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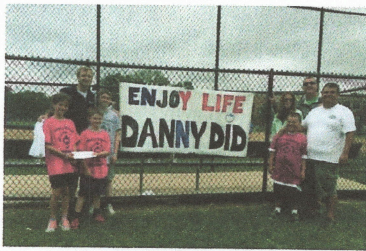
DANNY DID FOUNDATION:

FROM TRAGIC LOSS TO INSPIRING LEGACY

After Losing His Son, Chicago REALTOR Finds Strength and Comfort in His Peers



Mike and Mariann Stanton



▶▶ making a difference

By Mike Stanton

There's a park we call the "Choo Choo" park at the corner of Algonquin and Tahoma in Chicago. Its official name is Jeffrey Green Park, but as it's situated adjacent to the Metra tracks, and has a kid-sized train on the playground, it's better known as the Choo Choo. It's also a stone's throw away from the Edgebrook Baird and Warner office on Devon Avenue.

I used to take my kids — Mary Grace, Johnny, Danny, and Tommy — to the Choo Choo park to play on the swings and dig in the sandbox. After the park, we'd grab donuts from Happy Foods (a block away) and then sit on the benches in front of Baird and Warner, eat our treats, and watch the trains pass through

uptown Edgebrook. We'd always hope for a freight train so we could guess how long it would be, and then count the cars as they rumbled by. I'd tell the kids, "Whoever's closest gets the last donut!" Those were great times.

The train crashed, so to speak, on December 12, 2009. That was the day our middle son, Danny (then just three months shy of his 5th birthday), died from a seizure while he was sleeping. I wasn't yet a REALTOR at the time, but I would come to know the kindness and generosity of the real estate community after Danny's death.

Danny was a loving, creative, compassionate, intelligent, and athletic little boy who had no medical issues outside of experiencing occasional seizures while he slept. He was being treated with medicine and regular EEGs for his seizures, and we were assured by his doctor that Danny would outgrow his condition.

After two years of treatment — during which I slept with him every night — we were informed that he was out of the woods and could go back to sleeping in his own bed. He was thrilled to get back to his bunkbed where he slept right below his older brother, Johnny. That glorious news came on a Tuesday; the following Saturday, my wife, Mariann, found his lifeless body in that bottom bunk.

Danny had epilepsy, and he died from Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP). While treating Danny, we were never informed of epilepsy or educated by any medical professional about SUDEP. After his death, I quickly recognized that the environment for people who are afflicted with seizures needed to change.

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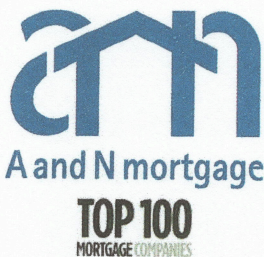
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Mike speaking at Danny Did's annual gala.

And so, with Mariann, I founded the Danny Did Foundation (DDF) in 2010. The name comes from the last line of Danny's obituary: **Please go and enjoy your life. Danny Did.** Our mission is to prevent deaths caused by seizures, and we accomplish this by advancing awareness of both epilepsy and SUDEP, and by helping to improve the communication model between medical professionals and families impacted by seizures.

We also advocate for the mainstream acceptance of seizure-alerting devices. Our signature program is providing funds to families for devices that can help in preventing seizure-related deaths. To date, we have assisted people in all 50 states and across nine countries. We view these devices as complementary to medicinal, surgical, and dietary measures that are used to treat seizures.

I remember the first summer after Danny died. The DDF was still a fledgling organization, and we had a kickball tournament — in honor of one of Danny's favorite sports — at Edgebrook Park. That's when I first previewed the incredible assistance that was to come from our local real estate community, as Edgebrook Baird and Warner's Nicole Flores offered to purchase T-shirts for all 300 participants.

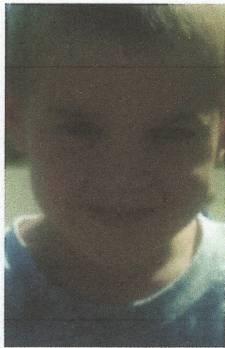
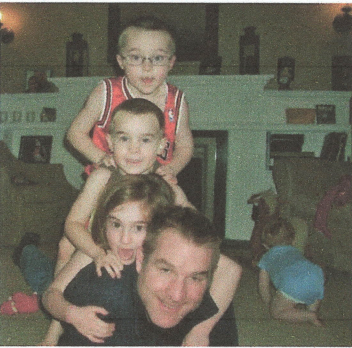
From there, the Danny Did Foundation got rolling. We assembled a board of directors, and when we needed a space for meetings, it was Lisa Kon, the Managing Broker of the Baird and Warner Edgebrook office, who offered a conference room. Support from that Edgebrook office has streamed in since: Agents such as Jan

Kupiec, Linda Kramer and Katrina Maglaya-Volkers have consistently volunteered their time, attended events, and participated in the Chicago Marathon on behalf of the DDF. Staff members like Jen Parker and Heather Lally have also attended events and run the marathon on the DDF's behalf.

The scope of the need is serious. Epilepsy affects 3.4 million people in the United States, and one in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy. But what few people understand, including many people impacted by the disorder, is that seizures can be fatal. More people die as a result of seizures than from house fires and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) combined.

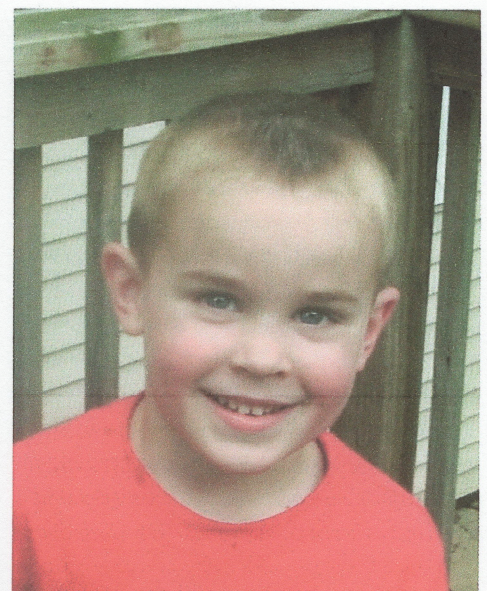
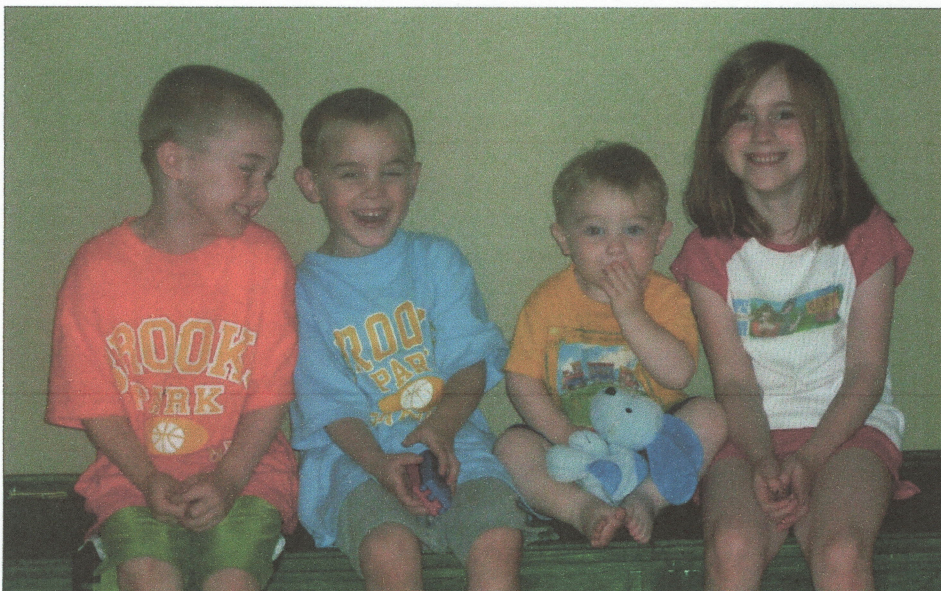
The REALTOR connection to the Danny Did Foundation continues to strengthen. Our board president, Jeanine McShea, is a REALTOR with @properties, as is a former board member, Kathleen Malone. We also have ongoing partnerships with Coldwell Banker's Marti Corcoran, Robert Padron of RE/MAX, and real estate attorneys Tom Moran, Dave Maloney and Joe Cook. The strength that I have received from the real estate community calls this to mind: In our business, we strive every day to provide comfort to people whose lives are moving on in one way or another. I treasure that I have been a lucky enough to be a recipient of that type of goodwill from my colleagues.

Mike Stanton is a Chicago native, and a REALTOR in the Edgebrook Office of Baird and Warner. To learn more about the Danny Did Foundation, visit dannydid.org.



Mike with his four kids, Johnny, Danny, Mary Grace and Tommy (crawling).

Danny Stanton



The Stanton siblings

The Stanton's son Danny