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An Emmy for Henry

BY GUEST ON JUNE 25, 2013 IN [INSPIRATION, MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING](#)



By [Jessica Kelley](#), Henry's Mom

"No, no I can't help you. I just learned that my precious 4-year-old, Henry, has terminal brain cancer. I'm a complete mess. I've been camped out under fluorescent lights for more than three weeks. Do you see the circles under my eyes? My crazy hair? My broken spirit? No, no. I can't."

Those were my initial thoughts when Kenny Hamilton approached me during an in-hospital Halloween celebration last fall. Kenny was there to film patients decorating pumpkins and asked if I'd consider discussing what the experience meant to us.

I wasn't interested.



However, perhaps it was the humble sincerity in his tone, or the kindness in his eyes. Maybe it was the fact that everyone at Children's had been *amazing*, offering countless smiles and patient assistance to this frantic, frazzled mom.

Maybe it was the psychiatrist whose relaxed, focused attention made us feel like Henry was his only patient. Maybe it was the surgeon who was courageous enough to be hopeful, virtuous enough to be painfully honest and gentle enough to share our tears.

Maybe it was the skilled nurses who listened to my fears and offered kind support, even at 2 a.m. Maybe it was the maintenance staff who

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worked extra quietly as Henry slept. Maybe it was the persistent optimism of the rehab folks or the cheerfulness of the child life specialists.

Whatever it was, I heard myself say, "Yes, I'll talk with you. I'd like to give back to those who have blessed us so much."

The resulting interview gave way to a [powerful, inspiring piece about Henry](#). Edited and told by Kenny and his wife, [Jaye Watson](#), this "story" captured Henry's gentle spirit, contagious laugh and his heart overflowing with love.

I'm told that his wish, for nothing more than to throw pennies in a pond, humbled even the wisest of viewers. He reminded us to pierce through the chaos of life with simple, childlike gratitude for each moment. Our family will forever treasure that beautiful piece which aired on Halloween night, just a month and a half before Henry passed away.

As we now struggle to create a new "normal," we find that some days are better than others. We had one especially joyful moment last week when a surprise package arrived. I had read that Henry's story was Emmy award-winning, but when Kenny requested my mailing address, I only anticipated a simple note. I thought he wanted to thank me again for my participation in the piece. But notes aren't delivered in heavy boxes.



"What is it, Mommy? What is it?" my 2-year-old daughter squealed as I cut open the box, peeled back the wrapping and felt the tears begin to form. GINGERLY, I lifted a heavy black box, removed the lid and was struck silent by what lay inside. Gleaming gold atop midnight black, fragile and formidable, it was a gift too profound for words. It was, of course, an Emmy that Kenny and Jaye had earned for their vision, hard work, and creativity. It could have been showcased in their home to share with their children and grandchildren. But much like our stay at Children's, our family was blessed anew by the generosity of others.

The Emmy currently is placed on our desk. Every time I sit to write, I gaze at that delicate gold trophy. It reminds me of the humble heroes at Children's. It inspires me to give joyfully, freely and without expectation. It compels me to embrace childlike gratitude in every moment. It also comforts me, because it represents the ripples of Henry's story that continue to impact the world.

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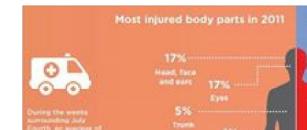
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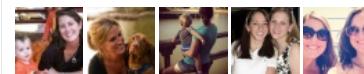


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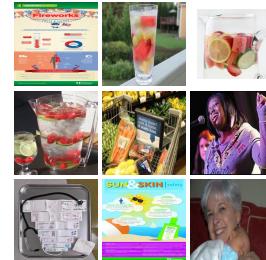
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Comments

[7 comments](#)[Add a comment](#)**Laura Davidson** · Martinsville, Virginia

Henry was our precious grandson. I cannot express how much it touches me to watch the story when my heart aches to see his smile again.

Reply · 14 · Like · Follow Post · June 26 at 2:43pm

**Beth Dodson** · Patrick Henry Community College

This is awesome Jess and Ian and Miri.. We think of you daily and you are still forever touching lives you don't even know about..

Reply · 4 · Like · Follow Post · June 26 at 8:41pm

**Paul Davidson**

Thank you Kenny and Jaye for giving Ian and Jess such a perfect gift. Our family will always treasure your presentation of Henry's story.

Reply · 3 · Like · Follow Post · June 26 at 8:58pm

**Stephanie Smith-Justus** · Grundy, Virginia

Jessica is an amazing writer. I find myself reading and re-reading every word. My daughter was diagnosed with cancer at age 8 and is now a healthy 24 year old. As I pray for Henry's family, my mind takes me back to those days "living under fluorescent lights". Not only is her writing amazing, but Jessica is an amazing mother. Thanks for sharing.

Reply · 2 · Like · Follow Post · June 26 at 2:53pm

**Kathryn Lynn Rainwater**

"It inspires me to give joyfully, freely and without expectation. It compels me to embrace childlike gratitude in every moment." Lord, help me live more that way. Beautiful, heartbreaking story.

Reply · 2 · Like · Follow Post · June 26 at 12:50pm

**Curing Kids Cancer**

It was an amazing TV story, told with tremendous empathy. It's great when such stories get the recognition they deserve!

Reply · 2 · Like · Follow Post · June 26 at 12:45pm

**Christine Faas**

U may need a tissue for this one!

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