



Mission Statement

The Amanda McPherson Foundation was founded in memory of a little girl cherished by so many. Donations are gratefully accepted and can be directed in several areas.

On a national level, the donations are directed towards research in the fields of Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome, a genetic birth defect, and Viral Myocarditis, sudden cardiac death. Further research will lead to better treatment and prevention of these conditions. Eventually, hopefully decreasing the number of families who experience the struggles and loss associated with either.

On a local level, the donations are directed towards the development and maintenances of an appropriate girls softball field for the Simi Valley Girl's Softball Organization. In creating a safe and positive environment for the girls to play, we hope that for the years to come families will enjoy the lessons of teamwork, spirit, and friendship. We hope they gain a sense of accomplishment like Amanda and our family learned and loved so very much.



Contact Us

The Amanda McPherson Foundation
3713 Alamo Street
2nd Floor
Simi Valley, CA 93063
Phone: 800.300.6188

Email: info@theamandamcphersonfoundation.com



Winter 2005



The Amanda McPherson Foundation Newsletter

Volume 2

Our "Highly Anticipated and Slightly Overdue" Second Newsletter

Hello again and thank you for your continuing interest in our foundation and newsletter. Our original goal was to release a newsletter every quarter. As over 6th months have passed since that last one, this may be our only goal that is not on target! But since we have been able to accomplish some more important goals in fundraising and helping others, we are going to give ourselves a break. We will continue to report on the foundation's progress and accomplishments along with related stories. The feedback we received from the first newsletter was incredible and we were so pleased. We love to hear from you regarding the newsletter's content and other information you would like to see included. Thank you again for all of your support.

Updating Our Mission Statement and Goals

The goals of the foundation remain the same as well as our unwritten goal: "To Do Good Things in Amanda's Name". That goal continues to drive those already involved in helping the foundation and is reaching new people as well. The foundation continues to raise funds for the following causes:

- 1) Research and education in the field of Viral Myocarditis
- 2) Support of the Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome Educational Foundation
- 3) Development and construction of an appropriate softball field for Simi Valley Girls Softball

As our goal of the softball field comes to fruition, we are in the process of changing our mission statement to include some new goals. These new goals will include:

- 4) Providing support and resources for children with special needs attending public schools in Ventura County, California
- 5) Supporting youth athletic programs in Ventura County, California
- 6) Supporting families suffering from a similar loss

This newsletter contains information regarding our new educational goal and outlines ways that you can support this important cause. Please look for the updated mission statement on our web site.

Fundraising Update

The foundation has been overwhelmed with the success of our fundraising efforts. In the June 2004 newsletter, we shared the successes of direct donations, the golf tournament and a 50/50 drawing. At that time, we had raised slightly over \$150,000.00. Since that time, we held our First Annual Amanda Family Walk and Carnival and a Texas Hold 'Em Tournament. We also continued to accept direct donations including on-line donations via our web site. Additionally, we have partnered with Teamwork Fundraising through which the foundation receives donations from businesses using their credit card processing service. We are receiving monthly donations thanks to businesses currently using the program. These latest events and on-going donations have allowed us to raise an additional \$60,000!

These fundraisers would not have been possible or successful without the incredible support of our friends, families, local community, local businesses, and all the wonderful, generous people who have supported this foundation. We wish we could list everyone's names to express our deep gratitude.



2nd Annual Upcoming Fundraising Events

Golf Tournament

Our fundraising efforts will continue this year with our Second Annual "Make A Difference" Golf Tournament, scheduled for April 4th, 2005 at the Wood Ranch Golf Club. We will raise money through participant fees, hole sponsors (something new!), dinners and both a silent and live auction. If you are on the mailing or email list, you should have already received a registration form which can be used for golf, dinner, sponsorship or any combination of these depending on your interest. Registration forms are also available on our web site (click on "Events") and at our office in Simi Valley or you can request one by phone. Please keep in mind that this tournament sold out last year prior to the registration forms being printed. Registrations will be accepted on first come, first served basis. Many golfers are already registered, so get those forms in!

Family Walk and Carnival

We will also hold our Second Annual Amanda Walk, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 10, 2005 at a location yet to be determined. It is a special day to spend with your family and friends in addition to supporting a wonderful cause (read about the First Annual Amanda Walk in this newsletter). This year, the foundation will hold a contest for the picture that will appear on the shirts for the walk. As you may know, Amanda's last painting appeared on the shirts last year. Please look for all the details on our web site under "Events" and in future newsletters.

On-Going Fundraising Events

Direct Donations

We will continue to raise money by accepting donations by mail and now on-line through our web site. Both one time donations and monthly donations are graciously accepted and appreciated. Simply visit our web site and from any page click on "Make a Donation". Thank you for your generous support.

Matching Funds

Many employers offer a matching funds program when employees donate to non-profit organizations like The Amanda McPherson Foundation. It is usually a simple process requiring a completed form be submitted to your employer. The foundation will be happy to complete any necessary paper work to secure these additional funds. We are in the process of collecting forms from various companies and will have them available on our web site. Please contact your employer to find out if your donation is eligible for a matching funds contribution. Many companies require both the tax ID number and the mission statement of the non-profit organization. You will find both of these on our web site by selecting "Matching Funds" from any page. This is such a painless way to collect funds that can be used to do good things in Amanda's name.

Credit Card Processing

As mentioned earlier, we have partnered with Teamwork Fundraising to raise additional funds without the traditional fundraising event. This company allows retailers to donate a percentage of their sales to the non-profit organization of their choice by using their credit card machine. The retailer not only saves on traditional credit card processing fees, but they are giving back by donating to a non-profit organization. Our foundation uses the credit card processing service as do several retailers in our community. The foundation receives a monthly donation based on the credit card processing for each of the retailers that has designated the Amanda McPherson Foundation as their charitable organization. We are grateful to those retailers who have chosen to support the foundation in this manner. If you know a retailer that might be interested in this program, they may contact Teamwork Fundraising by visiting their web site at www.teamworkfundraing.net. They would be happy to answer any questions and can help you get started on an easy way to support a cause that is important to you. We hope you keep our foundation in mind!



New Upcoming Fundraising Events

Junior Golf Tournament

The foundation is excited to announce two new fundraisers this year. We will be holding our first Junior Golf Tournament for ages 8 – 18 on Monday, March 28, 2005 at Wood Ranch Golf Club. This way, our younger players who cannot play in our regular tournament can also enjoy a charity golf event. Information is available on our web site and applications will be distributed to area high schools and golf courses. The foundation strongly believes that the next generation can learn to be even more charitable than ours. By participating in the golf tournament, they can help others while doing something they enjoy. We encourage parents to join us and support the children as they support a good cause. Volunteers are needed as well. Please visit our web site and click on "Events" or contact Tyler or Aaron Ostrovsky at 805/404-6893 or Charlene Jaeger at charjaeger@sbcglobal.net for additional information.

Logo Merchandise

Our second new fundraiser is the sale of merchandise such as hats, visors, shirts and jackets that proudly display The Amanda McPherson Foundation logo. These items will be available for purchase on our web site and will allow the wearer to show their support and possibly share Amanda's story. This merchandise is on order and will be available for purchase in the near future. Please check our web site for further details.

We are so thankful to have had such success in our efforts to raise monies to do good things in Amanda's name. We look forward to continuing that success through our 2nd annual events, our on-going events and these new events which will allow us to do more good things in Amanda's name.

Previous Donation Follow Up

Medical Donations

As stated in our first newsletter, our donations have been made to two worthy causes. Our first donation was to the Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital for research in the field of Viral Myocarditis. We were pleased to discover that another highly regarded foundation, the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation, also supports Dr. Jeffrey Towbin and his research. A family that suffered a loss similar to ours started this foundation. The founder, Lisa Yue, was recently honored by Good Housekeeping as one of five "Heros for Health". We are confident that our support will lead to real answers in the study of Viral Myocarditis and help families everywhere. We are grateful that Amanda's Foundation has been added to the Benefactors section of their web site. You can access the site by visiting www.bcm.edu/departments/pediatrics.htm and clicking on the Department of Pediatrics web site. Once on that site, choose "Sections & Centers", then "Cardiology", then "About Us" and finally "Benefactors". For more information on Dr. Jeffrey Towbin and his research, please visit the previously mentioned web site and instead of "Benefactors", choose "Faculty". To find out more about the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation, please visit their web site at www.childrenscardiomyopathy.org.

Our second donation was made to the Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome Educational Foundation (VCFSEF). The board of that foundation has set up a memorial fund in Amanda's name. Amanda's story was detailed in the January 2005 edition of the Educational Foundation's newsletter. You can access the newsletter by visiting their web site at www.vcfsef.org and clicking on "January 2005 Newsletter". The VCFSEF board has determined that the funds will be used to create an informational brochure regarding the syndrome which will be distributed to pediatrician's and geneticist's offices across the United States. The foundation hopes that, armed with this information, more children will be diagnosed and receive intervention services earlier to allow the best chance for success. Our family is convinced that Amanda's success in school and other activities was possible due to the early intervention she received! Our foundation is anxious to help this wonderful organization that helped our family so very much. For more information regarding the syndrome and the educational foundation, please visit their web site at www.vcfsef.org.

Both of these donations allow the foundation to help other special children in Amanda's name.



Our First Annual Amanda Walk and Carnival

After the success of the golf tournament, the foundation wanted to give the children in our community the opportunity to support the foundation. It is an important life lesson for children to learn to help others. Family was very important to Amanda. Her favorite thing to do was to do something with her family. With this in mind, the foundation came up with the idea of a family walk and carnival. Unlike the golf tournament, the ultimate goal was to raise awareness and give the children, Amanda's friends, a way to show their support and love. Although we placed no monetary goal on this event, it was a success by every measure. It was a fun day for every member of the family (including a few family dogs!) and allowed the children to become involved and help the foundation. As redundant as it may sound, it was a good thing we were able to do in Amanda's name.

In July, sponsor sheets were mailed out to everyone on the foundation's mailing list and distributed through family, friends and local businesses. Many families (including several who were going to be out of town on the day of the walk) collected sponsor money prior to the walk and dropped it off at the office. The prizes for collecting sponsor money included key chains, visors and t-shirts all displaying Amanda's logo. The day before the event we were not sure if 50 people or 350 people would attend. We were once again pleasantly surprised by the turn out!

The Walk and Carnival was held Saturday, September 4th at the Farmers Insurance Building in Simi Valley. It was a beautiful sunny day with an early breeze that almost blew our carnival tents over (keeping our volunteers busy!), but kept everyone cool on the walk. As volunteers checked in the walkers, everyone got decked in their Amanda gear. The t-shirts proudly displayed Amanda's logo on the front and the last picture Amanda had drawn on the back (see more on her last picture in the next section). Before the walk, walkers enjoyed some nourishment and got warmed up with the help of the DJ, Randy, and a performance by Cheerforce. Phil McPherson, Amanda's dad, encouraged everyone to share an "Amanda-style" hug with those around them and to think about the importance of family as they enjoyed the morning together. Then depending on their stamina, walkers chose a 2 or 3.5 mile walk and were greeted at the halfway mark by Brownie Troop #94 serving orange slices and ice cold water. Our youngest walker was 2 months old, while our oldest walker refused to have her name or age printed. There were strollers and joggers, young kids and old kids. There were people from our school, our workplaces and our community. High school friends of the family traveled several hours to be at this event. There were even people who did not know Amanda or anything about the foundation, but wanted to join the fun.

After the walk, it was carnival time! Time to eat and have some fun. For the hungry walkers, In-and-Out Burgers were served up along with drinks and chips donated by Sav-on. For the snackers, there were snow cones and churros! Everyone enjoyed getting a caricature or a tattoo. Kids could have one of the clowns make them a balloon animal or pet a real



continued from pg. 4

animal like a snake or baby pig. While the little ones enjoyed the pony ride, the older kids got to soak someone in the dunk tank or get soaked in the water balloon contest. The performance by Dance Creations to A New Day by Celine Dion was beautiful and inspiring. There was something for everyone to do or you could just sit back and watch the fun. After a morning of family fun and food, it was time for everyone to hug goodbye and look forward to the next year's walk.

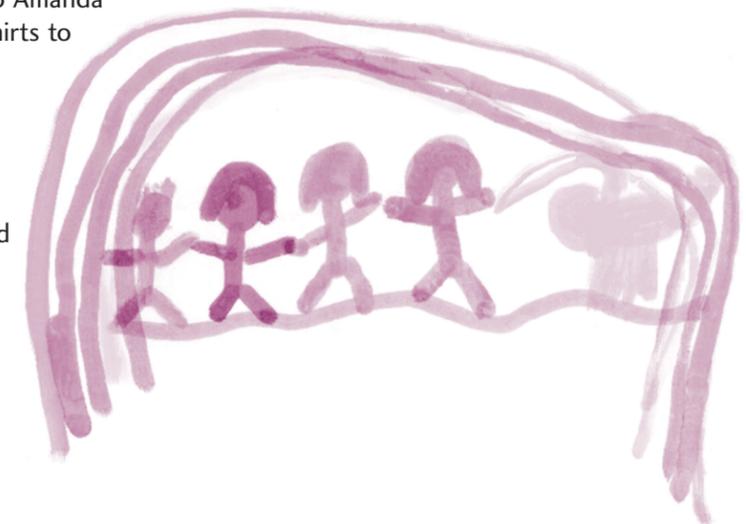
The final count is in and we had over 360 walkers attend our event. Although the goal of the walk was to raise awareness and sponsor a family day of fun, the event raised over \$32,000 for our cause! The attendance and fundraising total made the event an incredible success. The foundation is extremely grateful to all of the wonderful people who participated, sponsored participants, volunteered, sponsored the event or just thought of Amanda that day! We want to express our sincere thanks to our major sponsors – Farmers Insurance, Sav-On and Warner Pacific Insurance Services. A special thank you to New Directions Events Planning for all of their love and assistance. All of your support helps the foundation to reach it's goals.

Amanda's Last Picture

The t-shirt that was given out at the walk featured a beautiful picture on the back which Amanda painted on December 11, 2003, the day before she passed away. It was very typical of the pictures Amanda liked to paint. Whenever we would go to a restaurant and Amanda was given something to color on, she would find a blank area and draw a picture of her family. Each of us would be a stick figure with clothes - dresses for Mary and Krista and Amanda and pants and a shirt for Phil. We would always have a smile on our faces. Each of us would have eyes and hair. Phil's hair was always drawn as 4 or 5 pieces coming straight out of his head. We would often tell her that her daddy did not have that much hair, but she insisted that he should have some. No one in the family was in proportion to one another and we were usually drawn in all different colors. Amanda always included Daisy, her dog, that she loved so much and she would usually be the one holding Daisy's leash (although on a typical walk with Daisy, Amanda could never hold the leash as Daisy would have pulled her to the ground!)

On December 11, 2003, Amanda was home sick from school. She was feeling better and wanted to paint. So we got out the paints and we painted a few pictures together. Krista came home from school and wanted to paint also. Krista painted a rainbow and Amanda, being a typical little sister, wanted to paint just like her sister. So she painted a rainbow and her family. Little did we know how important this picture would become to our family. It symbolizes what meant the most to Amanda - her family. The painting was used on the walk t-shirts to remind everyone of the importance of family. The painting has been duplicated and framed with the logo of the foundation and the date it was painted. Currently, it is proudly hanging in the office of Wood Ranch Elementary School. The foundation presents this work of art to those who go above and beyond the call of duty to support the foundation and our family.

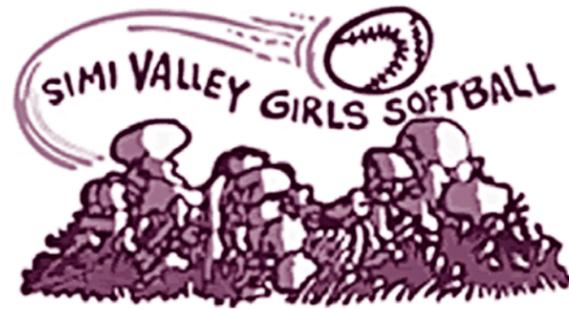
A limited number of these walk t-shirts are still available in size small and medium. Please contact the foundation at info@theamandamcphersonfoundation.com if you would like one.





Update on the Softball Fields for Simi Valley Girls Softball

We have wonderful news to share regarding this important goal of the foundation which was given the highest priority due to the great need, the injustice that needed to be righted, and the achievability. At this time, our goal of an appropriate softball facility for Simi Valley Girls Softball is in sight! To think, that we started this foundation in December 2003 and by January 2005, we are about to meet one of our goals is just incredible. When we think of all those girls playing on a state of the art field, we cannot help but get tears in our eyes. The game Amanda loved so much and the girls Amanda loved to be with will finally have a brand new place to play. As we watched the girls at try-outs, we could not help but wonder how different our life would be if Amanda were still here and trying out with the other girls. We do know that we would not have been as motivated and may not have gotten as far as we have on this project.



Over the past six months, the foundation has been hard at work meeting with representatives from the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. The members have been extremely supportive and helpful. Effective July 2004, a formal plan for a permanent state of the art facility was approved by the Board of Directors for the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. On March 9th, 2005, the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District and the foundation will appear before the Simi Valley City Council for final approval of the project. With the hope that construction will start no later than the third quarter of the year, we could be playing at this new field as early as next season.

The new softball facility will be located in the Big Sky master planned community currently under development in Simi Valley. This has been a collaborative effort between the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, the builder, Shea Homes, Simi Valley Girls Softball and the Amanda McPherson Foundation. Working together we have been able to design, plan and arrange funding for this exciting project. The Foundation has committed to a \$250,000 donation for this project. We are looking forward to making this donation and making our goal become a reality

The foundation would like to recognize the tremendous support of the board of Simi Valley Girls Softball and the many families involved with this organization. Without their support and love, we would have never been able to reach our goal. We continue to be moved by and grateful for the league's decisions to help keep Amanda's spirit alive. Not only has the league renamed the team spirit award, "The Amanda McPherson Award", they have also renamed their annual all-star softball tournament, The Amanda McPherson Memorial Tournament. It is such a special tribute to the little girl who helps us remember what is important in life - to always try your best, have fun and keep smiling! Anyone interested in learning more about the Simi Valley Girls Softball organization may visit their web site at www.eteamz.com/SVGS/.



Amanda's Bench and Amanda's Corner

Our children have attended Wood Ranch Elementary School since it opened. In fact, at the groundbreaking ceremony in 1997, the local paper printed a photo of Phil with Amanda sitting on his shoulders. When the school suffered the loss of a dear yard supervisor named Ron Bruney, two benches were placed near the entrance of the school with markers that read "In Loving Memory – Ron Bruney". On those markers were pictures of the fly swatters that he was famous for wielding to fight off the bees. It was a sweet tribute to a wonderful man and will always be there to help the children remember their friend, Mr. Bruney.

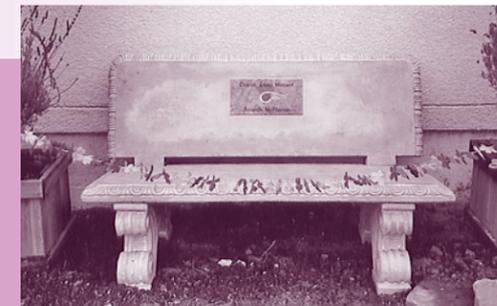
After Amanda passed away, the school again wanted to help the children remember a special friend by placing a bench near the front of the school. We were very pleased and touched by this gesture. We thought it was a wonderful way to have Amanda always at the school she loved so much. When we were asked what to place on the marker, we chose "Cherish Every Moment" and the logo for the foundation. We hoped that "Cherish Every Moment" would remind parents to be thankful for each day and Amanda's logo would remind the children now and in the future to always try their best and to share their hugs!

The entire school attended the bench dedication, as did many parents. The children listened as Mike Bishop, the husband of Amanda's kindergarten teacher Claudia Bishop, spoke about sharing Amanda's spirit and strength. He explained that the bench would always remind us of our friend whether we just passed by or sat for minute. Krista's classmates in Mrs. Pearsall's class sang a beautiful song during the dedication as well. Coincidentally, our dedication was the same day as the funeral for Ronald Reagan at the Ronald Reagan Library just up the street. After the wonderful ceremony, our family expressed their gratitude by presenting the framed picture of Amanda's last painting to the school.

When the school decided to have a bench for Amanda, a letter was sent home to parents requesting donations for the bench. The response was overwhelming and after the bench and some trees were in place, there were funds remaining. The school asked if they could use the funds to add some needed items to the resource room at the school and the idea for Amanda's Corner was born.

Amanda's Corner is a way for the foundation to assist schools with the educational needs of students with special needs. This cause is near and dear to our hearts as Amanda was a special needs child. Amanda received services from the school district since she was 3 years old. The Amanda's Corner at Wood Ranch Elementary will be the first of many in our school district. The foundation has already met with school district representatives and school principals to explain the program and the foundation hopes to have an Amanda's Corner, or something like it, in every school in this district. Each school would receive the items tailored to their particular needs to help their students needing additional support. It is another way to keep Amanda's spirit alive and to do good things in Amanda's name.

This program is just getting started and we hope by the next newsletter to have pictures and information on how the foundation has helped students in this school district.





Change For Change

We are always looking for ways to involve the children in our foundation. We began the family walk with the children in mind and now the Jr. Golf Tournament. Amanda's Corner is for the children as well, but we wanted a way that the children could help raise funds for their school and school district! That is when Phil came up with the idea of Change for Change. He had always been one of those people who did not like change weighing down his pockets. It probably interfered with his golf swing! When he came home, he would empty his change into his daughters' piggy banks or put it on his dresser. Every so often we would wrap the change or take it down to the machine. We were always surprised at how much money we had collected. We started discussing how we could incorporate this idea and involve the children.

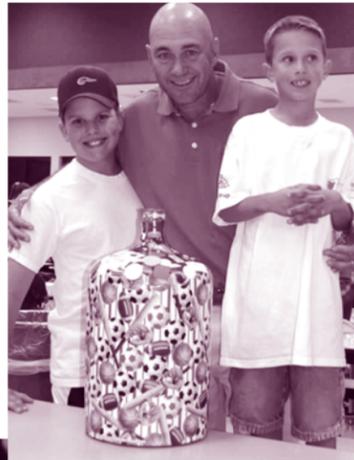
On a summer beach trip, we set a paper cup on the counter and had everyone throw in spare change. We finally knew what we could do! We would encourage the kids to create some kind of container in their home to collect spare change. After a few months, we would collect the change, again involving the children, and use that money to pay for the items needed for the schools. So that is exactly what we did!

Our newest fundraiser officially kicked off in the Wood Ranch Elementary School MPR on Thursday, November 18th, 2004. A flyer was sent home to all the children at the school inviting them to attend. The event was held in conjunction with Brownie Troop #94 (Amanda's troop) which supports this program as part of their community service work. Families came to the MPR with containers in hand, ready to decorate and have some fun! The containers ranged in size from a small cottage cheese container to a huge 5-gallon water container. The kids chose from several kinds of wrapping paper and construction paper to cover their containers. Then, they personalized their containers with stickers of every shape and size or used markers and crayons to make their own designs.

Once decorated, the finishing touch was to add a specially designed Change for Change sticker to the container. Each family registered their can or cans so that they could be notified about when and where the money will be collected. Those unable to attend the kick-off decorating party can still participate by decorating their own container to keep in their home. Then, log on to our web site and choose "Change for Change" from any page. You can request a Change for Change sticker and register your container. It is that simple!

And simplicity is the real idea behind the Change for Change program. The foundation wants to give the children in the community the opportunity to learn about making a difference and helping others by doing something as simple as saving spare change.

Our collection date is tentatively scheduled for June 16, 2005 which would have been the day before Amanda's 10th birthday. Once the exact date, time and location for collection is determined, we will notify everyone who has registered their containers and post the information on our web site! All funds raised through the Change for Change program will go directly to supporting the schools in our local school districts.



Our Newest Fundraising Event – Poker Tournament

Do you know the latest fad involves a river and being either the big blind or the small blind? Well, if these terms seem foreign, it is only because you have not heard of Texas Hold 'Em. It is the latest craze and you can watch it on television, play it on the Internet and even on GameBoy. Several people approached the foundation with the idea of holding a Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament, with the proceeds benefiting the foundation. We took them up on that idea and it was a great event!

The Texas Hold 'Em Tournament was held on January 8, 2005 at Dakota's Restaurant in Simi Valley. Although, the weather did not cooperate, the players did not let us down and we had almost a 100% turnout! Both men and women and boys and girls participated. As a charitable event, the winner could only claim bragging rights and some incredible electronic and computer equipment, thanks to our wonderful sponsor, The Selling Club. As much as everyone would enjoy the prizes, it appeared to this non-player that bragging rights meant a great deal!



The tournament began with a little socializing, a drink and some great food, but soon it was time to get down to business. The tables and dealers were ready to go and so were our players. Each player received a \$1000 in chips and had the opportunity to buy another \$1000 if their luck ran out too quickly. Our western-style hostesses kept everyone hydrated while they played and during breaks there was time for a quick bite. There were also prizes for our youngest and oldest players, players that traveled the farthest and the worst poker shirt! The first player out was awarded a home game of Texas Hold 'Em to practice up for next year. The blinds were raised at various time intervals to keep the play moving along and as players were eliminated, remaining players were moved to other tables. With only 2 tables remaining, it was getting serious! Each of these top 16 players received a prize ranging from an iPod to, the grand prize, a wide screen television valued at \$5,500.

With a large crowd cheering them on, the final two players battled it out until a hand of 2 pair gave Paul Burke the top spot. Paul not only earned the grand prize, but a bracelet and key chain proudly displaying the Amanda McPherson Foundation logo. The tournament was a success as a fun event and as a fundraiser as well raising another \$28,000 for our wonderful causes. Our special thanks to our enthusiastic volunteers who once again did it all! Thank you also to everyone who participated or sponsored a participant. If the popularity of Texas Hold Em' continues, we are sure to hold this event again next year!

Amanda Car Stickers

Have you ever been driving down the street or highway and noticed an Amanda sticker on another car? It is a wonderful feeling for our family and many others. Weekly, we receive calls from people asking if we know who drives a certain kind of car because it has a sticker on it. People tell us they speed up to see who is driving and even when they do not recognize the driver, they still wave – they have something in common. It is especially fun for the children. Why this reaction? We think seeing that sticker creates a

feeling of community that we have been so comforted by over this past year. We belong to a special group of people, who knew a special girl who touched our hearts. We are a special group who are now moving forward to help others in Amanda's name. We have a common goal – to always do our best, cherish every moment, to share our hugs and love. We are not an exclusive group though and welcome any new members! If you do not have an Amanda sticker for your car, please stop by the office to get one or contact the foundation to request one! Do you have a story about where you saw an Amanda sticker? Let us know! We would love to include it in an upcoming newsletter!





More New Fundraising Events

Just like the Texas Hold 'Em Tournament, the foundation is always interested in adding new fundraising events that will include new people with other interests. To date, we have held traditional fundraising events such as the golf tournament, the walk and now the poker tournament, so what kind of event should we add next? We are currently looking into having a Formal Dinner, Dance and Auction at the Ronald Reagan Library. We are also trying to coordinate a Tennis Clinic / Fashion Show / Luncheon at a local Country Club. If either of these events sounds like something you would enjoy attending or would like to help coordinate, please send your input or ideas to the foundation at info@theamandamcphersonfoundation.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

How Can You Help?

Thankfully, the foundation is asked this question quite frequently. We are always in need of volunteers and participants for each of our fundraising events. We are happy to accept both "front-line" and "behind the scenes" help. We have positions available for all ages! Helping a non-profit organization is a great way for your children to earn community service and to reap the benefits of helping others. As adults, we know that there is no better feeling. We can always use auction items for our annual golf tournament. Maybe you know someone who has "connections" to get something priceless! We always need sponsors for each of our events. Every sponsor receives special recognition at our events and there are many different advertising opportunities available to our sponsors.

If you have an idea for a fundraiser, please contact the foundation. We are always looking for new ideas and ways to include others. If you would like to put on event yourself, we would be pleased to assist you in whatever way possible.

How To Help a Grieving Family

Unfortunately, we have learned more about this topic the past year than we ever wanted to learn. We sincerely hope that no one will ever have to experience this kind of tragedy, but the reality is that it happens everyday. We would like to share what we have learned so, if necessary, you can help someone you love. We have read over 25 books on grieving, especially as it deals with the loss of a child. We have been in group therapy, family therapy and personal therapy. We have joined support groups and we have scoured the Internet for helpful web sites.

It has been our experience that the single most important thing you can do to help someone who is grieving is to be there. What does it mean to "be there"? It means coming to see them, even if they do not answer the door - one day they will. It means calling them, even if they do not answer the phone - one day they will. It means emailing them, even if you do not get an email back - one day you will. It means inviting them to a function, even if they do not respond - one day they will. It means saying hello when you see them, even if they can only nod - one day they will say hello. It means listening and caring and loving and not getting much in return

As the grieving, we understand that it is hard to see or listen to a person who is obviously suffering. We know it would be easier for everyone if we did not cry or look sad. We know that you want us to feel better, you want us to be our "old self," you want us to be happy. Trust us, we want that, too! But it is not that easy. Every single part of our life is now different. It is a surprising fact that no part of you life feels the same. We may never be our "old self," but we will do the best we can. We will incorporate this loss into our life. We will have a "new self" that is relatively close to our "old self," - but something will always be missing. Some days we will be able to deal with our tragedy better than others, but we need people to "be there" no matter what kind of day we are having.



continued from pg. 10

It is important to understand that grieving people do not know what kind of help they need. There is a great deal of shock involved in such a loss. We can honestly say that we remember only bits and pieces of the first several months. Shock is a natural reaction to such a tragedy and it makes even the daily things seems impossible. Some days you can accomplish many things while others you can only gather the strength to get dressed. It is best to just visit the grieving, and you will find something helpful to do! Take out the trash, visit with or take out the siblings, bring food, walk the dog, go to the grocery store, bring a book, make a pot of coffee - some of the simplest things are the most helpful.

Another important way to help the grieving is to record your special thoughts about the person who has been lost. It can be written in a card, letter, email or it can be a picture drawn by a child. The appearance is not nearly as important as the thought! Shock makes it difficult to remember things that were said. We treasure all of the special cards, letters, emails and pictures we have received and look at them often. Some describe feelings about Amanda or share another story of loss while others tell a favorite Amanda story. We know it is therapeutic for us to read and look at these special mementos and it may even be therapeutic for you or your children to write down their thoughts and feeling.

As time goes on, and the shock has worn off, it becomes important to talk about the person who has been lost. We are now able to hear your favorite story or listen to your thoughts. We also want to talk about our loved one. It helps to share the joy they brought to our life and the sorrow of losing that life. It helps to know that other people think about your loved one. If you do not feel comfortable talking, that is completely understandable. Everyone handles grief differently, in his or her own way. Try to find a way that you can communicate your sympathy or support - there are many ways to communicate without using words. In our situation, a simple hug goes a long way!

We feel very fortunate that we have been blessed with so many wonderful caring people in our life. We have been surrounded by people who are "there" for us and for that we are grateful. We are grateful for the foundation as it gives us a way to channel our grief into something positive. We are thankful for the support we have received from the most unexpected places. We wish that others could be as supported as we have been this past year. In our search for what to do in the face of this tragedy, we found the following organizations extremely helpful and encourage you to visit their web sites: www.compassionatefriends.org and www.missfoundation.org. We are happy to share any information we have - all you need to do is ask! Helping other helps us.

Communicating With You

One of the most important things we do is to communicate with you. We are so grateful for your support and want to always keep you up to date on the accomplishments of the foundation. We are continuing to work towards the goal of being able to communicate most of our information through our web site. If you registered your email address, we will notify you when an important update has been made to the web site and give you first notice regarding upcoming events. If your email address changes, please let us know. Be sure to visit our web site on a regular basis for updates and information!

We are aware that many people still do not use email or access it on a regular basis. We will continue to do mailings of the entry forms and newsletters as long as it is feasible. If you have any input regarding this subject, please contact the foundation.

Upcoming Events

1st Annual "Drive to the Future" Jr. Golf Tournament - March 28, 2005

2nd Annual "Make A Difference" Golf Tournament - April 4, 2005

Change For Change Collection Day - June 16, 2005 (tentative)

2nd Annual Amanda Walk - September 10, 2005 (tentative)