

Maggie's Fund

A legacy of help and hope for families



February 12, 2010

The anthropologist, Margaret Mead, was once asked what she regarded as the earliest sign of civilization. Was it the axe-blade, an arrowhead, a fishhook, or something more sophisticated, such as a musical instrument or a ceramic bowl? Her answer surprised her questioner: "A healed human femur."

Not something manufactured by humans, not an artifact, but an act of human compassion. In a time of survival of the fittest, a broken leg meant certain death. Yet, someone gathered food for that injured person until the leg was healed; someone cared for the injured until they could care again for themselves. Civilization.

During the six years that we were graced to share Maggie's life, we also provided foster care for nine infants who had been released to the agency for adoption. Maggie always warmly welcomed each baby into our home by sharing her most treasured possession, her blanket. A gift from Gary and Linda Rowe, Maggie was never more than an arm's reach away from that well-worn blanket. It was tightly in her grasp when she went to bed at night and when she awoke in the morning. But she would release her clutch whenever a new baby came to live with us. It was her way of welcoming, of saying without words, "You are one of us." In so many ways Maggie was akin to her grandmother Mary Ann who without notice or fanfare harbored and helped many an odd duck and cast-off relative who needed support, nurturance, and the help of someone who would quietly and surreptitiously support them through life. Maggie's blanket sits atop our mantle at home looking lonely in its case and absent the hands that so carefully caressed it. It seems its job has been bequeathed to Maggie's Fund. Over the past year, the fund has assisted families that have fallen behind in their rent and faced eviction; helped meet utility bills, car payments, or car repairs; provided the co-pay for health care; put gas in the car in order to attend substance abuse treatment or work, obtained counseling for kids who have suffered a loss or experienced a trauma. Some of the fund recipients pay back incrementally over subsequent months. Others were helped with the furniture assistance program, part of Maggie's Fund, which relocated 273 dressers, beds, appliances, couches, tables and the like from area donors, stores, and colleges to families in need. And over 300 parents who have endured the death of one or more of their children receive the monthly newsletter from the local chapter of The Compassionate Friends with the help of Maggie's Fund.

The kids and families who are helped are but a fraction of the many who need assistance in these Quad Cities. But it is significant to those who have been helped. It is a sign to many that there is hope and others do care. **You** have made a difference in the lives of the many who have been helped by Maggie's Fund. You have turned our loss into an affirmation of life and compassion, good deeds fostering a warm blanket of other good deeds. Our former next door neighbor wrote in a note of us last month, "Maggie touched so many lives during her short time. Through this fund she is able to touch so many more." Thank you for helping us continue to share Maggie's blanket.

Sincerely,

Bill Steinhauser
Maggie's Dad



Bethany
For Children & Families

