

# Family recalls Baroni's dedication, loving daughters after Highway 95 crash kills all 3

Mathew-Michael T. Baroni, 33, was dedicated to his family – caring for his two girls and helping those in need.

Those were the memories shared Wednesday by friends and family after Baroni and his two daughters, Madilyn, 8, and Molly, 6, were killed early Saturday morning in a crash on U.S. Highway 95.

“He gave his heart to everyone,” said his sister, Catherine Abrego. “It’s really a big loss and a big hole for everyone.”

Abrego said the girls were equally loving, with Madilyn having as big a heart as her father, while Molly was “a little bit of a rascal.”

The crash occurred just before 4 a.m. while the Baronis were traveling south near Athol on the return trip from delivering copies of Saturday’s edition of The Spokesman-Review to Sandpoint.

Ryan J. Turner, 27, was driving the wrong way in the southbound lanes and hit the Baronis’ vehicle head-on, Idaho state police said. Officers on scene said they smelled alcohol on Turner’s breath. Results of a blood alcohol test are pending.

Turner could face three charges of vehicular manslaughter, police said.

Baroni was working as an independent contractor for the newspaper, taking loads of newspapers to Sandpoint for delivery by carriers.

His wife had to work that morning, so he loaded his two girls in his minivan, laying them on a mattress so they could sleep.

None of the three were wearing seat belts.

Baroni had been an important figure in his girls’ everyday care, in addition to delivering for The Spokesman-Review and the Inlander newspapers and delivering suitcases from Spokane International Airport. He recently celebrated a third anniversary for his success at abstaining from alcohol, Abrego said.

He grew up in Garfield, Washington, and graduated from high school there.

Madilyn and Molly Baroni attended school at Spokane Public Montessori; their mother Meghan Baroni is a nurse for Spokane Public Schools.

In addition to his sister, Catherine, Mathew-Michael Baroni is survived by his wife, Meghan; his mother, Pauline Abrego; and three brothers, Thomas, Christopher and Benjamin Abrego.

“He was our big brother, our patriarch,” Catherine Abrego said.

She said she is a single mom and that he was always there to help her.

“If I needed an oil change, he’d change my oil,” and that willingness to help extended to his friends.

At home, life was in order, she said, “The bills were paid; the house was clean.”

They lived only two doors apart.

A dream of Mathew-Michael Baroni was to get all of the family living in the same neighborhood.

He was at the center of the family’s life.

A longtime friend set up Meghan’s Grief Fund to help Meghan Baroni with expenses; it’s at <https://www.gofundme.com/8e42mqag>.

As of Wednesday afternoon, the fund had raised \$12,500.