



# Kingsway Students Turn Personal Tragedy into Hopeful Mission to Support Grieving Families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Woolwich Twp.** – When Kingsway Regional High School students **Paige Oatman** and **Audrey Klieger** set out to complete a service project for the National Honor Society, they never imagined it would become a heartfelt mission — and the foundation for lasting change.

Paige's cousin, Connor, was diagnosed in utero with **Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia (CDH)** — a rare and severe birth defect. Born prematurely on February 28, 2025, he passed away just under seven hours later. Devastated but determined to create purpose from loss, Paige and Audrey created *Connor's Crew* — an initiative dedicated to comforting families facing similar heartbreak.

The girls began sewing **weighted teddy bears** and **cough pillows** for mothers recovering from emergency C-sections and donating them to families treated at **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)** and **Nemours Children's Hospital (DuPont)**. Their outreach soon expanded to **Inspira Medical Center**, and their mission continues to grow.

"I would be honored if you shared our story," Paige said. "It might help us with donations and getting our community involved in our mission. This vision we have to help families is a comfort for me as we move forward, and I could not have done it without the help of Audrey and the



guidance from our families. This isn't something either one of us could do alone, and I am grateful for our friendship and having her by my side through this journey."

"Being a part of Connor's Crew has been an incredible opportunity," added Audrey. "Paige and I have been friends since we were little, and I have always felt close to her and her family. When Paige told me about her cousin's passing and proposed a new NHS project, I immediately wanted to join. I am proud of what we've accomplished, and I'm especially proud that our project has grown into something more permanent — a foundation. We want to help as many families as we can and spread awareness about CDH."

With the support of their families, friends, and the local community, Paige and Audrey are now finalizing the paperwork to turn *Connor's Crew* into an official nonprofit organization. In addition to comfort items, the foundation aims to provide **financial assistance to families for funeral services, burial costs, and memorial expenses** for neonatal and infant loss.

Kingsway's National Honor Society Co-Advisors, Harleen Badeccha and Tina Smith, shared their pride in the students' leadership and compassion: "Paige Oatman and Audrey Klieger exemplify the four pillars of the National Honor Society—**Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character**—through their heartfelt mission, *Connor's Crew*, which began as a service project and has grown into a powerful force of support for families affected by infant loss. We are incredibly proud to have them represent Kingsway Regional High School and the National Honor Society and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will continue to make in the future."

Superintendent Dr. James J. Lavender praised the students' leadership and selflessness.

"Paige and Audrey have turned unimaginable grief into a mission of love and comfort," he said. "Their efforts are not only worthy of recognition — they are worthy of support. *Connor's Crew* is already making a meaningful difference, and I know this is just the beginning."

#### **How to Help:**

Community members who wish to support *Connor's Crew* can visit [Connor's Crew NJ on Facebook](#).

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#### **About the Kingsway Regional School District**

Kingsway is a limited-purpose regional school district that offers its students a rigorous academic program and a myriad of enrichment programs and services for students in grades 7 to 12. Kingsway Regional Middle School (grades 7 to 8) and Kingsway Regional High School (grades 9 to 12) cater to the individual needs of our students and promote opportunities for students to pursue their own areas of interest. Our population of nearly 3,000 students is multicultural and reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. Its mission is to ensure that all students receive rigorous and engaging instructional experiences that promote high levels of student achievement, including those with diverse learning needs. To learn more, visit the District's website at [www.krsd.org](http://www.krsd.org).

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