

October 30, 2005

Good Morning Everyone

Friday, October 28, 2005 the four young men charged with involuntary manslaughter pled guilty to the various parts they played in Matt's death. Over 30 friends and family came up from the Bay Area in their red, sporting their "REMEMBERING MATT" badges in support of our precious son.

Almost everyone came up the night before all of us staying at the Heritage Inn Express in Chico. They were so gracious there they let us put Matt badges in a basket on the front desk, which we kept having to refill. They put Matt's decal in their window and his anti-hazing flyers in the lobby. They were all going to wear red and Matt badges on Friday also.

Friday morning we met in the lobby where Dateline was waiting to film the events of the day as they unfolded. I was hooked up with a microphone and pack as we prepared to leave for the courthouse. By 7am we all got in our cars and caravanned from Chico to the courthouse in Oroville about a 20 plus minute drive where we were joined by more Matt Supporters.

Greg, two of Matt's best friends, Andrew and Mark and Greg's cousin Rich went with me to meet with DA Ramsey before going to the courthouse. After going through the details of what was going to occur that morning we walked across the street to the courthouse. As we walked through the hall of the courthouse getting closer to the courtroom where everything was going to take place that morning all we could see was a sea of RED.

What an incredible site it was. Words cannot express how amazing it was to see and feel all of the support for Matt in that courthouse. We had been there so many times before but this day was going to be different, this day was going to put some kind of closure to the last several torturous months we had been going through. Losing Matt, hearing the horrific details of the last 3 days of his life. Knowing that he didn't have to die if someone, just someone had put his well being before their own. Traveling back and forth to Oroville every other week trying to get some kind of justice for our son. Trying to get some kind of closure for us trying to get some kind of message out that hazing is real, it's scary and it is happening somewhere everyday and it needs to stop.

The week leading up to Friday, October 28, 2005 was filled with anxiety, stress and apprehension because until Wednesday night we were not sure exactly what all was going to happen. There were so many calls between DA Ramsey and myself as we tried desperately to iron out the details of the plea bargains to everyone's satisfaction. Matt needed justice, those responsible needed to be held accountable so that they could learn a lesson and be able to teach others and in doing so keep Matt's memory alive, we needed some kind of closure for our family but needed to let those responsible in taking Matt away from all of us know exactly who and what we had lost.

I knew that not only hearing those young men give their statements and accept responsibility for their actions and hearing the victims impact statements would be difficult but more than anything I knew standing up in front of all those people and telling them what I had lost sharing my pain was going to be one of the most difficult things that I was going to have to get through that day.

It was a very emotional day for everyone in the courtroom; many tears were shed not just by those that came to support Matt but also by the defendants, their attorneys, the press, the

family of the defendants and by those that had come into the courtroom by accident. There were so many kind words said about Matt, there were 30 impact statements written and given to the judge as well as the press. These statements can be found on Matt's site in the very near future. If in the future anyone would like to write something about Matt, what he meant to you or how his death has affected you please send it to me and also let me know if you would like to have it on his site for others to read.

For those of you that do not know the outcome of Friday's events...

Gabriel Maestretti pled guilty to misdemeanor hazing and felony involuntary manslaughter was given one full year in jail with no time off, five years full probation and will be working with anti-hazing projects.

Jerry Lim and John Paul Fickes pled guilty to misdemeanor hazing and accessory to felony involuntary manslaughter was given six months in jail with no time off, five years full probation and will be working with anti-hazing projects.

Carlos Abrille pled guilty to misdemeanor hazing was given 90 days in jail with no time off, three years full probation and will be working with anti-hazing projects.

All four defendants were handcuffed and escorted out the back of the courtroom and off to jail after their pleas.

As part of their plea bargain they will all be doing interviews with Dateline in jail in their orange jump suits with the bars showing. I feel that their stories will have the most incredible impact in helping bring awareness to the dangers and the reality of hazing, it will show others that are considering doing these heinous acts that their lives could be changed forever and go a long way in our fight to put a stop to it. It will hopefully show the National Fraternity that they have got to stand up and take notice that this is wrong and they need to stop condoning it.

Lets remember "Matt's Law" as we get closer to the beginning of the new year, the first year that Matt will never be a part of, when our campaign should be in picking up steam. Lets make sure that the next time this happens, and sadly enough it will before we are successful in changing the way people think, the prosecutor does not have to fight the way the law is currently written in order to make offenders be held responsible, they will be responsible as soon as they commit these acts.

Inside Edition and National Public Radio were also present on Friday and will be running stories in hopes that we can bring awareness. Inside Editions segment will be airing tomorrow, Monday, October 31, 2005. Check your local listing, here in the Bay Area it is on CBS at 4:30pm. National Public Radio will be letting me know when they are going to air and I will let you know so you will have the opportunity to listen if you would like.

Dateline will be going to the Butte County Jail to interview the defendants in the next week or two and when their segment is ready they will let me know when they are going to air and I will make sure that you know. This segment I believe is going to be very powerful, I would hope that you will let others know, it is something your entire family should watch our young people need to know what is going on out there. It doesn't only happen in college it can start at a very early age and is more common than we think, let your children know what it is and that it is unacceptable and that they can come to you.

Thank you to everyone for your unbelievable support, thanks for those of you for taking time off to come all the way to Oroville and thank you to all of you that weren't able to come but still wore your red in support of the days events. Thank you for your prayers and thoughts.

Let us all strive to make a difference in the name of "Matthew William Carrington" who is Always In Our Thoughts And Forever In Our Hearts. I love you Matt.

Love,
Debbie, Matt's Mom
www.wemissyoumatt.com

The two misdemeanor defendants left, Steivater and Hirth are scheduled to appear in court on November 23, 2005.