



KIM TAYLOR

is in eighth grade at Rocky River Middle School. In her free time she enjoys theater, singing, writing and reading. Kim plays both the clarinet and the saxophone. When she finishes school Kim thinks she may want to become a teacher like her parents.

Picking fights. Stealing lunch money. Making fun. Gossiping. These are some of the hateful cruelties people suffer every day. Seth* was a boy who endured hate on a regular basis. He had anger problems, and some ADD and Aspergers Syndrome as well. Seth wasn't particularly good at sports, but he loved them. Third grade peers required he fork over his "classroom money" in order to play with them at recess. When Seth didn't play sports he often played chess against himself until the other boys came and flipped his chessboard over. The awful boys did this to Seth for the joy of watching him blow because of his anger. Not just students bullied the lanky boy either. On one birthday, a teacher didn't let him pass out a treat or have the class sing to him like the other kids. All in all, his class in every grade made him a freak. Seth was angry at the way his peers treated him and eventually attempted to jump off a bridge twice. Things were not looking good for the now high schooler.

As I witnessed Seth's torture, I was devastated. I had no idea that such intense bullying happened within my town. Later I would learn of worse experiences. I remain in disbelief. I realize now that I've taken for granted the large number of friends I have. Seth had only one. Cole Matthews* wasn't always in class with Seth, so he was often lonely. I found that he enjoyed video games as well as sports and when Cole wasn't around, I would play games with him instead. Sometimes I would fake interest as he explained his techniques for defeating the boss battle, or how annoyed he was that Princess Peach got captured AGAIN. When it was warmer we'd play street baseball. I liked seeing him take his mind off the bullying.

Seth's father credits Cole Matthews and his family for saving Seth's life. When Seth would leave his house angry and flustered, he went to Cole's. Cole's family welcomed him and often gave him dinner. Not only did the Matthew's family change Seth's life, they changed my own. I realized it's not enough to not be a bully. I want to befriend these people. I can support them in front of my friends. I need to invite these victims into my life. I can ask them to sit by me at lunch. I must greet them in the hallway. I need to show my friends how to talk to them with human kindness. It is my duty to show them love and kindness where they don't get it normally. There needs to be more people like the Matthew's family in the world - people who embrace differences, take others in, and treat them with the dignity all humans deserve. These are the type of people that love everyone, and those who appear unlovable, are the ones they love most. I can now do the same.

**Names have been changed*