



KYLE PIAZZA WAS A GREAT FRIEND, TEACHER, MENTOR AND COACH. BUT IT WAS NOT ALWAYS THAT WAY.

KYLE STARTED AT BHS IN THE 2005-2006 SCHOOL YEAR AND STRUGGLED MIGHTILY WITH THE THINGS THAT ALL NEW TEACHERS STRUGGLE WITH: CLASSROOM AND TIME MANAGEMENT, LESSON PLANNING, AND THE DEMANDS OF ADMINISTRATION AND PAPERWORK. HE READILY ADMITTED THIS AND DID WHAT ALL GOOD TEACHERS DO – REFLECTED ON THAT EXPERIENCE AND IMPROVED UPON IT. STARTING IN THE 2006-2007 SCHOOL YEAR, KYLE FOCUSED HIS EFFORTS UPON IMPROVING IN THE CLASSROOM WHILE ALSO DEVELOPING HIS COACHING TECHNIQUES ON THE FIELD AND THE TRACK.

HIS PASSION FOR EDUCATION FLOURISHED AND IN THE MONTHS PRIOR TO HIS PASSING, KYLE RECEIVED HIS MASTER'S DEGREE FROM UMASS BOSTON AND WAS CONSIDERING A PROGRAM TO BECOME AN ADMINISTRATOR.

HE HAD BECOME AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE BHS COMMUNITY, VOLUNTEERING TO BE ON A NEASC COMMITTEE, PROCTORING THE MTEL AND SAT, PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AT VARSITY BASKETBALL GAMES AND COACHING TRACK AND FOOTBALL. HE WAS ALSO A REGULAR IN THE SCHOOL'S WEIGH ROOM AND PLAYED IN THE OCCASIONAL PICKUP BASKETBALL GAME WITH HIS COLLEAGUES.

WHEN I FIRST PROPOSED TAKING PART IN THE BOSTON MARATHON JIMMY FUND WALK, IT WAS TRISTYN ECKLER, A MATH TEACHER AT BHS, WHO WAS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE DECISION TO DO IT. AFTER SOME RECRUITING BY MYSELF, TRISTYN AND BOBBY KIPPENHAN, WE HAD A TEAM OF FORTY PEOPLE AND WE RAISED OVER \$20,000 FOR THE JIMMY FUND. FROM THE WORD "GO" KYLE TALKED ABOUT JOINING US ON THE WALK. I REMEMBER TELLING HIM HOW GREAT THAT WOULD BE, WHILE THINKING TO MYSELF THAT IT WOULD TAKE A MIRACLE FOR HIS DOCTORS TO AGREE. SURE ENOUGH, KYLE CONVINCED THEM THAT HE COULD DO IT, AS LONG AS HE WAS PUSHED IN A WHEELCHAIR. TAKING TURNS, HIS FRIENDS, FAMILY, COWORKERS AND FORMER STUDENTS PUSHED KYLE ALONG THE 13.1 MILE WALK. UNFORTUNATELY, THE WHEELCHAIR COULD NOT MATCH HIS STRENGTH AND THE TWO FRONT WHEELS ACTUALLY BROKE OFF WITH SEVERAL MILES TO GO. LUCKILY, KYLE'S BROTHER REALIZED THAT HE COULD PUSH KYLE USING ONLY THE TWO BACK WHEELS AND "POPPING A WHEELIE." WITH THE FINISH LINE IN SIGHT, KYLE MADE THE DECISION THAT HE WOULD CROSS IT – ON HIS OWN TWO FEET.

IN THE WAKE OF HIS PASSING, DAVE SWANTON SPOKE TO US ABOUT KYLE'S STRENGTH AS A TEACHER BEING HIS PATIENCE – SOMETHING THAT THE SCHOOL HAS ALSO SHOWN BY ALLOWING NEW TEACHERS LIKE KYLE TO TAKE THEIR BUMPS AS THEY PLY THEIR TRADE. WHAT SHOULD NOT BE LOST IS HIS PASSION FOR BHS, ITS STUDENTS, HIS PEERS AND THE COMMUNITY. IT SEEMED LIKE WHENEVER I VISITED HIM, WHETHER AT HIS PARENTS' HOUSE OR IN THE HOSPITAL, HE WAS WEARING HIS BRAINTREE FOOTBALL AND TRACK SHIRTS AND ASKING ABOUT LIFE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL.

ONE OF MY LAST MEMORIES OF KYLE IS THAT, PRIOR TO HIS FINAL TURN FOR THE WORSE, HE WAS PLANNING HIS RETURN TO THE HIGH SCHOOL. HE SMILED AS HE TALKED ABOUT COMING BACK IN MARCH AND ASKED IF HE COULD STILL WORK FOR OUR SUMMER PROGRAM IN THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL. THIS WAS CLASSIC KYLE: HERE HE WAS FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE, AND HIS FOCUS WAS ON RETURNING TO HIS PASSION: TEACHING.

THE PIAZZA FAMILY HAS SET UP A SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN KYLE'S NAME AND DONATIONS CAN BE MADE TO THE KYLE J. PIAZZA SCHOLARSHIP FUND. C/O CITIZENS BANK. 371 HANCOCK STREET.



What To Do If YOU Are Called To The Office

If you know the reason, and it is non-threatening, there is no problem. But, if you suspect that there may be a problem, **any hint of reprimand, discipline, or unsatisfactory handling of a situation, call a BEA representative.** In 1975, the US Supreme Court decided in *NLRB v. J. Weingarten, Inc.*, that **employees are entitled to union representation in any meeting in which they reasonably believe that disciplinary action might result.**

The key here is the phrase, "reasonably believe that disciplinary action might result". If the meeting starts out friendly, and takes a turn toward inquiry or accusation, you may ask for union representation. You **must ask** for union representation - it is not the responsibility of administration to inform you of your rights to representation.

If you haven't already gotten one, you should soon be receiving a ballot in the mail from the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System. Please don't throw away this important ballot! Instead, cast votes for two very worthy MTA activists, Plymouth teacher and incumbent MTRB member Karen Mitchell and retired Millis teacher Dennis Naughton.

The members of the state teachers' retirement board make important decisions that affect you, your retirement benefits and your future. Please check your mail, vote for MTA-endorsed candidates Karen Mitchell and Dennis Naughton for the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board, and mail your ballot back no later than December 5.

Please help us spread the word by forwarding this message to your colleagues in public education and eligible family members and friends, urging them to vote in the MTRB election before the December deadline; forwarding this message to other active and retired preK-12 educators; and posting messages of support for Karen Mitchell and Dennis Naughton on Facebook and Twitter.

For more information, including a link to a video message from the candidates, visit massteacher.org.

Payroll deduction of BEA dues should begin some time in the end of November or beginning of December.



We're still looking for ideas to raise money for the scholarship fund.



At 3:30 on January 18th at East Middle School there will be a Workshop on the New Educators Evaluation. The workshop will be sponsored by the MTA. The first hour will be a presentation and then the second hour will be a question and answer session. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

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