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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD TUESDAY 3/4/08 11:00 AM

Knights of Columbus Hall
130 Lake Avenue South Nesconset, NY 11767

**TWO SMITHTOWN HIGH SCHOOLS UNITE
TO HONOR CLASSMATES KILLED IN OCTOBER CRASH**

**May 3 Tribute Concert Slated to Unite Community, Raise Funds
for Scholarship and Memorial Garden**

Members of the Senior classes of Smithtown's two High Schools have joined together to honor Michael Western and Daniel Distefano, two of the three boys who died in a tragic auto accident last October 31, in Smithtown. At a news conference held today (Tuesday, March 4, 2008) near the Smithtown High School Western Campus, where Western and Distefano were Seniors, students outlined ambitious plans for a Tribute Concert to be held there on May 3, 2008.

According to students from Smithtown East and West High Schools, the concert will be an evening of song, poetry, rhythm, video and multimedia presentations, with all of the performers coming from the Smithtown school community or members of the boys' families.

The students have also begun working with community members on a plan to design and create a unique gathering place on the hilly campus of Smithtown High School West. At the urging of the boys' families, boulders and natural materials will be used to create a gathering area to be called "The Rock Garden", which reflects the musical tastes shared by the two friends. The students hope to obtain the support of landscape contractors to create the garden.

Within days of announcing the plan, The Ketcham Group, a Kings Park materials recycling company pledged to donate and deliver the massive boulders which the students hope will be the key ingredient in the garden's design. Toby Carlson, The Ketcham Group's owner said, "The Kings Park/Smithtown community is very close-knit. We were all touched by the tragedy when it happened, and we are honored to be able to help the friends and families create this special place at Smithtown West High School."

Businesses, civic and school organizations in the communities surrounding Smithtown have pledged everything from manpower and business services to concert production equipment. Organizers hope they will receive donations of labor, plants, trees, landscaping supplies and materials to create "The Rock Garden" at Smithtown High School's Western Campus.

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The proceeds from the concert will be used to endow a scholarship fund to help Smithtown Seniors offset the cost of taking college-level courses while still attending high school. John Dolan, Principal of Smithtown High School West noted, "Smithtown's high schools work very hard to prepare our students for college. Many Seniors take college-level courses here at the high school which are offered by universities including Syracuse, Adelphi, SUNY Farmingdale and many others. These courses require the students and their families to pay tuition to the college sponsoring the course." The Distefano and Western families agreed that the scholarship honoring their sons should benefit High School Seniors who enroll in college-level courses, as Daniel and Michael had done.

Businesses and community members wishing to become an event sponsor, donate services or goods or contribute in any way are asked to contact Craig Cooper, of Craig Cooper Productions, a Smithtown event and video production company.

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(NOTE: The Nesconset Knights of Columbus has generously donated their facility as a convenient location for the press conference. Their organization is not involved in the sponsorship or production of the concert.)

PRESS CONFERENCE INTERVIEW/PHOTO AVAILABILITY:

Students, High School Administrators, at least one family member

Artwork/design for the Memorial Garden will be available.

For more information on this story, or to schedule an interview with any of the students, faculty or community members, please call Craig Cooper at 631-863-3666 or email him at CooperEvents@aol.com. **NOTE:** Media is respectfully asked to direct any inquiries to the Western or Distefano families through Craig Cooper, using the contact information on Page One.



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