

Twenty-eight years ago we bought an old farmhouse and moved to the Hereford Zone. Our first of 3 sons was born soon after we moved. We were a pretty typical family. Our boys loved the outdoors. They fished, kayaked, and played sports. Wrestling, soccer, basketball, and lacrosse. They were scouts and we hiked the reservoir on the weekends and walked to church on Sundays. I got a job teaching at the middle school. Life was busy and never dull. We had definitely become a part of the Hereford Zone.

In February 2006, our oldest son had graduated and was away at school. Our middle son, Taylor, was a senior at Hereford. Our youngest son was a 5th grader at Fifth District. We were getting ready for our favorite time of year. Lacrosse season. We knew our evenings would be spent at Genesee Valley and the middle school with Conor and his Rec team. Taylor was a senior and the co-captain and goalie of the Hereford Boys Lacrosse Team. He was excited about his final season and was hoping for a repeat of the state championship his freshman year. The previous weekend he had gone to Killington with the Hereford High Ski Club to snowboard. The next weekend he was headed to Lynchburg College. He would be attending Lynchburg the following year. He had been invited to participate in a leadership weekend at the college. His selection was based on his academics and his outstanding community service as well as recommendations from his teachers.

On Monday he stayed after school to string sticks for other players and to help some of the JV players before practice officially began the next day. The other boys could always count on Taylor for giving them his time and advice and entertaining them with his songs and animal facts on the team bus. Everyone was looking forward to another successful season.

Taylor never got a chance to play his senior year. He was killed in a car accident that night. His teammates carried his stick and his gloves to every game that year so that he would still be a part of their team. His little brother wore the green TC sticker that was created in Taylor's memory on his helmet and still does to this day as a college player.

Taylor's death shattered our family. It is every parent's worst nightmare. It is also every brother's worst nightmare. We carry the scars of his death even today, eight years later. However, we decided as a family, in the days and months following his death, that we would not let it define us. Instead, we would honor the young man and his love of life that we had been so blessed to have in our lives.

We established the Taylor Cunningham Memorial Scholarship Fund in Taylor's name the year that he died. Including this year, we will have awarded over \$65,000 in his memory to 18 graduating seniors at Hereford High School. Each of these deserving students played sports, recognized the importance of being part of a team, and showed financial need. The decision

each year is based on a blind application which means that we do not know the applicants until after the decision has been made. Our major contributor to the scholarship fund each year has been March Madness which has been sponsored by Hereford High School. The school is no longer able to hold the event.

We are asking for your help. To continue to honor Taylor's memory, his love of lacrosse and his belief in paying it forward, we ask you to support us as we plan our first lacrosse tournament. Our hope is to raise enough money so that we are able to continue to award scholarships in his name each year. Our goal is to plan a day of lacrosse where it's not about winning a trophy, but playing because you love the game. Our tournament committee is made up of volunteers. Moms and Dads. Teachers. Coaches. Friends. High school kids. All willing to give their time even though most of them never knew Taylor. They are paying it forward. We truly believe in the Hereford Lacrosse Family. The support of the Hereford Lacrosse community has been a major factor in our healing since Taylor's death and in keeping his memory alive. We ask you to join our lacrosse family and support this worthwhile tournament in honor of a special young man.

The Cunningham Family

Matt and Kim

Matthew and Conor