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E-Haven Email (from griefHaven)

Where Hope Resides

E-HAVEN EMAIL April 2007

What Can We Do? We Have to Do Something.



Last week, I was driving on a crowded Los Angeles freeway listening to the radio. I began to hear about a shooting at a university. As I listened, I found myself taking short, fast breaths, and with my heart racing and gripping the steering wheel tightly, my entire body tensed up as I heard more. The question I tell myself I will not ask any longer, because there is no answer, came back, “Why? WHY?”

My immediate reaction, then, was this feeling of urgency that I had to do something to help. What could I do? I wasn't sure. We have so many resources of love and caring at *griefHaven* that can help parents, but these parents—new, raw, and shocked in their grief—weren't ready for those resources.

Throughout the day I couldn't stop thinking about the parents in their shock, disbelief, horror, and chaos, and how they would all be wondering what to do next. I realized that I did indeed know just how those parents were feeling right in this moment. I could bring those feelings back inside of me within a split second just thinking about that first minute, day, week, month after Erika died. In fact, all of us know how those parents feel right now. We all want to do something to help them, even if it's just to assure them that we DO, in fact, understand the journey they have been forced to embark upon—a lifelong journey of rebuilding their lives without their children. And, of course, even the older faculty members who were killed have parents who are now grieving. We want them to know that we are here and that we “get it,” that they are not alone, that we care so deeply, and that we will be there for them in whatever way we can.

So, what can you do? How can you help? Because you are a part of our foundation, rest assured that you have already begun to help. Today the foundation, on your behalf, sent a proposal to President Betsey Flanagan and Vice President Thomas Corvin of the Outreach and Community Programs at Virginia Tech University with these helpful suggestions:

1. Pass out a *griefHaven* brochure to every parent and family member who has lost a child, letting them know that, when they are ready, *griefHaven.org* is a place where they can go for help, hope, and support.
2. Within one month, the foundation will donate a grief pin and a *Portraits of Hope* DVD to every

family in honor of their beloved children. And we will let them know that we are all here for them whenever they need us.

3. Should they so desire, with our best two therapists who specialize in the death of a child, I will travel to Virginia to speak to and counsel with the parents and family members.

What can you do? You can do whatever you feel in your heart, and that will be different for each of us. But what we can do as a group, as a foundation—that has already begun! Just know that *griefHaven* is doing something on your behalf and in memory of your beloved children. As our foundation grows, we become more and more of a force of love, support and hope for everyone in need.

With big hugs,
Erika's Mom

Susan

Spring Newsletter: We are currently putting together our Spring *griefHaven Newsletter*. Be watching for it sometime around the first part of June. If you need to update your mailing information, please go to the following address to do so (copy and paste in your address bar):

www.griefhaven.org/mailling-list.html



Michael speaking to high school students.

**IN LOVING MEMORY
MICHAEL KARLIN
1946—2007**

We dedicate this E-Haven to our beloved friend, father, husband, uncle, and brother—Michael Karlin. In just the short period of time since his son,

Brett Karlin, died, Michael managed to take his pain and passion and create a valuable website, *Brakes for Brett*, write regularly with compassion to many on the *griefHaven* message board, create a seat for himself on the *Allstate Insurance Company Safety Driving Board*, sit as a valuable member on *The Erika Whitmore Godwin Foundation Advisory Board*, and conduct regular speaking engagements, to warn teens and their parents about the dangers of reckless driving. Michael died suddenly of a heart condition last month.

We love and miss you, dear friend. We know that, if anyone can, you can and will continue your mission from another time and place.

Until next time, we send our love.

From all of us, we remain dedicated to you
and your journey . . .

James Putney
Anne Roberts *Steve An Mui*

Judith H *Sandy Godwin*

Wayne Keenan

D. Joyce Jester *Denny Johnson*

URJ Klaus *Marc Klaus*

Wendell Whitmore *Jennifer Woolf*
Luke Woolf

Paul Caruth *John Caruth*

Erika's Mom, Susan

Jill Goodman