

# From the Family of Kevin Williams, who was lost on September 11, 2001.

To Our Community,

Nothing in this world could ever prepare you to lose a child. The heartbreak is so intensely painful it seems impossible to survive. But so many of you are the reason we will.

Although September 11 and the loss of our son Kevin will be forever painful in our hearts, we will also carry in our hearts the kindness, support and love of so many of you.

We have heard so much these past weeks about heroes, but perhaps you didn't know about the ones living right next door to you.

- The ones that waited outside our door before dawn because they knew when daybreak arrived without word from Kevin, we would need them.

- The ones that put aside their own lives to search with us day after day.

- Those that went far out of their way to make arrangements that allowed us to get into the city to search.

- The people who spent hours and days with us so we would never be alone.

- Those of you who sent food and delivered home cooked meals encouraging us to eat.

- The local businesses that supplied us with whatever we needed, while refusing to accept any payment.

- The hundreds of people who called even though they "had no words," yet offered help and prayers.

- The thousand plus people who waited up to 2 hours at the Memorial just to give us a hug and extend their sympathy.

- The hundreds of people attending the church service knowing that their support would give us courage to get through.

- The students, some passing through our classrooms over 20 years ago, whose faces at the service gave us strength and their words, encouragement.

- Those that made sure our lawn was always mowed and our dog taken care of.

- Those that decorated our front porch with Chrysanthemums and pumpkins.

Each of you have shared our sorrow, given us strength and reminded us we are not alone. Every kindness no matter how small, helps us toward healing.

A famous person once said, "Hero is a term awarded to people who make us feel better for having seen or touched them." You are all our heroes.

We will be forever grateful for everything this community has been to us and done for us throughout this tragedy. We thank you for helping us survive. Without you there, then and now, we could not face each new day.

Finally we thank God for lending us 3 special gifts, Kevin, Kelly and Jamie. We thank Him for giving us the wisdom on how to love them. He has guided us to know when to hold them, when to encourage them, how to always be there when they needed us and to never postpone a family vacation. Because of His guidance we know that the 24 years we spent with Kevin were filled with laughter, love and adventure. We thank God for every moment of those years. He blessed us and trusted us with His unique and special gift, Kevin.

If you happen to meet us in the community or stop by to visit, it is OK to smile and please encourage us to do the same. As Jamie said in Kevin's eulogy, "be thankful for every breeze

that strikes your face, be thankful for every sun that sets before you, love your family and love your Friends. And most of all love life." You will be the ones to help us learn to regain that love of life.

Thank you once again for your compassion, love and just being who you are. Please continue to keep our family in your prayers. *From the Family of Kevin Williams*

## 37 Seconds

*A note that will take just 37 seconds to read*

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window.

The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation.

Every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

Days and weeks passed. One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window.

The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside.

He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall. The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

*Epilogue:* There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, and happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you

have that money can't buy. Today is a gift, that's why it is called the "present."

*From the e-mailbag from jennifer.moobeichel@pepsi.com*