



Tunnel to Towers Foundation
T2T.ORG

Reflections

It Starts with Me!

You have always been so bubbly and confident. You never were affected by all the cruel statements your so-called “friends” would say about you. You just went on with your life living it to the best of your ability. Try to hold onto this as long as you can because the summer before high school, your life would be changed in a blink of an eye.

Your father, as you may know, helped this country out in one of the most traumatic days of US history, 9/11. He made families have peace with the fact that their loved one was lost. He spent months in that toxic environment. You were not alive during this time. Although, when you and your twin, Cheyenne were born, he had already been sick. Every day you saw him getting sicker and sicker.

When you were entering your teenage years, it started feeling like a routine. It felt like every day your parents were fighting about if he needed to be placed into a hospital. Your father was so stubborn. It isn't that your parents didn't love each other, your mother just felt the anxiety that she not only had to take care of her children but also her husband because he did not want to take care of himself. Day after day your dad gets diagnosed with a new sickness. First it was cancer, then kidney failure, then his body would swell up because of the lack of oxygen in his body. You always felt the worst coming, but you never really know when.

On July 8th, 2021, you wake up at 7 in the morning hearing a bunch of ruckus coming from outside your room, you see paramedics sprinting towards your fathers room. It was so normal, but in your gut, this time feels different. You go back to your room trying not to think much of it. Until, in the distance you hear your mother in total disbelief. It was then you knew. The Person you looked up to, was gone. Your heart dropped to the floor. You did not know how to react. In your head, you thought, Should I be scared? What is my life going to be like now? It started to rain, it still didn't feel real, it will never feel real.

The phone started to ring, people were being overwhelming in their apologies, but you didn't want to hear it. The paramedics left after the investigation; it became quiet. It felt like we were frozen in time. You then realized; your brothers were still asleep. You knew you had to step up and tell them what just happened. You wake them up with your mother and your grandparents rushed to your



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house to say one final goodbye. All together, we sat in silence. Not knowing what was going to happen next. You started to blame yourself and question what you did wrong. You kept saying “*he was fine yesterday.*” But again, nothing prepares you for the worst. But now, even though you are still grieving, you try to remember the good memories and cover up the negative.

You remember how on that day before he passed, his last words to you weren’t emotional, and you are happy with that now because it showed you who he was right there in front of you. One day, you look through your voicemail box. You see that you have 3 voicemails from him that he sent you when he was in the hospital for weeks just a couple months before he passed. These voicemails used to make you depressed but now you are just delighted that you get to hear and remember his voice every time you listen to it. Just you wait, because the trauma is not yet complete.

Just after a month of your dad passing, not only did you lose him, but you also saw your twin’s spirit fading away. This killed you. You never wanted to tell anyone about it because everyone knows how sibling love is. But then, he started going into hospitals for days, sometimes weeks. Then you knew he was really struggling and wanted him to know that you’re here for him. But this time was slightly different. He wasn’t poisoned in the physical way, but the mental. He suffered from a mental illness called anorexia. It started out lightly but as months went on, the more the mental illness consumed his brain. To this day, he still suffers from it. He has been gone for months. You miss him. But you know deep in your heart that you want him to recover. But from all of this, even though it has been a roller coaster, you would not be the same person you are now without all this happening to you. It shaped you. You have learned so many lessons from it all. You learned to not take things for granted, you must be the bigger person, don’t let people manipulate you and so much more. Some people just need to grow up before others.

But in the end, you are still the same bubbly person you were then but with a few new perspectives in life...

Sincerely,
Your older self

Kaelyn Campbell
Surviving Daughter of New York Department of Corrections Captain Joseph Campbell
Post-9/11 Family Home Program Recipient

Reflections and Rediscovery

"I'm so sorry for your loss." This is something that I have heard numerous times in the last 6 months. My life has completely changed during the last half a year. My husband, two young boys and I were all living in Arizona. This last spring, my husband, Alan, passed away unexpectedly at work. The many tears, crushed heart, and numerous life changes have seemed impossible to conquer. I have tried my best to stay strong for the boys and follow plans that Alan and I had to raise them. I'm hoping they grow up with good morals and beliefs like Alan showed me. He's been described by some as an angel that was on earth. He was SO kind to others and would have given someone the shirt off of his back if they needed one. After he passed, we relocated back to Minnesota, where I grew up. I have felt a lot of familiarity and comfort by being back near family and friends. The boys are even starting to get the hang of the chilly weather compared to Arizona temperatures. We'll see about that when the winter weather hits! It's really amazing to reflect on my life growing up in Minnesota, then remember my life with Alan in Arizona, and now see this new chapter unfold with the boys. It's crazy what life has in store for all of us. We think we "have a plan" when God really knows what that plan is. I'm learning to try to accept and understand that.



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My hope is to keep reflecting on all of the positive things that Luca, Leo, and I have been blessed with. The Tunnel to Towers Foundation has supported us immensely by providing us with a home in an amazing neighborhood. I've been able to reconnect with friends from my childhood and introduce our children who are now friends. Lastly, something I've tried recently is adding more self care to my agenda. With the chaos of two children under 4 years old, I usually am the last priority. I've tried adding massages, meeting friends for dinner, getting outside, dancing and laughing with the boys, and more. I really just need to remember that in the end, we are all going to the same place. I know that Alan is watching over us, as I've had several signs from him, and our time here on Earth goes quite fast. As the new year comes along, I want to say thank you to all of the foundation's donors because you have quite literally changed my life as a young widow.

Happy Holidays!

Take care,
Meg

Megan Aurigema
Surviving Spouse of Border Patrol Agent Alan Eugene Anthony Aurigema
Fallen First Responder Family Home Program Recipient

In Memoriam

After visiting the 9/11 monument in Boise, I was invited to write this article about the impact of the event across America and how it connects to our families' loss.

I think that the book *"The Little Chapel That Stood"* is a great way of explaining the tragedy of 9/11, and it is also a very child friendly book by A. B. Curtiss.

After my father CW3 Matthew Peltzer died, we came into contact with the Tunnel to Towers Foundation and went to New York City to visit Ground Zero. We found Stephen Siller's name on the monument and did the race in honor of Stephen Siller in 2021.

This year, we went back to the 9/11 memorial park in Boise and found Stephen's name on the monument. This organization has paid off our mortgage and also for countless other families, generously helping them to get one thing off their mind.

If you look in the black box to my right, you will see Stephen Siller's name.

Luthian Peltzer

Surviving Daughter of Idaho Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 3 Matthew Peltzer
Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient

