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Lynn family donates to animal shelter

By Robin Kaminski / The Daily Item

LYNN - In the quest to keep their son's memory alive, a Lynn family has donated \$1,000 to the Northeast Animal Shelter to lovingly name a dog kennel "Joshua's Place" in his honor.

Tragically killed in a motorcycle accident in 2005, Christine, Jeffrey and their son Michael Fromer donated the money garnered through a fundraiser to the Salem shelter at 347 Highland Ave. because of his love of animals.

Although the Lambert Avenue family still needs to raise an additional \$1,000 to complete the \$2,000 naming opportunity, NEAS Development Director Laurie McCannon said the shelter is forever indebted for their kindness.

"Here's this family that doesn't have a lot of money and we want them to know what a special thing they're doing for the NEAS animals along with adding a special way to remember their son who loved dogs," she said. "They are just such nice people and they've had to deal with such a tragedy."

Just shy of three years ago, Joshua, a 2004 graduate of Lynn Classical High School and an avid motorcycle enthusiast, died instantly when a vehicle driven by Guatemalan immigrant Jose Lopes hit him.

Still haunted by the fatal collision, Michael said his brother, a troubled kid who purportedly turned his life around, was working for a construction company when he died at just 19 years old.

"He was just an awesome person," he said. "His face just lit up with a smile whenever he saw his friends and they were all so close to each other. He was always smiling...just lived life to the fullest."

Wearing a t-shirt bearing a picture of his son on a motorcycle with the words, "young forever and forever young", and sporting a tattoo of Josh's face on his chest, Jeffrey Fromer struggled to find the words to describe how much he misses his beloved son.

"It would have been his 20th birthday soon," he solemnly said. "This naming will be a nice memory of my son. And if we raise more money than the other \$1,000, it will all come back to the shelter in his name."

Jeffrey said the money donated to NEAS was raised at a fundraiser in Lynn roughly three years ago to create a scholarship in Josh's honor.

When that didn't work out, the family decided to put the money to use in the form of Josh's love of animals.

"Josh just loved dogs," Michael said. "His friend had a pit bull that didn't like too many people, but it loved Josh. We used to have a dog named Jasmine that used to follow Josh around...but Jasmine passed away last year."

Once the family comes up with the remaining money, Michael said they would be able to choose a plaque to hang on the wall outside of the kennel they chose.

Clutching Michael's hand, Christine's eyes welled up with tears and said the plaque would be just another way to help with her healing process.



Michael Fromer, Christine Fromer and Jeffrey Fromer with a photo of Joshua Fromer at the kennel they sponsored at the Northeast Animal Shelter in Salem. Item photo / Owen O'Rourke

"We're all just trying to live life the way Josh would have wanted us to," she said. "It's just been so hard...I'll never get over what happened."

Donations can be made in Joshua's memory at St. Jean's Credit Union in Lynn.

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