

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



*Queen
Anne's
County*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAMILY DONATES EQUIPMENT IN MEMORY ...

STEVENSVILLE – The tragic death of her healthy, active 12-year old cousin spurred Becky Groff to make a difference for her community.

"A little more than a week before her 13th birthday, Taylor died after unexpectedly collapsing during soccer practice," said Groff. Unbeknownst to anyone, Taylor Waltman suffered from a heart condition, called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, which occurs without any apparent reason and is a significant cause of sudden cardiac arrest in young athletes. Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a disease in which the heart muscle (myocardium) becomes abnormally thick — or hypertrophied. This thickened heart muscle can make it harder for the heart to pump blood and may also affect the heart's electrical system.

Groff discovered there was no Automated External Defibrillator, or AED, on the soccer field where Taylor collapsed nor were there any on the playing fields in Queen Anne's County.

"This raised a red flag for me...I contacted EMS Chief Scott Haas to see if it would be possible and beneficial to buy and donate an AED in memory of Taylor," said Groff. Haas agreed and helped with research and ordering of the device, which was then donated to the Department of Parks and Recreation and is now housed in the concessions building at Old Love Point Park.

Groff said the family will never know if having an AED would have made a difference for Taylor but it may make a difference in someone else's life.

"Taylor's heart condition is not common but heart failure is and having an AED where kids and adults gather keeps our county parks better prepared and safer for everyone," she said.

Groff isn't stopping with the AED at Old Love Point Park. "My goal is to keep raising funds to purchase AEDs for other soccer fields here in Queen Anne's County... and to take proceeds from the Chesapeake Bay Wine Festival and donate them to the county," she said. As one of three partners of Inspired Events, LLC, Groff and her colleagues have pledged to donate the funds from the event, scheduled for June 5 and 6 at Terrapin Park in Stevensville.