

The Story of Aidan Miller

Written by Kaitlyn Gilk

Aidan Miller

Aidan Miller was a 16-year-old boy who was very active in his community when he passed away from Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) on July 22, 2019.

Aidan was very involved with his community and at school. He was on the Student Council, played football for the Plainview-Elgin-Millville (PEM) High School Bulldogs, wrestled from ages 5-15, and was involved in his school's FFA Club. Aidan also had been accepted into the Bulldog Ambassadors mentorship program shortly before his death where he was supposed to mentor kids younger than him in school. Aidan was also very active in his church. His family attended Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. He participated in youth activities, was a mass server, and attended Camp Summitt (a Catholic youth camp) every year since 6th grade. Aidan started out as an attendee and then became a part of the Fiat team, or a camp counselor, where he would be a camp leader and lead prayer groups. Aidan also worked extremely hard on his family's dairy farm.

July 22, 2019

The day of Aidan's death was supposed to be a fun day with friends to get together to play Wiffle ball and go fishing. Aidan started his day by doing chores with his friend who offered to help. He then made his way to his friend's house where they had a man-made pond. On his way, they picked up some more friends. After about 20 minutes of being at his friend's house, Aidan was playfully wrestling with a friend in the grass. Then Aidan stopped, took some steps, and went to the edge of the pond, took a knee, and collapsed. After his friends realized he



wasn't playing around they soon realized he wasn't breathing. They immediately called 911 but the call dropped because of the location they were in (very rural with little service). They then called on the landline where a dispatcher began giving them CPR instructions. The

boys continued doing CPR on their friend until 20 minutes later the first responders showed up. Plainview Police took over CPR when they arrived on the scene. They took out their AED but a shock was not advised. When the sheriff's deputy came they took over CPR until an ambulance arrived. Aidan was never taken to the hospital because he was pronounced dead at the scene.

No Warning

Aidan's family had no history of SCA, he had no symptoms and no signs. He had worked hard on the farm that morning and never said he didn't feel good or had visible signs of distress. Once Aidan passed, the Mayo Clinic did an autopsy to determine why Aidan went into SCA. They did not find anything concrete to pinpoint the exact cause of Aidan's death. They thought it was a cardiac arrhythmia that sent him into SCA. Originally Aidan's family thought maybe the acne medication he was on had caused the arrhythmia; since the pamphlet, the medicine came with listed that as a side effect. Aidan's family has since talked to multiple doctors and has been assured the medication had not caused his arrhythmia.

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Karen Miller

Karen Miller is Aidan's mom. Karen admits she barely knew anything about SCA before her son passed away. She says she has learned a lot in recent years about SCA in athletes and young kids. Karen has joined many groups of parents who have lost their kids to SCA. Through these connections, Karen has heard a multitude of stories of kids who had no signs/symptoms and had very similar stories as Aidan. Cardiac Arrhythmia with no family history or apparent symptoms is supposedly rare but Karen finds that hard to believe with the number of stories she has heard over the last 3 years. With the loss of her son, Karen has become an amazing advocate for young athletes and is very passionate about educating everyone she can on the importance of AEDs. She says she wants parents to know being an athlete puts kids at higher risk of SCA and they should be educated on it.



Karen has always known AEDs were important but didn't know to what extent. That all changed when Karen's family was watching the MN wrestling tourney in March 2020 when a wrestler collapsed and face-planted into the mat. Cameras were live and they watched people begin to do CPR and someone come running in with an AED. The AED saved the kid's life. He had a heart condition he did not know about and the problem was eventually corrected through surgery. After watching this event take place Karen finally realized how incredible these devices are.

Karen then reached out to PEM High School and they only had 2 portable units for the athletic events, plus the indoor units within the school. They did not have AEDs at practice, bus rides, and other places the athletes would be throughout their season.

Karen thinks athletes need access to AEDs at all times because you can never predict when an SCA will occur. Karen decided to hold a Facebook fundraiser to raise money for an additional AED for PEM. The fundraiser went so well that Karen and her family were able to purchase 6 portable AEDs for the school through that small fundraiser.

Another amazing thing that Karen and her husband do is give scholarships to PEM High School graduates. One year a friend of Aidan's parents helped them hold a benefit to raise money in memory of Aidan. One of Aidan's classmates was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma that year as well and they decided to do a joint fundraiser. They split the money between her and Aidan's family. Karen was able to buy 3 more AEDs, and provide more scholarships. Karen decided she wanted to get the word out to other high schools. She started reaching out to surrounding high schools and telling Aidan's story. She would share that 50% of SCA cases have no signs or symptoms and sometimes a cause is found and other times there is no cause found. Karen got multiple high schools on board and they agreed to receive donated AEDs. Karen was able to **donate to 5 high schools in memory of Aidan. Plus the 9 to PEM.**

Karen is now working with Advocates For Health to place Outdoor AED Smart Monitored Cabinets in Plainview and surrounding communities.