



## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2018084

DATE: 24 October 2018

RE: Bench dedicated to memory of Christopher Baxter

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – A young man with a big smile whose joy in life was bringing laughter into the lives of his family and friends was remembered on Oct. 24 when a unique bench was dedicated to the memory of Christopher Baxter.

Baxter, a former member of the Amherst Youth Town Council who died a year ago, was one of the sparkplugs behind the creation of the Lions' Skate Park. The bench, made from skate boards donated by his friends, sits overlooking the park he helped bring into existence.

In an email read at the dedication, lifelong friend Ashley Bickerton, who now lives in Toronto, said: "Some days heaven may seem far, but Chris has never left our sides and he is strongly with us today. For many, this skatepark will always be a place to remember and share great memories of our fun, loving, strong-willed friend. Now we have a beautiful bench made out of our friends' boards to sit and do just that – anytime we like.



**Tammy and Peter Baxter sit on a bench dedicated on Oct. 24 to their late son Christopher, who died a year ago at the age of 22. In his teen years, Christopher was on the first ever Amherst Youth Town Council and was instrumental in getting the Lions' Skate Park built beside the Amherst Stadium. (Tom McCoag / Amherst Bureau)**

"This means so much to each and everyone of us. ... Let our hearts be filled with the many



memories we share and remember how much Chris loved having everyone together.”

Christopher, was 22 when he died on Oct. 26, 2017. In his teen years, he became a member of the first Amherst Youth Town Council and it was during those years that he worked with many others to make the skate park a reality.

“Christopher was an avid skateboarder,” his aunt, Grace Jarvis, remembered. “When I heard of his passing, I felt we should do something in his memory because of the big part he played in obtaining the skate park.”

So did family friend Mike Clark. He approached Christopher’s parents Tammy and Peter Baxter with the idea of doing something at the skate park to honour Christopher, after having a chat with his own son while at the skate park.

“Mike asked his son if he knew the role Christopher played in getting the skate park and his son didn’t know the contribution our son had made,” Peter recalled. “That’s when Mike approached me at work and wondered if it was alright for him to do something to remember Christopher’s involvement,” Peter recalled. “I immediately said yes.”

Clark started on the project, but worked called him to Labrador and the project slowed. When Jarvis brought a similar idea up to the family, Peter put her in touch with Mike, who had previously approached members of Amherst town council.

The connection was made again and Jarvis was put in touch with Mayor David Kogon and Recreation Director Bill Schurman.

“I thought it was a great idea to honour Christopher,” Kogon said. “Despite his young years, he contributed greatly to the town by first being on the very first Amherst Youth Town Council and second by being one of the driving forces behind the creation of the skate park. His contribution to the youth council and to the development of the skate park truly help make Amherst a great place to live, work and play.”

It’s unclear who came up with the idea the bench should be made from skateboards, but the idea caught on with Christopher’s friends who donated their own boards so the bench, made by Rick Gilroy, could become a reality.

“To know his friends loved him that much that they would hand over their stuff to do this is kind of overwhelming,” Christopher’s mom, Tammy said, her voice cracking. “It’s a great way to remember him.”

“There were a lot more players in getting the skate park than just Christopher,” interjected Peter. “That they chose to honour Christopher this way, I think that’s a great honour.”



“One of big takeaways we’d like people take from this is that it doesn’t matter if you’re 10 or 110, you have a voice and you can help change a community. When Christopher was on the Amherst youth council, he was 13. The creation of this park happened between when he was 13 and 16. As a young teenager, he helped make a difference.”

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