

Wade Family donates \$21,000 to Jerseyville Parks & Rec Dept. in memory of son, Jonny

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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JERSEYVILLE - In **December 2014**, when **Kimberly and Jon Wade** found out that their young son Jonny had **medulloblastoma**, a type of pediatric brain cancer, it seemed like their world collapsed.

Two days before the anniversary of his diagnosis, little Jonny lost his battle with the terrible disease this past **Christmas Eve**, leaving his parents and twin brother **Jacky** behind.

At **Tuesday's Jerseyville City Council Meeting**, the Wade family had the opportunity to give back to the community that supported them in their time of need.

The entire family approached the Council, including **Mayor William Russell and Commissioner of Public Property Gary Goetten**, and showcased a check for **\$21,000** in donation for the **Jerseyville Parks & Recreation Department**.

Despite her family's loss and the painstaking process of rebuilding a life after such a tragedy, Kimberly Wade has remained strong with a positive attitude and is happy to share this blessing with the community.

"We are so grateful for Jerseyville and how they just came with us along the whole journey. They were by our side for everything that we needed — love, support, faith, all of it," Wade said. "This is just our piece of paying it forward a little bit. Jonny loved playing baseball and I know he's really happy that it's going there."

Her boys had called the ball fields around town home during baseball season. The fact that this donation allows others to enjoy the town's parks in the way her son Jonny has, and how Jacky will continue to do, is truly remarkable.

Jerseyville **Parks & Recreation Director Angela Sullivan** said there are no specific projects that the donation will go to as of yet, beside improvements to the ball fields at Dolan Park or adding additional structures on some of the grounds. Fortunately, the Wade family and the department are closely working together on a vision for the future of the parks in Jerseyville.

"It's an amazing opportunity for not only the department or the city but the residents and the visitors," Sullivan said. "I hope that we can create something that is almost as big and great as Jonny's legacy that he had on the community."

Completely devastated by the loss of their son but driven by their faith and dreams of helping others who have been effected by pediatric cancer, the Wade's real fight was just beginning.

U.S. Representative Rodney Davis became aware of the young boy's heart wrenching story. The life and legacy of Jonny Wade went on reach the U.S. Senate paired with Davis's pleads for the government to support legislation that would increase funding for childhood cancer research.

The bond that the congressman and the Wade family built was insurmountable, leading for Davis to invite Kimberly, Jon and Jacky to **President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address** this past **January**. There, the family was given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to able to meet the Commander in Chief himself and share Jonny's story.