

RYDER'S FUND

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Summer 2019 Newsletter | rydersfund.org | Ryder's Fund is Administered by the YMCA of Northern Colorado Endowment Committee

ORIGIN OF RYDER'S FUND

On January 17, 2016, our 20 year old son, Ryder, went missing. It was a parent's worst nightmare. In the following days, weeks and months, hundreds of people searched thousands of acres in the vast and rugged Walker Ranch area west of Boulder. Mercifully, after 1 ½ years, on July 29, 2017, Ryder's remains were found and we were able to bring him home, say goodbye and have some sense of closure. In this tragic shared experience, we witnessed the goodness in people and greatness in our community. Ryder was a warm, caring and empathetic person so it seemed that Ryder's Fund was a fitting way to honor those qualities and begin to give back for a greater purpose. It is from this place that Ryder's Fund was created to enhance the healthy development of young people in our community and assist them in meeting life's challenges. —Rick and Cindy Johnson



There are several elements of our vision for Ryder's Fund, including schools/education, law enforcement, specialized service providers, faith community and youth programs.

SPONSORSHIP OF YOUNG MINDS MATTER LECTURE SERIES

Ryder's Fund continued its sponsorship of a four-part community lecture series titled "Young Minds Matter." In partnership with the YMCA of Northern Colorado, Mental Health Partners, Hope Coalition and Parent Engagement Network, the lecture series focused on teens and emerging adults' mental health, and how parents, educators, peers and community members can provide support and guidance in the midst of a changing and complicated modern world. Mental Health Partners hosted the final two lectures in January, 2019 which addressed medical treatment alternatives for mental health conditions and how stress, strain and technology affect today's youth. The final lecture was given by Chris Bader, Ph.D., and former Director of Psychological Health & Performance at the University of Colorado Athletic Department. Ryder's Fund has worked with Chris Bader in the past with the Bolder Buffs Peer Advocacy Program and wishes him well as he moves to the University of Arkansas.



ONGOING PARTNERSHIP WITH BOLDER BUFFALOES PEER ADVOCACY PROGRAM TO ENHANCE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Ryder's Fund continues its partnership with the Bolder Buffaloes Peer Advocacy Group (a/k/a Bolder Buffs) through the University of Colorado Athletic Department. The Bolder Buffs program mission is to promote mental health and wellness through education, programming and support for their fellow student-athletes and in the larger community. The partnership has resulted in the production of a video series — Mental Health Minutes — so far covering topics such as anxiety, depression and eating disorders, and in the fall topics will include coping with injury, community/belonging, stress and suicide. In addition, the CU vs. Nebraska football game on September 7, 2019 will be dedicated to mental health awareness. Ryder's Fund is proud to partner with the University of Colorado on these initiatives.



WHAT MILO LEFT A Loyola Marymount University Film Project Spreading Awareness About Mental Health Issues in Young People

Ryder's Fund contributed to a student film project entitled "What Milo Left" directed by Evers Pund at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. The film's mission is to spread awareness about mental health issues in young adulthood. The storyline involves a young genius, Milo, who encounters tragedy early in life and enters depression and solitude. Milo loses sight of who he dreamed to be as a child. In his early adulthood, he has an experience which gives him the chance to start again, reconnect with his past and find meaning in his life. The film is a story about regaining dreams that seemed gone forever. It is a story of hope and rebirth. The film is also the Director's response to his personal experiences with childhood friends losing their lives. The goal is to address life-threatening mental health problems in young adulthood while also providing a message of hope and resilience. The Director, Evers Pund, dedicated this thesis film to Ryder, his childhood friend and mentor. The film is currently in post-production and will soon be presented to film festivals across the United States and internationally.



A special thank you to Mail Solutions & Printing in Erie, who once again donated the printing of the Ryder's Fund Newsletter. Please repay this kindness by considering this business for your next mailing or printing project. You can find Mail Solutions at 649 State Highway 52, Erie, CO 80516. 303-828-5222 • wendy@mailsolutionsinc.com • mailsolutionsinc.com



SOPHIE'S JOURNEY

Sophie was born in August 2018, the youngest of three girls. The day she was born the nurse remarked "she is a fighter" — no more prophetic words have ever been spoken. A month later, Sophie was diagnosed with hydrocephalus, a condition in which fluid builds up in the brain. By the time she was diagnosed, emergency surgery was necessary to relieve the pressure building in her brain. She experienced large-scale hemorrhaging and blood loss. Follow-up care was provided by the PICU at Children's Hospital. Due to the bleeding, her brain swelled and caused her to go into a state of almost constant seizures which doctors were able to stabilize. Two weeks later, however, Sophie would have to undergo a second surgery. The second surgery was a success, relieving fluid buildup and allowing for Sophie's brain to begin the long process of healing. Two months passed and she was laughing, smiling and beginning to recognize her sisters. Then at 5 months old, Sophie was diagnosed with a severe epileptic seizure condition known as infantile spasms, a rare and devastating condition. Over the next several months, she was placed on multiple heavy drug treatments in an attempt to stop the infantile spasms. After 3 weeks, miraculously, the spasms stopped! Now Sophie is healing, smiling and adoring her older sisters. She has been diagnosed as epileptic and has permanent brain damage on the left side of her brain. She undergoes multiple forms of therapy, including "neuromovement therapy" designed specifically for children with brain damage. Ryder's Fund was used to help with the costs of this specialized type of therapy. Sophie's family stated "[t]he funds you have given our family are an incredible blessing and a direct response to prayer... Our doctors have reiterated to us over and over again, that children who participate in therapy have a significantly better outlook than those who don't. Thank you for making it possible to pursue the needed therapy for Sophie without a concern for how our family would afford it. Your impact will be felt for the rest of Sophie's life and beyond. We are deeply thankful."



HELPING WITH RECOVERY FROM SUICIDE ATTEMPT AND THERAPEUTIC REHABILITATION

When the call for assistance went out, Ryder's Fund responded with help for a young person with connections to the YMCA who had attended YMCA day camps and Camp Santa Maria. On Halloween night, 2018, this young man made a serious attempt at suicide by grabbing a box cutter and harming his legs, arms, stomach and neck. He was transported by ambulance to the hospital and then moved to Centennial Peaks Hospital for acute care. The family consulted doctors and an educational consultant. Several weeks later, the young man began intense outpatient therapy at the Redpoint Center in Longmont. It was determined that he had extremely high levels of anxiety and depression and the doctors worried about him making a second suicide attempt. After much discussion and research, the family decided to send the young man to Open Sky Wilderness Therapy out of Durango, Colorado. Ryder's Fund was proud to contribute to the costs of the wilderness therapy program. The young man is currently receiving after care at a residential treatment center with a primary focus on therapy and secondarily to complete his high school course work. Of course, the costs of medical bills, the wilderness program and residential treatment center are staggering and the family was grateful for the assistance provided by Ryder's Fund.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Ryder's Fund seeks to continue to enhance the healthy development of young people in our community and assist them in meeting and overcoming life's challenges. Make a charitable contribution at RydersFund.org or send a check (Payable to YMCA of Northern Colorado – Ryder's Fund) to:

YMCA of Northern Colorado
Ryder's Fund
2800 Dagny Way, Lafayette, CO 80026

Ryder's Fund is administered by the YMCA of Northern Colorado Endowment Committee



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Total Contributions \$322,073.67*
Total Gifts/Grants..... \$58,928.21
0% spent on Administrative Costs.

*includes \$20,635 contributed prior to establishment of YMCA endowment account



Mike and Mimi Repucci at the Della Cava Family Medical Pavilion donor wall. Ryder's Fund contributed to the Anchor Point Mental Health Endowment which provides stabilization services in and after crisis situations.