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# Lower Providence *Living*



## Remembering Morgan

E. Morgan Heckler Foundation

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# Lower Providence *Living*

## PUBLICATION TEAM

**Publisher:** Beth Ann Bittner Mazza



**Content Coordinator:**  
Luciana Bove  
lbove@bestversionmedia.com



**Designer:**  
Nathan McRee



**Contributing Photographer:**  
Megan Pinto  
Holding Hope Photography  
holdinghopephotography@hotmail.com

### Advertising

Contact: Beth Ann Bittner Mazza  
Email: bmazza@bestversionmedia.com  
Phone: 484-213-6382

### Feedback/Ideas/Submissions:

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## Dear Friends and Neighbors,

*“Love is how you stay alive, even after you are gone.”* – Mitch Albom

Experiencing the loss of a loved one is never easy but losing a child shatters the normal cycle of life. Only parents who lose a child can know the depths of grief. It is not just an event in life but an indescribable journey of survival that begins the day the child passes and ends the day the parent joins them.

A child's soul never dies, it lives on in the hearts left behind. Memories bring comfort and peace. And in honoring their life, they live forever.

The E. Morgan Heckler Foundation was established to celebrate the spirit of a son, friend, and teammate. A vehicle for healing, education, compassion, and generosity, it is also an effort to empower young people with a passion for learning and making an impact on the world around them. In sharing Morgan's life and story, it is the foundation's aspiration that together we can make a difference.

If you are experiencing grief and trauma or would like to support the mission of the E. Morgan Heckler Foundation, please reach out to them at [info@EMorganHecklerFoundation.org](mailto:info@EMorganHecklerFoundation.org).

This story could be anyone's story. It is our hope that in sharing and educating, it will never be yours.

*With Much Love and Gratitude,*

*Beth Ann Bittner Mazza*

Publisher

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# Remembering MORGAN

Amy and Grant at the Methacton High School baseball field, where they spent so much time proudly watching Morgan play.

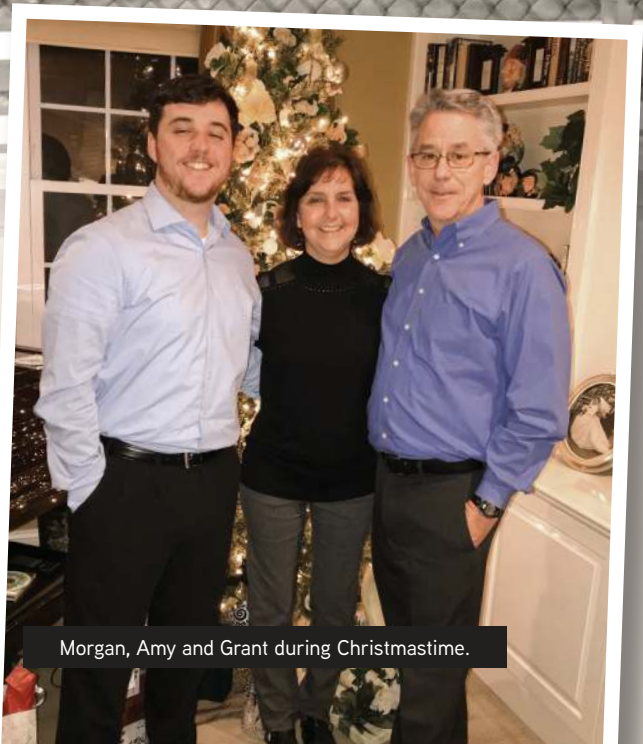
## E. Morgan Heckler Foundation

Story by Luciana Bove

Inside cover photo by Holding Hope Photography

**G**rant and Amy Heckler met after college. They were married in 1991 and bought their first house in Phoenixville. Their son, Morgan, was born November 19, 1999. Having both grown up in Audubon, the Hecklers decided to move back to the old neighborhood when Morgan came along. In 2002, they bought Grant's father's house, which has been in the family for over sixty years. Grant explains, "All of our childhood memories were from this neighborhood. Amy grew up in the same neighborhood so coming here was a natural fit for both of us. The neighborhood is essentially the same as it was when we were growing up and that was a primary draw for us."

There were plenty of neighborhood kids for Morgan to play with and Amy and Grant became friends with their parents. He tells us, "It was safe and quiet, just like when we were kids."



Morgan, Amy and Grant during Christmastime.





Amy, Morgan and Grant at the Methacton Baseball Field on Senior Day.

Morgan's favorite thing was baseball. He loved playing baseball. He played for ARA from little league through high school and legion. He went on to play club baseball in college. Grant says, "Some of our best memories were the four of us; Amy, her

folks, Barbara and Rusty, and me watching him play."

Morgan went to Audubon Elementary, Skyview, Arcola and graduated from Methacton High School in 2018. He went to Bloomsburg University majoring in mass communications. He loved being a Huskie. Morgan had many friends. He grew up happy, with parents that loved him.

Preparing for his senior year at Bloomsburg Morgan returned to school in August 2022. He was excited about the upcoming year and graduating in May. He had plans to meet up with a few friends to celebrate being back in town and kicking off the year.

On August 20th, 2022, at 3am Grant and Amy were awakened by a loud knock on their door. On the other side of the door stood two Lower Providence Police officers preparing to deliver the most toxic words a parent can hear confirming the worst fear they can fathom.

Morgan was found unresponsive in an off-campus apartment and had passed away.

Over the next months the Hecklers



E. Morgan Heckler, Class of 2018

were able to piece together what had happened. Three of the four friends were poisoned by a combination of fentanyl and Xylazine, substances that they were completely unaware they were ingesting. They immediately passed out and the fourth called the police who arrived there within five minutes of the call. The officers administered Naloxone (aka Narcan) to the unconscious students. Two were revived,

>>>> continues on page 8

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but Morgan was not. Morgan died between 2:15 and 2:45 on Saturday, August 20th at just 22 years old.

Morgan was extremely social and liked by many. His friends' parents would always tell Grant and Amy that he was super charming and polite. His life celebration was attended by over 300 family members, fellow and former students, and friends. At this event, someone turned to Grant and asked if he was going to start a foundation. He hadn't previously given it any thought. He looked to those that were right around him at that very moment; those that came to support him and Amy, Morgan's peers who cared about and loved him, their family, and it was then and there that he decided he was going to move forward with this endeavor and honor Morgan's memory. He called on a close friend of Morgan and with some help, they put together a group of five people to get started.

**The mission of the E. Morgan Heckler Foundation (EMHF) is to:**

- Educate our community about the dangers of fentanyl and fentanyl poisoning
- Provide free Naloxone and test strips
- Award the Annual E. Morgan Heckler Scholarship to a Methacton High School senior's continuing education
- Provide counseling to people who may not be able to afford it

Tragically, Morgan was one of the more than 70,000 Americans who died of fentanyl

poisoning in 2022. The foundation focuses on providing people with knowledge about fentanyl poisoning, to recognize and avoid fentanyl, and to be able to help those who may be in trouble with fentanyl and other opioids.

The board currently consists of seven members, three who have deep non-profit experience. There is also an advisory board of eight of Morgan's friends and peers. The fact that these eight young folks who are completing their higher education and beginning their careers, still find the time to serve on this board speaks volumes about who Morgan was to those around him. When asked why it was important to serve on this advisory board and remember Morgan, here is what they said.

**Justin Leggin, MHS Class of 2018, Class President:**

"Morgan and I were in the same graduating class at Methacton. Ironically, how Morgan and I knew each other was a joke in our friend group because we cannot remember how we met. All we knew was that it's been longer than we can trace back to a middle school or high school conception. What drove me to be on the advisory committee? I first joined because it felt right to support Morgan and his family by doing so. Eventually, I came to the realization that this was a lifelong commitment of mine. Being friends with Morgan for so long, it was always clear that he was the poster child for "do what you say, say what you mean." He was always there for me or our other friends whenever we needed him. If he made a promise, you could bet that he was keeping it, and he never went back on his word. Morgan was someone I always looked up to because of that; you always knew you could rely on Morgan. Since Morgan has passed, my way of carrying him with me is to embody his commitment for doing what you say, and saying what you mean. Being a part of this foundation and sharing Morgan's story to prevent this from ever happening to someone else is a way for me to still feel connected to Morgan and embody the principles that I always looked up to in him."

**Sam Hackenberry, Longtime friend:**

"I have been a friend of Morgan's since childhood. I wanted to serve on the advisory board because he was such a bright light for everyone that he knew. I wanted to keep that spirit alive for those who knew him and for



Amy with some of the players from the Villanova baseball team at the first Scavenger Hunt.

those who did not have a chance to meet him. I feel that the work of the foundation is important as it is a way to help educate others about the dangers of fentanyl and have the chance to help have the opportunity to save lives."

The foundation just marked its one-year anniversary and has made great strides within that year.

As the foundation matures, it will continue to develop and roll out more programs to combat this crisis.

The first presentation, a very difficult one, was given by Grant and a moderator at Bloomsburg University. The university was very open and supportive to have him there. Grant told Morgan's story, explained the dangers of fentanyl and fentanyl poisoning. The university now has the antidote discreetly available at no cost throughout the campus in the hopes of combating this lethal substance.

Just this past February, Grant and other board members of the foundation made ten presentations over four days to Methacton High School students along with the support of the Lower Providence Police Department. They told Morgan's story and armed their audience with information to protect themselves and their friends. Grant explains that as he presented, his voice was the only sound in the auditorium. The students listened intently as Grant detailed what had happened to his son. Some knew Morgan, some knew of him, and some didn't know him, but many could relate that what happened to Morgan could easily be their friend, a relative or even themselves. Grant included staggering statistics such as Fentanyl overdoses are the number one killer of people from age 14 to 49 in the United States.

At the end of his presentation, some



Sharon Gamble (front R), board member and Treasurer, with her family at the first scavenger hunt.



students came up to Grant to share their similar experience in their lives and some shared how the antidote had rescued loved ones. Grant even received an email from a parent explaining how, after their children heard the presentation, their family sat around the dinner table and talked about it. Grant says that the feedback is what validates the work he and the foundation are doing. If he could prevent this tragedy from happening to other families, the time and work are worth it. These services are available free of charge to any group who thinks their members may benefit from it. The hope is to continue the presentations throughout other school districts.

The foundation also looks forward to granting its second Annual E. Morgan Heckler Foundation Scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 to a Methacton Student in May. Looking into the future, they hope to create a scholarship in Morgan's honor for a Bloomsburg University student.

Currently they are developing a Narcan distribution program to get this life-saving medicine into more hands to be prepared to help if needed. Finally, the foundation is working on a program to form a bank of mental health care providers to counsel people who may not otherwise be able to afford it.

All of their work cannot be done without capital which is why fundraising is a significant part. The inaugural year brought two fun, successful events. The first was a Scavenger Hunt throughout Phoenixville in June attended by 168 people. The second event was Morgan's Birthday Trivia Night in November attended by over 100 people. Look out for this year's EMHF Scavenger Hunt on June 22nd! Like last year it will be on a Saturday afternoon in Phoenixville. Teams scour the area around Bridge Street to find clues. The team that collects the most clues wins! There is a team spirit award, raffles, and more! It's a great time for the whole family.

These events and the work of the foundation

takes a village. Volunteers are needed as committee members, delivering the antidote, fundraising committee, events and marketing. Without volunteers, it cannot succeed and ultimately combat this devious toxin that is plaguing our society.

If you would like to learn more about the work of the E. Morgan Heckler Foundation or to volunteer visit;

Email: [info@EMorganHecklerFoundation.org](mailto:info@EMorganHecklerFoundation.org)  
 Instagram: [@emorganhecklerfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/emorganhecklerfoundation)  
 Facebook: E. Morgan Heckler Foundation  
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## 2024 Scavenger Hunt

June 22nd 2:00 to 5:00pm  
 Bridge Street in Phoenixville

Fun, friends, prizes, raffles, and food and drink specials. Everyone is welcome! Supporting the E. Morgan Heckler Foundation a PA 501(c)3.

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 ENGAGE, EDUCATE, EMPOWER**

More info at [EMorganHecklerFoundation.org](http://EMorganHecklerFoundation.org)  
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Friends and family having a great time at the E. Morgan Heckler Foundation's first Trivia Night.



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