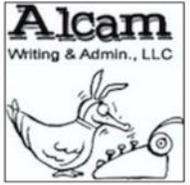


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More of the Best of the Valley

January 23, 2018

## Late Seymour teen's sparkle lives on at cheerleading competition

By Patricia Villers

SEYMOUR - Seymour High School cheerleader Nina Poeta, who passed away in 2014 at age 17 from an inoperable brain tumor, left a trail of glitter wherever she went.

And witnessing the love shown Saturday to her parents, John and Dorie, by friends, coaches, and community members it was clear to a reporter Nina's sparkle continues to shimmer.

On Saturday 30 teams from across Connecticut took part in the 10th annual Seymour Wildcat Open cheerleading competition at Seymour Middle School. It was the third year the event was named "Bring It On For Nina."

Dorie Poeta said Nina had a sparkle about her that would light up a room. Nina has an older sister, Cara Poeta, with whom she was very close.

Nina's sparkling smile and outgoing personality combined with amazing athletic ability was a perfect fit for her love of cheerleading.

Dorie Poeta said she was amazed by how the cheerleading competition has grown. With so many teams participating it has expanded to two sessions.

"We're so blessed to have this cheer family," Dorie Poeta said with tears in her eyes, as person after person walked up to her and gave her a hug.



"We're so grateful to live in the Valley," she said. "The kids are great; they did so much for Nina."

Continued on P.2



## Late Seymour teen's sparkle lives on at cheerleading competition



*Continued from P.1*

Nina's parents were selling bracelets and car stickers and raffling off Poeta Porketta - a community favorite created by John Poeta - to raise money for a scholarship fund they started in Nina's memory.

Dorie Poeta said the fund gives out \$1,750 in annual awards. They include a \$250 Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley Trail of Glitter Award, a \$500 Trail of Glitter Scholarship at Seymour High School, and a \$1,000 Connecticut State Cheerleader Award.

The Poetas recently established a fund at the Valley Community Foundation. "We hope to grow the Nina fund to the point where the scholarships are perpetual, permanent," Dorie Poeta said.



### Results - Seymour Wildcat Open 2017

#### All Girl Varsity Large

1. Shelton
2. Fairfield Ludlowe
3. Fairfield Warde
4. Ansonia
5. New Fairfield

#### All Girl Varsity Small

1. Oxford
2. Danbury
3. Watertown
4. Joel Barlow
5. Holy Cross

#### Co-Ed

1. Staples
2. Norwalk
3. Greenwich

#### Junior Varsity

1. Danbury
2. Watertown
3. Ridgefield

#### Middle School

1. Danbury Jr. Hatters
2. Great Oak
3. Seymour

Jessica Young - Head Coach, Seymour Varsity Cheerleading  
 Chrissy Manion - Assistant Coach, Seymour Varsity Cheerleading

## Living with a disability means change is constant

*The ideal man bears the accidents of life with dignity and grace, making the best of circumstances.*  
- Aristotle

ANSONIA - Change is inevitable.

I say this as someone who has had to ambulate by wheelchair since late 1995, itself a major life change. I imagine no person would choose a wheelchair - but when change is thrust upon you, perhaps you *should* accept it with dignity and grace.

I've been driving three different vans since 1996, transferring into the driver's seat and that has been changing over the decades, and not for the better:

Transferring from the wheelchair has become rather problematical. It is getting harder to make a clean transfer from the wheelchair to the driver's seat and back.

Likewise, working the old style right angle hand controls (to go/stop) is more difficult. When cold, driving with hand controls has become more difficult, thus driving is more of a challenge.



Transferring from driver's seat to current wheelchair driver  
Vehicle 3, 2008 Dodge Grand Caravan. Taken Oct. 2012



Transfer seat, wheelchair driver Vehicle 2, 1998 Ford  
E-150, 1998-2010

Given that we live on the Ansonia Hilltop up Hill Street at a 13° slope, it is much harder to get home.

It was inevitable that I would have to drive from my wheelchair. To simplify things, the solution is to drive from my wheelchair. The van has already been modified with a lowered floor to maintain normal visibility from a wheelchair. This requires a lot of new equipment:

Wheelchair Dock: This replaces the current transfer driver's seat. The wheelchair will be safely locked in place behind the steering wheel. See this video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V\\_T3SIduH10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_T3SIduH10)

Hand Controls (Gas/Brake): I require a different style than I currently use: I require electronic push-rock style hand controls.

This video explains it better: <https://www.mobilityworks.com/hand-controls>.

New wheelchair: one that works with the wheelchair dock. This is an

example of a wheelchair that has 3" of ground clearance:

<https://www.spinlife.com/Sunrise/-Quickie-Pulse-5-Full-Size/spec.cfm?productID=102521>

Costs: A quote for the wheelchair lockdown is \$3,500. This sounds high, but the installation labor alone is more than 22 hours. In that context, the price is more than reasonable. The hand controls are \$1,650, a fair price. The wheelchair with delivery is about \$3,500.

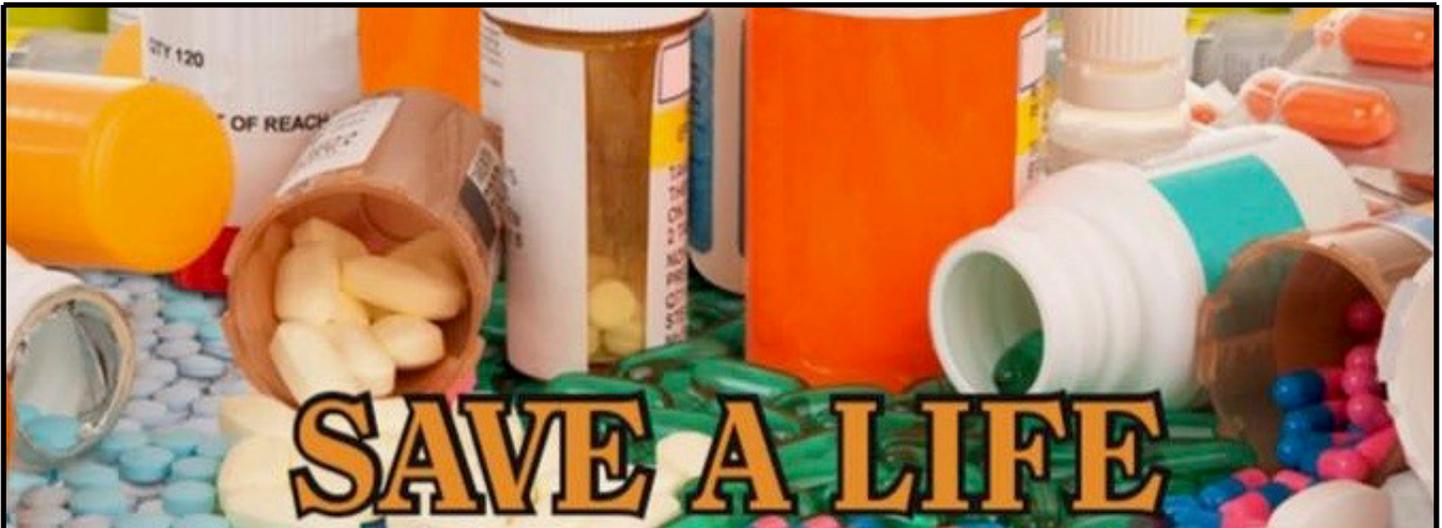
Yes, adaptive equipment is expensive. But what price independence?

As for funding all of this, well, it will be self-funded. I see no third-party who will share any of these costs, and even if they did, it would take far too much time to settle on the equipment needs.

So, we will be our own self-advocates here, and make it happen.



Transfer seat, wheelchair driver Vehicle 1, 1989  
Dodge B250, 1996-1998



This event will teach people in the community how to administer Narcan by using a nasal injector.

This lifesaving Narcan is an opiate antidote. Opioids include, prescription pain pills such as codeine, oxycodone & morphine as well as heroin.

Narcan is a prescription medicine that blocks the effects of opioids & reverses an overdose.

There will be some free Narcan Kits to hand out for those people without insurance or who have higher co-pays. There is also going to be a pharmacist on site to write prescriptions for Narcan for those people with insurance who want a Narcan Kit.

This event is an RSVP event only to the first 35 people who sign-up.

**Being trained in the use of Narcan may just save someone's life.**

**FREE Narcan Training\***

**Date:** Feb. 8

**Time:** 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

**Place:** Seymour Middle School, 211 Mountain Rd.

**Training will include:**

- Overdose Prevention Strategies
- Signs and Systems of Overdose
- How to Administer Naloxone
- Good Samaritan Law
- Support Information and Resources

**\* - Registration is required**

**Narcan kits are available to those who are uninsured**

Please bring your insurance and prescription card for the mobile pharmacist

**Register today!**

**Please RSVP to Rich Kearns**

**[RKearns@seymourschools.org](mailto:RKearns@seymourschools.org) or**

**203-888-26561x1003**

