

In Loving Memory of

MICHAEL ANTHONY GAINES

1992 - 2009

Written by Friends

Compiled by IVWriting.com

The following writing was submitted by various people who knew Mike and was inspired by Eric Simmons and compiled by Andrew Lam of Intravenous.

JAMIE HAUG

He was one of the nicest guys a person can ask for.
He gave the shirt off his back when I got trash all over mine.
We shared a love for the TV show Heroes.
He will always be a hero in my eyes.
Much love to you big Mike much love.

ERIC SIMMONS

Mikey G, was a good friend and enduring amigo. He would always help out a friend in need. If for some reason I didn't have lunch money that day, Mikey would immediately spot me. Whenever the snack shack would get a new food he would get a little for the group, just so that they could try it. When we would hang out and play video games with him, he would always forfeit his controller to someone else, so that they could get a turn. He was constantly letting friends borrow games, even the one's he hadn't even had a chance to play himself. He was a talented rapper, writing all his own lyrics, but had an uncanny ability to freestyle, which usually ended up on the track instead of the written lyrics.

ZUBIN MODY

What up, Mikey? I will never forget all the times we had in the hallways at Northgate, shaking hands like we had known each other for years, and saying each other's names like we were notorious rappers in the business. Your heart was too big for this world, and your love could be felt in other universes. I wish you good luck as your journey continues above the clouds over our heads.

ERICIA BYER

Mike, my thoughts and prayers go out to your family. May you rest in peace.

CHRIS SHELVER

Michael Gaines was a unique person, who always had a smile on his face. He was great to be around. Although I was not around him much, when I was he always made me feel upbeat and positive about life. I can't believe he is gone. Just yesterday, I was sitting on the bus, looking out the window, when I saw his uniquely interesting hair style. I cannot believe that he was to pass away a few hours later. Thank you Mike for all you have done for all the people who love and care for you.

CLARA PAINTER

I never really knew you but I wish I had. You touched many lives and will be truly missed! Rest in Peace.

LYNDSAY PETERSON

If tears could build a stairway,
and memories a lane, I'd walk
right up to heaven and bring you
home again.

GABRIELLE SOTO

I didn't know Michael that well, but I do remember him. He was in my sixth and seventh grade P.E. class. I danced with him a couple times when we had the "social dancing" unit, though we never spoke except maybe a few words. I was too shy, too introverted to talk to anyone that wasn't my closest friend. This school year, I have seen him, every day in the hallway, just walking to his next class. And now I wonder why I never talked more with him, and wish I had because now I will never get a chance to know better the person that everyone referred to as a "great guy" and "kind" and a "nice person". I wish I had gotten to know him like so many did. And though I didn't, the news of his death shocked me just the same. My jaw dropped when Mr. McMorris read the news; I just couldn't believe that somebody so young had passed away so suddenly. The rest of yesterday, and today, have sort of gone by in a blur. There was a noticeable hush in the school today, in the hallways, in the classrooms. Because even those who didn't know Michael were affected, and disturbed by what happened. It made everyone, myself included, realize how precious life is. We think these things don't happen, or that they couldn't happen to someone we know, but that is unfortunately not the reality. Michael, you will be greatly missed by all.

MICHAEL DE GARMO

Michael Gaines, you were truly a great person and it is hard to see you go. Your personality always brought smiles to people's faces. R.I.P.

ROMAN SCALISE

Today we lost more than a classmate; we lost a positive person in our lives. Some of us never got to know Mike better than to know him as a nice and fun loving person. I am very sad along with tons of others that he is gone. We will all miss seeing him in the halls laughing and having a good time. I send my prayers to him and his closest family and friends. R.I.P.

KATY BLUMER

I sat behind Mike Gaines all year. I didn't know him well, but anyone who knew him knew what kind of a guy he was. He sat surrounded by friends. They teased each other mercilessly, the way sixteen-year-old guys do. Mike never teased back, never even protested, just grinned that giant grin of his and laughed. Not once that year did I hear him disparage anyone, even as a joke. I'm not exaggerating when I say he was the sweetest guy I knew.

In the coming weeks, Northgate will be a sadder place. Mike's not here anymore, so it's up to us to do what he did. Remember his warmth and good humor. Don't pick stupid fights; comfort those who need it, even if they're complete strangers. Remember that your life is fragile. Take good care of it. Let's make Mikey proud.

NATASHA MALHOTRA

Since seventh grade his laughter warmed everyone hearts every where he was. I never knew his personally but he always had a smile on his face. I hope he will Rest in Peace.

JAY KIM

I have so many thoughts going across my head at the moment. I never had a chance to get to know Mike in person nevertheless I always thought that he would be a sweet kid when I see him in the hallways with his smile on his face. Mike, My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. You will be truly missed. Rest In Peace.

DANIELLE MURTHA

Mike was such a sweet person, and I know that since high school has started I haven't really talked to him. I really wish I would have. I take everyone for granted, like I'll wake up the next morning and they will always be there. I wish I would have stayed in touch with Mike through these past couple years, because I'm going to miss him a lot. He was a sweetheart, and such a nice person. I am going to miss him. We are all going to miss him. So I pray for the family, because I know the loss of a loved one hurts worse than anything else. But he was always kind to others, and he was a sweet guy, and happy, and we should celebrate him. Celebrate his life.

We love and miss you, Michael.

Here's to you, bud. Here's to everything you've been. You touched all of our lives, and we will never forget you.

JASON YU

Michael Gaines could be described in one word: friendly. At first, he was just another one of the eighteen people in my Biology class. We all took notes together, had fun with Mr. Tellian together, and shared stories together. I would always remember Michael as the person who would listen to all of your stupid stories, and even though everyone would be ragging on you for whatever stupid thing you've done, Michael would just be the one person to just laugh along, and just listen to your story. As a freshman, I didn't get to know Michael as long as other people have, however, in these nine months of school that we've had, I have noticed that this man is a person who never said anything bad about anyone, he was always that one who would lift you up, not bring you down. He was the person who would treat you like a brother, even if you've known him for a short period of time. He was taken from us, and it's a heartbreaker, however, if there's any bit of learning that could be taken from this, it's that life is so fragile. It could be taken away from us in a heartbeat. He is gone, but his personality lives on. As long as we treat each other with respect, as long as we bring each other up, we're paying our respects to Michael. He was taken from us way too early, but during his short time on Earth, he left his mark.

CAROLYN ANDERSON

I am sad to hear what happened to you. Everyone wore black in memory of you today. The whole school misses you.

LENORE FISH

Some may say that although I never truly knew you personally, it would not be proper to write this; but I disagree. You will always be remembered and that is something everyone can agree with. Michael Gaines, to me and to everyone else you will always be remembered but above all you will always be loved.

MICHAEL WRIGHT

I never knew you very well Michael Gaines, but you're gone and it's too late for me now. After reading what everyone has written about you I can't help but see the way you have affected so many people. It seems your kindness and loving nature will never be forgotten by those who really got a chance to know you. May you rest in peace and never be forgotten.

KELSEY AUSTIN

I never even knew your name. I never even talked to you or heard your voice. But every day I would walk out of math and you would walk right by me. Sometimes you looked sad. Sometimes you looked happy. One time I heard you laugh and it made me smile. Smiles are all it takes to affect someone. Not hearing your laugh ever again won't nearly be as hard for me as it will for the people that knew you, were friends with you, and your family. But it affected me.

EUGENE SVIDLER

Michael, I didn't know you that well, but we had a few classes together and you were always nice to everyone. You never had anything negative to say and I'm glad I knew you. I regret not talking to you more. Best wishes to your family, you will never be forgotten, man.

HALEY FRASER

I speak for many people when I say that one did not need to know Mike well to know he was a genuinely easy-going and kind person. I never heard him say anything negative about anyone, and I really admired him for this. I will miss hearing him laugh everyday in English and History, and I will never forget him.

EMMA FULLER

You will be missed and remembered forever
R.I.P. Mike

PARAG JOSHI

What can I say About Mike Gaines? He was one of the happiest kids I have ever known. Always had a smile on his face. Never sad... never mad. For the past few months I would always say hi to him in the halls and just yesterday, on his last day with us, he said hi to me for the first time. I don't know why Mike was taken from us and I don't think it is fair, but I know he is in a better place and he is looking down on us from heaven.

Rest In Piece Mike Gaines

ADAM WALCHIRK

Now everything seems to move slowly.
I'm not sure which way I should go.
Life's given me so many paths how can I choose one.
I've had a lot of friends, never thought I'd lose one.
And I swear they got the wrong one.
And I swear I won't forget you in the long run.
I wish I could fast forward to the day we are together.
Mike you will be in my heart forever.

R.I.P. Mike... You will never be forgotten.

DAVID HO

I can't ever say that I knew Mike Gaines as well as a friend would have. For me, he'd just been a guy who was in the same grade as me, and a guy who I'd shared a few classes with in the past. But now, as I think about the past with him in it, I remember and realize how special of an individual he was. When we used to be in the same class, we'd pass in the halls, and he'd always say hello to me. We used to chat idly about anything, and he was always there to talk to. I think back to the last time I ever saw him. We were at a crowded "College and Job Fair" inside the NG library and I was bored. There really wasn't anything there that interested me, and none of my friends were around with me at the moment. I was simply

wandering around; I had no one to talk to, and was getting ready to leave. But then I noticed Mike standing nearby, and we just happened to make eye contact. I don't know if he remembered me from the previous year, but we ended up exchanging a friendly chat. We chatted on about a random topic, and I stood there smiling, listening, and talking to him. We talked as if we were brothers.

Mike was really special. There is no one like him. He was a friend, and a brother to everyone. He treated everything whom he met as a true friend. Though I never spent a ton of time with him, I can guarantee this, if you treated Mike with respect, he'd give you ten times more.

Now that it's time for me to say goodbye, I'm stuck here, regretting the fact that I'd never been a true friend to Mike. My most treasured memory of Mike is him creating his own rap for his persuasive speech, and performing it in Mrs. Jenkins' class. He put a smile on all of our faces that day, and I know he's smiling at us now. He'll put a smile on those who remember him, and those who ever met him will smile at their memories of him. Those who were his friends will never forget him. May you rest in peace Mike, your presence will be missed. Thank you Mike, for always being there, and for being the guy who you were.

MARCO SAN MATEO

Mike Gaines was more than just a student for the student body of Northgate but he was also a great friend to us all. Mike was always a friendly guy and he was always easy to talk to when you're feeling down in the dumps. When I first met you in 7th grade you always had my back. When we first went to aims in are freshmen year of high school year you made me feel more at ease to be myself because I had a friend with me. When sophomore year came around you were in my aims class again and I had more friends to keep me at ease and I met more people. As time passed by I didn't see you as much anymore and then when I first heard that you passed away I was devastated. Mike you were more than just a friend to me you were like a brother to me man. R.I.P. buddy we will miss you so.

BEN GARCIA

I never really knew Mike, and I had only talked to him a few times. Even from those couple of times I could tell that he had a big heart. I would see him walk by everyday at lunch with a big smile laughing with his friends. I wish I could have gotten to know him better. R.I.P.

BRENT HISAKA

I won't act like I really knew or was even acquainted with Michael. That might seem odd considering he has lived on the corner of my street since before I could even remember. I vaguely recall seeing him for the year or two that I took the bus to school in middle school. Never, though, did I approach him. Why, then, am I writing? I may not have been hit quite as profoundly today as so many of those at Northgate, but I saw things today that I will never forget. Two of my close friends, Jacob Schiller and Cody Stirm, two men who have always composed themselves with the utmost humor and happiness...were crying. Now this, this unsettled me more than so many things I have encountered in my life, however short it may be so far. Short...who am I to comment on how short my life has been so far... Michael, a mere junior in high school has passed on. That's short. Far shorter than anyone deserves. Even the worst of souls deserves to see their college graduation, to go to college. And surely Michael was the best of souls, the kindest of people. What else could move Jake and Cody, two such happy men to such emotion? I may not have known Mr. Gaines, but if his passing could spark such emotion, such mourning in so many people, he must truly have been an amazing person.

No amount of condolences could ever assuage the loss of the Gaines family, yet I extend mine regardless. No mother should have to bury her son.

I'm by no stretch of the imagination am I a religious person, but at a time like this, something inside me makes me wish that there is a God, and that Mike is with him right now. R.I.P.

LISA RANKIN

I only wish I had the chance to get to know you better. The saying is true when they say you never know how precious something is until it is gone. The people around me who knew you well, spoke only kind words about you. Never once did anyone have anything bad to say about you. You had made an ever lasting impression on everyone you met in your life, and trust me, Mikey, you are unforgettable. You are so kind and generous. I could see that you genuinely cared about the people that were close to you and you only wanted to look out for them. That makes you unforgettable, Mikey. I will always remember you in math class freshmen year and Mr. Olsen calling on you all the time and you taking your time to find the answer (I think you may have been his favorite!). And Ms. Hodge always challenging you, but of course you always won. And even in middle school in Mrs. Lee's science

class. You were my first lab partner and you were so peaceful to be around. You never made anyone feel uncomfortable or stressed. The aura you had around you was so calming and relaxing. And true. You were you. And only you. And you will always be cherished and missed for that. For being Michael Gaines. We love you, Mikey. And you will never be forgotten. May you always live forever in our hearts.

MANDI HEPPLER

R.I.P. Mike Gaines. I never met you but from what I hear you are an angel. Rest in peace Mike. You will be missed.

ERIC BUCKLAND

Mike Gaines; whether you were good friends with him or you had only met him once or twice, you know what a cool person he was. I was just starting to get to know Mike, and the worst part is that I'll never really get to be good friends with him. The last thing I said to him was "Hey Mike" to which he responded with his usual greeting "What's up, Buckland?" in the gruff but friendly way with which he always said it. That is all we could say. Hey Mike. No one got a chance to say good bye. We should not remember Mike because he passed away suddenly at the end of his junior year. We should remember the Mike who brightened our days and brought laughter to our lips. Mike, you are, and will be, missed.

BRENT NETTELL

I didn't know you that well.

In fact, I didn't know you at all. To my recollection, we never even spoke.

But, this doesn't change the fact that this event has affected me, just like it has everyone else.

That a precious life has been extinguished, and so suddenly.

I didn't know you, but I do know that other people did. That you were an important figure to your friends and family. Your life was a precious one, a life that can never again be replaced.

In fact, my biggest regret is that I never got the chance to know you.

That I never got to talk to you, and get to know you, before you so suddenly departed.

Fly high, Mike Gaines. We will all miss you dearly.

SARA LY

I met Michael at the beginning of my high school career. I didn't know him that great but I was always aware of his presence. As it came, he and I were in the same English class in our sophomore year. We weren't the best of friends but we were classmates and Michael considered me his friend and for that I am honored.

Anyone who knew Michael knows that he has a kind heart. He would always lend a helping hand even if he wasn't the one you were asking. His compassion knows no boundaries and that was what made him loved.

There was a time last year when I had ridden the wrong bus home from school. Michael was kind enough to walk me all the way back to my house when it was on the opposite side of his own home. He didn't have to and I didn't ask him to but that was the way he was. He went out of his way to help me and I'll never forget his kindness.

People always talk about death and what would happen when it strikes. No one expected for it to strike Michael so suddenly and at such a young age. It saddens me that his life has been robbed because of this untimely event but I do hope that he lived it to its fullest. I know that Michael is in a better place because someone like him, someone that generous and caring, deserves it, at the very least.

Michael will be greatly missed. No one could ever replace him in our hearts and it upsets me that he has to leave us like this. Many of us would have never expected it. When I heard the news that someone had passed away, I was shocked, but I didn't know who it was until a few moments later. During the time that I didn't know who it was I was curious. What grade were they in? Do I know them? The shocking news left me heartbroken and hurt. I couldn't believe that something this awful would happen to such a great man and I still can't believe that I will never see his face again.

Somewhere in the clouds, angels are taking care of Michael and somewhere in the clouds Michael is watching over us. He will never leave us and he will always be cherished. May you rest in peace Michael Anthony Gaines.

ARVIND RAMESH

Today, when I heard that Mike Gaines had passed away last night, I felt sick inside. I felt terrible, and what confused me the most was that I didn't even know him that well. My distant relatives and distant acquaintances have passed away throughout my life, and I have never felt a single morsel of sorrow. But today when I heard Mike passed away, it stuck with me. A feeling that I had never really felt before; true sorrow. Upon later reflection I realized I felt this way because Mike had such a big heart and was

always so kind to everyone, and I could not think of a single time when was mad at him or he was mad at me. R.I.P. Mike, I'll miss you.

BIJAN PARVIN

I never really knew Mike until this year when I shared threads with him. I did a couple classwork assignments with Mike and came to realize how kind of a guy he really was. Mike was a guy who would do a favor for you and ask absolutely nothing in return. He was a great guy with a great heart. It's really hard to realize that he's not going to be around anymore but we all can rest knowing that Mike is somewhere in a better place.

KATIE REUTTER

I wish I could have known you, talked to you, become friends with you, but now I never can. It is unbearably sad and unfair that death took those opportunities away from us. But, you were a joy in many people's lives, always giving them your heart and soul. As I talked with my brother he remarked in fond remembrance that you always gave him a dollar in middle school when he needed it. My brother did not even know you. I will always remember you as the caring, loving, open-hearted being that you were. Maybe I'll get to know you later, whenever and wherever that might be.

WILL MELTON

I didn't know Mike too well, but from what I did know from talking to him and seeing him around other people, he was clearly a really nice guy. It's sad to believe someone can pass away at such a young age. I'm not quite sure what else to write, all I can say is that I don't have a single negative memory about him and that he will be missed.

PAUL OKENDO

When we are born, there is one thing that is gonna come to us all. And that would be death. But for Mike Gaines, his life barely started. Mike was always the one to have someone's back, or be the first one to offer a helping hand. He was always laughing and making some form of a joke. He always tried to put a smile on someone's face. He was the kind of kid that everyone knew around the Northgate campus. Everyone loved Mike dearly and we will surly miss him. R.I.P. M.G.

MONICA WOELFFER

It just doesn't seem real. Tomorrow we will walk into the halls of Northgate and our fellow peer, Mike Gaines, will not be there to join us. It really just seems unfair to take away a life that was so young. He had hopes, dreams, and goals that he planned to accomplish. Sure, I was not a close friend, but this whole situation seems surreal. From the very few conversations I had with Mike, I realized that he was an optimist. An optimist in a world filled with negativity. His strong spirit should be an inspiration for us all. We need to look on the bright side, for Mike.

Mike will truly be missed. He may be gone now, but he will never be forgotten. Though it may seem totally clichéd and straight out of a Disney movie, Mike will always be with us in spirit as long as we keep him in our hearts. R.I.P. Mike Gaines.

GABRIELLA DE LUCA

I never knew you that well, but I saw you every day. We shared Art class in seventh grade, and you were always sweet, kind, and funny. You shall be missed dearly. My heart goes out to family and friends of Michael Gaines for he shall remain in our hearts forever. This tragedy will only make the ones who love you stronger. God bless you Michael Gaines.

EITAN KARNI

Mike was always a great guy. I would eat lunch with him and he was always happy and in a good mood. He was just such a nice person. I enjoyed being in his presence and talking and joking around with him. He was also very compassionate. As an example, he would sometimes go to the cafeteria and return with a handful of cookies to pass around to everyone. Mike was a one of a kind guy and will be missed greatly.

JOEL FRATTINI

Mike was always the guy with the big heart. You could always count on him. If you needed a couple dollars you could go to Mike and he would give it to you without thinking. He always had your back. He always acted as if you were his brother. May he rest in peace.

MATT BATASKA

The one time I spoke to you, you brightened my day. You were such a kind, sweet guy. I wish I could have gotten to know you better. I'll miss seeing you in the hallways.

TYLER REYES

I remember being in his 8th grade science class, every day we sat across from each other and just talk about what ever. One day I said, "Mike Gaines I'm sorry, just DON'T EAT ME!" the whole table erupted in to laughter including him. I saw him every day in the halls, said hey and patted him on the back; I would have never guessed that yesterday would be the last day I got to do that.

CODY STIRM

He was perhaps the kindest and most generous person I knew. He had so much to give to everyone, not just to his friends. He shared everything and never expected anything in return. He was the friend who everyone was happy to have around. He made us all smile. He was a very funny and creative guy, and very fun to be around. He never complained and always kept a positive attitude. Mike is someone I will remember forever, especially after spending nearly every day around him, having the silliest conversations and laughing. He was always one to find good humor in everything. He had a great heart and a great soul. We love you Mike Gaines!

SALMA ABDELAZIZ

You were a good guy Mike. You're in a better place now.
Rest in Peace, keep us safe.

AARON HERNANDEZ

R.I.P. Mike you were a good guy and awesome friend... You put smiles on people's faces... I'll never forget you... MY hommie.

ANONYMOUS #1

Today is a day I won't forget. Today is a day I learned a lesson that took all the years I have been alive to learn.

I learned to "know" a person for who they are, what they represent and what they mean to those around them.

Today, for the first time, I "met" Michael Gaines.

My daughter told me after school today of his death. She told me she didn't know him personally, but she knew who he was. She told me how the students at Northgate High School honored his memory by wearing black clothes and holding a short memorial service in his honor at school .

How can a student at Northgate just suddenly die like this? Who was Michael Gaines? Why did this happen? Many questions raced through my mind. I turned, as I always do, to the magic of the Internet, the all-mighty, all-knowing, Internet, to try to find some answers to my questions.

Instead of finding answers to just those questions, I found more. Much, so much, more.

I experienced the joy, perhaps for the first time in my life, of "meeting" and

getting to know someone through the eyes, thoughts and words of others. I don't know what Michael looked like, how tall, whether he wore glasses, color of his hair, sound of his laugh or color of his skin.

But, let me say, I feel after reading all the thoughtful words and comments made by those who do know those details, I DO know the spirit of Michael Gaines.

It touched me to the point of having to wipe tears from my eyes, over and over again, as I read the impact Mike had on those around him.....his friends, classmates.....those he simply passed in the hallway of the school.

It touched me to read the beautiful words, hand-picked by those who walked through life with him, chosen to be typed into memorialization.

What an impact this life, this one person, had on so many. Simple things. It's the simple things people feel, remember, appreciate. How clear this was made to me as I read words of his classmates and friends.

He touched those around him. He tried, in simple ways, to make the world around him a little.....just a little.....bit better with his actions, his words. He wasn't flashy and shiny and loud and imposing. Yet, he managed, in so many ways, on a daily basis, to make those around him have a little bit better a day because his spirit passed through.

His spirit. Not his accomplishments or achievements. Not his power or his opinion.

Just his spirit. That is who he was and that is who we all are.

Reading words typed by his friends and classmates made me stop and think: I wonder if any of these young people ponder how they will be "remembered" if they were to suddenly have their life taken away from them?

I wonder if they have a sense of how "their classmates" will speak of or remember them? I wonder if the rest of us, touched by Michael Gaines' passing, think we know how those we leave behind will choose to tell others about us, about how we lived, who

we were.....?

I wonder if anyone will ever truly be able to write about me as positively, as thoughtfully, as those who have written about Michael Gaines have written about him.

I am a mother. I have three children. My youngest is a freshman at Northgate. My parents are living in their mid-70's. I have been particularly blessed with many, many relatives in my life I have enjoyed the company of for as long as I can remember. I often wonder how it will be to deal with the death of those I have known my entire life.

Taking time out of my day to read and get to know Michael Gaines has been something I will not soon forget.

Because of his passing I was brought to see the absolute goodness and talent in students at Northgate, as measured by their incredible thoughts poured into their keyboards. It is so reassuring to see inside the hearts of some of those who wrote about Michael.

Because of his passing I have found a reason to appreciate the internet, the technology, the era we live in.....the era of detached social skills, artificial relationships and void left where human interaction once dwelt. I have seen the value of seeing inside someone's heart and soul.....both Michael's and those who wrote about him.

Because of his passing I have watched the outpouring of respect for life shown by the students of Michael's school, his life, as evidenced by the frantic "call to arms" to wear black in his honor today via the almighty text message.

I have stopped in the midst of my incredibly demanding, stressful life as a mother of three and tax attorney working full time to reflect on how, if I were to leave this life tomorrow, those who knew me would speak of me, what they would remember as having value to them, what example I set for others.....

I say to the family and close friends of Michael: thank you for sharing him with the rest of us. Know that this young man had an incredible impact on the lives of so, so many.....people like ME, who did not ever have the pleasure of knowing him. Try to find comfort knowing that although his life was so short, way too short, that unlike so many of us still here bumping around into each other day after day, what he stood for made a huge difference in many lives. What a tribute. If we all could be as fortunate at the end of our lives.....

And to Michael, wherever you are, and I believe you know this: thank you for living a life that brought such value to so many. You truly are One of the Good Guys.

CHRIS HOPKINS

Boy what a smile! His smile will live with us where ever our lives may take us.

DEREK KRYSKOWSKI

You have created a flame in all of our hearts that will never be burnt out. R.I.P. Mike Gaines.

NIK HERNANDEZ

It seems like everything flew by just a little too fast. Sitting on the bus from 7th grade all the way to this year, still saving me seats on the bus. Looking at your empty seat across from me in English just won't be the same. Turning around to talk in History will be no longer possible. Nothing will ever be the same with you. You were funny, smart, knew how to make people feel just that much better about themselves. And in just one night, it's all taken away. I miss you Mike. Rest in paradise.

STEVE KIM

Hey Mike

I still can't believe you left us like this... but I am glad that I got to know you... We hanged out during summer break and it was hella fun! I'm going to miss you and never forget you. Much love brotha and God bless you and your family

MEGHAN VERCAMMEN

I am sorry to say that I did not know Mike Gaines but all I can tell you is that I, too, know what it is like to lose a close friend. A friend that was loved by so many people in his or her life. A friend who has been taken away from us unexpectedly by an illness. A friend who we missed so much, that we wish we could turn back time, just to see his or her face and hear his or her voice again. Even though I did not know you, I love you. We all love you. We all miss you. May you rest in peace, Mike Gaines.

DEBADRITA BHATTACHARYA

Just to think, it was only yesterday I saw Mike walk past me to class after brunch. A year ago was the first and unfortunately the last time I talked to him. One day before school started I went to the school library. I remember a friend of mine was talking to him. I went to my friend and the three of us had a hearty conversation. I found Mike to be the most wonderful, kind, and humorous person I had ever met. Never will I forget that moment. He was the kind of guy who left a mark in your mind even if you just talked

to him once for five minutes. His smile would put a smile on each and everyone's face! Rarely, in today's world, are such people found who not only want their own happiness but the happiness of others.

Death can take the body of the person, but his memories, his deeds, and his love for humanity will prevail in our hearts. We all have something to learn from Michael. I have learned how to be a good human being and how to love everyone no matter what. No matter where Michael is, his memory and his teaching will always remain with me. I hope his family and friends all the best. I give them all my support!

TIFFANY FAED

Michael Gaines was most possibly the nicest person I've ever met. When I was a sophomore I was so lost, didn't know where my classes were yet. I was rushing to the bathroom to try and remember, I remember I was so mad at myself thinking "I'm a sophomore I should know where my classes are" and as I think this is am passing him, and he looks at me and stops me and says "do you need help?" and he helped me find my class. Over the next year and half we exchanged few words but the times I did he was smiling and giving a warm aura. "There is nothing in the world so wonderful as to love and be loved; there is nothing as devastating as love lost." Always and forever remembered with love,
R.I.P Mike Gaines

ALEJANDRO RAMOS

He smiled at absolutely everything. Happy or mad. He didn't show it. Because he was a great kid. R.I.P. Mike

JINNY SUN

It is strange to think that a student from Northgate will never walk down the dreary and windowless halls. I suppose even now I am waiting for the truth to hit me, for I cannot even begin to comprehend the tragic loss of a person and what life will be like. I remember Mike from elementary school to high school, and I still believe deep inside that I will see him again. For all the memories, thank you. For all the joys and jokes, thank you.

FRANNIE UCCIFERRI

I am sad to say that I never really knew Mike Gaines. He was a good friend to some of my friends, but we never ran in the same circles.

After hearing the tragic news, I saw my friends-Mike Gaines' friends-looking as though the world had fallen from underneath their feet. The whole thing seemed unreal, too terrible to be true.

I listened as these people talked about Mike, told stories about their mutual experiences, and shared jokes that reminded them just how much he meant to the people he knew.

The fact that I did not have the chance to know Mike Gaines is a regret I will carry with me forever. I never was able to know the genuine, generous person who touched his friends with his love, humor, and kindness. However, by hearing the way his friends loved him, I know that his time here has made the world a better place. Mike Gaines, rest in peace.

SEAN SIDDHU

Mike, I will always miss you man. I still can't believe what has happened. Yet if there is one thing I have learned from being around you, it is that you always find a way to make the best out of something. I know you're probably writing some raps up in heaven right now. I won't disturb you; just know that I will never forget you. You will always have a place in my heart. I love you man, Sean

KIM GRIFFIN

I didn't really know you too well, but I wish I had made the effort. What I do remember though makes me smile. I remember you reading poetry in Ms. Ludden's class. I remember how it made me laugh and reminded our class to enjoy life. You brought joy into other people's lives and I want to thank you for that. You will be missed.

KAREN JENKINS

When I read the amazing and heartfelt messages on this site [IVWriting.com], I had to add my thoughts and memories of Michael Gaines. He brought his heart and soul to second period English last year, in room 44. This was one of those rare classes where people bond and form close friendships, where people knew each other from many years back - and then keep adding more and more memories through a year of class activities and discussion. Michael was a quiet presence, full of heart and he always had his signature smile ready. More than once, when he had been quiet and I would call on him, he always had an insight or comment to share. Quiet but not shy. Soft-spoken but not hesitant. I'll always remember, and I'm sure students will too, his original rap song, complete with mixed music, that he performed as part of his persuasive speech. Now doesn't that memory bring a smile! Or his

Catcher in the Rye monologue, Michael ranting like Holden Caulfield and stealing the show from his group. I'll remember Michael, and the great display of friendship and support from his classmates, and from his mom who was so devoted, caring and supportive.

JARED FRIEDMAN

Although I never got the chance to get to know you, I could tell that you were an awesome person. You went too soon, but I hope that your last thought was your best one. A member of the Northgate Family is gone, but not forgotten. Goodbye dude.

ALEX ROGALA

Every day, as I strolled from P.E. to my locker and rubbed my eyes awake, I passed by you in the gym. We never talked; and I doubt we ever even exchanged a glance; but I will miss seeing you every morning.

ANTHONY CHIN

Although I never knew Michael Gaines particularly well, I know that the guy treated everyone he met like a brother and a friend. He had a quality of unconditional love that does not come along very often. I remembered he was always a great guy to talk to about the latest video game or anything of that nature. Even though he may have been limited physically, he will always be remembered as a lover of a life, a true friend, and an overall amazing person.

CHRIS ANDRES

Mike was the nicest guy I ever met. He is a funny, out-going, kind, generous and fun to hang around. I first met Mike in English class last year in Mrs. Jenkins class. He sat right next to me the whole year and we would talk with other friends in class and we would just have a good time together. We would talk about class stuff and other stuff like cars, girls, music especially and a lot more other things. In class we both became close friends. Everyone loved Mike when he was in class. He would make jokes and rap for us in class. Mike will always be with us in our hearts. He will be missed dearly. I will always remember Mike because we became close friends. The last time I saw Mike was yesterday after 5th period, I was walking and he was in the hall and he said what's up biscuit and I said what's up Mike Gaines! And that's the last time I talked to him. Mike is a special person; the lord blessed him with his kindness, and generosity. Everyone loves Michael Gaines and so he will be missed. Michael Gaines rest in peace my friend! I will miss you!

MAYNOR GUERRA

I didn't know Mike too well but I would see him in the halls a lot and every time he would be like "what's up Maynor?" in his deep voice that made my day that much better... Mike was a kind and generous guy he put smiles on everyone's face he will always be missed he is in all of our hearts we miss you mike... R.I.P.

ALI KHAVARI

I have known Mike Gaines since middle school but last year I got to know him a little better. Last year, sophomore year, Mike and I were in the same World History Class. During that time, I learned a lot about Mike. I learned that he was probably one of the nicest guys at Northgate. He was friendly and kind to everyone he met. Every day, I would walk down the ramp leading to the cafeteria towards Mr. Boyd's class. As I rounded the corner and entered the classroom, I always saw Mike in his seat with a smile on his face. No matter how early I arrived, Mike was always there. From his wonderful personality to his great sense of humor, Mike always made the class more interesting. We spent numerous days discussing sports and our lives outside of school. He was a great friend. Northgate will always remember Mike Gaines. Rest in Peace Big Mike.

ZACH GARMAN

It took me less than a minute to figure out that Mike Gaines was the most genuine person I'd ever met. Mike cared about people for who they truly were inside, regardless of who they were on the outside. He was one of the most caring people that Northgate's halls have ever seen, and the love he has shown to everyone at Northgate is being reflected by his passing. Mike Gaines, you are gone, but you will never be forgotten. You changed my life and made me think twice about things when I met you in eighth grade, and you've changed my life and made me think twice about life now that I have to say goodbye. People like Mike are the people who can change lives. I know you're looking down on us and because of the love and acceptance you showed to each and every single person that you met, we're all looking right back up at you. You showed me what matters in life Mike and I'll never be able to thank you enough. But thank you Mike Gaines. In your short time here, you changed the world.

SUSIE BOWMAN

Mike was in my international relations class freshman year. Today, after hearing the news of his death, I replayed one thing over and over in my head, something I think I remembered him saying. I just replayed Mike saying, "Hey Susie." Such a small thing. But I couldn't stop thinking of it... Just the way in which Mike said things, so sweetly, and with no ulterior motives. He was down-to-earth. Mike was one of those people who I can't imagine would ever turn someone away--he was genuinely friendly to those he encountered, and I am blessed to have been one of them. As for the rest of us here... We'll be missing him. But I hope Mike is looking down on us happily, just waiting for us to join him.

So thank you, Mike, for being a friend, thank you for your good-heartedness, and thank you for being yourself. All of our lives have been blessed because we knew you. You're in our thoughts and prayers.

EMAN BIDOKHTI

Mike Gaines you were the nicest kid I have ever met, you didn't deserve anything like this, hope you are in a better place now. R.I.P.

JOSHUA CHZEN

I never really got to know you,
but the couple times we talked,
I found that you were one of the nicest guys I had ever met.
I'm just sorry I didn't get to know you better.
May you rest in peace.

MATT WILLIAMS

Knowing Mike has been a privilege. Mike was the nicest person I have ever known. He would go out of his way to help anyone. I will always remember Mike and what he did for all of us. I will miss you Mike, we will all miss you.

KARINA KARAPETIAN

"You're in our thoughts
Please know how much you are loved
and how deeply your loss is felt by all."
Although I didn't personally know Mike, I often saw him at school. He was always surrounded by people who were constantly laughing and smiling. It hurts me so badly to know someone so young and so kind is no longer with us today. We need more people like Mike in this world, people who are always smiling, never upset.
It's awful news to us all; death is one of the hardest things to deal with. During this difficult and sad time we as all have to come together as one and be strong. To all Mike's family and close friends, my heart goes out to you. Stay Strong

SHANNON WOO

Mike Gaines always made me laugh. I didn't have any classes with him this year, but I did have P.E. with him last year. He always had a smile on his face and was always laughing. I rode the school bus with him too. He was always cracking jokes and sometime rapping. He was an amazing person and I wish I had more time to spend getting to know him better. He is always in my memories and me and communities everywhere are praying for him and his family. You will be missed Mikey!

SARAH SARDELLA

Today while sitting in 5th period as I heard Mr. McMorris's voice over the intercom, I expected him to announce a sports accomplishment or for him to remind us we were great students, I was not expecting to hear about the tragic death of Mike Gaines. All 5th period I sat, blank, staring straight ahead. Blank. All I could think about were his family and his friends. As I walked to 6th period I was in a daze, then I asked my friend Simone what Mike looked like. I remembered who he was. Suddenly, the feeling of despair deepened. His family and friends must be suffering so much was all I could think about. I sat in German and failed a quiz. I walked to my friend's car after school, still in shock. I hugged anyone I could. I wanted to help. But I couldn't. I could not bring him back. I spent the afternoon at Katy's house, discussing life, death, dying. I reminisced my mother's near death experiences. I reminisced how a girl named Shelly passed away when I was a freshman. I grew upset, feeling worthless. Suddenly my vibrating phone jolted me out of a daze. It was my brother. I soon learned he knew Mike. My shock deepened. Now my own brother was one of those friends of Mikes I was worried for. I wanted to help, but Matt didn't want to talk. As I let Matthew be for a while I talked with some people who knew him. I began hearing the wonderful person he was. How kind and caring he was. How come had I never met this wonderful person? In a world with so few loving and caring people, why did we have to lose him? Finally Matthew calmed down enough to talk with me. "He was really nice..." he half mouthed. Waves of emotions overtook me again, the

tears swelling in my eyes. Mike Gaines, we will all miss you. I will never forget you, even though I never had the chance to know you. ! My brother respected you; you were a friend to him. I wish you were here, I wish I could thank you in person. I am angry with myself for never getting to know you. I know that wherever you may be, you will continue to be the wonderful caring person I wish I had the chance to meet; the person who was beloved by all.

RYAN MCCAULEY

I never got the pleasure of really knowing Mike but I saw him almost every day and he always was living life to the fullest with a smile on his face – R.I.P.

EMILY KANE

For some reason, one moment sticks out in my mind. In sixth grade, we had to "partner dance." I remember frantically looking for a partner, and seeing nobody. Mike Gaines just walked up and said "I already have a partner, but come over here and dance." That's the kind of person he was. He loved everybody and everybody loved him.

JOHN VROOMAN

Mike was the happiest dude there was. Always nice and smiling no matter what. You couldn't upset him if u tried. Death is part of life. He would have wanted us to come together as a school and treat each other with respect and kindness as he did, because u never know what's going to happen. May we never forget him and live the way he would have wanted us to. He will be in our hearts and prayers forever - R.I.P. MGaines.

WEISI KANG

Michael - If only I had said a few more words to you while you were here, on Earth. If only I had taken advantage of the opportunity to know you better. But I can get to know you right now. You had such a great influence on everyone around you - your friends, your classmates, and your teachers. All I have to do is ask: you will always be remembered. Until we meet again.

STEPHEN COLLINS

When I heard the announcement over the loudspeaker today, I sat down in disbelief. I remember Mike Gaines as someone who was always friendly and nice to anyone that he met. Just 3 days ago, I passed Mike in the halls. Even though I had not had an extensive conversation with him since freshman year, he stopped to say hey and chat it up before class. You will be missed Mike.

KEVIN CHINN

Mike – how you gonna leave me here
2009 was 'bout to be our year
I just wanna hear your voice I can't believe my ears
We just got confirmation on the worst of our fears
And yeah there's still tears, God there's still tears
I just wish I wrote this song while you were still here
And all of our peers, Mikey they really miss you
Since you've been gone there haven't been enough tissues
Damn, honestly I can't believe it
I thought you'd rule the world never thought that you would leave it
But I gotta keep going this is something I know
So I'll carry you with me everywhere I go
But I feel so slow, I think I'm going insane
Think back on you and block out the pain
Remember when I told you we'd get higher than the planes
Kept my promise, you're in heaven, rest in peace Mike Gaines

ALEX GODWIN

I have known Mike since middle school. He was always friendly and these past high school years he has eaten lunch with us every day. He was always very generous probably the most so of anyone I know. Mike was a great person to joke around with, bringing the mood to many conversations. He was a good friend and I will miss him a lot.

LEEZA PIKE

I knew Mike as a sweet, kind, funny, and a considerate guy; who always had a smile on his face no matter what. I can't believe this happened. Rest in peace Mike you will always be remembered.

JIMMY TANG

Many of you might have known Michael Gaines or Mikey or Mike Gaines, but the fact that Mike Gaines is really gone seem to be just a dream. I will remember Mike Gaines as the loveable and humorous kid who could crack a joke and somehow make me laugh. Mike and I became close friends during our bus rides to school and home; Mike was always the funny one and could make anyone laugh. I will remember you Mike for your love of jokes and South Park, I will never forget our South Park moments. Rest In Peace Mike

ELYSE GIRANDE

I've known Mike since I was in the 7th grade. He was someone that would do things for anyone, even if he didn't know them. School is going to be so weird, not seeing you in 5th period it's hard. You have made such an amazing personality and you would give your shirt off your back to anyone. You were a great bodyguard to me and you wouldn't want us to be sad, you would want us to think of you of all the good things that you did. You have touched so many people, even if you don't know it. I miss you and everyone at Northgate misses you. Keep in touch with us somehow and you will never be forgotten.

ERICA JENNINGS

I never really had the time to get to know you and I wish I was able to. My thoughts and prayers go out to you and your family and you will forever remain in the hearts of many.

KELLY PETERSON

I went to preschool/daycare and regular schooling with Mike and although we haven't talked much recently, the things I do remember about him was his big, boisterous laugh that always made me smile. He always had a smile on his face and was nice to everyone he met without ever judging anyone. I send my condolences to his family and know he's in a better place.

KAJ LAANEN

What goin' Michael? I remember meeting you back in the fourth grade, and I'm glad I got to meet you. I think I saw you everyday back then waiting in the drop off at highlands, just hanging out and talking. Then I met you again as freshman in P.E. and you were just as I remembered you. You were still that same nice kid, and now that you're gone everyone is going to miss you and your laugh and your presence. You were a relaxed guy and even though I hadn't seriously talked with you in the last year, you were still that nice guy and I'll remember you as that great friend. Rest in Paradise Michael.

STEPHEN SULYMA

I have known Mikey since I was he was in first grade. We went to the same Daycare together. The first day I was there I saw Mikey playing catcher on the court we played Kickball on. Mikey was the first one to come up to me and the first to introduce me to everybody else there. Because of him I was able to have a fun 5 years at that daycare and make friends through Grade school. I will miss you Mikey and your Great Smiling attitude.

ANDREW LAM

I didn't know Mikey that well but we did hang out a bit in freshmen year. He always had a positive attitude and never made enemies or got into conflicts with anyone. His humor was always welcome and he was an all-around friendly guy. I will miss his smile and laughter the most.

ALLEN ZHAO

I've never had a single class with you except for 7th grade PE, but we've been riding the same bus together since 6th grade. Make no mistake; you were always an influence upon the rest of us when we were all fighting to get on the bus first when it came late. And now, knowing that none of us will ever see you again, will leave an empty space in all of us. R.I.P. Michael Gaines, you will be missed.

TIM SWANSON

You were a big guy, with a bigger heart. This sounds corny, but I think it hits the nail on the head. You would give a kid the shirt off your back and the money in your wallet, whether or not you knew for sure they actually needed it. People would give you a hard time sometimes, but you would just roll with it, and laugh with it. I couldn't always understand what you were saying but we'd laugh

it off. I'm going to miss that. The world will be a darker place without you, but wherever we're off to next, I know you'll be there waiting for us, a smile on your face. Rest in peace.

PAUL WICKMAN

Mike Gaines was one of the nicest kids you would ever meet he always had a smile on his face and was always friendly to everybody easy person to talk to. You will be missed Mike.

ANONYMOUS #2

Hey big Mike!

Man! I miss you so much

We used to hang out and u always made sure if I was having fun... you were a great guy... and a well educated wonderful young man! Why does this kind of stuff happen to such a great people? I think it is God's plan to take you up to heaven because you EARN it... Mike please watch over us in heaven and be with us... My prayer goes out to your Mother and rest of your Family... And I hope that we can meet again in heaven with a smile... start again from where we left off...

LULU MARTINEZ

I never really got the chance to know Mike, but from what I can tell he was a great person who was always happy. R.I.P. Mike, we will miss you.

ANNIE BENNET

I had only met Mike when I asked him to dance in 7th grade when no one else would. I wouldn't say we became friends, but we knew each other. I saw him in the hallways and said hey, gave a little head nod, or just a wave.

I saw him every morning right after A period, and he was always in the center or close to it.

You could see his smile from a mile away, people always called him a Teddy bear, and his hugs were legendary.

Even though he is gone, he is always going to be here, in the gym before school, in the halls between classes, at his lunch spot. He will always be at Northgate, and he will never be forgotten.

Mike, I never knew you as more than an acquaintance, but after all the stories I heard, I wish I could know you as a friend. Bye Mike, you will be missed, by me and everyone.

ANONYMOUS #3

You were one of my close friends...

I am very ashamed that I never did anything for you... you were the one who gave me things I need and you were always there for me... I am truly sorry... I never thought you will leave me like this... I hope you're in better place right now and I truly pray about your mother and please watch over her and us... Much love.

ANNIE BENNET

I had only met Mike when I asked him to dance in 7th grade when no one else would. I wouldn't say we became friends, but we knew each other. I saw him in the hallways and said hey, gave a little head nod, or just a wave.

I saw him every morning right after A period, and he was always in the center or close to it.

You could see his smile from a mile away, people always called him a Teddy bear, and his hugs were legendary.

Even though he is gone, he is always going to be here, in the gym before school, in the halls between classes, at his lunch spot. He will always be at Northgate, and he will never be forgotten.

Mike, I never knew you as more than an acquaintance, but after all the stories I heard, I wish I could know you as a friend. Bye Mike, you will be missed, by me and everyone.

EMMA MOSSINGER

I am so sorry that this had to happen. I never met you, but I will always remember you. Everyday I would walk by your group during lunch and see you smiling and laughing. Now I regret that I never went over to meet you. Your laughter will live inside me forever. May you rest in peace.

ALLEN MORLA

Mike, it just saddens me to think that I didn't appreciate you enough until after you're gone. Man, I wish I could go back in time, with you, me, and Gordon owning in Call of Duty. I wish I could go back in time and go to Evie's with you and the crew just one more time. I wish I could be sitting in English class, look to my left, and see you at the end of the row, talking nonsense with Sean. I wish I could hit you up with a high-five as we both walked out separate ways, leaving school. I don't miss you just for what you did, but also for who you are. You were nothing less than caring, honest, and you were probably one of the greatest guys to be around. All I can do now is see "devilcigar6", and be reminded of all the good times we had when we had you. Much love Mag, you'll always be in my thoughts and heart.

MICHELLE DAWKIN

Michael - may you rest in peace. Thank you for sharing your loving heart with this world. you are greatly missed.

ELLEN PANEK

I was reading some of the things that people wrote about Michael today, and a lot of the ending words were, I know you will be happy wherever you are. Wherever you are, those words are so shallow and depressing. I know that after we leave this life that there is a heaven, and I know that is where Mike is. I didn't know Mike that well, I had some classes with him and he was my friend. However he was a sweetheart, he was caring and was always up for a good laugh. Mike is in a better place now and is happy. He has found peace, and he has found comfort. It has been hard for everyone at school, but today I was so impressed by all of the people who showed respect for him by wearing black, by writing notes for him and his family. Mike will be missed, but it is so important to know that we will all be able to see him again someday. He is in a wonderful place, and I am grateful that I was able to know him. He was amazing and always made me laugh, and whenever I saw him he always, always, always had a huge smile on his face. I don't think I can recall one time when he was not grinning, and it was contagious, it definitely put me in a better mood instantly. Thank you Mike for all the good times. You will truly be missed.

EVA MINUTOLI

It was Tuesday afternoon, and I was pushing my way past everyone in the crowded hallway. I heard a laugh echoing throughout the hall, and glancing up I saw Michael Gaines. He was laughing and joking around with a friend. I was stressed over something probably really pointless. But his smile was so genuine and so contagious that as a result I found myself smiling too. I kept walking towards my next class, and started to think about everything that needed to get done in the next few weeks. The next afternoon, Mr. McMorris announced that Michael had died. And I found myself going back to that smile yesterday. I asked myself how he could have been smiling, when death was so incredibly close? Tears welled up in my eyes, as people all around me were silent. What could be said? We were all in such shock. Someone our age was gone, and there was absolutely nothing anyone could do or say to change that. Although I did not know him personally, he affected me in a great way. His friends say that he was always smiling, always happy: a truly kind and caring person. I'm so thankful for the lesson that he taught me. He made me think about what truly mattered in my own life, and what was utterly pointless. In an instant, someone can be gone. There is no warning, no clues to how long someone can be on this earth for, and when the time comes for them to leave, they are simply gone. But in a sense, they are still around us. Everywhere you look, you find memories. A person can live forever in the hearts of those who loved them. Death is a reminder to the living of how important the people that you love and care about are. Without these people in your life, there would be no point to continue living. Michael is a constant reminder to laugh more, and to tell and show the people I care about how much they mean to me. You never know when someone could be gone, it takes just a second, just one moment for someone to leave, and never return. I will always remember that smile, Michael, and I could never forget it. My heart and my prayers go out to you and your family. I know that you are in a better place. Rest In Peace

DYLAN WRIGHT

I remember Mike Gaines was in my English class last year for a day; I never really got to know him, but I saw him in the hallways sometimes. It's seems so cruel that things went so wrong so early in his life. Best wishes for his friends and family; rest in piece man.

MARLENA BAUTISTA

A Passing Glance

There he was, day after day,
A light in the dreary crowd,
The strength it gave
Pushed away my stormy clouds

Never were we to meet,
Never were we to speak,
But a glance was all I'd need
To lift me up, week after week.

He'll never know, I hope you might,
Of the kindness he did me,
For I now see myself in a new light,
For but that one passing glance.

MAURICE ELGAZAAR

You know it's weird... 5 years on the bus together and I don't have much to show for it. Every day, I was just 2 or 3 rows behind you. I remember asking you for amps... I remember how cool Max thought he was when you would just give him one... how he would show it off to everyone in the back of the bus. You're a rare type of person Mike, not many would bring a backpack full of drinks, just to give them all away.

Our story isn't like the rest of them up here, ours isn't about the jokes you told me, or the laughs we shared. Not many people even know what happened that day or even why. Only those who were on the bus knew. You surprised us all, funny thing is... mostly me. What happened that day isn't important; it's what happened the day after. I remember you coming up to me, telling me that we needed to talk. I didn't know what you were going to say, but I definitely didn't think it was going to be positive. You surprised me, you surprised all of us, you dropped everything...and immediately... I felt two things...shock... and RESPECT. Respect is how Max and Chris carried your backpack to your house that day. I never understood the real reason why they did that until now... When it's too late. If you were still here...I bet you would be wondering to yourself...why would Maurice write this of all people. And I would tell you.... no matter what happened between us... I will never forget what you did, and what you didn't do. Very few people in this world have my true respect, but you are one of them, and you always will be. May you rest in peace, and may God be with your family and loved ones.

SHRUTI KANAN

I can't say I knew you, Mike. I can't pretend that we were close friends or I've got a personal story to share. I don't even know if you like being called Mike! I don't know your favorite color, or what your favorite food was. I saw you in the halls sometimes. You and your crazy hair had a tendency to tower above everyone else. You seemed like the kind of guy who would do just about anything for anyone. You seemed like you were generous and in love with life. It's not fair that you had to lose it all now. What type of music did you like? What was your favorite class? What makes you nostalgic? What was your childhood like? Why didn't I get to know you better?

Mike, you've inspired everyone to appreciate life and the people around them. So for that, thank you so much. I just wish you could see the impact you've made. Though somehow, I get the feeling you can. I get the feeling you're watching, and smiling like you always do, from up there.

DEREK NOLLSCH

Michael Gaines. I did not know you personally, but I did not need to know you to see how important you were to us. You embodied the spirit of Northgate. You were respectful, kind, and accepting. We will miss you Mike.

ANTHONY PERALES

Always heard how great of a person he was, I didn't know him really well, but I always saw him around. About a month ago I ran into him turning a corner to go to my bus, anyone else would have started something, but he was all cool about it and asked me if I was alright. I was surprised and thought he was joking with me, but he was serious. He had a lot of potential, he could've been huge. But for some reason it was time. We shouldn't be too sad; he was here for a reason. He was here to remind us how life can be, you can be the nicest person in the world, but all good comes to an end. He was here to remind us to appreciate everything we have. He was a friend to many, and he lies in our hearts... Now and forever... we be missing you...even those who didn't know you...we be missing you...when we look up, we be seeing you smiling down at us...R.I.P....Mike Gaines... We miss you.

MIKKI MACARAEG

Michael—with a smile on his face—
Would go on with a normal day.

Caring for others—a gentle giant—
To all who knew him.
A young benevolent soul—looking down—
At his loved ones with the angels.
One who carried himself—through life—
Living to the fullest.
Those who approached him—got nothing—
But ten times the warmth in return.
Never gone—the most beautiful—
Of God's creations.
Sumalangit nawa ang kayang kululuwa—
May his soul rest in peace.

WEI QUAN

I knew Mike when I was in seventh grade. I sat with him on the bus. I knew him as a funny person and very friendly. He would talk to me about mature things that I would not understand till now. I also remember him being friends with a fellow classmate named Antonas Regenas, who moved away the following year. Mike, myself, and a few other friends attended Antonas's birthday party one night and it was the first sleepover I ever had. I had the most fun time of my life there and I will never forget it. I will miss him and he will be in a better place.

JUSTYNA KILMOWICZ

I've been going to school with Mike since 7th grade, yet I never talked to him. I wish I had. This year, I saw him every day in the hallways, on my way to my next class. The one thing I remember most about him was his big smile, always present on his face. Although I didn't know him, I will still miss him, his absence will affect all of Northgate. R.I.P. Mike.

EUGENE

It's been two days without you....

Mike, I know you're in better place now and I hope I can join you someday and we will meet again...

Class of 2010 is going to miss you and never forget you Mike! I hope you can watch over us and help us out when we are struggling... and I am trying to get over this but I can't...

Rest In Peace Mike. Time for me to say Goodbye.

ROSHELLE LOWE

Michael, I may not have known you that well but having two classes with you showed me how genuine and nice you were. You were always smiling whenever I looked across the room in English and whenever I looked to my right in History. I honestly wish that I'd taken the time to try and get to know you better. Though we never exchanged very many words, I'll always remember you. You'll never be forgotten. Rest in peace, Mike. You'll be missed.

CHLOE RUSSELL

I will always remember the rap you did for your Persuasive Speech in 10th grade, and how you could always make us laugh and smile with joy. I had English with you for almost two years, and although I may not have known you too well you will definitely be missed by all of us. Thank you for always putting smiles on our faces and brightening up our days. You will be missed, RIP Michael Gaines.

SANDEEP KAUSHAL

Mike, you were a great a kid whenever I would pass by you through the halls you would always have a big smile on your face. You were always positive and happy never down. I'm going to miss that, you always thought about others before yourself I remember freshmen year P.E. You would treat us to energy drinks that you would buy with your own money and how you would always spot me if I didn't have lunch money. Mike you were truly a good hearted person and I know you're in a better place right now. My deepest condolences go out to his family and all his loved ones. Rest In Peace... I'll keep on smiling for you.
Acquaintance...

TOMAS KNEPPERS

Mike Gaines was the type of guy who never was without a smile on his face. Nothing dampened his spirit. His smile was an inspiration to us all. He will be missed.

AMIR REZWANI

I never had the privilege to get to know sir Michael, and I wish I had, because I'm SO sure he would become my best friend in a matter of minutes. I had spoken to him only a few times in my life. From my few encounters with him, it honestly felt like I had grown up with him. The way he spoke to people, it was as if he had grown up in the same household with them. He was comfortable, warm and inviting. I'd never heard of anyone who disliked Mike Gaines, nor had I even heard of someone refer to him as "yeah, he's ok." Although I may not have known the MAN, it's still impressive considering I hear criticism about people I don't know either. I recall him rapping a couple times in P.E. during my sophomore year (last year). He showed signs of potential. Normally when students rap, I let it go through one ear and out the other, but in this case, I actually listened.

During our time on the field (in P.E.), I have very little recollection of the events that took place. It might not be a bad thing either. Mike was never getting upset at anybody. Team Sports Period 1 was the place where students were doing pushups every five minutes from "dropping the f-bomb" or the "s-bomb" and other profanity as big Al Durazo put it. Never had I seen Mike do a pushup for using profanity, he was part of the very select few that were in this level of composure and discipline. But among these fellow "composed individuals" Mike stood out for one reason. He might have been the only guy that didn't even yell at anyone. Heck, I didn't even see the guy get upset at anything. He was "The Gentle Giant" in its purest definition. Regardless of his nature, no one messed with him, regardless if they viewed as intimidating or if they viewed him as harmless. Either way, big Mike garnered monumental respect from everyone.

It's sad to see anyone go, but in this case, where the man was so quiet and so incredibly friendly and welcoming it sucks even more. The man was incredibly hard to miss, walking down the steps leaving the Science Wing every morning; I would pass by Mike Gaines and couldn't help but notice him because of one sole fact. I heard laughing and saw smiling from every person in his presence. I couldn't help but smile and admire the fact that he was such a "people's person." Mike may not stand in front of us ever again sadly, but he will ALWAYS remain a part of his deep in our hearts. He would've made one heck of a spouse and a father, and he was a heck of a son, a friend, and a person.

God bless you Mike Gaines, may God help guide your family through these difficult times, with Prayers.

SARAH WILSON

Mikey was not my son, or my brother.

My father or my cousin.

He was not my better half.

He was my friend. He was everyone's friend.

And from what I can tell you, it was constant that he should have a smile on his face and change in his pocket. (Mo' money Mo' Problems, Gordon says, with a grin he can't betray.)

He was always generous, whatever you wanted he'd give to you. A personal Santa, if you will.

More than likely that \$100 PS3 game you wanted yesterday would be dropped on your doorstep tomorrow.

And all you would think and feel was, "Hey! Thanks, Mikey."

I loved to listen to him talk because, there, in that baritone/falsetto

Barry White voice of his was a depth of life I couldn't fathom.

If ever there was someone who was alive, it was Mikey.

I remember him telling me about Eric's, new iPod touch, in his words

"That's awesome. Straight up TOUCH SCREEN!"

I wish I had known him better.

He said "Hi" to me almost every day.

I wish I had known him better.

He was a genuinely good person.

I wish I had known him better.

But what I will remember is the profound effect he has had on everyone, who knew him.

What will I remember? The best of the best

Simply, "Mike Gaines...."

LESLIE FISI

Mike Gaines. What can I say about this brother of mines? Sadly, I found out about his passing on Facebook, since I was not at school, but right when I heard the name I immediately could picture his face in my head, no joke. He sure did have a unique laugh and smile like none other. Mike Gaines, bro you surely will be missed and please look over us from up above. I know that you're probably still carrying on in heaven and we all love you. Much love bro.

KRISTINA DIDERO

I didn't know Michael Gaines; I had never met him. But the more I talk to the people who knew him, the more I wish I did. His warmth and kindness shines through the words of his friends. It is obvious that Michael was not only a truly miraculous person, but an inspiration to all. He was so loving, so caring, and so happy. Anyone who knew him has been really lucky in life.

A sea of black and one of red has never looked so beautiful. One individual has touched the lives of many, and even those who did not know him have come to realize how important he is to others. In a school of such diverse groups of people, Michael Gaines has brought unity, a remarkable occurrence. He was truly someone rare and special; Michael Gaines accomplished something extraordinary in life—he made people happy.

As Michael watches over us now, I'm sure he is glad to see how much we respect him and how much he means to us, but probably crumbles at the sight of our tears and sadness. We shall celebrate his life and together we shall spread his message of love to the rest of the world.

Michael Gaines was a good friend and a sensational person. He will be dearly missed. May he rest in peace.

KEVIN B

How long does a smile take

How long until he will again wake
How long must someone know you
until they can show you,
How much they care?

One smile, one second.
One joke, one poke, one time is all.
He is lost, and now we fall.
Into a darkened future.

I know not his pain
he never did complain
and for that I'm sorry.
I could have been his close friend.
If we could start again.
But never shall I know,
and forever will I simply be,
Acquaintance.....

STEPHEN SULYMA

Mikey Memorial Rap

I can remember back in the day
where all we did was play.
That was in a brighter past
when every day was a blast.
Crowding around the, watching people play
Watching you play, Mr. Michael A Gaines.
And then I left you
something I shouldn't do
in that small day place.
Then came middle Sega school and there was surprise
you standing there with your bright shining eyes.

But now you're gone and no one will forget
something nobody saw coming how God let
you, GO? It's a mystery
10 years of friendship will never leave me.

MADDIE HAGEN

I never met you but you seemed like a nice guy. I passed you on the way to 4th. Sad we never met. You will not be forgotten. Rest in Peace.

ROHTIH BAHTIA

Thanks for lending me some money. I saw you every day in the morning and at lunch. You will be missed. Rest in peace.

CHRISTIAN ANTALAZCKY

Thanks for buying lunch for me. I saw you almost every day but I will miss you.

ANTONION LAU

Never really knew you but people told me you were the nicest person in school. Rest in peace Michael.

SUJAY

You will always be remembered. Love ya big guy.

FATIMA HERRERA

Rest in peace Michael. We will always remember you

LISA

Rest in peace Mike. Have a good time in heaven.

BRUCE

I never really knew you but everyone says that you were one of the nicest people.

AMANDA

Passed you in the hall every day. Kind of blows my mind that you're gone forever. Rest in peace.

ARIK BARILKO

Never really liked you, but you looked like a nice guy. Hope that you had a fulfilling life.

MELISSA DANISH

It's too hard for me to grasp the fact that you're gone. I watch the door so to see you come. I wait till the day we are in heaven together. Love always.

ANTONIO H

I would always see you during passing but never actually met you. It would have been a pleasure to meet you. Rest in peace.

MICHAEL

You were an amazing, loving, caring, sweet & genuine individual. You will dearly missed.

MATT BUTLER

Rest in peace bro. You'll be missed.

LINDSAY G

Michael, I never really knew you but I wish I had because I know the impact you had on those you knew and how everyone misses you. Rest in peace.

MIKEY BELL

You always had a smile when I saw you. I've heard a lot of great things about you.

EMILY

I didn't know you well but I've known you forever. We'll never forget.

MARGARET

Michael, you will be missed to those who loved you and those who now know you.

ASHLEY

Hey Michael, you were a great guy and you will be missed.

GLORIA

Rest in peace Michael. You are already missed and will not be forgotten.

ANDREW WOO

Though I never knew you, I heard that you were a great person. Rest in peace and best wishes to your family.

NICK FICKETT

Take in peace Mike

CYNTHIA

Hey Michael, thanks for letting me borrow money all the time. Rest in peace.

PAT P

I never knew you, but on Monday I found myself right before lunch saying to myself that I wanted to know you. Follow your heart, if time allows it.

JIMMY

Rest in peace Michael

AMANDA LI

Even though I've never gotten the chance to know you, but from other people, I got to know that you were an uncommonly nice person. Rest in peace Michael.

FRANKIE GUITRON

Man, God speed. I hope heaven realizes it has one of the greatest people on the earth gracing his presence among the angels.

EMANUEL MOURA

I always saw you laughing walking through the halls. Now that you're gone, it's like the halls are empty. Rest in peace Michael Gaines.

ANONYMOUS #4

Heard a lot of great things about you. You'll be in my prayers

TYLER MCCLELLAN

I remember going to PE everyday. You and I would say Hi. You were and still are a great guy. Rest in peace bro.

ALLY HEUER

I know I didn't know you but I have never heard anyone say something bad about you. You were always nice and funny. I wish I knew you. Rest in peace.

ANDY CHOI

Hey Michael, I heard that you were a really nice guy and I'm sad that I didn't get to meet you. I hope we can be friends in the Afterlife.

JULIA HOH

You were a really sweet guy and you will be forever missed. God bless you.

RYAN PALMER

Never really got to know you, sad that I didn't. Rest in peace.

NICK MOREHOUSE

Michael, I never really had the chance to get to know you but from what I hear from other people, I understand that you were a really cool guy. Rest in peace Michael.

CANDACE EDWARDS

I hope you rest in peace. You will be missed. I heard lots of wonderful things about you.

MICHAEL ENDICK

I saw you get on the bus almost every time but never did you have a frown on your face. What happened to you was terrible and unfortunate. I hope you find peace.

ANONYMOUS #5

Michael, I didn't know you very well but I hope wherever you are, you're happy.

CHRIST CONNEN

Yo mike. I met you in summer school and you seemed like a great person. Hope you have fun over the rainbow.

ANONYMOUS #6

Mike, I didn't know you well but your presence was felt and you will be missed.

PHILLIP KATAGUE

Rest in peace Mike! We'll always remember you.

KAILANI KANG

You will be missed. Rest in peace,

MAX

Mikey, I'm sorry we didn't chill out more. Padres are still better than the giants bud. Peace.

MACKENZIE

Rest in peace Mike. May the angles lead you buddy.

KRIS SWITZER

I didn't know you much except that you are a kind hearted wonderful person and that you are truly missed. The first time I truly met you was after challenge day this year and I was crying, you came up to me and gave me a hug and told me that it would be ok. You are a wonderful person and I know you will find happiness wherever you are.

ANONYMOUS #7

Mike- Sometimes its wrong, but time goes on. You will be missed.

RUSS WOOD

Rest in peace.

AURELIO G

You will be missed big guy!

MORGAN MITCHELL

We'll always miss your laughing on the bus. Rest in peace.

SEAN FOLEY

Even though I didn't know you that much, I feel the same pain and sorrow as everyone else. I hope you're resting in peace.

NICK BRANCACCIO

Didn't know you really, saw you a few times. You seemed like a cool guy, and tell me what its like in a dream or something. Rest in peace.

JASON FERRY

Hey mike, you were fun to be around especially in bio. Rest in peace.

SPENCER GILCREST

Bro, I didn't really know you well but everyone said you were very nice and I think it's a shame that you had to pass before you finished living. You'll be missed.

ALYSSA A

I sat next row to you at lunch. You will be missed.

JULIA H

You will be missed! Rest in peace.

ELISE N

Hey I never really got to know you better than the guy who sat in front of me in math. You always seemed hella nice though, and you will definitely be missed.

SHELLY PIPO

Hi.umm... I didn't really ever get to talk to you but from what I've heard you were a great person; so polite and respectful and generous. Rest in peace.

TRAVIS HACKING

Dear Mikey, from what I hear, you've been doing some work kiddo. Rest well in peace because you'll do so in everyone's hearts.

VILI B

Mike-we all miss you. We all knew you, even though not personally and we love you.

CHARLES ASHBURY

From talking with Michael and a couple of other times, I could always tell that he was an honest and kind person. Rest in peace.

RISHI A

I never really knew you but whenever I see you in the halls, you were always smiling. I can tell you were a good person. Rest in peace.

MAX LEVY

Mike, It's horrible that you are gone and you will be deeply missed. Rest in peace.

CONNOR JEAN

Dear Mike, I have heard many positive things about you and I feel very sorry for this mishap. You sound like a great kid and I wish I could have gotten to know you sooner. We all miss you.

AKAYLA GINESH

Mike, I didn't know you that well, but you were a cool dude. You will be deeply missed and forever engraved in our hearts with gold lining. May you rest in peace and have it made up in heaven. Love always.

NATALIE DIB

You will always be remembered and I heard nothing but good things about you.

ANONYMOUS #8

Hey Mike, you were nice and it was great to know you.

BRUCE

Mike, I didn't really know you but I heard that you were a very nice person and that your work was really good. You will be missed.

ALLY

Dear Mike, when I met you last year I thought that you were one of the funniest people I met. No one will forget your jokes or your contagious laughter. Rest in peace.

TAKARA RAGLAND

Mike, although I didn't know you very well I've heard your work and seen through other people your personality. You are a wonderful personality. You are a wonderful and kind person and you will be missed everywhere. Rest in peace.

IAN

I knew you since 1st grade. You'll be missed. Rest in peace.

BEN

Mike you're always such a giving person.

SURAJ PATEL

Bro, I wish we could have chilled more. You may have been the nicest guy whom I ever have met in Northgate. No one will ever forget you and for the short time I've known you, you've already engraved your name in my heart.

BROOKE

Mike, even though I never really got to know you I could still tell the type of person you were and that it was one of greatness. Every time I saw you smiling and seemed to be such a great person. You will remain in everyone's hearts forever.

STEVE SONNIER

Hey Mike. Sorry that you had to go so soon. I never really got to meet you but from the overwhelming responses to your unfortunate passing, I can tell that you were a wonderful person to be around. I hope that wherever you are, you are looking down with your big smile and waving Hi to us. We all miss you and god speed.

TRACY SIMMONS

I remember your smile
the way you always laughed
Coming through the line with your friends
I saw you through glass
while I worked in the snack shack
I saw you walking the halls with your friends
You were always so happy
and I would feel myself smile
We never spoke
save the times I took your order
But I remember those times so strongly now
Your smile lightened the rainy days
All the times you spotted money for your friends
tell me that you were kind
I heard your music for the first time yesterday
I cried
You were, and always will be

one of the kindest souls.
talented beyond your years
surrounded by friends
respected, even loved, by everyone who saw you
Always there to lend a hand
But now you're not
And the world seems a darker place
If I wave to you now,
will you see me?
If I shout a 'Good Morning!'
will you hear?
Yes
Because nobody as wonderful as you
could ever truly leave.
You touched us all, Mike.
Be at peace, and Godspeed.

SHANNON WOO

I have been through this far too many times and I can imagine how his mother is feeling right now. Waking up yesterday morning I felt something was wrong. It was a bright and sunny day out so as usual I just brushed it off and started my day. It always seems like there was a voice inside me telling me to check on everyone to see if they were alright. Walking into 5th period, I didn't realize I would soon be told news that would once again change my life. I sat down ready to do review in chemistry when McMorris came on the intercom. At first I thought he would talk about sports or congratulate NG for being such a great school as he always does. He spoke with a slow and cold voice. The words that came out of his mouth and in my ears were barely processed. Shock over came me. I looked around the room and every single person had their hands covering their mouth. Tears running down my classmates faces. I felt like my heart skipped a beat. I was still for a moment. Not wanting to take it in... Sarah Wilson leaves the class room crying. Lisa follows. I look down and my hands are shaking uncontrollably. My mind goes through something unexplainable and i burst out crying. Tears start to gush from my face.

In 2006, my younger brother Jason passed away from an asthma attack. My mind replayed the flash backs of his death. The same thoughts I had when Jason passed went through my head. This was happening in a mere amount of seconds. I couldn't be there anymore. Not in the place i was told. I get up and weakly walk out of the class room. I collapsed and cried my hearts out. I noticed that Annie Bennett had followed me out. I cried in her arms. I remember saying over and over again "not again not again....I can't handle this". Ms. Starr runs over and tells me not in front of the class. She tells me I need to get up and she and Annie would walk me to the library. The past few years I had reoccurring anxiety attacks. I hadn't had one in a few months, but I felt this was bring one on. Walking, I stopped in front of the Physio/Bio room. Collapse again. Stares and whispers. I just keep saying Mikes and Jason's names. I get up and walk further. Through the doors. Looking outside, the day seems gloomier. Walking past multiple people crying. Ms. Starr tells me to keep talking and breathing. Pale. Warm. Dizzy. Feeling as if I was going to pass out, I collapse again. Another hand. I feel Frank help lift me up and we walk to the library. Friends on mike start coming into the sectioned off room. I sit down in a chair. It all seems unreal and I hoped no family would ever have to go through what mine did. Ms. Starr calls over the crisis counselor and He sits down in front of me. He says Ms. Starr told him about my brother and he asked me if I know Mike. I replied with a mere yes. But to me that yes meant more. Mike was an amazing person. I had never ever seen him without a smile. So full of life he didn't deserve to go so young. I look up and the people standing around the room look devastated. People that I never knew Mike had known were all here crying. He had touched so many countless lives. I stayed until 5th period was over. I wait there awhile before leaving for 6th period. I didn't want to leave. I still felt faint! And too many thoughts were running through my head. School is out and i get on to the bus. Everyday I see Mike sit three seats behind me. But today it lied empty. I couldn't help but cry more. Kevin Chinn walks past me with a ghostly empty stare. I couldn't think of what his thoughts may have been. The loss of a best friend is unbearable. I have. In front of my eyes. I get home and I can't do anything. I lay down on my bed and cried myself to sleep. A million texts flood my phone telling me to wear black in honor of Mike. The text spread like wild fire and it just showed how many people cared for him.

Walking up to school the next day a group of people surround the front sign of the school. I get closer and a memorial had been started for him. Flowers, pictures, letter, posters, candles and even energy drinks are laid out for him. I walk towards the sign with Roman S. and we each place a bouquet of flowers. Mine orange. His White. I stand there still filled with pain and friend walk over to comfort me. Hugs and pats everywhere. Tears once again. I hear a voice say "Mike wouldn't want us to be sad everyone! He

would want us to be happy. He is up there right now looking down at us say "I got it made guys! Don't sweat it!" we all begin to tell stories about Mike. We laughed together and we cried. The bell rings and a few of us stay. The attendance office is writing up passes to our first period class. It's time to go but I have a feeling of something that is incomplete. I turn around and see Kevin Chinn standing and staring at a picture of Mike in tears.

Being late to first period I still didn't want to talk to anyone. But Erica was concerned. I told her why I broke down and about my brother and how Mike had touched my life. I knew today would be a hard day to get through. Let alone this whole week. Today seems like a gloomy cloud now. I can't remember much I was in such daze.

At lunch everyone who wore black was called to go outside. A picture was supposedly taken of everyone. It seemed like every single person at the school was wearing black in his honor. I took a picture. I didn't go to 5th period i stood outside of what is supposed to be the door and stared at my desk. Mr. Taylor told me I didn't have to stay and I could sit out for the day. Me, Annie, Erica and Mary-E sat outside of the classroom. The day was over again and getting on the bus was even harder than before. I was imagining mike sitting in his usual seat when a kid in front of me began to cry. I tried to comfort him. Getting home the only thing I wanted to do was pray. And talk to Mike. I let him know that we all miss him deeply and he'll never be forgotten. I had read in the bible that God takes away the young because he has a better plan for them then we did. They must be very important to be needed so early. Mike gave so much of his life to entertain us with his music and his presence in general. He had one of the biggest hearts I'll ever know and I'll never forget him.

I miss you big Mike!

FARZIEN RAD

Michael Gaines was the nicest kid I have ever met, plain and simple. He didn't care about your age, sex, race, or income; he treated everybody like a brother. That is what Michael was, a big brother, and not just my brother, but everyone's brother. Michael treated everyone with unparalleled respect. And then there was his smile. Mike had the biggest smile, which I now realize was a reflection of his big heart. I remember walking into second period English to see Big Mike sweating all over, drinking an AMP, and telling us about how he cracked someone in what was supposed to be Flag Football. Then there was his persuasive speech, which was written about the west coast rap movement. Mike turned on his iPod and began rapping one of his own songs which had been heavily influenced by TWA. Mike was the only person I knew who had a speaker built into his binder. As sophomore year went on, my friendship with Mike also grew. At the end of the year, Mike gave me his phone number, and suggested we hang out over the summer. I never called.

Then there was last Friday. I really wanted to go to the DP show with some close friends, but none of them really wanted to go. I ended up going to the DP show by myself, but after walking in, I noticed an empty seat by an old friend, it was Mike Gaines. I shouted out Mike's name, slapped him on the back, and sat down right next to him. Every so often, I would look over at him to see his wide grin. When intermission came the two of us went outside and had the first meaningful conversation in almost two months. We talked about our old English Class, raps, and college. The night of May 15th was honestly the first time I heard Mike talking about going to college. Mike told me that he was making a conscience effort to raise his grades. Mike didn't have the highest grades, but there is no doubt that he put the extra work in to make himself a better individual. We even joked about me being stuck in Merced, while he transferred to Stanford. "Yo it's Mike Gaines calling you from Stanford" he said. The two of us went back inside and the show ended forty-five minutes later. I gave Mike Gaines a quick high-five and ran in an effort to beat the traffic. That was the last time I ever saw Mike.

MAG was different than any other student and Northgate. You could not miss Mike in the halls. He always acknowledged friends walking by; you could not walk by him without hearing your name or a pat on the back. It was who was on the inside that separated Mike from the rest of us. He was the nicest, kindest, most respectable person I have ever met. People didn't respect Mike out of fear, but out of love. I know you are sitting up there in heaven sipping AMPs from champagne glasses, writing lyrics with some of the greats, getting all the girls. I guess you now realize how many lives you single handedly touched. Thank you for your friendship and brother hood Mike Gaines, I will never forget you, nor will I forget what you stood for. Keep Hustlin'. RIP MIKE GAINES.

ANTHONY CHIN

Death is never a pretty thing. For some it is easier to accept, but for others it could haunt forever. It can sometimes be sudden and unexpected, or just a matter of time. Today Wednesday May 20, 2009 during 5th period, Mr. McMorris announced that one of our own Michael Gaines, a junior, passed away from an asthma attack the previous night. Many knew Mike as the big guy who would treat everyone like a brother or a friend. In my own interactions with Michael, I felt the same way and I thought there are not many people that come along like Michael with this unconditional love for his fellow peers. Although not everyone knew Michael well, they always had something positive to say about him. Nobody could ever rag on him or say that he is a jerk.

While his death might have seemed sudden to many, I believe that it was only a matter of time. I knew that he had asthma and some type of diabetes. This combination obviously limited his physical activity and led to his condition. While it is tragic to lose Michael, especially since he passed on way before his time, we cannot forget who he was and what he stood for.

While we mourn, we must think about how Michael treated others in such a friendly manner regardless of appearance, lifestyle, gender, etc. In fact, we should embrace his unconditional love. We should take this time to reevaluate ourselves and see how we treat and affect others, because we should desire to help build each other up and leave a positive image of ourselves just like Mike did. We must also take this time to cherish what we have and live our lives to the fullest. This does not mean that we should be reckless and be willing to throw our lives away because there is a possibility we may die soon. It means that we should take the time and energy to invest in developing strong bonds and relationships with the ones around us: family, friends, classmates, teammates, etc. Especially in our constantly technologically innovative society, we are prone to just interacting through AIM, Facebook, on the phone, or some indirect form of contact. This has some value, but I believe that we should take the time to meet people face to face, because this is where the greatest times and memories are made. I hope that his death will not be for nothing and that the way he lived and treated others will touch a life.

I understand that his death will be painful for many who have never experienced the death of a loved one or even for those are very familiar with death, but I believe that it is important for us to not overreact to his death. I know it is only normal for people to mourn for a short length of time but I think that even Mike himself, wherever he may be, would not wish for us to be excessively depressed about his death. Personally, his death did not strike me particularly hard, but it did make me think deeply and seriously about how I should cherish the time have with my peers and how my actions affect the lives for others. Nevertheless, we can never forget who he was and what he stood for. Wherever he may be, we all know that Mike's journey on Earth is finished. Yet, he lives on in the hearts of those who knew him. We must realize that although his time is up, our journey on this Earth is not finished. In his honor, we should never forget Mike, learn to be more loving like him, appreciate our lives and our personal situations, and live life to the fullest without any regrets. Personally, this is how I think he would want us to live. So to all you Broncos out there and those who were fortunate enough to know Mike personally never forget who he was and what he stood for.

ROANNE QUIOZON

I saw Death today.

Death himself did not compose an approachable posture and greet me, but housed various mediums.

Begrimed on faces, branded on skin through tears, and fixated on what was the routine saunter through the hall.

This was the first time I saw Death. I wasn't reading of Death in an acclaimed turn-of-the-century novel, I wasn't observing Death masquerading on the faces of actors through the convenience of a screen, I wasn't listening to Death disguised in that song you and I know very well, traipsing up to the chorus, wedging in between the verses.

No, I didn't witness Death through a page, a film, or a lyric.

This was something else.

I heard the message – Death took one of Northgate's students with an asthma attack – and then he made his appearance, sprouting on each of the faces of my geometry class, one by one, stretching their eyes open, arousing a silence, striking all with his company.

"Michael Gaines" was what we heard. Some shuffled in their seats to ask who it was, some remained rooted in that alarm, some had already yielded to the tears. After I rushed through a quiz I had had no intention of studying for, I observed the room again. Death remained sheltered here and he had no intention of leaving.

Death was fresh on any countenance I saw while I walked in the hall. Death was bursting from the library, erupting from that small gathering by the bathrooms. Death was implanting himself everywhere.

Even though I wasn't a close friend of Mike's – even though the only words I've exchanged with him were the cultured "excuse me" as I passed periods not too many a day ago – Death left an effect.

Mike was the friend of many, a student under the roof we share, a familiar face in the sea of hallway traffic, a frequent resident of the bus ride home.

Death played with each and every one of us today. Death wandered and left us with the token he chooses to bestow: pain. We are plagued with that pain, yes, we must help one another endure said pain, that is certain, but alongside that pain, we are gifted with his memory.

That memory you have of him – keep it. Don't lose it. From being in a class with him, from a short encounter before fourth period, from recurrent spans of free time spent with him – challenge Death through the remembrance of Mike, and one day, maybe not soon, maybe not far, your memory will glow and overpower that pain. The pain that Death left behind will shy away, swell as it withers, and slowly expire, while you will keep that memory of him.

Mike, may you rest in peace.

JOANN LIANG

In life, death comes in many different forms; painful, peaceful, sudden. Today, on May 20, 2009, death has come to us in a way that we, as a school, could never imagine. The death of a friend is a pain to everyone, young or old. A certain number of us have known Michael Gaines for years, or even just recently. Some of us never even met him, yet it still hurts. Why? Because death can come upon us at any time, of any day. The cause: a severe asthma attack. It was scary to think about. "It's a way of life," Christian Ortiz said. "Where do you think we will go?" I ask, staring out the window into the small concrete Atrium. He shrugs. "I don't know. It's one of life's greatest mysteries..." "And we won't know what it's like until we get there?" He nods at my response. "Exactly." It has come unexpectedly for us. Some people came in and saw the faces of others, how their eyes were so red, thinking to themselves, "Why is there pain in their eyes?" That answer would come only a few minutes later after 5th period had started. The announcement came over us and it hit us all. Hard. It was silent in the room. The sniffles and shaky breaths broke the ice every so often. Mr. Lewis sat down at his desk and said "It's all right to talk amongst yourselves, or you could go to the library to see a crisis counselor." Two people took the leave and for the rest of the period, no one spoke. Several of us were just too hurt to even speak about it.

From Ben Campo's room, I heard laughter and his class was continuing. I tried to take out my journal and write what was on my mind, but nothing happened. Not even half a page could describe what I had really wanted to say. I never knew him, I never even seen him before. But still, the death of someone shook me. He was a good person and he cared. He would be friendly with everyone and it made someone somewhere feel a little bit better about themselves. I stepped out into the halls and stared out the window. I didn't cry yet, but I wanted to. Sitting in silence wouldn't do me any good if I kept it all in. Travis Lyons came down the hall and saw me. "Today...is our moment of silence," I whispered. He nodded and hugged me tightly. That was when I let the tears fall. We talked for a few minutes, what it felt like having to watch or hear one of our close relatives pass away. "It was just really bad, having to look at all the pain that they have to go through." he said. When he left, I looked around. The hall slowly filled with more friends of Michael's. It was painful to look at, the way they cried, the way they couldn't control the forbidden question inside their heads. I wandered to the end of the hall and as far as I could see, only one other room was dead silent. I ran to the bathroom and saw Tiffany Faed leaning against the wall. She saw me and hugged me tightly as I tried to rush for a tissue. "One death can hurt so many," I said, trying to take a deep breath. "I know, I know," she whispered and walked out with me back to the Atrium. By then, a group of friends were standing in a circle, silently, talking about what we should do in memory of Michael's death. I walk into the band room and Emily Kane was still there with Natalie. She was still crying. "I didn't even realize he was gone," she said sobbing and trying to wipe her tears away. "I mean, I didn't even bother asking 'Where's Michael,' you know?" I hugged her tightly, knowing that more tears would well up again. "It's not fair!" Emily cried as she shook in heavy breaths. "I know, I know. It's never going to be fair," I whispered. By then, the room was filled with the sound of silence and there was almost no movement. People around us watched while we mourned and tried to pull ourselves together.

One death can hurt so many.

Rest in peace, with all our hearts.

ANISHA NARAYAN

As I write, I am thinking about a conversation I had a couple days ago with my grandmother. My grandmother, always a deeply religious person, spoke to me of the concept of reincarnation: although the physical body dies, the soul lives on, and takes on different physical forms. With death and birth, a life, a soul, never truly dies, but rather is "reborn" into a different physical body as the cycle of life progresses. A very interesting concept. The idea that a person dies only in body but not in soul intrigued me, and I

sat for a while, thinking to myself. Life and Death are two of the greatest mysteries, and it may remain a mystery forever. However, one thing I realized is this: While it may be true in the literal sense of the word, Mike Gaines is not truly "dead." His soul lives on, and stays with us, forever ingrained into our hearts and minds. Although he is no longer living, breathing flesh, a part of him will always remain. Memories will be with us forever, his genuinely kind personality, big heart, and way of treating all people he met as a friend and brother, have not gone with his body, but are still alive and existing...existing, through us. He lives, through us. His personality and way of living made an impact on all who knew him, including myself, and we will carry on these ways with us as we go about our own lives. We will mourn the loss of his human, flesh presence, but his soul, his ways of life, the memories and impact he has left, will forever remain. Michael Gaines lives on. He lives on, his presence is still with us, through memories and the way he has impacted our lives, and through the way it has affected the way we view life itself. Through this experience, both those who had seen death as well as those who were introduced! to death for the first time, have learned about the delicate balance of life, and the fragility of the human being. We are fragile. We are mortal. Physically, we are breakable, but mentally, we are invincible.

I thought about what my grandmother had meant...there are essentially two parts to a life: the body and the soul. Through the endless cycle of life and death, the body will die and the soul will always be alive; the body acts as a dwelling place for the soul to attach itself, and once the body dies, the soul "frees" itself and lives on. Mike Gaines is alive in soul and in memory, and his soul is now "free." This is why Mike Gaines is not truly "dead." Because Mike Gaines is a soul, only without the physical body, and this soul lives, through the legacy he has left. This experience has left many deeply troubled, even to those who never knew him. It has been especially hard on those who could relate, or had similar experiences with the death of a friend or family member, causing the old, buried, hidden memories and pain to resurface once again. As teenagers, we are often reckless and carefree; we sometimes feel as if we are immortal, and that nothing can ever harm us. Many of us, blessed with the things that a lot of people around the world do not have, tend to take life for granted and do not think about death often, the concept of death seems so surreal.

This experience has really put life into perspective. I know it has affected me, and the way I live my life, as well as many other people. I have come to realize that it is important to appreciate life while it lasts, because life is beautiful. Life is a gift, that's why they call it the present. Death seems to attack when you least expect it. It can come at any moment. So live like there's no tomorrow, love and appreciate everyone, welcome friendships with an open mind, and an open heart, the way Michael Gaines would have done.

KATIE REUTTER

Death.

You know it's inevitable, there, waiting to happen in the distant future.

You hear about it every day, people dying, the numbers rising.

it's in the big picture, so you let it pass by without a second thought.

But.

When someone you know, or have seen, passes away without warning,
you are stopped dead in your tracks, jolted back to reality.

Indescribable feelings pour over,
and soon life doesn't feel the same.

Strange feelings of loneliness, hopelessness and disbelief linger.

Why does death seem so foreboding now?

One day he is there, alive, a joy to all.

The next day,
gone.

Just like that.

No one can keep up with death.

We have to cherish the time, the people we have before it catches us,
because who knows when it will.

Rest in Peace, Michael Gaines. You will be missed.

ALLEN ZHAO

Sometimes I wonder about death. It means peace to the one dying, but torture to the ones surviving and witnessing. We think about what it's like to die, and sometimes, we may even forget about our own lives. What it means, the value of it, and appreciating what else is there to bless you.

Death to many defines being gone forever, but I believe otherwise. Rest assured, memories are there to stay forever. The most precious of our memories lie at the bottom of our human hearts. They will never be forgotten. We say we want to forget this painful experience, but that's an insult to the dead. Why should we forget about the death of Michael Gaines? I knew him long enough to understand the caring, optimistic individual he is. And I write this, alongside the memorial to be posted, to remind us all that we can't save those we love from dying, and that we must keep going on while holding tight to what we hold dear. Michael Gaines was a student who worked alongside us and hung out with us. His presence, whether if we had experienced much of it or not, was a significant one, as it is for all humans. His absence leaves a gaping hole in the society of friends and family.

Can we fill in that hole? The answer is no. Michael Gaines was one of a kind. No one will ever take his place in our hearts and minds because they can't. His death seems to put him a great distance away from us, but I've always believed that close to heart means never far apart. We hold on tight to the memories of Michael Gaines, but let go by accepting the fact that he has gone on.

I remember in 7th grade, my grandfather died of Parkinson's Disease. After I moved to the United States when I was five, I hardly ever saw him again. Yet, I held tight onto the memories of my time with him. Every moment I recall, every memory I remember, seem so real. It's almost like living in the wonderful past again. Knowing that he had gone was so hard to accept, but something that must be accepted in order to recover and move on. I hold on tight to the memories to keep him alive in my heart.

And so we accept and move on. I'm not saying that it will ever be easy and that applies to almost all of us. His family, I'm sure, got hit especially hard. A parent's greatest pain, I'm sure, is outliving their own children. I've lost a family member myself and I can relate to those of you undergoing the worst of this crisis.

In summation, I'll say this. No one will ever truly be dead as long as there are those to remember them forever. Keep those memories close to heart. Michael Gaines's death once again made me reconsider something I have now that he will never have again: my life. Lives are precious, and we only get one. We need to make the most of it. We need to appreciate what we have and make the most of it. We will all derive nothing but strength from his death, and move on. I'll continue to mourn even though I do not consider myself too close to him even as a friend. The feelings I have in the light of his death proves that I, too, am human and should make the most of my life, with the memories of him, however little, deeply entrenched at the bottom of my heart. However painful, don't forget the past, learn from it.

MICHAEL WRIGHT

We are running a race, every single one of us. Some of us may be further along in that race than others, and some of us may be almost done. Who knows when we will finish the race, maybe tonight, tomorrow, 20 years? But eventually we will all reach the finish line. The only question is, how soon. Last night Michael Gaines reached the finish line. And let it be that, a finish line, a point of exalting. May we celebrate the life and the journey and not mourn for the end of his race. For as he ran, he instilled something different in each and every one of us. And as he finished he left us with inspiration. An opportunity to live our lives in the model he showed us. Michael ran the race with love and let it be known that his race is complete. Michael Gaines has finished the race. May he Rest In Peace.

WILLIAM JOHNSTON

This anthology has not been created by Intravenous; the contents have not been created by the students who have participated in it. The actions of one person will resonate through the lives of all those who ever are to know them, however slightly – the ripple reaches outward as the water itself expands and engulfs its originally barren boundary. This process explains with exactitude the creation of this prodigious offering -- in less than twelve hours after we all were informed that the rock which evoked the ripple had eroded eighteen pages have been filled with the memories of, regrets regarding, celebrations capitalizing a certain Michael Anthony Gaines. Things which would have still have been thought, had they not herein been expressed. Things which accentuate not only the beautiful character constituted by their subject, but that same character ingrained in the authors. Things which demonstrate that despite the million ways of minimizing and marginalizing our fellows – some recent and some ancient – the basic love of human life persists unflagging in all of us. We are united as a community in his memory; if we remain separate in all other aspects, we hold that link. In this way, we fortify his memory against inevitable erosion by the Earth's rotation.

Rest in Peace

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