

From tragedy, 3 Points president finds a way to help others cope



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Kevin Doyle is the president of 3 Points in Countryside and founder of the Sheilah A. Doyle Foundation.

Kevin Doyle will never forget the day his mother died.

As a 17-year-old high school junior, he had just told her he wanted to go to college at the University of Iowa. His mother, Sheilah, worked as a nurse and had recently decided to go back to school to get her RN degree, which would help her earn money to help put Doyle and his three sisters through college.

But on the morning of July 4, 1993, Sheilah Doyle was killed on her way home from work by two men who wanted parts from her car. Police found her body locked in the trunk of her vehicle.

"My mom was a licensed practical nurse who was going back to college to become an RN so she could help put my three sisters and me through college," Doyle said. "When she died, that all went away."

Doyle continued to pursue his dreams, graduating from Iowa and eventually starting his own IT support business, 3 Points LLC based in Countryside.

Building a success from his personal tragedy, Doyle realized his story was one that could help and inspire others — especially those who, like him, lost a parent or guardian to murder.

With help from his family and a personal mentor, Doyle created the Sheilah A. Doyle Foundation. The three-year-old nonprofit's original goal is to provide college scholarships for children victimized by the murder of a parent or guardian.

"I wanted to be able to help other kids realize that they could turn something tragic into something good," he said. "My goal was always to start a college scholarship program to help kids go through school — and also to help my mom live out her dream of helping out."

But a recent partnership with a national bereavement organization has given the foundation a huge

boost and broadened its scope, Comfort Zone Camp and the SAD Foundation will play host to a bereavement camp Sept. 30 to Oct. 2 at Camp Manitou in south suburban Frankfort. Doyle said about 100 volunteers will help about 60 children learn to cope with the trauma of losing a parent or guardian to murder.

"This was a match made in heaven," Doyle said of the partnership. "It's great when two nonprofit organizations that have the same mission can work together, because there's a ton of synergy and a lot of collaboration that goes on that make each other better."

The Richmond, Va.-based organization runs bereavement camps in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Virginia and California for children between the ages of 7 to 17 who have suffered through the death of a parent or sibling. However, Doyle said the camp planned for this fall will be the first "niche" camp, specifically focusing on children who have lost a parent to murder. The campers will be paired with a "big buddy" volunteer, who will be with them throughout the weekend. The focus of the camp is to help the children cope with their loss while enjoying the events and camaraderie.

Campers enjoy a recent Comfort Zone Camp in Massachusetts for children who have lost a parent or sibling. Comfort Zone has partnered with the Sheilah A. Doyle Foundation to bring a bereavement camp to south suburban Chicago.

Doyle said. "What happens is that one kid may open up and be brave, and the other kids see this and are more willing to open up and tell their story. It's pretty emotional."

The timing couldn't be better for the SAD foundation, he added, as they will be presenting their first scholarships later this year. One of the prerequisites for the scholarship, Doyle noted, will be that the award winner attend the Comfort Zone Camp as a camper or a volunteer. So far, they have three applications for scholarships, with more expected. The two groups held a fundraising event in Tinley Park last February that drew about 400 people, and they recently received a grant from the New York Life Foundation, all of which will go toward funding the camp, Doyle

said. In the past year, the foundation has raised just less than \$90,000, according to Doyle. About 20 percent of that came from grants, 30 percent from fundraisers and the remainder from corporate and individual donations. Doyle noted the majority of that money will go to fund the camp, while the remainder will be put toward the scholarships.

Doyle hopes to build on the relationship with Comfort Zone Camp to expand his foundation's reach and scope. He hopes to have a Chicago camp well established in the next three years, and eventually use Comfort Zone facilities to develop regional niche camps in the Midwest and on the east and west coasts. Doyle also plans to build and expand relationships with area social service agencies that the foundation could use as referrals between camps.

While things have been moving quickly for the foundation, Doyle notes that his experience as an entrepreneur and building his own business played a critical role in his ability to bring everything together.

"3 Points has been such a huge training for me," he said. "If I didn't have 3 Points in my life, I don't know if the SAD Foundation would be as successful as it is today. I know that for a fact."

While his mission continues, Doyle feels one goal has certainly been fulfilled.

"I know my mother would be so proud what we're doing today."

For more information, visit www.sadfunds.org.

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