



Dear Friends and Family,

On March 4th, two relay teams representing the **Matt Blackwell Foundation** will travel to Myrtle Beach, SC to participate in the Myrtle Beach Marathon. Each relay team will go the 26.2 mile distance, and will do so not only to support the continuing work of the Foundation, but to remember two very special people and the love so many of us will always have for them.

This year marks the 16th anniversary of the **Matt Blackwell Foundation**. To look back and realize the number of young lives that have been touched by the Foundation's work is gratifying for so many of us. Our success through the years would not have been possible without the support of those who believed we could make a difference in our community and beyond. The Foundation continues to support our youth in many areas throughout Lancaster County. In 2016, we established a scholarship endowment in Matt's name at Clemson University. The recipient will always be a Lancaster County student and the first scholarship was awarded last spring to a wonderful student from Buford High School. The Foundation also continues to award its annual Player's Player Scholarship to a freshman baseball player at the University of South Carolina – Lancaster.

As with any foundation, fundraising is crucial. It is a necessary ingredient for an organization, like our own, to succeed and reach its goals. In 2005, Matt's uncle, Mark Blackwell, recognized this need and decided to create his own personal fundraiser by attempting to run a full marathon in Matt's honor. He not only succeeded in completing the 26.2 mile run, but well exceeded his fundraising goal for the Foundation. Mark ran many other races for Matt after that, including an astonishing 51 miler in 2008. As the years went by, others ran with him in this annual event, and thousands of necessary dollars were raised. And all because Mark had the vision and was bold enough to take that first step many years ago. Sadly, Mark is no longer here to run his race as he passed away last spring after a yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer. But his spirit still runs with us and inspires us to stay the course and to continue making a difference. For that, and many other reasons, we dedicate this year's Team Matt run to Mark as well as Matt, two precious souls who left us far too soon.

To the many of you who have received a similar version of this sponsorship letter in the past and have donated generously, we say THANK YOU. We, again, ask you for your prayers and support. Any donation will be much appreciated and 100% of all funds raised will go to **The Matt Blackwell Foundation** and its mission.

Your tax deductible donations can be made by check, credit card, or PayPal. Make checks payable to:

The Matt Blackwell Foundation
PO Box 188
Lancaster, SC 29721

To pay by credit card or PayPal, go to our website at www.mattblackwellfoundation.org and follow the instructions.

Thank you, in advance, for supporting and honoring Mark and Matt.

God Bless,

Larry & Jan Blackwell