

YMCA gets \$1M

Detwiler family remembering SIDS victim Daniel by helping other children

By RACHEL MCDONALD

Freedom Valley YMCA Association
Jonathan Detwiler and his family have chosen to give \$1 million to rename the Phoenixville YMCA in honor of their grandson, Danny, who died at the age of 4 months.

A New Year's baby, Daniel J. Detwiler was the second baby born at Phoenixville Hospital in 1995. Today would have been his 13th birthday.

"He was a strong baby," says his mother, Fern Detwiler, adding that Danny was a healthy baby, 10 pounds and 22 inches at birth. "Danny had a check-up two days before his death, and he was perfectly fine," she says. This is the devastating mystery of SIDS, the sudden and inexplicable death of a sleeping infant. It is a diagnosis that offers no answers and little comfort to grieving parents.

As Jonathan's son, Randy, and his wife, Fern, talk about Danny, it is evident that their loss is still painful. But instead of focusing on their grief, the Detwilers are choosing to do something positive.

It is a profound and fitting gesture to name the YMCA, whose mission and promise is "To build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities," for one of the community's youngest members. Danny's

See YMCA, Page A3

life may have been short, but through this gift his legacy will impact generations to come.

The \$1 million gift to the Deep Roots, Strong Branches Capital Campaign will contribute to the renovation and expansion of the Daniel J. Detwiler Phoenixville

YMCA, including a new wellness center, new gymnasiums, a playground for kids in Child Watch, a new lobby and more rooms for hosting youth and family programs.

Ultimately, though, beyond bricks or walls, the Detwilers are giving the opportunity for countless children to achieve the dreams they had for Daniel.

Being involved in Phoenixville and the YMCA is nothing new for the Detwilers.

Jonathan, a member of Phoenixville High School's Class of 1949, was born and raised in Phoenixville, attended the University of Tulsa, and after a few years away, returned to his roots to assist with the family trucking business and to raise his family. He served on the Phoenixville Area YMCA's Board of Trustees for nearly 20 years, from 1977-1996.

As a family they were very active in the Y. Randy recalls spending every weekend at the Y when it was still located on Main Street, playing basketball under the coaching of Don Coppedge. Later, when the Y moved to Pot-house Road, the family would spend summers keeping cool at Baker Park.

The Detwilers' connection with the YMCA, however, extends beyond nostalgia. Their gift is being given through the newly established Jonathan and Gloria Detwiler Family Foundation. When Jonathan began the foundation, he wanted a way to express his philanthropic spirit and show his children and grandchildren the causes



that were important to him. First on that list are children. Incidentally, the foundation has also become a catalyst for bringing Detwiler's own children, who are spread out across the country, together as they make decisions for the foundation. Jonathan laughs as he shares this, his sparkling eyes revealing that this may have been his secret plan all along.

The Phoenixville **YMCA** is not only a place that holds fond memories for the children, but it embodies their family values.

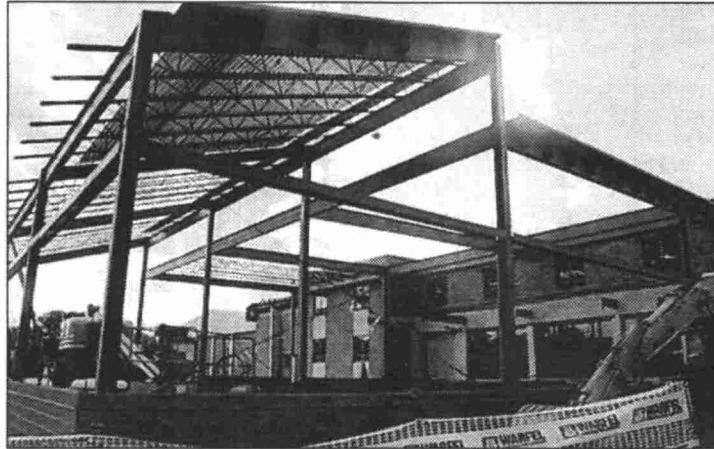
"It is a safe, clean place to go as a family. It offers wholesome, family-oriented activities, which is very important to me as a mom," says Fern.

"We like that it includes everyone, regardless of finances or culture, and reflects our community," Randy adds.

As a grandfather, Jonathan has enjoyed helping to provide for his grandchildren's future, and it has pained him to be unable to give anything to Danny. With this gift he is keeping Danny's memory alive, and offering a bright future to an entire community.

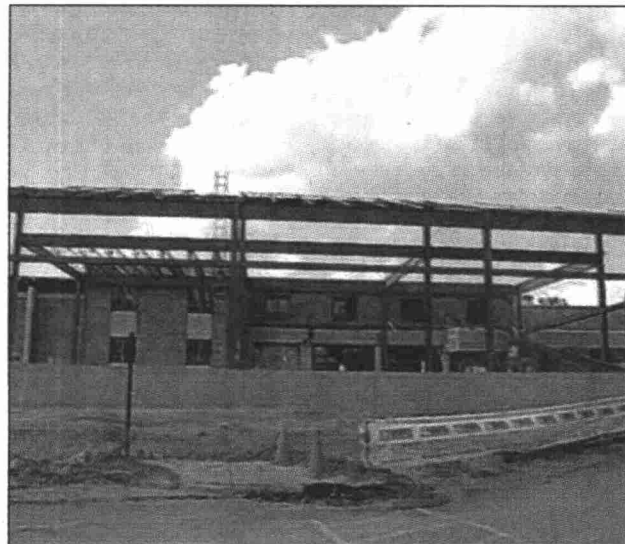
The Daniel J. Detwiler Phoenixville YMCA will no doubt benefit from the trust The Jonathan and Gloria Detwiler Family Foundation has placed in the "Y" with this generous \$1 million gift. It demands that the YMCA continues living out its mission, always going above and beyond, keeping the promise to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

As Danny is remembered today on his birthday, everyone can celebrate that his young life is going to touch the lives of so many in this New Year and for years to come.



Phoenix file photo

The Detweiler family has given the Phoenixville YMCA a \$1 million gift in memory of their infant son Daniel who died from SIDS. The money will contribute to renovation and expansion.



Phoenix file photo

The Detweiler family has chosen to give the Phoenixville YMCA a \$1 million gift in memory of their child who died in 1995 from SIDS.