

Contact: Maggie Rogers  
917-763-5456  
Maggie.rogers@mslpr.com

**Tragedy Turns Into Opportunity -- Untimely Death of Young Iowa Man  
Results in Michael Burke Foundation**  
*Special Website Launches to Benefit Local Iowa Kids*

*New York, NY, September 23, 2005* -- Today a very special website launches in honor of a local Iowa man who died tragically less than two months ago during an unfortunate camping accident in Sheldon, IA. Michael Burke, 27, was enjoying an annual excursion with two close friends (also from Iowa) as they biked across their home state as part of Ragbrai, the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, when tragedy struck and Burke was killed by a fallen tree while they camped for the night. As they mourn the untimely loss of this young man, friends and family have rallied together to create the Michael Burke Foundation ([www.formichaelburke.com](http://www.formichaelburke.com)), an educational organization whose main goal is to provide opportunity for Iowa high school students.

The Michael Burke Foundation was created because it was Michael's dream to give back to the state he called home. He spoke to family and friends about his desire to help young Iowa kids – finding a way to open doors for them and inspiring them to aim high. Each year, the Michael Burke Foundation will provide one local high school senior the opportunity to attend the University of Iowa, Burke's alma mater. "Michael always believed in giving back. He believed in kids from Iowa and wanted to provide them the great opportunities that he was fortunate enough to have," states Bette Burke, Michael's mother.

The first-year goal of the Michael Burke Foundation is to provide a scholarship for one Central Lee High School senior. However, much like Michael himself, the Foundation has larger aspirations. In the years to come, the Foundation hopes to provide multiple scholarships and to expand the [www.formichaelburke.com](http://www.formichaelburke.com) web site so it can serve as a valuable source of information for young college-bound students with online mentoring capabilities.

***Michael Burke Foundation Scholarship Criteria:***

To be eligible for the scholarship students must meet the following criteria:

- Student must be a senior at Central Lee High School
- Must have grade point average of 3.0 or better
- Must be outgoing, social, involved in a variety of activities
- Must embody the energetic, good-natured, make-the-most-out-of-life attitude that Burke was known for

“Many of us remember having Michael as a student,” states Judy Burgin, teacher at Central Lee High School. “He graduated at the top of his class, but he was so much more than just a good student, he was so ambitious and outgoing -- he left quite an impression. This scholarship will be a wonderful opportunity for one of our young students and is a fitting tribute to Michael.”

***How to Apply:***

To apply for the scholarship, students must:

- Compose a 500 word essay on why they deserve the scholarship
- Submit High School transcript
- Provide at least two letters of recommendation (one must be from current teacher)
- *More details re: submission to be released in Spring 2006*

To help raise money for the organization and the scholarship program, various fundraising events will take place throughout the year and will be highlighted on the Foundation’s website. First up is the P.F. Chang’s Rock ‘n’ Roll Arizona Marathon and \_ Marathon on January 15, 2006. Many of Burke’s friends and family will be donning their running sneakers to participate in this amazing race and raise money for the foundation throughout the entire weekend.

Additionally, via the [www.formichaelburke.com](http://www.formichaelburke.com) website, people can donate to this wonderful cause.

***About Michael Burke:***

Michael Burke, originally from Donnellson, Iowa was living in New York City for the past year and a half where he worked as a consultant for Accenture. The son of Thomas & Bette Winnike Burke and brother of Stephanie, Angie and Jennifer, Michael loved life and lived it to the fullest. After graduating as valedictorian of his class from Central Lee High School in 1996, he went on to receive an industrial engineering degree from the University of Iowa in 2001, where he was a member of Theta Tau engineering fraternity. While at the University of Iowa he traveled around the country singing with the Newman Singers. He also studied abroad in Spain, where he became in fluent in Spanish. He loved to travel, spend quality time with friends and family and had a passion for sports including, golf, snowboarding and scuba diving. He enjoyed just hanging out and making everybody laugh, without even knowing that he was leaving something important along the way.

For more information about the Michael Burke Foundation, for details regarding the scholarship program, or to make a donation, please visit [www.formichaelburke.com](http://www.formichaelburke.com).

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