

# 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*

## **A Survivor's Story - Mickey Pallazzo**

March 12, 2007 was a day that we will never forget, a day when we thought our world had come to an end - the day we were told that our son, Mickey, had Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia at the age of 4.

During the week of March 5, 2007, Mickey became very ill. He was taken to his pediatric doctor's office a few times that week and was told he had a stomach virus. He was no better on Friday (3/9/07) and complained of a sore throat. Mickey was taken back to his doctor. At that time, he was transported by ambulance to Vassar Brother's Hospital. While at VBH, his throat started to close and he stopped breathing. They immediately intubated him and he was airlifted to Westchester Medical Center. He was admitted to the ICU Pediatric Department of the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital. His neck and glands were swollen and they had determined there were masses in both sides of his neck. They performed multiple tests and we were told they thought he had mono. On Monday, 3/12/07 we were informed it was not mono, it was Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). The doctors began treating the leukemia aggressively, while he was still in the induced coma. After two weeks, the masses in his throat diminished and they tried to remove the vent, but both of Mickey's lungs collapsed. He had to be intubated again and have chest tubes inserted due to the air that was in his chest cavity. After only having a 30% oxygen level and being resuscitated

for several hours, it was determined that he needed a certain blood pressure medication, which increased his oxygen levels. Mickey remained intubated for an additional 2 weeks while his lungs healed. Throughout this time, he also developed a very large blood clot in his left thigh. During the week of April 2<sup>nd</sup> they tried to remove the vent again and were successful this time.



Mickey & Koda

He continued to have very serious respiratory problems and was put on Bipap and C-pap respirators. Since being diagnosed with leukemia he has faced many challenges from learning to walk, talk, and eat again, to physical challenges due to his blood clot, and academic difficulties as a result of all the chemotherapy he endured. Mickey fought a long hard battle, but we are proud to say that he has been in remission since May 2010!

Since Mickey finished treatments, he has faced some additional struggles. Due to beginning chemotherapy at the age of 4, he has cognitive difficulties. He has trouble processing information, which includes mental tasks related to attention span, thinking, and short-term memory. This causes him to have difficulties in school. In addition, in 2011 after extensive testing, Mickey was diagnosed with ADD. This is also believed to be a result of the chemotherapy. Even with all of these hurdles, he is still positive as ever and has learned to overcome the obstacles he faces.

This past June we had another scare when Mickey became very sick and displayed all the symptoms he had when he was diagnosed with Leukemia. He had an ongoing fever that lasted for over a week and his blood counts were off. After many doctors appointments and numerous blood tests we found out that Mickey had Lyme disease. As horrible as Lyme disease is, we were relieved that it was not a reoccurrence of Leukemia. Although Mickey will experience the same illnesses of his peers, any time he gets ill it causes more concern.

Mickey enjoys playing baseball in the spring. He has been playing baseball with Hyde Park Little League for four years now. His favorite positions to play are 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base. He also enjoys playing football for the Hyde Park Eagles Pop Warner Team.

Continued on page 3

# PEOPLE WHO GIVE BACK: Our Supporters

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 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 ill.

Ryan McElroy 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 by providing support and HOPE to the families of 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 every day. This non-profit is one of few run by unpaid, volunteer efforts that have raised and distributed over one 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:

- THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS spent granting wishes for local children to live out their dreams through the MAKE-A-WISH Foundation

- THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS spent on chemotherapy, experimental cancer treatments, and other medicines and equipment
- THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS for funeral arrangements
- Between the months of May - July this year, we have given over \$25,000 to help families with everything from gas cards, grocery store cards, travel expenses, utility bills, to hospital stays and medical expenses.

The Ryan McElroy Children's Cancer Foundation is Raising Hope for children and their families faced with the harsh reality of 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 is able to do would be possible without the many amazing supporters who always rise to the occasion to turn out to our yearly 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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Principal Vice Chair

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Kirk Imperati  
Tralee McElroy  
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## TRUSTEES:

Gina Busolt  
Jeremy Busolt  
Art Hart  
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Jennifer Paden

## NEWSLETTER

### EDITOR:

Susan Havelka

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It is with great pleasure and pride that the McElroy Foundation welcomes Tralee McElroy to the Board of Directors. Tralee is in her senior year of college and has taken on the role of Board Member to help oversee the daily operation of the foundation that honors her brother, Ryan.

Tralee has grown up as part of the foundation and plans to continue in a leadership role long into the future.

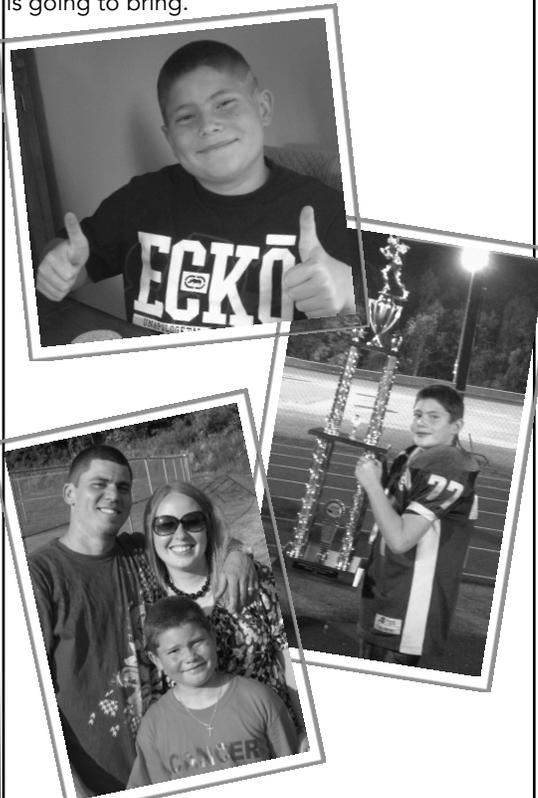
Raising Hope,  
Ryan's Way

Mickey Pallazzo - continued from page 1

Last year his Peewee football team was the Mid-Hudson Conference Champions which was a huge accomplishment for the team. Mickey's favorite NFL team is the Philadelphia Eagles. He loves watching the weekend games and making friendly bets with his Grandpa. Mickey also enjoys swimming, playing video games and exploring the woods with his dog Koda who was Mickey's present when he ended his chemotherapy treatments. They are inseparable friends! This year Mickey is going into middle school in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He is very excited for this new start and all of the fun things that middle school brings.

Through all the hard times we have been so grateful for everything that the Ryan McElroy Children's Cancer Foundation has done for us. Not only did they support us during the hard times, they continue to be a support to us. We consider everyone in the Ryan McElroy Children's Foundation to be part of our family. We try to give back as much as we can for everything that Chip, George, and everyone else has done for Mickey!

Little did we know back on March 12, 2007 that his diagnosis was not the end of the world, but the beginning of a life experience. As a family, we have grown and learned to appreciate all the small things. Our motto is to live each day to the fullest because you do not know what tomorrow is going to bring.



## A COMING OF AGE STORY:

I have had the unfortunate but life changing privilege to see why Ryan's Foundation was founded, to watch it grow to what it is now, and be on a Board that has an incredible amount of love and devotion for this foundation, what we do, and for Ryan. My perseverance to see this foundation grow to the next level and to continue our mission to never say no to a child is unending.

On July 29<sup>th</sup> 2013, an official board meeting took place and a decision was made to vote another member on the board. I am honored to have just become an official board member of Ryan's Foundation! I have watched the foundation grow tremendously throughout the years and I have seen the amazing work that the board members and volunteers do on a day-to-day basis. The events that take place are amazing to watch unfold knowing that everyone is doing this for Ryan and to help children and families that were once in Ryan and my parent's shoes. The members on Ryan's board are relentless in what they do. They put on beautiful events throughout the year, all in memory and honor of my little brother. It is a bittersweet feeling watching these events take place year after year. Ryan is no longer here with us on earth and more than anything, I wish he was. With Ryan's passing though, we have this foundation and we can help so many little boys and girls who have life threatening illnesses, and we can do everything in our power to save the life of that child.

I am honored to be on a board, surrounded by people who love what we do, love our mission, and love Ryan. There are only a few people on Ryan's board who were blessed to meet Ryan before God took him away. Everyone else fell in love with his big blue eyes, fell in love with Ryan's mission, and fell in love with helping other children. From the very beginning, my parents said, "I want everyone that did not know Ryan, to know him and for everyone that did know Ryan, to never forget him." My parents did a pretty good job of never losing sight of what they set out to do; to keep Ryan's memory and spirit alive, and to never let another child or family go through the financial, emotional, and physical stress of having a sick child.

I am blessed to be surrounded by amazing people and to be officially a board member of Ryan's Foundation. As Ryan's sister, I want and will take this foundation to another level and help more children and families than we ever imagined. I have goals, dreams, and aspirations, and one of those is for Ryan to never be forgotten.

*Tralee McElroy*



## IN LOVING MEMORY OF RYAN McELROY

The death of a child is an enormous tragedy. The despair and pain that follow a child's death is thought to exceed all other bereavement experiences. The death of a child is always untimely and encompasses the loss of the anticipated future together. Parents are simply not supposed to outlive their children and no parent is prepared for a child's death. The parent-child bond is one of the most intense relationships. Children are emotionally and biologically a part of their parents. Many parents who have lost a child feel that a part of them has died too. The length of a child's life does not determine the size of the loss. Parents are heavily involved in the daily lives of their children and death changes every aspect of family life leaving enormous emptiness.

When a child dies, parents not only lose a child, but a link to grandchildren and an irreplaceable source of emotional and practical support. Parents grieve the loss of possibilities and all the hopes and dreams they had for their child. They grieve the potential that will never be realized and the experiences they will never share. When a child dies, a

part of the future dies along with them. Parents report that they never really "get over" the death of a child, but rather learn to live with the loss.

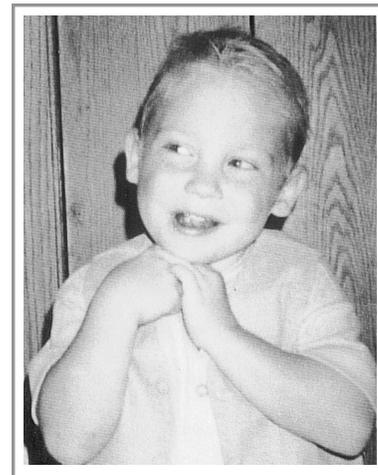
The death of a child can force parents to rethink their priorities and reexamine the meaning of life. It may seem impossible to newly grieving parents, but parents DO go on. Many parents create a legacy for their child and make their child's life, no matter how short, have meaning. A part of each child's legacy is that the changes he or she brings to a family will continue after the child's death.

It was Ryan's extraordinary bravery and determination that inspired the creation of the Foundation. It is a story of unconditional love, faith, and the power of not giving up despite the great pain and loss when Ryan journeyed on from this life. This is an inspiring example of ordinary people creating something extraordinary out of nothing more than heartfelt hope -- inspired by an amazing little boy with a courageous spirit and contagious smile. *It is Ryan's legacy.*

The Foundation's Board members and volunteers have diverse backgrounds, but come together with one single mission: to raise funds to support the children living in our communities who are afflicted by diseases and to try to improve the quality of life for them and their

families while they courageously battle on.

The Board and volunteers of Ryan's Foundation proudly support the McElroy Family and the wonderful things they have done for families in need. Chip and Judy, along with their daughter Tralee, are truly inspirational in how they have turned their grief into something so positive. "Raising Hope" is their mission and we will continue to work hard to help other young warriors battle on. Children show us new ways to love, new things to find joy in, and new ways look to at the world. The memories of joyful moments you spent with your child and the love you share will live on and always be a part of you.



Ryan would have been 20 years old on  
September 11 this year

### FALL EVENTS 2013

**September 28 - Angels of Gold** @ Thorndale Farm, Millbrook, NY. Features dinner, live and silent auctions, fashion show, art exhibition, and tastings from local area restaurants. **60 Volunteers Needed!** Contact [info@pulsecyclingandfitness.com](mailto:info@pulsecyclingandfitness.com) if you would like to help

**October 6 - Millbrook Duathlon & Kids 1 Mile Run** @ Pulse Cycling & Fitness, Millbrook NY 9:30 am - 1 Mile Run for kids ages 4-11. 10:00 am Duathlon with lunch to follow. Starts at Pulse Cycling & Fitness in Millbrook. 1 Mile Walk/Run - 12 Mile Bike - 3 Mile Walk/Run. Register at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) and search for 'RYAN'. Race day registration begins at 7:30 am and closes at 9:00 am. Age awards and string bags for first 100 pre-registrants. (Tickets \$60 in advance). **20 Volunteers Needed!** Contact [info@pulsecyclingandfitness.com](mailto:info@pulsecyclingandfitness.com) if you would like to help.

**October 10 - 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. (Tickets \$50 in advance).

### Sponsors & Vendors Needed!

Go to our website to purchase tickets or how to participate in these events.

# 2013 CALENDAR

September 28 **Angels of Gold**  
Thorndale Farm, Millbrook, NY

October 6 **Millbrook Duathlon & Kids 1-Mile Run**  
(In honor of Caleb Gaylord)  
@ Pulse Cycling & Fitness  
Millbrook, NY

October 10 **Beer, Wine & Food Tasting Event**  
@ The Grandview, Poughkeepsie, NY  
6:00pm - 9:00pm

**\*\*VENDORS & SPONSORS NEEDED\*\***

See preceding page for information on  
how you can help.

See our webpage for tickets and more info.

Ryan's Foundation reminds you about our EFT feature on our web page. 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)

## **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. 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)).

## FROM THE EDITOR

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 would like to receive your newsletter by email & help us cut costs on printing and postage, please let us know.

If you have a story you want us to know about, please contact our newsletter editor:

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



## GOOD NEWS CORNER

- Mid Hudson Medical Group held another "Friday Jeans Day" Fundraiser and donated \$285
- 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
- Ryan's Foundation provided financial support for a single mom who is fighting breast cancer while learning her fifteen year old daughter has been diagnosed with cancer as well. This family is in our prayers!
- Ryan's House of Hope has been sided and garage doors have been installed. The well has been drilled and the septic system and propane tanks should be installed this month. Thanks for your continued support.



Thank You to **ALL** who came to our Annual Gala of Hope, Clay Shoot, 5K Walk, and our Golf Outing. 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 headed 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 and 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!**