

# HATS OFF!

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## ...to Stephen Held,

a new career. People he solicited told him they would give to his cause if he would in turn help them with this or that charity. "Everywhere I went, there was another charity that needed help, so I decided if no one would hire me, I'd rather not build at all and just do charity work."

When he heard about Brien and the family's desire for a headstone, Stephen went into action. He learned that Brien's favorite place was a spot in the back yard of his home, so he wanted to make it especially beautiful for the grieving family. He solicited a headstone, beautifully etched with Brien's name, clouds and angels. He went to seven or eight different nurseries, to pavers and concrete companies, and obtained a concrete bench with the same pattern that was etched on the headstone.

Jack and Jenny Alvezios were awed by the beautiful creation in their back yard. Stephen said the cost for this special place would have been \$10,000 if he had not solicited

the materials, delivered them to the site and done much of the work himself. The parents don't have sufficient words to express their gratitude to him and to all who have helped them in so many ways since their beloved son was killed.

Stephen learned about the Justice Coalition from the Clay County Sheriff's Office who told him we were helping the family. He immediately joined forces to meet the Alvezios family's needs - not that he didn't have anything else to do. He supports a wide variety of charities, drawing on resources from his many friends and local businesses.

"I know everybody in town," he says, "so I go to my friends and they make me look good." Working with 14 different restaurants - McDonalds, KFC, Dairy Queen, Sonics, Zaxby's, to name a few - he feeds 85 kids every Friday at the Boys and Girls Club in St. Augustine. He talks to the restaurant managers two weeks in advance to arrange for their



Stephen Held



Jack and Jenny Alvezios with Stephen in their backyard oasis.

donations, picks up the food about 3 o'clock and delivers it to the kids at the Club.

The St. Augustine Community School of Performing Arts, the Adult Retardation Program, St. Gerard's campus (a non-profit Catholic organization for unwed mothers) and Clear Imaging are other charities that receive assistance through his efforts.

Born in Illinois, Stephen came with his family to Ft. Lauderdale when he was 8 years old. After relocating to the Bahamas for several years,

his father bought an estate in Satsuma, and Stephen eventually settled in St. Augustine with his wife, Lori, and three children, Stephanie, Mary and Michael. Lori works as a financial adviser with Modern Woodmen of America, and daughter Stephanie teaches at St. Augustine HS.

Our hats are off to this young man who truly has a heart for anyone who needs help. We're happy to join forces with him as we all strive to make our community a better - and safer - place to live.

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