



## Michael "Mike" Scott Burrage

September 1, 1976 - March 29, 2024

Michael "Mike" Scott Burrage, 47, of Corvallis, died peacefully on March 29, 2024, surrounded by loved ones. He did the activities he enjoyed up until his final week when he fell ill from an infection that led to his death.

Mike was born Sept. 1, 1976, in Salem to parents Dennis Sr. and Sandra (Brewster) Burrage.

His brother, Dennis Jr., was 4 years old when Mike came into the world, and he remembers the shenanigans of his little brother – stripping naked and laughing as he ran out the door and down the sidewalk, burying his hands and face into a cake his mom just baked, and wearing out the springs of his mini trampoline. Mike memorized his favorite commercials from the late 1970s and early 1980s and was obsessed with Superman and cheeseburgers, a love that endured through his whole life. His affinity for Wonder Woman came when he got older.

Mike began elementary school in West Salem where his brother attended. It was apparent early on that he was different from other children, but little was known at the time about autism. Mike's inability to communicate his needs caused violent outbursts, which led to him becoming a ward of the state a few years into elementary school.

Richard and Jeanette Knaggs took in young Mike for the next five or six years, and provided the routine and structure so important to him. When Mike was 10, he moved with his foster family to Dallas where he won the heart of his new schoolteacher, Carol Christ. Carol taught him for three years, remained an official and unofficial part of his care team as he grew into adulthood, and then became his legal guardian, a role she served until his death.

Mike moved around and attended different high schools in the area until age 20. He graduated from Springfield High School with the Class of 1997.

Over the years, Mike lived in different foster homes and group homes within the Willamette Valley and he held various jobs like sorting recycling, delivering newspapers, and shredding paperwork. He participated in Special Olympics bowling.

Mike spent the last 12 years of his life under the care of the staff at Personalized Independence in Corvallis. He was happiest when building his collection of colorful sweatshirts, keeping the washer and dryer going at the house, doing laundry at the laundromat, taking daily trips to buy pop and snacks, watching movies and commercials from his younger years, and going out for a hamburger.

Dozens and dozens of caregivers, past and present, grieve Mike's death. He did not speak many words, but he had a big personality.

"I think it's really easy to like Michael," said Carol, his guardian and the longest-enduring relationship of his life. "When he could persevere and people could learn his communication style and we could figure out how to tell him things through very clear, short sentences and he knew what was going to happen, no surprises, and he was in good health – all those things were in his favor and he was such a delightful guy."

A memorial for Mike will be held at McHenry Funeral Home in Corvallis on April 9 at 1 p.m. Those in attendance are welcome to wear superhero-themed attire.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

APR 9. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (PT)

McHenry Funeral Home  
206 NW 5th St.  
Corvallis, OR

*Reception to follow service.*