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Shedding his locks to show his love C.J. Belker, 12, cut his hair for Locks of Love in honor of a man he admired.

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GWEN NEWMAN For the Daily Record/Sunday News

C.J. Belker had been counting down the days for nearly 9 1/2 months.

On a recent night, the long-awaited moment arrived and the 12-year-old aspiring hockey player had more than 9 1/2 inches of his blond locks cut off.

C.J., who will be a student at Central York Middle School this fall, views his donation as a way to benefit children with cancer and honor someone he greatly admired - Shane Lashua.

Lashua, 26, died Oct. 7. The Massachusetts native was riding his motorcycle on South Queen Street when he was in a fatal collision.

Hundreds attended the memorial service for Lashua at the York City Ice Arena, where he was a maintenance manager and volunteer coach.

Lashua also was a student at York Technical Institute, training to become a motorcycle mechanic.

"He was very friendly to everybody. The kids just loved him out there," C.J.'s father, Dan Belker, said. "He always greeted them at the front door. You could drop your kids off and know they were in good hands."

Lashua grew up playing ice hockey and participated on an adult male team.

A lasting memory for many was when he had shaved his hair for the Locks of Love program.

He donated to the program twice.

"He was a really nice guy," C.J. said. "He always talked to players at the rink and helped you with stuff. He joked around with you and always made you feel special, important."

C.J. decided after Lashua's death that he would follow suit and donate his own hair to Locks of Love.

Children with cancer will benefit from wigs specially made from the donated hair after losing their own hair as a result of treatment.

C.J.'s mother, Debbie Belker, says her son, like Lashua, is a thoughtful,

caring person who makes her proud.

"I think he's a pretty sweet kid," she said. "He's thoughtful always. That's just one of his traits. And he really looked up to Shane."

Wayne Winemiller, assistant manager of the ice arena, is not surprised others would want to follow Lashua's example.

Many of the skating youth wear stickers bearing his initials, SML, and not a day goes by that someone doesn't talk about him, Winemiller said.

"Shane had a constant smile, a positive attitude," Winemiller said. "He loved what he did and whatever he did, he did with his whole heart."

A Carolina blue jersey hangs in the front entry of the ice rink in honor of Lashua, along with a plaque with the words, "Remember the Good Times."

Winemiller said he's touched by C.J.'s decision to pay tribute to Lashua.

"It's taken time for some of the kids to digest it and think it through," he said.

"It's a great thing that Shane did, and Locks of Love is a great way for this boy and his family to show how much they thought of Shane." PIC:
SUBMITTED PIC: C.J. Belker, 12, grew his hair for almost a year and was recently able to donate more than 9-1/2 inches of it to Locks of Love.

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