

Widowed Father Holds onto Faith through Jill's House Family Spotlight: The Woodlins



Gary Woodlin shares how Jill's House helps keep his faith alive after the sudden loss of his beloved wife.

connected, keeps me holding onto my faith, is the experience my son has at Jill's House. When he's there, I know he's at a place that is spiritual, that believes in the Lord. That keeps me connected, prevents me from totally turning around."

When Gary Woodlin's wife Antonia died suddenly last year at the age of 38, he was heartbroken and alone as the sole provider for his son Christian, 9, who has autism. "I just couldn't understand why God, who gave us Christian, would take away my helper," said Gary. "That created some dark days, some frustrations and some doubts.

"Even though my wife has passed on, I still know God is powerful. The fact that He is powerful, loving and kind hasn't changed. What has changed, though, is how I think He feels about me. But one thing that keeps me



Antonia would have loved how independent her child, Christian, has become at Jill's House.

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he's been visiting Jill's House. They love him, but they don't baby him. That is the one wish Antonia had -- that Christian would learn independence and begin to do many things himself. I am sure she's smiling down on him with such pride; she loved him so much."

Gary and his wife both served our country, and Gary is still in the military. Alternating deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq, one of them was always home to care for Christian. "When Antonia passed, Christian became very clingy," said Gary. "I would explain that mommy got sick; she went to the hospital, and now she's in heaven. He sometimes asks, "No more Mommy?" so I know he is beginning to understand.

"Christian's regular visits to Jill's House also help him become more secure. When I drop him off on a Friday night, he knows that I will come back. I won't leave him, too. Best of all is how much more independent he has become in the past year since

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