

Clifford G. Annis Jr.: For the Love of the Game

Thank you

This may be the hardest column I have ever had to write, but it is also one I'm happy to be able to write. As many of you may or may not know, my



son, Matt, was struck by a car in Quakertown on Feb. 15, a day my family will never forget. This column is dedicated to all of you who opened your hearts and prayers to us in our time of need. Thankfully, those prayers came true.

My son, Matt, is your quintessential 13-year-old boy who loves soccer and baseball and being outside. On that fateful Friday, Matt was being a typical boy and made a mistake that caused my family's life to change forever. As I said, Matt was struck by a car. My wife, Dana, and daughter, Megan, were with him at the time of the accident and were witnesses to what happened. Both have told me that things seemed to occur in slow-motion and though they knew what was going to happen were powerless to stop it. Just before impact, they simultaneously called out to Matt causing him to hesitate. Matt's hesitation, I believe, saved his life. My wife and daughter are heroes to me, but they aren't the only ones. Thanks to quick thinking by our friend, Debbie McLaughlin, and good samaritan Javonni Rodriguez at the scene, they were able to keep Matt as calm as possible until the ambulance arrived.

Matt was blessed to have many wonderful and caring doctors and nurses at Lehigh Valley Hospital. Within minutes of his arrival there, he was in surgery to remove a large blood clot from his brain and to assure of no more bleeding. Matt's care was closely monitored by three teams of doctors: his trauma team, neuro team and pediatric team. The care he received was exceptional and three of his nurses from the Pediatric Intensive

Care Unit really stand out. Amy, Maryann and Matt - thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

There are so many people to thank for their support and prayers. There are too many to name, but I have to take the time to mention a few. My sister-in-law, Lori Murphy, spent the first two nights at the hospital with Dana while Matt was most critical, and I'm forever grateful to her. Debbie, Luther, Tyler and Trysten McLaughlin spent countless hours at the hospital taking turns to sit vigil at Matt's bedside. Rose Vanelli and Kathy Kramme were invaluable in helping to ensure that Megan was okay as well as overseeing the care of Matt's puppy, Riley. Karen Quinn and Pat Murphy were on prayer patrol and got the word out to many people quickly to get the prayer chains in motion. We cannot forget Father Fred Riegler who was the first one to make Matt smile.

To Matt's soccer coaches Wynn Kiesel and Stan Cadwallader, thank you for the love and support and keeping the team informed about Matt's status, allowing me and my wife to focus on Matt and Megan. The same goes to baseball coaches Jerry Kulp, Eric Johnson and Nick Sinnott. His teammates and their families have been a constant source of support and love.

I have to thank everyone at Strayer Middle School from his teachers and administrators to his classmates. The visits from Mrs. Allen, Mr. Zackon, Mr. Pierce and Ms. Senigo were a boost to Matt's spirits as were the many cards and wishes from his friends. Thank you to Strayer Principal Dr. Zinck and assistant principal Mr. Murray for their caring phone calls and kind words.

Of course, our love and thanks go out to our parents and extended families that are always there and ready to help. To all those who had Matt on their various prayer chains, thank you, thank you, thank



Matt Annis, his dad Cliff Annis is happy to report, continues to improve after being struck by a car Feb. 15. Matt enjoys playing soccer (Matt is center, in white) and baseball, among other things.



you. The power of prayer is amazing! God's hand in Matt's healing has been evident at every turn.

Throughout this ordeal, Matt has done incredibly well, exceeding expectations at every stage. He was out of the hospital in less than a week and continues to make progress with every day.

Life can take some pretty strange turns and some are not pleasant. The lesson I'm taking from this experience is to never take life for granted. Love your family and friends and don't sweat the small stuff. Sounds cliché, I know, but it is so true. Matt is truly blessed to have so many wonderful friends who care about him. Please continue with your positive thoughts and prayers as he continues to recover and again, we thank

you from the bottom of our hearts.

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