



St. Joseph Alumnus

## Josh Gorges



NHL Defenseman, Buffalo Sabres

Reflecting on his time as a student at St. Joe's and an aspiring young hockey player in Kelowna, National Hockey League standout Josh Gorges recalls lessons of leadership and selflessness: "You look at the things that got you where you are today, it was because of the people before us who stepped up and helped out". Josh added that "in school and in hockey, people didn't have to but they chose to be leaders ... to help ... I couldn't be grateful enough." These leadership values were echoed in Josh's large family – many of whom also attended St. Joseph's: "My grandfather taught that you couldn't just sit on the sidelines and say you were part of the community. You have a responsibility to give back."

Moving into the tough arena of professional hockey, Josh rarely sat on any sidelines. Captain of 2004's Memorial Cup champion Kelowna Rockets of the WHL, Josh received Most Sportsmanlike Player and First Team All Star honours for his play. Josh also earned silver with Team Canada at the World Junior Tournament before moving onto his impressive NHL career. Josh is widely considered one of the NHL's most reliable defenders and a perennially a top shot blocker – quite a testament considering the unprecedented current era of lightning fast hard slap shots!

Josh's influence from St. Joe's appears not only reflected in his "heart and soul" style of play but also in the reputation he earned along his path. Famed Hockey Night in Canada commentator Don Cherry summed things nicely by declaring "Look up the word 'leader' in the dictionary, and you'll find Gorge's picture". After their Memorial Cup win, Kelowna Rockets President Bruce Hamilton said "we weren't the best team ... but it was guys like Josh who made everybody believe they could win ... you can't help but admire that determination." Hamilton recently added that "Josh has never forgotten where he came from. He is exactly what we want all of our players to be: Family First ... Team Second. Josh epitomizes these attributes to the fullest". Of note, Josh was not drafted into either the WHL or the NHL but instead earned his way onto squads with opportunity and hard work – clearly backed by a strong spirit. Like the leaders he acknowledged of long ago, Josh is known for sharing this spirit with younger teammates trying to find their own place in professional hockey. When in Kelowna during the off season, Josh regularly attends the Rockets' rookie camp ... patiently answering questions from the aspiring newcomers.

Friends from his school days mentioned the St. Joseph Project and Josh admires the idea of "bringing new excitement to a place of knowledge". A new father himself, Josh offered "if you're doing something worthwhile to help, it is for kids" and sees the Masterpiece Campaign as an "opportunity to be something bigger than yourself". In a manner supported by the example he has set, Josh describes this as a time to "help not just one person but a whole community of people grow and be the leaders of our community for years to come."

Not everyone needs to become an NHL star to be a Masterpiece. Perhaps, however, Josh's time at St. Joseph's, alongside the lessons his family nourished, reminded him to seek the Masterpiece that lies within all of us; to lead, to share and to stay far, far away from those sidelines.