



One Suicide's Survivors

*Excerpted from the story of Kevin Graham,
son of General Mark and Carol Graham*

When Kevin wasn't at the gym, he lay on his bed or played video games. He had a hard time sleeping.

"I thought Kevin was being lazy," Melanie says. "He said he didn't know his purpose in life."

One night, sitting on the edge of Melanie's bed, Kevin told her she had so much potential she could do anything. "He said it like three times," Melanie says, "Mr. Perfect. He had everything going for him. And he's telling me that."

The next morning, Jeff called to see whether Kevin had left to meet him for golf. With Jeff still on the phone, Melanie checked. Kevin wouldn't wake up. "I said, 'Kevin, stop it. It's not funny,'" Melanie says.

In that horrifying moment, she realized Kevin had taken his life. Melanie screamed into the phone. "Kevin's dead!"

Jeff yelled, "Get out! Get help!"

In Korea, the phone rang. General Graham answered. "No! No! No!" he screamed.

Carol rolled out of bed and crawled to her bible. "I'd prayed so hard for Kevin," she says. "I'd dealt with it spiritually. We'd missed the medical part."

If Kevin's heart didn't work, the Grahams would have gotten the best doctor. But Kevin had said his brain didn't work.

"I can't explain why I didn't do a better job when I had the chance," Carol says.

Melanie says Kevin must have thought suicide was his only way to find peace. "We'd have done anything in the world for him."

Consider This

Jeanne Blake: Hopelessness is a common symptom of depression. Melanie says Kevin must have thought he could only find peace in dying.

Dr. Rauch: Depression can feel like carrying an overwhelmingly heavy weight or a sense of complete emptiness or numbness. In this state, it's hard for someone to believe that things will get better. In reality, depression is a treatable illness.