

A year after Haley Sue Pearson's death, her family works to carry on her legacy

Anika Exum Nashville Tennessean

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Haley Sue Pearson rushed to help a friend who had been in a car crash on Vietnam Veterans Boulevard in Hendersonville on Dec. 6, 2020.

That selfless instinct ultimately cost the 25-year-old her life when she was struck and killed while trying to cross the large interstate to be by her friend's side.

Her parents, Pam and Stacy Pearson, said their daughter most likely didn't think twice about running to assist her friend.

"We were not surprised," Pam said. "When they said that's what she was doing, we were like, 'Of course that's what she did.' Nobody that knew her is surprised.

"Sometimes you're like, 'Haley you can't do everything,' but that's just not the way she was raised. She probably thought she could do everything."

Haley Sue's parents said she was a fighter from the beginning of her life when she was born nine weeks premature weighing 3 pounds. In the years to follow, her loved ones said, she worked hard to have a fulfilling life and help others.

A year after her death, her parents and her husband are working hard to keep that generosity alive through the Haley Sue Foundation, a nonprofit that has undertaken a whirlwind of projects in its first year.

Beloved daughter, sister and wife



The first days without Haley Sue were a blur for Pam and Stacy, and even now, tears still flow down their cheeks at the mention of their beloved daughter.

"This is probably the way we're going to be for the rest of our lives," Pam said.

Haley Sue's husband, Nat Hubert, recalled her overflowing intentionality, as well as her diligence in trying to make a difference in the lives of others.

Hubert met his wife at a time when he was soon moving back to his native England. The soccer coach wasn't looking for a relationship, but after 20 minutes of chatting, she soon told him he'd be "the love of her life."

The couple was together for three years in a union Hubert described as easy and simple.

"I think when you are with someone who's willing to compromise and loves as hard as she does, it just makes everything else so much easier."



Haley Sue started most mornings of their relationship by asking him on her way to her job at her alma mater Lipscomb University, "How are you going to change the world today?"

She'd tell him how she could say something to a struggling student or the boys she nannied that would stick with them for the rest of their lives, or how she

could lead in a way that empowered other women, or how she'd go to her sister's dance show to make sure she felt supported.



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"I think we as a society struggle with that and kind of just plateau on by and life just kind of happens," he said. "But there was so much intent behind each day that she lived."

Carrying on Haley Sue's legacy

By March 2020, her parents created the Haley Sue Foundation, a 501(c)(3) through which family and friends work together to fundraise for those in need.

The foundation provides two scholarships to high school students, funded through donations and events, including one at the Row House in Franklin where the family frequented, a golf scramble and a sale sponsored by Kendra Scott jewelry company.

In February they'll hold their first Haley Sue Legacy Ball.



Last year, the first Haley Sue Foundation scholarship went to a graduating senior at Centennial High School where Haley Sue attended. This year an additional one will provide funding to one Williamson County high school student who has lost a sibling.

The foundation also brought Christmas gifts, as well as a Christmas dinner and party, to children in Scottsville, Kentucky, where Haley Sue spent the first eight years of her life. The Pearsons hope to continue the event annually and add a back to school event for the same children.

Hubert has also worked to carry on what he calls Haley Sue's "torch" by doing what he can to empower women, a cause for which his wife was passionate. He now coaches girls soccer and has helped mentor young women on the Centennial High School cheerleading team Haley Sue and Pam used to coach together.

"It's life's greatest honor to be her husband. It's a joy," he said. "I am grateful for that opportunity and that privilege because she chose me and I don't know why. I will never know why, but I'm really grateful that she did."

Pam took to writing after losing her daughter.

Taking what she learned from grief, how people respond to it and what can go right and wrong despite people's best intentions, she wrote a book titled "What Not To Say to People who are Grieving." She hoped to be a source of advice for those who might not know what to do or say in what could be someone's worst moments.

"I just thought, gosh, if I can help anybody who can help somebody that's grieving, it was all worth writing the book," she said. "I don't know that our

society embraces grieving. It's kind of like nobody wants to talk about it, but I think it's something that people need to talk about."

[The book is available on Amazon.](#)

The Pearson family plans to continue doing all this work in Haley Sue's name.

"That's an exhausting, daunting task of carrying this on for the rest of our lives," Stacy said. "But when you do things like we did in Kentucky and the scholarships and seeing the number of people that are willing to support, it absolutely motivates us to move forward."

He and Pam hope to expand the Haley Sue Foundation's work further across their own community in Williamson County, n Nashville and beyond, always decked out in yellow, Haley Sue's favorite color.

"We had two choices: We could lay down and die, too, or we could continue to do the work that she was doing," Pamela said. "We chose to let her legacy live on and continue to do her work until we get to see her again."

"I've said from day one, I'll live the rest of my life trying to make her proud. So she would not be proud of us if we just laid down and hid away."

Anika Exum is a reporter covering Williamson County for the Tennessean. Reach her at 614-347-7313, aexum@tennessean.com or on Twitter @aniexum.

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