

## **TAYLOR WHITNEY #25**

**(1990 – 2007)**

This year all Royal York baseball players will be wearing a memorial crest on their uniform bearing the number 25 to honour the memory of Taylor Whitney.

The crest is intended as a memorial to Taylor who played for Royal York from the age of six until his death at age 17. It is also meant as a reminder of the real risks that young men and women face in the transition to adulthood.

Taylor was part of a loving, supportive family. He had many friends and he was loved by his teammates and his coaches. Taylor was intelligent, happy, responsible, athletic, healthy and had a bright future ahead of him. What happened to Taylor could happen to any young adult.

Taylor passed away last August in the midst of the Ontario Baseball AA Championship Tournament through a series of preventable misadventures. Taylor's death did not result from neglect, recklessness or carelessness.

The evening of Taylor's death, he played baseball for Royal York in the Ontario Championship Tournament. He arrived home at 9:00 p.m. and went to attend his high school friends' end of summer party scheduled for that night. Taylor left the party disoriented and got separated from his friends. Although he did have a cell phone, he did not call his parents who were waiting up for him. He did not get a ride home. There were several people who saw Taylor but did not intervene to save him. He was walking home, fell down a steep ravine and died.

Taylor's death was preventable. While no one is to blame for Taylor's death, there are lessons to be learned from his tragic misadventure.

### Friends

1. Do not leave your friends alone. Make sure you protect each other and get each other home. If someone has had too much to drink, call their parents or your own, even if your friend doesn't want you to. You can do it anonymously. You don't have to be someone's best friend to help them.
2. Drink in moderation. Avoid funnelling! (Parents, if you don't know what this is ask your kids. It's dangerous.) There is a lag between when you drink and the effect of your drinking. Even after you stop, you will continue to get more inebriated. Remember your capacity to make rational decisions and your physical abilities deteriorate with each drink, including your decision to stop drinking.
3. Never drive after drinking. Do not get in a car with someone who has been drinking. Do not let your friends drive if they have been drinking. Even one beer is too many.
4. If going to a party, have a cell phone. Make sure it is charged. Check in with your parents.

5. Do not leave a party alone.

### Parents

1. Make sure your son or daughter has a cell phone and it is charged. Tell your child when you are expecting a call. Call if they forget to.
2. Leave taxi money in your home where in an emergency your child can use it.
3. Have a list of your child's friends cell phones and home phone numbers.
4. Know which friends are going to be at the party.
5. Let your child know that you will pick them up at any time, no matter how late, and you are happy to do it.
6. Discuss the issues surrounding alcohol consumption before your child is likely to be exposed to it by their peers. Include a discussion of funnelling and other drinking rituals and games.
7. If you find out your child has been drinking under age, use the opportunity to discuss the risks, while at the same time re-enforcing your love. This does not mean you have to condone their potentially destructive behaviour. Use this as a teaching opportunity and re-enforce your trust in your child to make good responsible decisions.
8. Ensure your child has an In Case of Emergency (ICE) number in their cell phone contact list.

### Neighbours

1. If you see a young person alone and disoriented, help them or call the police to help them. Do not be afraid to become involved or to approach a young person in distress.