

Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation



Fall 2012

e-Peace Update

www.MattieOnline.com

Mattie's Peace Club

WHAT – A Membership Program created to support the mission of *Mattie's Foundation*, which is to spread a message of hope and peace for all people.

WHO – Children, Teens, Adults, VIPs, and Messengers who **Choose Peace!**

WHY – Peace matters, and it begins with a choice in thought, in word, and in action – OUR CHOICE.

COST – Kids ages birth-12 are FREE! Teens, Adults, VIPs, and Messengers pay a nominal fee that supports our mission.

BENEFITS –

- ♥ **Peace Club Kids & Teens** pages for poetry, art, photos, and more.
- ♥ **Peace Club Teens** can choose a *Three Choice "Peace Journey"* which may earn Community Service Hours (& it's great for college applications).
- ♥ **Peace Club General Members & VIPs** provide **much-needed support** that enables us to continue creating and disseminating peace materials.
- ♥ **Peace Club Messengers** sponsor *Peace Certified Schools & Youth Groups*.
- ♥ Peace Club Adult Members are offered **Member Discounts** in our *Peace Shop* and on *Peace & Book Chats*.
- ♥ Support is **tax deductible**.

Invitation from Mattie's Foundation: "Peace on Earth" Ornament Decorating

Throughout December, a tree decorated by the *Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation* will be on display in the *Glenview Mansion* at the *Rockville Civic Center* (603 Edmonston Drive, Rockville, MD 20851). If you or your children (or students) would like to decorate one of the paper ornaments we are preparing, send us an e-mail to request an ornament template (Heartsongbooks@gmail.com). Decorated ornaments must be received by **November 15** to be included on the Foundation tree.

- ♥ *Photos of our tree and the ornaments will be posted on our website.*
- ♥ *Names of those who decorate our ornaments will be posted, too.*
- ♥ *All decorated ornaments must be on the paper template created by Mattie's Foundation (there will be a choice of six ornaments).*
- ♥ *We encourage people of ALL FAITHS to participate!*
- ♥ *If you are in the area, please visit Glenview Mansion during December and enjoy the "Peace on Earth" tree display!*



Happy Autumn Days!

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Visit our website for more information:
www.MattieOnline.com



Why Mattie's Foundation Matters

Reflect, Respond, and Reach Out with Peace

*"No one person can end war; however,
every person can begin peace."*

– Mattie J.T. Stepanek

"Peace matters!" – That's a statement we all can pretty much agree on. Simply *liking* peace does not change our world though. Agreeing that peace matters for our world does not end war, nor does it promote an environment of kindness (or anti-bullying) in our schools and communities. Change comes through action, and action necessitates planning and commitment, and involvement and education.

Many people around the world are generally familiar with late teen poet and peace activist, Mattie J.T. Stepanek. For some, he was a favorite television talk show guest or the "Heartsong Kid." For others, he was a neighbor, a hospital roommate, or a friend.

For many, he was an inspiration, who reminded us to *"play after every storm!"* After his death in 2004, the *Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation* was created as a volunteer-based, not-for-profit organization with the mission of furthering the message of hope and peace that Mattie shared with people around the world.

But what is that message? How could Mattie state that *"hope is real"* when he knew his life would be so short? How did he explain his vision – his blueprint really – for a world in which *"peace is possible"* despite the reality that conflict will always exist? How do we begin to teach our children that peace not only matters, but that it begins with personal choices in thought, in word, and in action?

Reflecting on these questions, responding to Mattie's message, and reaching out with peace is what Mattie's Foundation is all about. We offer opportunities to explore and understand Mattie's life and message through a variety of programs and materials. We promote action in sharing this message through motivational projects and activities. And most of all, we encourage people of all ages, abilities, races, and religions to work with us in realizing this mission of peace, by responding to it, and reaching out to others with peace.

Why does Mattie's Foundation matter? Because peace matters, and our Foundation offers inspiration and information, programs and resources, to help make peace a choice that you understand, and can celebrate. Do more than "like" peace. Begin a journey of understanding and action by participating in the mission of the *Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation*. We will support you as you reflect, respond, and reach out with peace.



Explore our website! We offer lots of free information and materials about Mattie and peace.



Join our Peace Club! It takes only a minute to join, but the benefits can reach far into the future.



Become Peace Certified! *Peace Certification* makes a statement about your choices as person (e.g., parent, teacher, politician, leader) or community (e.g., classroom, scout troop, school, city).



Volunteer to serve on our Board of Directors or one of our Committees! Mattie's Foundation is in need of individuals with development or fundraising experience – you might be just who we need!





Morning Crunch

The cold melon skies of morning
Slowly streak through milky clouds
As the orange juice sun rises
Behind coffee and burnt toast branches.

I would like to stop and share
Magic-star cereal with
The few winter birds,
But the hands on the clock
Keep pointing to the day saying,
"Hurry up, or you'll miss the bus!"

Mattie J.T. Stepanek
February 9, 1998
In *Reflections of a Peacemaker*
AMP, 2005
www.MattieOnline.com

Is Peace on Our *To Do* List?

*"We must celebrate the gift of life
Everyday in some way,
We must always remember
To play after every storm."
-- Mattie J.T. Stepanek*

Our fall schedules and activities are now in full swing. What was a new academic and fiscal year for so many just a month ago has now transitioned into routine assignments and examinations, and looming projects and deadlines. Also wedged into those tiny calendar boxes are sporting events and worship meetings, after school clubs and after work gatherings, and all sorts of other individual and group activities and endeavors.

With so many worthy or necessary tasks pulling us in so many different directions, considering one more *To Do List* element may seem like the infamous straw that brings that clichéd camel down. But what if that additional element was

one that supported us – as individuals and as a community – in coping with the all those worthy or necessary tasks that leave us sometimes excited, and often exhausted? In his final book, *Just Peace: A Message of Hope* (AMP, 2006), Mattie J.T. Stepanek wrote the following:

There is a gentle quietness to peace. Relinquishing anger and tightfistedness brings a calming acceptance and resilience. Peace is something that feels good when we recognize and realize it inside of us. And, we can feel the goodness of peace when we are selfless and reconciled with others, and when we are considerate and careful with the earth.... Peace is possible, because peace begins with an attitude, and an attitude is a choice.

If we think of peace in this way – as a truth that begins with how we choose to think, and then speak, and ultimately *be* – we realize that putting *peace* on our *To Do List* is not something that takes more of our time. Instead, choosing peace becomes a strength that supports us in coping with any task and in celebrating any moment that is a part of our reality. Despite that *morning crunch* most of us face each day, and despite those stuffed-full calendars and lists of things we plan to tend to or accomplish, let us take time and make time for peace. As we move into every today and toward every tomorrow, let us ask ourselves this simple question:

Is peace on our To Do List?

Peace Club Members Only Box Fall 2012 Discount

Personalized Brick in Mattie's Peace Garden

Regular Price: \$199 / **General Members:** \$179 / **VIP Members:** \$159

Order this item in *Our Peace Shop* under "*Special Peace Items*"

Sponsor a brick for yourself, or as a holiday gift to honor someone else!

FOR MEMBERS ONLY --- Offer Expires December 31, 2012





Summer into Fall Website Snapshots

Upper Left: New personalized gift bricks were installed in Mattie's Peace Garden. The Foundation places an order for bricks each time we reach our goal of 25 sponsored bricks.

Lower Left: "Mattie's Boys" – the combined Greenburgh, Yonkers, and Mississauga over-40 softball team – won the 2012 *Team Sportsmanship & Spirit Award* during the annual MDA/IAFF tournament in Watkins Park, Maryland.

Lower Right: Dozens of photos were submitted for our first annual "Peace is Possible" summer photo gallery.

Visit our website to learn more about these and other stories: <http://www.mattieonline.com>



2012 Team Sportsmanship and Spirit Award --
"Mattie's Boys"
Greenburgh, Yonkers, Mississauga Combined Over-40 Team



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From Our *What You Are Saying* Pages

"I am very proud of your untiring efforts to promote Mattie's crusade for peace, especially among the future leaders of the world. Much love, Jimmy." – *Former US President Jimmy Carter*

"We talk about Mattie every semester that I teach biochemistry and mitochondrial disorders. I want my students to put a face to the conditions. That way, they know the purpose for studying the pathologies." – *Cindy Boughton Cross James (via FB)*

"We here in *Equait* are truly honored that you are following us on Twitter. We truly hope that we do Mattie's dreams justice here in Kuwait, and eventually, the world." – *Equait (via Twitter)*

"If you look at the perfection of a raindrop as it falls into a lake and then watch its ripple effect... that's Mattie and the love he left the world. He was a special gift from God. His life reflected joy... You stay in my prayers." – *Dorie Holloran Kelly (via FB)*

The **Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation** is a volunteer-based 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, created in 2005 to continue the work of the late teen poet and peace activist, Mattie J.T. Stepanek. During Mattie's "almost 14 years" of life, he penned seven *NY Times Bestselling* books of *Heartsongs* poetry and peace essays, was a well-respected and award-winning inspirational speaker, and served as an ambassador for many peace- and disability-related organizations. Mattie died in 2004 due to complications of a rare neuromuscular disease.

The Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation, Inc.
(Federal Tax ID No. 20-2743852)
is an American not-for-profit charity approved by the IRS under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and incorporated in the State of Maryland.
MD Charitable Solicitation number 17267.