In Loving Memory of Justin Carr, by Susan and Darrell Carr

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POSTS

"THE HANDS OF MY FATHER"… BY JUSTIN CARR

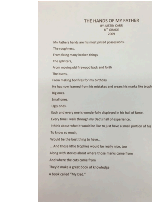
JUNE 19, 2016 · SUSAN TOLER-CARR · 52 COMMENTS

The Hands of My Father

As I said before, I can't make this stuff up!! Just a few weeks ago (due to water damage) I was forced to go through "stuff" that I really wanted to leave in place forever… But, in hindsight, I was glad I was pushed because I found yet another treasure that Justin left behind. It was beyond appropriate and perfect timing for this Father's Day.

I grabbed one of Justin's middle school backpacks that lay dormant in his closet. I never looked at his homework assignments. Pretty much he was self-supportive in ALL of the homework that he ever did—and he rarely asked for help. Well, let me take that back. I do remember one time when he was in 5th grade and he was up late putting the final touches on his project. We assured him that he should go to bed and that if he places the pictures in order for his poster:"Shaquille O'Neal for President" we would glue them down. To make sure that they stuck, Darrell and I came up with the "grand" ideal to lay heavy books over the documents. The next morning we learned we had made a major faux pas. The pressure from the books made the glue seep beyond the picture borders and ruin the paper and the overall layout. In other words it was indeed really a "hot mess"! Justin was mad and told us: "Please, never touch my stuff again!" So we did not.

In any event, as I was going through loose paper, when I came across an assignment that Justin had for 8th grade English- to write a poem. As I read through all of the drafts and the final document, once again the words from our young Renaissance man, took my breath away. It was a poignant poem about his Dad… "The Hands of My Father"



THE HANDS OF MY FATHER
BY JUSTIN CARR
8TH GRADE
2009

My Fathers hands are his most prized possessions.
The roughness,
From fixing many broken things
The splinters,
From moving old firewood back and forth
The burns,
From making bonfires for my birthday
He has now learned from his mistakes and wears his marks like trophies
Big ones.
Small ones.
Ugly ones.
Each and every one is wonderfully displayed in his hall of fame.
Every time I walk through my Dad's hall of experience,
I think about what it would be like to just have a small portion of his experience.
To know so much,
Would be the best thing to have…
… And those little trophies would be really nice, too
Along with stories about where those marks came from
And where the cuts came from
They'd make a great book of knowledge
A book called "My Dad."

THE HANDS OF MY FATHER

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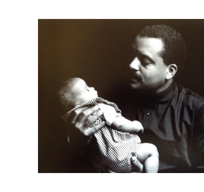


As a surprise, I put all of the drafts and the final copy of the poem in a nice frame for Darrell- to remind him often how much a great Dad that he was for Justin -and that he will always be.

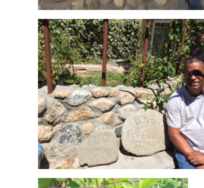
I don't know if any of you have suffered from a loss (of any kind) and felt like you wished you should have done things differently, spent more time, said more things etc. Darrell and I have talked often about unfinished business we had with Justin. However, I hope that this poem is now proof for Darrell on yet another Father's Day (sans Justin) that Justin loved him dearly, appreciated what he taught him and learned so much by his Father's good examples of how to be a gentleman, with integrity, strength, compassion and empathy for others. I appreciate you too Darrell.

From an early age Justin watched Darrell build and fix things and subsequently he knew how to paint, build and work with concrete too.

In 8th grade he made a ceramic tool kit piece of art for Darrell

Later in life, Justin helped his peers with construction activities in New Orleans to help construct a house of Habitat for Humanity

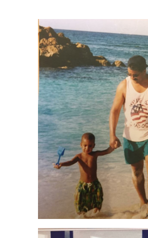
Darrell has many hobbies and can work with concrete, metals and woodwork. Justin could do the same. Darrell has a lot of work in progress projects around the house. He has started a garden for Justin, and laid each and every rock with "his hands" and he just recently completed an extension on the stairs in the yard… So much love.



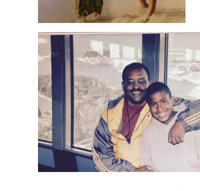
Butterfly flower in Darrell's Garden

Darrell, I can't imagine what your pain is without Justin, by your side. I do hope that you can look at this poem and know that you indeed did a wonderful job as Justin's Dad from the beginning to the end. And as you move forward you will always be Justin's Dad and Justin will always be your son! You gave him the gift of life (with a little help from me!)

This poem that Justin wrote in 8th grade says it all. Darrell the words of your son could not have been put any better. You were his " Hall of Fame"

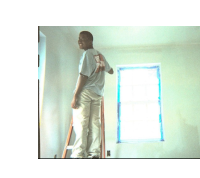


First Beach outing in the Bahamas



Darrell and Justin in Australia (I stayed at home)

At his friend Tara's Arangetram



Justin learned from Darrell so he too could help others

Love,

Susan

Postscript.. Darrell texted me this picture that he took of himself with the note" This has been the best gift ever, next to seeing Justin (Champ) being born. Thank you very much Susan (Justin's Mom)

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PREVIOUS POST
Safe At Home® with Baseball Legend Joe Torre

NEXT POST
The Labor of Love Continues at the Beach

52 THOUGHTS ON ""THE HANDS OF MY FATHER"… BY JUSTIN CARR"

Debra Johnson
SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 AT 1:50 AM
As always I am so inspired by your pictures and writing! Justin had the best parents… Amazing

REPLY

Michael T. Terry
SEPTEMBER 14, 2016 AT 1:30 PM
What a fantastic poem, what a terrific son, what a wonderful father. Thank you for sharing this. I pray that your son's dream comes true

Funny thing about hands. Susan, I remember your father as having enormous hands, even when I shook hands with him as an adult. Funny thing though, his hands always felt somehow friendly. I know it sounds odd, but his huge hands didn't intimidate, nor did your father seem to try to show how strong those hands were. I remember you and your brothers from St. Emydius and S.I., of coyrse, and your father's friendliness, grace, kindness, and class is remembered by all who knew him.

REPLY

Monique
JUNE 22, 2016 AT 6:04 AM
Thank you for sharing!! ❣

REPLY

Dona Mitoma
JUNE 21, 2016 AT 11:55 PM
Happy belated Father's Day to Rooney. What a lovely and heartfelt poem Justin wrote. He is a gift to us all. Love, Dona

REPLY

Catherynne
JUNE 21, 2016 AT 1:57 PM
So beautiful, and the love continues on for your love for Justin, and he for you both was so powerful, so beautifully strong!

REPLY

★ Susan Toler-Carr
JUNE 21, 2016 AT 3:12 PM
Cat, I am grateful that you got a chance to witness Justin who was "everybody's" child. Grateful that he is directing from the other side xox

REPLY

Walt Jourdan
JUNE 21, 2016 AT 12:14 PM
What a message, I can't wait to share this with my family. What a message to pass on. "BT" and Melvia, I know, are so proud.

REPLY

★ Susan Toler-Carr
JUNE 21, 2016 AT 3:13 PM
I know that they are and these words coming from you (who knew my parents before they married) can speak about the power and love! xox

REPLY

Darrell Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 10:14 PM
My Father's Day started out with memories of my Champ, Justin . I decided not to be sad, and concentrate on all the positive memories I have of our family hugging, laughing, playing together. As the day progressed I started feeling sad — not having those memories of happiness. Next thing I remember is Susan telling me to open a package in Justin's room. I opened the package and read the most precious words I have ever read before in my life! I couldn't speak for several minutes. All I could do was cry uncontrollable tears, cleansing my tortured soul. Justin (Champ) no one has ever recognized me, honored me, looked up to me, rejuvenated my spirit the way you did with that beautiful poem you wrote about my hands, Thank you son, I love you every second, of every day, with all my heart.

Dad

REPLY

★ Susan Toler-Carr
JUNE 21, 2016 AT 3:58 PM
Darrell,This is a gift that was meant to be. I hope that these words will forever bring you some comfort in that you did your best and your best was good enough. xox

REPLY

Gloria Johnson
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 7:32 PM
I am so happy that Darrell had such a special Father's Day.
Justin was truly an amazing person!
Thanks for sharing.
Always love,
Auntie

REPLY

★ Susan Toler-Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:09 PM
Auntie,
I am do glad of all these gifts from my baby. He will live with me everyday!!

REPLY

Gloria Johnson
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 7:30 PM
I am so happy that Darrell had such a beautiful Father's Day.
Justin was an amazing person! Thanks for sharing.
Always love,
Auntie

REPLY

Rickey Bussey
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 5:21 PM
Makes me tear up!!!!!

Beautiful stuff…….

REPLY

★ Susan Toler-Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:11 PM
You. I am glad to get these messages and you know they keep me going. But what a gift that he knew you, my friend Buzzy. xo Susan

REPLY

David G.
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 4:27 PM
I love this post. What a great poem Justin wrote!

REPLY

★ Susan Toler-Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:14 PM
It floored me when I read it!! I am glad to get these mes-

RECENT COMMENTS

Xiomara on THIS IS US… DARRELL, SUSAN & JUSTIN

Anonymous on THIS IS US… DARRELL, SUSAN & JUSTIN

Anonymous on THE FRUITS OF THEIR LABOR

Nancy on THE FRUITS OF THEIR LABOR

Dr. Margie Baker on This Swimmer Caught My Ear

Suzanna Camejo on Life as a Walt Disney imagineer and beyond

Catherynne on Life as a Walt Disney imagineer and beyond

Betsy on Life as a Walt Disney imagineer and beyond

Renee Plummer on NFL PIONEER BURL TOLER'S LIfE WILL INSPIRE Bay Area SPORTS FANS (MY DAD AND JUSTIN'S PAPA)

Ellen Garrett on a tree of life (For two Justin's MOMS) WAS IT A COINCIDENCE?

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tagged ones to pass on. Thanks for reading and responding to my stuff!

REPLY

Colleen Jackson Williams
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 12:44 AM
Like father…like sons…genius at work!!!

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:14 PM
It took your cousins breath away to the fullest extent! Glad Justin keeps me on a treasure hunt.

REPLY

Nicole
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 10:16 AM
What a beautiful tribute to Darrell on Father's Day! Lovely words of truth too Susan. We all should tell those in our lives how much they mean to us everyday because so morrow is not promised. Thank you for the sage advice and the laugh for sharing Susan. May God continue to keep you both in his arms.

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
Thank you!! Justin has me on a mission with no end in view. I am soooo glad that he continues to keep me on my feet xoxo

REPLY

Linda Ruff
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 10:16 AM
What an incredibly meaningful, beautiful poem and tribute to Darrell, given again by you Susan. A continued remembrance of our Dear, Justin. It is so very sweet of you, Susan, to compile these wonderful memories and give us all these gifts…the sharing of Justin's love. Thank you…
Love, Linda

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
Justin has me on a mission and I am ready to be guided xoxo

REPLY

Anonymous
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 8:56 AM
Beyond beautiful! I am so happy for you both to have received such a special gift from Justin. You both are so very special and inspiring! Love never ends.

Jennifer & Mike

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
I know it does not and I am glad that Justin has me on the hunt!! I am

REPLY

Patricia Allegretti
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 1:18 AM
I recently added a new word to my vocabulary…'ineffable'. You might know it as if not in Merriam-Webster definition is 'too 'great, powerful, beautiful, etc. to be described or expressed.' Your story, your poem, your relationship with your wife Justin continues to reach out to you. Bless you Susan and Darrell.

Pat

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
I did not know this word. but I do now. I am grateful that Justin has me on a path of discovery and affirmation xoxo

REPLY

Catherine Ray
JUNE 18, 2016 AT 2:07 PM
Dearest Susan & Darrell,
Wonderful, wonderful choice we have lost leave behind. I too discovered a few things today. I am taking 3 weeks off for fun / return back to work at my previous employment. This time, by my self during the days, will decidedly be the time I needed to go through my piles of stuff. The "to do" I never get to, or the "to do" I promised my mother. Maria's poem "Gone" is so, so true. I remember when my mom, my sisters and I were young, age 9 we went through all our toys, clothes, then her jewelry, and holding her eyeglasses, and her address books. So bibles of notes that don't make much sense to me, but they did to her, and it made me smile to remember her handwriting again. Then after a few hours, it was time for my sisters and I to go home to our lives. We left with our treasures, paper box notes we all wrote in it. Yeah, and high school, yeah dress books of his many , many friends, and his picture from the memorial that jumped out at me with his big smile. BUT what also jumped out was this beautiful card from Darrell, Susan, Justin. Thank you for sharing this beautiful poem and lesson to me for my family. Thank you, it felt good to see that card again today, and remember what a great family you are, and what a sweet boy Justin was.
Happy Fathers Day. Love Always Catherine Ray

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
I am so glad you are on your treasure hunt of affirmation of the unconditional love you had for your Mom and your brother. Love can never be broken. It's time to meet before your 3 weeks are off xoxoxo

REPLY

Pearl A Lynette
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 12:14 PM
Happy Fathers Day Darrell! Susan thanks for sharing this beautiful poem with us. Bless you Justin for giving Susan a new purpose for Mind, Focus…. Boy do we need it today more than ever.

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
Yes, we do and I am glad that Justin still has me on the hunt!! And Mind Peace is what we need more than ever xoxoxo

REPLY

Bella Flaherty
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 7:52 PM
Susan,
So positive and loving! Thank you for sharing! Bella

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
Justin has me on the hunt and I am glad that he has me on the hunt of discovery and sends me clues xoxo

REPLY

Margaret Comer
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 6:30 PM
How beautiful. A perfect, and perfectly timed Father's Day gift from Justin. You can't make this stuff up. And we get to witness bits of the blending of the worlds of us and our loved ones who have crossed over. Darrell's brother said it best. Justin lives on.

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
Yes he must. All of our loved ones should and I am glad that he has me searching for affirmation of the time xoxo

REPLY

Anonymous
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 10:44 PM
Thank you for sharing Susan. This is beautiful. You both poured into Justin and did a great job. The world is a better place because of it. Love to you both. Lori

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
I am beginning to think that. His gifts of love still keep coming and I am always on the receiving end xoxoxo

REPLY

Gary V. Lutt
JUNE 21, 2016 AT 5:19 PM
Susan, what a special gift to present to my buddy and brother, Darrell. I know that this gift filled a void in his life like no other gift you could have pick out for him from your personality choosing that could have brought the fulfillment that you and Darrell bestowed upon Justin. Keep your faith in Jesus, trusted and opened up your heart to divine inspiration, and for that, Justin continues to live on. Keep trusting your heart! Much love, Gary

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 24, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
You indeed and I am on the hunt and will receive all that I catch xoxo

REPLY

Marcia Ioeff
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 5:06 PM
Dear Susan,
Thank you for sharing your beautiful gift of love, and thank you for sharing Justin's poem and those pregnant photos. You remain my hero, always.
Nina

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:17 PM
Justin has me on a mission and I will forever be open and ready for the messages xoxo

REPLY

Marianne Hall
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 4:42 PM
The most beautiful Father's Day words of appreciation that I've ever heard…and no one more deserving than Justin's Dad. Darrell – and how beautiful that these were brought together by you, Susan. Justin experienced and connected to FAMILY like few others that I've known.

With great appreciation and love always,
Justin's Mr. Hall

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20PM
This was truly a gift and a grateful one at that. I will always be ready for any mission and ready to do what I have to do to receive messages. xoxo

REPLY

Jane
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 3:39 PM
You're just beautiful, Susan. I cannot imagine how sad this day must be for Darrell but he is so blessed to have you to help him through it with your beautiful tributes. Love to you both from Jeff and J

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
It's tough but I think this is proof that he should lessen his load xoxoxo

REPLY

Maria McGuinness Llewellyn
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 1:18 PM
To My Darling Friend Darrell – Whisper: I love you to Justin! To My Darling Friend Susan – Whisper: I love you to Justin! Happy Father's Day and always with love. Xo xoxo Maria XOXO

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
I will whisper every day!!! xoxo

REPLY

Anonymous
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 12:24 PM
Dearest Susan,
Darrell's poem was just beautiful. Thank you for sharing his poem with all of us. You have truly touched our hearts.
Xo
Ruthy

REPLY

Susan Tuker Carr
JUNE 20, 2016 AT 8:20 PM
Justin has me on a mission and I am willing and able to find clues. See you soon xoxo

REPLY

Elizabeth Gregory
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 12:7 PM
Dear Susan,
Wow, Darrell was so built as talented in so many ways you have words. Darrell with his hands. Those stairs are beautiful! I'm thinking of you both today, with much love as always. My memories are of Justin, a poet, an artist, an athlete, most importantly, a kind and caring soul. Thank you for sending his lovely tribute to Darrell.
With gratitude for all you give,
Elizabeth

REPLY

Valerie Williams
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 12:00 PM
What more could anyone say after that. I am overwhelmed at all of the things you had of Justin's in a life way too short. But what a perfect gift to Darrell. How beautiful. Susan. What a lucky man to be adopted from Justin to you and Darrell. On this journey with you
Valerie

REPLY

Lynnell
JUNE 19, 2016 AT 11:09 AM
Thank you for sharing this. Your words and pictures continue to remind me not to
take for granted one minute of the day.

Love you both.

REPLY

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