

Field of Dreams

Chris Attieh Foundation honors
a legacy of kindness and humanity

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*Chris Attieh
1982-2010*



As the ball trickles through the infield, the batter dashes to first base. On the sidelines, spectators, teammates and opponents happily mingle while music blares and grills sizzle. The Chris Attieh Softball Tournament is a celebration of life and community, a fitting tribute to an extraordinary young man.

Growing up in Whitehall, Chris Attieh enjoyed playing baseball. Yet kindness was his greatest passion. Whether you had a flat tire, were sick in the hospital or simply needed a few bucks, Attieh was eager to help. “Chris never said he was too busy,” says his brother Joe. “He genuinely cared, and people were drawn to that.”

Persistent cold symptoms and breathing difficulties landed Attieh, 28, in the Lehigh Valley Hospital–Muhlenberg intensive care unit in October 2010. He was diagnosed with acute respiratory distress

syndrome (ARDS), a rare, life-threatening condition that makes it difficult for oxygen to enter the bloodstream. After a brave fight, Attieh passed away on Nov. 22, 2010. An entire community grieved, with nearly 3,000 people attending his memorial service.

To keep his memory alive, Attieh’s parents and three brothers established the Chris Attieh Foundation. They partnered with the ARDS Foundation, a national nonprofit, to raise awareness of the syndrome, fund research and support survivors, who frequently face long-term physical and emotional challenges.

The coed softball tournament, held annually at Whitehall’s Zephyr Park, is the foundation’s main fundraiser. Twelve teams competed in 2011, 16 last year, and 20 are scheduled to participate this June, including three

playing in memory of their own loved ones. There also are games and activities for children, with more in the works. “The community has embraced this, and we expect it to keep growing,” says Attieh’s oldest brother, Dan.

To honor Attieh’s kindhearted legacy, the foundation annually awards scholarships to Whitehall High School seniors who give of themselves through volunteering and charitable deeds. Because Attieh loved children – and they loved him – the foundation also supports the Children’s Clinic at Lehigh Valley Hospital–17th Street. His family strongly believes in the clinic’s mission to make the local community a healthier place to live.

“Chris had no ulterior motive or agenda other than helping,” Dan Attieh says. “Our foundation is guided by that same spirit of humanity.”



Although it has a decidedly local flavor, participants from as far away as Australia, Syria, the Bahamas and throughout the United States travel to Whitehall for the annual Chris Attieh Softball Tournament.