



The Will To Live Foundation, Inc.

"For The Kids, Through The Kids, By The Kids"



Summer Lax'n with my Life Teammates

By Ryan Larcinese

Everybody knows that I love Lacrosse. I play Goalie on a Summer Travel Lacrosse team for the Georgia Outlaws. We have players on our team from Northview, Chattahoochee, Centennial, Milton, Roswell, Wesleyan, Woodward Academy and the Walker School. Our team is sponsored by the Will to Live foundation and we proudly display the WTL logo on our shorts, the Life Teammate message on the back of our shooting shirts and stickers on our helmets. Some of my best friends are my Georgia Outlaw teammates and even though we are rivals in the spring and fall we have a brotherly bond that is bigger than the game.

I knew Will Trautwein my whole life. We live in the same neighborhood; both swam on the Sugar Mill Swim Team, practiced lacrosse together and played sharks and minnows or hamburgers and hot dogs with our friends at the Sugar Mill pool. Even though Will was 3 years older than me he always treated me as an equal. I looked up to Will; he was a role model for me. He was a great athlete, very talented musician, he refereed my Lacrosse games and he had an ever present smile. When I would see Will he would always say how's it going bro and we would talk about Lacrosse or music. He was a Life Teammate.

This summer I attended a 4-day overnight Lacrosse camp at Emory University that was run by True Lacrosse. At the camp I made a bunch of new Life Teammates. I had a great week at camp and the True Lacrosse coaches invited me to compete in 2 tournaments with their True Michigan 2017 team. I traveled to New York and played in the Long Island LaxFest and Illinois for the Chicago Summer Classic. The True team travels like a College team. We have roommates, eat all our meals together, attend team meetings and travel on a Coach bus. While in New York we had some mechanical problems with our bus which forced us to come together. Overnight I had 25 new Life Teammates. In between the 2 tournaments I reached out to Mr. Trautwein and asked him if he would provide 25 helmet stickers, so I could share Will's story with my True team. Mr. T came up big and provided over 100 brochures, wristbands and stickers.



While in Chicago, I talked with my coaches about the Will to Live foundation and the concept of "Life Teammates." One of the coaches had a High School friend who was a victim of suicide in 2005, right after graduation. The message hit home with him. He called a team meeting and talked about Will, his friend, the WTL foundation and being "Life Teammates" to each other. He said that we could talk to the coaches about anything. It didn't have to be Lacrosse related. He encouraged us to express our feelings and reach out to each other if something was bothering us. You could have heard a pin drop. I had never seen our team so attentive, serious and quiet. They got it. After the presentation, I passed out the flyers, stickers and wristbands and our entire team was wearing them proudly. My Life Teammates had never met Will but they were spreading the word.

Our prominent display prompted a lot of interest from other teams and we were able to share the message with players from our opponents and other members of the True family. Our team played inspired and we won the U15 Championship with a 7-0 record. We were honored to support WTL and be "Life Teammate" messengers.