

Oatridge

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University of Pittsburgh, has taken a year off to stay at home and help out. "My life is doing laundry and working at a toy store," he said. "My mom keeps pushing me to go back to school. She has always put us kids ahead of her own needs."

Daughter Tara works full-time at General Hospital as a unit secretary and attends King's College. She wants to be a registered nurse, but can attend school only part-time.

"I'm trying to get some fundraisers together for Mom with the help of my friends," she said. "So far we have sold candles, and with the help of Shawn Cryan, the activities director at King's College, have had a benefit concert and bake sale. We also received some money from the Dr. Edwards Memorial Congregational Church."

Donna Oatridge is on the list for a lung transplant that could take place at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, but for the need for financial support. She has some insurance for the surgery itself, but it will not cover the uninsured expenses, which can be as great or greater than those associated with the actual transplant.

"The doctors told me that my name is coming up soon," said Oatridge. "I've been on the list for more than a year. I'll have to stay in the hospital for

two or three weeks and then stay close to the hospital for another three months. I will have checkups three days a week to make sure that my body is not rejecting the lung.

"Someone will have to be with me all the time. We don't know how we will pay for all of that."

Donna Oatridge readily laments the fact that she smoked cigarettes for 15 years. "My illness is directly connected to that bad decision," she said. "It's a drug. Once you start, it's very difficult to stop."

Oatridge is now looking to the future in the hope that the lung transplant will be successful and give her life back. "I want to go out and enjoy the things I used to do without carrying a portable oxygen tank. I want to be able to clean my own house. But most of all, I want to impress upon my kids and others not to smoke so they can lead healthy lives."

An account has been established for Oatridge through the National Transplant Assistance Fund, a nonprofit organization that has been assisting transplant patients for 20 years. Checks may be made payable to NTAFF in Oatridge's honor and mailed to: NTAFF, Suite 230, 3475 West Chester Pike, Newtown Square, PA 19073. For credit card donations, call NTAFF at 800-642-8399 or visit www.transplantfund.org.

Hasay: Eaton Twp. should reapply for flood grant

Eaton Township should re-submit its application for state funding to help eliminate the serious flooding problems on Jurista Hill, Rep. George Hasay (R-117) said recently.

"After conducting a study of the Anderson/Ayres properties, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) officials suggested the Eaton Township supervisors submit an application for a \$114,716 Round 5 Growing Greener grant. However, because of competition for the limited state dollars available, the department denied the application in favor of more serious immediate problems," Hasay said.

Bill McDonnell, DEP northeast regional director, said the program evaluates stream projects with respect to threat to life and/or property and the associated cost/benefit associated. He suggested that the township reapply for a Round 6 grant.

"There may be more funds available that would allow for approval in this round," Hasay said.

McDonnell said another option to remedy area flooding would be for the property owners to apply to DEP for a General Permit 3 for streambank stabilization and perform the necessary work on their own behalf.



FOR THE POST/FRED ADAMS

About 100 people turned out November 9 for a candlelight ceremony honoring Casey Zalenski.

Candles light remembrance of Casey Zalenski

By LAUREN ROTH
For The Post

DALLAS TWP. — Carrying his glowing candle to the front bleachers at the Dallas High School stadium, Tommey Zalenski offered its flame to start a chain of candlelight among those gathered to remember his brother, Casey.

The ceremony was held Sunday, November 9, just over a year after Casey Zalenski, 16 at the time, was shot and killed at his Franklin Township home by Larry Tooley, who was led to the home by the family's former babysitter, Tina Young. The two were looking for money to buy drugs.

Tommey was home with his brother the day Casey was shot.

Casey's father, William Zalenski, said his life has never been the same since his eldest was taken so violently last Nov. 8. "We suffer every day. A parent's grief is forever. Your mourning period is your lifetime. Every minute, every hour, you think about it."

He said he was touched that some of Casey's Dallas High School classmates wanted to remember Casey's life and called the ceremony "bittersweet."

Jacqueline Hardwick organized the event with fellow senior Ashleigh King and school principal Frank Galicki. "This ceremony is only a little part of Casey I can give back to his family," she said. Casey would have been a senior at the high school this year.

People still talk about Casey's death at school, Hardwick said. "But some are timid to talk about it. I think this is a way to be open about feelings." As she stood in front of the Zalenski family with a microphone, she called Casey "brave" and described watching him wrestle.

Casey's close friend Robin Major told about 100 people who gathered in the frostbitten weather that she would stay in school for Casey. "He was a really good kid. I was going down the wrong path and was gonna quit school." Last year,

after his death, she said he was her catalyst for going back to school and helped keep her motivated.

"Lately I've been thinking about Casey a lot," she said. "When I graduate, my diploma will be dedicated to Casey."

William Zalenski told the gathered friends about Casey's love of God and approach to life. "His brief life and tragic death should never be forgotten. Casey's joy in the simple things in life will never die."

William Zalenski encouraged the young people to honor his eldest son's memory by getting an education and serving in law enforcement, the military, the government, as a football coach or in any other helping profession. "Casey would have loved that."

Casey loved sports, from football to wrestling, because of the sportsmanship.

Casey's friend Jason Senese expressed his strong feelings through a poem he wrote.

"Life doesn't last forever, but friendships do," he read. "I close my eyes and think of

you," he continued. "At night I pray and just speak to you."

After the ceremony, Tommey led the assembled group, candles producing a pale yellow glow in the darkness, to the stadium archway, where people blew out the flames, and some embraced.



FOR THE POST/FRED ADAMS

Robin Major, a friend of Casey Zalenski, took part in the memorial service at Dallas High School.



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