



Steve Brooks worked at the Manchester Township company for almost 40 years, and his daughters, Celeste and Zarah, grew up with their dad's coworkers. Zarah (left) and Celeste (right) pose with their dad at Ski Round Top. "Our dad did everything to the fullest. He was a dedicated worker and loved to make life fun."

Maple Press honors lost colleague through United Way campaign

by OUR YORK MEDIA

For 39 years, Steve Brooks' laugh billowed throughout the hallways of Maple Press Company.

His co-workers knew him as the invader of candy jars and the Energizer bunny. He was a positive influence at the company, the guy who'd take the time to learn a little something about every employee. At annual company cookouts, Steve always manned the grill. He'd cook during the day, and then come back later to grill for the second-shift folks.

"That's just who Steve was," his wife, Laurie, says. "He was completely selfless. He respected the guys who worked for him, and he wanted to show them how much they meant to him."

Last June, Steve told his coworkers he was going on a trip to the Smokey Mountains with Laurie. It was the last time they'd see him alive.

Lifelong dedication

Maple Press wasn't just Steve's job – it was Steve's life. The company hired him as a temporary worker in 1980. During the next 39 years, he worked his way up to plant manager and stayed dedicated to the company through the good times and not-so-good times.



When longtime Maple Press employee Steve Brooks died in June, the company decided to run its 2019 United Way campaign in his honor. Brent Halpin, Manager Human Resources, Purchasing, Transportation, and Jim Wisotzkey, Maple Press' chairman, president and CEO, led the initiative.



United Way of York County

Steve's daughters, Celeste and Zarah, grew up with their dad's coworkers at Maple Press.

"They are almost like family," Celeste shares. "I remember my dad staying late to train new hires and do whatever was needed to help other people."

A few years ago, Steve tried to return to work after breaking his back in a bad auto accident, says Jim Wisotzkey, Maple Press' chairman, president and CEO. "It took an almost heroic effort to prevent him from coming to work in a cast without his doctor's approval," Jim remembers.

"Steve just always wanted to be engaged," Jim says. "He wanted to come in, do his work, and be around the people."

When his colleagues heard about Steve's death on June 24, they couldn't believe it. He was 58 years old.

'We wanted to give back for him'

For years, Maple Press organized a campaign for United Way of York County – developing giveaways and raffles to engage employees and raise money for United Way's Community Fund, which supports 67 programs in education, health and financial stability.

"Steve always participated," Laurie says, "He knew the

money went to help others who needed it more than he did."

A few days after Steve's death, the idea came up to run the 2019 campaign in his honor.

"We wanted people to know how much he's done for all the people in the company," Jim says. "He loved giving to people, so we wanted to give back for him."

Remembering the best

"Steve wouldn't have loved the publicity," Laurie says, "but he'd be honored. The more I thought about it, the more it just made sense," she says.

Reflecting on a message that her dad shared with her repeatedly throughout her life, Zarah says, "He always said – no matter what we may be going through, there is someone who has it harder. Enjoy what we have and enjoy life."

The United Way campaign in his honor was a way for people to remember the best in Steve, Jim says, and to give back to the community.

"We saw this as an opportunity," Jim says. "This is an outlet for others to show their appreciation for Steve's life while doing what he loved to do most: helping others."

