



Charles "Ryan" Untz

Died Age 19

Pills & Alcohol

At a 6th grade parent/teacher conference I was told that the power of Ryan's charisma was almost "scary". This teacher had never seen such a young person draw the admiration and respect of his peers, en masse, as Ryan did. There was truly something very special about Ryan. Small children were attracted to him, older people enjoyed his company, and he was immensely popular with his friends and deeply loved by his family.

After a traumatic loss of an older cousin from a heroine overdose, Ryan, instead of receiving support from the Catholic School system he'd grown up in, was treated with intolerance and his self esteem began deteriorating. This was when "everybody" was trying out partying, horrific timing in a young male's life.

Ryan was knowledgeable about addictions and alcoholism. He grew up knowing his father preferred a beer can to him, his brother and sister.

Ryan tried so hard, over and over and over, to overcome his increasing drug use. He sought treatment on more than one occasion. In May of 2004 when Ryan was in the hospital from a pill and alcohol overdose, he solemnly promised me that if could not beat his problem, "this time", that he would go into long term treatment.

The summer of 2004 was a very happy one for us. Ryan got a job he was proud of and worked so hard at. He was attentive to his family, especially his older brother Karl who was recovering from a major accident and to his younger sister, Kerry. He took it as his personal responsibility to watch

out for her, in the absence of a father figure for her. Ryan came home every night, as that is where his heart was. He wanted to watch the Braves with Karl, lie on the couch with his girlfriend, Lauren, and watch a movie, or to entertain us at the kitchen table over dinner.

I was pretty good at detecting renewed and or increased drug abuse, through little signs such as his coloring, mood, dramatic increases in candy eating, but the week of August 2, 2004 was more hectic than usual. Ryan went out Thursday night, August 5th but did not come home, a very disturbing fact to us. On Friday, August 6th, we began calling him repeatedly and began a search for him. This time, when Ryan relapsed, he used with kids he didn't know very well, and really didn't care for. When he went into convulsions, the fear of legal trouble prevented these kids to call for help for my son. When the medics did arrive, Ryan was technically already brain dead. We caught up with him, (or his tall handsome physical self) in the Intensive Care Unit. We released him to God on Sunday, August 8, 2004. Our priest told us the Church had more people in it than any Christmas Mass, I believe because Ryan whistled louder, walked taller and sang with more heart than anyone we've ever known.

10.25.84 08.08.04
"One Love"

~ Karl Untz



Remembering Lost Promise