

JR's Angels

Remembering Kindness and Paying it Forward

On September 11, 2001, the world stopped after the attack on the World Trade Center. The lives of many changed forever, as they were left to deal with the devastating loss of a loved one.

John Rodak was one of the victims that day. He was an investment banker at Sandler O'Neil and Partners, and worked at the World Trade Center.

"John was generous, funny, caring, intelligent, could brighten a room, was adventurous. I could go on and on," said his wife Joyce Rodak. He loved spending time with his daughters, Philadelphia sports, golfing and fishing.

After his sudden death Joyce was left to manage the household and continue to raise their two daughters, ages five and 10 at the time.

Through the next few days after the attack, the community united behind the Rodak family.

"The days following the tragedy were almost a blur. What I do remember is the abundance of people who brought meals, offered to help with the girls, those who

prayed with us and most importantly, those who made sure we never felt alone in our time of need," said Rodak. Entering into what she described as uncharted territory, she said money came in to support the family until she could figure out her next steps.

"After it all came together is when I realized at some point in my life, I needed to pay it forward," she said.



In honor of her husband, Rodak established JR's Angels. On their website, it states JR's Angels' mission is, "To provide help and assistance to communities, organizations and individuals in need." Rodak said it is all to pay it forward from the assistance her family received after 9/11.

JR's Angels works with several charities throughout the region by providing volunteers or monetary donations. They work with the Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce for its annual Breakfast with Santa. The charity encourages attendees to bring food donations to fundraisers for

the South Jersey Foodbank and Cathedral Kitchen.

For individuals and families who find themselves needing



For more information
about JR's Angels visit
the website at
www.jrsangels.org/

help, they too can turn to JR's Angels. Those who have been struck by an unforeseen illness, the death of a loved one or job loss, can submit a letter of need to the organization. If approved by the board, monetary consideration is determined based on the severity of need and financial hardship.

The work JR's Angels performs is why the Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce named JR's Angels its Non-Profit of the Year during the 2019 Community Service Awards ceremony held February 27.

"To be recognized by the chamber and our peers was not something we were expecting nor were looking for. However, this appreciation not only spurs us on to continue our work, but it is an acknowledgment that John's life was not lost in vain, and his values and ever-giving heart continue to live and give to others," said Rodak.

Rodak is hoping the recognition from the award will allow JR's Angels to build their awareness in 2019 and exceed last year's fundraising. Their largest fundraiser, an annual bowling event, was held April 27.

"Our goal is to, on an on-going basis, try to further our reach and let more and more people know about us and our mission, and therefore help even more people," Rodak said. ■

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