



Juan Sebastian Varela

October 31, 1993 - June 20, 2020

Our beloved Juan Sebastian Varela, 26, of Provo, Utah, passed away by suicide on June 20, 2020.

Juan was born on October 31, 1993 in Cali, Colombia. He was the third of nine siblings, three boys and six girls. Juan lived in Colombia until he was 3 years old. He left Colombia with his mother and two siblings in November of 1996 and ventured to California. He lived in California until May of 1997. By the time we left California, Juan had another sibling and we moved to his adopted hometown of Provo, Utah, where he lived most of his life, save 2 years in Las Vegas.

Juan attended preschool at Head Start and Rock Canyon Elementary in Provo, Utah. He moved to Las Vegas for his middle school years and attended Charles Sylvester Middle School where he won the athlete of the year award. Juan loved sports and played basketball every chance he got! He played football for the Island Warriors and Liberty High School during his time in Las Vegas; and with Timpview High School in Provo which was a dream for him. Juan was a natural athlete. He played safety, wide receiver, punter, and filled in where ever he was needed. Juan was also an exceptional soccer goalie and was often sought out by teams who wanted to recruit him. It was magic watching him play goalie. In his later years, Juan began working with his older brother, Andrés, on cars and was introduced to the racing community where he quickly developed a passion for car racing. He got to the point where he was hosting races and became an active part of the racing community.

Juan was always the life of the party and a magnet for his niece and nephews. Juan would joke and tell people his first nephew was his son. He loved them unconditionally and would call them often. Until his son was born, his niece and nephews were his cell phone screen saver. Juan felt a big obligation to be the best older sibling for his younger six siblings. He would often consult with his older sister about how to better help his younger siblings. Juan would attend all family events, including the infamous "Taco Tuesday" and made those dinners memorable. Juan loved his family very much, as they did him. If Juan

was there, you knew you would have a good time with no awkward moments. He had this incredible ability to make you feel seen and known; he would read your mood and knew exactly what to say or do to “fix” it.

Juan left us, his family, the greatest gift he could possibly give; a piece of himself. His beautiful, mini Juan, his son Matías Sebastián! Seeing Juan being a daddy is a gift we will cherish forever! Juan didn't let anyone take over his parenting and he easily could have! He has a six sisters and the most giving mom. But Juan wanted to do it all by himself. He woke up to comfort and feed, he changed diapers, made bottles, played, sang, cuddled, and dressed him like a boss! Juan was meant to be a dad. He was so proud of Matías and in awe that he created such a perfect, beautiful being. We will teach Matías everything about his daddy and he will love him as much as we do.

We loved his jokes, his presence, his kindness, his generosity, and his stride. Juan was never, ever in a hurry! Even to Matías' birth Juan walked in his cool, collected manner. He walked to the beat of his own drum. We will mostly miss his ability to love with every ounce of him, so deeply and passionately.

Though Juan was always making us laugh and helping others, he was having a grueling battle with severe depression. This may come as a complete surprise to some, but it was his reality. If there is one thing that our family has learned from this experience, it's that we can ALL do a better job at checking in with our loved ones. WE must take the first step and make the first move.

Often those who need our help the most aren't showing signs that they need someone to reach out to them. These conversations and interactions can be painful or uncomfortable. We may feel it's “not our place”, or “none of our business”, but they are absolutely critical. None of us can afford to be thinking this way anymore, and we ask that moving forward you promise to yourself to never put off reaching out to a loved one. We can all do a better job at leading with compassion, empathy, love and concern, just as Juan would. Become the person your loved one's can't wait to talk to and confide in about any and everything. That is our goal moving forward. That is Juan's Legacy.

Juan is survived by his 18 month old son, Matías Sebastian Varela, his mother Olga Lucia Bradley-Varela, his Stepfather Thomas Wayne Bradley, his loving siblings- Jorge Andres (Jessica) Herrera, Olga Lucia (Pablo) Gomar, Ana María (Brodix) Fleming, Michelle Grindstaff, Liyanir Grindstaff, Karina Grindstaff, Joseph Nathaniel Grindstaff, and Ruth Katherine Bradley. He is also survived by seven nephews and one niece. London, Christian, Maddix, Brayden, Sofia Elena, Elijah Anthony, Mylo Andres, and one on the

way. He is also survived by his grandmother Melba Ruth, many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

A memorial service for Juan will take place at 11:00 AM on Saturday, July 11, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 650 Stadium Avenue, Provo, Utah.

In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to the fund set up to benefit Juan's son, Matias. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/juan-varela039s-legacy>

Tribute Wall

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“ *My husband and I just found out. We are so sorry for your loss. Juan was a great guy. We all played video type games together for the past 5 or 6 years and we became friends. I know he loved his family so much and his son meant everything to him. My prayers are with his whole family. May God bless.*

Matt and Angie Layne - August 26, 2020 at 01:19 PM