

DOING GOOD IN  
*Your Backyard.*

Matt Stroup  
*Bradford County*

Designated Fund  
*To provide for the ongoing needs of athletic programs at Troy High School.*



## Boyz For Life

Troy, Pennsylvania, is the type of town where everybody knows each other, where you can't go anywhere without bumping into a buddy, and where kids grow up camping, playing sports, and just cruising around in cars.

So, to hear Matt Stroup talk about his childhood shouldn't come as a surprise.

"We used to call our group of friends the 'Troy Boyz,'" Stroup said.

"We had a real close core of five or six of us who always hung out on the weekends and were always very tight. I looked at my best friends' parents as my own parents. That's how close we were."

So, to hear Stroup talk about what happened when tragedy struck the Troy Boyz also shouldn't come as a surprise.

A car accident in 2010 ultimately took the lives of Grant Furman (24) and Robby Slingerland (25), two of Stroup's closest friends and a pair of 2004 Troy High School graduates.

"I just want people to always remember who they were, their smiles, their attitudes about life," he said of his friends. "They lived life to the fullest every day."

After attending a Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers (CFTT) event a few years after the accident, Stroup had the idea to start a fund in honor of Furman and Slingerland.

"[CFTT] talked about some of their grant-giving and funds," he said. "I contacted one of my other good friends and told him, 'Hey, we need \$1,000 to get this started.' At the time, that was a lot of money for us, so we split the cost."

Stroup decided that the way the fund would raise its money was through one of the Troy Boyz' favorite pastimes: golf.



For the last eight years running, Stroup has organized a Labor Day Weekend golf tournament at the Corey Creek Golf Club in Mansfield, generating between \$6,000 and \$8,000 each year. Raffle prizes like football tickets and electronics are donated by Stroup and other supporters to entice participants to sign up for the tournament. The registration money received is then added to the designated fund, which releases an annual grant to the Troy Trojans football team.

Given that both Furman and Slingerland loved sports and played for the Trojans, Stroup decided to name his fund the Troy Trojans Athletic Memorial Fund.

“When I first had the idea, I went to CFTT and talked to them about it,” Stroup said. “I wanted to do grants in honor of my friends, but I didn’t want to name the fund after them because I wanted eventually for it to be large enough to recognize all student-athletes. To be able to do that for multiple families and sports would be awesome.”

The fund, which now has a balance of \$60,000, recently donated \$1,500 to the Trojans for the purchase of much-needed practice equipment that will help with player safety. In addition to gathering feedback from the team’s coaches about how the money can best be used, Stroup said there’s a board that consists of himself; Chris Connell, the friend who split the cost to start the fund; Grant’s mother, Nadine Furman; and Robby’s mother, Cindy Boardman.

As a Certified Public Accountant and CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™, Stroup knows the intricacies of finance and investing, and he couldn’t be happier with the job CFTT has done in managing the fund.

“They’re accredited, they’re known, they do all the tax stuff, and everything you would need so it’s properly done,” Stroup said of CFTT. “You just worry about spreading the word about your event, who you’re doing it for, raising the money, and getting it to them—then they invest it into the fund.”

At 35 years old, Stroup is one of the youngest fund owners in CFTT history, which excites him because it leaves so much time for the fund to continue growing and helping kids just like the Troy Boyz.

“The more support we get, the more we can help out our student-athletes and remember people who have passed away,” he added. “Hopefully, we’ll continue to be able to do great things with the fund and even expand beyond just giving grants. There’s a lot of need out there, and in my opinion, this is going to be a million-dollar fund someday. We’re not thinking short-term. We’re thinking long-term.”

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