

Family's Memory of Jonathan is Focus for Helping Others



The SIDS Annual Bull Roast held in Harford County (Level/Churchville) started from a family that had lost a very special little one in their lives; Jonathan Spencer Cockerham. The Center for Infant and Child Loss was and has been a huge help to its success. It was after the Center helped our family learn how to cope with the tragic loss; we felt that we wanted to give back to the Center, so that others may receive the same kind of help that we had received.



hospital empty armed.....no longer carrying a child, it was then that we took our thoughts to the Center. With the aid of the Center, we developed the Empty Arms Project that consists of the softest bear, so that no parent would ever have to leave the hospital empty armed again. The Center has arranged to have these bears placed in all the hospitals in Maryland.

At first, my family volunteered to help with other Center events, but soon realized that we wanted to do more in our local area. So the family formed a small committee and began the learning process of organizing the SIDS Annual Bull Roast. Members of our family had some experience in planning similar events, but usually in supporting an event, not actually running the event from start to finish. The planning process for the event runs year round, but really gets active six months prior to the event. With monthly meetings the family and the committee were getting together on a regular basis focused on a goal. For us, this was a way that we could reunite as a family and be supportive to each other to help us get through the tragic event.



Our Bull Roast is the primary funding for that project. While we will never understand completely as to why Jonathan died, it offers some therapeutic relief to know that Jonathan's death was not in vain. It has brought great pride and peace to our family to know that other parents/families would not have to go through that feeling as we had. It was through our families' loss and the committee members losses that there can be something positive develop. The event is a lot of work to coordinate, but it is a labor of love. The days leading up to the event are hurried and chaotic, but there is a sense of anticipation.

The Son's of Pirates band which has played the event the past few years has told the committee this is the best event of this type they play. They look forward to playing and the band has a great time. The crowd has a great time and

it is at this point the family can finally start to relax and enjoy the moment. That moment can be enjoyed as everyone's hard work and the success of the event is for support of all the families who have lost a child. Each year the memory of Jonathan is our families' focus for helping out with a successful event which we hope helps others.

It was a focus that provided for memories to continue and for some new ones to be formed. Other families that had lost children became involved and it expanded the support structure. We decided that the hardest part of losing a child was to walk out of the

– Cockerham, Gallion, Stine and Hawley families