March was a good month for October Twisdale. He turned 6, celebrated the three-month anniversary of a heart transplant, and got to spend an afternoon hanging out with his heroes—professional wrestlers from WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment).

“I think he has a new best friend,” said October’s mom, Kristine Henzy, while watching her son craft a miniature WWE belt out of felt with the big-bearded, three-time world champion Daniel Bryan.

October was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome and total anomalous pulmonary veins. You’d never know it to look at him though. His parents could hardly keep up as he weaved through the crowd laughing and getting all the wrestlers’ autographs.

Seven-year-old Addison Mercurio, who was being treated for aplastic anemia, was a little more shy—at least around the male wrestlers. (Who wouldn’t be intimidated by WWE’s Sin Cara in a full-face lucha libre mask?) But that didn’t stop her from getting a “no boys allowed” pic with WWE’s Brie Bella and Paige.

Addison’s father, Adam Mercurio, said that later that night, they noticed Paige on television wearing a bracelet Addison had given her. “It meant the world to her and all the other kids there.”

The event was held as part of WWE’s ongoing commitment to Connor’s Cure, a fund created in honor of Connor Michalek, an 8-year-old fan who died last year from a rare tumor that affects the brain and spinal cord. The fund supports pediatric brain and spinal cancer research and helps with costs borne by families whose children are undergoing care. Connor’s father, Steve Michalek, was also in attendance.

“I’m really proud of what this event has become,” he said.

That same evening, Connor “The Crusher” Michalek was inducted into WWE’s Hall of Fame and honored with its first Warrior Award.

—Story by Jason Bittel, Photography by Martha Rial