January 15, 2005

Dear family and friends,

Thank you. Thank you all so much. These words are so few but we can't find the right words to express how much you all mean to us. Some of you only know us because Jordan was a Marine or because you went to school with him, but never met us. It doesn't matter; you are now a friend for always.

Jordan's death was so unexpected that it was hard to accept, but there is something we want everyone to know. Throughout Jordan's involvement with the United States Marine Corps, we were supportive of him. We knew that his life, and yes, each of our lives, was entirely in God's hands. God is Sovereign. His will and His ways are not our will or our ways; and rarely can we see or understand the reason behind trials that we face.

We know many of you were praying for Jordan, daily, as were we. We talked with many of you and know that our prayers covered Jordan every day and in every way. Some of you prayed for the enemy to be confused and ineffective, they were! Some of you prayed for equipment to function properly, it did! Some of you prayed for the leadership of these young men to be wise and caring, they were! We prayed for Jordan to be unafraid, to be courageous, to be confident in his job, he was! Our prayers were answered.

There was one more thing we prayed for - that Jordan would be safe and healthy. He was until he died. Was this an unanswered prayer or a "no" answer? We don't think so. Why? Because every prayer we prayed ended with "May Your will be done, not mine." We had to accept that God is Sovereign and no matter what our desires were, His will would be done.

All of you who responded to our need for comfort during the weeks after Jordan's death have been blessings to us. God has provided us with friends who listened to us talk, and talk, and talk. Many of you brought food and paper goods and drinks for our families from out-of-town and us. Some of you stayed with us and helped welcome guests into our home. Many of you contributed to various charities in Jordan's name. There were so many beautiful flowers and plants and the special memorial ribbons. There were gift certificates to eat out when we needed to get away. And there were phone calls from so many of you, making sure that we had everything we needed, or just ready to listen to us talk again.

We received some very special one of a kind gifts from people who only wanted to share with us in their special ways. Many of you were strangers. We want you to know that these gifts are very much appreciated. We pray that God has helped you in your grief as you prepared these things for us.

To all of you we want to say thank you again. Your notes and cards have been so thoughtful. Even if we didn't have the energy to read in our Bibles, we were still receiving God's guidance through the cards that you sent. We appreciate the time you took to share our burden with us. We appreciate the prayers that we know have been said for us. Thank you.

The Marines who have been with us from the beginning and who assisted in Jordan's funeral services have become family to us. We especially want to thank you. Those of you in Iraq who served with Jordan, thank you for being his family, for being his friends, for your service. We will continue to pray for you.

There were so many of you who attended Jordan's services to support us, and to remember his life. We hope you know how much that means to us. We are keeping a scrapbook of pictures and letters about Jordan's life. If you want to add something please let us know. These memories are so special to us; they help us remember the good times, his sense of humor, his friends, and his life!

We want to finish this letter by reminding you that God loves you. We pray that Jordan's life or death may in some way draw you to a new or closer relationship with Jordan's Lord Jesus Christ. Jordan was a normal teenage boy with normal teenage hopes, dreams, and ideals. And yes, he often learned lessons the hard way (don't we all.) By no means was he "perfect" or did he do anything that earned him a place in Heaven. Only because of Jordan's faith and belief that Jesus Christ, God's only Son, was born, lived a sinless life, died on a cross to suffer death for Jordan's sins, rose again to live in Heaven eternally, may we know that Jordan is now in Heaven with his Christ. This is a fact, but it is hard for us to even imagine. Thankfully, we can know for sure that we will one day be reunited with Jordan if we share his faith and his belief, if we know Jordan's Christ died for each of us also. Do you know God's Son?

Please know that we love each of you, we thank you for caring for us in so many ways, and we would love to hear from you any time. We continue to need your prayers and thank you now for them. Also, don't forget to keep praying for the Marines and service men and women still in harm's way.

In Christ's love,
Jordan Winkler's family

If you have any questions about Jordan's faith, please call us at 461-2570, or contact Jordan's church family at Living Oaks Baptist church at 250-0210. We would love to talk with you.