

Faith, Hope and Love

...Feeling St. Pat's Healing Touch

If you're like most people, you expect each day to be pretty much like the last one. Sure, experiences vary from day to day...some days are good while others leave a lot to be desired. Although you know life isn't perfect, you kind of assume things will continue on an even keel. What you don't expect is to experience a life shattering event — one that, in the blink of an eye, changes you forever. This is what happened to the Babbitt family in 2006 when their 16 year old son, John, passed away suddenly, and without warning, while playing basketball with his friends in the Parish Center's gym.

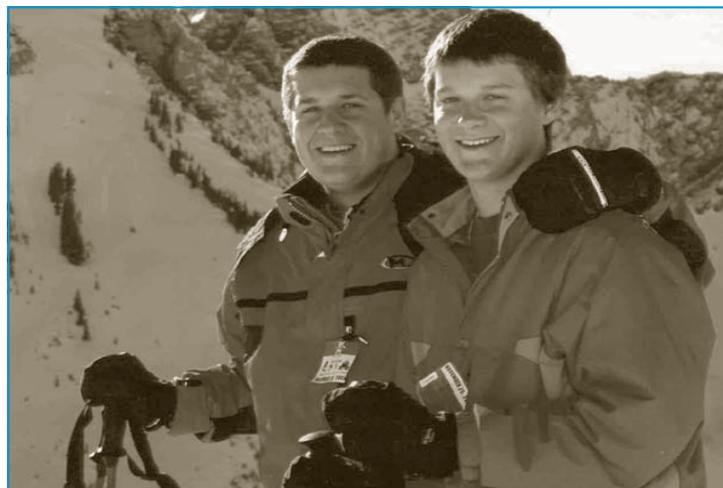
John's family later learned he died from Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy — the number one cause of sudden death in young athletes. Yet, his parents, JoAnne and Dave, didn't even know John had the disease. By all appearances, John was a normal, healthy 16 year old boy, who graduated from St. Patrick's School and went on to become a three season athlete at The Pingry School. That's one of the reasons this disease is so deadly. Although there is a test for Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, it isn't administered unless symptoms present themselves in an individual or another family member.

After John's death, JoAnne and Dave had their younger son, Andrew, tested and discovered he also has the disease. Dave, says "...Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy is a reality for our family...not only because of John's death, but because of Andrew's diagnosis as well. These life changing events have given us a special gift — a valuable insight — that helps us to know instinctively what really matters in life and how we can help make a difference."

Although JoAnne and Dave admit the past two years have been extremely difficult for the family, their memories sustain them. They reminisce about their early days in the St Pat's community. "When we first

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To honor John's memory, and to increase awareness about the severity and prevalence of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy within the young adult community, the Babbitt's established the John Taylor Babbitt Foundation. You can view this foundation's website at www.jtbfoundation.org. If you would like more specific information about this disease, go to the national Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy website at www.4hcm.org.



John and his brother Andrew on the slopes



John and a friend at Halloween

moved here from Winchester, England, the boys were accepted in the school immediately — despite their English accents! Life was wonderful and we wouldn't change a single thing. The people we met all had the same agenda. They lived for their families and all they wanted for their children was to have an appreciation for family values, faith and the importance of community."

JoAnne adds "...after John's death, the St Pat's community held us close to their hearts. The empathy and sincerity of each encounter was truly amazing. How could so many people know just the right thing to say or just give a hug at the most needed time? The compassion in each person's eyes expressed the sorrow, yet ignited the hope we needed to face each day. Father Ed and the entire Parish staff were always there for us and for that gift, we are forever grateful."

Although the Babbitt's knew they had many friends within the St. Pat's family, they were overwhelmed by the outpouring of love. "Within hours of John's death..." says Dave "...you were all there for us. Your love, support and prayers were nothing short of inspirational and heroic. Our friends and family within the St Pat's community keep us going as do the occasional emails, phone calls and parking lot chats. We now realize why friendship should be a measure of one's success and not how much money you make or your corporate title."

Anyone who has felt the love and support of the St. Pat's family understands what JoAnne means when she says "...we've come to realize the ties that bind us are strong. It's through our faith that we learn to endure. While it's tragic to lose a child, we recognize the main thing that keeps us focused on the future and all the joy it offers is our faith and relationships within the St Pat's family who John loved so much!" Dave echoes JoAnne's feelings. "We're so blessed John had the opportunity to go to Appalachia, play basketball with his friends, and participate in St. Pat's Youth Ministry. The relationships he developed were strong...and those relationships are still strong with our family to this day."

JoAnne picks up where Dave leaves off. "Your faith, love and prayers keep us going. We know God calls all His children home...our son was one of them! While we'll never understand why He wanted John at such a young age, we're starting to come to terms with His calling. Your strength, inspiration and kindness keep us focused on our journey. From the bottom of our heart, thank you so much as a Community in Christ!"

A Special Tribute

At the St. Patrick "Spirit Night" celebrations Ed Roland of the Athletic Association paid tribute to the three young St. Patrick parishioners whose lives were so tragically cut short, John Babbitt, Thomas Peterpaul, and Edward "EJ" Schmeltz. Plaques memorializing the boys are displayed in the entrance to the gymnasium in the parish center.



Memorial plaques for John Babbitt, Thomas Pepterpaul and EJ Schmeltz.



Appalachia Fundraiser

Annual Car Wash
When: Saturday, June 28th
Where: St. Pat's Parking Lot
Time: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Cost: \$7.00

Come support our outreach trips to Appalachia and get a clean car out of the deal!

