

Schwarber, Batmobile surprise 10-year-old at HopeKids event



By Carrie Muskat / MLB.com | @CarrieMuskat
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CHICAGO -- **Kyle Schwarber** (<http://m.mlb.com/player/656941/kyle-schwarber>) surprised his 10-year-old buddy, Campbell Faulkner, by driving him around in a Batmobile, but it was the Cubs slugger who may have had the most fun.

Schwarber joined in on a surprise party Sunday night in the Phoenix area for Faulkner, who is battling a rare form of a mitochondrial disease. HopeKids Arizona organized the event, inviting Faulkner to be "Batman" for a day.

Faulkner and Schwarber met in Mesa, Ariz., in Spring Training 2015, when Schwarber began wearing a green wristband to show his support of "Campbell's Crew." The two exchange emails, and when Schwarber tore two ligaments in his left knee in the third game of 2016, Faulkner wrote immediately, suggesting the Cubs outfielder talk to the youngster's doctors.

"He said he wanted me to come to Phoenix so his doctors could help me," Schwarber said Monday. "The cool part is he sent me an email right away after I got hurt when he got the news that my season was over.

"I remember when I was a kid, I wanted someone to look up to when I was his age. It's funny -- it's not like we look up to each other now. We're just friends. I think that's the best way to put it."

Schwarber and Faulkner's family were all dressed in green "Campbell's Crew" T-shirts. But as soon as Schwarber got behind the wheel of the Batmobile, he became Batman.

"I drove it for about an hour," Schwarber said. "I drove his family all around the block. Usually it's a police officer who drives it, but they let me drive it. I was doing burnouts and everything in it -- I wasn't really a good example. I was being a little kid right there. Why not drive it the way Batman drives it?"

Hopefully, the event's coordinators will let it go. Judging by the photos, Faulkner had a great time.

"He's just a good kid," Schwarber said. "He's got a really good heart and that's all you can say about the kid. He's a person you look up to because he's faced a lot of adversity in his life and he's only 10 years old. He's faced it with a big smile on his face. It was definitely something I could relate to, going through my little injury. He's someone you look up to every day."

Faulkner inspired Schwarber during his rehab. Schwarber was cleared to join the Cubs in the World Series as the designated hitter, and helped them win the championship. His time now is spent on rehab and golf.

"I'm focused on getting in shape and getting my knee back to where I can go play some outfield and catch," Schwarber said.

And he finds time for his friends.

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Ramblings (<http://muskat.mlblogs.com/>) . You can follow her on Twitter @CarrieMuskat (<http://www.twitter.com/carriemuskat>) and listen to her podcast (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/chicago-cubs-podcast/id902521518?mt=2>) . This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.