

## **Bereaved Families Of Cape Breton**

### **Random Act of Kindness**

By Patty Smathers

May 14<sup>th</sup> was Jake's twelfth birthday. I took the day off. I remember when we ate at Taco Bell together on September 23, the day before his tragic accident almost three years ago. He said he wanted to try a Gordita Crunch, but ended up choosing something else instead. Since I lost Jake, seeing those Gordita Crunch commercials on TV still makes me sad. So, on his birthday, I went to our local Taco Bell and had a Gordita in his memory. It was tasty, but not my kind of food—too greasy for the weight Watchers food plan. As I sat in that Taco Bell, I thought of Jake. I looked towards the booth we sat in last time we ate there. I remembered how much fun the two of us had that day. Then I left to go to the cemetery. I visited Jake and wondered why he had to leave us when he was so young—only nine years old. If Jake had been thirty or forty, I still would wonder why he left us. But it just seems so out of sequence.

I was at Target shopping for something to put in my garden as a tribute to him on his last birthday. Last year, I had bought a couple of trolls to sit in his garden. While I was browsing, I heard a little boy talking to himself. He was about nine or ten. He was in the toy aisle, checking out some Transformers toys. I watched him from a distance, remembering how Jake loved to lose himself surrounded by the toys in the toy aisle. Jake loved to check out the toys and then he would return to my side when he was done. Usually, he would be holding a toy and those big brown eyes would look up at me, those deep dimples accenting his smile. Then he would say, "Please, Mom? I really like this. Can I have it?"

As I studied this little boy in the toy aisle, I noticed that he had chosen a particular toy and was marching down the main aisle hollering, "Gramma! Can you buy this for me? I will pay you back." As he left to talk to his grandma, I went to the toy aisle to see what he was looking at. As soon as I got there, he returned to put the treasured toy back on the shelf. I looked at him and said, "So Gramma said no, huh?" He nodded his head and kept looking at the toy. I asked him if I helped him pay for the toy, would Gramma let him have it? He shrugged his shoulders. So, I asked him which toy was his favorite. He pointed it out and I picked it up. I told him, "Today is my little boy's birthday. He would have been twelve today, but he was killed in a car accident when he was nine." I then gave him some money, the toy, and a "Random Act of Kindness" card. He thanked me, started down the aisle to talk to his grandma again and turned back to look at me. He said, "I'm sorry about what happened to your son." Then we went our separate ways.

So May 14<sup>th</sup> has come and gone without Jake. He would have been twelve years old.