

Remembering Matthew

Family prepares for 2nd annual hockey awards

BY THERESE POKORNEY
For the Juneau Empire

As a graduate student with stage 4 cancer, Matthew Campbell entered treatment in Seattle with an atypical request.

"Right away, he asked about volunteering with (the center)," Matthew's mother, Judy Campbell, recalled him saying. "That was one of his questions right away: 'Can I help?'"

In Seattle, Matthew continued taking courses at the University of Washington toward his master's degree in transportation engineering from Montana State University. Aside from academics, playing hockey, and listening to music, Matthew prioritized altruism.

In June of 2019, he was diagnosed with desmoplastic small round cell tumor sarcoma, a rare childhood cancer, and died a year later at the age of 25. Now, it's his mother's goal — as well as the Campbell family and a considerable portion of the Juneau community — to carry on Matthew's dream of spreading kindness.

Some things are bigger than winning

One way to do this was through the launch of the Matthew Campbell #LiveLikeMatthewC Award, which recognizes two local hockey players for their kindness and sportsmanship. Winners are gifted a hockey stick of their choice at the end of the season.

One award is given to a Juneau Douglas Ice Association club member and another is given to a Juneau-Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kalé hockey athlete.

"This isn't an award that goes to the highest-scoring player," Campbell said. "It's an award that is given to someone who is a great teammate, shows good sportsmanship, and most importantly, is kind."

Hockey season is just starting up in Juneau, and coaches will have until February to decide who lives like Matthew did. Last year, Ike Puustinen was awarded the 14U JDIA hockey award, and Colton Johns was awarded the JDHS award. This year, coaches will select a member from the 12U JDIA team.

Continuing the legacy

Matthew's younger brother, Brandon Campbell, learned to walk when he was 14-months-old. By the time he was 16-months-old, Matthew had him on the ice, teaching him how to skate, according to his mother.

Matthew started playing hockey when he was 5-years-old, the same year Treadwell Arena opened. Matthew belonged to the JDIA as a player, then a referee, and then a coach. He then played four years of varsity hockey on the JDHS team, and played adult



COURTESY PHOTO

Judy Campbell smiles with Matthew Campbell in this photo shared by the Campbell family. Matthew died in 2020, a year after being diagnosed with a rare cancer. His family continues his legacy with the annual Matthew Campbell #LiveLikeMatthewC Award.

recreational hockey while studying engineering at Montana State University.

After moving to Seattle for treatment, Matthew continued his passion for hockey and joined the Greater Seattle Hockey League and the Seattle Pride Hockey Association.

"For all the years I coached Matthew with JDHS, he loved the game, but more than anything, he loved being a part of the team," said Luke Adams, the head coach of the JDHS varsity hockey team. "He was a source of positive energy and kindness that was truly one of a kind."

Off the hockey rink, Matthew skied, played in the MSU Band, and traveled to Kenya with Engineers Without Borders to help the community of Khwisero install



COURTESY PHOTO

Colton Johns (center, with a blue hat) was awarded the JDHS hockey award named for Matthew Campbell. He stands with (from left to right) Brandon Campbell, Judy Campbell and Andrew Campbell.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Ike Puustinen (center, in hockey gear) was awarded the JDIA hockey club award named for Matthew Campbell. He is joined by (from left to right) Judy Campbell, her husband Andrew, coach Mike Bovitz, Brandon Campbell, his mom Shawna Puustinen and his dad Kevin Puustinen.

Matthew

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and learn to maintain composting latrines. From his desire to help others, he became a STEM mentor, and resurrected the MSU chapter of the International Transportation Engineers after it was inactive for years, and became the chapter

president.

Along with the #LiveLike-MatthewC hockey award, the Campbell family is setting up a Matthew Peter Campbell Memorial Scholarship, which will go to a JDHS student who shows the same characteristics as Matthew did.

By awarding the hockey players and setting up the academic scholarship, Campbell said she wants

her son to be remembered.

"He wanted to be here so badly," she said. "My mission is to make sure that Matthew is never forgotten. We need a lot more kindness in this world, and losing Matthew was a loss of a giant amount of kindness."

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