

BELIEVE IN BAILEY

I was still under the impression that it was a normal beautiful Thursday Spring night. The kids were all out playing, and it was only days away from son's 13th birthday. Bailey was on his bike as always. Neighbors all knew him as the sweet red head on the bike that will talk to anyone. It was only minutes before I was going to call him in for the evening when I got a call from his phone. "Bailey had an accident on his bike and there is a lot of blood, 911 is on their way", stated an unfamiliar voice. A sense of panic swallowed me, as my stomach dropped to the floor. I threw on my clothes and jumped in my car to fly through the apartment complex parking lot to the adjacent lot. All the while, telling myself to calm down and that it was only a bicycle accident. Really.... How bad can it be? The blood is probably a leg or knee injury that will require some stitches. As I approached the parking lot, my vision was blurred by all the red and blue lights. A police officer met me at my car as I jumped out. He stated that the ambulance had already been there and had taken him to the hospital. "It doesn't look good Ma'am" is a phrase that will haunt me for the rest of my life. For the past two years, we have driven or walked by that blue ramp (technically a portable loading dock located behind Lumber Liquidator). I never dreamed that my son would try to jump the ramp as he had never tried something so bold or daring. I guess I underestimated the power of boys' adrenaline or level of curiosity.

That night was the beginning of the worst time of my life, and a time that would change my life forever. That week in the hospital was full of the most intense emotions that I have ever experienced. It began with the biggest devastation the first night when the doctor told me that he was probably going to make it through the night. Really??? From a bicycle accident??? He did make it through that night, and several more. There were many tears, laughter, hope, despair, anticipation for the next sign. As the doctor's started removing some of the medicines to do a brain death exam, a term I wish I never knew, he started to take a significant turn for the worse. I could never bring myself to believe that I might actually lose my son. He is an amazing person, and he will be spared. Miracles happen all the time! The night finally came that I could not have any more faith that Bailey was going to come home with me. His blood pressure continued to climb, his heart rate maintained at a rapid pace, and the brain pressure monitor was off the charts. The doctor's finally turned it off as it was not showing any signs of coming down. Bailey was surrounded by his family and good friends. I held onto to his hand and rubbed his leg like I had done through the whole week. I saw something come out of his nose, and I was informed that his brain was hemorrhaging. It was too late. All hope was gone. It was up to me as I had the final decision of what to do. My family announced that they believed he was holding on for me. I finally told Bailey to go be with his Nana that is in Heaven. My blood curdling screams could be heard throughout the floor. My son was and is my life. I never dreamed that I would be a mom that is lying with her son, holding him in her arms for one last time before they turn off the machines that were keeping him alive. Leaving the hospital room that night, letting go, and then having to tell Bailey's 6 year old sister that he went to Heaven, are the worst things I will ever have to do in my life. I do not wish this pain on any parent any where.

I recognize that Bailey had an accident and that there is no one to blame or hold accountable. The one thing that I ask is that we help parents and kids recognize the importance of wearing bike helmets. I never thought that my son really needed one; he just took leisurely rides around the neighborhood. The times that I did tell him to wear one, I got the response, "Mom, I'm fine". Well, he wasn't fine, even though I believed he would be as well. It is a proven fact that children's brain's are not fully developed, and they are not able to make completely informed decisions about the risk and safety. To a kid, they are invincible as nothing can ever happen to them. Yes, safety and rules and guidelines are the responsibility of a parent. However, as parents letting our teens out of the driveway and out of our sight, we have the ability, if all else fails, to say "You have to buckle up because it is the law." I wish I could have said to my son, Bailey, "you have to wear a helmet because it is the law." It would have saved my son's life, and the lives of many others, but it still can.

