

## **Dear Family and Friends,**

This past year has been the most heartbreaking of our lives, as we lost our beloved son Matthew, after a 3 year battle with intestinal cancer. He was 40 years old. He fought as hard as he could, for as long as he could, but in the end there would be no cure to save him. He touched many lives, and his memorial was attended by almost 250 people, and the live-streamed event was watched by over a thousand. Many paid tribute to the several charities he loved, and many good things have already happened in his name. Land was purchased in Haiti, and a school started in his memory. He wished for others to undertake missions to disadvantaged countries to serve the poor. He stood for strength in learning, devotion to others, and most of all, love of God.

Lauren is a working mother, putting in many hours at her veterinary clinic. Her husband Simon is a great support for her, not only working at his own job as an environmental engineer, but also taking on many of the household responsibilities. Joel and I love him like our own son. Our 2 little granddaughters take ballet, gymnastics, and swimming lessons. Addison is 5 and is in Kindergarten. Emma turned 4 last October, and will start Transitional Kindergarten next fall. I don't think I will make a soccer player out of either of them, as they both want to be princesses. They are the light and joy of our lives. Jeff still runs his own company, Study Soup, and is constantly updating his house in Santa Barbara.

Everyone asks how we are doing, but words can't really do justice. We're doing the best we can, taking life day by day. Joel and I, along with Jeff and Lauren, have returned to work. Jeff, Lauren, and my nephew Joey Sarafian, took off months of their lives to spend Matt's last 9 weeks with him, and took charge of his care. Lara of course was with him as well, giving him such love and comfort. All of Matt's cousins, aunts and uncles came to see him before we lost him. He was surrounded by music and love, as he slipped the earthly bonds of our arms, and entered the kingdom of heaven. In paradise, I know he is still teaching, being father to any children who are there without their parents, brother to all who are alone, and cherished by his grandparents, and Uncle George.

We are all trying to learn how to live our lives without our son, brother and husband, which leaves a big hole for us. What we have learned is that living with grief is not looking for answers, but learning to live without them. Matthew above all, wanted us to be united as a family, and a country, showing love and kindness to everyone, despite our differences. The world lost a wonderful young man, and I wish we could all learn from how he lived his life, and live ours by his example. May we all find peace and joy in the coming year.

Anna and Joel Silverman



