

## Rachel Bartlett Rosado

Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 7:26 am

Dear Matías,

I had such a vivid dream of you recently. You were laughing and jumping around. My heart filled with joy. I said, "Matías, why are you so happy?" You beamed at me with your beautiful smile, "I am happy because I am all better." Excitedly I said "Oh!" but then reality seeped in and I whispered, "But Matías, you killed yourself." And I woke up to tear filled eyes and my new reality of you not being here. Today would be your 20th birthday.

I want to let you know what you have missed out on these past 5 months. You missed having new experiences and friendships at Chapel Hill, you missed spending time with your girlfriend and friends from home, you missed learning more about computer science and stats and seeing all of the limitless possibilities that life has to offer. You were missed by me, your dad, and Mason.

I told another mom at my suicide loss survivor meeting that I now understand how you felt every day....the devastating sorrow, loneliness and despair. It is debilitating. The other mom said, "But as a mom, don't you feel like absorbing this pain is something you can do for Matías? You can take this pain knowing he doesn't have to bear it anymore?" She's right. I will never stop being your mother, and I would do anything to take away your pain.

And, I would do anything to have you back with us celebrating your birthday today.

You were a great son who had already accomplished so much. Your 6'4, ruggedly handsome frame with a razor-sharp wit, and brilliant mind was a perfect recipe for success. We are heartbroken over everything you will miss out on in life. I am not sure you thought of the magnitude of your ultimate decision. But that is the selfish me talking. You were so sad and couldn't see yourself getting better. I just wish we had more time to work through some of the options. I wish the pandemic had ended a little sooner. But I know your depression wasn't letting you see any light or have any relief this past year and you couldn't hold on any longer.

It's 2:29 in the morning as I write to you. I am actually sitting in your room surrounded by your smell. Your ashes sit hidden behind your Gronk jersey on your side bureau that your dad put there so I wouldn't have to see them. You said we were great parents, that we were kind, that we didn't do anything wrong. You said you loved us. I want you to know those words help, but I would rather be taking you

out to your favorite steak dinner tonight and hugging you tightly and saying “happy birthday, how does it feel not to be a teenager anymore?”

Oh and one last thing.....we created a foundation in your honor so that we can give hope to those who feel hopeless, to help others in need. This is your legacy, Matias....helping others like you did in life. You will be remembered for your beautiful life of youth sports, strong friendships, and kindness; not your untimely death. A few days after your birthday on December 13, we are hosting our first educational event with the Charlotte Rush Junior Hockey team at Extreme Ice Center in Indian Trail, NC. A well-known mental health and suicide prevention advocate, NAMI NC Board Member Fonda Bryant, will be the keynote speaker. We are planning more events in 2022, and I will continue to write to you to share updates on your important legacy.

At your celebration of life ceremony, I shared, “you were born on a Saturday and died on a Saturday, I was the first person to talk to you and the last.” That cold snowy day in Boston when you introduced me to motherhood was magical. You were my everything. You didn’t disappoint. I love you today and always. Happy 20th birthday sweet boy.

Love, Mom

P.S. your Bruins are off to a great start but I can’t watch them without you...

\*\*If you have a birthday wish for Matias or a memory to share, post it in the comments section. It means a lot to know how many friends and loved ones miss him.\*\*

## You Can Help

We lost a vibrant young man in the prime of his life to a disease that can strike anyone at any time. Depression seeped into his brain ever so slowly and started eating away at his self-worth, his livelihood, he couldn’t see his value.

Unfortunately it has been hitting our adolescents hard especially during this past year of Covid. Our country is in the midst of a mental health crisis that has escalated during the pandemic. <https://www.hhs.gov/.../youth-mental-health/index.html>

And yet, the funding for mental health is inadequately low. The Matías Rosado Foundation (MRF) is committed to raising awareness about the mental health crisis among our youth through support, education, and advocacy. Whether for Matias or for someone in your life who has struggled, please take a stand for mental health awareness by visiting the MRF online at <http://www.matiasrosadofoundation.org> or like us on Facebook: @MatiasRosadoFoundation.