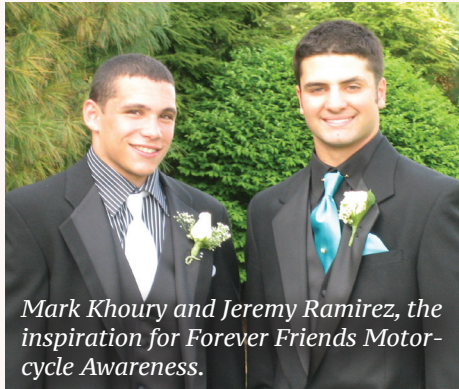


Shining a Spotlight on Forever Friends Motorcycle Awareness

By Teresa Sellinger



Mark Khoury and Jeremy Ramirez, the inspiration for Forever Friends Motorcycle Awareness.

“The only cure for grief is action.”

- George Henry Lewes

Toni Caserta and Denise Arcykiewicz know what it is to grieve. In the fall of 2010, their sons, Mark and Jeremy, best friends since kindergarten, both died in motorcycle accidents just seven weeks apart.

“They were brothers in every way except blood,” Caserta says.

On September 3, 2010, Mark and Jeremy shared their last ride together. The boys were working on their cruisers and took a ride to get some parts for their bikes at Motorcycle Madness on Route 94 in Lafayette. On their return home, they saw a driver coming down a driveway quickly, so they slowed down. The driver stopped, allowing Jeremy to pass, but suddenly pulled out in front of Mark. He attempted to stop, but it was too late.

“His life was taken from him because the careless driver did not take the time to look twice,” Caserta states. “Mark had the right of way, was not speeding and tried to save himself. Jeremy watched his brother die that day while holding Mark in his arms. The pain everyone felt that day was unbearable.”

Seven weeks later, Jeremy had plans to sell his bike and decided to take one more ride, the only time he’d taken his bike out since Mark’s death. Jeremy was less than a mile from home when he attempted to swerve around farm equipment pulling onto the road. He lost control of his bike and slid into the path

of oncoming traffic. Jeremy died on October 28, 2010.

“The boys practiced safe riding, always using hand signals and riding in formation. They loved life and loved to ride their bikes,” Caserta recalls.

But Mark and Jeremy’s own motorcycle safety awareness and measures hadn’t been enough to save them or spare their families heartbreak, so the two mothers decided to turn their grief into action. Together, Caserta and Arcykiewicz founded the non-profit organization Forever Friends Motorcycle Awareness (FFMA). Their mission? Making a difference by educating both riders and non-riders to be aware of motorcycles on the road, providing motorcycle safety precaution education to new drivers and non-riders, and helping fallen and injured riders as well as their families.

The organization’s biggest fundraiser is their annual Forever Motorcycle Awareness Charity Bike Run & Event, occurring this year on October 10 at the Sussex County Fairgrounds in Augusta.

“We’re excited that this year’s event will include a car show sponsored by North Jersey Hot Rod Association, a fellow 501c3 organization,” Caserta says. “In addition to raising funds for FFMA, we’ll be raising money for The Valerie Fund Center which cares for over 4000 children a year with blood and bone disorders, so this is really two charity events in one!”

In addition to the car show, the fun-filled family event for motorcycle riders and non-riders alike offers a scenic motorcycle ride, bike show, the Traveling Memorial Wall for Fallen Riders, live music, 15 food trucks, craft vendors, a game trailer, a bounce house, 50/50, a tricky tray and more. There is a \$20 donation per rider (for scenic ride and event) and a \$10 donation per non-rider. The event is free for children under 10. Pets are not allowed. Motorcycle and car registration runs from 9:30am to noon with the motorcycle scenic ride taking place from 12:30pm to 2pm. The full event at the fairgrounds takes place from 10am to 6pm.

“Last year, over 1000 people came to support our cause. The bike ride was amazing with over 500 bikes! We’re growing more every year,” Caserta says proudly.

Proceeds from the event assist with a wide range of FFMA activities, including donations to fallen and injured riders. Since its founding, FFMA has donated over \$40,000 dollars to riders and their families alone. Proceeds also go to support local community EMS and fire departments to assist with training



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and care for families in times of accidents. Lastly, funds assist with the cost of the dissemination of a motorcycle awareness education program FFMA developed, which is now offered to all groups and driving education classes in high schools.

“We will save lives with education. Something we can’t stress enough is ‘Look twice, Save a Life.’ Pay attention to the road, put down the phone and look both ways numerous times before pulling out or when switching lanes. It only takes a few seconds, but it could save a life and save a family from broken hearts.”

For more information regarding FFMA, visit www.foreverfriendsmotorcycleawareness.org.



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Sparta Woman’s Club Earns Accolades

Story and photo submitted by Kathy Shepard

The New Jersey State Federation of Women’s Clubs recently recognized the Sparta Woman’s Club for their 2020 efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic by awarding the club five first place awards in the categories of leadership, civic engagement and outreach, health and wellness, women’s history project, and community improvement as well as one second place award in the advocates for children category.



“It was only through the dedication and generosity of the membership of the Sparta Woman’s Club that all of these projects and donations were realized without the benefit of our traditional fundraisers,” Sparta Woman’s Club co-president Kathy Shepard said. “Compassion and wanting to help those in need was at an all time level and COVID-19 restrictions did not hold us back.”

For more information regarding Sparta Woman’s Club, visit www.spartawomansclub.org or call membership chair Janet Knecht at 973-726-4641.

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