

FFWPU USA Blessing and Family Ministry: In Memory of Akinobu Iwasaki

Carina Mendez
October 18, 2023



Akinobu Iwasaki

Parents: Shota and Miyuki Iwasaki

Siblings: Sunkook, Noritaka, Soonmee, Lena, Miae, Shohey

Birthdate: November 29, 2003

Ascension: October 11, 2023

Seonghwa Ceremony: October 21, 2023

Akinobu Iwasaki was born in Sapporo, Japan at Angel Hospital (under Franciscan Order) on November 29, 2003. He was born and raised as the 6th child and 3rd son of Shota and Miyuki Iwasaki. He has two older brothers, Sunkook and Nori; three older sisters, Soonmee, Lena, and Miae; and one younger brother, Shohey.

He spent the first three years of his life at his grandparent's home together with all of his siblings and mother. Since he was the only child born in Japan and the youngest child at the time, he

received much love from everyone around him. Akinobu, with adorable eyes and a bright smile, was the grandparents' favorite baby. His grandmother, who is endearingly referred to as Obaa-chan, especially loved him dearly. She took him with her wherever she went, usually on her bicycle. It became so natural for him to simply sit inside the basket of her bicycle, wondering where his next trip would be. Aki's favorite time was being with Obaa-chan. So, when it came time for the family to move back to the States in 2006, it was painfully difficult for Aki to say goodbye.

In 2006, the Iwasaki family lived in Red Hook, NY near the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) before settling down in Philadelphia, PA in 2007. It was in Philadelphia where Aki began attending the Robert Pollock Elementary School. He then studied in Austin Meehan Middle School before moving on to George Washington High School. His final school years were spent there until his graduation this past summer at the prime age of 19. During his school years, Aki involved himself in all kinds of extracurricular activities such as track and field, tennis, wrestling, and cross country - all so that he could stay in shape for his utmost favorite sport, basketball. Aki loved basketball. It was his greatest passion. Everything he did revolved around basketball.

Aki's first encounter with basketball was when his older brothers brought him to their backyard to teach him how to dribble and shoot. He was new at basketball and knew nothing about it until then, but he loved it from the start. Ever since, you could find him playing basketball with his brothers, his dad, his friends, and even by himself. His skills improved daily. Aki's passion for basketball eventually led him to challenge himself by joining local basketball leagues. He often told his family that his dream was to become like the Japanese professional player, Yuki Togashi, and play in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

Aki was the embodiment of perseverance. He never gave up on the things he loved, even if that meant jogging for hours alongside his more physically fit older brothers until the very end at just 13 years old. To achieve his dreams, he would spend hours and hours studying and practicing new skills and training methods day and night, without concern for time. Being a very disciplined and self-motivated individual, Aki would push himself to his limits to overcome his own weaknesses every single day. The people who knew him could surely attest to what an inspiration he was.

Aki was not only devoted to basketball, but to his family as well. He loved spending time with his family, simply enjoying their presence. In a memory of one of their last months with him, his sisters and younger brother went on a trip to NYC. Although Aki himself was not so fond of all the walking, shopping, and sightseeing (unless gorillas or athletes were involved), he still went. Even if he was just dragged around to ride the metro or to go shopping, he came along without any complaints. What made Aki smile and laugh was not necessarily the environment around him, but that the people he loved were around him. Aki also

bought his very own jacket for the first time with his own money during that trip. Trying on clothes was a new experience for him too. Coming from a big family, it's very common for the younger siblings to receive lots of hand-me-downs and gifts, making it almost unnecessary to personally buy anything. Therefore, this was a whole new experience for him - to choose for himself what he liked and to buy it with his own hard-earned money. He was so nervous, but after purchasing his coat with his own money, his proud, signature smile welled up on his face - the one where the corners of his lips don't rise much, but his grin is spread, his teeth show and his eyes are creasing showing only the blacks of his eyes. His chin would lift a little too.

This year was a season of many firsts for Aki - his first purchase, his first solo flights, his first basketball team that he assembled, and his first dorm experience. He had also started working as a line chef under Mike Diamond at UTS. He started working alongside his older brother and sister last summer, and this year Aki started showing up to work with Mike without his siblings. Seeing him earnestly challenge himself and be so diligent about his work has touched and moved all of our hearts.

Throughout all of his ups and downs, Aki never gave up. He never stopped loving, and he never abandoned his principles. He simply trudged forward. One of his favorite quotes was, "I really feel like I'm The Process, like The Process is about me," by the 76ers' Joel Embiid. That quote embodies Aki - always moving ahead with his eyes focused beyond what his family and friends could see.

Akinobu Iwasaki, a compassionate, diligent, loving, and kind son, brother, and friend peacefully ascended into the spirit world on October 11, 2023. He will be eternally remembered and loved by all who knew him. His legacy of perseverance and compassion will live on forever.



Seonghwa Ceremony

Date: Saturday October 21, 2023 at 12:00 PM EDT (Viewing will be from 10:30-11:30 AM)

Location: Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church and School (915 Vine St. Philadelphia, PA 19107)

Flowers can be ordered from Torresdale Flower Shop (215-338-5990)

Gofundme to support the Iwasaki family: gofund.me/3977dc91

Condolence Cards can be sent to the family at:

Shota and Miyuki Iwasaki
8916 Bluegrass Rd, Philadelphia PA 19152

Aki Iwasaki, beloved brother and son 10.11.2023



Lena Iwasaki is organizing this fundraiser on behalf of MIYUKI IWASAKI.

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Beloved son, brother and friend Akinobu Iwasaki passed away on Wednesday 10/11/23 surrounded by all of his family members.

Aki suffered from a sudden Pulmonary Embolism on 10/4/23, that led to every imaginable complication. After spending days at the UPMC Presbyterian, with the staff there trying everything they could to help Aki, he was officially pronounced brain dead. His entire family flew from all sides of the world to be by Aki's side in his final moments, before they took him off the machines that were keeping him alive. No words can describe the pain Shota, Miyuki, Sunkook, Noritaka, Soonmee, Lena, Miae, and Shohey Iwasaki are feeling for losing their son and brother.

Aki was attending a trade school this fall in hopes of discovering a practical skill set that he liked that could eventually lead to a career path for him. Before this, Aki lived with his family in Philadelphia where you could almost always find him (at any hour of the day) playing basketball with friends at a local court. Basketball is probably one of the first things to come to mind when any of us who knew Aki think of him. He loved the game. He loved challenging people, he loved getting challenged, and he loved smack talking. Basketball was Aki's way of making friends, relating to people, and expressing himself to the fullest. When not on the court, you could find Aki challenging his older brothers, Sunkook and Nori, to wrestling matches, playing games with his younger brother Shohey, and chilling at home with his sisters Soonmee, Lena and Miae.

Aki was such a kind, loving, and understanding kid. He brought so much laughter and joy to everyone's lives. For anyone who had the blessing of knowing Aki, our lives will be forever changed now that he's no longer with us.

We ask if you could support the Iwasaki family in this difficult time, and allow them the time and space to properly grieve.

Your help will support them with medical bills, his Seung Hwa ceremony, and any expenses that accumulated along the way. Thank you so much to everyone who prayed and sent good thoughts to Aki and reached out to the Iwasaki family. We feel your love.

Donate Share

Organizer and beneficiary

Lena Iwasaki →
Organizer
Philadelphia, PA

Contact

MIYUKI IWASAKI
Beneficiary

\$50,900 raised of \$40,000 goal

565 donations

Share

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40 people just donated

Antal Mitsuko
\$20 - Recent donation

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Daniel Awang
\$100 - First donation

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Words of support (34)

Please donate to share words of support.



Tommy & Pauline Lee and family

\$250 · 8 hrs

just topped 50k yours true lee



Hitomi Okada

\$50 · 8 hrs

I am so sorry for your loss. Sending your family love



Joohee Choi

\$20 · 17 hrs



Doyle Family

\$50 · 1 d

We are thankful to have met the Iwasaki Family. You has always shown us kindness and made us feel welcomed. We met Aki a few times at Camp Shehaqua. We weren't close, but he was always kind and positive. Our thoughts and hearts are with you at this... [Read more](#)



Yeonjin & Inil Koh

\$100 · 3 d

I am so sorry to hear your loss. We are keeping you and your family in our thoughts.



julia walton

\$50 · 4 d

sorry for your loss, prayers for your family



Choon Lee

\$100 · 6 d



Susan Bouachri

\$100 · 6 d

Much love and prayer for your family, from the Bouachris



Mitsu Fukuzaki

\$70 · 6 d

I'm so sorry to hear of Aki's passing. Grateful to have spent the time we did in Lonestar Camp 2022. I wish you all the space and support you need to process. Much love.



Matthew Stoia

\$100 · 6 d

I'm sorry for your loss.

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