

# A father's hope



ABOVE: Steve Grant is using his family's tragedy to save others.

Steve Grant is no stranger to tragedy. But rather than being crushed by it, he is using the unthinkable to save others from a similar fate.

Grant's sons, Chris and Kelly, both suffered from drug addiction — a devastating, powerful hold that ultimately took their lives through accidental overdose.

Chris died in 2005 at the age of 21 after overdosing on cocaine and methadone. Grant says his oldest boy started using drugs when he was just 14 years old. The addiction took over his life. In 10th grade, he was asked to leave the private school he attended. Chris ultimately attended several high schools before getting his GED. Grant and his former wife pulled out all the stops to save their son — including sending him to five rehabilitation programs.

None worked.

"I tried to send him to a sixth one in Houston and he ended up on the streets," Grant says. "I did what I knew to do and I did it wholeheartedly."

For seven years, Chris' addiction took over his life and the lives of those who loved him.

"You neglect your marriage," Grant says. "You neglect your finances. You neglect your other child. It obviously affected our other child. He was a model student."

Kelly was a gifted musician who was part of a band in high school and in college. He was pursuing a degree in psychology until he started using heroin in March 2010.

"He had an overdose in March that

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Written by Chris Worthy | Photographed by David Poleski

he told me was exhaustion,” Grant says. “I believed him.”

Kelly came home from college and spent the summer under his father’s watchful eye.

“I drug tested him every other day,” Grant says.

But once again, addiction won. Kelly returned to college for a time before coming back home at age 24.

“He was home about 10 days,” before seeking drugs, Grant says. “He died that night.”

Grant said the attraction to drugs was overwhelming for his sons and devastating for his family.

“It’s hard to see two body bags leave your house,” he says. “It’s your only children. I will see them again and I also know this was their time on earth. I really think I was put in this situation to help others.”

And that is Grant’s purpose now — to tell his sons’ story and use it to raise awareness and raise funds to

To learn more about Chris and Kelly’s Hope Foundation, visit [chriskellyhope.org](http://chriskellyhope.org).

support treatment and prevention programs. When Chris was struggling with addiction, Grant tried to find an extended treatment program for him.

“Everyone said to try and find a 100-day program, minimum,” he said. “There was only one in South Carolina and it had a 75-day wait. My son didn’t have 75 minutes to wait.”

Chris and Kelly’s Hope Foundation, operating under the auspices of The Community Foundation of Greenville, has contributed to a variety of projects including The Family Effect, Gateway House, Miracle Hill Ministries and FAVOR Greenville. The organization is also supporting the construction of Montford Hall, a residential treatment facility for boys that will be located in Asheville.

Grant said taking on the role of fundraiser has opened his eyes.

“I thought it would be really easy,” he said. “There is a certain stigma associated with drugs and alcohol, (as if) it’s this habit that starts because parents don’t do a good job with their kids. Nothing could be further from the truth. You never know when a person is going to fall in love with something that will control every decision in their life.”

Grant said his boys “despised what they did” and would be pleased to see what he is accomplishing in their memory.

“If my sons were here, they would know very well this is something I would do,” he says. “They would be proud of me.” ❁



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