



DIX HILLS

Hills Grad's Death Inspires Philanthropy

Second annual Scarpati Tournament aims to raise \$20,000 for scholarships, camps

By Mike Koehler / mkoehler@longislandernews.com

Matthew Scarpati was killed by an allegedly drunk motorcyclist nearly two years ago but one of his best friends says it feels like time stood still. "It still is as difficult today as it was two years ago," Danny Silver said. But during the time since the 19-year-old Dix Hills resident's death, Silver and Scarpati's family have found ways to honor the soccer aficionado. That includes organizing the Second Annual Matthew Logan Scarpati Memorial Soccer Tournament for June 11.

"Having an event where you can bring everyone together doing something he loved to do is important for his friends and family... Nobody's sad for that day and they're playing the game he loved to play and that's important for everyone," Silver said.

Scarpati, then a student at the University of Buffalo, was killed in July 2009 after an allegedly drunk motorcyclist collided with him along the Wantagh State Parkway. He had stopped to replace a flat tire on his bicycle when the accident occurred; he moved off the bike path so others could go by.

A bicycle enthusiast, Scarpati had only recently discovered the bike path. His routes often brought him close to speeding cars, so pedaling next to the parkway was not a concern for him, friends said.

Silver and Scarpati's family put together the inaugural benefit last summer. They attracted 150 people on 16 teams, deciding to cap enrollment instead of adding a second day. Twenty-nine 50-minute games were played at Half Hollow Hills High School East, Scarpati's alma mater, with a squad of former Thunderbird soccer players winning.

Registration was set at \$200 a team, and combined with raffle and T-shirt sales, the event raised just under \$12,000. All of the funds went to the Miles for Matt Foundation, which allocated the funds later that summer. A total of \$25,000 has been pledged to Sunrise Day Camp – a summer camp in Wheatley Heights for children with cancer – over the next few years in exchange for having a field named in Scarpati's honor. Other funds were allocated to MADD, Huntington Boys Club and scholarships from University of Buffalo and Half Hollow Hills.

The reception for this year's event surprised Silver, who capped registration at 220 players on 24 teams playing nearly 40 games. The event will still be held on one day at Hills East, he confirmed, while registration now costs \$250.

When it's all said and done, Silver said he expects to raise between \$16,000 and \$20,000. He admitted he was struck with fears his friend's story would be too old to attract a lot of attention, something he was happy to be wrong about.

"It didn't really end up being an issue. People recognize the cause and the story; they're eager to donate," Silver said.

He added that the Long Island soccer community tends to gravitate towards existing, regular events-something he hopes the memorial tournament can become over the years.

"I would really like this tournament to become a fixture in the soccer community," he said.

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Last year's winning team of Half Hollow Hills East alumni honored their teammate, Matthew Scarpati, on their shirts in the soccer tournament held in his memory.



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