

# Christopher Rieb Fund helping out young athletes

## Memory lives on

**By Rich Remmers**  
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As members of Watertown's various hockey teams get ready to compete in their respective state tournaments, a former Laker standout and state champion continues to be remembered with the help of the Watertown Area Community Foundation.

Chris Rieb was the top scorer on Watertown's varsity boys hockey team as a junior and also helped lead the Lakers to a state championship in 2007 as a senior. He scored two goals in Watertown's 4-3 overtime victory in the title game. Hockey, along with other sports such as baseball and golf, played a big role in the short life of Rieb, who passed away



Courtesy photo

Members of the 2007 Watertown Lakers and their fans celebrate winning a state championship with an overtime victory. Chris Rieb, who passed away in 2015 at age 26, was a big part of that winning team. Rieb's memory lives on now through the Christopher "Chris" Rieb Fund, which gives back to young athletes in the community.

on March 15, 2015, at the age of 26.

While his life was cut short, his memory and influence continue to live on through the

Christopher "Chris" Rieb Fund.

The fund was set up by his parents — Dr. Mark and Susan Rieb — under the guidance

of the Watertown Area Community Foundation as a way for Chris to be remembered while also giving back to the youth in the community.

"When Chris passed away, a lot of people gave to his memorial and the Watertown Area Community Foundation has been a good way to give back in his name and memory," said Dr. Mark Rieb. "We decided to use the fund for youth sports programs and we just want to see as many kids take advantage of it as possible."

Once the Christopher Rieb Fund was established, young skaters were soon taking advantage of the fund. For the first couple of years, the Riebs opted to purchase hockey jerseys for youth skaters



in the Watertown Park and Rec program. The youngsters all received a jersey and were able to wear those jerseys over a couple-year period while in the program.

The Watertown Area Community Foundation played a big role in making those jerseys a reality.

“The Community Foundation helped us start the fund and it’s worked out great. They’ve been fantastic by helping start it and by promoting it,” said Dr. Rieb. “They do a good job of letting the community know what’s available through their foundation.”

The Christopher Rieb Fund may soon be finding other ways to give back to the community, also. While handing out jerseys has been a blessing for many young skaters, the Rieb family is looking for other ways to use the memorial funds to help the youth in the community.

“We’re looking at doing it on a grant basis. We’re concentrating on youth sports because Chris enjoyed hockey and baseball and other sports,” said Dr. Rieb. “We don’t know what the needs are out there and if some organization were to approach the foundation for help, we want to be flexible with the funds. We want to help out as many kids as we can so they can enjoy these activities.”

The Watertown Area Community Foundation, celebrating its 40th year, has been no stranger to promoting winter sports and activities for area youth.

In 1986, the Watertown Area Community Foundation board awarded a grant to assist with the ice arena’s capital campaign. Another grant in 2002 supported the purchase of additional skates so more would have the opportunity to rent them at the ice arena.

“Whether that support was from the Foundation or from a donor’s fund, sometimes the phrase ‘Cold nose, warm heart’ rings true,” said Watertown Area Community Foundation Executive Director Jan DeBerg. “Such is the case for donors Mark and Susan Rieb who established the Christopher ‘Chris’ Rieb Fund to support the passions of their late son — passions that included hockey. Their story truly warms my heart — even in the coldest winter.”

Gone are the days that saw Chris gliding around the ice or cruising around the baseball diamond, but his memory will never be gone with the help of the Christopher Rieb Fund and the Watertown Area Community Foundation.