

# IN MEMORY OF BILLY BURKE

August 21, 1990 - July 28, 2016

*"I will miss you every second of every day" - Momma*



## ABOUT MY SON...

**Who was Billy?** Those who knew him would describe him as **compassionate, funny, edgy, artistic, earthy, free-spirited, spiritual, emotional, sad, sensitive, soulful, melancholy, non-ordinary, a dreamer**...the list goes on and on. **He was 25 years old.** Brown/hazel eyes, brown dreadlocked hair. **A hippy at heart.** Billy loved the Grateful Dead and playing the guitar, **but his passion was skateboarding.**

**He was not only my son, but a wonderful soul whose life ended too soon because of an addiction he could not beat.** Billy had a big heart, some said it was too big. He was known for giving his last penny away. Sometimes that penny was mine - actually most of the time that penny was mine, but I admired his love for the needy. Even if he was in need Billy still gave something.

I believe that he had three loves in his life that lit his soul, Two of which I became very close to. I will think of them always and be grateful for their support and presence in his life. He sought love but in the end could not give it because he didn't love himself.



Though his smile was contagious, his eyes showed a pain and sorrow that love and support could not fulfill. He suffered a head injury when he was 16 where he broke his neck and for the past nine years suffered immeasurably with pain and a constant search for relief from that pain. Unfortunately, it was with "her" that he found a temporary escape. He hid it well from many, especially me. But she ended up sharing his last moments in this life. I hate "her." I will spend the rest of my life finding ways to make others despise "her" as well. Heroin, you will go down and I will do it with honor and love for my son who you took from me. We will help others in honor of Billy, a really cool kid who deserved so much more in life. His legacy will live on.

**My mission is to vindicate my son's tragic death from a heroin overdose and use that pain to help others.** Billy will not be just another statistic. This is just the beginning of my quest to help shed light on heroin's growing grip in our communities. **Heroin does not discriminate; it is happening to your neighbor, your co-worker, your family members and friends.**

- Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
- Opioids kill close to 100 Americans each day.<sup>2</sup>
- From 2001 to 2014 there was a 6-fold increase in the total number of deaths caused by heroin in the United States.<sup>3</sup>
- Roughly one in four people who try heroin will become addicted.<sup>3</sup>
- Four in five new heroin users started out misusing prescription painkillers.<sup>2</sup>
- Heroin is cheaper and easier to obtain than prescription opioids, making it an attractive alternative.
- In 2014, an estimated 28,000 adolescents had used heroin in the past year, and an estimated 16,000 were current heroin users.<sup>4</sup>

I was once there, seeking help for my son with no one to turn to. So I want you to know whether you are an addict or a loved one of an addict there are resources available.

**Don't be afraid to talk about it.** Reach out for help, before it's too late.

**We need to be a caring community that supports one another, rather than ignoring the problem.**

HEROIN KILLS

[www.weremberbilly.com](http://www.weremberbilly.com)

*A special thank you to my beautiful sister "B" and the Peckhaus & Latour/Brocherie family for your overwhelming love and support, Melinda S. for your PR guidance, Sarah and Jim for your marketing help, Above All Recovery, Broward County Police Officers, my team and all of my beautiful friends who provided me time, love and support. I am so grateful for you and thank you from the bottom of my heart.*

Sources: 1) Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 3) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), 4) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)