

## WHY THE TURTLE?

We get asked the question of why the turtle?

It's a great memory from our 2003 family vacation in Hawaii, that has always brought us a smile and laughter.

Richard and his mom were out fairly deep in the ocean and Richard saw "something" pop up out of the water. Lets just say that there was a bit of panic on Richard's part. Keep in mind that Richard was in his junior year of high school, a football player, and much bigger than his mom at the time, yet he nearly drowned her by climbing on her back to save himself from that "something".....a giant sea turtle.

When Richard bought his home, one of his first gifts from his mom was a small granite turtle just to remind him of our good times. If you get the chance to chat with the family they would love to share the full story and they might even include Richard and the sea urchin.

## HOW THE TURTLE TREK BECAME AN ORGANIZED EVENT

Two weeks after losing Richard, our family envisioned hosting a 5K walk to honor Richard in memory of his birthday.

As Richard's mom, the "walk" represented that I needed to continue to be the person that Richard was proud of and to somehow find the strength to get out of bed each morning, put my feet on the floor and take that first step to "walk" through each day no matter how difficult.

As a family it represented that we would "walk" this journey through the loss of our, son, brother and uncle together.

With just two weeks to plan, we were able to spread the word to our family and friends had approximately 60 participants at our 1st Annual "unorganized" Richard Lambert Memorial 5K. The following year the event raised \$5,000, which was donated to a nonprofit organization to support teen moms.

The Turtle Trek Remembrance 5K/15K Run/Walk is now an event organized to support the Richard Lambert Foundation Family Grief & Healing Center in furthering it's mission to provide care, support and essential resources for bereaved children and adults, allowing them to create a foundation for hope, healing and survival, through the Center's free grief support programs and low cost counseling.

## WHY TEEN MOMS?

It seems like it was just yesterday that I was a new mom at 15 to my son, Richard. Knowing what I know now, are we ever really prepared for motherhood? Let alone at the age of 15. With the loving support of my parents I was able to become self-sufficient and successful.

I was blessed to hear many times from Richard how much he loved me and he acknowledged the strength and commitment it took to be a teen mom. He often stated to me, how proud he was of me. He was grateful and I was fortunate. You see, not all teen girls have the support of their parents. Some may become abused, kicked out of their home and left to live on the streets. Left to raise her child on her own.

Richard also had a big heart for a friend with a young family in need. He would often provide for them financially, paying their utility bill before the heat was turned off, he had shared with me that he didn't want the children to be cold. Richard also made sure that the children had gifts for Christmas one year when otherwise, due to the families hardship, there wouldn't have been a Christmas. He took their father out shopping the night before Christmas and told him to pick out whatever he wanted for the kids. I know that one special little girl woke up Christmas morning with a brand new bicycle.

As a teen mom myself and Richards generosity and love for children, it feels only befitting that Richard's legacy will live on through supporting young mother's and their children.

