



BYOND WINS, WE WEEP. THAT'S OK.

September 2021
by Tammie Newman

Mark my word- my promise to you, South Carolina – my next blog will be positive, uplifting, funny even. After the drastic turn of events this August, I can't think past the loss of life we, as a "team," have experienced.

Our friends at Dutch Fork High and W. J. Keenan High have each experienced grief never meant for a student body, a staff and most certainly, a family, to endure. Jack and Donadrian are on everyone's mind, in everyone's heart.

Our SCHSL Executive Committee member, Mike Beasley (Mayor of Blackville, assistant principal of Barnwell High) lost his son, Dustin, a father, and police officer, to Covid after a long hard-fought battle filled with highs and lows, hope and despair.

On a personal note, my nephew (by marriage) lost his life to Covid as well. He was a father of four, veteran fireman and new police officer completing training in Aiken County.

A well-known and beloved SCHSL wrestling coach, Mark Nathan Day, passed away at the age of 57 due to Covid.

Our nation lost 13 US service members overseas in a senseless act of violence in August.

I settled into my desk with the solemn task of writing FIVE sympathy and condolence cards. FIVE!!!! By the second stroke of the pen, I wore wet cheeks with foggy eyes and was flat out sad. I didn't personally know either of the two students who passed away but just reading the multitude of moving sentiments about them made me feel like I missed out of some amazing young men with bright futures ahead.



My purpose for this blog is to acknowledge and express the void many are coping with due to the loss of lives. Loss is occurring from all directions, unexpected and wayward losses. Students are the life blood of not just school systems, but families and communities as well. Children are miracles, hopes, dreams, and wonder meant to succeed and prosper but most importantly, to grow into adults with parents, peers and community watching, witnessing their greatness.

"Absence" isn't the word I would use to describe what occurs when a child is no longer walking the hallways of a school. When a father is never coming home from work. The aforementioned individuals are just a minuscule portion of the losses South Carolina has experienced within a month. They are the most recent that have touched my personal path.

Crisis teams, therapists, grief counselors.
Tributes, mourn, memorial.
Words covering social feeds more and more.
Too common. Too soon. Too much.

Unfortunately, death has no expiration, and we will face more as the days roll on. Athletics are a vital part of the education process and provide much more than a score on the board. We are grateful to still have fall sports during a time of such uncertainty. However, let's agree that the health and safety of our students, staff, and communities trumps any sporting event at any level. Bidding farewell to a friend or family member is an emotionally draining occurrence that can render some numb, depressed and confused. The SCHSL Health and Wellness Summit last month had some important ways to handle emotional and mental blockages. Our friends at Prisma Health shared many myths as well as facts on how to handle stress, depression. You can find the full recording on our website (www.schsl.org) and on our YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/quB8YVbUDds>)

August has not been kind to us. September has our hopes in her 720 hours. Be good to us, Fall, and let's be good to one another. Weep if you must and allow a cleansing of the emotions you may be feeling. Talk to someone. Share your feelings. Our comradery goes beyond the wins. We are friends. We are family. We are SCHSL.