

# THE **FINAL** WORD

**"Nobody really knows where I'll go, but I have had scouts tell me that my stock is on the rise. Some have said that I could even go on the first day. They said that I could be anywhere from third round to free agent with all the extra stuff that is going on."**

— Ed Johnson, former Penn State defensive tackle

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**"Right now we are saying that we're going to the national championship. The guys, this winter, we worked out really hard and a lot of people stepped up into leadership roles and everything is positive right now."**

— Derrick Williams, Penn State wide receiver

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**"That's how we felt last year down at bowl practice. We started doing real well against our defense and it was just like a big boost of confidence for our offense. We went into that game thinking if we can do that against the Penn State defense, why can't we do this against anybody? It's helped us a lot."**

— Anthony Morelli, Penn State quarterback



THE TAIL END

## Breakfast with Champions



By Chris Morelli

**T**he way Lee Rubin looks at things, it's time to give a little back.

The former Penn State safety is enjoying life these days. He's got a good job as a corporate recruiter in New Jersey. He's married with two wonderful children. Like most former Nittany Lions,

though, Rubin isn't content to just sit around. He likes to help people. With his latest venture, he's doing just that.

Rubin is actively involved with the Community Refuge Education and Recreation Center, a non-profit organization that is committed to providing programs and services that are intended to enrich, empower and educate residents in central New Jersey.

"The organization was set up to provide services and support to young people in the central Jersey area. It's a rather affluent part of the state, but there are a whole lot of people who are not affluent," Rubin said. "They've slipped through the cracks academically, so we try to create a safety net, so to speak. A lot of them come from single-parent homes where no one has ever been to college. We try to provide support."

To help the cause, Rubin is coordinating the Second Annual Blue-White Scholarship Breakfast, which will be held the morning of the Blue-White Game beginning at 9 a.m. at the Nittany Lion Inn.

This year, there are a pair of featured speakers — former Nittany Lions D.J. Dozier and Tyoka Jackson.

The breakfast was Rubin's brainchild. It all stemmed, he said, by taking underprivileged youngsters to the Blue-White Game many years ago.

"We've been doing the trips for eight years. That has really grown. It started with a buddy putting a couple of kids in the back of his car. It's grown to a chartered bus and an overnight stay," Rubin said.

Then, in 2006, Rubin came up with the idea of the scholarship breakfast. He wasn't sure what the response would be like, but he thought he would give it a go.

"I always thought, there are 50,000 fans up here (for the game). We can get 50 of them to come to a scholarship breakfast. The funds go to directly to the scholarship fund. We toyed around with a couple of ideas. We called a few places. We wanted to get some speakers who would be attractive," Rubin said.

The response was overwhelming.

He lined up a couple of guest speakers, including former Penn State defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, who knows what it's like to start an organization — The Second Mile — from scratch.

Also present were former Penn State player Terry Smith and academic advisor Don Ferrell.

But it didn't stop there.

At the breakfast, the Penn State family turned out in

droves. In addition to the three guest speakers Rubin had lined up, plenty of former Nittany Lions turned out.

"The buzz in the room was unbelievable. Charlie Pittman shows up, Andre Collins stops by, all these guys come through. Bobby Engram, who had just played in the Super Bowl, shows up. I'm like 'wait a minute, we're on to something here.' The people who were there were in heaven," Rubin said.

With fans coming to Happy Valley in droves for the Blue-White Game, Rubin knows that they have to eat breakfast somewhere. Instead of plunking several dollars down at a downtown establishment, he says, why not eat at the Nittany Lion Inn with some former greats?

For Rubin, the breakfast is the highlight of the giving year.

"This is my baby. This is the part that I love. This stuff is what gets me going," he said. "I've been a very fortunate,

very blessed young man. I had a great family structure, great support at home. I see talented, bright young kids who don't have those opportunities and I want to help give them a chance."

It's often said that behind every good man is a good woman, and that's definitely the case with Rubin.

His wife, Carmen, is the executive director of the Community Refuge Education and Recreation Center. If Lee is the muscle of the organization, Carmen is the braintrust. An eighth grade teacher and the mother of two likes to wear many hats. Why? Because she's been there, that's why.

"Originally, I wanted to start a tutoring program. We wanted to help those kids who sort of fall through the cracks. I'm reaching back because someone lifted me

up. It's my way of giving back, absolutely. I put on a lot of different hats during the day," Carmen said.

The CRERC got its start in 1999, when the group received a \$3,000 grant. That got the wheels turning.

The scholarship breakfast appears to be a hit.

"It's been overwhelming. (The breakfast) is the biggest event of the year for us because people are so connected to Penn State. It is definitely our biggest fundraiser," Carmen said.

It's not just the breakfast that raises funds, though. The breakfast will feature a silent auction with signed collectibles from PSU greats like Franco Harris, Lydell Mitchell, Kenny Jackson, Kyle Brady, O.J. McDuffie and Ki-Jana Carter — just to name a few.

Tickets are just \$25 and are available through the organization's website, [www.crerc.org](http://www.crerc.org).

So go have breakfast, get some autographs and bid on some memorabilia. But don't forget to stop and say hello to the Rubins and thank them for all that they do.

In the process, you can help a child.

"I was that kid, so I know what these kids want, what they need," Carmen said. "We're just trying to provide something so kids can get that little something extra."

*Chris Morelli is the editor of Blue White Illustrated.*