

# 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](http://www.ryansfoundation.org)

*Children's Cancer Foundation*

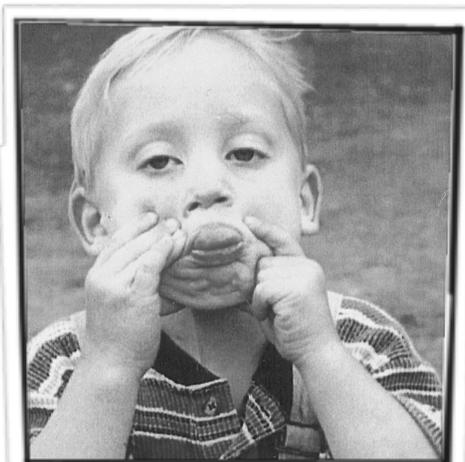
## IN LOVING MEMORY OF RYAN McELROY

I miss you. I wish I could see you, hug you, and talk to you. I wish I could protect you, look after you, and be the big sister that I know I could be. Instead, I have to pray to you, dream about you, and only imagine what you would be like and how you would look. You are looking after me, protecting me, and watching over mom, dad, and I, as our guardian angel. I wish things could be different. I wish you could be here and be living your life as a 19 year old, but life isn't fair. As a famous poem reads, "God saw you getting tired and a cure was not to be, so he put his arms around you and whispered, 'come to me'." With tearful eyes we watched you and saw you pass away and, although we loved you dearly, we could not make you stay. "A golden heart stopped beating, hard working hands at rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us He only takes the best." As you know, that poem is in our house and it means so much to Mom, Dad, and I because we know that you are safe with God and no longer in any pain.

I know you are right beside me with every step I take and every accomplishment I reach. I know that you were sitting right beside Mom and Dad as I walked across the stage to get my diploma and when I opened my first acceptance letter to college. It is not the same as being able to hug you and celebrate with you. I know you are right next to me with every decision I make and I just wish I could be next to you with every obstacle you overcome and every achievement you reach.

I want to be able to celebrate with you and cheer you on at games. I know you would be playing Division One baseball at any school you desired, preferably St. Johns with me. I wish I could watch you play baseball again; I can only imagine how talented you'd be. Knowing Dad, you would be making it to the big leagues!

I would do anything to see you smile, hear your laugh, or hear those three words, "Rug Rat On." I would do anything to get back to the days when we would wrestle in the living room, eat ice cream at King Kone, or play baseball in the yard. No one understands how hard it is to be without their best friend, no less their brother.



My friends always talk about their brother or sister and sometimes vent about how irritating or annoying they are. None of them ever realize how much that hurts me to hear them say that because none of them know how it feels to lose someone so close to their heart. If they only knew that their brother or sister could be gone in a second, I would hope they would take advantage of their presence. I would do anything to be in your presence once more.

Ry, you are in my thoughts and dreams everyday, but without you here physically is one of the hardest challenges I deal with. Your death has taught me the greatest life lessons that most people do not realize until they are older. You have taught me to never give up on anything, whether it is achieving something for school, sports, or trying to fight a life threatening illness.

As a 4 year old boy fighting stage four bone cancer, you never gave up on anything. Everyday you fought through chemotherapy, hospital stays, nasty medicine, shots, and the worst but greatest fear, knowing you were going to Heaven. You were one tough little boy. You have taught me to live my life to the fullest and appreciate everything one has because it could be gone in a second. Life is too short to be unhappy, too short to get mad over little things, and way too short to give up.

I love you so much and I miss you more than anyone realizes. No one understands how much it hurts everyday to be without you, how difficult it can be to lose someone. I know life would be so different if you were here, but you have taught me how to be strong and independent. I love you so much Ryan and I can't wait to see you one day.

In the meantime, I will see you in my thoughts and dreams.

Your sister forever,  
Tralee

*Ryan would have turned 19  
on September 11 this year.*

***"Raising Hope Ryan's Way"***

# PEOPLE WHO GIVE BACK: YOU

Thank you for taking the time to become better acquainted with The Ryan McElroy Children's Cancer Foundation. It is only through increasing local awareness and funding that this organization can continue to improve the quality of life, and often deaths, of children battling devastating diseases in our community. The McElroy family knows all too well the enormous emotional and financial challenges that arise when a child is seriously, often fatally, ill.

Ryan courageously battled bone cancer for 3 years until his journey led him beyond a life here on earth not long before his 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. His bravery and undying faith inspired family and close friends to create a foundation that honors and carries on his living spirit, providing support and HOPE to the families of other children in crisis. The combined efforts of this amazing board of directors and numerous volunteers, led by Ryan's dad, Chip McElroy, and Sheriff "Butch" Anderson, is impressive to say the least.

The vast array of "customized" assistance that Ryan's Foundation provides for local children suffering from illnesses is unheard of, according to many of the pediatric nurses at Vassar Hospital.

Ryan's brilliance shines on through this dedicated group as they set new standards of excellence for children's charities, daily. This non-profit is one of few run by unpaid, volunteer efforts that have raised and distributed over 1 million dollars to those who need it most. The following are only a few of the many "GIFTS of HOPE" spread throughout the Hudson Valley by Ryan's Foundation:

- \$10,000 in medical expenses for one child suffering from brain cancer
- \$1,670 for a family to stay in the Ronald McDonald Family Room when their seriously ill child was hospitalized miles from home
- \$4,600 for a wheelchair giving a young child the gift of expanded mobility
- THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS spent granting wishes for local children to live out their dreams through the MAKE-A-WISH Foundation
- \$15,000 spent on chemotherapy and experimental cancer treatments

- \$49,000 in medical bills for a family overwhelmed with the expenses of an ill child
- \$16,841 to cover the costs of the much needed medial treatment of a child without health insurance, suffering from congenital heart disease
- OVER \$5,000 for funeral arrangements of a dying child, (one of many)
- After what they thought had been a long year of successful treatments, \$7500 was given to a family overwhelmed with the financial challenges of a daughter battling leukemia - to pay for her funeral.
- When bone cancer caused a young girl to have 1/2 of her leg amputated a few years back, Ryan's Foundation made it possible for her to receive the \$25,000 prosthetic that had her dancing in no time! In 2008, when the rest of her leg needed to be removed, we were able to provide \$4,044 of that surgery not covered by other means.

The Ryan McElroy Children's Cancer Foundation - Raising Hope for children and their families faced with the harsh reality on the uncertain paths they all must journey along when battling a life threatening illness; one that in the end may cause their precious child to join hands with Ryan long before they are ready to leave the arms of those they love most in this life.

Throughout the years we have taken great pleasure combining our resources in many ways with other children's charities, making every attempt to improve the quality of life for seriously ill children. We take great pride and enjoy working closely with groups like Make-A-Wish, CCF, The Ronald McDonald Family Room, and FRAXA.

NONE of what this foundation does would be possible without the many amazing supporters who always rise to the occasion to turn out to our many fundraisers, or hold a fundraiser of their own (see Mid Hudson Medical Group story in Good News Corner), or help in whatever way they can.

**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chip McElroy

### Chairman

Adrian "Butch" Anderson

### Executive Director

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### NEWSLETTER

#### EDITOR:

Susan Havelka

\* \* \* \* \*

Reach for the Stars

By Dolly Busolt

Reach for the stars and you'll find me. It's a Field of Glory up here. There's meadows and children and angels. It's

unimaginable to each a new sphere. There's comfort and peace and laughter. You'll know what I mean someday. You'll meet the "Father of Glory" who orchestrated the way. He sets our feet on a path you'll see, Of which man does not understand. But when the path gets near the end, You'll see His glorious hand.

# BONE MARROW DONATIONS

Every year, thousands of people of all ages are diagnosed with blood cancers like leukemia or lymphoma, sickle cell anemia or other life-threatening diseases. Many of them will die unless they get a bone marrow or cord blood transplant from a matching donor. Seventy percent of people do not have a donor in their family and depend on Bone Marrow Registries to find a match to save their life.

Bone marrow is defined as the flexible tissue found in the interior of bones. In humans, red blood cells are produced in the heads of long bones, in a process known as hematopoiesis. On average, bone marrow constitutes 4% of the total body mass of humans; in an adult weighing 140 pounds, bone marrow accounts for approximately 5.7 pounds. The hematopoietic compartment of bone marrow produces approximately 500 billion blood cells per day, which use the bone marrow as a conduit to the body's systemic circulation. Bone marrow is also a key component of the lymphatic system, producing the lymphocytes that support the body's immune system.

Blood and bone marrow donation is a voluntary process. You agree to allow doctors to draw blood stem cells from your blood or bone marrow for transplantation. Blood stem cells are the cells that make all the body's blood cells. They form and mature in the bone marrow and are then released into the bloodstream. Although they're called "stem cells," these cells aren't the same as the embryonic stem cells studied in therapeutic cloning and other types of research.

In the past, surgery to draw marrow from the bone was the only way to collect blood stem cells. Today, it's more common to collect blood stem cells directly from the blood. This is called peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) donation. Blood stem cells can also be collected from umbilical cord blood at birth. However, only a small amount of blood can be retrieved from the umbilical cord, so this type of transplant is generally reserved for children and small adults.

You might be considering donating blood or bone marrow because someone in your family needs a stem cell transplant and doctors think you might be a match for that person. Or - perhaps you want to help someone else - maybe even someone you don't know - who's waiting for a stem cell transplant.

If you want to donate stem cells, you can talk to your doctor or contact the National Marrow Donor Program ([www.marrow.org](http://www.marrow.org)), a federally funded nonprofit organization that keeps a database of volunteers who are willing to donate. You'll have a test called human leukocyte antigen (HLA) typing. This test helps match up donors and recipients. A close match increases the chances that the transplant will be a success.

If you sign up with a donor registry, you may or may not be matched with someone who needs a blood stem cell transplant. However, if HLA typing shows that you are a match, you'll undergo additional tests to make sure you don't have any genetic or infectious diseases that can be passed to the transplant recipient. Your doctor will also ask about your health and your family history to make sure that donation will be safe for you. HLA testing usually costs under \$100. If you're identified as a match for someone who needs a transplant, the costs related to collecting stem cells for donation will be paid by that person or by his or her health insurance. Thank you for taking the first step toward saving the life of a child in need.

## Potential donors MUST:

- Be between the ages of 18 & 55
- Be in good general health
- Weigh more than 110 lbs. but not exceed a BMI 40
- Not be HIV positive or have been diagnosed with AIDS
- Not have had heart surgery or have heart disease
- Not have autoimmune disorders such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis or fibromyalgia
- Not have sleep apnea, breathing problems or severe asthma (daily inhalers are acceptable)
- Not have diabetes requiring insulin (or injectible medication)
- Not have hepatitis B or C
- Not have kidney or liver disease
- Not have had a stroke (including a TIA)
- Not have chronic or severe neck or back problems
- Not have had uncontrolled epilepsy and not have had any seizures in the past year
- Not have a history of blood clotting or a bleeding disorder
- Not have a personal history of cancer (melanoma, breast, bladder, and cervical cancer and cured localized skin cancer (basal cell or squamous cell are acceptable)

Other websites to check out:

- [www.mndp.org](http://www.mndp.org) or [www.dkmsamericas.org](http://www.dkmsamericas.org)





## RYAN'S HOUSE OF HOPE

Ryan's Foundation has created hope and wishful thinking to all families and children. Ryan is finally getting his House of Hope. A house for children to come and play, a house where miracles can come true, a house where lives can be changed. A house must be built upon a sturdy foundation. Without a sturdy foundation, the house will not stand tall; it will fall because of lack of support and it can't be trusted to protect people. Without a foundation, the house will have no trust, no loyalty, and no structure. Ryan's Foundation is where it is today because of the people supporting Ryan and all the children we have helped. Ryan's House of Hope will only stand tall and last forever if the foundation it was built upon continues to grow, get support, and continues to help families in need. "The goal isn't to live forever, the goal is to create something that will." Ryan's House of Hope is that something that will last forever. For generations to come, everyone will know Ryan, the foundation will continue to thrive, and the House of Hope will stand tall and proud, knowing it was built upon a loyal and structured foundation.

Ryan's House of Hope has been dreamed of for over ten years and it is becoming a reality. Construction started last year thanks to the generosity of many people who have donated their expertise, time, and love toward helping us reach for the stars. You've heard it takes a village to raise a child? Well, it takes a community to RAISE HOPE!

### FALL EVENTS 2012

**September 30 - Celtic Day in the Park @ Mills Mansion, Staatsburg, NY 11:00 am - 5:30 pm.** This is a fun day for the entire family, even the family dog! Come out and see Celtic pipe bands as they parade on the sweeping lawn at this fabulous estate along the Hudson River. Enjoy caber toss, traditional dancing, kids' activities, craft vendors, food, storytelling, and more. See us at the beverage tent. See our website for more information.

**October 25 - Beer, Wine, & Food Tasting Event @ The Grandview, Poughkeepsie, NY 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm.** 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. See our website for tickets or how to participate in this event.

## 2012 CALENDAR

September 30 Celtic Day in the Park  
@ Mills Mansion  
Staatsburg, New York  
11:00am - 5:00pm  
Celtic celebration on Hudson River  
Pipe bands, Celtic music and dance,  
workshops, sheepdog herding, clan tent  
displays, kids' tent with activities,  
vendors & food.  
Location & Contact Info:  
Old Post Rd Staatsburg, Hudson Valley,  
NY Phone: 845-889-8851

October 25 Beer, Wine & Food Tasting Event  
@ The Grandview  
Poughkeepsie, NY  
6:00pm - 9:00pm  
Entertainment, Auctions, Raffles,  
Vendors, and plenty of Food, Wine,  
Beer

Ryan's Foundation reminds  
you about our EFT feature  
on our webpage. Please  
consider signing up for  
recurring EFT donations so  
that we may continue our  
mission of never having to  
say NO to a child in need.

[www.ryansfoundation.org](http://www.ryansfoundation.org)



FROM THE EDITOR  
Ryan's Newsletter is  
published by The Ryan  
McElroy Children's  
Cancer Foundation, a  
non-profit 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.

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If you have a story you  
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please contact our  
newsletter editor:

[sghavelka@gmail.com](mailto:sghavelka@gmail.com)



## GOOD NEWS CORNER

THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY, WE WERE ABLE TO:

- Provide \$2,500 to a family in LaGrange to pay for medical expenses
- Provide \$3,700 to help a family pay for a funeral
- Provide \$1,000 to pay for rent
- Provide \$800 to pay a utility bill
- Mid Hudson Medical Group held a Friday Jeans Day Fundraiser and donated \$320
- Topical Biomedics gave 5% of their quarterly sales
- New Fairfield Physical Medicine donated through recurring EFT
- North East Physical Medicine donated through recurring EFT
- Danbury Physical Medicine donated through recurring EFT



Thank You to **ALL** who came to our Clay Shoot, 5K Walk, Annual Golf Outing, and Family Fun Day & Classic Car Show. Your participation and generous donations are the reasons we are able to help so many families. Please continue to support us in our upcoming events! Your support of our efforts is appreciated and without you, none of this would be possible.

Back to school sales have started and the college kids are heading back to school. Don't forget Christmas shopping starts NOW! Most retailers offer AWESOME coupons when you shop online. From searches for necessity items to travel deals, folks can donate to us around the clock at no added expense on their part. Often you can save with the coupons and, with gas prices being ridiculous, you don't have to leave home. Goodshop.com & Goodsearch.com & Marketamerica.com search engines give money back to Ryan's Foundation every time you search or shop online. All you have to do is sign in, shop at your favorite retailers and they send \$\$\$ to us. No cost to you at all.

Goodshop/Goodsearch: [RYANSFOUNDATION](http://RYANSFOUNDATION) or [Marketamerica.com/ryanmcelroyccf](http://Marketamerica.com/ryanmcelroyccf)

# I want to help donation form

Enclosed is my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone-day: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone-evening: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

My check is enclosed. (Make checks payable to: The Ryan Foundation.)

Charge my donation to:  Master Card  VISA  Discover

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL COMPLETED FORM WITH YOUR CHECK TO:**

**The Ryan McElroy Children's Cancer Foundation,  
198 Route 22 Atrium Building, Pawling, NY 12564**

**ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

**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.**

**Please help and embrace the tiny things in life. Thank you.**

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO MADE A DONATION AFTER READING THIS NEWSLETTER. YOUR  
GENEROSITY IS WHAT MAKES ALL OF THIS POSSIBLE! GOD BLESS YOU ALL!**