

# Thousands remember Humboldt Broncos players at Rogers Place memorial

Madyson Bruneski says her Christian faith was the only way she could come to terms with grief after a tragic bus crash claimed the life of her close friend Stephen Wack and 15 other members of the Humboldt Broncos hockey organization.

“It’s been honestly the only thing really getting me through it,” said Bruneski, who attended an April 18th public memorial for the crash victims from the Edmonton area. “I try to talk to Stephen as much as I can. Even though he’s not here anymore, I know he’s there with me.”



**Madyson Bruneski**

She was one of thousands who gathered at the Rogers Place arena to honour Stephen Wack, 21; Jaxon Joseph, 20; Logan Hunter, 18; and Parker Tobin, 18. They died when the Broncos team bus collided with a tractor trailer on April 6 near Tisdale, Sask.

Photos of the four players – on and off the ice – were placed in the front of the Rogers Place stage, surrounded by flowers, jerseys and handmade signs as friends and families shared memories of their sons, brothers, godsons and friends.

Mourners wore team jerseys, and ribbons of green and yellow – the Broncos colours. As the arena was bathed in green light, the names of all 29 victims of the bus crash scrolled on a screen.

For many, faith and love have been the only ways to make sense of this tragedy.

Sean Brandow, the Humboldt Broncos team pastor, said *1 Corinthians 13*, a Bible passage on the importance of love, came to mind as he was preparing to officiate at the memorial.



Pastor Sean Brandow

“Love is the most painful thing in the world. We mourn, we grieve – because we love. Yet, it’s also love that helps us move through this,” said Brandow.

Lawrence Hunter, father of Broncos right-winger Logan Hunter, said even in his grief and fear, he feels the love for his son.

“Some people might say time heals all. I haven’t grasped that yet, because right now it doesn’t feel possible,” Hunter said. “I do know one word that has brought me some inner peace, and that word is ‘love.’ I know our son Logan swelled with love.”

Christine Frew, a friend of Logan’s mother, says her Catholic faith is helping her deal with the young man’s death. “It has helped me a tremendous amount, because I know that one day we will be together.”

When Bryan Radmanovich decided to post a selfie on social media wearing his godson Jaxon Joseph’s jersey, he had to ask him permission first.

“I sent Jaxon a text that simply read, ‘#hugsforhumboldt, love Uncle Bry.’ It showed ‘delivered’ on my iPhone, so I know Jaxon received my text up in heaven and he approved.”

Broncos goalie Parker Tobin was a compassionate young man who could always find the good in the worst situations, said Brandon Ewanchyshyn, his friend and fellow goalie.



Kevin Garinger  
Lincoln Ho, Grandin Media

“Whether someone stole the tailgate from his truck or I let in three terrible goals on three shots, (Tobin) would be standing there with that goofy grin of his saying, ‘Don’t worry man, we will get them next time.’”

Kevin Garinger, president of the Broncos hockey team, says the Humboldt community and the victims’ families have been devastated by “an unthinkable tragedy.”

But they are blessed by the generosity of donors across Canada and around the world. A GoFundMe page has raised more than \$15 million for the victims’ families.

“We have been incredibly blessed by a nation and a world that has wrapped their arms around our Broncos family,” said Garinger. “We have witnessed a nation that has reached out through words, and thoughts, and prayers, and gifts, and we thank you.”

The Rogers Place public memorial ended with a minute of silence, broken by the blaring sound of the Edmonton Oilers’ goal horn. In lieu of flowers, the families have asked for donations to STARS Air Ambulance.