

On Wednesday our worst fears came true. Our brother Chris, My parents son, my daughters uncle and godfather, brother-in-law, life partner, Nephew, cousin, and friend to so many passed away. His struggles with addiction overcame him and we were unable to save him. Over the years there were multiple times that I thought this will be the last time. This will be the life change and he'll be able to push through and not succumb to the addiction. The truth is addiction is such an ugly disease. It doesn't discriminate- It doesn't care how old you are, how much money you have, or how bad you really shouldn't do it. It just takes you over. Many families that go through this are unable to say goodbye to their loved ones. We are grateful that before Chris passed he was in the hospital for a week and we were able to spend time with him. All of us got the chance to tell him how much he meant to us and how much we truly loved him.

Even though this is so hard we need to remember all the happy times we had with Chris and what a truly amazing human being he was. We have to remember his beautiful blue eyes, infectious smile and his kind heart.

As kids Chris really was screwed being the little brother who had two older sisters. We used to make him play Barbies and My Little Ponies with us. We also used to dress him up and we would put on shows for my parents. Whether it was singing and dancing or a magic show there was always a performance. Magic was also something Chris was so good at. He would learn all these tricks and loved showing them to us. Just a few years ago my dad bought him a Chris Angel Magic Kit for Christmas. Within a few minutes he was able to suspend a dollar bill in the air, something that would take the rest of us all day to figure out.

We were so lucky to grow up in a tight knit neighborhood- Good old Edward Rd! We spent our childhood playing outside, riding bikes, playing flashlight tag, building forts and having snow ball fights. Chris and Brenna were always with the boys skateboarding. I swear they would be out there until it got dark just skating around and doing tricks of the ramp. Most summer days you could find us in the pool, whether it was ours in the backyard or the Rapps a few houses down. Chris and I being summer babies would always have pool party birthdays. I'll never forget us being so excited to pick out our themes and decorate our cakes together. Our birthdays were just 4 days apart.

When we were in middle school my parents bought our original cape house called Aunties. It was such an adorable cottage in Harwich where we loved spending time as a family and bringing our friends. There were 2 bedrooms upstairs for us kids and Chris and I actually shared a room! We loved being at the beach so much. I can remember Chris and I would be swimming and Dad would be calling us to come in because it was time to leave. We would just pretend we didn't hear him so we could play a bit longer in the waves. We would ride our bikes or mopeds and have lemonade stands that we actually made a lot of money at. The house didn't have insulation and I can remember being there in the chilly days of October all bundled up with sweatshirts and multiple blankets to stay warm all cuddled up on the couch- just because we loved being at the Cape cottage.

As we got older Chris would come to visit me at College. We would throw big parties with all of the boys. I probably shouldn't bring up any of those stories- but if you were there you can remember how much fun we all had. After college being back on the Cape we spent a lot of time together. I can remember driving around town just out for a cruise. Chris and I would be in his trans am with the t-tops open and drive down Hyannis main street blasting Eminem! We thought we were so cool. He also loved playing guitar and trying to learn new songs. Whether it be Pantera, Tom Petty or even Tracy Chapman.

Chris was such a smart and handy guy. I feel like he could literally fix anything. He was always the first person I would call when I needed a sink faucet replaced, our weed whacker broke, or I got new baby gear that needed to be put together. He was always tinkering with something. I remember in high school he took apart an old hair clipper and made it into a tattoo gun. My parents weren't that thrilled when they found out he had tattooed himself, but then honestly they were kind of impressed that he knew how to do it and how good the tattoo came out. I think Rob and Dana and some of the other boys have tattoos from Chris's handy work too. If you have known Chris for a while you know he had SO many cars. I can probably count about 10. Whether it was the old school Trans Am, the new Trans Am or the jacked up Red truck just to name a few he would always be working on them. He was def a car guy. Most recently he was hooked on building and flying his airplanes. From time to time he would get them stuck up in a tree and he would call me to come over and get some rope or anything he could find in my garage to be able to fish it out of the

tree. But it never stopped him- he would just rebuild it or start a new one fresh using the old parts.

As most of you know Chris' birthday was yesterday. He would have been 34. And for just a few short days all us kids age are right in a row- 34, 35, and 36. This year will be the first year I don't get a birthday card from my brother. He was one of those people that you can tell actually read through a bunch of cards at CVS just to ensure he picked out the perfect one for you. If any of you had ever seen his hand writing you know it was messy and words were not always correctly spelled but that didn't matter. I would love reading his heartfelt messages year after year. Yesterday I went to pick out a card for his birthday to put in the casket. I had to laugh to myself because I know we would have shared a laugh over how much the damn cards cost now a days! It was over \$7! Last year we were all at my parents house celebrating Chris and Martys birthdays and it was the first time I told him the news that I was pregnant. He broke down into tears. Even before Liv was born Chris helped us so much. He would come over and put together all of the baby gear- bookshelf, high chair, installing the baby monitor, you name it and Chris put it together. When Liv was finally born him and Brenna were her first visitors to the hospital. I remember him being so nervous to hold her and I just assured him none of us really knew what we were doing so just give it a shot! And of course he did a great job. He loved coming over to my house when it was just us and holding Liv on this lap. He didn't like when everyone was starting at him holding her, which I totally understood. We were fine having our alone time with Uncle Chris. I can still picture him just looking at her with such a loving smile or laughing at her cute little hiccups. Even though I am so sad about Chris being gone, I am beyond grateful that he was able to meet Baby Liv. She was lucky to have such an amazing uncle and God Father and she now has the best guardian angel looking down on her.

I always loved helping Chris- whether it was shopping for groceries after he got out of the hospital earlier this year or shopping for clothes. Chris was one of those guys, like most guys, that hated shopping. When he needed clothes I would go to Marshalls or TJ Maxx and pick out a bunch of things for him. Most of the time I was spot on and there was nothing to return. I just knew what he would like and what would look good on him. I wish he was still here for me to help him. I would have done anything for him.

Chris my baby brother you were so handsome, so helpful and always sticking up for me. I will never forget our very special brother sister bond and I hope you are at peace now. We will cherish these memories and as we go on we will tell these stories to baby Liv so she too can know who Uncle Chris was. We love you