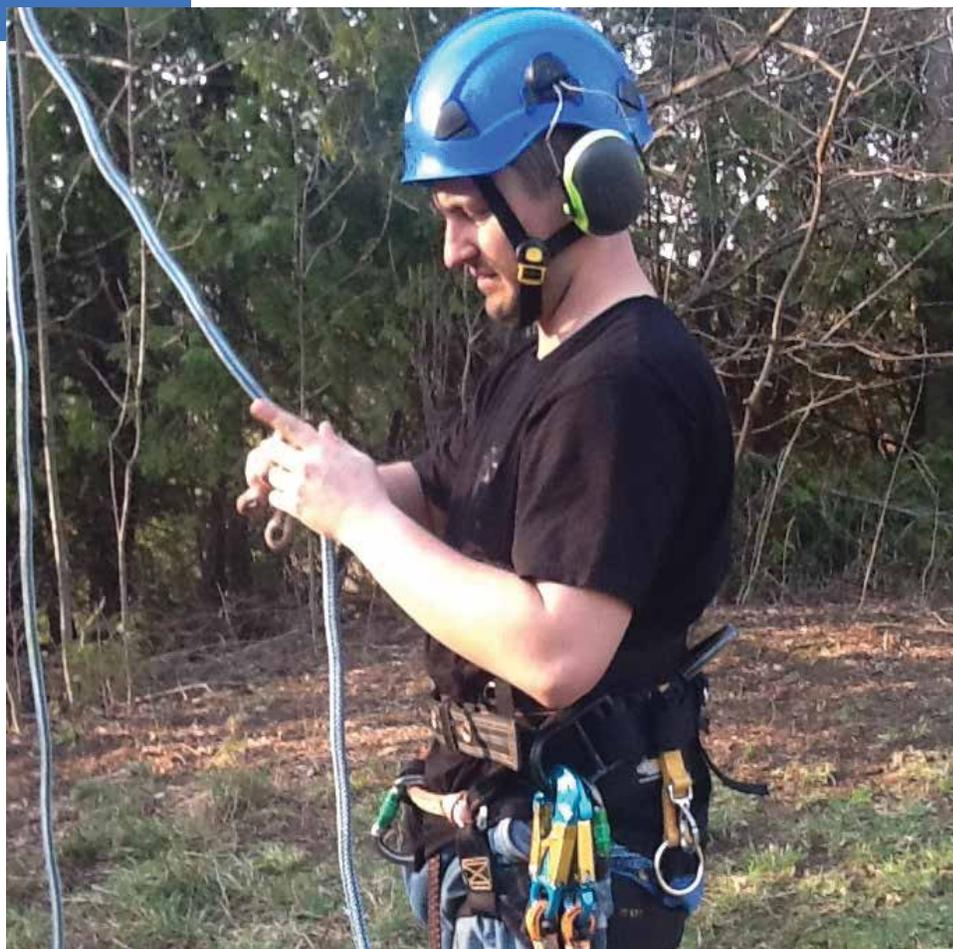


# A LIFE WELL LIVED (but tragically cut short)

Adam Andrew Francis Sura

May 3, 1990 - May 4, 2018

by **Debbie Wickham**



Adam ready to climb

**F**rom the moment Adam was born, he was a joy to behold. He had a beautiful smile and he let the world know he was in it. Fast forward to day care and watching Disney movies together. From the back seat of the car on the way home, I heard a rendition from the movie Mrs. Doubtfire, “I’m a hip old Granny, I can hip hop, be-bop, dance til you drop, and yo-yo make a wicked cup of co-co.” Little did I know that hip hop would be his style of music in his twenties!

He made me a beautiful Thanksgiving Day card (in grade one I think) with a tree with big strong brown branches and crimson red leaves and a poem inside the card that read: “Thanksgiving is great, Thanksgiving is fun, with a big Thanksgiving crew, I almost like Thanksgiving as much as you” Little did I know the, but Adam had a gift for words, drawing, and a huge love of trees (I’ll expand on this later).

Adam played many sports such as soccer, rugby, baseball, basketball, karate, and was a winning goalie on the Rep hockey team in Erin, Ontario where we lived. He often yelled into the crowd “Hi Mom!” which really thrilled me. But above all he was an avid

snowboarder and landed many tricks. His many friends proclaimed he was unbeatable at disc golfing. He also loved kick boxing to get in shape.

Adam’s love of music started in his day care Christmas show when he played Billy Ray Cyrus and grabbed the mic at the end of the performance of “Achy Breaky Heart” and said: “You all listening?” It progressed to high school when he and four of his friends formed a band called the ‘Sasquatches’ and crafted songs like “Cash Flow” (or lack of it!). Later on in his twenties in the music scene in Guelph, Adam’s hip hop Group “Skeleton Crew” which morphed into “Phreaks of Technique” rapidly gained popularity.

Adam loved to cook which didn’t come from me but landed him “Chief Wing” cook at McCabe’s Restaurant in Guelph and the hearts and stomachs of many of his friends.

Following the big ice storm in the winter of 2013, a good friend of Adam’s convinced him to apply for a ground crew job at a tree service company in Campbellville to clean up all the broken tree damage. His interest in everything to do with tree care grew over the following years and Adam applied to

Humber College’s Arborist Apprenticeship Program in January 2017. His boss was really impressed with his progress in completing Level I of the program and encouraged Adam to take his International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certification which he successfully completed, becoming a Certified Arborist.

If that wasn’t enough, Adam got his DZ Operators license that same summer and was ready to drive the company bucket trucks. This led to his boss promoting him to crew leader and things kept progressing so much that Adam urged his boss to allow him to take the Level II Arborist Apprenticeship Program in January 2018. He told me that Humber College had the best climbing school. Adam graduated with Honours in March 2018 and out of a class of 100 he was the only Certified Arborist. Adam wasn’t finished there. He successfully completed a one-week hydro safety course with above average marks, exceeding the expectations of the instructor. His boss said he was the future of his company.

At 28 years old (May 3, 2018), Adam was finally reaping the rewards of his hard work.

He was about to move into a nice big house in Guelph with his good buddies and to celebrate his birthday with a close gal friend. Tragically that was not to be. On Friday, May 4th 2018, Adam went to work clearing trees in Milton along the hydro lines. A big tree fell across the road, blocking the path of a school bus with a young child aboard. According to the bus driver, Adam boarded the bus and comforted the child, saying he would get the tree out of the road. He and his co-worker cut the tree up and removed the limbs so the school bus could get by. They were just finishing up clearing the debris when a sudden huge gust of wind (110 km/h) snapped off a large tree which fell on Adam and his co-worker. Adam was killed instantly and his co-worker (Zach) died later on in hospital.

A memorial site was erected for the two young arborists that night and the family of the young child placed a sign on a log, which thanked them for their heroic efforts. Because of Adam and Zach, their child made it home safely that day. The only solace was that Adam died doing a job he loved and helped a child get home.

The huge love and tributes he has received from family and so many of his close friends are testimony to Adam's positivity and infectious personality. In the words of one of Adam's roommates and fellow hip hop artists when he heard of Adam's passing: "This isn't fair. No one deserves to lose a ray of sunshine like this. This ray of sunshine doesn't deserve to be lost. I've lost family before but never someone I was this close to, and I can't describe how terrible it feels. You were always the nicest person in the room, you were always the funniest person in the room, and you oozed swag with every bar you wrote. I love you Adam Sura. I miss you more than I can even fathom already. None of us will ever be the same without you in our lives. No one will ever be able to replace you or what you've done for everyone you've ever met. You were the realest. I'll never forget you."

Wherever Adam went, he spread laughter and fun. He was always thoughtful of others' feelings, making sure they were included. His legacy is summed up in the words of one of his schoolmates: "Adam Sura is so deeply engrained within me. Whether it's talking about movies or music or just something hilarious that's happened to us recently. It's so hard to live and not be reminded of him all the time. But while that makes me sad, being reminded of him makes me feel so very

happy because I know that he'll be with me forever. Thanks for talking to me the first day in grade nine; my life changed forever. Love you buddy."

Adam loved his family and drove long distances to be at family gatherings. He would arrive with arms wide open and make all occasions truly memorable. His was a life well lived. A fellow arborist posted a video on Facebook of Adam sitting at his desk at Humber College saying, "Demand the best, from yourself." He certainly gave life his best effort. I couldn't be more proud of him and am grateful to have been his Mum.

“ Adam would be so happy to help out students struggling with the costs of their tuition and required equipment so that they could achieve the same success as he did.

Here are some words from one of Adam's hip hop songs that are like his mantras: "Forget what you can't do, just focus on things that you can..." You can lend a hand to yourself and turn a two to a ten!"

Adam had used his company's bucket truck to install Christmas tree lights for one of his friends, Cindy. Cindy kindly set up a fundraising campaign which raised \$12,000 towards annual memorial scholarships in Adam's memory. Adam's dad, stepmom and I decided to award the funds to students attending Humber College's Arborist Apprenticeship Program because we know that Adam would be so happy to help out students struggling with the costs of their tuition and required equipment so that they could achieve the same success as he did.

Extreme weather events like the huge windstorm on May 4th, 2018 which

took the lives of Adam and his co-worker, as well as a construction worker in the Greater Toronto Area, are happening with alarming frequency due to climate change. Adam was very conscientious about following safety protocols on his job and never taking shortcuts. The Ontario Ministry of Labour did not find any fault with Adam's employer because there was no safety procedure that could have avoided his and his co-worker's deaths. According to Catastrophe Indices and Quantification Inc., insured damages from this windstorm, which affected Ontario and parts of Quebec, topped \$410 million – with \$380 million of this damage in Ontario alone. And that figure doesn't cover the costs to governments and taxpayers. For Ontario, this was the most costly insured event since the 2013 Toronto floods, which caused almost \$1 billion in damages. The greatest loss in this terrible windstorm was the loss of three precious lives, including my son Adam, who had worked so hard to achieve his life goals but didn't get to realize the success he so deserved.

I am so grateful to Threads of Life over the past year and a half. My Volunteer Family Guide, Joanne has been a tremendous support to me in so many ways. I know that she understands what I'm feeling and going through because she lost her son in a workplace tragedy too. Last year I was fortunate to attend the Family Forum and I came away so uplifted and united with other parents in my situation. I also really look forward to receiving the Threads of Life newsletters.



Adam with his mom