

2nd Annual Sam Wilson Memorial Golf Tournament

**To benefit the
Youth Suicide Prevention Program (YSPP) of
Washington State**



Many of you already know that our beloved son and brother, Sam, died by suicide March 13, 2006. Sam was only 16 years old. Sam was funny, extremely caring, athletic, smart, handsome and very popular with his peers. He was everything we could ever want in a son and brother. You can never know or imagine the horrific impact the loss of a child can have on a family until it happens – we will never be the same family.

One week after Sam's death I attended a Youth Suicide Prevention Program (YSPP) meeting hosted by our school district for the very first time. You see it wasn't enough that Sam was seeing healthcare professionals for the past 7-8 months, these experts did not fully recognize what was really going on with Sam until just days before his death – I needed answers and what we had missed as signs.

Teachers and especially friends sometimes interact with our kids to a much greater degree during the teen years than even we do as parents. These at risk kids may express feelings of hopelessness and verbalize more freely with their peers and teachers. Parents need the resources and the education along with teachers and students to better recognize the warning signs of depression and suicidal behavior. At that meeting I learned so much about the warning signs and heard first hand parent's talk about their own tragic losses that it became very clear that our son had exhibited some of those signs to us and even more so to his peers. Unfortunately, these peers did not know to talk to us or anyone else who possibly could have helped. What we as Sam's parents saw and told our healthcare professionals were not enough for them to assess how vulnerable to suicide Sam was.

YSPP began through the tragic loss of a promising 16-year old student and athlete named Trevor Simpson who died by suicide in 1992. Immediately after his death Trevor's parents, Scot and Leah Simpson, began advocating for resources and programs that could help prevent other young people from dying. Their efforts resulted in seed funding from the Washington State Legislature for a non-profit youth suicide prevention program. Today, YSPP envisions a state where youth suicide is a rare event, where young people are nurtured and supported, where individuals and families are aware of risk factors for suicide, and actively seek help from accessible, effective community resources. To that end, YSPP focuses on raising public awareness, facilitating training, and supporting communities to take local action.

Please help support our efforts in providing continued funding to an invaluable program that needs to be more readily accessible to all of us. Sam thoroughly enjoyed golfing as he enjoyed all things fun in life – so I hope that you will plan to play or be a sponsor in Sam's Tournament!

Thank you,

Lori, Howard & Shelby Wilson