

February 9, 2010

Normally I wouldn't write again so soon but I just had to let everyone know how amazing our trip to Chico was this year. Matt is making a difference and I can't tell you how rewarding it was for us to see it with our own eyes. To hear it straight from the fraternity and sorority members themselves that Matt's message is being received, that his story is being told, that he has not been forgotten.

We arrived in Chico the afternoon of Sunday, January 31, where we immediately met up with Chico's Channel 12/24 News at the old frat house, did a quick interview explaining the events of the following day and what we were hoping to achieve. They were so kind as to run the segment that night and several times the next morning. Helping to set us up for success from the start. We are very appreciative to them and Sara, the correspondent, that came out Sunday and met up with us on campus Monday for added coverage.

On Monday we set up a table in the BMU with a giant photo of Matt, banners, and large posters of what Matt has accomplished in his death, Matt's Law, the first ever felony hazing conviction in the US, etc. We handed out flyers with Matt's story and spoke to a lot of students about Matt and the dangers of hazing, water intoxication and alcohol. I was surprised that after 5 years how many kids actually knew Matt's story. This is in no small part credited to the great work the Greek Advisors, Connie Huyck and Larry Bassow are doing, as well as the Chico State administration.

That night we had a candlelight vigil for Matt in front of the old frat house where we planned to show a presentation of his life and what has been accomplished in his death, which we did. Along with a DVD of a fraternity brother of his, Joe Gonzales, depicting the mind set of pledges as they are enduring these sadistic rituals. Sadly, we had some technical difficulties and were unable to show the powerful speech by Mr. Gonzales but we were able to put it on Matt's site. You can find it by going to [www.wemissyoumatt.com](http://www.wemissyoumatt.com) and clicking on Multimedia. Please be patient as it takes almost 4 minutes to download (in some cases), but is well worth the wait. I encourage you to check it out so that you may get a better understanding of what our young people are being faced with.

The vigil was to begin at 7pm so we got to the house at 6:30pm to get things set up. Many fraternity and sorority members had told us they were going to come and bring their members with them but you know young people, they can always find something better to do. We hoped they would come but would be happy if it was only a few. As long as some were getting the message we were so desperately trying to share.

About 10 minutes to 7pm there were a handful of students in front of the house as we were getting Matt's presentation ready to play. At 7 O'clock someone said, turnaround, and as we did we saw a mass of students coming across the street to the house. It was absolutely amazing! Of course my stomach became upset as I began to shake in disbelief and astonishment as they just kept on coming until there were more than 100 students and administrators in front of that house. All I could think was, Matt is making a difference!

It was an incredible event (even with our technical problems). DA Ramsey came out and was his amazing self, speaking to the students about hazing and the difference they are making and the

difference Matt's death and Matt's Law have made and continue to make. Mr. Jim Moon, retired VP of Student Affairs was in attendance, as well as Mrs. Huyck and Mr. Bassow.

It was an unbelievable experience as fraternity presidents introduced themselves and spoke of the changes they have made and continue to make in their fraternities. The hugs, the appreciation for what we are trying to accomplish in Chico was so rewarding and uplifting. As student after student told us that it was helping them and helping the cause when we came back each year to remember Matt. In our hearts we believed Matt's message was being received and that what we were doing each year was making a difference but there is something about seeing the results with your own eyes.

Before we left Connie Huyck and Larry Bassow told me that they had been discussing creating a scholarship in Matt's Memory. That was the night's icing on the cake for me, I was quite literally blown away. What an incredible honor to Matt's memory and to all who have come and gone before him.

I want to thank everyone for their love, support and prayers. I want to thank Frankie, Bill, Bobbie, Kristi and Brandi, who truck up to Chico with us every year to remember Matt with us and help us share his wonderful life and tragic story. I want to thank Danielle, Katie, Elliott and Jessica, who are from the Pleasant Hill area but are in Chico going to school and took the time to be with us while we were there.

Hugs and kisses...

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

Love,

Debbie, MM

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