

## **My Beautiful Son**

Ryan Andrew Morrow, was born November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1981 and died January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 in Baker City, Oregon. He was barely 30 years old.

Ryan was a tall, handsome, muscular, strong, healthy young man, unafraid, dedicated, a huge Duck's fan, a father and he died because he didn't have health insurance.

My son was loved by everyone. He had a heart of gold, he literally gave people his bed, his last dollar, his last meal. He cried when he was a boy, when our house developed mice. This child of ten could not understand why we had to put out mouse traps. With alligator tears in his eyes, he begged not to hurt them, telling me "mom, they didn't do anything to us!?"

Ryan was known for his wild sense of humor, his crazy impersonations of Jim Carey, his compassionate views, his hand constantly held out to help.

That heart of gold developed an arrhythmia and we did not know it. Eight years earlier Ryan had gone to the ER with a painful stomach and 12 hours later had his appendix taken out. He was left with a 14,000.00 medical bill. Though he worked two jobs, he did not have insurance.

That lack of insurance taught Ryan to ignore what was painful, and begin investing in hope - hope that the pain would go away. My daughter, who is a nurse and whom he had confided in about his heart beating irregularly, urged him to go to the doctor. If he would have had insurance, he would have sought help. He couldn't go to the doctor because, even if they found something wrong, he would not have been able to pay to make it right. Though he worked long hours for a local farmer, he did not have insurance. He had no choice but to ignore it and hope for the best.

Anyway, how could a big, strong, loveable guy like Ryan have a potentially fatal heart condition? He was only 30 years old? Right? Yet he was worried, and besides my daughter, he confided that worry to no one.

Ryan had been coaching his 9 year old daughter, Zoe, how to play basketball. January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 was her first game of the year. Everyone was so excited. Especially her dad. But Ryan never showed up for the game. No one knew why he wasn't there. It was so strange and out of character. Where could he be and why would he miss his beloved daughter's first game?

The next day his girlfriend broke into his house and found him. His heart had skipped a beat, and never started again.

I am urging you to reconsider a Single Payer Health Care system. You have the power to literally save lives. Non-action in this matter implies consent to needless suffering and death. There are still too many folks in Oregon who do not have health care due to the cost. Yes, the cost is lower with the Affordable Care Act, but it should be universally available. Health care is a right - not a privilege.

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