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# Dealing With a

## Bond of Brothers Broken by Foggy Morning

Jessalyn Holdcraft  
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"They were driving to school, and it was foggy. They were turning to go into school when a semi hit them," Senior Cody Wendelin said, explaining the accident that killed his two older brothers. Kirk, 17, and Brady, 13, died October 4 and 3 respectively, in 2002.

"When I was ten in fifth grade, I was at school recess, just playing and my uncle Dave, who I never see except for holidays, came. He got me out of recess, and my teacher was crying. I didn't know what was going on. Then we were going, driving, and he told me that Kirk and Brady were in an accident. I was just really shocked; I didn't know what to think."

It has been seven years since the accident, but the family always remembers the two brothers.

"In our family, sometimes when something bad happens or we do something during Christmas, we talk about the memories and what we had done with them."

The little moments help Cody remember his brothers every day.

"As I go through day by day stuff that happens with my friends, like just joking around, that stuff reminds me of them, or my PAL likes Legos a lot, and I remember building Legos with Kirk and Brady."

Time can't heal everything, but it can make remembering easier.

"I'm now getting to the point if I remember a story about them, I can tell it without think about it too much."

Cody learned two important lessons that Oc-



Kirk, 14, Brady, 10, Cody, 7, and Elizabeth, 4, Wendelin enjoy an afternoon out in South Dakota. Three years later, Kirk and Brady died in a car accident in 2002.

tober day.

First, "if you're having a bad day and feel like taking it out on your mom or sister, remember not to because that could be the last time you see them."

Second, "I think it made me value life more

instead of just going through life, it made me realize there's not always a next time, so make the most of what you can right now."

## After Loss of Brother, 20 Becomes Loneliest Number



Brothers Nathan and Aaron Paulsen proudly show off their number 20 football jersey that they have both wore while participating in sports. In August of 2008 Nathan passed away due to a car accident on Highway 33.

Amanda Reetz  
Photo Editor

For Aaron Paulsen, losing his brother, Nathan, was one of the hardest things to deal with in his life.

"The hardest part is not being able to talk to him about different things and not being able to do things with him," Paulsen said.

Remembering all the fun memories with his brother is the one thing he likes to look back and smile about.

"The last memory that I had with my brother was when we both went to Lincoln together and drove around for a while," Paulsen said.

With the loss of a family member, the family has changed their routines a bit.

"We have changed our routines by taking counseling classes and just by remembering all the good memories with him," Paulsen said.

Sports are a big thing in the Paulsen family, even when Aaron was younger he always wanted to wear his brother's jersey, number 20.

"Last year was kind of the hardest for me just knowing that he wasn't going to be there to watch me," Paulsen said.

Aaron always intended to wear his brother's jersey. "I have always wanted to wear his jersey since I was younger; it was just hard for me last year, but I love wearing number 20 just because it brings back good memories," Paulsen said.

Rooming right across from each other, Aaron has had some days where it's hard for him to walk by his brother's old room.

"Sometimes if I am thinking about him, I remember him, but I just try to forget about it and just go on with my day," Paulsen said.

The Paulsen's have taken some classes to mourn over the loss of Nathan.

"We went to a family counseling group that went over a family member's death and it seemed to help our family out," Aaron said.

# Sibling's Casualty

## Sisters Separated by City Park Cement

Jasmine Foster  
Design/ Layout Editor

Thinking the end of the year school picnic would be a time of enjoyment and epiphany, a tragedy was about to take place. On a day I thought would be a breath-taking last day of the sixth grade, my whole life was about to change in an instant. At Tuxedo Park, a celebration combining food, friends, water guns, and family was taking place.

It was time for the annual water fight.

My youngest sister Brooke, my mom, and I were sitting on the picnic tables eating our dinner. I had my water blaster stuck to my side, protecting it from all the devious kids.

Alexa, my second youngest sister, came up to me.

"Jasmine, can I please use your water gun?" She said. I grunted, rolled my eyes, and refused. Alexa frowned and walked away in disappointment.

The fight had just begun.

There were kids running at each yelling "watch out for me". I decided I was "too old" to participate, so I watched the action from the picnic tables with my mom.

During the fight, Alexa, Brooke, and a few of their friends decided to go into the nearby bathroom to fill up their water guns.

They were all inside, ready to get back to the fight, when a cinder-block wall started to collapse.

Alexa was behind this wall.

The other children tried to help her out as the wall crashed down, but she had slipped on the cement floor, knocking her unconscious.

The children came racing out of the bathroom screaming "The wall fell, Alexa is hurt". As soon as my mom and I heard her name, we ran to the scene while an adult called 911.

As we arrived at the hospital, praying the whole way there, we were forced to wait outside in the parking lot with my grandparents.

About an hour later, we were told to go inside because my parents wanted to speak with us. The nurse guided us to the "family consolation room" which was my worst nightmare.

Right then and there, I knew that my life was about to change forever.

"Girls, there have been some complications."

"They tired really hard to save her," my mom said. I knew my sister would now be gone forever. I knew that everything in my life had just come crashing down right before my eyes.

Knowing my sister is not going to be here for the rest of my life is a hard concept to grasp. Going to therapy helped the healing process.

Anyone who has had lost a sibling or family member should go to therapy or a psychologist for help.

Sometimes it is hard to talk about my sister passing, but having friends around that I trust to talk to is a great way to let feelings out and say how you feel.



Reporter Jasmine Foster (age five) poses for a picture with her little sister, Alexa Foster (age two), in 1997. Alexa passed away in an accident after a concrete block wall in a city park restroom collapsed on her.

## How to Help a Young Person Experiencing Grief

- Use terms "died/dead/death" rather than a phrase like "passed away" or "taken from us". Give an honest explanation for the person's death, avoid clichés or easy answers. Straightforward, gentle use of the words helps a person confront the reality of death.
- Explain and accept that everyone has different reactions to death at different times. The reaction might not hit until the funeral or weeks later.
- Reassure the young person that his or her grief feelings are normal. There is no "right" way to react to a loss. Give permission to cry, or let them know it's OK not to cry if the person does not typically act this way.
- Permit or encourage the young person to talk about the person who has died. At the moment of loss, but especially after the funeral, this is a vital part of the healing process. Often we want to protect the person from the pain of the memories, but experiencing the pain is the first step of acceptance and of healing.
- Do not try to minimize the loss or take the pain away. Phrases like, "Don't worry, it will be OK," "He had a good life," or "He is out of pain" are not helpful. Grief is painful. There must be pain before there can be acceptance and healing. It is very difficult to do but most helpful to acknowledge the person's pain and permit him or her to live with it without trying to take it away or make it better.
- Encourage the young person to talk about their feelings. Encourage communication first in the family, but also be aware of other support people such as clergy, trusted adult friends or trusted peers.
- Listen. Listen to your heart. Listening to the feelings of the young person is most important. Listen through silences. Just being there, showing you care by listening is more important than knowing what to say or ever saying anything at all.
- Help the young person make decisions in regards to attending the funeral. The funeral can be a way to say good-bye. Often times it is better to attend and mourn with others, but abide by the young person's wish and express understanding if he or she chooses not to go.