

Earthly Angels

I spend my days holding my kids close to me as tight as I can trying to make them feel as secure as possible, trying to pour all of my love into them and also trying to pour all of the love I have for their mother into them so that they can feel her presence through me. I am allowed to do so because of the generosity and grace of my employer Mike Perrin of Cobb County Toyota. In a business that is stereotyped as being cut-throat and riddled with greed mongers, there is at least one compassionate and caring man who stepped up and gave of himself so that another father and husband could provide desperately needed emotional and nurturing support to his children without having to temporarily worry about financial support. He did so without requiring anything in return and he did so out of the kindness of his own heart. He understood even better than I was able to during my time of extreme pain and despair that my children would desperately need my presence in our now very emotionally barren home. Even with my presence here in my children's lives and even with me embracing them daily and ensuring them how much mommy and daddy loves them, Connor still daily whimpers to me how much he misses loving on his mommy. He knows that mommy is in Heaven and is always with him in his heart and is always watching him, but he gets frustrated that he cannot see her or hear her talking back to him. I know without a doubt that Kim comes to them in their dreams to comfort them because even after two months, after not having called out for her mommy in weeks, Chloe will wake up from a nap and call out for her mommy. I ask Chloe on these occasions if she had a dream about mommy and if she had been talking to her, and she always says "yes." I also ask her sometimes when she wakes, but has not called out for her, if her mommy had come to her in a dream and she says "no." She very well knows the difference. Nathan is older and a little better equipped to handle grief and a loss of this magnitude, so he on the surface seems to be doing alright, but all it takes is a short conversation about something his "Emmy" used to do for him and tears always swell up in his eyes. He loves to talk about her though because it keeps her close to his heart. So, with me even being here now when they each get home and being here each morning when they leave to go to school, it still does not fill the boundless void that now exists in their lives and hearts. God only knows how much damage will result and ripple effect through the years to come because they will not have the daily physical presence of their mommy here with them who had oceans full of love to yet share with them.

There are other angels here on earth that have stepped up and showed their caring and compassionate spirits during my family's time of need. Navella Barnes and Ryan Carter of BB&T along with Dan Lightner of BMW United of Roswell, and Chip Boyd of Ed Voyles Chrysler took an idea started by friends and family of mine and Kim's, and organized a golf tournament at the Bentwater Golf Club to raise money for our children's future educational needs. Mike Chapman and Ken and Kris Brown thought that it would be a fitting tribute to Kim that they start an educational fund for the children because that is why we had decided for Kim to run the business. The extra money from the business was to be invested to provide needed educational money for the kids. All of our friends,

neighbors, and other people associated with these institutions devoted weeks of their time to an event that was a tribute to the love and devotion of one mommy. Anyone who has a family was touched by what happened to Kim. In addition to her children's and husband's catastrophic loss, her sister Rhonda, her brother Ryan, her mother Connie, her father Ron, and her brother-in-law Scott have all struggled daily with the huge holes now left in their lives with the absence of their beloved daughter and sister. Brianna and Christian, Kimberly's niece and nephew, are also struggling heavily with the absence of their most loved aunt. People who know us and scores of people who did not know us before this tragedy have sent condolences and offered to help in anyway possible. Our entire neighborhood at Bentwater has taken it upon itself to make sure that my entire family has plenty to eat for the rest of the year. Business after business has donated their goods and time to events like the golf tournament. Publix not only donated to the golf tournament, but they donated food to Kim's wake and funeral. Sabrina McNeese donated her talent and time in making this website. A publicist, Toren Anderson, has donated and continues to donate her time and energy into making sure that the flaws in our system that contributed to Kim's death are exposed and not forgotten so that we can get changes made that will protect other wives and mothers.

The list goes on and on of the people who have been affected by our family's tragedy and who have volunteered to help. This is a tragic story about the unrecoverable loss of one of the most precious and sweetest souls who ever took steps on this earth, but it is also a story about the rise of the human spirit, about the good in people. Pure evil took my baby, but God and his angels here have busied themselves for damage control and to make sure that good comes from such a horrific tragedy. When our state government convenes and institutes the changes that are needed in our penal, alert, and banking systems, wrongs will be righted and my baby's life and death will be her legacy to all of the wives and mothers who were saved because of the inspiration she gave us in her life. She inspired us as a wife, mother, daughter, sister and dear friend to such an extent that when this horrific thing happened to her, we has her family, her friends, and community will not rest until our efforts have justifiably met the level of the legacy of love that she has left with us.