

“Integrity is doing the right thing when no one is watching.”

-C.S. Lewis

In my classroom there are three quotes on my wall. The first comes from the movie *A Bronx Tale*. Robert De Niro reminds his son that there is “nothing worse in this world than wasted talent.” The second quote comes from my eighth grade social studies teacher Rick Walsh and that was, “Organization is the key to success.” Lastly, is the quote above by C.S. Lewis. All three quotes I preach to my students all the time, they hate me for it. However, the quote used as the title fits perfectly with our Athlete of The Month for November, John Kraunelis. John is a young man with strong moral principles who truly makes me, and I speak for others as well, want to be a better person.

In August of this year I emailed John’s mom. Not the first nor the last time I will be emailing a parent about a great child but certainly this time I felt it was necessary. I stated to Mrs. Kraunelis, “I just want to say how impressed I was with John today working with him. He is one of the best young men walking through our doors. He hasn't just improved so much in baseball but just listening to him communicate with new boys in the facility and how he makes them feel welcome. It is just amazing how good of a person he truly is and I just wanted you to know that. I am sure you already do.” That is just John being John. From the time John walks in to the time John walks out, he is the most polite, caring individual in the place. He is friendly to his peers, respectful to his instructors; always representing his family the best way possible. Certainly an individual who was raised the right way.

On top of being an excellent role model to his peers when it comes to character, John has improved his baseball skills through his calm demeanor and excellent work ethic. Jay Schnabel described John correctly when he said that John this year truly earned his spot on the 12u Bandits AAU team. Bill Berman, his fall coach and instructor at the club, also commented about John. He said,

I have known Johnny for a long time as I had the pleasure of coaching his older brother James 10 years ago. James is now a freshman at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. I've known Johnny and the Kraunelis family since he was a very young boy. I remember telling him way back then at one of his brother's games- "Don't change a thing". I meant it then and I mean it now. When John walks into a room or a situation, he immediately makes it better in every way. John is a champion on the field, in the classroom at BC High, at home (his Mom tells me), in the club locker room, conditioning area, bullpen, cages and amongst his peers. I've had the honor of coaching Johnny for the last two 12U Fall Ball seasons. In the fall of 2014, our team was 0-9. This past Fall Ball season our team won the league championship and went 9-0. Johnny's presence and attitude were a major reason. During the championship game early in November- 3rd inning, we are winning 1-0, I was talking to our hardest throwing pitcher/closer about the game plan to seal the championship. The pitcher interrupted me and asked, "Johnny's my catcher, right?" I said, "If you want Johnny, you got him." He responded, "I need Johnny, he calms me down." I'm not sure a family can raise 2 young men any better than the Kraunelis family has with their sons. I want to thank them for bringing John to the Braintree Baseball Club and allowing us to coach him. As always, he's done more for us than we could ever do for him. Congratulations Johnny. Don't change a thing.

Jim Joyce

Bill Berman