

**For Immediate Release**

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## Mattie Stepanek Sculpture Dedicated

**Direct Dimensions aids in the creation of memorial statue for young poet**



Jeni Stepanek meets the life-sized bronze statue of her son, Mattie.



Mattie Stepanek



Direct Dimensions' 3D digital rendering of Mattie's wheelchair



Sculpture reproduction made by Direct Dimensions

On Saturday, October 18, 2008, poet Matthew "Mattie" Stepanek was honored in Rockville, MD at the unveiling of a life-sized bronze sculpture by artist Jimilu Mason. The sculpture, which features Stepanek in his wheelchair, assisted by his service dog, Micah, will act as a memorial to the young peacemaker whose personal motto, "think gently, speak gently, live gently," was heard by many during his short but inspirational life. Stepanek, who was diagnosed with a rare form of muscular dystrophy at a young age, published five books of poetry espousing peace before his death in 2004, shortly before his fourteenth birthday. His funeral was attended by over a thousand mourners whose hearts he had touched, including Oprah Winfrey and President Jimmy Carter.

When Virginian artist Jimilu Mason became involved with the Mattie Stepanek memorial project, she came to Direct Dimensions with a unique 3D problem. She wanted her sculpture of Mattie to be as lifelike as possible, and that included getting his wheelchair just right. The wheelchair was brought to the Direct Dimensions facility in Owings Mills, MD, where it was imaged with a Konica Minolta Vivid 9i 3D laser scanning camera. The data acquired from the scan was then processed to produce a digital file suitable for computerized rapid manufacturing, which would allow Mason to incorporate a very accurate replica of Mattie's wheelchair into her sculpture.

The completed sculpture was unveiled during the dedication ceremony of the *Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park*, a 26-acre recreational facility in the King Farm community of Rockville, MD. The statue was placed in its own Peace Garden, designed by Slater & Associates, Columbia, MD. The garden features pavers and winding paths meant to symbolize the "concentric circles of support" and the "flowing streams of peace" that were recurrent themes in Mattie's bestselling and posthumously-published final book, "Just Peace," which was co-written with President Jimmy Carter.

The dedication ceremony drew national attention, including a surprise visit from Oprah Winfrey, who spoke of her special relationship with Mattie. She described Stepanek as "a highly evolved spiritual being and just being in his presence made me feel happy inside." In addition, a 100-voice choir performed music based upon Mattie's speeches, and the facility's "Bank Shot" courts were declared officially open to the public. The ceremony culminated with Grammy-winning musician Nile Rodgers leading the audience in a sing-along of "We Are Family."

For more information about the dedication, please visit [www.mattieonline.com](http://www.mattieonline.com).

### **About Direct Dimensions, Inc.**

Since 1995, Direct Dimensions has provided advanced 3D digital imaging products, services, and training for the solution of 3D-related applications in the fields of design, engineering, and manufacturing; as well as art, sculpture, and architecture. Direct Dimensions specializes in the application of 3D digitizing systems and the conversion of 3D digital data into high-resolution computer models. Direct Dimensions develops and markets systems for the solution of these complex 3D problems.

For more information, please visit [www.directdimensions.com](http://www.directdimensions.com) and our [Mattie Stepanek Featured Project](#) page.

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