

Currents



JANUARY 2009

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS CEREMONY

VOLUME 14.1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of Brendan's Fund,

In 2008, Brendan's Fund received two special recognitions of our endeavors on behalf of our children and their families. We were honored through the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce's *Community Betterment Award*, along with a Joint Legislative Commendation from State Senator Van Drew and Assemblyman Albano and Milam. The Eagles Fly for Leukemia also recognized our work at their September fundraiser.

Our commitment to our children and their families during the crisis of their diagnosis and treatment remains steadfast. We will continue to provide the emotional and financial support we have offered since 1992. In our 19th year, we are hopeful that we will be able to continue to meet their needs. As ever, we depend on the kindness and generosity of the Cape May County community as well as that of our many visitors.

This year's newsletter highlights the experiences of Patty Cerrato. We think her experiences will give our readers an insight into what it is like to survive and prosper even with a diagnosis of cancer. Patty is truly a remarkable young woman and we at Brendan's Fund are extremely proud of her accomplishments.

As I write to you there are ten children we are working with, who are struggling with their treatment and the effects of their experiences with cancer. We hope that the outcome will be just as positive for each and every one of them. They all know they can count on us for support.

Summer will be here soon and we look forward to seeing you at our summer events!

Sincerely yours,

Lydia C. Borek

Lydia C. Borek

Remembering Brendan



Brendan lived for 18 years and filled his life with joy. Active, athletic and well liked, you could always find him on the beach, a skateboard ramp or the soccer field. He was loved and supported in all his efforts by his family and was blessed with good and loyal friends.

Brendan's carefree life changed shortly before his seventeenth birthday when he was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma, a cancer of the bone. For the next sixteen months he fought a courageous battle against unbeatable odds.

Although Brendan experienced great suffering in his life, he also experienced great love. Brendan's Fund was born out of this love.

His memory lives on each time Brendan's Fund brings comfort, help and hope to children and families facing the same battle.

2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Two hands – We as individuals accomplish a great deal with them. However, when we place our hand in the palm of the person next to us and join our hands and our efforts, we have doubled our possibilities.

Over the years, our list of events has grown. We appreciate the organizations and businesses who have taken Brendan's Fund into their hearts by conducting a fundraising event on our behalf. We are thankful for their efforts.

These fundraising events go to the core of Brendan's Fund's mission – the spirit of community. By sponsoring and participating in these new events, you support our grassroots efforts and bring another aspect of community into our organization. Thank you to all who care.

APRIL

4th Annual Bass Barn Golf Tournament for Brendan's Fund

Avalon Golf Club, Swainton, NJ
Friday, April 24, 2009

MAY

19th Annual Spirit Walk Hosted by Wildwood Catholic High School

15th and New Jersey Ave, Wildwood, NJ
Sunday, May 3, 2009

JULY

Hyperflex Beach Splash

Golden Inn, Avalon, NJ
Sunday, July 2009 (Date - TBA)

AUGUST

*All events are held in Avalon, NJ

Crab Cakes at Sylvester's

Monday, August 10, 2009

Artist and Friends Art Show at Avalon Yacht Club

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

Pizza Day at Circle Pizza

Wednesday, August 12, 2009

Pancakes at Fishin' Pier Grille

Thursday, August 13, 2009

Movie Night at Community Hall

Thursday, August 13, 2009

Method Skate Jam for Brendan's Fund Hosted by Avalon Recreation Department

Community Hall
Friday, August 14, 2009

19th Annual Brendan Borek Surf Memorial

30th and the Beach
Saturday, August 15, 2009

19th Annual Brendan Borek Homecoming Party

Community Hall (note new location)
Saturday, August 15, 2009

NOVEMBER

3rd Annual High Tides Striper Tournament Hosted by Cape May County's Carpenter's Union Local #1743

November 7, 2009

7th Annual Cape Fitness Turkey Trot

Cape Fitness, West Cape May, NJ
Thanksgiving Day 2009

Assistant Director, Laurel Nushke



As a new year is upon us it is always a good time to reflect on the experiences of the past year. 2008 was an exceptionally tumultuous year for all Americans but even more so for the 10 families we call our own. With the economy in disarray and financial security in question our families also had to confront the challenges of a possibly fatal illness.

Family crisis, while not something anyone wishes for, very often forces participants to "rise to the occasion". I am constantly amazed at the strength that so many of our parents exhibit through the course of their child's illness. Once a child is diagnosed with cancer, parents must battle the illness on many fronts.

They navigate the labyrinth of our health care system with expertise, and confront it as champions for their children. They struggle to stay financially sound while their expenses from travel, procedures and medications mount. Parents face the challenge of caring for the child who is ill while making sure the other children in the home have their needs met. In the end they are battle weary and scared but have a wisdom that few of us will ever achieve.

Brendan's fund does what it can to help alleviate some of the suffering these families face. While we cannot mend a broken heart, provide a renewed supply of energy or make more hours in the day, we provide what we can, through the generous support of our donors. We appreciate you helping us so that we can help our families.



2nd ANNUAL HIGH TIDES STRIPER TOURNAMENT



6th ANNUAL TURKEY TROT



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARD

For the most up-to-date information, call 609-967-0100 or
Visit our website www.brendansfund.org for all the latest information and entry forms for the events.
We hope to see you throughout the year!

HELPING HANDS

Battling Cancer By Patty Cerreto

Over 14 years cancer free, Patty has been a part of Brendan's Fund family for many years. Her words below tell you about her experience and the impact it had on her as a teenager battling cancer.

The scariest moment of my life happened to me when I was seventeen. I was sitting on the bed in my Mom's bedroom, having recently been diagnosed with neuroblastoma. While she was putting some clothes away, I asked her, "Mom, am I going to die?" She turned to me, gave me a big hug and said, "I don't know."

This was not the answer I expected from my Mom, who always told me with every sprained ankle or scraped knee, "Don't worry, you'll be fine." This moment was more frightening than going in a CAT scan or MRI for the first time, having major surgery, radiation therapy or undergoing a bone marrow transplant. It was at this moment I realized my own mortality. Suddenly, I wasn't sure whether or not I would live to see tomorrow, next week, or next year.

Facing my mortality at an early age forced me to develop a strong appreciation for my life and the lives of others. I realize that life is delicate. I do not take for granted that those I love or care for will be around tomorrow. Life is short. I try to live for today, plan for tomorrow, and look to the future. I smile. I do my best not to get caught up in material things because material things, in the end, are worth nothing. What really matters is how one's life and actions impact the lives of others. The love and care that develops between people, whether between a husband and wife or two strangers, this is what is truly precious in life. This is what prevails when things get hard.

The direction of my career path was also influenced by my battle with neuroblastoma. I was an avid athlete in high school. I felt like the healthiest kid in the world. The only sign or symptom that I had when I was diagnosed with neuroblastoma was a hard palpable mass in my abdomen. I could not understand how I could go from running a six minute mile one day to being admitted to

Children's Hospital the next when I didn't even feel sick? I was confused and shocked. After the shock wore off, I became curious. I wanted to know everything about neuroblastoma and medicine in general. I wanted to see my MRI pictures. I wanted to know what was wrong with the kid next to me. I remember asking a resident to explain to me how the heart works. I developed a strong interest in medicine and this interest has never wavered.

Today, I work as a Physician Assistant in cardiology. With my experiences battling neuroblastoma, I have gained empathy for my patients that makes my care unique. I appreciate what it feels like to put your health, your life, in someone else's hands. I understand that some treatments are very hard to tolerate and that pain is a real thing. I listen to my patients closely and try to be compassionate about their physical complaints and emotional concerns. I also find that I tend to be a patient advocate, trying to go the extra step to make sure they receive the best care.

I grew up on the beach. When I was sick, I would often sit on the beach and reflect on my battle with cancer. My thoughts during these times inspired me to write the poem below. When I recite these words to myself even now, I still feel their strength.

"My Jetty"

I am a rock.
Go ahead waves push and pound
I will not lose my ground
And all you storms that arise
Just to stare me in the eyes
I will not crush or crumble to your surprise
I am strong
I am solid
Can't you feel?
I am real
I am a rock.



A letter from Patty:

Brendan Borek High Tides Memorial Fund actively makes a REAL difference in the lives of pediatric cancer patients and their families. Brendan's Fund knew how to provide my family and me with the support and guidance we needed to navigate this new world of cancer. They connected me by phone with other pediatric cancer patients so that I could ask "What does chemotherapy feel like?" and get a real answer. We received gas cards to help ease the costs of endless travel from Ocean City to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Since this was a time before cell phones, one of the best things they did for me was provide pre-paid phone cards to use while in the hospital. I could contact family and friends whenever I needed their support, without having to worry about telephone bills. Brendan's Fund stood by my family every step of the way and helped give me the strength to beat neuroblastoma.

Thanks Brendan's Fund, for helping me through the toughest time of my life. Thanks for helping all of my dreams come true!

BRENDAN'S FUND

The Brendan Borek High Tides Memorial Fund, Inc.

(Brendan's Fund) is a grassroots organization whose efforts are directed toward providing comprehensive, compassionate and personalized assistance to Cape May County pediatric cancer patients and their families. Since its inception in 1992, Brendan's Fund has helped area families through the crisis of their child's illness. Services range from professional counseling and advocacy programs to financial and material assistance. To help in the fight against cancer, Brendan's Fund also contributes to pediatric cancer research on a discretionary basis.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS PROVIDE:

Reimbursements: Illness related expenses, gas, tolls, parking fees, lodgings, meals and telephone bills.

Annual Assistance: Thanksgiving and Easter Baskets, Back-to-School Clothing Gift Certificates and Christmas and Hanukkah gifts for each child and sibling.

Special Assistance: Payment of utility bills, monthly supermarket food certificates and, in extraordinary circumstances, payment of rent/mortgages.

Ways to Give in 2009

Please consider making Brendan's Fund a part of your yearly charitable contributions. Some additional ways in which you can offer your financial assistance include: using our memorial and honorarium program to honor someone, company matching gift program and estate planning. Online donations are available at www.brendansfund.org.

Visit our office and The Store
2170 Dune Drive
Avalon, NJ 08202

Other ways you can reach us:

Brendan's Fund Phone **609.967.0100**
P.O. Box 41 Fax **609.967.3480**
Avalon, NJ 08202 Email **bren@brendansfund.org**

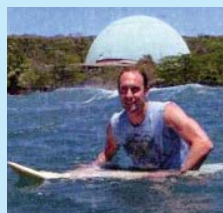
Find us on the web
www.brendansfund.org

In Memorium

Kristopher James Zuccato, "Zeus"
1976-2008

In his own words: "I'm the coolest dude in the whole wide world, I am very selfless, I am very outgoing, love music and most art forms. Like to travel, meet new people and am very spontaneous and adventurous! I surf snowboard, play drums and guitar. I'm a pretty good cook. Like to go out n party at a drop of a hat! I'm sometimes the life of the party when the mood hits me. Well, I gotta run, talk to ya soon!!!"

Kris was an ardent supporter of Brendan's Fund and a member of our Circle of Friends. We are saddened by his passing and will miss his energy and zest for life.



Always Loved
Always Remembered
Always In Our Hearts

Brendan Borek

Kaitlin Anzelone

Hannah Clark

Allison Clayton

Dominique D'Amico

Christina Fillippo

Arthur Jermain Graham

Frannie Hardwick

Matthew Lawrence

Tyler Mahoney

Scott McCaffrey

Jason McCullen

Joanna Matthews

Rose Marie Miller

Isabella Morin

Christopher Nordberg

C.J. O'Neill

Joseph Schulte, III

Stephanie Selinsky

Christine Smith

Harold Snyder

John Sorensen

Guy Stauble

Shana Whelan

Nathaniel Wood