

# EVANFEST PRODUCES GOOD OUT OF TRAGEDY

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**Alumnus's battle with cancer has inspired a movement raising millions of dollars for families in need.**

As Mr. Bill Brady P'05 sat on a folding chair at Malvern on a sunny Saturday morning, he fought back tears describing his son Evan's time at Malvern.

"He was very good at sports and really excelled at lacrosse," Brady said. "That's what kept him going. He never missed lacrosse practice or the games, even though he couldn't play."

It was not because of an injury that kept Evan out of playing lacrosse while at Malvern. It was a diagnosis of osteogenic sarcoma, a deadly childhood bone cancer, in 2001, just two weeks into his freshman year. Although Evan was not able to play on Malvern's team, he supported his teammates constantly as a coach and mentor.

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**-Mr. Angelo Savelloni**

“He fought back for four years, the whole four years he was at Malvern here,” Brady said.

However, he passed away shortly after his graduation at the age of 19. Out of the tragedy and heartbreak, Brady and his wife Patrice planned to turn this into a positive.

“After he was gone, a bunch of the lacrosse parents came to us and said ‘We want to do something in his memory’ and we thought it would be great to do a lacrosse tournament,” Brady said.

Friend of the Bradys and original Evanfest board member Tom Dunn said that the Make-A-Wish Foundation gave the Bradys money to help them out in their tough time with Evan.

“There was a lot of stress, bills, little stuff like parking, going to the hospital every day... it really adds up and is taxing to a family. So Bill and Patrice’s idea was to help relieve some of that stress and make those stressful times a little less stressful,” Dunn said.

This began Evanfest, an annual lacrosse tournament hosted at Malvern Prep which raises money for families who have a child or children with cancer. This simple idea began a movement that has raised \$1.4 million over 12 years for over 300 families in the tri-state area according to Brady. This year, it took place on Saturday, April 21, with 38 local teams ranging from grades five to eight playing on six different fields.

Board member and treasurer of Evanfest Mr. Angelo Savelloni explained that sometimes the families they help will have multiple kids with cancer. He said Evanfest helps the families with the many expenses outside of insurance, like paying for dinner or babysitting.

“Those are the stories that move me beyond anything else,” Savelloni said.

The organization is all volunteer-based, with around 20 board members in which many have been with Evanfest since the beginning. “There’s not a lot of groups like that,” Brady said.

One person who has been involved since the beginning is Mr. Ben Osborne ’05 who was Evan’s close friend at Malvern. Evan played on offense while Osborne played on defense, so they first grew their bond sharing tips about lacrosse. Osborne’s mother also had cancer so they shared that common struggle.

“We didn’t live too far from each other, so I was always over his house doing homework, projects... We spent a lot of time together on and off the field,” Osborne said. “He was a really special kid, always making everyone laugh. I think everyone who met him would say that.”

Osborne and his parents have been involved since the beginning with Evanfest. He said his dad and parents of kids who played lacrosse with Evan helped with setting up the tournament each year while Evan’s friends helped set up bar nights or bowling events to raise money.

“There are a few satellite events throughout the year, I know they do Barnaby’s a lot... A few kids Evan’s age and I have done events over the years outside of [Evanfest],” Osborne said.

Savelloni explained that much of Evanfest’s money comes in from corporate sponsors as well as an ad book and apparel sales. The foundation raises around \$100,000 every year.

In the future, Savelloni wants Evanfest to go to other organizations who want to support those like Evanfest.

“We’re not that great as far as writing is concerned, and doing applications and grants,” Savelloni said. “So we’re working on that.”

He also wants the next generation to take over the leadership of Evanfest.

“One of the things I love about this is we see another generation coming in and doing a lot of the work with us. So it looks like a program that is going to be here for a long time,” Savelloni said. “So I think that’s something that we all like to see because we don’t see any cures for these types of cancers and we need to make life a little bit easier for the people affected by it.”

Brady wanted to thank Malvern for being so generous to their cause over the years.

“Malvern is just awesome. They donate the whole day to us, we have use of their kitchen, all their fields, we pretty much take over campus for the day,” Brady said. “So they are tremendous. If we didn’t have them, we wouldn’t be doing this.”

Remembering the story of Evan, all those involved with Evanfest want to make sure other kids with cancer can realize their dreams.

“Whenever you meet someone who has such impactful moments on your life and who you have a lot of memories with, it’s awesome to come out and make sure you are able to honor his legacy,” Osborne said.



NOT JUST A ONE-DAY EVENT - Evanfest is most known for the springtime lacrosse tournament that celebrated its twelfth round at Malvern this year. But the organization fund-raises for families in need year-round. The day of the event itself only raises \$9000 with teams paying to partake in the tournament, while the foundation raises around \$100,000 every year.