

Chris Saiz's brother Tony, father Michael, and mother Magda Saiz holding a photo of him during a Cinco Ranch High School basketball game



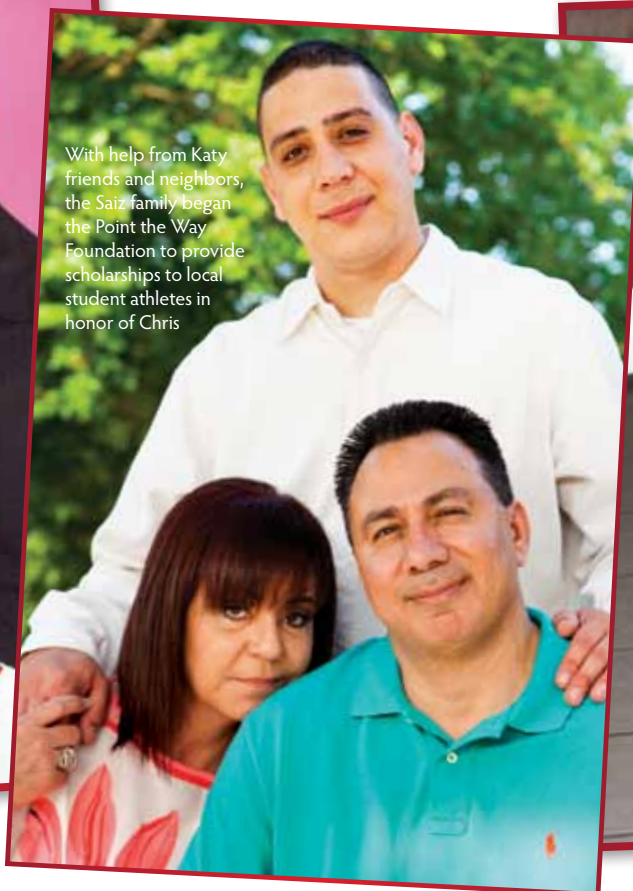
In Honor of CHRIS SAIZ

After the tragic loss of CRHS student Chris Saiz, friends and family raise scholarships for other hard-working Katy student-athletes through the Point the Way Foundation

Written by Julie Estep | Select Photography by Jason Lehecka



Magda and Michael Saiz remember the way Chris' smile could light up a room



With help from Katy friends and neighbors, the Saiz family began the Point the Way Foundation to provide scholarships to local student athletes in honor of Chris



Chris, who was known for his positive and caring attitude, was already being recruited to play basketball by Ivy League schools as a CRHS student

Katy student Chris Saiz was riding with a classmate on Dec. 20, 2011, when the car struck a tree on Mason Rd. and flipped. The driver, Derrick Jones, sustained only minor injuries, but Chris was tragically killed. Almost immediately, Chris' grieving family and friends knew they needed a way to honor his legacy, so they teamed up and started the Chris Saiz Point the Way Foundation. The foundation gives scholarships to hardworking student-athletes and is a way for the Katy community to celebrate this gifted athlete's life.

A Promising Future

A straight-A student at Cinco Ranch High School, Chris was a model student-athlete with dreams of playing college basketball for a top university. He was selected as team

captain for his basketball team as a junior and was already being recruited by Ivy League schools.

He was also a kind, caring, and loyal friend to many, the rare kind of young person who reached out to all and left a lasting impression. "The biggest thing is that Chris always embraced people," says his father Michael Saiz. "He liked people, he was a good listener, and he was approachable... very giving of praise and support to others."

Chris' mother Magda adds, "Chris was very alive, every day. He walked into the classroom or onto the basketball court and you knew he was there. You felt his presence."

Rising from a Tragedy

On the day of Chris' memorial service - which brought together over 1,000 people to pay their respects - family friends Jeff Pennington and Bruce "Chip" Morris approached Michael and Magda Saiz to discuss a way to honor their son's legacy and his dreams of going to college. They proposed raising money and offering scholarships to driven student-athletes who wish to continue their education but lack the financial assistance. Pennington wrote the first check to the Chris Saiz Point the Way Foundation, and their concept became a reality.

The name "Point the Way" comes from Chris' position on the basketball team: point guard. The primary goal of the foundation is to make an impact in the community by investing in its young people's bright futures. "We want to help deserving students who wish to go to college and who want an education and [allow them] to take advantage of the opportunity to advance themselves," says Michael, now president of the foundation. "It's about more than funds. We want to build relationships with them and support them. It's about having a part in their future and their success."

Every morning, Magda would tell Chris, "Be a blessing to somebody today." "And he was," she says. "Chris had a lot

of light to shine on the world." The foundation is a way to continue to pay it forward and to honor his memory.

Coming Together as a Community

The family has received constant support from their Katy friends and neighbors. "This is a beautiful community," says Magda. Chris' parents have a long list of people to be grateful for, including their son's basketball coach at Cinco Ranch, who retired Chris' jersey, and another couple, whose son played basketball with Chris and who put together the first fundraiser. "Everyone has really been there for us," says Michael.

And everyone, young and old, wants to be a part of the Point the Way Foundation. "The Katy community has shown a lot of interest and support for the foundation," says Dave Reynolds, a neighbor of the Saiz family, who himself reached out and proposed a recent golf tournament as a fundraiser. Magda shares, "In the midst of all of this pain, you see these little rays of sunshine that help you go on, because you know you're being helped by a lot of beautiful people." **KM**

JULIE ESTEP was born and raised in Katy and enjoys sharing inspirational stories from her hometown.

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