



## Legacy of Jason Baragar makes lasting impact

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*After the passing of this beloved CATA bus operator, a new tournament helps his legacy of compassion live on*



*(Photo: Submitted)*

With the high school basketball season over, the Holt High School gym has lacked its usual roaring crowds and the echoes of screeching shoes on the court. Luckily for basketball fans, a charity basketball tournament brings the community back together around basketball each year in April.

The tournament was created in memory of Holt graduate Jason Baragar. During his high school career, while Baragar excelled at both basketball and baseball, he was better known for his friendliness, his compassion towards others and his desire to help those in need.

As a young adult, Baragar lived in Lansing and worked for eight years at the Capital Area Transportation Authority as a bus operator. He was known to many riders not just as a bus driver, but as a friend. A true testament to Baragar's compassion was the number of attendees who paid their respects at his funeral – many of them his regular riders and beloved community members.

After Baragar's unexpected passing in 2014, his family wanted to honor him by contributing to the community he cared so much about. In the spring of 2015, the Baragar family partnered with the Holt Community Foundation to create the Jason Baragar Memorial Basketball Tournament. The revenue from the tournament would be used to fund foundation projects and scholarships to Holt High School seniors.

This year's tournament took place Saturday, April 21, and hosted almost 20 teams. The event raised nearly \$7,000, beating the \$5,000 goal set by the committee. Recently, the tournament committee shifted its funding-distribution focus to better align with its mission and to honor Baragar. While education was important to Baragar, he was passionately committed to helping the most vulnerable in our communities, especially the homeless. The committee discovered that the Holt High School Pop-Up Pantry addressed the needs of homeless students or those who were experiencing economic difficulties. Created in 2016, the pantry gives eligible students basic school supplies, toiletries and food. The committee donated \$3,000 to the Holt High School Pop-up Pantry to help the group continue their work, as well as donations to the school's garden project, the Holt football team and various scholarships for students.

The Capital Area Transportation Authority and the Amalgamated Transit Union Local No. 1039 are proud sponsors of the Jason Baragar Memorial Basketball Tournament. Together, they stand behind the mission of the Holt Community Foundation. Learn more about the foundation and the tournament at [holtcommunity.org](http://holtcommunity.org) (<http://holtcommunity.org>).

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Fullscreen



## Jason Baragar Memorial Basketball Tournament

Jeremy Baragar presents \$3,000 donation to the Holt High School Pop-up Pantry. The pantry provides school supplies, toiletries and food to homeless students or those who were experiencing economic difficulties. Shane Blood Photography

