

A Night in September

September 29, 2002 seemed a day of wonder because my son Shane had been so sad. That evening when he left the driveway in his Jeep without mentioning where he was going, his sister Ashley and I became concerned. We were very close and always knew the whereabouts and watched out for each other. Not long after, our lives were changed forever. We started to hear sirens on the next street over, and shortly after we heard the thump, thump, thump of the Med-flight helicopter hovering overhead. My first thought was "Please don't let it be Shane". The phone began to ring and cars were everywhere in front of our house. Soon a sheriff pulled in our driveway. My daughter and I hung on to each other feeling faint and afraid we might be getting news about Shane being badly hurt.

Our worst fears came true and immediately turned into a nightmare. The officer said it first appeared to be a car accident but then realized it was what he believed to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound. My son Shane was hanging on and I was shocked and so afraid of losing the most precious little man of my life. As Med-flight faded away in the sky just starting to reach night time, the officer drove Ashley and me to the hospital. I kept telling him to please drive faster and praying out loud to please let my son be okay. I can't describe the pain I was feeling. I tried to be strong for my daughter, who counted on me to fix everything.



The next several hours were filled with numerous family and friends showing up in shock and disbelief. We prayed and prayed. I spent every moment I could with Shane in hopes he would respond and get better as I spoke to him and stroked his soft brown hair. The medical staff was preparing for a brain scan to check for any brain activity. A short time later we were told there was none. I begged them to repeat the test because I was not willing to accept losing my son. The thought of never hearing his voice or feeling that pat on my back when we hugged just did not seem real. Shane reached the point where he was not breathing on his own, as he lay there lifeless and tired. At this time I remembered a conversation he and I had about a year earlier when he came home from getting his driver's license renewed. He said he was an organ donor and asked what I thought about the idea. Before that I had

never given it a thought because you never think you're going to ever have to make that kind of a decision.

It turned out that Ashley was the strong one at the hospital and she was the first to notice that the Arora staff had arrived. From being in nursing school, she knew about ARORA from Scrub-Tech school when they had a guest speaker named Tom Thompson talk to her class. The conversation Shane and I had along with Ashley's knowledge about ARORA prepared us for that day. The day was such a blur as things moved in slow motion and voices echoed. We talked about ARORA among family members and agreed that organ donation would be the positive outcome from this tragedy. Without hesitation, we wanted to do this in Shane's honor. ARORA appeared to be silent Angels, being very compassionate and caring about our family's needs and even asking to see a picture of Shane that I was carrying to remind me of his smile.

I remember feeling comfort after finding out that a pastor found Shane and prayed until help arrived. The hardest thing was hearing Shane's strong heartbeat and walking away from him. When Walt from ARORA said they were getting ready to take him to OR, I had a peaceful vision of the other mothers so graciously waiting for that phone call and gathering their families to let them know their child would have a healthier and longer life because of Shane's gift. A 1 yr old, 5 yr old and a 12yr old, all boys, have a precious gift and are able to enjoy all the things Shane enjoyed such as baseball, basketball, skateboarding, camping, fishing, hunting, 4-wheeler riding, and racing dirt bikes. He loved animals and even rode a couple of bulls. He would bring home wild animals for pets such as squirrels, raccoons, snakes, and even a hornet's nest full of hornets. This got him in such trouble but we still laugh about it. I will never forget that laugh. He was so honest and humble and was always smiling in a crowd. He cherished his family and friends and they knew if they needed Shane for anything he would be there. I try not to think about Shane's death but to remember his life of laughter. I was so blessed to have him and will cherish his memories forever. I am so thankful we made the right decision to donate.

I am grateful to ARORA for making this time easier by offering support and holding events to honor Shane. They remind me of things I have to look forward to. I am so anxiously waiting to meet those three young men. Who knows, they may grow up to be doctors, firemen, a famous musician or writer, or a pastor of a church. Most likely they will be parents someday, which has been the most rewarding and sometimes the most heartbreaking roll in my life. Shane and Ashley are my life and he will never be forgotten. In addition, there are two other recipients. One is a lady from Florida and the other is a lady in central Arkansas who has Shane's heart. I can't wait to meet them. The moment I hear Shane's heart beat again will be one of the most precious moments of my life and hearing her say "thanks" will mean so much.

Even the ordinary things in life are not the same anymore. Simple things like the air and water and even the change of seasons seem to have lost part of their beauty. Deep down I know I have to make it the best it can be, but it is so difficult. I find comfort in making the decision to donate on Shane's behalf and this gives some form of inner peace. Having ARORA there for support has helped make my life the best it can be even though my life changed so dramatically on that night in September.

