



## Where Are They Now?: John Pappas

Former Crown Point three-sport star John Pappas, left, poses with his wife Kim and their son son, Elijah.

### The John Pappas file

Pappas starred in football, basketball and baseball at Crown Point and was a 44th-round draft pick by the Atlanta Braves in the 1987 draft.

He played part of one season at Kishwaukee Community College and suffered a career-ending rotator cuff injury.

A few years ago, he lost his left eye due to cancer.

John and wife Kim are black belts in karate.

Pappas is an outreach pastor for young adults with Living Hope Church in Merrillville.

His group, John Pappas Band have cut a CD, "Freight Train of Praise." It is can be accessed at [johnpappasband.com](http://johnpappasband.com).

### Have A Where Are They Now idea?

To submit a "Where Are They Now?" idea, contact Mike Nieto at [mike.nieto@nwi.com](mailto:mike.nieto@nwi.com) or (219) 933-3232.

His faith has been tested many times, but John Pappas was never a doubter.

He lost his father before his senior year at Crown Point High School, his pro baseball career ended before it got started and he lost his left eye two years ago to cancer.

As an outreach pastor for young adults at Living Hope Church in Merrillville, Pappas tries to give guidance to those facing adulthood and uncertainty.

"What we do is try to build a relationship with God," Pappas said. "God is found in relationships and people and even through sports.

"We are not here to judge people, but to realize God is found in everyone and everywhere. Jesus Christ is here to help us with our 'junk.'"

A football, basketball and baseball star at Crown Point, Pappas was chosen as a pitcher by the Atlanta Braves in the 1987 Major League Draft. He spent a year at Kishwaukee Community College, but tore his right rotator cuff and he realized his potential pro career was done.

"I kind of questioned 'Why me?' and I think everyone does at some time in their lives when they hit a bump in the road," Pappas said. "I had lost my dad a few years before and I think even then my faith was a big part in my moving on with my life."

That included starting a rock band, Kronik and Uncle Sneaky.

Pappas and his wife, Kim, have a son, Elijah. John and Kim met while he was taking karate lessons at Homann Karate in Crown Point. She was an instructor.

A few years ago, John went in for an eye exam because he was having trouble seeing.

"I figure with karate and the blows to the head, I might have a detached retina," he said. "They told me I had a tumor on my eye. I had about a 30 percent chance to live. ... I had to call my wife and tell her ... it was tough."

At first, Pappas went to Bethel Church in Redding, Calif., which is a healing church.

"All these people were being healed, but I never got healed," Pappas said. "I tried prayer, fasting, everything. I came to grips and realized we are supposed to submit our lives over to God."

Pappas had the eye removed and three weeks later he was pitching in a local baseball game.

"A line drive hit me right in that eye where I had the surgery," Pappas said. "I was wearing protective glasses."

He and his new band, the John Pappas Band, have cut a CD and he said he shares his life and wants to be a mentor to the youth.

"We have to reach out to all communities and be that adult figure," Pappas said. "No matter what religion or race, we need to build bridges (to connect) with each other. I am not one to hit someone over the head with religion, but encourage you to live your life as a good person."

In August, Living Hope Church will host a Bikers' Sunday.

"We encourage all bikers to come out and we will have a blessing of the bikes," Pappas said. "We will then have a hog roast and my band will play some rock tunes."

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