



Mike Johnson Scholarship Foundation

Helping Good People Do Great Things!

From the Desk of the Mike Johnson Scholarship Foundation: Welcome to the Fall 2012 Newsletter!

Congratulations Trevor Leach, First Annual Mike Johnson Scholarship Award Recipient

By: Brian Johnson, Mike's Dad and Board Treasurer



President Steve Johnson and Board Member Molly Gray award Trevor Leach with the first Mike Johnson Scholarship Award

The Mike Johnson Scholarship Foundation has worked a long time to get to the point where we can actually start to do what we set out to do: to give financial assistance for education to special individuals who possess a love for the environment and its well-being, as well as a strong commitment to physical fitness.

Now, we are proud and honored to introduce Trevor Leach, the first winning candidate of the Mike Johnson Scholarship. Trevor received our award in addition to \$2,000 to help him pursue higher education.

Trevor is a graduate of Hickory High School in Chesapeake, VA. He has worked his way through a rigorous high school honors program and completed his studies with a weighted GPA of 4.1. While this is important to us, it's not the only thing we were looking for. The fact that Trevor is a first rate baseball player and keeps himself in top physical condition is important too. But, when we found out that he's currently off in the Virginia forests researching the movements of Box Turtles and various other amphibians in a freshman scholars research project, we knew he had the kind of mindset we were looking for.

Congratulations Trevor. We are glad to support your studies and wish you great success in the life that you're embarking on... Carpe Diem!

To learn more about the scholarship process please visit MikeJohnsonScholarships.org and click "Scholarships." Know an outstanding student, athlete and environmental enthusiast? Download an application and encourage them to apply for next year's scholarship.

About Us:

The Mike Johnson Scholarship Foundation is a nonprofit endeavor created by the Johnson Family in April 2010, in loving memory of 1st Lt. Michael Edward Johnson, USMC, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on September 8, 2009. Although Mike was only 25 years old, it is remarkable the number of people he influenced and the positive impact he had on their lives. Mike was a passionate environmentalist, fitness enthusiast and loyal Marine.

Contact Us:

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Racing to Remember: Running to Honor Mike Johnson and Wounded Warriors

By: Steve Johnson, Mike's Brother and Board President



Saturday, March 24th was a perfect day for a run. My family friend Ryan Self and I headed down to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront for the annual Wounded Warrior Project 5k. The race helps raise funds for our nation's wounded military men and women. In Mike's Honor, Ryan and I carried the Honor and Remember flag throughout the race. It was amazing to hear the support and words of encouragement not only from the spectators but also from the runners.

Mike was a big supporter of physical wellness and would be proud to see all the participants out there breaking a sweat on an early Saturday morning.

To learn more about the Wounded Warrior Project visit www.woundedwarriorproject.org. To learn more about the Honor and Remember Flag and organization, visit www.honorandremember.org.

Just Walk: An Inspirational Story of Mike's Uncle Greg

By: Claudia Johnson, Mike's Mom

Mike's Uncle Greg and Aunt Ann live in Portland, Oregon. On May 17, 2012, Greg Chase set out from Pamplona, Spain, to walk the Camino de Santiago ("Way of St. James") pilgrimage route across northern Spain to the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. In his backpack were three stones, which he planned to leave at the Cruz de Ferro ("Cross of Iron"), an important spiritual site along the "Way." For centuries, pilgrims have left small stones as remembrances of relatives or friends lost, for people who need special prayers, or as an opportunity to symbolically shed personal hindrances.

Greg explains, "Ann and I found one of the stones at an artisan market in Oregon. The artist painted on tumbled-smooth river rocks, and had a bunch in a basket in her booth, all with different sentiments written on the reverse side. I turned a few over, and on the back of one was written **CARPE DIEM**. On the other side was the artist's logo – a representation of an eagle. Ann and I agreed...this was the stone I would carry to Spain!" This was Mike's stone!

June 7, 2012: "I had only been walking for about an hour from my overnight lodging in Foncebadon, Spain, when, out of the foggy mist, emerged this spiritually powerful site. The Cruz de Ferro is the highest point along the Camino – over 4,900 feet above sea level. Because of the early hour and heavy mist, I couldn't really see much else except the wooden pole and its simple cross, and the large mound of stones below it. On this particular morning, it was very cold and very windy, so I only lingered for a brief period of time. After a few quiet prayers, I placed my three stones (Mike's, Kurt's, and Nicole's) at the base of the cross and returned to my journey on the Camino."

Greg reached his destination, the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, on June 17th. He had walked over four hundred and fifty miles in thirty days. Thank you, Greg, for including Mike in your journey. To learn more, watch the movie, *The Way*, starring Martin Sheen.

Building a Foundation: How the Foundation Officially Became a Non-Profit Organization

By: Brian Johnson, Mike's Dad and Board Treasurer



Mike and his dad, Brian Johnson

When the idea of creating a scholarship first came up, it seemed like a pretty simple thing to do. Lots of people encouraged the idea and pledged financial support. It seemed like all we had to do was set up a bank account and register as a charity. Of course we had no idea *how* to register a charity, so we went in search of people who did. We talked to financial advisers, foundations, lawyers and countless city and state departments to assist us. We quickly realized that this process would take a lot longer than we had originally thought.

Disappointed but undeterred we began talking to other foundations. At this point we learned the cost of setting up a foundation typically started at about \$25,000. As a working-class family we were far short of having that sort of cash on-hand. Still determined to make it happen, we found a lawyer who identified with our goal and offered to assist us. Rod K. Sutherland, Esq. in Virginia Beach, VA helped us to create Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and advised us on the legalities of fundraising and the actual scholarship application process. What seemed like a simple task, took us two years to achieve. The Mike Johnson Scholarship Foundation is proud to announce that we are now a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. We'd like to thank our generous donors who have believed in, and trusted us from the beginning. We'd also like to invite you to learn how you can make your tax-deductible donation today:

Making Your Tax Deductible Donation Has Never Been Easier! Check Out Our Options:

1.

Hop online and go to: www.mikejohnsonscholarships.org and click "Donations." On a budget? Donation levels start at just \$5! Pay with your credit card using our secure PayPal process.

3.

Send an email to MikeJohnsonScholarshipFdn@gmail.com or give us a call at 757-645-1197 to learn about our donation levels. All donors will receive a tax-deductible donation receipt for their taxes after the donation is processed.

2.

Write your check or money order out to Mike Johnson Scholarship Foundation and mail it to:
Mike Johnson Scholarship Foundation
P.O. Box 1447
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Announcements and Honors

Mike's "Brother", Sergeant Dakota L. Meyer, USMC, Receives Medal of Honor

On September 15, 2011, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine" Sgt Dakota L. Meyer, USMC, was presented the Medal of Honor for his "unwavering courage and steadfast devotion to his U.S. and Afghan comrades" at the Battle of Ganjgal, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, on **September 8, 2009**. Sadly, Dakota's "brothers," 1stLt Michael E. Johnson, USMC, GySgt Edwin W. Johnson, USMC, GySgt Aaron M. Kenefick, USMC, and HM3 James R. Layton, USN, were killed during the devastating battle. Corporal Dakota Meyer was awarded the "highest award for valor" for his heroic actions while trying to reach his "brothers" who had been "pinned down" near the Ganjgal village. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Where there was evil, Dakota Meyer exemplified love. **Mike's family is eternally grateful to Dakota for bringing Mike "home."**

Dakota Meyer and best-selling author and veteran Marine, Bing West, have written a book about this tragic day in September, 2009. Published by Random House, Inc., "Into the Fire: A Firsthand Account of the Most Extraordinary Battle in the Afghan War," is scheduled to be released on September 25, 2012. Amazon.com describes the "work" as follows: "We hear the story from Dakota's own perspective, and come to know our narrator as a true American hero: a young man raised on a cattle farm in Kentucky with uncompromising morals and a fierce determination to do what's right." To learn more, go to www.amazon.com.

Building Strength! CrossFit Honors Mike Through "WOD" Workout Of The Day

CrossFit, Inc. is a "proud and patriotic company of committed professionals whose directors put values before fitness and fitness before business." "CrossFit's exercise program is practiced by members of approximately 3,400 affiliated gyms, most of which are located in the United States, and by individuals who complete daily workouts posted on the company's website." On October 7, 2009, the "Workout of the Day" (WOD) was dedicated to the memory of 1stLt Michael E. Johnson, USMC, and was posted as follows:

"Johnson"

Complete as many rounds in 20 minutes as you can of:

245 pound Deadlift, 9 reps

8 Muscle-ups

155 pound Squat clean, 9 reps

Mike thrived on being physically fit and encouraged others to reach their "fitness" potential!

To learn more, go to www.crossfit.com.

Honoring Mike in the Tidewater Veterans Memorial

Mike's family has purchased a paving stone in memory of 1stLt Michael E. Johnson, USMC, to be placed in the Veterans Memorial Park, Virginia Beach, Virginia. The Park is located behind the Tidewater Veterans Memorial, across from the Virginia Beach Convention Center on 19th Street. The 8" x 8" paving stone will be inscribed as follows:

1STLT MICHAEL

E JOHNSON USMC

3/1984-9/2009

AFGHANISTAN

FOREVER MISSED

FOREVER LOVED

The inscribed paving stone will be recognized during a ceremony at the Tidewater Veterans Memorial on Veterans Day, **November 11, 2012**. Dedicated on Memorial Day, May 30, 1988, the Tidewater Veterans Memorial honors the service and sacrifice of all Tidewater veterans. "From concept to fruition, the Memorial has been, and will remain, part of the great legacy of service rendered by our military. May We Never Forget." For more information, call 757-428-9013 or 757-481-6513.

Building Strength Through a Legacy: A Mike Johnson Fitness Memorial in Oregon

By: Dan Johnson, Mike's Brother and Vice President



For years now, I have been thinking about a way to honor Mike in a manner that is unique to the great person that he was. When I first moved to Oregon, Mike and I would go “running” through a park on the outskirts of Corvallis known as Bald Hill. We would chant Marine Corps cadences as we ran up and down the trails through the woods and do circuit training on the north side of an old, barn-style building. This was one of the highlights from the short time we were able to spend together in Oregon.

Last year, after completing one of the better workouts I've done out there, I sat down on a bench, and I noticed it had been dedicated to the memory of a young lady. This started the wheels turning, and I soon came to the realization that the perfect way to honor and remember Mike would be to dedicate a memorial that people “sweat over”...one that even the next day, when they felt that good pain you only get from challenging your body, they would still be thinking about Mike and the sacrifices he made for us all.

So, after several emails, phone calls, and meetings with Corvallis Parks & Recreation, I was triumphant! A set of four pull-up bars of varying heights, and a memorial plaque, will be constructed by that old barn at Bald Hill; the construction began on Saturday, September 15th.

Oregon Car Show Honors Oregon's Fallen Soldiers

By: Molly Gray, Mike's Friend and Board Member

After I packed my bags and stuffed as many pairs of high heels as I could fit into my car, I closed that trunk and left my home state of Oregon in search of adventures in Virginia. About a month after I moved, my neighbor in Oregon told me that there was a car show in Oregon honoring all Oregon Fall Soldiers. He walked through rows and rows of cars and found Mike's name.

I am so proud of the fact that we can honor Mike on both sides of the coast: on the East Coast where he had his roots, and on the West Coast where he spread his wings.

