









Hello,

As we get underway with another great season of Lake Elmo Baseball you will notice something a bit different this year with the uniforms. On the tryout shirts, hats and jerseys you will see a purple ribbon with the initials JDP. Hi, my name is Jay Pernu and the ribbon that you see is in honor of my son, Jayson David Pernu who passed away from an overdose on May 23, 2019. The purple ribbon signifies opioid awareness. While I realize that some of the athletes that try out and for and play in the Lake Elmo Baseball Organization are as young as 8-years-old, I truly believe that this is an important enough issue that all ages understand or are at least aware of the dangers of opioid addiction.

Jayson began playing Lake Elmo Baseball in 2002. I am a member of the Lake Elmo Baseball Board and coached Jayson throughout his Lake Elmo Baseball "career". Jayson, continued on with baseball and pitched for the Stillwater Ponies during his junior year. He had a very successful season as did the Ponies qualifying for the State Tournament in 2010. In the off-season he injured his shoulder in a casual pick-up football game. He had surgery in the Winter of his senior year and was unable to pitch as a senior. It devastated him.

Jayson went on to pitch for DCTC (Dakota County Technical College) the following year. He pitched very well but probably too much and experienced shoulder pain. This is where the downfall began. He began taking pain medications and was never the same person. I won't go into all of the details here but it was a long, hard journey for him and us as well. We didn't know for quite some time (years) that he had an opioid addiction.

Tragically, Jayson's life ended at the age of 26. There are many, many more details to his story. Our purpose here is to give you some insight as to what the ribbon is all about. I thank all of the parents and players for wearing it, honoring Jayson, and bringing an awareness to this terrible disease during the upcoming baseball season. It means so much to our family to know that maybe we can make a difference for someone else. I would also like to thank the Lake Elmo Baseball Board for allowing this to happen. Although I am a member, it was the rest of the LEB Board that paved the way for this. We are forever thankful to them.

I pray as players and parents that you never have to go through this. Our goal as a family is to bring as much awareness and education as possible to this disease. I am more than willing to speak with anyone about this if you need advice or just want to learn more. We miss you Lefty.

Have a great season,

Jay Pernu