

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

Our Featured Child Nicholas McAuliffe

This is the story of Nicholas McAuliffe who was born premature at 28 weeks. The morning of Wednesday, June 1, 2005 started off like any normal day as I left for work. As the day progressed I started to not feel so well. I called my doctor's office in the afternoon and was told to go to the hospital to be checked out. Moments later I was told that I was in labor and needed to have an emergency Cesarean Section. I was in shock. Labor and delivery was chaotic. There was no time for any discussions or decisions. For a person who never runs out of things to say or ask, I was speechless and frightened. I was brought to the operating room and advised that my husband could not come in to the room. I do remember that there were so many doctors, nurses and machines, This was not what I had planned or discussed throughout my pregnancy with my doctor. Even though I previously had a Cesarean section with my first child, Daniel, who is now 12 and a healthy child, I was planning a normal delivery.

Nicholas was born weighing 2 lbs. 9ozs. I do remember waking up in recovery and asking how Nicholas was. I was told he was fine. Twelve hours later I remember asking my husband to go see how Nicholas was. He came back with the neonatologist with the

dreadful news that Nicholas was very sick, his lungs were not developed fully. He was breathing but needed support. I was devastated. A little while later the neonatologist came back to tell us that Nicholas needed to be transferred to another hospital for more support.



A couple of hours later, the doctors came back to tell us that, at this point, Nicholas was not stable enough to be transported. The following day we were told they were getting a team of doctors, nurses and medical equipment to try and transport him again. I was wheeled into the NICU to see him prior to him being transported and to have him baptized. I immediately signed myself out of the hospital to be with him. My husband and I drove to the hospital that Nicholas was transported to. When we arrived at the hospital, we were told by a team of doctors that we had the sickest baby out of 77 babies on the unit. The days that followed

were a blur. Nicholas had a Level 3 or a possible Level 4 intra-ventricular bleed. He had hydrocephalus (buildup of too much cerebrospinal fluid in the brain), bilateral pneumothorax (abnormal collection of air in the pleural space that separates the lung from the chest wall), and pulmonary emphysema (abnormal enlargement of the airspaces distal to the terminal bronchioles). He required surgery for a subgaleal shunt (bleeding in the space between the skull periosteum and the scalp), and galea aponeurosis (a tough layer of dense fibrous tissue which covers the upper part of the cranium). When he reached 5 lbs, he had surgery for a VP Shunt. He spent 10 1/2 weeks in the NICU. We were told that he probably would not walk or talk. This was the worst roller coaster ride of our lives.

I am so thankful for the team of doctors, nurses, therapists, and medical advances who cared for him, were kind to us and worked tirelessly to give us a chance to take him home.

Nicholas is now 9. He is the happiest, loving, caring, funniest young man you will ever meet. He is one determined little guy. Though he has his struggles, he never complains. He loves to sing, dance, play the guitar and play video games.

People Who Give Back.....The Coppola Family

No one has to tell the Coppola Family about loss. They have endured a great loss – the death of Luigi Coppola’s son, Claudio, just 16 years old, killed in a traffic accident near his home in Hyde Park, NY in 2012.

The Coppola family’s journey started in 1961 when three brothers, having just arrived from the Naples region of Italy, opened the first Coppola’s Restaurant in the old abandoned Rialto Theatre on Main Street in Poughkeepsie, NY. Today, four brothers — Luigi, Nicholas, John, and Vincent — run the Coppola family restaurants: “**Coppola’s Restaurant**” in Hyde Park NY, and “**Coppola’s on 9**” in Poughkeepsie NY.

Since 1961, the Coppola family has been civic minded when they would close their restaurant to the public and feed many needy children in the area. Today, that tradition continues. For the last six years, Nick Coppola has closed his doors to the public at **Cappuccino’s** in order to host a free all-you-can-eat buffet breakfast for children of Ryan’s Foundation and their families. No expense is spared. There is everything imaginable to eat as well as a magician to entertain and even Santa Claus makes an appearance. The incredible generosity of this family in the Dutchess County area is second to none. The Christmas breakfast gives these seriously ill children, and their siblings and parents, a day to sit back and enjoy some time away from their troubles — away from hospitals, doctors, and needles. When you hear the children laugh at the tricks the magician plays, it is just magical. And there is Nick, in the background, with the biggest smile.

The Coppola family has also been selling their famous tomato sauce in the Hudson Valley for 25 years. For every jar sold, a portion is donated to **Autism Speaks**.

Then came the loss of Claudio. Through their grief, the family and friends of Claudio Coppola have worked to channel the pain of his death and the loss of the boy with the “bluest eyes and a brightest smile” into ways to better the community he loved. The Coppola family started and runs a non-profit foundation called **Claudio Cares**. They have collected more than 34,000 pounds of non-perishable food items for five local food pantries. Volunteers from around the area help to collect, organize, and distribute a tractor-trailer full of supplies to help those less fortunate. Luigi Coppola says, “People want to give. We just gave them an avenue for helping others.” Luigi calls them “Claudio’s Army.” Throughout the year, the Coppola family and Claudio Cares Foundation hold many fundraisers, including an auto show, a 5K run, their annual Snowflake Gala – at which they honored Ryan’s Foundation.

Claudio Cares Foundation gives out two awards: The Claudio Coppola Student Leadership Award which is given to those students that embody the spirit of Claudio Coppola, seeking young people who have leadership, selfless, athletic, artistic and academic qualities that Claudio exuded. Their second award is the Claudio Coppola Distinguished Educator Award given to those teachers that seek to instill the skills that embody the spirit of Claudio Coppola, teaching young people leadership, selfless, athletic, artistic and academic qualities that Claudio exuded.

Please check out their webpage at: www.claudiocares.com or their Facebook Page, **Claudio-Cares**

We ask that you support those that support us and stop by any of the Coppola Family’s restaurants. You will be glad you did. Most small and large retailers in the Hudson Valley carry their sauces. If you would like to order some, contact 845-229-9113 and they will ship it to you.

GOOD NEWS CORNER

Ryan's Foundation sent a local family to St. Jude's Cancer Research Hospital in Tennessee after their child relapsed, in hope a new experimental treatment will save his life.

Thank you to all the vendors and attendees that came to our Food, Wine, and Beer Tasting event. It was an amazing evening! Thank you to the Grandview Events for hosting us. Thank you to Steve and Erin Reverri who put so much thought and effort into the event. We can't wait for next year.

Ryan's Foundation received a request from a family who had tickets to go see the Wiggles at the Mid Hudson Civic Center. The Mom asked if there was anything we could do to help her little boy, who is suffering from a life threatening illness, meet the Wiggles. With a few phone calls, the family had a meet and greet set up. We arranged for a limo to pick up the family, bring them to dinner, then to meet the Wiggles and see the show.

Ryan's Foundation just paid an electric bill for a family living in Dover Plains, NY whose child is suffering from a life threatening illness. Hopefully, this little payment will help alleviate any stress for the family.

Ryan's Foundation just paid for three separate gas cards for three different families living in the Hudson Valley who have children with serious illnesses. The expense of traveling across the county or to a different state can be a tremendous burden, in addition to medical expenses.

Thank you to everyone who came out and participated in the dodgeball tournament at the Pawling high school on Friday with proceeds to Ryan's Foundation. It was such a fun evening. Thanks to the Pawling Interact Club for all they did to make the night a success

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.

2015 Calendar

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 9 - Ryan's Foundation Duathlon Millbrook, NY

MAY 30 - Angels of Gold Event - Walbridge Farm.

JUNE 6 - Annual Sporting Clay Shoot - TMT Preserve, Clinton, NY

JUNE - Annual Golf Outing - TBA

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

GOOD NEWS CORNER - CONTINUED

Ryan's Barn on Ryan's Way is making HUGE progress towards being completed. We officially have a working bathroom in the barn. Painting is finished. Only thing left is flooring. We are so close to completion and have come such a long way from when this was all "just a dream and a wish." Slowly, our dream is becoming reality. Thank you to all those who are supporting us and making this possible. We will continue to keep you updated on the progress. Photos are up on our Facebook page if you want to see the progress.

#raisinghope #ryansway

We will do whatever it takes to help. Your support is what makes this happen. THANK YOU.

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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

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