

A "Catch-Fire" group responds to JaredStory.com - An exchange of emails with youth leader, Randy Brown

Dear Jared's Mom:

Discovered Jared's story tonight on the Internet. I work with teenagers in our church youth group. Have worked with teens for 34 years.

Tonight, I sat in a home at a kitchen table with three teens. They are all coming to our "Catch-Fire" teen meeting tomorrow night at church! Would love to know more about Jared so I can more effectively help other teens who may be thinking the same thoughts. This summer I will speak in four different youth camps to hundreds of teens. Any advice or warning you can give will be greatly appreciated! I will faithfully pass it on to these kids. Thanks. And my God's wonderful grace minister to your heart.

Randy Brown.

Hi Randy,

I'm so glad you have the opportunity to have an impact in the lives of young people. You are doing a wonderful work. This "Catch-Fire" teen meeting sounds great.

Jared was a kindly boy, loved people and animals. He was a bit shy but not enough to prevent him from flirting with some girls at school. He had a cute crooked smile and would stand with one shoulder tilted downward. The thing that changed him and caused his depression was an assault inside his middle school by a well known bully. You can read about that at <http://www.jaredstory.com/assault.html>. I think Jared lost his innocence on that day. He couldn't believe someone would want to hurt him so violently. He had only known gentleness until that day.

I think that if you could teach your group about bullying and how it wounds children, even to the point of suicide, you would be teaching them a very valuable thing. There is a course, and book put out by Frank Peretti (a Christian writer) called "The Wounded Spirit," that might make a good future topic of study for your Catch-Fire group.

Another thought... Jared never asked us for help, never told us he wanted to die. If you could tell teenagers to talk to someone when they suspect they have depression or some other illness, then that could save many lives.

Depression is like a fog looming over the brain, which causes the thoughts inside to be trapped in sadness. If the teenager will just ask for help... there are several natural herbs and medications that can help, along with counseling or therapy. There are always people willing to help, as you have made it your mission to do.

I wish you well. You will make a difference and you will save many teenagers with your loving advice. You may not see all the rewards here on earth but when you meet your maker, God will say, "[Well done, thou good and faithful servant.](#)"

Much love from Brenda (Jared's mom)

Dear Brenda:

It is with a happy, happy heart that I send you this note tonight (Wed. PM). Thank you so much for your email.

I was laying on our bed when my wife Linda handed me your email. I had informed Linda about Jared's story and I began reading the email out loud. When I got to the phrase "a cute crooked smile..." my voice broke and I couldn't continue. I had to go outside for a while. I decided then and there that Jared's death would make a difference in the lives of our teenagers. It would not be in vain.

Tonight at "Catch-Fire" we had 45 teenagers present. Nine of them were first time visitors. We sang some chorus', welcomed everyone visiting and then I began speaking to the kids about teens who have taken their lives and how we must find teenagers who are thinking the same thoughts and tell them of the love of Christ. I then held up Jared's pictures with his cats. I had enlarged them to 8X10 size so the kids could see Jared's beautiful face and expression. They sat absolutely stunned as I told about Jared's experience with the bully and the tragic results that occurred in his life. Not one teenager was talking or moving around as I told Jared's story. Then-- I read your email response and your advice to them. The room was absolutely silent.

The scriptures plainly say that "[all things work together for the good, to them who love God Who are the called according to His purpose.](#)" (Romans 8.28) Jared's death made a major impact on 45 teens tonight. Brenda, all eight visiting teens and one adult woman accepted Jesus as their Saviour! Many of our teens were weeping! It was the most unusual moment I think I have witnessed in 34

years of ministry with teenagers! They fell in love with Jared tonight and their hearts are broken for you and your family.

One of the young ladies that accepted Jesus tonight walked up to me after the service and turned over her left arm. She has a 4-5 inch long scar going from her wrist to her forearm. I said "Honey, is this what I think it is?" She said, "Yes, sir. Several months ago I tried to kill myself. I'm so glad I came tonight!"

We all send you our love, prayers and deepest affections. Keep telling Jared's story! I am convinced it will continue to change many, many lives! Please keep me updated about any new developments concerning Jared's story and the impact it is having on other lives-- especially teenagers. God bless you, Brenda. We count you as our dear friend. To 45 kids you are their hero.

Sincerely, Randy.