

# NORTH MEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL

## HOME OF THE BLACK TORNADO

Dan Smith, Principal

Jesse Pershin, Assistant Principal • Aaron Luksich, Assistant Principal • Jessica Hamlin, Assistant Principal

---



September 21, 2015

SWC Hardship Committee,

Tanner Thomson has transferred to us from the state of Washington, where he attended four different schools. He is ineligible due to a Transfer without Change of Joint Residence.

I met Tanner for the first time two days ago. He is a kid that you can see is hurting on the inside, and is desperately looking for something positive.

From reading his letter, you will get a real sense of the suffering he is going through, from the death of his child, to a feeling of abandonment.

I talked with his mother, who is living in North Bend, Washington. She filled in a few gaps in Tanner's letter. Her husband's father was critically injured in a car crash in Spokane. So Tanner's family made plans to move from their home in the Seattle area to Spokane to help care for his grandparents. As they prepared their house for sale, extensive dry-rot meant that the move became quite expensive for them. The grandparents' house in Spokane, heated by woodstove only, was not going to be big enough for everyone, so they had Tanner move to Medford to live with his Aunt.

Given the hardships beyond his control, we believe Tanner should be granted the opportunity to participate in OSAA activities. He desperately needs positive outlets in his life.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel P. Smith  
Principal, North Medford HS

Tim Sam  
Athletic Director, North Medford HS

**Go Black Tornado!**

---

Tanner Thomson

9/10/2015

Explanation letter

To whom it may concern,

I understand that I need to explain my situation and why I am here. It has been a rather rough year for me and I would say the beginning of it all would be a relationship I didn't expect. I became a couple with a girl who was also in an unfortunate situation. Her family was entirely unsupportive of her. Her mother was verbally and physically abusive and the rest of her family just verbally abusive. I had had a lot of stress simply from that itself, wanting to protect her from her family. Seeing her come to class with cuts and bruises hurt a lot, however it was only a minor pain compared to the rest of my year. During the entire relationship with her, my family seemed to be foreshadowing their upcoming behavior. One day I cut my arm so bad it needed stitches. My mother immediately blamed my girlfriend for my depression acting up. At this point I had been having fights with my parents for years and was still fighting with them until my older sister made me realize something. It wasn't entirely their fault that they couldn't agree with me. She made me realize they simply have no experience dealing with mental instabilities such as depression bipolar disorder and anger issues. All of which I have shown signs of. There came a time when I was really tested. My girlfriend became pregnant. My family and her family became hostile. Both started to put the weight on my shoulders to take care of the baby and her. I thought at the time that it would greatly reduce my chances at being wealthy or even providing a comfortable living for myself but I was ready, wholeheartedly, to take on the task. One day my girlfriend (her name is Ashleigh) came into the house crying. I was babysitting for a mutual friend at that point to make some extra money before I could legally get a job that required an

application process. Ashleigh was at a doctors appointment to check and make sure everything was going well with our baby. She sat next to me and told me her doctor had given her bad news. There was a rare condition our baby had that gave chances of survival a low percentage. There was still a chance he would survive. Months of her family and my family being extremely hostile to us both her family thinking of me as a future deadbeat dad, my family thinking of the girl I loved as a whore with no ambitions. We really only had each other to rely on. On december 16, 2013 my son Owen James Radosevich Thomson was born at 12:02 and at 6:00 that same day he stopped breathing and his heart stopped. He died. There was a lot that went on the few days after that. His funeral, burial, and a lot of crying. I had told my dad that I wanted everything to be as private as possible and I didn't want my parents at the hospital or the funeral just the burial. This was the start of the disagreements with my parents that I couldn't handle. My mother completely bypassed me and Ashleigh and talked directly with Ashleighs mother. Each time her mother got a call she told us that my mother was on the other end crying. I explained to Ashleighs mother why I had had all the trouble with my parents and she began to understand that it was not beyond my mother to be manipulative. I told my dad that we had all agreed that it would just be us until the burial. Again there was a call. At this point whatever my mother said to Ashleigh's got her raging mad at us. She decided we had no more say in who attended our son's funeral or burial. My mother had forced her way into another aspect of my life I wanted to keep private. Not unlike her, hence all the fighting we had been through. It wasn't long after that that I stopped listening to my parents. I almost stopped thinking of them as people entirely. They were more like children. The more my mother realized I stopped yelling but she didn't the more she tried to assert her dominance over me. One instance in particular had to do with homework. I was mature enough and competent enough to take care of my own homework assignments and at this specific point in time I was taking a rest from school for the night. My mother told me

to do my homework and I simply waited. I waited as I always had from the moment I realized she was not as credible as I thought. I just let her go until she left then went back to what I was doing. She became so upset at my inaction and my null expression she threw our television on the ground at my feet. Another few inches or so and it might have fractured my leg. That incident was merely one outbreak of many in her emotion that everyone in our household turned a blind eye toward. These bursts of anger I saw in her I attributed to be like that of an animal that can't open a door. I don't mean that to be insulting but she truly cannot figure out how to understand me and she can't accept that she never will if she doesn't stop trying to use brute force. My father used to be more supportive of me however he recently had become the main target of aggression from my mother when I decided to drop out of all the yelling and screaming. He stopped supporting me because he would get yelled at just the same as I would for disagreeing with my mother. That moment it became clear I needed to get out. There was no going back to a loving family I could not get them to understand. My child dying caused a tear in our family and all we were doing was putting more weight on it. So I started to look for a place to live. I thought I had found someone. She told me she was 24, living on her own on a decent paying job a two bedroom apt. and her own car she was getting fully paid off soon. I relaxed on finding a place but I kept other people in mind for emergency back-up. The day she was supposed to show up and show me to her place to move in, she stopped contacting me. I found myself soon after in a mad scramble for a survivable living place. It was around this time my parents told me we were going to a family reunion. While we were there I was pulled to the side by my father and told that I would be allowed to stay with my aunt Cindy for a week. On the fourth day my mother called me and offered me to stay a second week. Within that second week I was offered to stay here permanently. I accepted. I began to think about jobs and school where would I go what could I do how would I make money? In all of those questions and my

aunt trying to help me answer them I found myself looking toward NMHS football. That is my story up until now. My future relies on those that may deem me eligible or not. If I am decided ineligible that would mean I have to drop out of football. Which means I no longer have even an opportunity for college. I hope this has proved sufficient.

## Tim Sam

---

**From:** Burgener, Elaine <burgenere@svsd410.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 17, 2015 2:24 PM  
**To:** Tim Sam  
**Subject:** RE: Tanner Thomson

Hi Tim;

I do not know the circumstances of Tanner moving, but he has spoken with me in the past about the difficult nature of his living arrangement and his wish to find another housing opportunity. Tanner is an academically capable person who I believe would benefit from physical activity. I don't know of any reason why he should be excluded from your athletic program. Please let me know if you need further information.

Elaine Burgener  
Two Rivers School  
North Bend, WA

**From:** Tim Sam [mailto:Tim.Sam@medford.k12.or.us]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 17, 2015 1:45 PM  
**To:** Burgener, Elaine  
**Cc:** 'tanner.n.thomson@msd549c.org'  
**Subject:** Tanner Thomson

Hi Elaine,

We have just enrolled Tanner Thomson at North Medford HS, Medford OR. He would like to participate in athletics as a positive outlet, and to make positive connections. Our state requires a letter from a person at his previous school, and Tanner thought you would be a great candidate.

Specifically, we are looking for information that led to Tanner moving here without his entire family (Mom, Dad, sister), beyond his or his parents' control. Any information in support of Tanner being involved in athletics as a positive outlet would also be appreciated!

E-mail works fine, or a letter on letterhead is not necessary, but certainly works as well!

Tanner is with me at the moment, and is wanting to be sure you know that he is ok with you sending me this information.

Thanks,  
Tim

**Tim Sam, AD, CMAA**  
**North Medford HS**



**GO BLACK TORNADO!**