



WHEREAS, Mattie J. T. 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, which he referred to as his “Heartsongs,” enabling him to cope with a rare and fatal form of muscular dystrophy, a disease that 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 22, 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 June 2026 marked the 22nd anniversary of Mattie’s passing.

WHEREAS, the Stepanek family chose to live in Rockville, and Mattie 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 26 acres of park area in the King Farm community for him; and

WHEREAS, the Mattie J. T. Stepanek Foundation will host “Toast2Peace on Peace Day” celebrating Mattie’s 36th Birthday, and the inaugural Cornhole for Peace Tournament to benefit the Mattie Stepanek Peace Foundation - July 11, 2026, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., - World of Beer - 196 E. Montgomery Ave., Rockville, MD.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Mayor and Council of the City of Rockville, Maryland, do hereby proclaim July 17, 2026, as Mattie J. T. 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.




Mattie Stepanek, Mayor


Kate Vukobratovic, Councilmember


Uzo (Zola) Shae, Councilmember


Barry Jackson, Councilmember


Melissa Valeri, Councilmember


David Wyles, Councilmember


Adam Van Grack, Councilmember

June 1, 2026