

# ONE LAST GOODBYE

## CANDLELIGHT SERVICE HONORS LORENZO MENDOZA

A crescent moon glowed over the school where a crowd of over 100 students and faculty gathered around a tree next to the auditorium to attend a candlelight service for junior Lorenzo Mendoza Oct. 26. The luminescent candles could be seen by cars passing down Haltom Road, but tears could only be seen up close. Hymns came to a silent ending and students gathered closer together to link hands in prayer in honor of Lorenzo who passed away earlier that Sunday morning because of complications from hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

"I know the wind is blowing out the candles, but keep the fire burning in your hearts," junior Ana Maria Brown said.

The service started at 8:45 p.m. after messages on Twitter informed students to meet at the school. Sophomore Madeline Martinez and junior Mariah Quadri organized the candle lighting. Friends who gathered passed a box around the crowd to raise money for Lorenzo's family. Meanwhile, friends and classmates shared their memories.

"I remember seeing him out on the field in his baseball pants all dressed like he was going to play," junior Carlos Duenas said. "He knew he wanted to be apart of something more."

Even those who did not know Lorenzo well gained the courage to speak.

"I remember talking to him the other day about how excited he was about basketball season," junior Ashley Peterson said.

After an hour of reflecting, students were joined by Lorenzo's mother Olivia and other family members. Olivia walked into the middle of the circle and placed Lorenzo's backpack on top of the donations box. Then she lit a candle and placed it in the middle. Although Olivia could not speak English, assistant principal Mrs. Elena Villanueva translated for the crowd.

"I know my son is flying away like a cloud, but he is shining like a sun," Oliviaz said. "He told me he loved going to school because of all the friends he had and all the people who loved him."

Another candlelight service was held the next morning around the flag pole before school. Students wore white in honor of Lorenzo.

"Lorenzo taught us that there are no limits to anything," junior Alejandro Narvaez said. "And to live life to the fullest."

*Story by Giovanna Villalpando*