

SHAWN HEFFERN

For a kid who had trouble seeing, nobody had better vision than Shawn Heffern. For a kid who was short, nobody was bigger than Shawn. For a kid who lived a short life, nobody will have more lasting effect than Shawn. I hope they know what they're getting in heaven.

In a short span of life Shawn has taught us so much. He loved people; he enjoyed humor; he played sports. With a sickness that would drive others to despair he plodded along with determination; he accepted every illness no matter how serious as if it were another scrape on the knee--just something you deal with and move on. He had a remarkable curiosity about people, and that made us curious about him. How did he do it? He had a restlessness about him, as if he had to cram a lot of life into a short space. He taught us the meaning of life, love, joy, and suffering in just thirteen years.

In our loss, we're going to wonder, "Why did he have to go?" I think a better question is "Why was he here? What did he bring to us?" Maybe he was here so we'd pay more attention to what matters in life. Maybe he was here to make us appreciate what we have. Maybe he was here because God knew that this family and this community would take care of him, because God knew we would learn from him.

The Book of Wisdom says measure people not by their years; measure them by their lives. When we live as upright people, God will be pleased.

Our sorrow is deep because we have lost Shawn. But Christ has not lost Shawn. Christ has never lost anyone entrusted to him. This isn't the kind of kid you lose anyway. He'll always be there, a companion to Christ, giving us vision, giving us height, and giving us life.