

Dear HRHS Bulls Soccer family,

Yes, I'm using that word "family"...and I'm Italian, so that has an added meaning! I just finished going through all the gift cards arranged so thoughtfully in that awesome crate that I'm going to keep forever. If you wrote a verse on the gift card, I looked them all up and felt each one. Throughout this whole experience: diagnosis, repeated treatments, regressions, additional treatments and set-backs, my belief system took a hit. When I was 19 and my father died from cancer, God and I were not exactly on speaking terms. My priest told me that that was fine...that God was a big boy, and he can take it: that he'd be there when I was ready.

A few years later, I returned to church, directed largely by Fran's encouragement, and have come to enjoy weekly mass as an escape from all the plugged in, over-stimulated world in which we find ourselves mired. Then, cancer reappeared. Though I didn't completely turn away this time, I certainly wasn't pleased with the direction life had taken my family. I found myself at odds with Him once again.

But from all the sadness and tragedy has come beauty, kindness, and generosity the likes of which I've never experienced. Seeing the beautiful banner and all the ribbons y'all had made for our family at Monday's game touched my mother and I deeply. I'm tearing up as I type this because it was beautiful. The handout with Fran's name and what she had been through was amazing. And then came the ceremony after the JV game.

Thank God I had on glasses and a mask because I was a mess. Seeing our youngest out there being supported by his team, being made honorary captain, well, my heart swells just thinking about it. I will never forget that moment. It was the embodiment of community love and team unity.

I sent videos of the ceremony to Fran's friends, coworkers, and siblings (all nine brothers/sisters!) and they loved it too. All echoed each other about how pleased they were that we were part of such a loving community. I couldn't agree more.

I spent a good deal of time today going through all the gift cards, notices of donations to ACPMP, and that incredible letter that accompanied the crate. As my eyes blurred once again (a regular occurrence these days), I was reminded that even in tragedy there is humanity and that it is through these trying circumstances that love prevails.

Thank you for showering us in love.

Sincerely,

Keith Maletta