

March 14, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

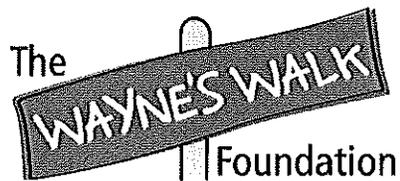
On January 28th of 2007, my life as I knew it was changed forever. My best friend, Wayne Nicholas Lecardo, beloved son, brother, husband, uncle, godfather, and friend, was killed by a teenage drunk driver. It was two days before his 34th birthday. He was on his way home from his job as a Butler at Foxwoods Resort Casino. Wayne, his co-worker, and the teenage drunk driver were all killed. One teenager survived. On the night before Wayne's funeral, myself and two other close friends were nearly killed when our vehicle was rear-ended by another drunk driver a mile down the road from Wayne's home. Although we all survived with varying degrees of injuries, the shock and horror of another senseless drunk driving crash was completely surreal.

As the victim of two drunk-driving tragedies within a matter of three days, I have witnessed first-hand the life-long effects of these preventable crimes. Shortly after Wayne's death, I began the process of setting up a non-profit organization to help prevent these senseless tragedies that occur in our state all too often. In 2014, there were 97 deaths related to drunk driving, equaling 39% of all traffic fatalities. Higher than the U.S. average of 31%, Connecticut has the 5th highest percentage of alcohol related fatalities in the country. This needs to end!

As the Founder and President of the Wayne's Walk Foundation, Inc., I have dedicated much of my life to raising awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving, and I am dedicated to helping victims of these tragedies. Our Victim Assistance Fund is the only one of its kind in Connecticut, and each year we rally hundreds of supporters at our 5K Walk event. But our dedicated all volunteer board of directors sought to do something more. One of our board members suggested a taxi voucher program or a potential partnership with Uber to curb drunk driving...and that's exactly what we have created!

I had heard about Uber in other cities around the country, but was unaware that they were here and active in Connecticut. The decision to establish a partnership with them was solidified when I learned of a 40th birthday celebration in my community. Many of the attendees at the event are people I know, a group of social drinkers, and I knew there would be lots of alcohol at this event. In fact, many of the attendees are people I have had multiple conversations with about their drinking and driving in the past. However, for this recent event, the attendees had planned ahead to use Uber to get to and from the party, leaving their cars at home. This is when I was sold on Uber!

Last month, I was proud to announce that The Wayne's Walk Foundation, Inc. and Uber had created the first-of-its-kind partnership in Connecticut to combat drunk driving. When the Mayor of Stratford, John Harkins, learned of the pilot program and its potential to take impaired drivers off the roads, he donated \$5,000 toward the cause as well. Throughout the month of February—thanks to the Mayor's donation and a generous donation from Paul Pabst of the Dan Patrick Show—Wayne's Walk paid for weekend rides taken within the Town of Stratford between 6pm–2am. The pilot program was so successful that we are extending it indefinitely!



This is a model that other cities can use to drive down rates of drunk driving in their own communities. When residents know that they can request a free ride at their location within minutes, they will undoubtedly leave their car keys behind and choose a safe, convenient, and sober ride home. And after receiving their free ride home, people will learn how safe and easy it is to use Uber, whether the ride is free or not. Unfortunately, we do not have the funds to offer this program every night or at every time when an impaired driver may need it, but after downloading the app and using the service for free, our hope is that impaired drivers will use this option at other times outside of our program and in other towns and cities throughout Connecticut.

As other mayors and elected officials look for solutions to reduce drunk driving and traffic deaths, I hope they will see the value of investing in public-private partnerships with ride-share companies like the Town of Stratford has forged with Wayne's Walk and Uber. A few years ago Uber was not an option in my community. Now that it is here and I have repeatedly used their services, I can say without a doubt, that ride-share companies like Uber are a safe alternative to drinking and driving.

We are doing something in Stratford right now that no one else is doing in the State of Connecticut, and I feel strongly that Stratford's streets are amongst the safest in our state thanks to this new program with Uber. And if other communities around the state help to promote Uber as a safe alternative to drinking and driving, whether through private/public partnerships like ours in Stratford or by simply promoting Uber and other ride-sharing services as an option, Connecticut will have the safest roads in the country!

The feedback we have received to date regarding our Wayne's Walk / Uber Safe Rides program has been nothing but positive. And we receive almost the same response from people when we share the news about this program..."What a great idea!" I thank the Town of Stratford and Uber for pioneering this partnership with us!

Respectfully,

Darin Michael Bershefsky, RN
President
The Wayne's Walk Foundation, Inc.