

In Loving Memory of Justin Carr, by Susan and Darrell Carr

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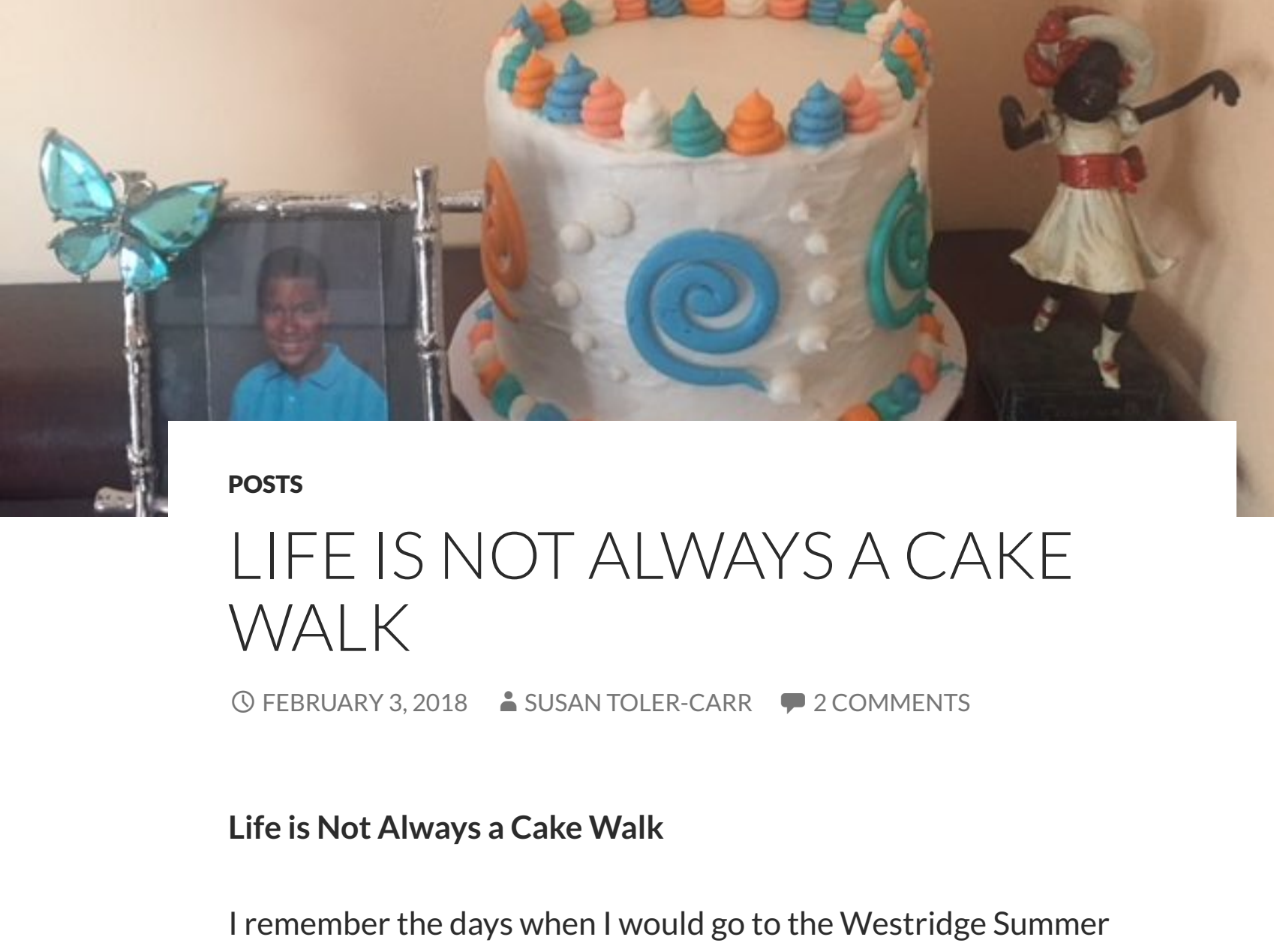
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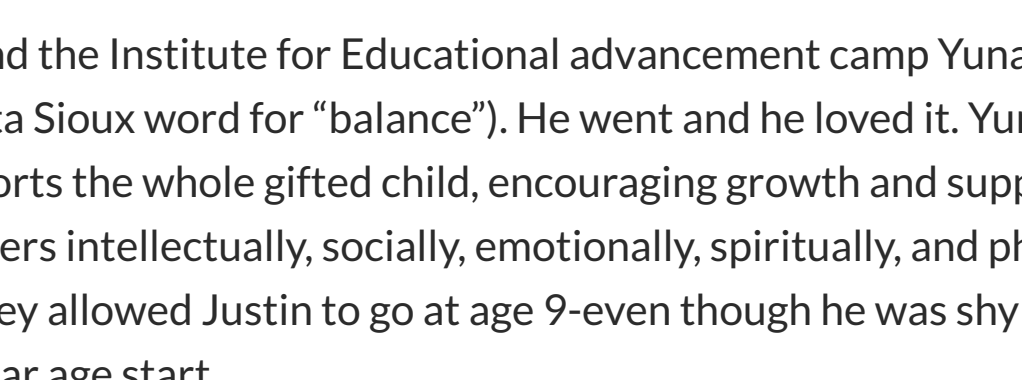
LIFE IS NOT ALWAYS A CAKE WALK

FEBRUARY 3, 2018 SUSAN TOLER-CARR 2 COMMENTS

Life is Not Always a Cake Walk

I remember the days when I would go to the Westridge Summer Camp Fair and find options for Justin to select for the summer. I must say that Justin was indeed aware and grateful that he was fortunate to be able to go places besides his front yard during the summer. I got there before the crowds and always managed to play my favorite childhood game.

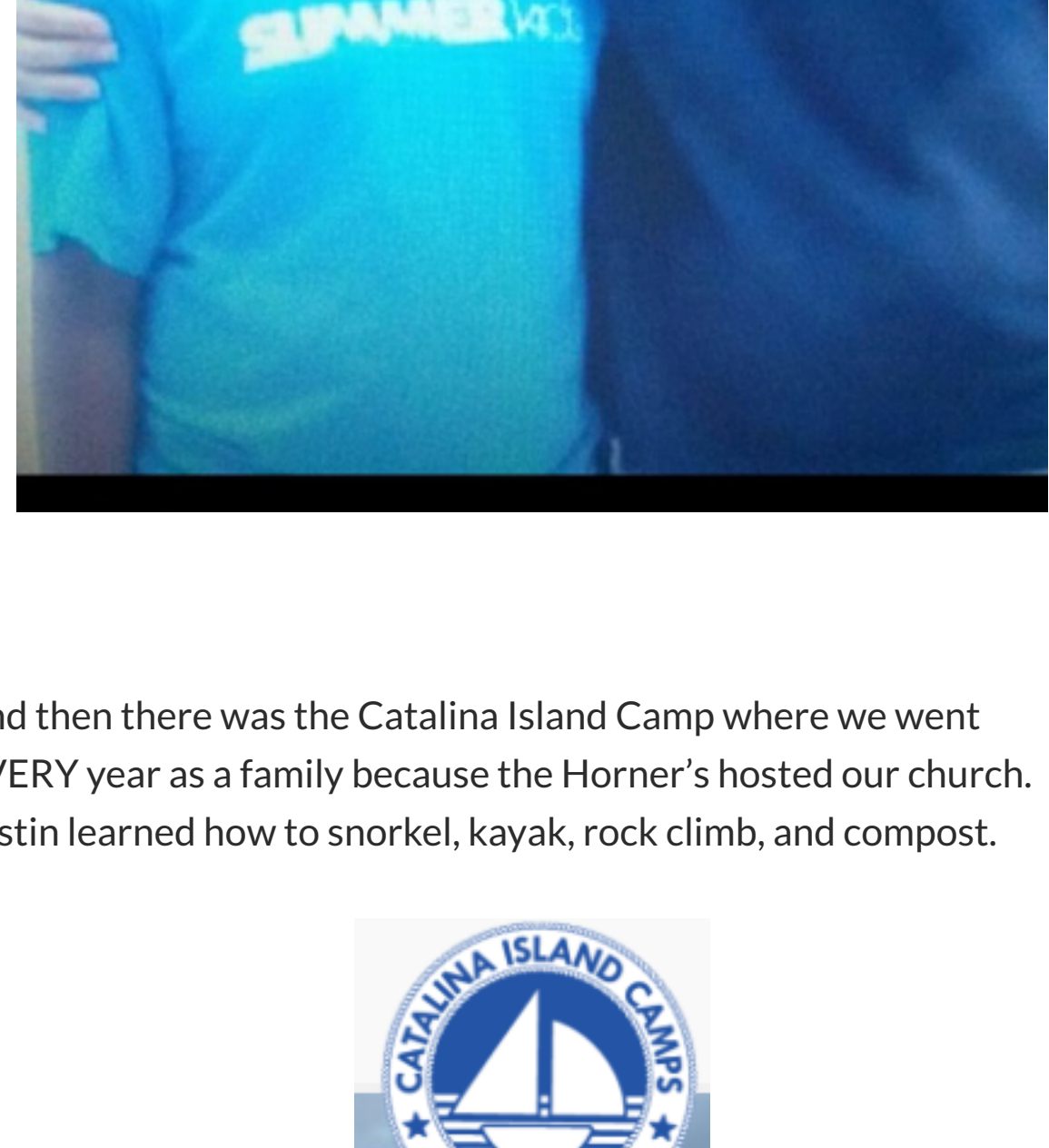
Over the course of his life, Justin went to a slew of camps, many of which I found out about at this fair i.e. the NY Film Academy where he and his team made a movie about a boy getting bullied after school until he bounded with another boy and they became best friends. They stood up for each other when others did not.



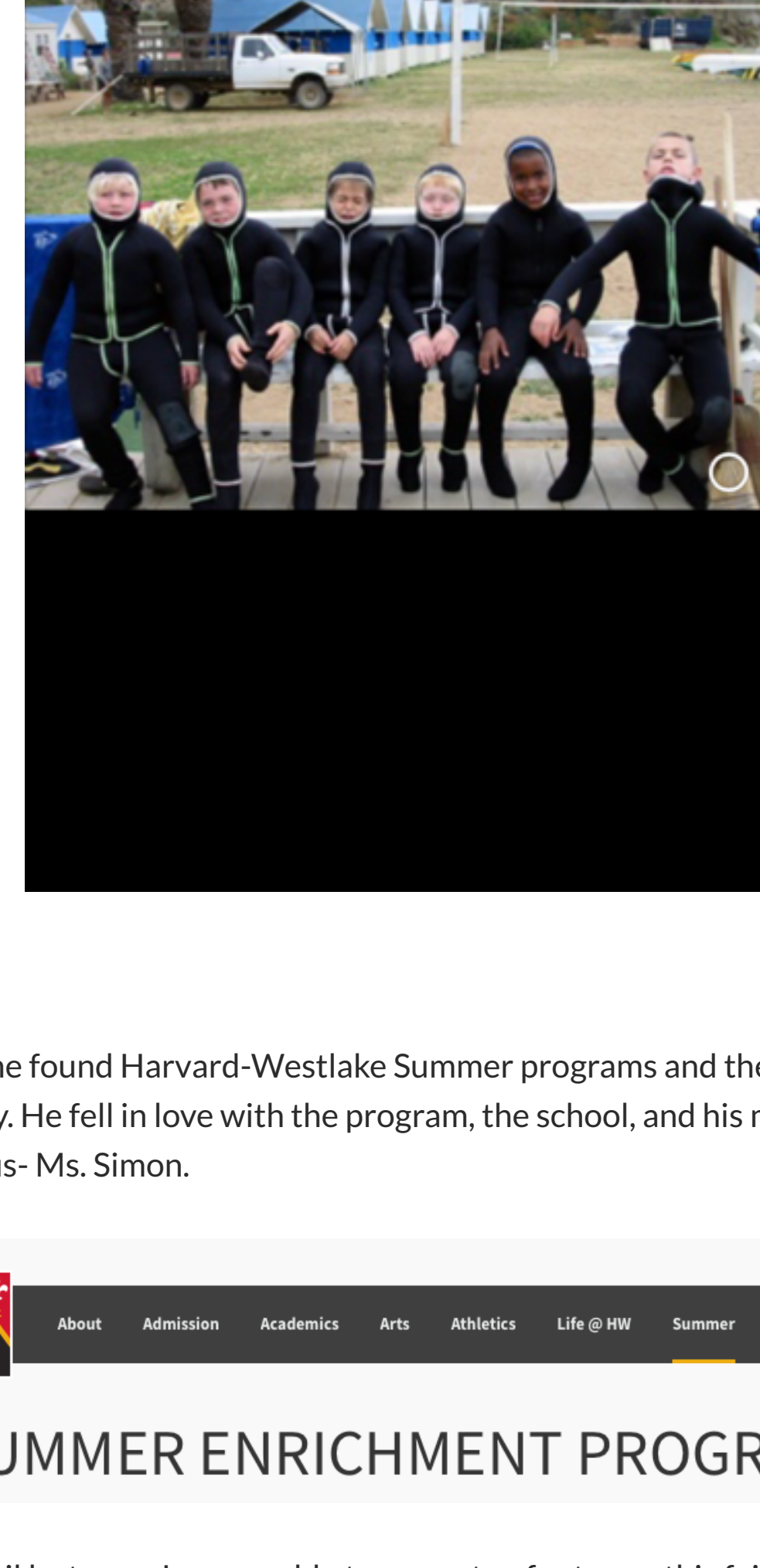
After his 4th-grade teacher told me "I never call on Justin because I know he knows the answer- he will find his niche in college." You know what I said back to her and what I did!!



I found the Institute for Educational advancement camp Yunasa (the Lakota Sioux word for "balance"). He went and he loved it. Yunasa supports the whole gifted child, encouraging growth and support of campers intellectually, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. They allowed Justin to go at age 9- even though he was shy of the 11 year age start.



And then there was the Catalina Island Camp where we went EVERY year as a family because the Horner's hosted our church. Justin learned how to snorkel, kayak, rock climb, and compost.



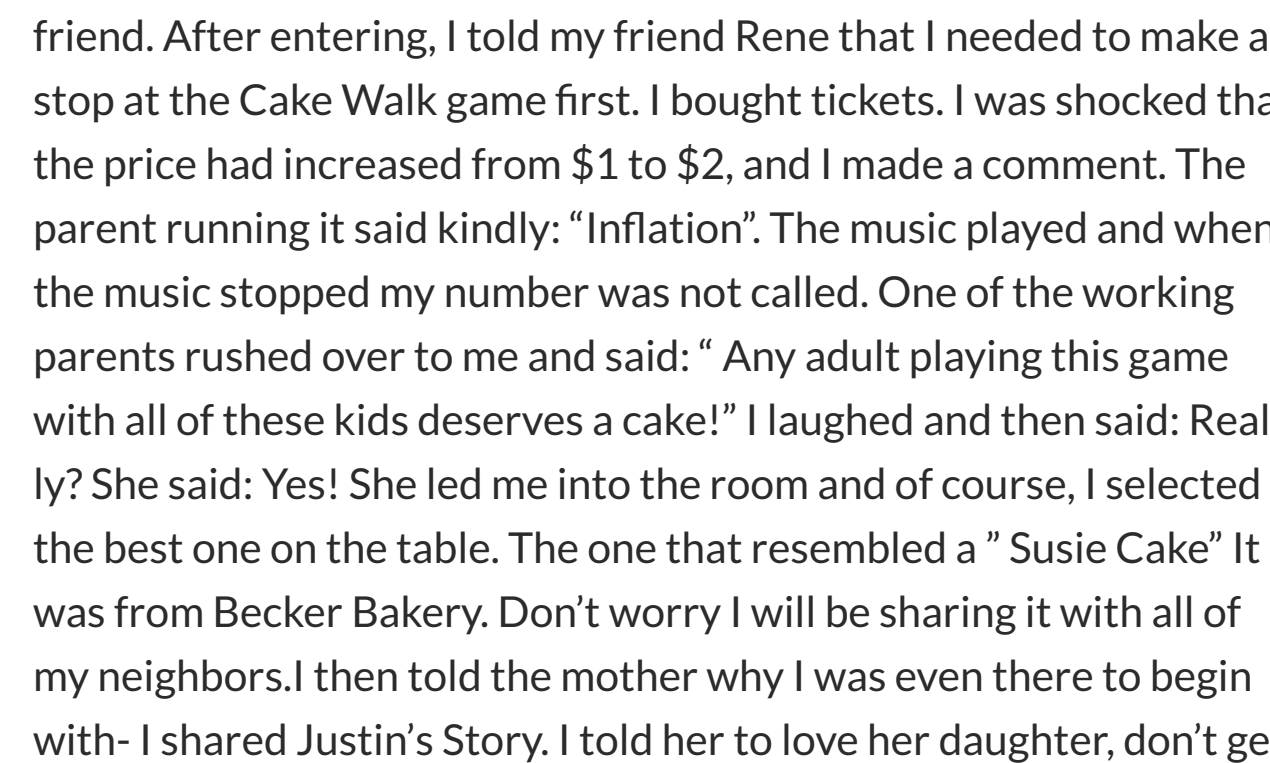
Then he found Harvard-Westlake Summer programs and the rest is history. He fell in love with the program, the school, and his mom on campus- Ms. Simon.



SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Up until last year, I was unable to even step foot near this fair. I took a leap of faith and chaperoned my friends who were looking for camp options for their kids. I was shielded on all sides by my friend Jenn, her husband and kids. I survived.

One of the things I loved about this fair was getting the chance to play was the good old fashion Cake Walk game.



Every year I would stand on a number and step to the music with the hopes of my number being called for cake. when the music stopped. Today was no different. I went to the fair to get materials for my friend. After entering, I told my friend Rene that I needed to make a stop at the Cake Walk game first. I bought tickets. I was shocked that the price had increased from \$1 to \$2, and I made a comment. The parent running it said kindly: "Inflation". The music playing and when the music stopped my number was not called. One of the working parents rushed over to me and said: " Any adult playing this game with all of these kids deserves a cake!" I laughed and then said: Really? She said: Yes! She led me into the room and of course, I selected the best one on the table. The one that resembled a " Susie Cake" It was from Becker Bakery. Don't worry I will be sharing it with all of my neighbors. I then told the mother why I was even there to begin with- I shared Justin's Story. I told her to love her daughter, don't get caught in all of the hype and competition and let your child be. " She hugged me and said she will remember what I said.



We scurried through the various booths and I was able to: Hug Maria from Catalina Island Camp Embrace Betsy- one of the founders of IEA See Coach Bible who was one of Justin's swim coaches at H-W. Bump into my friend Stephanie whom I just met 2 years ago. She was a mere stranger who found the words to confront me and not run away like some "friends" did. She was touched to the core by Justin's story. She came up to me and said: " You don't know me but I went to your sons funeral. I was taken aback by your unimaginable loss. I only have one child... She told me a just a few weeks ago: " I am both inspired and shamed that you as a mother of a child in heaven are more mother than 100 of us put together. I want to step up my game because of your example. I want to get closer to God because of your life of giving. You lift me up."

They all mentioned Justin's name. It feels good when other people are not afraid to mention my baby's name. I love it when they do. And everyone said to me: It's good to see you!"

When we left my friend Rene said: " I don't know how you do it and come to something like this. How do you feel? I said: "Life is not always a cake walk, I'm taking baby steps, and I carry Justin with me everywhere I go. He is walking with me now."

P.S. The cake was packaged and wrapped in plastic wrap so I really did not see the actual colors until I came home. Really!!



PREVIOUS POST FREE HEART SCREENING

NEXT POST HAPPY BIRTHDAY JUSTIN- YOU ARE FOREVER YOUNG!

2 THOUGHTS ON "LIFE IS NOT ALWAYS A CAKE WALK"

Cookiee P MAY 26, 2018 AT 7:24 AM Susan, you are so awesome that Justin chose you to share him with the world. Any life that spends a comparatively brief stint in our physical existence that makes such an impact is to be praised and glorified to every hilltop, ocean and sky. Imagine how much of him is everywhere now and how much he will continue to touch lives through this foundation through you and his dad. How awesome! Our love to you always!!!!

REPLY

Noreen FEBRUARY 6, 2018 AT 3:08 PM Heartfelt and lovely as usual. You are a beacon of courage. Stay that way. I love you!

REPLY

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NOVEMBER 2021

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