

AMAZING KID

Ryan Tolero



Making a difference one child at a time!

110° Amazing Kid (July/August)

Ryan Tolero – An Amazing Kid

By Laura Page

Laura Williamson nominated her seven-year-old nephew, Ryan, to be this month's Amazing Kid. Laura said that she did so because of the qualities of unselfish love that she's found to be part of her young nephew's character.

Laura traces the origins of Ryan's extraordinary sense of compassion back to the age of two when his father, a policeman and former Marine, succumbed to cancer. Little Ryan had to grow up enduring the tragedy and heartbreak of never developing a relationship with his dad, and having to find his identity in the absence of the strong healthy father figure that his dad would certainly have provided as an example for him.

Three years later tragedy once again struck a figure close to Ryan when his five-year-old cousin, Preston, contracted cancer. Ryan and Preston had a close relationship with each other – more like brothers than cousins.

When Ryan learned the grim truth about Preston's illness, he was undeterred by his friend's disease. He did things to comfort Preston and to protect him from becoming depressed by his illness. He would read books to him by the hour, tell him stories, joke with him, and draw pictures for him.

The most touching example of Ryan's love would take place when he would simply put his arms around his cousin, rubbing his head, and saying, "You'll be okay, Preston; I'll take care of you."

Laura said that on some occasions it was difficult for other family members to not break down in tears as they witnessed the examples of unconditional love that her nephew would show towards his gravely ill cousin.

Laura said that she thinks that perhaps Ryan's acts of loving service towards Preston stemmed, in part, from the story of his father's death. Since he was only two years old at the time, Ryan, of course, couldn't help his father fight against cancer. He had learned of how cancer took his father, and now he perhaps hoped that he could make the difference in Preston's battle against the disease that he hadn't been able to make for his father's.

Whatever the source of Ryan's helpful spirit, the heroic attitude he displayed in the face of his cousin's illness helped Preston to not give up. Preston was able to remain strong because of the example of Ryan's strength.

As Laura shared the story with me of her young nephew's loving concern for his cousin, I was reminded of the lines from Bill Withers' song, "Lean On Me."

*Lean on me when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on*

All the while Ryan was moving in on his cousin's need, he continued to remain an exceptional student at Brentwood Elementary – maintaining his place at the top of his class.

Ryan has learned a lesson about the meaning of life that all of us should learn and continually relearn. The fact is that loving and fulfilled people never attempt to draw significance in life from the number of toys they possess or the size of their income.

Life is about friendship. Like Ryan, we draw significance from opportunities of taking care of each other. Relationships that are based upon love and that call love forth from us are the only foundation stones upon which we can build a life full of meaning and purpose.

May we all make up our minds to treat others around us with the loving concern that Ryan continues to show towards Preston. May we all have hearts filled with loving concern, like the love that overflows the heart of Ryan Tolero – this month's Amazing Kid.

Send any opinion about the article to editors@110mag.com.

Do you know an "Amazing Kid" between the ages of five and 18 years old that is worthy of this award?

The Amazing Kid Nomination Deadline is July 31, 2009.

(Entries received after the deadline will be considered for the subsequent issue of 110° Magazine.)

To Nominate an "Amazing Kid" go to www.110mag.com and click on The Amazing Kid Nomination link.

