



Jason Paul Hannigan

October 12, 2022

Jason Paul Hannigan, of West Hartford, died by suicide Wednesday after a decades long battle against depression. He was 49. He will be remembered for his incredible capacity for love and his willingness to give his time and effort to anybody who needed it.

Jason loved and is loved by his wife, Mary Painter, his children Owen and Jojo; by his mother Yvonne (Durivage) Tafuto, step-father Louis Tafuto, father Peter Hannigan, step-mother Diane (Foster) Hannigan; by his brother Jamie Tafuto and his sister-in-law Lauren (Stabile) Tafuto, his brother Ryan Hannigan; and by his nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins, and countless friends, who referred to him, always, as Hannigan; and of course his beloved dogs, Rocky and Monty.

Jason was born on February 10, 1973, in Hartford. He graduated from Conard High School in 1991 and the University of Connecticut in 1998 with a degree in Economics. But it was as a personal trainer that he found his professional calling. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, Jason was working regularly to help people maintain their physical fitness, though, he once made the mistake of trying to serve as personal trainer for his wife. The results were predictable and comedic.

The pandemic, however, created a void in his professional life and that void was filled by his disease. Those who knew Jason, know that he fought every day to remain alive and tried every treatment and therapy in an effort to feel better. His condition, however, is not understood well enough by medical

science.

More than anything, Jason lived for his family. He loved the book “tuesdays with Morrie,” in which he highlighted his favorite passage where Morrie says, “The fact is, there is no foundation, no secure ground, upon which people may stand today if it isn’t in the family. It’s become quite clear to me as I’ve been sick. If you don’t have the support and love and caring and concern that you get from a family, you don’t have much at all. Love is so supremely important. As our great poet Auden said, ‘Love each other or perish.’”

Jason had so much love, both in his life, and within himself.

During the long stretches when he was healthy, Jason would bring vegetarian chili to a friend’s pregnant wife, befriend folks struggling with sobriety, or deliver gym equipment to a family with a disabled child searching for ways to engage her during the pandemic. He would donate his time on Thanksgiving to food pantries, dropping turkeys off all over West Hartford. He would offer suggestions to gym teachers to help them modify their classes for students with disabilities. It’s hard to count the number of young guys, and not so young guys that he helped to find a program of recovery, because Jason was someone so many people in need loved and trusted. He was your man in the foxhole, the one who always had your back. The trust people had in him saved them.

All of these activities helped Jason become the people’s mayor of West Hartford. Those who accompanied him around town were in for a day where random people would stop to talk to Jason and trade stories about, books, coffee, high school football (does anyone else in town really know who the running back is for Shelton High School?) and of course, the Pittsburgh Steelers. A lucky few were treated to Jason’s story about how, when he was flying unaccompanied on a plane, Lynn Swann, the greatest of all the Steelers’ receivers, invited him to sit next to him in first class. A lifelong Steelers’ fan was born.

The stories could continue for pages, but they will all be a variation of the same theme. Jason Hannigan gave of himself until he no longer could. Jason

cherished his sons Owen and Jojo and instilled in them the importance of being the best person you could be and living life to the fullest. One of his favorite activities was telling stories and sharing the adventures and accomplishments of his children. His family and extended family meant the world to him. He will always be dad. We will miss him.

Calling hours will be Tuesday from 5 p.m. through 8 p.m. at Molloy Funeral Home, 906 Farmington Avenue, in West Hartford. A memorial service will be held Wednesday at 11 a.m. at Rockledge Grille at 289 South Main Street, West Hartford.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks people to consider a donation to The American Society for Suicide Prevention (<https://afsp.org>) or The West Hartford Food Pantry through the Town That Cares 50 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT. Online expressions of sympathy may be made at www.molloyfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Calling Hours

OCT **18**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Molloy Funeral Home
906 Farmington Ave
West Hartford, CT 06119
(860) 232-1322

Tribute Wall

CB

“ I am shocked to hear this news. Jason had such a positive, uplifting energy while working out at the gym. I remember him from weekends when he worked out at Big Sky Newington. He was the King of the kettlebell! My deepest condolences to his family and friends.

Cindy B - October 19, 2022 at 03:19 PM

KH

“ I am so saddened to hear this news about Jason and also inspired to hear how many lives he lit up with his own. It has been far too many moons since I have seen Jason (30+ years worth), but he was my middle school boyfriend for awhile and easily the deepest kid at Sedgwick that I knew. I remember our marathon phone conversations when he went to visit his cousins in Cali like they were yesterday, and how much cooler his bi-coastalness made him. I remember the way he tossed his perfectly feathered hair back, his contagious smile, and the true blueness in his eyes. He was a tender soul, a stellar listener and a lot of fun too! Now I live in California and work to help those suffering from deep depression, substance use and incessant suicidal ideation try and stay alive. It is no easy fight, and I commend Jason for all the joy he spread amidst it. Oh, how the world turns...I wish I had been able to cross your path one last time to see all that light around you and share a laugh about how ridiculous it was that my over-protective father and his friends chased you and yours out of my yard when we were all so young. Perhaps if it weren't for you, I wouldn't have gone to private school! haha RIP, big-hearted Jason Paul Hannigan. I am sending all my love on repeat - to you, your wife Mary, sons Owen and JoJo, and the rest of your beloved family and friends. Always and forever, Kelly

Kelly Hefner - October 19, 2022 at 02:44 AM

KM

Hi Kelly. This is a surreal post to write, but my name is Kevin Murphy. We went to Jr HS together. I read about Jason's death tonight. Of all my friendships in grade school/ HS, his was the only one I cared about after we graduated from Conard. Despite Jason's rather notorious reputation back in the day, his honesty and vulnerability were unique among our group of friends. Such endearing traits that has kept Jason on my mind for 30 plus years. A stereotypically angry youth, I often ran my mouth at parties or the bar, esp with some alcohol in my system. Jason bailed my ass out of more than a few occasions. Protected me really. I work as a psychologist in San Diego. My career to some extent traces back to Jason. Unable to help him - ultimately protect him - the way he always unconditionally helped me greatly motivated me to figure out how to be a steward to others. This is such painful news.

For what's it's worth, your over protective father shaped one of the most important conversation I had/ needed as teen. I never had much of a relationship with my own father. Few tender moments and no fatherly sit downs. Your dad, though, stressed integrity and courage in a conversation that we had one night after he traced a handful of crank calls that I participated in, I think in the 8th grade. He called about 10 of us who were in Mike Deery's bedroom the night of the cranks. He didn't actually call me/ figure out my home phone bc there are 1 million Murphys in CT. But he pressured Mike to coax me to call him. I did, fighting through a minor panic attack to do so. The effect of our 10 minute conversation still resonates today. The call was something of a watershed moment in my development. Beyond the values he bestowed in the call, it gave me a glimpse of what a father-son relationship should be. Truthfully, I am still indebted to your overprotective dad. Thank you for sharing your post. It activated so many fond memories.

Kevin Murphy - November 26, 2022 at 03:49 AM

OF

“ I was very lucky to have Jason as my personal trainer at Big Sky, mentor, and so much more for several years before I moved. He always helped me with any problem that clearly bothered me before my workout session and gave me advice that I will carry on forever. Finding out about his passing was devastating to me. To Jason's family- I cannot imagine the pain and heartache you're feeling. I am praying for your peace and comfort. Rest in peace, Jason. You will forever have a special place in my heart.
Olivia Filipiak

Olivia Filipiak - October 18, 2022 at 11:32 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.



October 18, 2022 at 09:54 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.



October 18, 2022 at 09:00 AM

FW

“ *Another light in heaven! We will miss Jason because he was an absolute light! His warm welcome, warm hugs and genuine care are what I remember the most. His love for my younger son was very heart warming. Mary, Jojo, Owen and the rest of the family, please accept our deepest condolences. The world has lost an amazing and gentle soul. Rest In Peace, Jason.*



Fatmata Williams - October 17, 2022 at 10:16 PM

DM

“ *He always lit up a room with his wonderful light of energy he will be missed . My deepest condolences . I will keep your family in my prayers* ❤️

dominique medina - October 17, 2022 at 09:34 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.*



October 17, 2022 at 08:47 PM

JD

“ Howard and I were so fortunate to have had the opportunity to work out with Jason at Big Sky for several years. He touched our lives in many ways. Jason always encouraged us to get stronger both physically and mentally, which we did. Our bright and early morning workout sessions, were always fun. Jason loved training Howard, who was always excited to try additional weight. Julie was another story, but Jason quickly realized that he just needed to push her to do more. We had many wonderful discussions, and it was obvious that Jason loved his family dearly, and had a very kind, generous, and gentle soul. Jason was so proud of his family, when he told us about Mary’s new job at UCONN, or Owen’s new acting role in CA, or Jojo’s Eagle Scout project. We shared funny stories that only dog owners would enjoy too. Food was a fun topic, as well, especially talking about family gatherings and holiday delicacies. Jason loved his family get togethers so much.

To Jason’s family we offer our deepest sympathy, prayers and love.

To Jason rest in peace, we miss you, and love you.

Julie & Howard Dyson

Julie & Howard Dyson - October 17, 2022 at 05:20 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.



October 17, 2022 at 02:59 PM

BW

“ My sincere condolences to all of Jasons family and friends. Hanny thank you for always making me smile and sharing your time with me . I loved talking Hollywood with you. Thank you for always sharing health and beauty tips 🥹. Rest easy brother, love and respect.

Brendan Wentworth - October 17, 2022 at 02:45 PM

SM

“ Sometimes you just meet those people that you could talk to for hours and never be bored or disinterested. Jason was certainly one of those people in my life. We could talk about sports, work, injuries, but mostly it all came back to talking about our kids. I will miss those conversations more than you know my friend. You fought the fight as long as you could and I now hope you're able to rest easy my friend. Meet you on the other side.

Scott Martin - October 17, 2022 at 01:55 PM

PA

“ RIP my friend. I enjoyed our days working together, the conversations and mostly the laughs. You brought happiness to so many. My deepest condolences to your family and friends.

Paul - October 17, 2022 at 09:05 AM

HW

“ Jason was my good friend at Sedgwick Middle School. He was the funny, kind, mischievous and definitely the most handsome guy at school. I have so many fond memories of Jason during my two years I spent with him at Sedgwick. He always had a smile on his face. I'm so happy that I ran into him often in WH. Sending you all so much love and sympathy at this time.

Heather Walsh - October 17, 2022 at 08:46 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.*



October 17, 2022 at 08:41 AM



“ *Dear Mary,
Sending thoughts, prayers, and strength to you and your family.
This obituary was very beautiful and full of love, my condolences.
Ana Gopoiian*

Ana Gopoiian - October 17, 2022 at 08:19 AM



“ *My deepest condolences to your entire family. I always enjoyed my sideline conversations with Jay, just such a sweet guy. Your tribute to him above is beautiful. I am so sorry.*

John Doyle - October 16, 2022 at 08:43 PM

SB

“ Jason brought so much joy to my life. I have such fond memories of him as a child throwing balls and trying on baseball caps. His loving heart and kindness always radiated. Although I will never understand why such a beautiful soul had to suffer with such a cruel disease, I can only pray that our wonderful Jason is playing catch with his aunt Yvette and is at peace.

Thank you for being such a special part of my life, my dear first nephew. You will always be in my heart.

I saw a rainbow after the storm here yesterday and I knew it was you sharing that radiant smile in technicolor

Love you,
Auntie Sue

Susan Bedrick - October 16, 2022 at 04:13 PM

BB

“ My dear Jason,

From the first time Susan and I took care of you at our apartment in Rocky Hill when you were two, you and I became pals for life. We went shopping, you tried on my baseball caps, you danced on our steel coffee table and we laughed so much. From day one you had a magnetic smile. It was almost predictable that you would grow into that charismatic clone of Tom Cruise. So handsome, so joyful, so full of life, you were a gift to many. Whenever we saw each other over the years, we immediately broke into smiles and laughter as if we were picking up on where we had just left off. Of course, I even forgave you for being a Yankees fan.

Now your beautiful memory lives inside of me. Whenever I think of you in the future (as I often will), I'll see the smile that will light up my heart and improve my day immeasurably. You will always be synonymous with happy thoughts and joyful memories. I know you'll represent us all well on the Heavenly Nine baseball team.

Peace,

Uncle Barry

Barry Bedrick - October 16, 2022 at 04:11 PM



“ *Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.*



October 16, 2022 at 03:48 PM

JO

“ My sincerest condolences to Mary, Owen, and Jojo for the loss of husband, father, Jason. Jason was a big, beautiful soul, with an even bigger heart. He was always ready to encourage, and cheer on the folks he was working with. He approached his craft with in-depth knowledge, humor, and kindness. He was a true inspiration to so many of us at Big Sky. I will miss him always. Rest now in Peace and know that you touched so many lives. Thank you for everything. Jurg and Richard.

Jurg Oggenfuss - October 16, 2022 at 08:36 AM

JS

“ I didnt know you long, but it was enough to know you were a great man. I'll miss sitting next to you in the morning. Rest easy my Good friend.

Joshua Strano - October 15, 2022 at 11:11 PM

JK

“ My deepest condolences to all of J's family and friends. What a tragic loss, what a cruel disease. Remember his light and love and do our best to sustain it.

John Kolega - October 15, 2022 at 04:58 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.



October 15, 2022 at 02:33 PM



“ *Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.*



October 15, 2022 at 02:28 PM



“ *My deepest condolences Mary and the entire Hannibal family.*
Colette Anderson



Colette Anderson - October 15, 2022 at 01:26 PM



“ *Such a sweet and gentle soul. Always with the biggest hugs and the genuine smile and kindest things to say when I ran into him around town.*

Monica Gengras - October 15, 2022 at 08:14 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.*



October 15, 2022 at 04:45 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Jason Paul Hannigan.*



October 15, 2022 at 12:56 AM



“ *A big smile and a hardy handshake whenever I saw him. I've known him for years and he helped so many people find their way to living healthy and loving life. I'll miss you Jason, you made me laugh until my belly hurt.*

Shawn Meehan - October 14, 2022 at 10:47 PM



“ *I've known Jason since the early 90s when he worked at manhattan bagels ,then he worked for me at the brickyard cafe we entered each others lives again at Big Sky in New Britain .We're we shared memories of the old days. I will miss Jason 🙏🙏🙏 RIP BROTHER*

Paulie Tirella - October 14, 2022 at 08:12 PM



“ *Festivus will not be the same without you buddy. I'll miss our times laughing out loud at the gym like a couple of children. You helped me more than you'll ever know and I'll miss you. ❤️*

jay Stuart - October 14, 2022 at 08:00 PM