

Keeping Their Son's Legacy of Love Alive

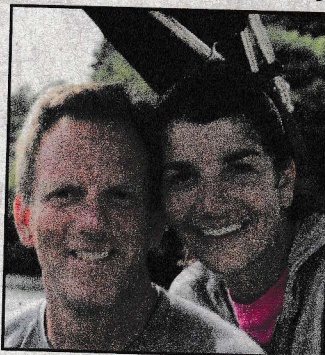
By Kaitlin Irwin

Karen and Andy Hicks are two parents in West Chester, PA who responded to their son's death admirably through love, grace and generosity by founding the Andrew L. Hicks, Jr. Foundation. Through social outreach programs, the Foundation helps change and shape the lives of children and teens in Chester and West Chester.

Karen and Andy have been supported by countless volunteers, friends and family in keeping Andrew's spirit alive. The Foundation is quite active and unique in its aim to help those living in the immediate area. Andrew was always appreciative of his hometown and fond of doing good in the City of Chester. The Foundation unites the two cities in love and support.

The organization has developed initiatives that support Andrew's goals of fighting social injustice and improving lives. Open events create opportunities for West Chester teens to help Chester children while establishing greater social awareness and development in the teens. They also give the Chester children the chance to experience new things and discover their own gifts and talents. The Foundation even helps with graduation and volunteer projects, and members of the surrounding community are encouraged to help out.

Through the Foundation's monthly events, children and teens help organize and spread a message of love. Karen and Andy organize much of the transportation, resources and finances involved, while encouraging the youths to take action and sharpen their leadership skills. Past events have included bowling, skating lessons and more. The kids end up sharing with their peers and increasing participation



in the foundation. It is a beautiful collaborative endeavor.

There is also a mentoring club, called "Warrior Guides", in which West Chester high schoolers are paired with Chester elementary students. Through social activities and team-building exercises, participants form new friendships and tear down economic and racial barriers. The club is a perfect way to expand Andrew's work with disadvantaged kids. The club provides new perspectives, opportunities and growth, and participates in summer camps. West Chester students volunteer as counselors for the Chester student campers.

The camps have been so successful that a second program, RISE, was formed. It continues Andrew's legacy of responsibility, integrity, service and excellence and is geared toward Chester middle-schoolers. In August, the camp will move to a bigger, more engaging location. Also in August is an open golf clinic, with a backpack supply drive following a couple of weeks later. Volunteers are always appreciated, and The Foundation's mailing address is 914 Kenmara Drive, West Chester, PA 19380. Karen is Executive Director, and can be reached at 484-390-0689. Andy, the Board President, is available at 484-390-0686. Donations to sponsor a child for camp can be made at www.AndrewLHicksJrFoundation.org.

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