

# Chicken Soup

for

## Friendswood ISD

Working with men who have decades of experience can be very intimidating. You want to fit in and not mess up! Luckily for me, the Friendswood ISD maintenance department is made up of men with all sorts of different backgrounds and job experiences before life lead them to Friendswood ISD. Being able to work with these men and learn from different perspectives on how to solve problems has proven to be valuable in developing my skills in carpentry, painting, plumbing, and electrical. Skills that seemed to have fallen by the wayside in today's youth. But the most important aspect of the maintenance department is the comradery. Whether we are laying out the tarps in the boy's gym for a football game, setting up/breaking down the high school cafeteria for an evening event, or moving classrooms during the summertime, the comradery between all maintenance personnel is what keeps us coming back to punch the clock at 7am Monday thru Friday. But for me, the brotherhood of the maintenance department would come to mean a whole lot more in the hardest year of my life.

2020 started out as any ordinary year but within the span of April-September, the maintenance department would lose four men who departed this world for the next. One of these men was my dad. The loss was unimaginable. Throw a pandemic and lockdown on top of it, you find yourself totally isolated and the desire to be embraced and comforted were now seen as threatening gestures. But the maintenance team rallied around me whichever way they could through phone calls and text messaging. When you lose a parent, you reach out to people who can relate, and the maintenance team was my saving grace during those dark times. These men continue to fill that void in my life daily.

In the summer of 2021, I was tasked with the job of pressure washing the campuses along with a crew of summer helpers. When we arrived at Windsong, I noticed the old marks on the ground. They were in neat order. You could tell the person who pressure washed last took pride in their work. Except, I recognized these marks. These marks were from dad. It provided a beautiful moment of reflection and remembrance for me. Those markings are now gone, having been erased forever. But it provided me with a smile because I knew I would always have a special connection with my dad as long as I am a Friendswood Mustang.

-Blake Warren, Maintenance