

## **Student Stories Project: Myles Grote**

Audio version available at: <http://www.alumni.indiana.edu/profiles/students/grote.shtml>

**[IU fight song]**

**Welcome to the Indiana University Student Stories Project, a production of the IU Alumni Association. I'm your host, Alana Salata. In this series, you'll get an insight into what it takes to be a student leader here at IU, from the perks –**

***“One of the members of the club brought the Mad Money show to campus. Now, that was a big step for both the school and the club.”***

**– to the hard work –**

***“Graduate school takes up more time and energy than you can anticipate.”***

**– to the memories that will last a lifetime.**

***“I traveled to India in the fall of 2006 with 60 students from the Kelley School of Business.”***

**Join me on this journey through the lives of IU student leaders.**

**[IU fight song]**

**SALATA: Today we're speaking with Myles Grote of IU's Circle of Life.**

GROTE: Hello, my name's Myles Grote. I am from Indianapolis. Business major majoring in finance – I just graduated in June 2007, so this coming month I'll be graduated. Basically, my involvement with Circle of Life, I started as a general member at the first call-out meeting, I worked my way up to a finance council member, to the vice president of finance, and then chief operating officer, which I maintained for about a year and a half. My general interests are – obviously, I like to get involved with extracurriculars. Exercise, just sports in general I enjoy, for example. As far as extracurricular goes, other than Circle of Life, I'm involved with the Lance Armstrong Foundation. I do several events throughout the year with them.

**Why did you choose to attend IU?**

I chose to attend IU ... My dad kind of raised me to come here – Bobby Knight pictures all over my room, cream and crimson – I mean, basically I was born and raised to go to IU. But on a serious note, I researched the different, you know, business schools throughout the nation once I was in high school, because I basically knew what I wanted to do, that I wanted to go into business, and from there I found, you know, that the Kelley School is among the elite in the nation. And after I looked at, you know, the costs of in-state tuition and compared the different costs, I decided to go to IU.

**Tell me about a meaningful or enjoyable experience that you have had at IU.**

By far the most meaningful experience that I've ever had at IU was when we hosted the Circle of Life IU Mini Marathon. I worked for about two and a half years with fellow classmates Kevin MacCauley, who was the originator of the idea, and Samantha Roper, who was the chief financial officer; they were both there from the beginning. Basically that was by far the most meaningful, as a culmination of two and a half years of hard work with my classmates. So that was definitely the most meaningful and enjoyable experience for me at IU.

**What advice would you give to incoming freshmen and other students just starting out at IU?**

I would tell them to get involved early. That was one mistake that I kind of made. It ended up working out for me, but I would say it probably doesn't work out for everyone else if you wait too long. I mean, it's better to get involved with *one* organization – not, like, five organizations where you just hold positions, where you don't really get to get the hands-on experience that you would if you were to work on just one organization. My advice would be to get involved early, get involved with something that you really care about, and try not to spread yourself too thin, because if you get involved with too many different places, you know, too many different student organizations, you're not really going to get to apply yourself as well as you would if you were just with one organization.

**Tell me a little about Circle of Life and its objectives.**

Circle of Life was founded in 2005 as a not-for-profit student organization here on campus. In the summer of 2005, July 25, Bill Z. Littlefield, a professor at the business school, passed away from mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. We made the decision, me and the people involved with Circle of Life at the time, to endow the scholarship after him. It's housed at the IU Foundation. It currently is – once we meet our financial goals at the IU Foundation, it'll be the largest scholarship for cancer survivors in the nation to this date. So it's definitely something that IU should pride itself on, that we have that housed here and that Circle of Life is housed here as well. So that's the main objective, is to fund that scholarship. And to do that, we host the Circle of Life IU Mini Marathon, which the inaugural was this past year. All the revenues from the race, all the profits, go into the endowment, which is a perpetual endowment, so that means, you know, the money, all the interest made, just keeps getting reinvested until we meet our financial goals.

Circle of Life is basically built on one main pillar, which is professionalism. With all the outside relationships that we have with Old National Bank, you know, the different sponsors, it's very important that all Circle of Life members maintain a keen sense of professionalism, because we don't want them to feel like they're dealing with students – we want them to feel – “them” being the sponsors – we want them to feel that they're dealing with a professional organization. Because Circle of Life is a not-for-profit corporation – we obtained that status in 2006, 501(c)(3) status through the state of Indiana, so it is a corporation – the way it's built and structured is like a corporation. We have different councils, basically exactly run like a corporation, which some

students have problems with sometimes, because it's not like other student organizations. We definitely try to recruit the best talent that this campus has to offer. We have a pretty lengthy interview process to make sure that we get the right people in, and so far everything's been good. We have phenomenal students involved, and I know a lot of them have moved on to pretty successful jobs as well.

**What motivated you to be a part of creating this organization?**

Really, the way I got involved was through X220, which is Career Perspectives. They really encouraged you to get involved with different student organizations, to get involved on campus in general, you know, start up your own company, do something extra to set yourself apart from other students. My motivation as far as what drew me into this organization was I had two cousins throughout my life who were diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma – one of them was Down syndrome and was diagnosed at a very early age. I kind of had a little additional motivation to get involved with this organization because of the scholarship for cancer survivors. So that's where my motivation came, and I'm really glad that I got involved with this organization because, you know, it was infant at the time and it's really grown to be something pretty great.

**Tell me more about the Circle of Life IU Mini Marathon.**

Well, in its first year, it drew in 3,122 registrants from 39 states and raised about \$192,000, so the first year was extremely successful. We had a lot of alumni come; I know Kevin MacCauley, the one who started the organization, I know his brother brought in at least 12 alumni, and we had several alumni telling us, you know, this was the event that they were going to come to. It's really got off to a fast start and we've got a lot of positive sentiments about it, so this year it's planned for September 8, 2007, and we're capping the field at about 6,000. We expect anywhere between four and six thousand people this year. So we expect a lot bigger numbers, and, you know, we're trying to work out the kinks that we had last year. We didn't really have too many problems – everything ran smoothly, basically very successful – so we're looking forward to this coming year.

**What challenges have you faced within Circle of Life?**

It was really hard to get quality students involved. A lot of students that worked with Circle of Life didn't really have any idea what kind of work it entailed by getting involved. And that was a problem, because we had students coming in, and, you know, they wanted to do the work, they wanted to put forth the effort, but it really was just, I mean, you really have to put your heart and soul into this organization because it's not like a lot of student organizations whereas you can be involved and not really do as much hands-on. It's very hands-on, and it really takes a lot. So that was definitely the biggest problem: getting students involved that were ready to take on as much as this organization brings to the plate.

**How have your leadership skills developed over the course of your participation in the Circle of Life?**

Definitely, I look back to before I got involved, I mean, by far, I know that I'm a lot better of a leader now just from experiences. And, you know, it's funny that you ask that because today in class one of my teachers asked exactly what makes a good leader. And I started thinking about it, and really, it's really the experiences that you have. I think that developing leadership is really an experiential kind of thing. I mean, you really have to learn from actually doing, and I think that Circle of Life and being involved in the leadership position and going through all these different things, I think really helped me to develop my leadership skills.

**What are your future goals, and how do you think IU has helped prepare you to meet those goals?**

Definitely I eventually want to get my MBA in some kind of field of business. Currently, I'm going to be working for a company called FactSet Corporation in Chicago, Illinois – I'm going to be consulting for them – so I definitely want to stay in the field of finance and really eventually get my MBA, as I said before. And then work my way up the ladder, the corporate ladder. I definitely want to stay in corporate America, and I also want to stay involved with Circle of Life, you know, in some shape or form, definitely give back to my community, because I think that's very important.

**What will you miss the most when you graduate?**

I would just say Bloomington in general. I love Bloomington, and I'm having a really hard time trying to take it all in, that I'm going to be leaving here in such a short time. I've had a great stay, and I definitely look forward to coming back. I think that just Bloomington in general, all the landmarks here, and the experience that I've had, I'm going to miss the most.

**We've been talking with Myles Grote of IU's Circle of Life.**

**[IU fight song]**

**This series was produced by the Indiana University Alumni Association, with special thanks to the IU Marching Hundred and director Dave Woodley. I'm Alana Salata.**

**[IU fight song]**