

Ryan's Newsletter



The Ryan McElroy Children's Cancer Foundation
198 Route 22, The Atrium Building, Pawling, NY 12564
845-855-0211 www.ryansfoundation.org

Children's Cancer Foundation

Nathan Redmond

Sheriff for a Day, Parade Marshall, Renegades Baseball Honorary Captain, Guest of Honor at Sheriff's Picnic - these are some of the highlights of Nathan's summer. Our son Nathan will turn 6 years old on August 14. He's small in stature, but tall on life. A true extravert, fully enjoying time spent with others, his outgoing spirit, love of talking and charm always win people over. Nathan attends school at Fishkill Plains Elementary and is headed into first grade. He enjoys plays (especially those on Broadway), playing instruments, watching Disney Junior and playing with his toys.

Nate was born with Spina-bifida which, by definition, means "split spine" which caused deformity and nerve damage. For people with this disorder paralysis is the primary disability. The degree of paralysis varies as some children can walk with crutches or walkers while others are wheelchair bound. Urological, gastrological, neurological and orthopedic issues are an everyday part of our lives. Nate's paralysis begins just above his belly button, below this line he feels nothing. He wasn't able to sit up on his own until the age of 3!

Nathan is our only child - a reality we treasure. I'm a perfectionist at heart with an inventor's spirit and Spina-bifida has afforded many opportunities to use my creative mindset. I'm forever thinking of ways to modify things so Nate can move and play more freely.

Caring for him requires a great deal of planning, timing, and consistent

management. It has taken a team of people and professionals to bring him to where he is today. This concentrated care will continue until he reaches adult hood. He currently has 9 specialists/physicians, a pediatrician, 3 therapists, 2 nurses, various support agencies (Ryan McElroy Foundation, Dutchess ARC, Fragile Families Support Group, medicaid), a fantastic hospital (Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital Of NY) and the help of our family and friends. The financial cost has also been great and we have survived because of the generosity of our



parents and a very close friend. God provided for us, not in the way I'd hoped, in a very humbling way but all Nathan's needs (and wants too if I'm being honest) have been met! Nate has undergone 7 surgeries since he was born (3 within the first five days of birth) and just had his most daring surgery this past June. His spine had been curved 97.6 degrees bending him forward like the letter C. Titanium rods were placed inside to straighten and support his failing spine. He recovered remarkable fast and is back to his cheerful, on-the-move self. He will have a lengthening surgery every 9

months till he reaches 13 at which point the current rods will be replaced with permanent ones. Our little man has quite a journey ahead of him.

As parents, Gerry and I decided early on that we would do our best to provide Nathan with as many opportunities for a normal childhood as was possible. Two years ago we discovered a sled hockey team in NYC, the New York Sled Rangers (sponsored by the Wheelchair Sports Federation and the New York Rangers). This has been an amazing experience both for us as parents and for Nathan. We have met so many amazing parents and kids. They all push their kids to do the best they can, not treating them as disabled and each child rises to the occasion. It is a beautiful thing to experience, the spirit and will rising above physical limitations and mindsets: Proving that all things are possible!

If I had one person I'd thank most for Nathan, it would be God. He's given us a remarkable young man to raise while opening a door to an amazing world I'd never have known, yet one I fit so well in. To all those that have supported and loved us we'd like to say thank you; Nathan is where he is today, in part, because of you. To the Ryan McElroy Foundation, thank you for the opportunity to share our story and for your generous support.

If any parents are interested in joining the Rangers youth sled hockey team please visit <http://www.wfsledrangers.org> Your kids will love it and all equipment is supplied by the team! www.ryansfoundation.org for more photos of Nate.

ANNUAL FALL TASTING

September 25 , 2014

This year's Annual Fall Tasting Event will be held at The Grandview in Poughkeepsie, New York. One of the most popular events Ryan's Foundation puts on, it's sure to be a memorable evening. Over 50 Hudson Valley restaurants, wineries, breweries, bakeries, and artisans of all kinds coming together under the outdoor tent for a no pressure, light-hearted, lip-smackingly tasty good time! It's a great time to get together with family, friends, and co-workers to sample some of the best the Hudson Valley has to offer. Come mingle, eat, drink, and have fun all while raising awareness, funds and HOPE. What a great opportunity for socializing and meeting new people and catching up with old friends while helping to raise HOPE for area children and families in need.



Dutchess County Sheriff and Ryan's Foundation Executive Director, Butch Anderson, will host the event as Master of Ceremonies. There will be raffles, silent auctions, and live auction bidding. The evening's entertainment will be local favorite Johnny Dell who always keeps everyone happy!

Doors open at 5PM. Tickets can be purchased on our web page in advance or at the door. If you would like to be part of this magical evening, contact Stephen Reverri at: sreverri@gmail.com or 845-249-5541. Vendors are always welcomed.

Please visit our website for more information. www.ryansfoundation.org We rely heavily on the FALL TASTING for a significant portion of the funds needed to help children in the Hudson Valley.

ABOUT US - Tom Cerchiara, Treasurer



Having known the McElroy Family and what they had been through when they lost Ryan, I offered to take care of the accounting for the Foundation since that was my profession. Once I met the other board members, I was overwhelmed by their incredible commitment to the children they helped and to volunteerism in general. Ryan's Foundation works right at the grass roots level, helping families navigate through the hardest of emotional and economic times. Ultimately, this allows parents to be with their child to give them the love and support they need at the hardest time of their lives.

Tom has two sons and four grandchildren and lives in Brewster, New York. He is a partner at Arthur Meyers & Company, 2384 U.S. 6, Brewster, NY 10509 (845) 279-8400.

GOOD NEWS CORNER

Ryan's Foundation paid the rent for a family in Dutchess County whose little girl, Berenice, is sick with acute leukemia. Paying for the rent is a small gesture to help alleviate the stress for the family.

A little boy named Nathan became "Sheriff for the Day". He hung out with the Sheriff of Dutchess County, Butch Anderson, at Headquarters. He was introduced to DC Deputies, given his own badge, patch, hat, and ID card. He sat in the SWAT Emergency Vehicle, the 4-wheelers, Patrol Car, and also sat behind the Sheriff's Desk. Lastly, as Sheriff, he ordered the Deputies to "be nice to Butch." It is amazing that someone who is suffering so much wanted something as simple as being Sheriff. Being able to make this child smile for the day is what we are all about. At the end of the day, we gave his mother gas cards for transportation to the hospitals.

Ryan's Foundation sent a young girl and her family to Vero Beach, Florida while she is between treatments. We hope she has so much fun soaking up the sun and can have a few days of not worrying about reality.

Ryan's Foundation just paid for a new septic system for a family whose son suffers from seizures after surviving brain cancer. We will do anything to help a family in need.

Help us reach our goal of never having to say NO to a child in need. Consider signing up for our EFT for just \$10 per month - that's 33c per day.

See the DONATE page on our website to join our cause. Thank you!

2014 CALENDAR SAVE THE DATE

August 19-24: Dutchess County Fair - Building B. Doors open 10AM.

September 22: First Annual Clifford Kihlmire Memorial Golf Tournament - The First Annual Clifford Kihlmire Memorial Golf Tournament is in honor of Clifford Kihlmire, father of Kevin Kihlmire; owner of the River Station Restaurant. This tournament is to "Remember a life, Save a Life"; To remember and honor Clifford Kihlmire, with proceeds benefiting Ryan's Foundation. Dutchess Country Club, Poughkeepsie, NY.

September 25: Annual Fall Event 5 - 9 P M . The Grandview, Poughkeepsie, NY. This is a wonderful night of sampling some of the Hudson Valley's best food and spirits. Plenty of vendors, entertainment, auctions, raffles. Come mingle, eat, drink, and have fun all while raising awareness, funds, and hope for children facing the battle of their lives. (Tickets \$50 in advance \$60 at door.)

September 28: Montgomery Gentry Concert 7PM. Mid-Hudson Civic Center in Poughkeepsie, NY. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Ryan's Foundation. General Admission: Buy your ticket on Ticketmaster.com! Premium Ticket: Enjoy a Cocktail party prior to the concert at the Poughkeepsie Grand. Hors d'oeuvres and open bar will be included in your ticket price of \$150/single or \$250/couple. Please email: Tmcelroy@ryansfoundation.org for more information on ticket options.

Event details are available on our web page under: **EVENTS**

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Ryan's Newsletter is published by The Ryan McElroy Children's Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit 501 (c)3 organization, dedicated to helping children who battle childhood illnesses and cancer by providing support that improve the quality of life for them and their families. If you have a story you want us to know about or someone who needs assistance, please contact our newsletter editor:

sghavelka@gmail.com

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MAIL COMPLETED FORM WITH YOUR CHECK TO:

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****ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE****

PLEASE - HELP US REACH OUR GOAL

A \$100 contribution will cover transportation to a hospital.

A \$250 contribution will pay for food or utilities. A \$500 contribution will pay for lodging or rent.

A \$1,000 contribution will pay for a mortgage or medicines.