

Congratulations of Arlene Priest for her remarkable story in the October 23 edition of the Billings Gazette. She shared her family's courage, patriotism and loss during World War II when four of her brothers served, and went on to share how the loss of her brother and her son, Marc, shaped her life and inspired her to help establish the Billings Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. Thank you, Arlene, for using your pain & heartache to reach out to others to honor your son and brother.



PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I've been thinking a lot about superheroes lately. Maybe it's because Halloween and Aaron's birthday are coming up.

Aaron adored superheroes, especially Batman. He loved the old TV series from the '60s, and one of his favorite gifts from his nurses was a Batman sweatshirt. Aaron was a superhero. He endured so many medical procedures, some very painful, and through it all just tried to enjoy being a little boy.

The more stories I hear about you and your family makes me realize they are superheroes too. Our children, grandchildren & siblings fought through the darkness of illness, critical medical conditions, and desperately tried to escape the claws of addiction or mental illness.

Some of the superheroes among us don't wear capes. They wear sweatpants and baseball caps. They are the moms & dads, brothers & sisters & grandparents who sat beside our child's bed day after day or answered phone calls in the middle of the night and prayed and willed with all their strength for that child to heal and come back to us. Some of these superheroes had to leave that child to come home to care for other children, or go to work to provide an income and maintain health insurance for the family, and some superheroes come with a lab coat or scrubs instead of a cape. They may not come with a Batmobile, but their superhero powers are knowledge, skill, compassion and caring. They become part of your family because they are such a big part of caring for your child.

Now the battle weary superheroes in our Compassionate Friends family try to navigate the journey of grief, and learn to go on in life without their beloved. They get out of bed every morning, put one foot in front of the other, put their superhero mask on and care for the rest of their family, try to work and learn to go on with a life forever changed.

These superheroes reach out to others in that same pain, sheltering them beneath their capes of understanding and empathy and lifting them up with hope and caring.

This month I want to honor all the superheroes who touch our hearts and loved our child, and who bravely fight on to honor the lives and love of our children, siblings and grandchildren. Be strong, superheroes, be strong.

I wish you comfort and healing, and the peace that passes all understanding

*In friendship,
Nadine*

