

Hi. My name is Angela Fisher, and I'm a parent at The Museum School. ^{Brian 1} We have three little girls – Reese (a 4th grader), Libby Grace (2nd) and Blythe (Kindergarten). It was through The Museum School that we first had the privilege to get to know Jess, Tami, Dave, and Jack. I remember on the first day of second grade, my daughter Reese came home from school and exclaimed, "Mom, there is a NEW GIRL in our class. She is REALLY nice and smart, and she has RED HAIR. Her name is Jess. I really think that we're going to be friends!"

And with that, Jess came skipping into our lives.

It was just this school year that Tami and I approached our nanny Hannah about watching all of our girls after school. After all, they were already going to the park together after school and playing. At first Hannah was a little nervous, but she quickly discovered just how much easier – and BETTER – her job was WITH Jess in the mix. ☺ Since Jess came home with our girls each day, it provided Brian, Hannah, and me with the wonderful opportunity to really get to know her even better. We quickly came to love and respect all of the amazing qualities that she possessed. And it was not a stretch in the least to say we felt like she was one of our own. ☺

Two nights ago, Brian and I were sitting down with our girls and reading from a little ~~devotional~~ book we have. The verse for the night was 1 Corinthians 13: Here's what it said. At the end, I said, "That is talking about Jess."

INSERT PASSAGE HERE...

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous. It does not brag; It is not proud. Love is not Rude, is not selfish, and does not become angry easily... Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always continues strong.

I'm a list maker. So I thought I would take a moment to share with you just a few of the many reasons why our family is on "TEAM JESS":

1. Jess rocked. Plain and simple.
2. As our nanny Hannah put it, "We needed Jess more than she needed us." I want to share a quote from Hannah – with her permission, of course. *She said, "Whenever Jess had a headache, we would swing on the bench in the park and she would lay her head on my shoulder and I would cover her eyes with my hand so the sun wouldn't bother her. I miss that."*
3. Jess was a peace maker. [She has a permanent spot in our car – and Hannah's – directly situated in the middle of our kids.]
4. She fit into our family beautifully and was a wonderful influence on my girls.
 - a. My girls read more and knocked out their studies in a shorter amount of time.
 - b. They showered more frequently – b/c when Reese asked if Jess was going to shower that night, she would reply, "Duh, I don't want to smell!" Then before I knew it all three of my girls would head for the shower without their usual protesting.*c. They sang "Let it go!" with gusto. And even changed the words to "Let it Cheese" and apparently that was very funny to them all!*
5. Jess was wise beyond her years. She just "got it." She recognized what was important and ~~wasn't~~ *wasn't* bothered by what was truly frivolous. [Sometimes if Hannah didn't know exactly how to help the girls with their homework, Jess would say, "I'll help them, Ms. Hannah. Just go ahead and fix their lunches. Then she'd smile."]
6. She had a kind heart.
 - a. Blythe always has the hardest time buckling herself into the car, but Jess was always there to help buckle her seatbelt for her.
 - b. When Jess and the girls played board games at our house, she'd always make sure that Blythe or Libby Grace would win.

- c. When Hannah picked up Jess after Christmas break, she told her it was so good to hear her voice...that she had missed hearing her voice over the holidays.
- 7. Jess had such a generous spirit – she was always thinking of others. [She never went to the zoo or the aquarium with us that she didn't bring back a special gift for Jack.]
- 8. Jess was comfortable being Jess. She was ok with who she was and was not. Books and nature – yay! Soccer and ~~horses~~ ^{swim team} – yay! And that was a-ok.
- 9. She was an advocate for nature. She saw the good in things... especially living things that were small, furry, and enjoyed a good acorn on occasion.
 - a. Speaking of small and furry...when Jess was 9, she noticed that several squirrels on her street (Exeter) had been hit by cars. Jess was so concerned that she wrote a letter to Mayor Rieker to inform him of the situation. She outlined the need for a "Squirrel Crossing" sign in her yard, so that motorists could please slow down for the squirrels. She went on to present a petition that was signed by 21 of her neighbors in support of the sign and crossing. Mayor Rieker was so impressed by her commitment to her community (and our neighborhood squirrels) that he presented her with her very own "Squirrel Crossing" sign for the Willadsen's yard. Jess went on to share that since the sign had been up "No squirrels have been hurt and our furry little friends have never been better."
 - b. I also recall that for one birthday, Jess and Tami provided explicit instructions that no gifts were to be brought for Jess... but instead they asked people to bring food donations for the cats at Lifeline. This was just another example of Jess showing how everyone can contribute to make a difference.
- 10. She was *Jess the Brave and Adventurous!*
 - a. [One day at the park, she found a wild onion and brought it to Hannah. It was all covered in dirt. She was told not to eat it, but she ate it anyway, because according to Jess, 'Dirt was sanitary.'"]
 - b. One afternoon she and Reese were really quiet. When I came to see what they were up to, I discovered that they had made their own

mystery super-sleuth detective badges, and they were in the middle of solving a very important mystery that had occurred in our home. I quickly retreated so as not to disturb them on this urgent mission.

11. Jess was so curious and creative. [Hannah told me that one time she and my girls were sitting and coloring Disney princess books. She asked Jess what she was coloring. Jess replied that she was making a history book, and asked Hannah if Clara Barton was indeed a famous nurse in one of the wars? Hannah said that she politely admitted she had no idea -- and then immediately returned to coloring her princess picture.]
12. Jess saw the good in everyone and everything. This is oh-so rare in a child of her age. [One day she found a disgusting little doll in the park. It was all covered in dirt – who knew how long it had been there?! Hannah told her to please leave it, but instead Jess brought her the doll the next day – all cleaned up and “prettified.”]
13. Jess’ glass was always ½ full.
14. Jess was a vegetarian, but she could eat anyone under-the-table when it came to snacks. Hannah said that she could eat an entire pantry, but a couple of months ago, Jess decided it was time to limit herself to just three snacks a day. But sweet Hannah would always pack “extra snacks” in Reese’s lunchbox for her to share with Jess at lunch. ;)
15. Jess had a wicked sense of humor. [One day Blythe had given Hannah a special rock to hold onto. It was literally the size of a grain of salt...teenie-tiny. Hannah accidentally dropped it in the car (and of course it was gone forever). She asked Jess not to say anything to Blythe in hopes that she’d forget she’d given it to her. As soon as Blythe walks up, Jess tells her ‘Ms. Hannah lost your rock.’ And then proceeds to laugh like crazy.]
16. Jess was so much fun. She would brighten any room she entered.
17. She made everyone feel comfortable. Jess welcomed everyone. She put people at ease.
18. Jess had a wonderful appreciation for nature. She once brought our family her plant named Kyle and told us that she would like for us to keep Kyle -- alive. I assured her that we would do our very best. Sadly, after two days she rethought her decision. Reese went on to admit that Jess was afraid

that we wouldn't have enough time to care for Kyle, and it may be best if she took him back home with her. Oh, sweet, wise Jess. ;) Guess she felt Kyle couldn't compete with 3 kids, 2 cats, 2 fish, and 1 dog. ?

19. Jess was a poet. Her poetry was insightful and inspirational. [Here's just one example.]

20. Jess knew what it meant to be a true friend. She was loyal. She loved honestly and completely.

Jess was such a blessing to our family. She made a huge mark on us as she did all of you and our entire community. She was a gift in every sense of the word.

Ashley Robinson, who was most recently teaching Jess piano, shared with me that one day Jess didn't really feel like playing piano, so Ashley just let her talk. They chatted about books, and Jess read her poetry and told her about writing an essay on Shakespeare in the 3rd grade...for FUN! As Ashley put it, "This world needs more people like Jess, and I am blessed to have encountered her."

And I agree. Our world ^{certainly does} need more people Jess.

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Jess

A precious voice

Silenced before it could be heard

Quietly cutting through hearts

Leaving its mark time and again

Gone before we realized

So clear, so wise, so kind

Cherished forever

Loved for always

In both hearts and mind

Sweet child, dear friend

Skipping in glory

Overflowing with life

Radiant beauty

Eternal angel

Our child of peace

- May her memory be a blessing to you today – and for always.

Thank you.

This Poem

A thought...
A word...
A whisper..
Is this poem.

A light...
A flicker...
A gleam...
Is this poem.

A bud...
A bloom...
A blossom...
Is this poem.

A heart
A Will
A reason..
THAT IS this poem.

Here are a few funny excerpts that showed her personality that she wrote to me:

Dear Ms. Frandsen,
Have you ever looked up at one of your students and thought to yourself- "Wow! They would really make a great class sweeper, or maybe wipe the floor"?

Dear Ms. Frandsen,
I am writing to you, with great respect about one of my most strongest skills...snacking!

Dear Ms. Frandsen,
I would really like to be a reindeer. After all, I mean don't they have room for a tenth one? Come on people nine is already an ODD number, for crying out loud, so here's how it would work: Instead of Rudolph being the lucky one all the time, I mean with leading the pack and all! Oh yea and don't worry about Rudolph's feelings, he is getting pretty old, so maybe a bit of laid back time would be good for his BLOOD SUGAR.