

## **Foundation helps parents heal**

*By Elizabeth Jackman*

She lived for only 1,215 days, but Kylie Southworth had a profound impact on many lives.

Her aunt Carrie was so touched by the little girl, she left her job selling clothes to become a physician assistant, and when Kylie passed away Jan. 18 at age 3-1/2, two people were given the gift of sight through the donation of her eyes.

Looking for a way to deal with her grief after her daughter's passing, Dana Southworth-Douglass, a nurse, remembered attending a workshop at the hospital where she worked on bereavement to help families who had lost children.

"Little did I know at the time that I would be calling her for support," Southworth-Douglass said of Joanne Cacciatore, who facilitated the workshop and is founder of the M.I.S.S. Foundation.

MISS is a non-profit, volunteer-based corporation committed to helping families heal from the trauma of death, eventually empowering them to become volunteers and to give back by helping others.

"Joanne has created a safe haven for those coping with the tragedy of losing a child. I attend a formal support group once a month, but I go on-line everyday," Southworth-Douglass said.

When Southworth-Douglas was 19 weeks pregnant with Kylie, a blood test came back, showing an abnormality.

An ultrasound indicated a fatal birth defect called holoprosencephaly, a neurological condition in which the fetal brain does not grow and divide as it should during early pregnancy.

"I was told to go ahead and plan a funeral, but buy baby clothes just in case," Southworth-Douglass said.

"Our doctor gave us no hope, so we did what we had to - we created our own hope. I am pro-life and an abortion was not even a consideration."

For the first five months, Southworth-Douglass had the help of hospice care, but when she realized Kylie was not going to die, she began therapy and respite care to give her

the best life possible.

"She surprised us, she did very well with the brain she was given. She was non-verbal, but she talked through her facial expressions, you could see her cry or laugh," Southworth-Douglass said.

Kylie was hospitalized frequently, took 14 medications each day, and was completely fed by a G-tube. She had two shunts in her brain to keep it stabilized, receiving the first one at 3 months old and the second two months later.

"She had a habit of always looking above her right shoulder. I think that is where her angels were that were watching over her," Southworth-Douglass said.

"My Kylie was the sweetest, most loving child you could ever meet. I am ultimately a stronger person for taking this journey with Kylie. She taught me to seek the best in people. She taught me that you don't love someone for what they can or cannot do, but love them for who they are. I find that giving back to the community and preserving Kylie's legacy is my most powerful tool towards healing my pain."

The MISS foundation will be holding its fourth annual children's memorial golf tournament on Sept. 27 at the Arrowhead Country Club. There will be raffles, a silent auction, prize holes and an Italian buffet dinner. All funds raised from the tournament will go directly to family support and crisis intervention programs to help families facing child death.

For more information visit the MISS Web site at [www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org).

### **Former Landmark principal dies**

Even though Val Just was principal of Landmark Middle School for less than five years, the tall, well-dressed woman known for hard work left her mark on the school and its students, improving discipline and implementing uniforms.

### **Library program aims to keep boys involved in reading**

Terry Oxley is hoping that the success and excitement of a program he created at one branch of the Glendale Public Library can be carried over to another.

### **Migrant families receive gift of sight**

For some, getting new eyeglasses is nearly an annual affair to be taken for granted, but for a few children and their migrant worker parents last week, the specs were a completely new experience.

### **YWCA helps seniors party at annual luau**

The beach was the only thing missing at the Senior Summer Luau held last Thursday at YWCA Valley West.

### **Local welder fired up over writing books**

Whenever Robert "Bob" Carlson did something that he enjoyed as a kid, he always stuck to it with great determination.

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