



Nicholas Jay Lehman Poulos

May 14, 1997 - January 30, 2026

Born May 14, 1997, in Atlanta, GA, Nicholas Jay Lehman Poulos died unexpectedly at the age of 28 at his home in Asheville, NC. The first child of Julie Lehman and Michael Poulos, his loss will be felt deeply by his family and so many others who loved him dearly.

In addition to his parents, surviving family members include his brother, Gabe Poulos; grandmother, Judi Lehman; aunts, Eve Poulos Stegner, Naomi Lehman Duncan, and Kerry Lehman Chope; first cousins, Hannah and Haleigh Duncan, Emmaline and Holden Chope; and countless friends with whom he found much delight.

Nicholas was shaped by the communities that nurtured him: Trinity Presbyterian Church of Atlanta; First Presbyterian Church of Asheville; Haw Creek Elementary; Reynolds Middle and High Schools; Queens University; and UNC Asheville (BA, 2023). Sovereign Kava in Asheville became Nicholas' primary community—the place he visited regularly on Wednesdays for open mic and on Mondays for ping-pong tournaments—the community where he found friendship and support.

From an early age, Nicholas lived life with his heart wide open, fully present in each new experience and relationship, and always ready for more. As the first grandchild, he received abundant love and attention from both sets of

grandparents. His early years in Atlanta gave him lots of time with his maternal grandparents, Judi and Ron Lehman (Nana and Papa), and his aunts Naomi and Kerry. He also made regular visits to see his paternal grandparents, Betty and Chris Poulos (YaYa and Papou), and his Aunt Eve in Sumter, SC.

When the family resettled in Asheville in 2002, Nicholas loved everything about his new home. As the son of a pastor, he spent many hours at church, where he made some of his best and longest-lasting friendships. The nurturing, mentoring, affirmation, and encouragement Nicholas received through his church family shaped him profoundly. He participated in children's ministries and choirs, youth conferences at Massanetta Springs and Montreat, and mission trips in Atlanta, Raleigh, and Guatemala. His experiences volunteering with Room in the Inn, Pritchard Park breakfasts, and Saturday Sanctuary all inspired Nicholas's dedication to caring for those living on the margins.

Between his years at Queens University and UNC Asheville, Nicholas traveled west and volunteered with Conservation Corps, working as a ranger in Colorado and Utah, and later with AmeriCorps as a volunteer construction manager with Habitat for Humanity in Bend, Oregon. After working at Trails Carolina therapeutic school, he decided to return and finish college at UNCA. While in school, he interned at Homeward Bound's AHOPE Center and worked at Haywood Congregation's Respite and Safe Shelter. As a Rapid Rehousing Case Manager at Homeward Bound WNC, he treated his clients with respect, compassion, and a willingness to do what was necessary to help them secure housing.

Nicholas had many passions, but his gift for music is what brought him—and those around him—deep joy. A band kid who always sang in the church choir, he taught himself to play the drums and guitar. He channeled his creative

spirit through music, playing weekly at the open mic at Sovereign Kava in Asheville. He also recorded songs and shared them on Spotify.

From childhood, Nicholas struggled with his mental health. He worked diligently with counselors and doctors to manage anxiety and depression. A natural empath, Nicholas loved the world deeply and took its injustices to heart. He was politically engaged and encouraged others of his generation to do the same. Many of his friends say that Nicholas was the first friend they met when they moved to Asheville, what a great listener he was and how he made them feel loved and cared for.

His proud parents offer these lyrics from his song "The Way" to continue his uplifting legacy in you:

So when you see the need for healing,
Show some grace and love unyielding
Cause the hardest part of love,
Is knowing it's meant for everyone.
And when I lay my head to rest,
I pray my soul be continued blessed
Knowing well I tried my best,
To live in love that manifests
And purpose is in knowing,
You're here for a reason growing
Finding your own way.

Nicholas' Memorial Service/Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, February 21, at 2:00 p.m. at the Montreat Conference Center's Anderson Auditorium (303 Lookout Rd., Montreat, NC 28757), with a reception to follow.

The service will be livestreamed and recorded for those unable to attend at: ht

[tps://vimeo.com/event/5722360/34e61baf3d](https://vimeo.com/event/5722360/34e61baf3d)

Homeward Bound has established the Nicholas Poulos Fund for Rapid Rehousing to honor his commitment to serving our community's most vulnerable neighbors. Contributions can be made through the Homeward Bound website (<https://homewardboundwnc.org/in-memory-of-nicholas-poulos/>) or by calling (828) 579-3479 to donate and/or volunteer.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

FEB 21. 2:00 PM (ET)

Anderson Auditorium at Montreat Conference Center
303 Lookout Road
Montreat, NC 28757

Tribute Wall

AB

“ *Michael & Julie, Although, I did not know Nicholas (I wish I had from All that has been written and said about him); what I do know is this: That in Life and in Death Nicholas belongs to God ... May God's Blessings & Peace be upon you both and Gabe today and in the coming days, weeks & month.....
Please & Love,
From,
Abby Bates*

Abby Bates - February 21 at 12:59 PM

TM

“ *Dear Michael and Julie,
it has been a long time since our paths have crossed, and I am very sorry to hear of Nicholas passing from this earth into the arms of Jesus. I remember him fondly when you arrived at First Presbyterian Church all those years ago. He was a beautiful little boy. My prayers are with you. As a mom who buried a son (with your help), I understand how difficult this time will be. With all my love to you and your family. Teri Morris*

Teri Morris - February 16 at 03:23 PM

LB

“ *Michael, Julie, Gabe.... I am so saddened to know of the loss of your son and brother. He sounds like a true blessing to the community and will be sorely missed. You fostered a goodness and graciousness in this young man that will obviously leave lasting good in his wake. May he rest in the arms of God with grace and peace. May you be comforted by the myriad of blessings your son/brother brought to the world. God's peace...*



Laura Cudd Branton - February 16 at 12:50 PM

RI

“Michael and Julie, we honor you today with hearts full of gratitude and compassion. Thank you for sharing Nicholas with the world. Through your love, your guidance, and your faithfulness as parents, you released into this world a young man whose life reflected compassion, service, and deep love for others—especially those who were struggling.

Nicholas' life reminds us of the words of Scripture:

“Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)

He lived what he believed. He served selflessly. He loved deeply. And because of that, lives were changed, hope was restored, and light was shared in places that desperately needed it.

Michael and Julie, your willingness to love, to nurture, and to give your son to a hurting world is a testimony in itself. Scripture tells us,

“Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.” (Psalm 127:3)

Nicholas was a gift—first to you, and then to so many others. Though your hearts now carry an unimaginable ache, his legacy will continue to speak.

We pray the promise of God over you:

“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” (Psalm 34:18)

May the God who sees every tear surround you with His peace, strengthen you in the moments when words fail, and gently remind you that love never ends.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

(Matthew 5:4)

Thank you, Michael and Julie, for loving Nicholas so well—and for sharing him with the world. His life mattered. His love mattered. And his light will not be forgotten.

*With lots of love and continued prayers of comfort,
James & Sarah Lee*

Rev. James E. Lee III - February 12 at 02:46 PM

SS

“ *Spencer Sword Sheppard lit a candle in memory of Nicholas Jay Lehman Poulos*



Spencer Sword Sheppard - February 12 at 10:14 AM



“ *I remember babysitting Nicholas and Gabe when the family first moved to Asheville. Nicholas had the same quiet groundedness as his dad as he grew up. He was always willing to talk to someone, and I know he always spent time with my son whenever Chase was in town. To the Pouloses, you have been a cornerstone for our community for decades, and we are so grateful. Know your community is all here to be the rock to lean on now. We love you so dearly as our hearts break together.*

Caitlin Sforza - February 11 at 11:44 AM

MC

“ Nicholas had touched the lives of so many people! His memory will always be with us, even as his light shines with Jesus forever. Go in peace, Nicholas!

Mike and Sandi Carter - February 11 at 08:35 AM

MC

“ Mike And Sandi Carter lit a candle in memory of Nicholas Jay Lehman Poulos



Mike and Sandi Carter - February 11 at 08:30 AM

SB

“ I briefly worked with Nicholas at Homeward Bound and remember him as a very kind, genuine, and deeply caring person. You can tell he was passionate about his work and the people he cared for. I've run into him a couple times at Sovereign Kava and am sorry I never had the chance to hear his talent in person. This is heartbreaking news and I am sending my prayers to his loved ones and the many people he impacted and inspired. Grateful for having the chance to have met him.

Sheridan Block - February 06 at 04:34 PM

LH

“ I worked with Nicholas at Homeward Bound, I was the Director of Rapid Rehousing when he was hired. I remember interviewing him and being immediately struck by how kind and genuine he was—I knew that he had the right heart for this work and that he would treat his clients with the care and attention they deserve...Nicholas saw the good in all of us, he genuinely loved helping the people Homeward Bound serves, and his dedication and passion for his work with his clients humbled me often, and brought hope even on days when I thought there wasn't much of it to be found. I am utterly heartbroken that he has been taken from this world so soon, and I am sending so much love to his family, his friends, his clients, and to the many people whose lives he touched with his warm smile and enormous heart.

Lacy Hoyle - February 05 at 08:19 PM

JM

“ Seeing Nicholas perform his music at an open mic right after the hurricane is my favorite memory. He knew how to soothe our hurt and grief. Sending love to his family.

Joe McCarty - February 04 at 10:34 PM

SG

“ My sincere condolences to the Poulas family on the loss of Nicholas. Keeping you in my thoughts and praying for your comfort and peace.
Love in Christ, Susan Gaddis

Susan S. Gaddis - February 04 at 04:15 PM

DH

“ *Julie, I am so sorry for your family's loss. Will keep you in my heart*

Don Harris

Don Harris - February 04 at 06:33 AM

JS

“ *TO THE FAMILY OF NICHOLAS POULOS*

JUST WANTED TO SEND YOU ALL THIS SHORT NOTE TO LET YOU ALL KNOW THAT YOU ALL ARE IN MY THOUGHTS & IN MY PRAYERS EVERY DAY & ESPECIALLY DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME. MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL ALWAYS & KEEP YOU ALL IN HIS LOVING CARE AS A MEMBER OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASHEVILLE I HAVE KNOWN NICHOLAS & ALSO HIS PARENTS MICHAEL POULOS & JULIE LEHMAN & WAS THE SHEPHARD FOR THE KINDERGARTEN & FIRST GRADE CLASS OF BIBLE JOURNEYS (WHILE NICHOLAS WAS INVOLVED WITH BIBLE JOURNEYS I REALLY DID ENJOY SEEING NICHOLAS GROWING UP AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASHEVILLE & BECOMING A VERY NICE YOUNG CHRISTIAN MAN

LOVE IN CHRIST, JEAN SHEAROUSE

JEAN SHEAROUSE - February 03 at 04:21 PM

NI

Nick was an amazing soul. Gone way too soon. My condolences to his family. He is up in a much better place than we are. You will be missed brother.

Nick - February 05 at 04:20 AM

CO

It is easy to remember Nicholas....as a middle school student, he was compassionate, caring, intelligent, mature, and a gentle soul. He was joy! It is not surprising his life path was one of service. I was so proud to learn about his life work. Our world was enlightened by Nicholas. My heart goes out to Mike, Julie, and Gabe. May his soul rest eternally. His MS counselor...Cindy Oak

Cindy Oak - February 10 at 11:29 PM

SD

The last time we saw Nick was leading singing at the White Horse, Beer and Hymns. We were so happy to see him as he told us about his work with "Homeward Bound." WE grieve with you. Much love, Susan Denne & James Aydelotte

Susan Denne - February 14 at 03:12 PM