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.

About Mattie
Mattie J.T. Stepanek envisioned a world at peace. Born with a rare life-threatening neuromuscular disease, he embraced and exemplified a personal philosophy that motivated him to cope with many challenges and also celebrate life: “Remember to play after every storm!” During his brief life, Mattie shared a message of hope and peace in six volumes of *Heartsongs* poetry and one collection of "Just Peace" essays, all of which became NY Times Bestsellers. An award-winning speaker and advocate, Mattie served as an ambassador for many peace and disability-related organizations and was a frequent guest on shows like *Oprah, Larry King Live, Good Morning America*, and the *MDA Labor Day Telethon*. Mattie died in 2004 just before his 14th birthday.

About our Beliefs & Goals
Mattie believed that peace begins within each of us when our basic human needs are met, which enables us to be okay with who and how we are as individuals and as communities of people. Peace grows when we then begin to consider and tend to the needs of other people and communities so that they too can survive and thrive. Peace is not about liking others or being like others, but about living gently with others and balancing personal and global needs.

The mission of the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation is to share Mattie’s message of hope and peace with people around the world. Our goal is to inspire and encourage global citizens with peace, and to support people of all ages, abilities, faiths, and nationalities in moving from attitude to action so that they are able seek, make, and bring peace for themselves, for others, and for our world.

About our Activities, Programs, & Resources
Mattie’s Foundation creates educational and recreational programs, activities, and resources for people of all ages around the world that encourage an understanding of peacemaking as a deliberate choice in attitude and action. Examples of our programs and activities include:

- **Mattie’s Peace Club** with levels for youth, teens, and adults who want to learn about peace;
- **Mattie’s Peace Network** for people who want to receive our Foundation e-Peace Updates;
- **Peace Club Kids Gallery** for children to share thoughts and artwork about Mattie and peace;
- **Peace Journey / Activity Certificate** for teens/tweens who explore Mattie’s Three Choices for Peace;
- **Pathways to Peace Program** – resources and tools for understanding Mattie’s message of *Heartsongs* and purpose, and for exploring key elements of Mattie’s peace message, such as kindness, anti-bullying, resilience, service, education, gratitude, role models, and more;
- **Peace Certification** – a program that supports individuals, families, educators, politicians, schools, businesses, and other communities as they reflect and respond to Mattie’s message of peace, and then reach out to others through a personalized peace plan or activity;
- **Peace Spotlights** – featuring role models who seek, make, bring, and sponsor peace; and,
- **Make Peace the News** (summer) and Mattie’s Peace Tree & Poetry (winter) – annual fun, free, international outreach activities rooted in the Foundation’s theme for the year (e.g., *For Our World, Peace is Possible, Kindness Campaign, Peace is for All People, Mosaic of Gifts*).

About the Important Matter of Mattie’s Foundation
Peace matters, peace is possible, and peace can be taught and learned. Our programs and activities reach people of all ages in all parts of the world, and directly impact how diverse groups of people consider peace. Understanding peace affects the choices we make in thought, word, and deed, and leads to personal and world peace. People want peace. We help them understand how peace begins and grows, and how moving from attitude to action with peace decreases bullying, promotes non-violent conflict resolution, and is correlated with balancing basic human needs of global citizens.

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