



MATTHEW ORNSTEIN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

November 29, 2016

Dear Family and Friends,

I just realized, as I saw my in-box fill with all kinds of worthy solicitations last night and this morning, that today is "Giving Tuesday." So, perhaps this is an opportune moment to update you on the progress of the Matthew Ornstein Memorial Foundation and to thank those of you who have already contributed to MOMF in 2016. Hopefully, you will soon get personal acknowledgments, suitable both for framing and for tax purposes! For now, though, let me thank you as a group, on behalf of my family, from the bottom of our hearts. We urge you to stay with us on our journey and perhaps even consider a second donation this year. There is so much work to be done. **As for those of you who have not yet donated to Matthew's Foundation this year, or ever (what a shanda!!), we ask you to consider doing so on Giving Tuesday (before midnight tonight) or as part of your year- end charitable contributions. Instructions on how to donate appear at the end of this letter and our family will match dollar for dollar all new contributions received between now and December 31.**

I actually started to write this letter in September and here is what I was going to say back then: "Another summer has come and gone; we hope it was a good one for you! Fall makes me think of 'back to school' and with that thought comes a flood of memories. I remember, for example, the September day, thirty years ago, when I hurriedly threw on my clothes to walk Matthew to school (only about a block away) for his second day of kindergarten. As I approached the door, Matthew assessed the situation and quickly, but firmly, informed me that he was walking to school with his friend, not his mother. I acquiesced, as I did so many times thereafter when Matthew asserted his independence, but watching from an open window, as Matthew looked both ways and then carefully crossed the street, I couldn't suppress the need to call out: 'I love you, Matthew.' Again, Matthew looked both ways and again he crossed the street, this time to return to the house to deliver a stern warning: 'Don't you EVER do that again in front of my friends.' And then, he was off." We raise them to leave us and how quickly, sometimes way too quickly, way too tragically, they are gone.

But I never got around to finishing the letter I was drafting back in September. As many of you know, we lost my beloved Father in the middle of that month, and our hearts were broken yet again. Now, somehow, it is almost December. Thanksgiving was this past weekend and just like the start of a new school year, it too brought back many memories, both joyful and sad: the ten year anniversary of a large and wonderful four day family reunion we held in Longboat Key, Florida to celebrate my late parents' sixtieth wedding anniversary...and, exactly one year ago, the unveiling of a marker on our beloved Matthew's grave. It's been a really challenging decade to say the least, but – thankfully - we found that this year, as we sat around the dinner table on Thanksgiving, we were able to focus not only on what (whom) we have lost in recent years, but also on all the wonderful gifts with which we have been blessed, including having had the

amazing Matthew in our lives for 34 years, with all his magic, his wisdom, his humor, his kindness, and his indomitable spirit. And, of course, Matthew's spirit remains, strong as ever in our hearts, even if his physical presence will never again grace our holiday table.

There have been two main reasons we have been able to reach even this early point in our healing and to continue with determination on what will surely be a lifelong journey of learning to live with, and find meaning from, our grief: First and foremost is the fact that none of you has forsaken us. You have been steadfast in your love and support and we will never cease to be grateful. When we have needed to talk, you have been there to listen. When we couldn't find the strength to speak, you have helped us find meaning in our silence. The second thing that has sustained us is the work we have been doing on behalf of the Foundation which we established, just a bit over a year ago, to memorialize our beloved son. The Foundation provides a purpose in the midst of our grief and helps us plot a path forward.

So, what has the Matthew Ornstein Memorial Foundation been doing with your money this year? For one thing, we nailed down all the legal requirements to secure not only the Foundation's non-profit status, but its categorization as a Non-Profit Operating Corporation, which affords certain tax benefits and enables us actually to do work and not just be a pass-through entity, funneling money to other charitable organizations. We also secured a certificate that allows us to avoid the payment of sales tax on the Foundation's purchases and an occupancy permit (yup!) that allows us to use our home as the base of our operations...for now, at least!

For another thing, through Danny's diligent efforts, **we now have a website** that we (Danny!) will continue to enhance to provide substantive materials related to the two part mission of the Foundation and regular updates on our work (so that you will never again have to receive such a long and detailed letter). For now, check out the website and contribute to it: add photos, memories of Matthew, suggestions for the Foundation going forward, express your interest in volunteering to work with us, whatever! **Mornstein.org!**

We have e-mail addresses too and, working with Pamela Dailey, a very talented designer, graphic artist, architect and dear friend of Danny's from Yale, we have a logo, stationary (as you can see) and business cards. The back of our business card has a beautiful picture of Matthew, artistically enhanced by Pam, from a photo provided by Matthew's dear friend and housemate during his junior year in South Africa, Chris Meserole. The picture was taken by Chris as he and Matthew watched the sun rise over the hills on their first morning in Rwanda (a place where, for the record, I unsuccessfully begged Matthew not to go; same unsuccessful effort with respect to bungee jumping at Victoria Falls!). The bird that Pam used on the stationary and the front of our business cards appears in the upper left hand corner of Chris' photo, while Matthew, with that beatific smile of his, is in the lower right.

More substantively, as you know, the Foundation's mission is twofold: (1) to memorialize Matthew, by building on his personal passion for policy debate, and his success as a high school national champion debater, to provide a chance for personal growth and academic success for those who might not otherwise have some of the opportunities that so enriched Matthew's life; and (2) to work, through any and all avenues possible, to improve outcomes for those who suffer from mental illness and for their families.

Regarding debate, on April 20th of this year, with the support of my law firm, Reed Smith, and in partnership with the DC Chapter of the Washington Urban Debate League, we held our first fund-raiser to help defray costs of the second season of the Matthew H. Ornstein Summer Debate Institute. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of colleagues, friends, family and the WUDL board and its supporters, we raised over \$60,000! The Institute itself was held on August 8 through August 12 and was, by all measures, a phenomenal success! More than double the size of last year's inaugural session, we had about 70 middle and high school participants from a large number of different public schools in the District of Columbia and Prince Georges County (and a few students who even came from outside the area to participate). In addition, we had a waiting list of many more! For five days, eight hours each day, our "campers" learned, cooperated, competed and grew; we saw them blossom before our eyes.

In the world of competitive policy debate, a single topic is set nationally in the summer, for the following school year. The topics alternate between domestic and foreign policy issues. The summer is when most students prepare for the tournaments, which begin in the fall. This year's topic is policy towards China and each morning of the Institute, our participants heard talks by, and asked questions of, an array of top policy experts who donated their time to the Foundation. A highlight was when, on the first day, Janet Brown, head of the Commission on Presidential Debates, not only came to speak to our campers (after all, what else did she have to do this year?), but also loaned the Institute the actual podiums from which President Obama and Governor Romney had debated!!

A fabulous staff was assembled from around the country and, at the awards ceremony on the last day, after a multi-round tournament held on the Georgetown University campus, the Matthew Harris Ornstein Outstanding Debater Prize was awarded by Matthew's high school debate coach to the participant who most exemplified Matthew's special traits. A nice article about the camp, which you can find on the Foundation's website, even appeared the next day in the Washington Post! In 2017, if all goes well, we will not only admit more students, but hope to expand the camp to two weeks.

On the mental health front, we continue to search for the perfect niche. The issues are so numerous, and each so complicated, that it is easy to get lost in the thicket. To further our learning this year, among other things, we attended the four day convention in Denver of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI); a "State of the Union" conference put on by the Kennedy Forum in DC; the Like-Minded Rally for Mental Health Reform at the Democratic Convention, sponsored by The Scattergood Foundation, The Kennedy Forum, & City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services; the first conference of The Stepping Up Initiative (A National Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails); the first ever World Health Organization-World Bank Meeting on Mental Health, these last two both in Washington on back to back weeks; and we have met, and are continuing to meet, with various faith leaders to discuss intriguing issues at the intersection of religion and mental illness and to explore ways of getting the faith community involved in addressing, among other things, the stigma associated with brain diseases.

Norm has met throughout the year with numerous members of Congress and special Congressional committees, as well as representatives of various mental health organizations

about the first ever comprehensive piece of legislation to deal with problems of the seriously mentally ill, and has helped move the bill along toward enactment, which could come at any moment. While the legislation is far from perfect, it provides options for treatment that were not available before and we were exceedingly buoyed that it passed the House this summer by a vote of 422 – 2, even in this era of constant partisan divide. It gives us hope that people are finally waking up to the crisis, for so long ignored, regarding the country's backward practices towards the care and treatment of those who, through no fault of their own, are suffering from some of the most serious, most poorly understood, and most stigmatized of all diseases.

More generally, Norm is becoming a frequent writer and speaker about our personal experience with the desperately broken system we encountered as we tried to get help for Matthew. As a result, we have heard from a large number of people around the country and even the world who are facing, or have faced, daunting challenges similar to Matthew's and to ours. One of our goals is to try in the coming year to create a network of the folks we are hearing from and whom have met who are willing openly to share their experiences with others, through writing, speaking, teaching, advocating. It is the only way to deal with all the prejudice and misunderstanding that currently exists regarding mental illness and those who suffer from it.

One of our most exciting projects involves an (informal) partnership we have formed with a talented documentary film maker and friend of Matthew's, Gabriel London, and his company, Found Object. Together, we are embarking on what we hope will be the creation of a compelling and instructive film about a remarkable judge in Miami-Dade County, Florida, who has transformed the way that county deals with those with mental illnesses who get entangled in the criminal justice system. In January, we spent a couple of days in Florida with Judge Steve Leifman and his team and saw firsthand how he has worked with police, other judges, public defenders and prosecutors, jail wardens, guards, and peer counselors who have "graduated" from his program, to provide an ecosystem of treatment and support as an alternative to jail. Through his tireless, but we believe replicable, efforts, Judge Leifman has reduced violent incidents between police and the mentally ill to a trace level, reduced recidivism enough to enable a jail to be closed for a savings of \$12 million, and enabled a large group of formerly homeless individuals to find jobs and places to live. Tomorrow evening, here in DC, Judge Leifman will be honored by Governing, a division of e.Republic, Smart Media for Public Sector Innovation, as one of its eight Public Officials of the year.

This past spring, working with Judge Leifman, the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, Gabe and his partners filmed a short video for use in counties across the country to demonstrate best practices through the Stepping Up initiative I alluded to earlier. The next step—admittedly a large (and expensive!) one—is to move on to the full-scale documentary about Judge Leifman's work to showcase all that governments can do to save lives and save money simultaneously.


I apologize for the length of this letter, but we wanted you to be aware of at least some of what we have been doing, with your support and in Matthew's name. Our magnificent son, even in his terrestrial absence, moves us each day to dig deeper, to climb higher, to give more, and to love with all our hearts...just not to get up any earlier in the morning! Remember: for more information and updates about Matthew's Foundation, please go to our website (Mornstein.org).

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At the site, you will also find a place to make a donation via Pay Pal, or you can send a check to Andrew Rothenberg, Morgan Stanley, 7500 Old Georgetown Road, Tenth Floor, Bethesda, MD 20814, payable to the Matthew Ornstein Memorial Foundation (or MOMF). **Please do think of us in connection with your year-end charitable giving. We will be grateful for any amount no matter how small. We just want to know that you are with us. Have a wonderful holiday season and here's wishing you health and peace in the new year!**

With warmest regards,



Judy, Norm, Danny and Pam