

ALTERNATIVE TIMES

The Magazine

THE JOBY PROJECT



The Big Idea Next

Mental Health vs Wellness Health

**United
Way**



**United Way
of Jackson County**

My Story About Joby by Julie Barry

I met Joby and his brothers Landon and Dash when I became principal of Ruch Outdoor Community School in 2011. The boys and their parents lived only a half mile from the school, and I could not have anticipated in a million years the impact that knowing these boys would have on my life!

Joby was always the young man that would greet you with a "Ma'am, or Sir" title. He would hold open doors, ask you how you are doing and infect you with his beautiful smile accompanied by his sun-bleached blonde hair. He was full of life, joy and never once gave anyone an indication that his family life was in fact the very opposite: dysfunction, physical, mental, verbal abuse, alcoholism, drug use, neglect, and sadness.

Joby's presence on campus presented all other students an ally and friend in all things. He was a comic, a diplomat, an athlete, a mentor, a protector, a hero. He was to all others, everything that he desperately needed in his life but did not have. I believe this is what kept him coming to school every day-the opportunity to help others to give him an escape from the life he was living. Joby poured his soul into running! He was good at it and he received a lot of positive feedback from his peers, teachers and fellow athletes. He was known!



There were many times when the boys would come and stay with my husband and me. The boys' mom was always sick, and the dad worked on a ship in other countries. The boys were often left alone, and the parents gave us permission to take them when they were unable to be at home. The boys always enjoyed their time with us, and we were always struck by the bond these three had AND their insistence to sleep altogether on the floor instead of in a bed.



Joby was very fond of spaghetti, and I made sure we had that for dinner. He would talk non-stop about his adventures with his brothers around the Applegate and he would always talk about his mother as though she were his child. His love for his mom was so strong and it did not take long for us to realize that Joby was her caretaker and protector. He did not talk about his dad...at all.

Joby loved to write and had aspirations of going to Oxford when he graduated from high school. He served as the **Big Idea student representative**, and he won the hearts of all on that committee. He was a guest on a public program called Im-mense Possibilities where he was

asked what he would like to say to his friends, he stated "I wish that all my friends would continue their dreams and graduate and not give up."



As Joby became older, and his older brother spent more time away from home, Joby took on more responsibility for his younger brother Dash, as his parents were experiencing more challenges that caused them to be absent. Joby thrives on interactions with people he loves and went looking for acceptance and support in all the wrong places.

The family eventually sold their home and moved into a camp trailer. The boys had a good time out of school as the family bounced from place to place. Joby maintained a few friendships from Ruch School but established relationships with individuals in the drug world. His charisma and personality, I am sure, provided the very sales tactic needed to be a successful dealer. It provided lots of cash which is something he never had access to, but now was able to buy whatever he or his friends needed. In fact, he spent most of his earnings on his friends. Joby trusted

everyone and assumed the best intentions from all he met. Everyone loved him! The way he died can only be the result of him trusting the people he was with, and assuming they had his best interest at heart. Joby represents so many of our young adults afflicted with drug addiction. My heart is broken because he is gone, and he is missed every day!

Something in common by Will Young

Joby is someone we all know and care about. In fact, there is some Joby in a lot of us. I was Joby as a young man, the only difference is I am here to tell about it. I remember the lack of involvement by my parents and relying on neighbors for help as they became surrogates. And the many days of not having money or nice things like other peers, as I became a prime target for drugs and other criminal behaviors. I know now that a circle of support works when the responsibilities of the committed individuals are defined particularly by the parents or guardians. But young people are creatures of habits. Anytime a way of life is disrupted in terms of routines and comfort levels, then confusion ensues. I, myself was in a similar situation where the outside relationships were more prominent than a homelife I so coveted. I didn't know what to do, and I was overcome with so many different emotions. From sadness to fear, and anxiety, it was a struggle trying to reconcile the will to live, but I am one of the lucky ones because; I survived.



Teen Mental Health Statistics

- * Approximately 40% of teens have used marijuana in the past year.
- * 14% have use an illicit drug other than marijuana
- * 12% have misused a prescription drug
- * 11% of youth have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- * 56% of teens report using alcohol in the past
- * The rise in mental health disorders among teens has a direct correlation in the increase of teen suicide which is the second leading cause of death for ages 15 to 19.

Ways to get through your day

- * Get a least 8 hours of sleep per day
- * Eat a healthy diet
- * Keep yourself mentally active
- * Interact with others
- * Pick up a new skill or hobby
- * Get a mental workout
- * Do something for others
- * Learn to manage stress

Five symptoms of Mental Illness

- * Constant fatigue
- * Physical pain
- * Perfectionism
- * Lack of emotion
- * Avoidance

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