

Justin Carr Wants World Peace



POSTS

DANCING IS NOT TO GET A PLACE ON THE FLOOR BUT TO ENJOY EACH STEP ALONG THE WAY

FEBRUARY 18, 2015 | SUSAN TOLER-CARR | 11 COMMENTS

Dancing is Not to Get a Place on the Floor- But to Enjoy Each Step Along the Way

A few people have asked me recently: “Why should I burden myself with the problems afflicting other peoples kids?” Trust me, Darrell and I are holding a heavy load that we bravely carry daily. But, I will ALWAYS be Justin’s mother—which also makes me a Mom. For those of you who know me—I will always instinctively give mothering guidance to others—just as I did for Justin and for my friends—this is my letting me BE!!!!!!!

Over the course of a few days I had the following conversations that have been on my mind and I wanted to share:

Friend #1

I have a friend whose son (was in Justin's class) is away at college. I asked her: "How is he doing?" She looked at me in astonishment and told me with gratitude that "I was the "ONLY" mother /parent in the past 6 months who asked this question." She said the usual question is: "WHAT is your son doing?" She said the "Parents want to know his major, grades, and where he falls or fails on the social status on his campus???" She said "They have never been concerned about his wellbeing." I was shocked...

Friend #2

I congratulated my friend whose child turned down what society deems to be the HIGHEST TOP tier college. Instead he chose his passion of study at another great University that had the best academic rigor for his chosen field. "What's wrong with that I asked?" He told me that his child got chastised by his peers/teachers/other parents for "settling" for what seemingly appears to be the "lesser college." He also told me, that to date, I was the "ONLY" parent who congratulated him on his sons acceptance. I was flabbergasted!

Friend #3

When I asked a friend (whose son is a Sophomore in college) "How he was doing?" She looked at me and calmly said: "He tried to commit suicide a few months ago... and I am trying everything to save him and to pull him out of this deep dark hole..." "Not being a professional—but only a concerned "Mom", I told her I was glad she was taking his condition seriously and doing EVERYTHING in her power to help. I was saddened.

Friend #4

Another friend told me that her son (who is a Senior at a top Ivy League in the big city) told her he needed to get diagnosed as being ADHD so he could take medicine (to survive college) like a lot of his peers. She told him that she did not feel that he had this issue and she did not agree with him taking any medicine under false pretenses—but would support him always for getting over any seemingly impossible hump. He felt better after they talked and was glad that he got it off of his chest and that she listened and provided sound advice. That's what our job is as Parents. To give sound advice.

Paralympic Star #1

US Paralympic Track Star Blake Leeper recently spoke at the HW Middle School. He told the audience that when he was born, the doctors told his parents that he would be wheelchair bound and that he would NEVER walk—let alone DANCE! His parents thought otherwise and embraced and armed him with the "Can do anything" attitude. He profoundly told the crowd that "People laugh at me because I am different, I laugh at them because they are all the same". He quoted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and said:

"If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."

I must add don't forget to DANCE...

<http://www.hw.com/News-Archives/ctl/ArticleView/mid/5389/articleId/10926/Paralympian-Blake-Leeper-Visits-Harvard-Westlake>



Darrell and Blake Leeper

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/nba-celebrity-all-star-games-first-paralympic-athlete/>

Blake Leeper just played in the NBA Celebrity All Star Game. He competed for the RIGHT reasons...

For those fortunate students who have the opportunity to seek their higher education, going to college can be a BIG transition for MOST. Moving to a far away place, sharing a room with a stranger, being outside of their nucleus and thrust into a college atmosphere with a microcosm sampling of what the real world looks like. College days can be lonely and sometimes scary.

Today, it appears that the most popular motto kids/parents have for the pathway to success is BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY. I do not need to list these in detail because everyone knows what they are. The kids these days have limited time to JUST HAVE FUN! They are dealing with (but not reveal-

ing) the major issues at hand that seem to be put on the back burner i.e. stress, failure (in the eyes of their parents/peers), isolation, confusion, depression, mental health issues or even having second thoughts about their choice of college/and or major.

I remember having so much fun at college—as my Dad said “Too much fun at USC!” —when my report card got home before I did and I received my first “C” ever! I can’t say that we were not faced with a few stresses and some failures—but not to the extent of sending us over the edge. We had random parties in our dorm rooms, in the cafeteria or campus halls. We Danced (thanks to Merle showing us the latest steps), we laughed, we talked to each other. We dated and collectively with groups we got together to socialize. I can’t honestly say that there were not any “vices” in the room, but that was not the focus either. When a friend was in need, we helped or directed them accordingly. We did not keep blinders on.

Today, the electronic devices and social media have taken over. They are our blinders. People don’t look at each other, talk, or engage without clutching and frequently checking their phones. Some kids have voiced their sentiments saying they wished their college/high school experience were like the years gone by—less competitive, that their peers would get together to really socialize sans the crutch of having to drink, get drunk or hook-up their way to happiness. They just want to connect and to have fun, and actually DANCE at a party... What happened? Justin loved to dance.



Justin doing the Wobble with Kacey

We would ballroom dance in the kitchen. He also spent many an hour teaching his friends how to dance so that they would be ready at the parties! I wish I could

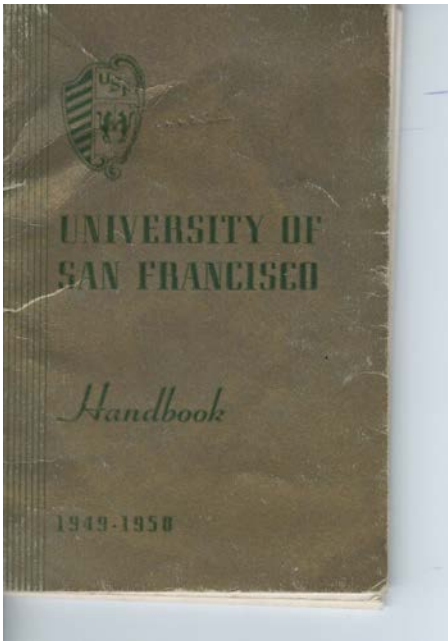


dance again with Justin.

I also knew (for the most part) if Justin needed help i.e. emotionally, academically or? Darrel and I did not take him for granted. We would often tell him that his only COMPETITION is with himself.

Today, I found my Dad's college handbook from the 1950's. It was a small pocket size book that spelled out how to dress, engage on campus, learn the school songs, and to have respect/assist their fellow peers/faculty/staff and how to seek help. As Freshman, they had to carry the booklet with them wherever they went.

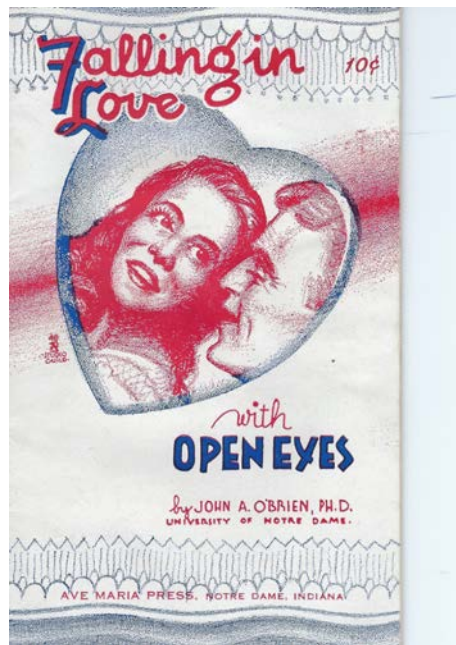
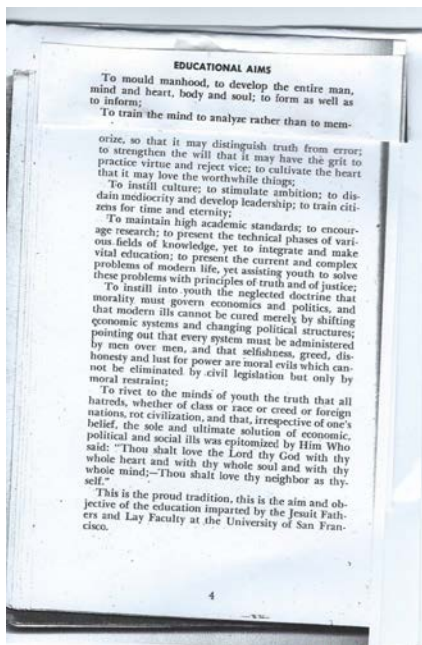
Chamber Singers Cabaret with Victoria



Pocket Student Handbook

They also gave each student a book on “How to Court” and “How to Fall in love.” So much for the good ole days.

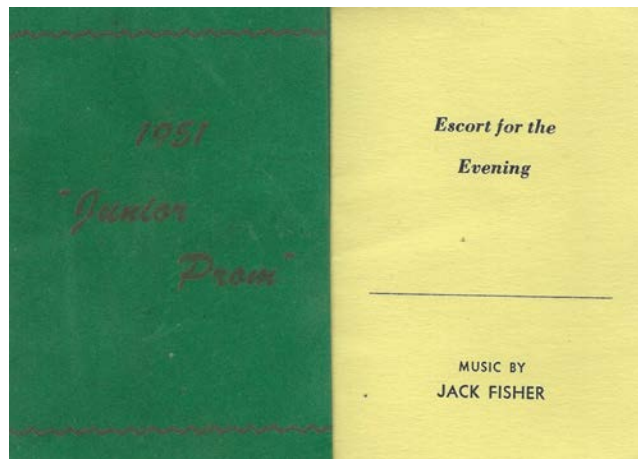
I also found a picture of my Dad with my Mom going to the Junior Prom that was held in college... and the little keepsake booklet they gave out at the dance.



I hope that sooner than later collectively society grabs hold of the real issues that afflict OUR kids—who ARE the future. It is time to listen to them, talk to them and pull them away from their isolation as a “Wallflower” (a person who has no one to dance with or who feels shy, awkward, or excluded at a party) and take time to dance with them, engage, with them and just “Let them be!



Mom and Dad at the Dance



People take heed (me included) OPEN YOUR EYES, Fall in love with your family and friends appreciate your life and those around you. It's

ok to stand out instead of trying to fit in. Life is not always a Party. Daily life should not be so competitive that we become more selfish, lack compassion; empathy and genuine support of most people around us— and it should not definitely be the Last Dance. This is my two cents for the evening.



- CHILD LOSS
- COLLEGE PRESSURE
- ENJOYING FUN
- GRIEF FROM CHILD LOSS
- GRIEVING WITH GRATITUDE
- HIGH SCHOOL PRESSURE
- JUSTIN CARR
- JUSTIN CARR WANTS WORLD PEACE
- SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST
- TEENAGE ANXIETY
- WWW.JUSTINCARRWANTSWORLDPEACE.ORG

11 THOUGHTS ON “DANCING IS NOT TO GET A PLACE ON THE FLOOR BUT TO ENJOY EACH STEP ALONG THE WAY”

 **Susie Wood**

OCTOBER 14, 2015 AT 10:38 AM

Susan,

Your have identified several factors that I have seen and heard in my work as a career counselor with individuals that have never experienced a day in school or work they enjoyed. I do not believe that is the way God intended us to live and it's my mission to help individuals examine and explore their unique gifts and to seek out career paths that will utilize those talents and skills in such a way to bring them satisfaction and excitement in starting each new day.

 **Kate**

MARCH 19, 2015 AT 9:41 PM

You and Darrell are so brave to face losing Justin with dignity and retrospection. So many of us get caught up in the “what” is your child doing at college and not the “how?” “How are you?” is actually a very important question. You've made me think about how distorting this question distorts our basic humanity. Thank you for sharing your thoughts. I know you came to them through very deep pain.



★ **Susan Toler-Carr**

MARCH 22, 2015 AT 8:23 PM

Kate, the pain is beyond imaginable when the hopes and dreams that Justin had and we had for him vanished in an instance. We are now Justin's voice. I so wished that we could have worked with you to allow him to soar. He is now soaring in a different manor now.



Lynn

FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 12:17 PM

Profound reflections Susan and so true! God Bless you and the pride and joy of being a great MOM!!

Love you,

Lynn



Caroline Somers

FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 11:47 AM

Brightens my day to see our children dancing in this photo. These were the happiest times of high school for her – right beside Justin. This is an important piece to share – so many of our kids are struggling with trying to achieve at great cost to their emotional well-being. Thank you for sharing your insights and continue to parent the children in your community.



★ **Susan Toler-Carr**

FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 11:28 PM

Caroline I agree and please share as you see fit. xox Susan



Ralph Braboy

FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 8:07 AM

What you wrote here is so true. I wish more kids these days would focus more on actually interacting with each other for the purpose of enjoyment instead of not interacting or being calculating about it. Your Justin was that interacting for the fun of it type person as is my Alexandria. We did have it good in our day with how we were able to interact with each other for fun and develop lifetime relationships that we still treasure and enjoy. Justin followed in your and Darrell's foot-

steps in that way and his potential college peers are really missing out on his contribution. Bless you guys!



★ **Susan Toler-Carr**

FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 11:28 PM

Ralph I agree and so glad we are life long friends. xox Susan



Mary martin

FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 7:09 AM

Amen to this! I revel in your thoughts and in Justin's spirit! I LOVE the pics, but especially those of your Mom and Dad! THOSE were the days as far as "class" and "grace" and "style!" Thank you for sharing with me...I always hold you, Darrell and Justin in my heart every single day. You all float in and out of my mind on a daily basis and while heartbreak has hit you in the most deepest part of you and Darrell and your extended family, you have "grace" to share your insightful thoughts...wisdom and grace...they sure don't come easy!

XOXO

mare



Noreen

FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 6:36 AM

So true. We want the best for our kids and will do anything to help them along the way. But even with love, support and "Whatever it takes", to make them happy, they may still can be lost...



Robbie

FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 5:24 AM

I think this is your best one yet. Magnificent.