



Benjamin Ross Pogrund

June 6, 1991 - March 15, 2023

Benjamin Ross Pogrund, 31, of Austin, TX passed away on March 15, 2023.

Ben had the most incredible sense of humor and never failed to make you laugh. He was kind, witty, caring, gentle, wildly intelligent, and so, so talented. Ben's smile lit up the room. He touched and inspired so many throughout his life and will be deeply missed by everyone that knew him.

He was born June 6, 1991, in Burbank, California. He was raised in Austin, Texas and graduated from Anderson High School in 2009. After high school, Ben went on to Austin Community College where he finished his Associates Degree in Video Game Design. Then he attended Texas State University where he graduated Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Computer Science with a Math minor. He dedicated 12 years of his life to building and designing his own video game, Realm of the Tempest, that he took great pride in and that was an incredible work of art. He physically drew and designed every object, character, landscape- everything you could imagine- by hand for his game, and composed all of the music- his creative talent for art and design was such a gift.

In his spare time, Ben enjoyed challenging himself with advanced level calculus problems on the Harvard website because he had such a passion for math. He has countless notebooks filled with equations and computer code-

all that he did, for fun. He was always phenomenal with kids and loved working where he could teach and help them learn to create and design their own video games and how to code.

Ben is survived by his parents, Rich and Rona Pogrund, his sister, Amy Renken (Pogrund), nephews, Carter and Wesley Renken, aunt Glenda Kirshbaum, cousins Geoffrey, Christi, and Chloe Kirshbaum, David Kirshbaum, and Ben Kass, Lauren Kirshbaum Kass, Henry, Josh, Zev, and Hazel Kass, birth family Susan Stidham, Marli Creech, Missy Roberts, and Jimmy and Jacob McBride, and many other family members and caring friends.

Ben is preceded in death by grandparents, Walter and Evelyn Lazarus, Lionel and Phyllis Pogrund, step-grandmother Kathryn Pogrund, and uncle Danny Kirshbaum.

In lieu of flowers, Ben's family is asking for donations to non-profit organizations to honor his life, Adoption Knowledge Affiliates (adoptionknowledge.org), American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP.org), or any other organizations that help those struggling with mental illness.

We miss Ben so much already and feel his absence heavily in our lives. He is and was so loved, and we can only hope that he is now free from any pain. Our hearts will forever be with him.

Cemetery Details

Eloise Woods Natural Burial Park

115 Northside Lane
Cedar Creek, TX 78612

Previous Events

Graveside Service

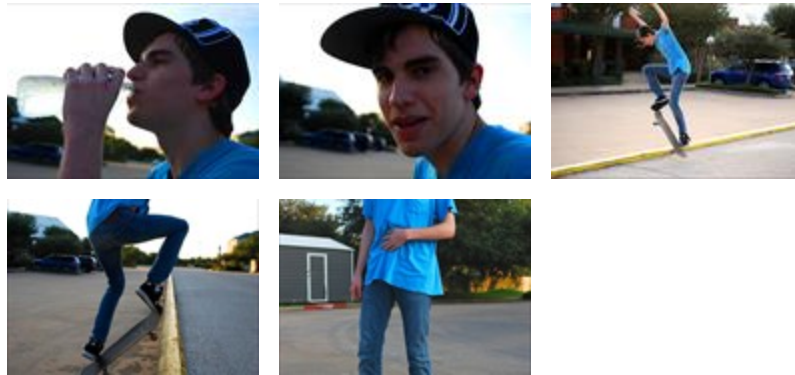
MAR **19**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Eloise Woods Natural Burial Park
115 Northside Lane
Cedar Creek, TX 78612

Tribute Wall

KR

“ *My heart sank when I found this obituary. Ben was a sweet and hilarious kid, with a heart of gold. I wanted to share some old photos I have of his big smile. My heart goes out to his family.* ”



Kristi - May 05, 2023 at 12:58 PM

AP

Oh Kristi, thank you so much for these ☐

Amy Pogrund - May 06, 2023 at 07:34 PM

AP

Do you have social media that we could connect on?

Amy Pogrund - May 07, 2023 at 12:42 PM

BR

“ *Belinda Rudinger lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Ross Pogrund* ”



Belinda Rudinger - March 26, 2023 at 01:43 PM



“ Ben was part of an online community and he had a huge impact on us. Ben or "Otay" as we knew him was incredibly creative and kind (something that you don't always see in an anonymous online setting) . I wish his family the best in what is a very difficult time.

J - March 22, 2023 at 06:02 PM



“ As others have said, Ben had a huge impact on his online community of friends and we will miss him dearly. Sending comfort to his family and friends. His memory shall be a blessing.

RM - March 22, 2023 at 03:45 PM



“ As many others have shared, I also knew Ben as an online friend. His online name was Otay. We played together in a game called VRChat where he would appear as a small bird with a pinwheel hat. In 2018 I painted the attached picture of him, for him.

We have had conversations about our lives, passions and beliefs. I find it so incredible the progress he made on his game, Realm of the Tempest while overcoming so many other challenges in his life. He was so passionate and was always eager to dive in to the complexities of his systems or the creative beauty of his worlds.

I will always remember ben as this bird and appreciate the permanent mark his presence left on my life.



John P (Zorark) - March 21, 2023 at 08:11 PM

CH

“ *Ben was, and remains, a brilliant light.*

I had the joy of getting to meet him (like others here) via a small internet community and was always fascinated by his creativity and dedication to his work. On top of this, he was a great friend - he was always willing to listen and to discuss and to dive deeply to whoever would listen about the things he was passionate about. He was an absolute genius with math and art and pretty much anything he put his mind to. To his family - I am so deeply sorry for your loss. Please know that he touched many people in his short time here and that we grieve with you.

Chris - March 20, 2023 at 10:02 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Graveside Service Recording*



Austin Natural Funerals - March 20, 2023 at 07:09 PM

DB

“ *I am so sorry for your loss, Rona. We are thinking of you and your family.*

- Devender

DB - March 20, 2023 at 05:40 PM

GD

“ Gabriella Davis lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Ross Pogrund



Gabriella Davis - March 20, 2023 at 02:07 PM

AM

“ Link to Bens Memorial Video: <https://vimeo.com/809844224>



Amy - March 20, 2023 at 01:42 PM

DR

“ My heart aches for you and your family, Rona. Thinking of you. - Dave Richman

David Richman - March 20, 2023 at 11:30 AM

PO

“ Phoebe Okungu lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Ross Pogrund



Phoebe Okungu - March 20, 2023 at 11:17 AM

JO

“ So...we all make choices in life...some much harder than others. Many choices we will never comprehend the depth from which they were made. Ben your life story ended abruptly yet your memories will last a lifetime and more. Ben you were a man of many dynamics that left a legacy in your passing. I sense you are at peace and your suffering has ended, for this I'm eternally grateful. The heaviness of my heart will ache for some time as it heals and lives on with your blessings intertwined in my life and all the lives you've touched, which were many. Rest at peace now Ben in the forest of trees where you found ultimate safety in your life and it's fitting this is where you rest now. Your laughter, smile and unparalleled wit will keep us remembering you in fond ways and brings a smile to my face even now. Thanks for gifting us with your life and spirit...I know my life is a brighter having known you~love James Ochoa

James Ochoa - March 19, 2023 at 10:59 PM

TA

“ I never met Ben in person, but I knew him online for over a decade. Ben was easy to talk to and connect with; he had such a pure and open heart. He was incredibly smart, exceptionally creative, and so funny. I'll always remember his unique perspective and willingness to be there for me when I needed it. He was loved by many for a reason.

Rest easy, my friend. I'm grateful that our paths crossed in this life, and I hope you found peace.

Taylor - March 19, 2023 at 08:35 PM

RY

“ Ryan lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Ross Pogrund



Ryan - March 19, 2023 at 06:09 PM

SR

“ Sharon K. Roszia lit a candle in memory of Benjamin Ross Pogrund



Sharon k. Roszia - March 19, 2023 at 05:36 PM

SR

I am so saddened. As I read the tributes it is clear he left an indelible mark on all who knew him. My heart is with you and the family; may he rest in piece. Sharon

Sharon k. Roszia - March 19, 2023 at 05:38 PM

MP

“ I am so sorry to hear the news of Ben's passing. My heart goes out to all of his family members. May the fondest memories you hold of Ben help sustain you through this very difficult time.

Marci Purcell - March 19, 2023 at 12:56 PM

KC

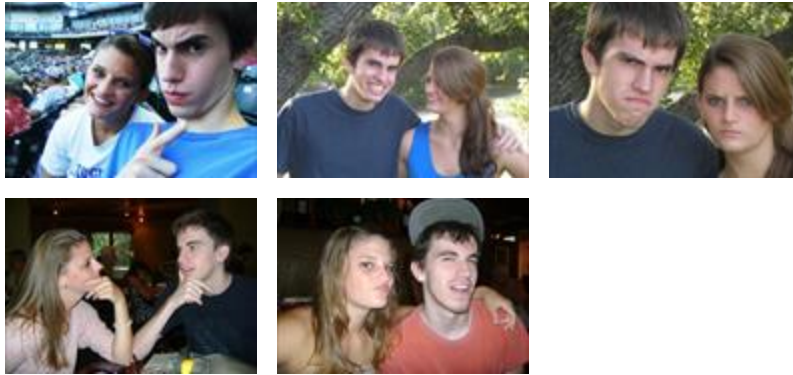
“ Dear Rona, Rich, Amy and Family,

*My thoughts and prayers are with all of you at this very difficult time. I have many fond memories of Ben when he was younger ... a bright, energetic, fun, handsome and friendly child. I am sending you healing prayers of strength and much love.
My love to all of you,
Karen*

Karen -Karen Chanon - March 19, 2023 at 09:29 AM

AM

“ I love you, brother. We all do.



Amy - March 19, 2023 at 12:09 AM

LR

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Lacy Ruwwe - March 18, 2023 at 11:17 PM



“ *May your soul rest easy in paradise. Thank you for sharing your light with the world. I miss you so much Ben.*

B - March 18, 2023 at 10:06 PM



“ *Ben was one of the nicest, kindest and smartest person I ever had the pleasure of knowing. The world's a little bit darker by your absence, but you live on through your art and the people you met and knew. Rest easy my friend.*

Scott - March 18, 2023 at 09:43 PM



“ *Ben and I ran in the same online social circle. Effortlessly funny, true to who he was, and one of those people who was so immensely gifted in so many areas he could hold a conversation with anyone. He touched so many lives in his time with us, and brought out the best in people. Wishing peace to him and his loved ones.*

Lexi - March 18, 2023 at 09:35 PM



“ *Rest easy, Ben.*

Michael Sullivan - March 18, 2023 at 09:10 PM

NP

“ Ben was an online friend of mine. We would frequently chat while he was making his video game, and Ben allowed me early access to the game as he showed off his progress. My kids thought the idea of having access to an unfinished game in the making was the coolest thing ever, and we bought a special game controller to plug into our computer and explore together. My kids spent more time in the game than I ever did, to be honest. That was almost two years ago now and recently we came across that special game controller while cleaning. My youngest child asked why it was there, and my eldest launched into a speech about being able to test out video games before they were made because Dad knows video game makers.

Now my kids are using the very same software Ben used to design his games. It was like bringing a kid to an orchard and showing them that apples don't come from the grocery store.

I wasn't lucky enough to know Ben as well as some of you, but he did make an impact on my family, and we won't forget him.

Be well.

N. Penston - March 18, 2023 at 08:27 PM



“ As a previous commenter posted, Ben was an online friend of mine. Ben was a friend to hundreds of people that you may never know, but we all loved him tremendously. I couldn't count the hours that I've spent in conversation with Ben about things small and large - and no matter the circumstance there was a perpetual aura that radiated from his being.. You couldn't help but smile.

The definition of a genius. The definition of a friend. The definition of a good human.

You are so loved and truly unforgettable.

- T

T - March 18, 2023 at 08:13 PM

K.

“ Ben was an online friend of mine. I've been scouring my old conversations with him searching for direct quotes to hold on to or share. Unfortunately, I am only left with my memories of our exchanges.

The last time we spoke, I was feeling jaded about life. Stuck in an existential rut. I expressed a feeling of meaninglessness to Ben. In response, he shared with me a kind of spirituality he had come to experience by studying theoretical math. I remember how passionate he became. Across hours, he took the time to share with me mathematical concepts I had never heard of. He expressed a sense of awe at the extent of human knowledge- at how far we've come and how much remained unknowable and mysterious. It gave him a type of faith.

This is something that has become rare with age- the experience of a perspective I've never heard before. One so intriguing that it makes me reconsider my own perspective on life, and sparks a type of optimism and hope within me. I am so sorry that I don't have his exact words to share with his friends and family. But maybe you were as lucky as me to have such a conversation with him.

I'm grateful for this.

Some time later Ben needed help getting on his feet. I along with many other online friends provided what I could. He mailed a drawing to me in return as thanks. It has traveled with me across a few moves. I keep it safe in a cigar box so that it doesn't become wrinkled.

I took it out today and cried. I wish we had talked one more time.

This isn't much, but I hope it provides his family some comfort to know the waves his life made. Reaching much further than perhaps even he knew. And the ripples that will continue on. Ben was a force for good in this world. I know many people feel lucky to have

crossed paths with him.



K. - March 18, 2023 at 07:53 PM