



December 04, 2014.

Dear classmates of Jonathan, Jonathan's close friends; Julian Francis, Nicolas Te, Jinsu Ha, Jordan Ferrazzo, William Barker, Scott Deakin, Brandon Wong, the graduating class of 2015, the principal, vice principal, teachers, councillors, staff and students of Saint Theresa of Lisieux Catholic High School.

We have wanted to write to you since the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 (the day of Jonathan's funeral) but until now, had not gained the fortitude to. We hope we do now, and pray you understand.

It is about this time last year that Jonathan came home from school one day and brought the yellowing of his eyes to the our attention. We immediately rushed to the doctor's office, then to the hospital followed by multiple tests, surgeries, procedures and hospital stays. Though we were lucky to celebrate his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and Christmas at home with family, he spent December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013 in the hospital under observation after he needed a vitamin K infusion. He came to school for a few days thereafter, but had to go back to SickKids hospital for various procedures starting mid-January 2014. Throughout this time, Jonathan - and us - fully expected that he would soon be well and return to his 'second home and family' as he referred to this school and to all of you.

We recount this, because we know that some of you were shocked and anguished on hearing of Jonathan's passing. Some felt that you did not get a chance to say goodbye, while others felt they would have liked to see him before he passed. We do not know how we can address these feelings or how to make you feel better. Those of you that knew Jonathan well, will know that he did not complain or say much if he felt unwell or was uncomfortable. That was his way at home too. We can tell you though, that Jonathan thought of you all and of his school often. When Ms. T. Hayhoe and vice principal Ms. Anne-Louise Sabo visited him on august 28<sup>th</sup>, even though he knew he was going to die, he expressed his wish to visit school and meet with some teachers, friends and specially with his buddies Julian, Nicolas, Jinsu, Jordan, William, Scott and Brandon. By this time, as he was unable to walk more than a few steps, he asked us to help him with a wheel chair so he could visit you. We did not know exactly when he would die, but in May 2014, the doctors had told us that Jonathan would not see the new year. Knowing the condition he was in and how his health was deteriorating daily, we knew it would be impossible for Jonathan to visit school. Especially as school had not reopened for the year and then because of a protocol that required Jonathan to write a letter expressing his wish to visit his friends in school. Even though we were given the option of typing the letter if Jonathan dictates, it was difficult for Jonathan to make this effort. He was disappointed when we told him of this protocol, and told us that, as he could not connect with his buddies over the summer, he was really hoping to see them one last time, he ended by saying, "but maybe that was not to be."

Once again, the only reason we write this is to let you know that Jonathan very much missed all of you and specially his seven closest buddies. The reason he could not say goodbye was: first, because he did not know of the terminal nature of his illness until the 7<sup>th</sup> of august 2014. We – his family – had decided not to tell him until absolutely necessary so as to not cause him anguish, pain and hopelessness; and second, by the time it became necessary to tell him, he did not have the energy to



walk around or go outside home. He also could not concentrate and therefore even dictating a letter was not possible.

So three months after his passing, we are taking it upon ourselves to tell you what we believe Jonathan would like to say to you his ‘second family.’ We feel he would want you to know– as he told us – that he loves you and that he enjoyed being with you. He wanted Julian, Nicolas, Jinsu, Jordan, William, Scott and Brandon to know that you were awesome friends, and that he could not have asked for any better friends, as you are the best ...the very best! He also would tell you “when you remember me, do not remember my by crying, be happy and think of me, eat some good food and think of me. Enjoy while you can, because once you cannot, you cannot.” That is probably all we think he would say.

If you are pained, grieving or troubled in anyway by Jonathan’s passing, we cannot say that we know how you feel – because you are all individual members of Jonathan’s ‘second family’ how can we know how you each feel? We cannot tell you that you will get over it. Because grief is not a mountain or hurdle that one can climb and get over. Grief is an injury that has to heal with help from Jonathan’s and our Creator. We cannot ask you to take comfort in someone or something else, because no one and nothing may be able to comfort you. Jonathan’s passing is one of many occurrences of our stay on earth. It is a painful occurrence that we need to heal from. Healing will come. When we get a bruise on our body, it heals. The bandages and creams we apply on the bruise do not heal or make the bruise go away, they just keep out infection. Similarly, the healing of this grief will come. While it does, let us do all we can to keep out unwanted effects (that, like infections) can make our grief worse. Let us not constantly want answers as to why and how this happened. These answers are only with the one ultimate Creator of us all. The healing we need also is with this, our Creator. A bruise cannot be rushed to heal, but it does heal. This healing comes from our Divine Creator. We trust Jonathan will help us through this healing process and time, by interceding for us all from his eternal home with our Creator.

We thank you all for attending Jonathan’s funeral, for the many cards, collages, the signed basketball presented to him, the masses offered, many prayers and remembrances services held in his honour. Most of all we thank you for being there, and being a part of his life on earth. Though Jonathan could not meet you to say goodbye, you all came and were there at his farewell. That told us that you care, that you were there for Jonathan, that you felt sad on his passing and that you pray for him. Perhaps knowing that Jonathan is now free of all uneasiness and suffering will comfort you and help ease your burden and grief.

We pray for blessings on us all, thank you and kind regards,

*Matthew, Espy and Vince Leitao*