

Matt Update....

February 2, 2014

It's hard to believe that nine years ago today we got that horrible call and raced to Chico to be with Matt only to find out halfway there that we were too late.....

February 2, 2005, a day that every memory is pierced within me. I do my best not to go back there because it is the worst day of my life and the pain is still so great it shreds my heart. But how can it not, today is the day my son was killed!

For the first few years I quite honestly did not know if I was going to make it. Every day was a struggle; it even hurt to breath without Matt. The thought of a life without him was unimaginable. The first year I could not wrap my brain around the fact that he was gone. Everyday on my way home from work I would expect to see his car in front of the house and Matt shooting hoops in the intersection. But he was not there.....all I could do was cry, the pain was too great and there was nothing I could do to make it better. Matt was gone and he was not coming back!

But here we are nine years later and by the grace of God, and the strength and love of our family and friends new and old, I am here today strong and happy with an amazing future in front of me, we all are.

I think of Matt every day and wonder about everything that might have been and strive to make a difference in the memory of the wonderful, kind and gentle soul that he was and who he would be today.

We are not alone in our pain, trying to rebuild our lives without our children. Sadly, there are too many of us that have lost a child to hazing. A senseless, horrific and degrading death, no one ever should experience! We are all on a mission to bring awareness to hazing.

It seems that hazing is spiraling out of control and that breaks my heart. It means that we need to work harder to help people understand that first it exists, and second just how serious it is. We need to TALK about it, educate others!

As most of you know Indigo Films has been shooting Matt's Story, it is set to come out on the Bio Channel, this spring (as far as I know). It was a difficult yet incredibly rewarding experience, as I was able to attend most of the interviews, including my own, lol.

Hearing Matt's friends and family remember him was so special. Matt was so FUNNY, quick-witted, sweet, kind and generous, you couldn't help but smile when he entered a room. Their memories were wonderful! Then to hear their pain of losing him, going on without him brought me to tears every time. The hardest for me was Travis' interview I had never heard his recollection of 'that' morning, it tore me up inside as he weeped for his brother, he loved him so much. I wanted so badly to hold him but couldn't because they were filming.

In Oroville and Chico I was reunited with two of my favorite people, DA Mike Ramsey, and Sgt. Greg Keeney. They both were kind enough to do interviews for Matt's Story and they were great, of course. I got a chance to catch up a little bit with both of them and that was nice.

But the highlight of the trip was totally unexpected. The film crew wanted to get some footage of the hospital where Matt died. I had not been back there since THAT day. I didn't even remember where it was but I had a vivid memory of what it looked like, where we parked by it, running in, what and who we saw and where everything was. This was not that hospital, I was more than a little confused....

We met someone outside the hospital that remembered Matt's story and she took me on a tour of the hospital. It turned out where we had just parked was a whole new building of the hospital and where Matt was, was under construction and the entrance we had gone in was no longer there. I cried as we roamed the halls, all the memories of that morning came rushing back.

Then this woman asked me if there was any one i would like to see? I said yes, there was a social working that worked here then, her name was Stephanie is she still here? She said yes let me get her for you.

Stephanie had talked to me on the phone all morning that morning as I struggled with being so far from Matt, waiting for Greg, then racing desperately to get to him. She was calming and kind, calling every few minutes or so to make sure I was okay and to see where we were on the road. She is the one I begged halfway there to tell me the truth about Matt. Were we going to make it in time? I already knew in my heart what the answer was I just needed her, SOMEONE to confirm it. And she did, as hard as it was I needed to hear it.

When we pulled up she met us at the entrance and took us in.....a lot of stuff happened that I won't go into but suffice to say she was a Godsend to me and I am forever grateful.

Stephanie came out and when I looked into her eyes I saw that warm and generous person that helped me get through the worst morning of my life. We got to visit for about 45 minutes and it was wonderful! She walked me to my car we hugged and said our goodbyes. It was so wonderful to get to see her after all these years and be able to tell her how much she means to me and always will.

I have come a long way since that day. I have learned a lot, I have grown a lot and I have met a lot of incredible people along the way. Going on without Matt has BY FAR been the hardest thing I have ever had to do. I am forever grateful that God blessed me with Matt and gave 21 years of wonderful memories that I cherish everyday.

If there is one thing I hope you take away from this it's that life is short and memories are precious. Our children grow up too fast, in a blink of an eye...don't miss out. MAKE MEMORIES!!!

Matt would have turned 30 years old this past November....

Gob bless you all, if you think of it light a candle for Matt today and maybe even say a little prayer. :D

"Hug your children and tell them you love them everyday."

Love,
Debbie, MM

www.wemissyoutmatt.com

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