

Advocacy Champions

We are excited to introduce the Advocacy Champions Award this year.

There are so many people doing outstanding things in the community that raise awareness about intellectual and developmental disabilities. We want to honor these advocacy champions and thank them for shining a light on the value that all people bring to the community, regardless of limitations.

The Beireis Family were introduced to the disability community three years ago when their beautiful son McCormick was born. Mac's mom Jill said that they did not know about many of the services and supports that were available in the community, until they needed them. And now those services, supports, events, and especially the other families they have met will always be a big part of their lives.

Last March the Beireis family lost their son Mac, and we cannot comprehend their sadness and loss. The loss of Mac was felt deeply by the community of Grand Forks, especially by the disability community. As Mac's family and friends grieved, they turned tragedy into something bright in the community. They started honoring Mac and his life and his memory through #MacImpact. And it has been a joy to watch.

The Beireis family have done many things in Mac's honor, participating in Spin for Kids, running with a team in the Wild Hog marathon, donating his backpack and school supplies to his preschool class, donating a basket to Stetson's Halloween Bash, and more. Jill said they want to celebrate Mac's life every day, so they have done things on random days throughout the year in his memory. This fall, Jill surprised her husband Allen with a bench that says "Mickey Mac" on it, and it is located at the Altru Performance Center. The Beireis family plans to continue to put benches around town in honor of their son, and to share his impact with others.

Thank you Beireis family for sharing your son with all of us and impacting the community in such a powerful way. It is an honor to present this year's Advocacy Champion Award to Allen, Jill, Rosalie, and Annabelle Beireis.