

Katy Brock



17314 Lantana Drive
Sugar Land,
Texas 77479
281-265-7666
katysbrock@yahoo.com

Dear Friends,

General Peter Pace said of military kids this month, "Through their personal courage and support, they serve this Nation too." I read an article about a girl named Jessica who grew up in the Army. She was a normal teenager, with normal teenage issues, but she also dealt with military stuff too, changing schools too often, making new friends that she'd lose a year and a half later. So, when her dad said they were going to Killeen, Texas, she was happy to go along for the ride just as she had been when moving to Hawaii or El Paso as her dad advanced his career. Besides, he promised things would be good in Killeen.

Three weeks after the move her dad was sent to Iraq. Before he left he told her, "Don't be scared, be proud." Going to a school where 80% of the families have one or both parents in the military was a support system in itself, until Jessica's dad was the first parent from her school to be killed in action just 18 days after he left. Jessica is now a child on the edge.

The article went on to describe the transformation in Jessica. She arrived in Killeen a daddy's girl, sweet with good military manners. She shares some common characteristics of military kids, "worldly, yet childlike, tough but needy, bounced all over the world as hostages to their parents' fortunes, they form quick but deep bonds... and they are extremely loyal." Jessica now displays a "dazed sort of detachment. She does not want to love because she does not want to hurt," says her mom. She has quit the drill team, her grades have dropped and she is skipping school to hang out with a crowd who is getting her into trouble.

But the focus of this article wasn't Jessica or the other students suffering loss, but about her school counselor. The article was describing all the ways in which the school has set up support groups, been mediators between families, and tried to provide comfort to their students. As I read, all I could think about was how different the situation might be if someone from MCYM was in the equation. How would things be different if someone who knows Christ was walking beside these students? What could I offer to a child going through this situation?

I think the answer is the sole purpose for my joining the MCYM team. My job is to share in the lives of teenagers. I have a different kind of access to teenagers than their school counselors do. I don't lose track of kids during the summer time. I have the opportunity to hang out with kids where they are, not just in the cafeteria at lunchtime. I have the opportunity to share God's love with these kids. And I think that is what is so incredible about this mission.

My gift is forming relationships with teens. And through those relationships I hope that teens see how God has worked and continues to work in my life.

I can't imagine having to deal with the things Jessica is dealing with, but what I can imagine is walking along side her through all the stages of her grief and helping her see God in her world. I know I am called to work with military teenagers and share in all of the things that are going on in their lives. Students like Jessica are why I am trying to get to Europe. I need your support to be fully funded by June 15. If you are waiting to send in those pledge cards, now is the time.

Praying for you,



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P.O. BOX 4478 ENGLEWOOD, CO 80155-4478

