

REMEMBERING DAVID CARSEL

BY LAURI MCKNIGHT

When a work colleague pours heart and soul into a job for his sheer love and dedication, he will never be forgotten. David Carsel was such a person.

In 2006, under then-Executive Director Maryjane Link, Children Awaiting Parents (CAP) had the pleasure and good fortune of hiring David Carsel as financial officer. He was an efficient, organized and jovial addition to CAP. His supervisor at the time—Program Director Patricia Burks—quickly realized David's many additional talents and skills, advancing his position to office manager and finance, and bringing him on in development and event roles as needed. His eye for detail, ability to help set up any type of event, as well as finding amazing auction items, were second to none.

David was able to juggle a mountain of financial obligations while keeping everyone in the office on their toes. Under his care, even the office plants grew wildly, spreading for yards across office cabinets. David was one of those well-liked staff members with whom everyone enjoyed conversing and sharing a good laugh. Without reservation, board and staff loved

and respected him. He was that staff person to whom everyone went for help, advice, support, and even home décor. He had an innate gift for beauty, finding unique antiques that he made into decorative pieces for his home. His kind heart also extended toward animals, especially



to his beloved cat.

Everyone who knew David also experienced his wonderful and quirky sense of humor. He often joked about offering a "special" at CAP: every adoptive family would get two children for the price of one (referring to adoption fees).

David's love and commitment to CAP can never be replaced. He made CAP a priority in his life. At the recent celebration of his life, I had the privilege of meeting numerous people whose lives he touched. In a quiet way, David was the one who demanded perfection, and many of his close friends said they imagined he performed the same way at CAP.

David's talents also extended to figure skating, where, at the Genesee Figure Skating Club, he had many admirers. At his celebration, close friend and fellow skater Marianna O'Brien related David's love and talent for skating over many years, often skating together. Other GFSC members told of David's great skating ability and his love for the sport.

Coming on as CAP's executive director in late 2018, I only had the privilege of working with David less than two years, but—with his thorough knowledge of all aspects of the organization—he was my "go-to." He could figure out the financial issues, pull a budget together in no time, help plan a gala, and keep the office neat. Recently, I struggled with our mutual decision to begin diminishing his hours so he could work toward retirement within the next year. COVID's restrictions





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impacted David's ability to work from the office, so we met every Friday, including a meeting during the week of July 13 with great plans for our office reopening and goals for 2021. But that meeting day would not come. Suddenly and unexpectedly, David was gone on July 16.

Mary Jane Link was so proud she had hired David, who, with his 14 years at CAP, took on the unofficial role as

"CAP Historian" plus so much more. CAP Adoption Specialist/Program Manager Veronica Black related how she, Pat Burks, and David had become family, celebrating holidays together over the years. David supported Veronica in numerous ways both as friend and colleague. His true spirit shown through as an annual REC Center volunteer with Veronica, helping cook, clean and serve meals. "There was no one like David, he

would do anything for anyone," Veronica said. And that was true. During COVID, David supported collections for families and youth, and even donated items for staff that he thought they might enjoy.

CAP will never be the same. It is my hope that David's love and dedication will act as an example—a beacon for the organization as we move into the future without him.

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