Proclamation

ROCKVILLE · MARYLAND

WHEREAS, Mattie Stepanek was an American poet, ambassador, and advocate for peace in our world; and

WHEREAS, at the age of 3, Mattie started to write poetry, to which he referred as his "Heartsongs," enabling him to cope with a rare and fatal form of muscular dystrophy, a disease which also claimed the lives of his sister and two brothers, and

WHEREAS, the message contained in Mattie's "Heartsongs" touched the lives of people around the world, reaching individuals of all ages, races, nationalities, faiths, abilities, and aspirations, and

WHEREAS, after his death on June 22nd, 2004, Just Peace, a collection of essays on peace and Mattie's correspondence with former President Jimmy Carter, was published and awarded the Independent Publisher Gold Medal Award for the Outstanding Book of the Year in 2007 in the Peacemaker Category; and

WHEREAS, Mattie J.T. Stepanek chose to live in Rockville. He loved his City, neighbors and friends; and

WHEREAS, on October 18, 2008 the City of Rockville honored Mattie J.T. Stepanek for his remarkable contributions to his community and to people all over the world by naming its 26 acre park in the King Farm community for him; and

WHEREAS, to commemorate the life and legacy of Mattie, the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation held a number of events including the upcoming Peace Gathering scheduled for Saturday, July 19 from 10:30am – noon at the Mattie Stepanek Park and Peace Garden in King Farm, where neighbors, friends and elected officials will come together and share memories and reflections about Mattie, about peace, and about our community; and

WHEREAS, a new Peace Pole, donated by the granddaughter of the founder of the "May Peace Prevail on Earth" movement after World War II (Yuka Saionji of Japan) will be unveiled at the Peace Gathering on July 19.

NOW THEREFORE, the Mayor and Council of Rockville do hereby proclaim July 17, 2014 as Mattie Stepanek Peace Day and encourage all members of the community to recognize the many contributions of Mattie J.T. Stepanek by **thinking gently, speaking gently and living gently,** the motto by which this courageous young man lived his life.

Bridget Donnell Newton

Bridget Donnell Newton, Mayor

Beryl L. Feinberg

Beryl L. Feinberg, Councilmember

Tom Moore

Tom Moore, Councilmember

Virginia D. Onley

Virginia D. Onley, Councilmember

Julie Palakovich Carr

Julie Palakovich Carr, Councilmember

July 14, 2014