

About Jordan – by Auntie Lee, Leanne Cross

Jordan, Jordi, Jo, Jo-Jo, Princess, Bean. Our Jordan had many aliases. She has now added the most distinguished and, I feel, fitting label.....Angel.

My name is Lee and I have had the immense pleasure of being Jordan's Auntie Lee. Actually Jordan recently had taken to calling me "Dude". This drove me nuts! Despite my shy, quiet nature I told her one day how I felt about her new lingo. She listened respectfully and responded, "Oh sorry, Auntie Lee.....dude!!" In hind sight I figure that I entirely deserved that given that I have called the child Jo Jo Bean for close to 16 years!

I hope that you will humour me for a moment and let me share with you a little about my relationship with my niece. For me, my connection with both Jordan and Andy ran far deeper than being their aunt. As many of you may know my own personal journey to motherhood was lengthy and difficult. I never openly shared this with Andy and Jo, but for many years THEY were my "babies". I remember thinking during those days that I could not possibly fathom how deep a mother's love must run, because I was just an aunt and they filled my heart!

It has been such a delight watching both Andy and Jordan grow up. For the past few days, my family and I found ourselves glued to our computer screens reading the many wonderful posts about our Angel on Facebook. You have all captured the essence of who Jordan is so perfectly! I have found myself on so many occasions telling people that "I know it sounds cliché but Jordan truly was THE perfect teenager (baby, not so much! But teenager, yes!)". I have always felt so blessed that my own son and daughter had such amazing role models in their cousins. Addi absolutely idolized her Jo. Last time we were here visiting Jo said to me, "Auntie Lee, I am going to be to Addi what you are to me". What Jordan may not have realized however was that she already was!

On a lighter note I would like to share a couple of the many fun moments that I have had the pleasure to share with my Bean. Several years ago my family had the incredible opportunity to holiday together in Mexico. We painstakingly researched to make sure our resort would meet the needs for

ages 4 to geezer. We lucked out! The resort even had the most amazing water park complete with water slides. Woo hoo! Only problem was for some reason regulations stipulated that I was too old to enjoy the waterpark. So I said to Jordan, "C'mon kid, let's throw caution to the wind" and up to the highest water slide we headed. As we approached the top, however, we got busted! Waterpark security had us! Jordan looked at me wondering how I was going to gracefully get us out of this jam. No problem! I looked down at security and calmly informed them that I needed to stay by my mentally handicapped niece's side! We spent the rest of that glorious day frolicking in the waterpark.

One thing that Jordan and her Auntie Lee definitely did NOT have in common was a love of domestic animals. I would be quite happy to fill my house with critters; Jordan definitely did NOT share this passion however. After one of our last girls' night slumber parties at my place, I woke up the next morning to find every chair, stool, and ottoman in my house all set out in a line starting at the bottom of the staircase to the kitchen.. There Jordan sat, on the counter, making us scrambled eggs. I guess she figured if she walked and sat 2 feet higher, that the dog and cat wouldn't be able to touch her.

Hey, did anybody else notice how fast our girl could talk?! Like seriously, she should have been an auctioneer! And I'll tell ya, get her hopped up on Tim Horton's Ice Caps, and a party sized Toblerone and that's a good time!

My heart hurts so much knowing that Jordan won't come bouncing out to my van when she catches sight of us arriving for our much anticipated visits. My heart bleeds for my beautiful sister, my loving brother in law, and my cherished nephew. But I take enormous solace in knowing that our Jordan knew without a doubt that she was, and forever will be, loved.

In closing I would like to urge everybody to live the rest of their days by two easy, yet life changing, principles. I was taught these values by an incredibly beautiful and mature 15 year old princess.

#1. Live your life with passion! And don't just wait for those moments to find you. You find them....each and every day.

#2. And never let a day go by without saying, "I love you". Three simple words that are guaranteed to transform and enrich lives.

We love you more, Jo Jo Bean.