

# Tribute to a hero

Marshfield High  
remembers  
Brooks Singer

By Ryan Bray  
RBRAY@CNC.COM

It takes a special person to really reach out and make a difference in the lives of others. But in the case of Brooks Singer, it was something he did almost regularly in the simplest of ways: a smile, a joke or just the positive energy he rained upon just about every person he met in his young life.

When Brooks, then a sophomore at Marshfield High School (MHS), tragically passed away in his sleep in August of 2003, his family, friends, teachers and classmates were left to cope with the loss of someone who made bettering people's lives a part of his daily routine. And while he's gone, his spirit and memory have not been forgotten and will live on for years to come.

The Singer family hosted a memorial for Brooks at Marshfield High School last week, where State Rep. Frank Hynes, D-Marshfield, Sen. Robert Hedlund, R-Weymouth, and selectman Patti Epstein joined friends and family members to honor Brooks' memory with a plaque that will adorn the school's walls and honor one of its most beloved and sorely-missed students.

"It's a prayer that his legacy and his life touches as many people as possible," said Brooks' father, David Singer. "It really makes the world a better place."

In his 16 years, Brooks made the world a better place for many, particularly his friends and family. All one had to do was look around the school library Wednesday to see the



STAFF PHOTO/CHRIS BERNSTEIN

*David Singer listens to guest speakers during a plaque dedication ceremony for his son, Brooks, at Marshfield High School last week. Brooks passed away in his sleep in August 2003, but his memory is alive and well at the high school thanks to the Brooks' World Travels program.*

effect he had on people. A collage of photos and written reflections from classmates spoke of someone who simply loved his life and everyone who played a part in it, while statements from family, friends and others in attendance cut with the

kind of heartfelt honesty one simply couldn't fake or embellish.

"I've come to know a lot about Brooks, a young man who seized every opportunity in life," Hynes said. "He understood the commonality of humanism, and

he loved life."

One of Brooks' greatest passions in life was traveling, having taken trips with his father to such far off countries as Costa Rica, Peru, Jamaica and Panama, just to name a few. In

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honor of Brooks' passion for traveling, MHS started Brooks World Travels in 2004. The program, which sends a select group of students and academic advisors overseas for a week each year, visited London last year and will return again in May. Dominic Centorino, a teacher at MHS and faculty advisor to the program, fondly remembered Brooks, who was one of his first students upon coming to MHS in 2002.

"It was my worst class," Centorino said with a laugh. "But Brooks was a shining star. He wasn't a part of any clique. He could mingle with anyone."

Brooks' mother, Molly Singer

read a letter written by Brooks in 2001, when he was just 14. It was letter outlining his hopes and goals for the future. He wanted to be a professional skateboarder, move to Egypt and, provided the time and money, buy a part of China to be renamed "Brooksonia." While the letter's wide-eyed innocence and sense of ambition drew laughs from those on hand, there was a sense that had he lived on, he would have made it all happen. He made the best out of life and had the drive to do great things.

"It's important to consider your purpose in life and live each day like it's your last," Epstein said. "I think we could all use that friendly reminder."

In a letter written to his son, David Singer embraced Brooks' unbiased and impartial outlook toward life and those around him.

"We didn't know how much you knew that we were more the same than different," he said, fighting back tears as he read. "I never realized the extent of that until after you left us. I love you Brooks. I love you for that."

Every person dreams of being remembered and leaving behind a legacy. For Brooks Singer, that legacy will live on with every kid who travels the world, or every kid who flashes a smile and goes the extra mile to make someone else's day a little bit brighter. It lives on with every kid who ever dared to dream big and set goals, no matter how high or how extravagant. It lives on with the belief that together we can make a difference in the world around us. His legacy will live on with all these things. But perhaps the inscription on Brooks' plaque says it best:

"To all the students of Marshfield High School, the world is really yours. Bring peace."