

Eulogy for Casey Beaupre

Delivered by Emily Cohen, 3/15/2010

My name is Emily Cohen, and I attended the High Mountain Institute with Casey in the Fall of 2006.

Casey's spirit was bigger than life. She had a way of surprising people with her honesty, and her ability to get to the heart of what was real. She had the ability to connect to anybody. Around her, I always found it extraordinarily easy to completely absorb myself in the moment.

Two years ago I was at school and had gone to my coach's office for an hour of my free period. When I came back, people were running up to me going "Emily, call your parents, it's really important". I automatically assumed the worst and called my parents in a panic. My dad picked up and I instantly yelled out "Dad, whats wrong?!?" and he responded "Huh? Nothing is wrong. Do you want to go to the World Series game with Casey tonight? Because if you do you need to come home they are picking you up in an hour." "umm... YES". When they picked me up, I climbed into the car and Casey gave me a hug and proudly told me that we were getting some sweet free tickets to the World Series game because she has cancer. When we got there Bob, Liz, Casey and I made our way to the EMC box seats looking right at home plate. Once we were settled in Casey and I went to get dinner, and we noticed all the people in the box seats decked out in cocktail dresses and fancy clothes, many of whom were watching the game on the TV sitting by the bar. Casey and I were obviously both wearing full head to toe Red Sox attire. The place was packed, and all of a sudden, Casey's eyes lit up the way they always did when she thought of a brilliant plan she was about to execute. Right in the middle of the fancy, elitist crowd we were surrounded by, Casey started dancing. She started flailing her arms, and walking through the crowd, keeping a completely straight face the entire time. As soon as we got outside we erupted into a fit of laughter, which lasted until our sides hurt, and David Ortiz hit

a home run and the laughter was replaced by cheers and hugs. When the woman next to us scowled at our joyous shouting, Casey leaned in and whispered to me “I bet that woman has a lot of cats...” and we exploded into another fit of laughter. Moments like this that I spent with Casey made me feel a little bit more alive.

Casey made everyone want to be a better person. She gave off a light and a power that was unique to anyone I ever met. We slept two feet from each other for four and a half months, in a small cold Colorado cabin. When you exist with people in such an environment, walls are broken down that exposes a person’s raw, true, self, to a point where there is nothing left to hide. It is an experience that is hard to explain, but is undoubtedly understood by the 33 kids and staff who were a part of RMS 17. In a lot of ways Casey helped me break down those walls faster than I ever thought possible. I met Casey on the first night of HMI and we walked to the portapotty together. I was crying because I was homesick and missed my boyfriend and she turned to me and told me that she was gay, and missed her girlfriend too, but that it was okay because we were about to have an amazing experience. After a moment of complete shock at the level of sheer comfort she showed in her own skin, I think I realized what I was getting myself into being at HMI. I said to myself ok, that’s how this is going to be, honest and open. In the first conversation we had that night Casey essentially said this is me, take it or leave it. After that first night I began to turn to Casey for everything that happened in my life. The girls in cabin 2, and I think everyone at HMI, developed an adoration for Casey- she stood as a constant reminder of what was real.

The girls in cabin 2 would stay up late and chase Casey around the cabin, and pig pile on her bed in one huge heap and we would talk and sing and laugh until we cried every single night. I don’t think that many people are lucky enough to experience that amount of laughter in their entire lives as we did in those short few months. Some nights Casey would take out her guitar and serenade us with ridiculous, improvised lyrics, poking fun at the world, but

simultaneously reminding us of just how much she seemed to get life. I would crawl into her bed late at night and we would lie around talking about everything and nothing at the same time. The advice Casey would give me always just seemed to carry a kind of power that would instantly make the world seem that much more clear and remind me what was truly important in life.

While Casey was at HMI she was one of the members of our group who brought us together, made us realize the unconditional love we had for one another. Her ability to reach out and connect to each one of us helped make our experience that much more meaningful, our semester that much more unified. Casey gave off an energy that drew people to her. She made us all feel like our best selves. She made us laugh so hard at the way she just seemed to tell it how it was. When she was diagnosed with leukemia and had to leave a week and a half early, her absence and the pain we felt from it intensified the bond between all of us. Now, we will all hold a piece of Casey in our hearts forever. If you look around this room, and see the people from HMI who are here today, it proves that even now, she is bringing us even closer together.

Being around Casey, I just felt lighter. When I called her this past November, I told her that I couldn't believe that it had almost been a year since we had last seen each other. Casey told me that it was okay, because no matter how long we went without seeing each other, as soon as we were together it was always like no time had passed at all. It was true. I was always surprised at how quickly that intense level of comfort between us came flooding back the moment we saw each other, whether it had been a week or a year. When she told me that she relapsed, she told me that she wants me to continue on with my life, to never let her hold me back from living my life the best I possibly could. I promised Casey that day that I always would. Casey will live on within me and all the people who were lucky enough to be touched by her magic. She will continue to inspire me to take the risk, live the moment, and make it real.