

A long time ago, before I was even aware of Hamden Hall, a group of people got together one evening to celebrate a Passover seder. And what a diverse group of people we were: two very liberal scientists; a former nun and her professional musician husband whose day job was in sales; a US Government officer whose agency at that time was the IRS and his wife who was beginning an early childhood career. We did have one or two things in common. At least one person in each of these unions was Jewish, we all had young children and in our own way, we each wanted to make the world a little better for having lived in it. It was at this seder that Jon and I met Barbara and Irwin Beitch and their lovely little curly headed daughter, Debbie. The big topic of conversation that evening was the anticipated arrival in the fall of their newly adopted son, Jonathan Eric Beitch.... Ricky.

I remember Ricky as an adorable little boy with a great smile. He had some obstacles to overcome in adjusting to his new world but he was an exuberant little boy. I remember his very shy smile whenever I complimented him on his beautiful art work. Ricky was a challenging child and it was not always an easy task for Barbara and Irwin raising him, particularly when they had to exercise tough love.

The years went by and I didn't see very much of Ricky except at graduations and other state occasions, but when we did see him he was always respectful of Jon and me and we had some lovely quiet conversations. He grew up and became a father. But it wasn't until he lost his Dad, I realized what a wonderful young man he had become. He had turned his life around. His love and consistent support for his mother and his family were evident to everyone.

And now I think back to those years when we were young and wanted to make the world a better place. I believe this world is a bit better because Irwin, Debbie and Ricky, for however much time they had, were in it. Throughout their lives they touched many who will remember them, and in the end, I believe loving and caring for each other is what really makes all the difference.