

From: Angela McClanahan
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February 28, 2022

Regarding: Christian Cortez

To: Whom It May Concern;

I have known Christian Cortez his entire life and consider myself lucky and blessed to have been fortunate enough to witness his growth over the years. This letter can only give you a glimpse into a few of his life events that help show what kind of person he is.

Even as a young child in elementary, junior high, and high school Christian always stood up for other children/people who were being bullied and tormented from peers. He never hesitated to stand up for those who could not stand up for themselves. When he unexpectedly became ill and started having cardiac issues, muscular deterioration, passing out for no reason, chronic fatigue and pain and was limited on physical activities he kept a positive outlook. After over a year of constant doctor's visits, hospital stays, and testing every week sometimes multiple times a week that teenager always said "there are people who have it worse than me." When he was misdiagnosed by a team of doctors that had been working on him for over a year and they told him he probably would not live out the next year, he simply said "well that sucks, guess I have to prove them wrong." Then after another year of doctors, specialists, hospitals, genetic testing, and biopsy's he is diagnosed with a rare form of Muscular Dystrophy called Tarui which has no real treatment or relief for his symptoms or pain. Since his condition is so rare the doctors don't really have any information on the disease. Here is a teenager who is in chronic pain, having cardiac issues, been limited from activities, can't feel from his knees down, and told he wouldn't live past the year to now being told "oh you are going to live but you will be in constant pain and in a stage of muscular degeneration and there is nothing we can do for you." Christian never felt sorry for himself or gave in to the limitations all the specialists tried to put on him and he never gave in to all the drugs they kept trying to push on him to help relieve his chronic debilitating pain. Instead, he was always looking to help others including family, friends, strangers, and people in the community in any way he could. Christian and some of his friends as teenagers participated in St. Baldrick's Foundation and raised money to shave their heads for a guy that was their age that they didn't even know in the Dallas area who had passed away from cancer. They participated in this event for the young man's family for a couple of years, until they started participating in Relay for Life in honor of one of his best friends mom who had passed away from cancer.

As a young adult Christian has always made time to help take care of his younger siblings, and not because he had to, but because he wanted to play an active roll in their lives. When his grandmother (from his dad's side) became too ill to live on her own and needed constant care due to Alzheimer's/Dementia and being a sever diabetic, he approached me and asked if she could please move into our spare room, and he would quit his job and take care of her and all of her needs. He said he could not see putting the stress on his dad and stepmom and there was no need for her to go to a nursing home while he is able to take care of her. He ended up putting his life on hold for four and a half years before we had to make the medical decision to put her in a place that could best take care of her worsening medical conditions.

The last example I will give you that shows the kind of character that comes naturally to Christian is when there was a gas explosion at a neighbor's house who we did not even know, Christian immediately and without hesitation jumped in to action and put his self at risk by going to the house that had exploded and was on fire to help get the people out of the house that were there because we could hear them moaning for help. His selflessness has always been admirable to me.

These are only a very few examples "snap-shots" if you will, of how Christian strives to be a successful and productive member of society. Unfortunately, others would like to try and paint him out to be a heathen or villain in a brief blip of time, when those of us who know him best knows that narrative could not be any further from the truth.

Despite the current situation, Christian's moral fibers are still strongly intact. He is not only an honorable individual, a valuable contributor to society, he is an amazing and inspirational human being and those of us who are fortunate enough to have him in our lives are better because of him!

Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions.

Angela McClanahan
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