***A Christmas Gift for Dale Becomes His Gift to Others***

By Rande Davis

As a parent, Kathy Carnahan lives her life with the belief that “every day you do the best you can.” When her son Dale died in a car accident on February 28, 2009, she continued to live that faith, thinking, Why change now? She visits him nearly every single day at Monocacy Cemetery.

It was during such a visit, around Christmas time, that she began thinking about what the family would do for Dale during the holidays. As she looked around, she saw a cemetery in need of some loving care and wondered, Who takes care of the burial grounds and how do they pay for it?

When told that volunteers and donations cared for the cemetery, she became passionate about making that the family gift to Dale for this past Christmas.

As she began to raise funds, she had modest goals, hoping to raise maybe a $1000. In remembering how so many helped the family at the time of Dale’s death, she became even more passionate about her task. Even the burial plot where Dale rests was a donation from Poolesville resident Bob Cissel. No one plans for the burial of a child, and when it happens, one is left so totally unprepared. That gift meant so much to the Carnahan family.

Planning her fundraising, she simply approached the family and suggested that instead of flowers, a donation be made to the cemetery. Then through word of mouth, momentum began to build. Her Zumba instructor, Kathy McFadden, who has family at the cemetery, decided to donate a week’s worth of proceeds and raised the $1,000. Then, other donations kept coming in until as of this month, $4,200.00 has been raised. Much more than enough for the new shrubbery she was planning.

Daughter Kathy shares her mother’s passion and is currently organizing a cleanup day for the grounds. Tom Bodmer, a member of the cemetery’s board of directors is overwhelmed by the efforts and the generosity of all involved. Others who want to help out can reach Kathy on Facebook or call 301-972-7047.

In the meantime, she will continue visiting him every day and, as a parent, do what she has always done: the best she can do every day knowing that Dale, whose generosity as an organ donor saved lives, would be so pleased to know that together, he and his mom have helped make this place of rest for so many, so much more beautiful.