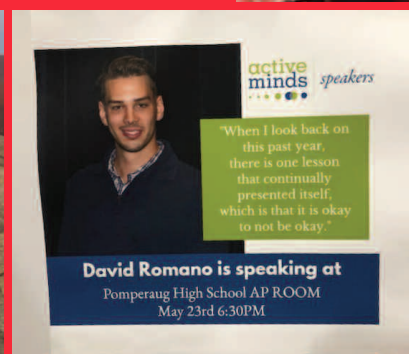


Alex Archie Foundation

Helping young athletes find their dreams and supporting mental health awareness and suicide prevention.

AAF



The Alex Archie Foundation
P.O. Box 2436
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Alex Archie Foundation

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Dear Family and Friends of the AAF:

We are hopeful that this newsletter finds you in good health, physically and emotionally as we all move through this time of the Corona Virus.

As it has impacted almost every aspect of life in the past year, so too has COVID 19 put a halt on most activities of the Foundation, and delayed this writing. Despite this, we have felt a sense of urgency to acknowledge now two years of scholarship recipients and great efforts made towards increased mental health awareness and suicide prevention at Pomperaug High School, The Hill School, Brown University and the communities in which we live. (Please note: all photos in this issue were pre-COVID 19.)



2019/20 PHS recipients: Katie, Mia, Catherine, and Maddy

To begin with the spring of 2019, the following Pomperaug students received an AAF scholarship, having been selected by their lacrosse coaches and the AAF: Mia Sullivan (University of Lynchburg), Katie Schenk (Endicott College), and Michael Trager (University of New Hampshire). The 2019 Alex Archie Leadership award and the #16 jersey were given to Ryan Paltauf. A special Alex Archie Leadership award was given to Catherine Windover, then a senior at PHS whose efforts on behalf of mental health



Michael Trajer with the Archies

awareness are recognized below. The Bridgeport Youth Lacrosse (BYL) recipient, Sinmisola Lawal, who is attending Albertus Magnus College, shared this about his experience with BYL, "Hello my name is Sinmisola and I am a lacrosse player. BYL was that opportunity for me, the chance for me to build my game in hopes of scholarships and a mission of introducing it (Lacrosse) to more minority students..."



Ryan Paltauf and family

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Jessica Evans



Sinmisola Lawal



Dalond Bidonne & Don Wilson (BYL)

This past spring of 2020, scholarships to Pomperaug students and the Bridgeport recipient were given via Zoom – a new experience for all! And they are: Maddie Villa (Quinnipiac University), Ryan Paltauf (University of St. Joseph), and Jessica Evans was chosen by Maddie to wear #16 in the 2021 season. The Boys' team elected to select an Alex Archie Leadership award recipient when the 2020/21 team is actually underway. Dalond Bidonne is the BYL recipient and is attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Congratulations to the 2019/2020 recipients who all embody the characteristics established in 2008 following Alex's death: love of lacrosse, love of family and friends, athleticism, determination and perseverance. And finally, we would love to acknowledge the work of the 2019 PHS Boys' and Girls' lacrosse teams who raised \$1,000 for the Foundation through the sale of t-shirts, wrist bands and general donations.

The AAF continues to support The Hill School Boys' lacrosse team with an

annual donation as has been the tradition. The Hill lacrosse coaches chose two PG's to wear #16: Patrick Neiswender in 2019 (now at Trinity College), who shared, "When Coach Ide told me I would have the honor of wearing #16 this year, I was speechless... Wearing 16 to me is way more than just a #, it represents Alex, his character, and what type of person he was..." Their 2020 PG was Mack Daniels, now at the US Naval Academy. While Mack never had the chance to play the 2020 spring season for Hill due to the Virus, we were very touched by Mack's willingness to also represent the team for what would have been the first Mental Health Awareness day on the campus. The AAF continues to keep in touch with

our friends at Hill and hope that such a day will happen very soon. All of the abovementioned students were sent to us with true admiration and support of their coaches. We are grateful to all for honoring Alex as they have.

As mentioned above, Catherine Windover was awarded the Alex Archie Leadership award in June of 2019. She is the first young woman to receive this award (it has traditionally been an award within the PHS Boys' team). She was chosen for her outstanding work in the spring of 2019 that resulted in an Active Minds presentation by David Romano (activeminds.org) who spoke first to an all-school assembly of 1,200 students and later that evening to parents. Catherine coordinated a group of student volunteers to assist the Principal and staff throughout the powerful presentation. In the end, Catherine



Mack Daniels, Hill School



Pat Neiswender, Hill School



Parent Session at PHS



David Romano at PHS

was successful in launching an Active Minds chapter at Pomperaug. Catherine is now a student at UCONN, but her Active Minds friends would have held their first mental health day at PHS this spring which the virus unfortunately postponed. Congratulations to Catherine for earning her Girl Scouts Gold Star award for this work at PHS. We appreciate all she did to make mental health and suicide prevention a public concern at Pomperaug. Thank you also to Principal Dr. Jones for his work with the AAF and tremendous support of Catherine.

The Foundation remains involved with Brown University's Active Minds chapter. In November of 2019, the AAF sponsored the presentation of Active Minds speaker Lisa Hamp, a survivor of the Virginia Tech shooting. Lisa spoke about her on-going recovery from that trauma and learning how to live with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. We look forward to more work with the chapter when the virus is under safe control.



Lisa Hamp & Brown Active Minds

The AAF continues to support Bridgeport Youth Lacrosse with an annual donation as well as the ASU Men's Lacrosse team in support of players struggling to meet their financial obligations to the team. A new donation was given this year to Athletes in Action, in support of Caitlin Clarke's internship at Wake Forest where she played Women's Volleyball.

It is also imperative that we recognize our friend and accountant, Jay Witek for his pro bono work for the AAF, and John Balis who is the graphic designer for the newsletter, also pro bono – thank you!

And again with a very heavy heart, we thank Christy and Tom Meyer and the Meyer Family for designating the AAF as one of the memorial donation recipients in memory of their dear son and brother, Paul, who died this past August. Paul and Alex played football together and the Archie and Meyer siblings lives have all overlapped in many ways. We are so saddened by Paul's death and we are determined to honor his life through the work of the Foundation.

Statistics from Stop Suicide Today tell us that nearly 35,000 people die annually by suicide in the US. This is a 35% increase in the last two decades. We need your help to keep the AAF financially sound in order to do more

work to prevent more deaths and increase more awareness. Your on-going loyal support is so needed and greatly appreciated. We will gladly send AAF t-shirts for a small donation of \$25.00. Please email your order (alexarchiefoundation@gmail.com) or send us a note. The AAF can now accept donations via Venmo and Zelle.

Our heartfelt thanks to our loyal supporters and to the Meyer Family. Thank you for keeping Alex, Wade Prajer and Paul in your hearts and memories. Please take good care of yourselves and seek help if you or a family member are in need. We can all work to end the stigma surrounding mental health concerns.



Dawneytoh –
Lisa and Tom Archie
Co-Presidents

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