

Celebration of Young Environmental Steward Marked with Installation of Memorial Chair One Year after his Death

Children at Madison Heights Elementary honor Jacob Crespo with a special "Recycled" chair

(Phoenix, AZ May 18, 2009) A year after their classmate's death, students at Madison Heights elementary school will see a chair they had a hand in building installed on school grounds. Eight-year-old Jacob Crespo, known for his work for charitable causes, passed away last year. He was an environmental champion who was very involved in the non-profit organization Children for a Safe Environment founded by his mother.



December 30, 1999 – April 24, 2008

Jacob was lauded by the media before and on his passing for being an amazing example of a child who thought more of others than himself. For his 8th birthday he gathered items for the animals at the Arizona Humane Society. He also showed up on the doorstep of the 100 Club for fallen officers to donate the contents of his piggy bank. Jacob was once noted to say that "if every child gave up just one birthday, the world would be a better place." For his 9th birthday, he was planning to gather gifts for Phoenix Children's Hospital. Instead he ended up donating eight of his organs to seven lucky Arizonans.

To help celebrate Jacob's giving spirit, one of his second grade classmates used his own birthday to get kids to begin decorating elements, such as skateboards and ceramic tiles that now make up a memorial chair. It will be installed in the school's walkway on Tuesday, May 19 at noon. Madison Heights is located at 7150 N. 22nd Street in Phoenix.

The chair made completely of recycled materials and the things Jacob loved best is a fitting reminder of the student who promoted environmental causes. A used bat, representing his love of baseball, was donated by the Arizona Diamondbacks serves as one leg, an oar for his love of canoeing serves as an armrest. Two skateboards donated from other students and painted with an exact replica of Jacob's earth artwork and special environmental sayings make up the back of the chair. The seat is a see through

box showcasing items that remained in Jacob's backpack on his last day of school – many of which reflect his focus on peace and the environment.

Volunteer craftsmen in wood, metal and glass have all donated their time and resources to contribute to the construction of Jacob's environmental memorial chair. Most of those involved never even knew Jacob but were motivated by his amazing story. Most notably, James Varela, who heard about the life of the young boy and was moved to take on the project. "Every day I worked on it I was inspired and moved by this young man that I never had the honor of knowing," said Varela. "It's been a true honor to be a part of this collaborative effort."

James Varela as the primary craftsman and project lead. Others involved include Rhonda Bannard, who helped guide her son Heath to memorialize his classmate in this special way, along with Justin Keilman with Blue Water Furnishings who built the base, Shannon Lindner, Jerry Knippel, Miguel Luna, Mike Robinkoff, Mike Cantrall, Ray Koenig, Steve Parsons, Mike Dyman with PMA Photometals Inc. who is completing the memorial plaque, Betsy Bombeck, Heights moms Lisa Montgomery and Alicia Slack, and the many Madison Heights kids – Heath & Morgan Bannard, Demetrius Hightower, Rachel Slack, Torri Badura, Mannie Montgomery and Jacob's principal Dr. Denise Donovan and Jacob's 2nd grade teacher Mrs. Gottfredson.

The chair will be a permanent celebration of the young man and a reminder to other students of the power of the choices they make to impact the environment every day. The chair was unveiled to the Heights student body the week Earth Day was being celebrated to further instill eco-friendly habits.

Photo opportunities: Installation Tuesday, May 19th at noon. Opportunities to talk to some of those who assisted in the construction, Heath Bannard – the boy who's birthday this idea came from, his mother, along with some of Jacob's family members, the school principal and others.

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