

# Beacon of Hope

## In Honor of Ryan Hathaway

Our son Ryan was only 15 years old when he was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. There were no warning signs, and no symptoms. It was the worst moment of our lives. He spent two long years in treatment and most of his days were ruined by pain. The steroids he took destroyed his bones; he needed two hip replacement surgeries and physical therapy so that he could walk again. Ryan faced his pain with dignity, and his losses with grace well beyond what could be expected of an adolescent. He doesn't think of himself as a "survivor" or acknowledge the bravery it took to wake up with cancer each day. His treatment left him scarred in more ways than one, but he is doing his best to move on with his life.

His illness robbed him of a normal life, but could not take his spirit and ambition. We just passed the anniversary of his remission—six years and counting. Ryan was a freshman when he got sick, and he met with tutors throughout his treatment to keep up with his schoolwork as best he could. The work was in



addition to physical, occupational, and speech therapy he also underwent. He met his goal of graduation on time with his class, and after a gap year he is a sophomore at Curry College studying Communication. He works between two and three jobs at a time including his internships and fulfilled another goal this year, becoming a Big Brother to a young boy in Dorchester.

This picture was taken at Fenway Park on the day of Ryan's Make-A-Wish, where he interviewed longtime Boston Globe writer Peter Gammons. The picture was taken by the center field cameraman, one of my favorite pictures of Ryan.