

Manulife Life Lessons Scholarship Program – Jordan’s Story

Transcript

“To my daughter Jordan, the beauty you behold, something out of image, the future not foretold. So perfect you have entered, into life you came, Jordan is your name, your mom and I ordained. Love, Dad, February 2005.”

This letter he wrote a year after I was born is the only thing he left for me to have. I was 12 when I found out my dad had died from a drug overdose, leaving no life insurance behind.

Despite his battles with addiction and mental illness, he was once an aspiring young artist who wanted to design logos for companies. And I believe he genuinely tried to be present in my life when he was stable. My mom had raised me as a single parent my whole life, prioritizing my needs ahead of anything else, even herself.

Growing up, I was shielded from my dad's substance abuse, the financial hardships my mom faced, and was fully loved and supported throughout all of my endeavors. But when my mom lost her job in 2018, she experienced a psychotic episode and was hospitalized for a few months. She returned to work too soon and was later diagnosed with psychosis, furthermore, inhibiting her as her genetic Huntington's disease continued to worsen with time.

After being placed on disabilities by her doctor, both me and my mom are now solely reliant on disability income, my personal earnings, savings, and assistance from my grandma to afford a warm meal and keep a roof over our heads. On the bright side, I'm grateful to say that I'm able to continue my seventh year of performing with the Calgary Marching Show Band Association, on account of the subsidized payment options and various fundraising opportunities provided through the band committee.

Additionally, I've been accepted into the University of Calgary for a Bachelor's in Communications and Media Studies, beginning in the 2024 fall term. In retrospect, I took for granted the importance of life insurance and how greatly I would have benefited from even the smallest contribution from my dad.

I mean, I would have the financial leeway of dropping a course that I didn't need or taking more than required simply because I wanted to. But I don't look at my circumstances with resentment or pity, because realistically, nobody can change the past, and instead learn to interpret life roadblocks as a lesson in resilience and growth.

See, starting in September, I will be accountable for adopting many new roles and responsibilities. balancing school, work, marching band, and the continued care of my mom's well-being. The support of Manulife Life Lesson Scholarship would provide me with financial relief for the entire first semester of my degree, allowing me a smooth transition into education.

This way I can focus on the success of my academic and extracurricular goals. Addressing all other applicants of this program, I will say the situation you find yourself in is not one which any person should have to go through. But even now, you continue to persevere, chasing your dreams, regardless of society's expectations of you.

And that's something to be immensely proud of.