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Good afternoon, everyone.

I’m here as Jay’s friend — best friends since our first-year residence at UBC — adventure buddy and co-conspirator in kindness.
And like you, I’m still trying to square the impossible math of a room this full of love with the quiet where his laugh should be.

Jason Robert Patel — Jay — was born on August 3, 1987, in Calgary.
He left us on November 12, 2025, at just 38.
He was Meera and Raj’s beloved son, Anika’s brother, Emily Chen’s partner, and Uncle Extraordinaire to Maya.
To all of you: thank you for sharing him with us.
We are better because you raised, loved, and believed in him.

We met moving boxes into Totem Park, both pretending we knew where we were going.
He flashed that grin — the one that made you feel inside the circle even if you’d just arrived — and said, “Let’s go find the best coffee on campus.”
He kept doing that for eighteen years: opening doors, pulling people in, making life feel bigger.

Jay built a career in tech product management not because he loved gadgets, but because he loved people.
He had this gift for asking the one honest question that cut through the noise: “What problem are we really solving for someone?”
Then he’d listen — actually listen — and turn answers into something useful.
He mentored newcomers like it was a second job, walking them through first interviews, first rejections, first “you got it” calls, always reminding them that potential is a team sport.

Outside work, he was a tireless voice for safer cycling in Vancouver.
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If you ever joined his rides on the North Shore, you know he could float up a climb and still talk city policy between breaths.
He showed up at community meetings, volunteered at hackathons, and somehow convinced grumpy strangers that better bike lanes were an act of everyday kindness.

He loved mountain biking, the Canucks, third-wave coffee, and chasing the golden hour with his camera.
He'd stop mid-ride because the light on the water demanded it.
And every time he brewed coffee, he treated it like a small ceremony — an insistence that ordinary moments deserved our full attention.

My favourite memory?
The spur-of-the-moment road trip to Tofino because we decided, with zero planning, that we were going to learn to surf.
We were terrible.
We swallowed half the Pacific.
But Jay cheered the loudest when a stranger stood up on a wave.
He made the beach feel like a team effort — which, with him, everything was.

What defined Jay wasn't just generosity, curiosity, or adventure — though he had each in spades.
It was his instinct to include.
He'd notice the one person on the edge of the room, cross whatever distance there was, and bridge it with that grin.
Inclusivity, mentorship, perseverance, and leaving things better than he found them weren't slogans for him; they were habits.

We will miss his spontaneous plans that turned Tuesdays into memories.
We will miss his bear hugs you could lean a whole life on.
We will miss the contagious optimism that powered every room he entered.

But celebration means we also carry his momentum forward.

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If you've ever thought about learning something new, helping someone younger in their field, writing that email about a safer street — do it.
If you wonder what Jay would say, it's probably, "I'm in. Want company?"

And there is this:
A UBC scholarship in Jay's name will support first-generation tech students.
It's perfect.
It means a new student will hear "you belong here," and mean it.
Jay's belief in people will keep getting the last word.

Meera, Raj, Anika, Emily, and Maya — may you feel the echo of his bear hug in the arms around you today.
May the stories we share be a map through the hard days, and may the light he chased at golden hour remind us that beauty still shows up, exactly when we need it.

Thank you, Jay, for making room for all of us.
We'll take it from here — together.

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