



## OUR WHY

Christopher W. Roell was born on June 14, 1993, in Mentor, Ohio. From the moment he could walk, soccer became his passion. Starting at just 3 years old, Christopher spent countless hours on the field, often inspired by his older brother, Bernie. He once said, “I was born to play soccer.” His devotion to the sport was unwavering, and it paid off when he was accepted into a Division 1 soccer program at the University of California - Santa Barbara. Unlike many freshmen, Christopher earned the privilege of dressing for games and even saw playing time in his first season. His dream of becoming a professional soccer player was within reach, and his family was incredibly proud of how far he’d come.

But on February 17, 2012, a life-altering event changed Christopher’s path forever. While hiking the ‘Bluffs Beach Trail,’ Christopher tragically fell 40 feet, suffering severe injuries. Miraculously, he survived and was rushed to Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital, where he was placed in a medically induced coma. It was during this critical time that doctors discovered he had sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

After a week in the hospital, Christopher was slowly awakened from his coma and began an intense six-week recovery. True to his character, he approached his recovery with the same hard work and determination he had applied to soccer. The medical team was astounded by his progress. They were optimistic he’d make a full recovery, and for a time, our family shared in that hope. But we quickly learned that the road to recovery from TBI is far more complex than anyone anticipated.

Once home, Christopher was eager to return to a “normal” life. He spent the summer recovering and eventually enrolled in community college with plans to transfer back to a full-time university. He followed in his brother Bernie’s footsteps and began attending Bloomsburg University.

Over the next few years, however, the invisible wounds of his TBI started to take their toll. Every day, Christopher fought a silent battle within himself. As a family, we did everything we could to provide support—offering love, counseling, and medical care. But the hardest part was convincing Christopher that he needed help.

Tragically, on February 17, 2018, after six years of fighting the debilitating effects of his injury, we lost Christopher. He was only 24 years old. He left behind a mother, Jennifer Roell; a father, Bernard Roell Jr.; a brother, Bernard Roell III; a sister, Sarah Roell; and countless friends and loved ones. Christopher had spent his life chasing his dreams and lending a hand to others, always with the belief that “it takes mind over matter to achieve your dreams.”

In his memory, our family felt compelled to do something meaningful, something that would honor his spirit and his passion for helping others. In 2018, we founded the Chris Roell TBI Foundation, dedicated to raising awareness for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Traumatic Brain Injuries.

Christopher will always hold a special place in our hearts, and we invite others to share in his love for life and his drive to help those around him. Thank you to everyone who has supported our cause and to those who continue to honor his legacy by helping others who suffer from the effects of TBI.

Thank you,  
The Roell Family