

Will's Story

Will's troubles began with his mom's breast cancer. I remember when it became clear that she was going to die. The hardest part was when I had to tell Will that Mommy was not going to be leaving the hospice. He looked at me in disbelief, as if I had committed the most horrible crime and had betrayed him.

Ten months after his mom's death, Will shuffled his trim, athletic, 11-year-old frame into The Cove, hands stuffed in his pockets, head bent, his sad face hidden by his long, curly hair.

School folks had seen a different Will. An angry Will. A belligerent Will. A Will who pushed a teacher. In other words, a hurting Will who sometimes did hurtful things.

But Will was lucky. Instead of misinterpretation, instead of judgment, lots of love poured into Will's life. He and I had always enjoyed a special bond. School personnel, trained by The Cove over the past seven years, knew how to be there for Will (especially the teacher who had been pushed). And our Cove support group nights provided a safe place for Will and me to explore the depths of our grief.

While at The Cove, I wasn't able to put my finger on what it was doing for me. Now, looking back, I know that it was a learning experience. I know it showed Will that he wasn't alone in the world, as it showed me. That it was okay to talk freely about his mom and be sad if he wanted to. Remember her. Talk about her. Laugh at, and about, her. He didn't have to be ashamed or keep it inside.

For me, it was sitting and listening to other parents, bouncing ideas around. What worked. What didn't work. And all of it happening among great people. Friendly and kind people.

Now, two and a half years later, I've seen this kid break out of his shell. He wants to go to dances. He made a ton of friends. He really, really enjoys baseball. It shows in his school work, his grades. His attitude. Not to mention his behavior.

His teacher, the same one that Will had pushed and who had responded consistently with caring, recognized the change and created the "New Leaf Award" to honor the work he's done in turning his life around.



*Providing Hope and Healing
for Grieving Children*

For the children like Will and their families who experience the grief and heartache of coping with the death of a significant person in their lives, The Cove provides a safe haven of understanding, hope, and support.

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