

Patty Schumacher - A Gold Star Mom Remembers



I have been married to my husband, Tom, for 18 years and have three wonderful children, Victor, Kyle and Katie.

When I was a child in elementary school, we would sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee", "The Battle Hymn of Republic", "America the Beautiful", "God Bless America" and "Amazing Grace", just to name a few. Never was I ever able to complete one of these songs without shedding tears. I never understood why these songs impacted me so much, especially at the ages of 9 - 13, if not, even younger. I remember in 3rd grade a classmate's brother went off to fight in Vietnam. He came home after he lost his foot in the war and he came to talk to our class. I don't remember what he said, but I do remember him. My father served in the Army during WWII, but he was quiet about it. We flew our flag on the required holidays. We were not extremely patriotic, however, we were proud of our country. When Victor announced that he wanted to join the Marines, we had mixed emotions. As Victor graduated boot camp in December 2009, our sense of patriotism increased. Just as every parent does, we stood by our son, and supported his decision, but we held our breaths as he deployed for the very first time.

A short, 18 days later, on October 13, 2010, our oldest child, age 20, newly engaged, was killed by a remotely detonated improvised explosive device (IED) that also took the lives of the other three Marines in the vehicle; all instantly. I had to stop planning my son's wedding to plan his funeral. I still shed tears at the songs from childhood, but now I have a truly deep understanding, if not a premonition as a child, of the tears to be shed later in life.

Since Victor's death, our family has developed a deeper sense of patriotism, a belief in America and what she stood for. My father's generation of WWII understood that. I want to help rebuild American Pride and Honor in our Military by reaching out into our community to bring awareness through education in the classrooms and community events what it is to be a Gold Star Mother with younger children, how my son's death affected our family and others, and how his death changed me, our family, and how in many ways, changed me for the better with the open desire to help serve our Military's men and women in war on the battlefield and in war with themselves once they come home. It is for this reason that I am proud to be associated with [The Honor Group](#) and it is through The Honor Group that we can learn how to Honor, Respect and Commit ourselves to those who freely are willing to give their lives for us and our country. May we never forget or abandon them.