



The Halftime of my life

A column by Mayor Dave Bartholomay printed in the Quad Community Press Newspaper on May 1, 2012

I loved the Clint Eastwood 'It's Halftime in America' commercial during the Super Bowl, with Clint saying: "I've seen a lot of tough eras, a lot of downturns in my life. And times when we didn't understand each other. It seems like we've lost our heart at times. When the fog of division, discord, and blame made it hard to see what lies ahead. But after those trials, we all rallied around what was right, and acted as one. Because that's what we do. We find a way through tough times, and if we can't find a way, then we'll make one".

Clint is the same age as my mother. And my personal halftime finds me caring for my aging parents while at the same time helping my teenage son become a man. Last weekend I helped Mom and Dad move into a beautiful assisted living facility in Fargo, while at the same time I was bursting with pride and joy at the news that my son Kyle was one of two students chosen to represent the Centennial Area and Legion Post 566 at Boy's State this summer. Like a lot of people in America, I'm working hard to be the best son I can be while also trying to be the best father I can be. Two roles that give meaning to my life, but also two jobs where I still have a lot to learn with a clock that is too quickly running out of time.

Halftime gives each of us an opportunity to consider where we are at, and what we want to accomplish in the 'second half' of our life. Bob Buford, author of 'Halftime: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance' writes about spending the first half of our life 'getting and gaining, earning and learning' with the second half becoming a quest for significance. When we leave this world at the end of our life, how have we each made it a better place? It's like the bookmark on my nightstand says: 'One hundred years from now it will not matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much was in my bank account or what my clothes looked like. But the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child.'

Today I used a few hours of vacation and left work early to cook burgers at the 'Mentor Party' after school for kids from Golden Lake Elementary. Kids and their caring high school mentors were enjoying beautiful Golden Lake Park, playing catch and Frisbee and kickball, and playing on the playground equipment. The kids were surrounded by older students and adults who love and support them, and make them feel special. A day like that is wonderful, and warms your heart.

One day like today trumps a nasty legislative session focused on divisive social issues instead of building a better community. More than ever we are in danger of losing what makes Minnesota special in what looks like a race to mediocrity. We seem to all be targets of politicians who think they can 'win' in that fog of division, discord, and blame. Instead, let's focus on what unites us: providing a world-class education that will generate good paying jobs, moving towards a fair and just society for all, and caring for and lifting up those in need. Let's reward those who work together on fair and reasonable solutions, rather than those who try to scare us.

Because the second half is about to start – are you ready?