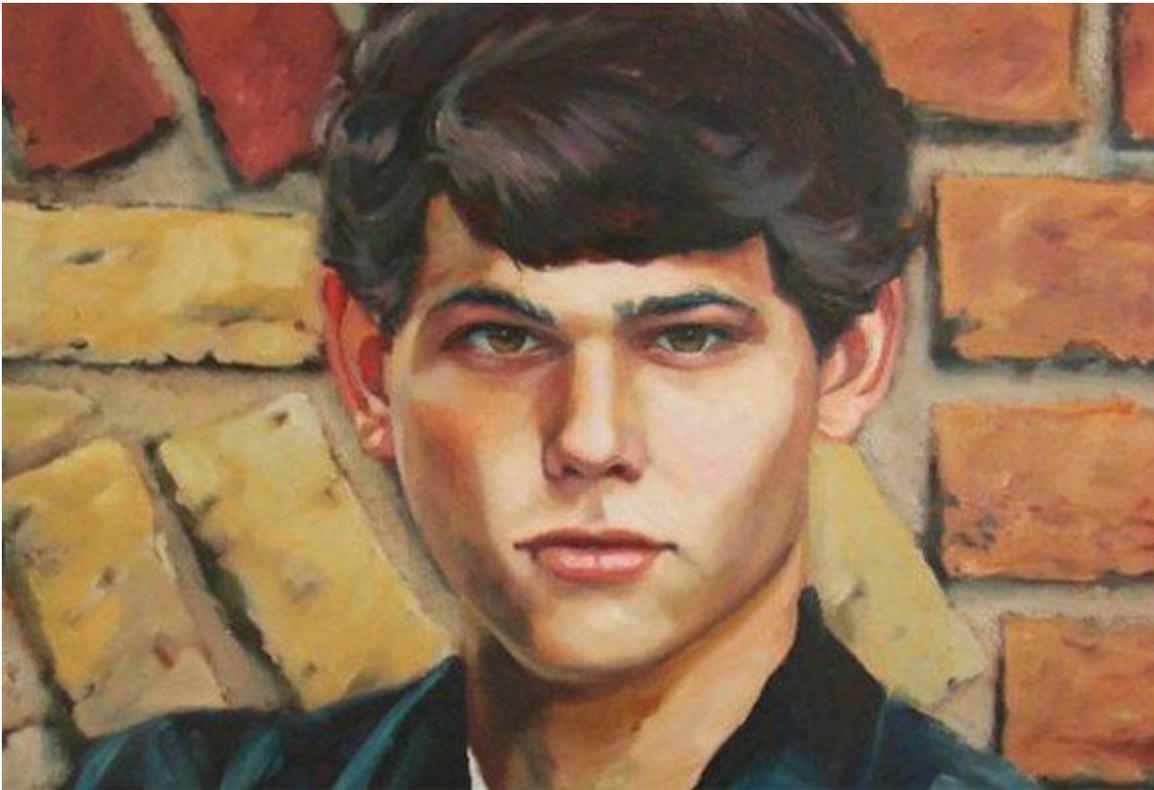


MOST HOPEFUL

above all, I will choose to be most hopeful

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A LITTLE HELP FROM HIS FRIENDS | GUEST POST BY RAYNA BOMAR



This is the first guest post here on mosthopeful.com, and I couldn't be more convinced of its appropriateness. Hugh and Rayna Bomar have become friends of mine these last few years, and their ongoing journey of remembering their son Sam has had an impact in my own life. I hope you glean from Rayna's words about what has helped and what has not helped as she has been on her own very personal journey with grief.

In August 2009, as my son Sam started his senior year of high school, I happened upon an essay by a woman named Mimi Swartz entitled "Empty Nest: In a Week He'll Be Gone – And I Can't Stand It." Her son, also named Sam, was leaving for college a year before my Sam would leave, and I read her words to prepare for what, I thought, I would be experiencing the following August. And, the following August, I did share some of the life changes described by Swartz – dinner for three became dinner for two, my schedule no longer

revolved around the school calendar, and the “mundane rituals of child rearing,” just as Swartz had predicted, were gone. But my role as a mother changed for a reason not anticipated. My Sam didn’t leave for college. Instead, he died on May 4, 2010, ten days before graduation.

There are many things that I could say about the past almost 23 months, but what I would like to do now is share some of the ways that others have helped us get through those months – and a few things that have hindered us.

My husband Hugh and I quickly realized that all grief is personal. What you have experienced losing a loved one, even a child, is not the same as what I have experienced losing Sam. My experience is not the same as Hugh’s experience. Therefore, things that I mention that have helped (or hindered) us may not help (or hinder) you. I am an expert only about my own grief.

We have been most touched by the kindnesses that have been shown by Sam’s friends. We are in awe of the young men and women who are so naturally compassionate and who have put aside their own grief to help us with ours. They have taken us out to eat on Mothers’ Day and Fathers’ Day, visited on holidays, designed t-shirts and bumper stickers in Sam’s memory, mowed our yard, shared stories about Sam (what we love the most), written letters and sent cards, laughed with us and cried with us, helped with chores, preserved Sam’s spot in the high school parking lot, invited us to their celebrations- I could go on and on. We are greeted with open arms and a hug. Sometimes we get more than one hug. They tell us that they love us. They share their lives with us and allow us to be part of their future. Their actions are drops of water on parched ground.

What they don’t do is, perhaps, more important. They don’t tell us that it’s almost two years since the accident and it’s time to “move on.” They don’t give us any advice. They understand that our world changed when Sam died and that we will never be the same. They don’t expect us to be the same because they will never be the same after losing their friend. They don’t try to “fix” us. They don’t make any demands on us. If we feel like a visit, that’s great. If we don’t, they understand, and they don’t take it personally.

Maybe because of their relatively young ages (late teens to early twenties) they don’t have any preconceived ideas about how we should act or feel. Therefore, they don’t think they know what’s best for us, and they don’t try to impose their own feelings on us or try to dictate what is appropriate behavior.

Instead of trying to make us be who they think we should be, they already know who we are. We are Sam’s parents, and we always will be. That’s good enough for them, and it’s good enough for us.

“Death ends a life, not a relationship.” Robert Benchley.

One of the upcoming ways you can join the Bomars in remembering Sam is by attending the 3rd annual Sam Bomar Night at the Jackson Generals. Half of each ticket pre-ordered with the promo code SamBomar goes to the Sam Bomar Scholarship Fund. [Click HERE to learn more, and to buy tickets for the event on June 23.](#)