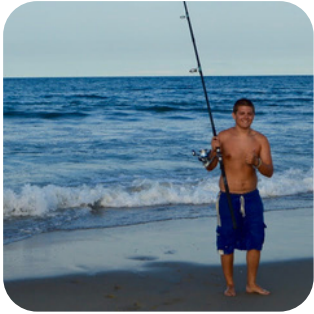




Calvin O'Brien Dworshak
'Cal'
6.19.1996 - 3.6.2017

Rare Disease Day

A story of love & loss



This is my son Cal. He was born with CAH/salt loser. He was our third child. His sister, Avery Kathleen was born April 23, 1989. She was our first child and was diagnosed with CAH/salt loser two days after she was born. That's a whole other story to be told. A scary yet exciting time in our life. Then came our son Henry Timothy January 25, 1991. We knew ahead of time, having several tests when pregnant, that he did not have CAH. This

was a relief in many ways since most of our days were spent going back and forth to doctors for Avery.

Then came Cal. We knew he had CAH. From the moment he was born he was put on medicine and life seemed to get smoother. Cal was the happiest child of all. He was mom's side kick and went everywhere with me. He was loved by all, always placing God and Family first. Cal attended The Manor Montessori School in Potomac, Md. As did his siblings in his early years. It is where I taught for 30 years. He then joined Avery and Tim at St. Bernadette's Catholic School through the eighth grade then Gonzaga College Highschool in DC. Cal had many friends and excelled while in school. His passion was the great outdoors and he took great pride in hunting deer and fishing, and just embracing God's great earth.

Cal was accepted into the Forestry program at West Virginia University. It was a dream come true for this nature boy. He loved the campus, the country feeling and his Mountaineers! In the summers, Cal would spend his time at his grandparent's beach home in South Bethany, Delaware. It is there that he met a beautiful young lady named Mary Coll when working at the near by pizza place. They were inseparable and continued to date well after the summer.

On March 2, a Thursday, Cal went to visit Mary who was not feeling well. He took her a dozen roses and visited for a while with her and her parents Bridget and Jim. Calvin adored Mary's parents and family and felt right at home. Friday March 3rd, Cal golfed with his dad, a pastime they enjoyed. It was a beautiful day, as I am told. That week end he also spent some time with his sister and brother who lived at a townhouse not too far from Cal's dad, Henry. March 5th Cal did

what he did best, hang out with friends, playing in the mud and dirt, riding ATV's and shooting the breeze. It was a fun time had by all from what I've been told. Cal did have a mishap and ran his ATV into a tree. He was not hurt. Well, no broken bones. But, this definitely shook him up. This was a "stressor", as I would call it when Avery or Cal's bodies were affected by sickness or their actions.

If I could swing back a bit, I do not live in Maryland. My husband and I divorced in 2012 and in 2015, I moved to Wilmington, NC. to work at a Montessori school. March 6, Cal woke up very sick. He was vomiting and had terrible diarrhea. He could not keep anything down. I was not there. I knew nothing of his illness. I was eagerly waiting for his arrival March 6 to spend time with me in North Carolina on his spring break. Cal called me in the morning and said he wasn't feeling well so he wasn't coming. I replied maybe he just needs to chill over break and that I was sad but understood. We both shared I love you's and that is the last time I heard my son's voice. I did not know the seriousness until it was too late. Cal could not keep anything down. That meant his meds, as well. Water, Gatorade, Pedialyte meant nothing if it doesn't stay in your body. He needed to go to the hospital, but that was not considered for some reason. He had no back up shot to take. It was never refilled!!! I am not pointing fingers for what was and wasn't done. He needed to get the hospital ASAP. Through the years my two CAH kiddos had many an emergency and spent much time in the hospital when sick or hurt, due to CAH. I could just look at them and know they are going down and need to get to the emergency room.

My son died in his father's arms at his father's home. His body just couldn't take it anymore and his heart gave out. I was called by my son, Tim, when all was said and done and Cal was gone. You can imagine my shock and despair, hurt and disbelief! I just talked to him in the morning and had no idea he was so sick. He was gone. My children were there at the hospital. They had to say goodbye to their brother while he lay on a cold, steel gurney!

The wake and funeral were held at St. Bernadette Church. Over 1000 people came. Family, friends and many, many strangers to us but were touched by Cal in some way in their lifetime. Stories of how Calvin drew them closer to God. How he made them feel special and loved and how he always reached out a hand to help his neighbor. It blew our minds how many were there. It softened our broken hearts for a minute.



I'm writing this short description of a most terrifying event so that parents and most of all

grown children take their condition in the most serious way. If they don't feel well...take note. If they have injured themselves...get help. If they are even in a stressful time, whether it be stressed about work, school, relationships...take note! Always call their endocrinologist and doctor when there is a sign of decline or worry. I wished I'd had known how serious Cal's state was. Always wear a medical bracelet (Cal did) and always have your medicine and syringe ready in case of an emergency.



My apologies for writing a sad story on this special day but I can't emphasize enough how serious CAH can get within minutes! God Bless and always stay CalStrong!

You can read more about our son Cal on his Facebook page. CalStrong.

Thank you.

Carrie - Cal's mom