

# JW Jacob Wheeler Foundation

January 1, 2016

Taking in the New Year probably means something a little different for all of us. For me, it will always mark the day I lost Jacob to depression and how his death changed my life. In spite of having many blessings and many gifts, Jacob felt a burden and hopelessness that I cannot explain. That is the curse of depression. Part of me died that day and I will carry my grief with me for the rest of my life. As I came through the fog sometime after his death and stopped begging God to turn back time, I realized that this is where I am and I need to make the most of my new normal and try and live my life, a life for Jacob that was cut much too short. The last two years have been a period of personal growth. I have made deeper connections with many in my family and friends. I have developed relationships with many new friends who walk the same difficult path that I walk and support me in my journey. I have discovered a deeper sense and understanding of compassion and the burdens that many carry in their own life journeys. I have found that because of the stigma associated with depression, mental illness and suicide, many that need to reach out for help do not do so and instead suffer in silence. I have seen once again how this community can rally together. I continue to be fortunate to have Lisa to stand alongside me and am blessed to say simply that I am Abigail's dad. So, for me this New Year marks a day of sadness for my loss of Jacob, a day of reflection as I see how my journey has changed and how I have grown, and also a day to be thankful for the many continued blessings I have in this life. My HOPE for all in this New Year is for a year of health, friendship and compassion for one another.

Blessings ~Bill Wheeler