

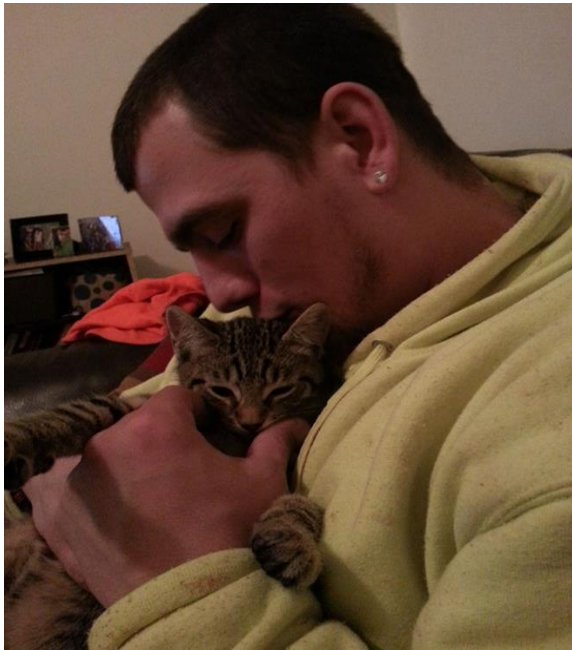
Matthew "Matty" J.

D'Annunzio was a true gift to those who were lucky enough to know him. He touched the lives of so many people with his gentle spirit, all accepting nature, selflessness, and compassionate heart. He had a smile that would light up the sky. So true in fact he was nicknamed "smiley" in grade school. He had a passion to help others though struggled to

find his niche. Without even realizing it however, he helped countless people on a daily basis by lending an ear, a hand, or a kind word. He was so well liked by others he was awarded "Best Personality" in his senior class. There is no question he deserved this honor.

Many people have told us "I will miss his hugs." They go on to say that he always embraced them with a heartfelt "bear hug." He may have only known them a day but he would embrace them like he had known them a lifetime. He cared so much about others. When he was a senior in high school a good friend of his tragically passed away in an automobile accident. Undoubtedly, he was devastated by this loss. Rather than walking on graduation day with a partner as required by the school, he asked for permission to walk alone to hold this place for his friend who had passed to honor him. This was the very essence of Matty.

He volunteered throughout his 27 years at various churches and community centers during the holidays to help those less fortunate obtain gifts for their children. He was the first one to volunteer to offer his time if someone needed the help despite his own internal struggles. He was the true definition of humility. Amazingly, these qualities never changed even during his addiction.



He loved to laugh, he loved his significant other, he loved his family/friends, and he loved animals. Some of his favorite things included playing board games like Scattergories on vacation, family gatherings where he would play with his nieces and nephew, and all the memories he made with his beloved girlfriend in their cozy abode with their kitten, Toby.

Growing up in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, Matty first started experimenting with drugs when he was about 15 years old. He struggled with anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem which stemmed quite a bit from his learning deficit among other factors. He never felt good enough or smart enough and was hard on himself for this. First it was marijuana and alcohol then later stimulants, barbiturates, and opiates. What started out as teenage experimentation quickly led to a downward spiral of addiction. He had come to his family at age 21 opening up about his struggles and asked to seek treatment. We could not have been more proud of him for taking that step. He wanted to get better, he wanted to beat it, he tried, and he fought. He went on 6



more years fighting this battle and trying his hardest to “live a normal life.” He moved out on his own with his girlfriend and obtained a job that he held for three years in HVAC. While he was proud of this accomplishment he still never felt “good enough.” Due to his continued battle with anxiety and depression, the black hole he had fought so hard to avoid was again staring him the face and ultimately led to his demise at age 27. All of his hopes and dreams, all of his family’s hopes and dreams, were shattered on July 4, 2016 when he passed away from an accidental overdose of heroin and Xanax following three months of sobriety.

Fourth of July represents freedom. We believe this symbolizes Matty’s freedom from his addiction and the grip it had on him. While we seek solace in knowing he is finally at peace in Heaven, he will forever be missed here on Earth. We are forever changed and forever heartbroken. We will honor him the way he honored others and keep his memory and mission alive to help others, especially those also struggling from addiction.