



An open letter from Susan Rizk

Susan Rizk

October 25, 2006

I would like to give thanks for all the support during this last year after the brutal attack I endured at the hands of my daughter's father, Steve Wasserman. There have been so many people that have contributed to my fast and miraculous recovery during this past year. We still have a long road ahead of us. I am so grateful for the Lord who spared my life and how He used so many different people in so many different ways.

I would first like to thank Ricky Martinez, Donna Kingman and the entire South Lake Tahoe Police Department. Also Kim Deeley and the entire South Lake Tahoe Fire Department. These people not only helped me but they also helped my daughter, specifically, Greg Almos from the El Dorado Sheriff's Department, the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and the chaplain from Calvary Chapel. The kind people who went into my home and cleaned up the mess as I am sure it was something they never wanted to see, and friends that packed up my belongings and moved them to a safe place. I know there were also many other people that were involved, and you know who you are and I am eternally grateful for all have done. I am sorry if I miss anyone in this letter.

I would like to thank the emergency room doctors and nursing staff at Barton Memorial Hospital who saved my life by stabilizing me as much as they could to get me ready for my flight to Washoe Medical Center for emergency surgery. Also, Washoe Medical Center doctors and staff who took very good care of me and my family during the two-month stay there. Also, I am thankful for all the cards, letters and flowers that were sent to me there which I still have! I am so grateful for my family at Sierra Community Church who rallied in prayer for my life and did not lose faith. What a mighty God we have!!!

With the help of ALL at Sierra Community Church, Pastor Rex McQuillen was at Washoe Medical Center every single day in the beginning to make sure my family was taken care of with lodging, food and any other expenses. Dan Blackwell was instrumental in organizing fundraisers that also helped my family as they had to take off work to be with me and provided food, lodging and so many other things needed during this ordeal. I would like to thank the children's ministry at our church who did bake sales and made jewelry on our behalf. Thank you to the T-shirt company, Sierra Shirts, who made and donated the shirts " Miracles Happen" to raise money along with our church's tape ministry that made music CD's of our worship team for donation to help in my family's needs.

My father and mother, brother and sisters who never left me alone. This has been very hard on all of you and I am so sorry for what you have had to go through during all of this. Even though my daughter and I were the actual victims that day and had our own experience of fear and terror, you also went through your own experiences. What a scary time for you all. I can't even begin to imagine the fear you had. My twin sister, Lisa Fischer, who was always with me at Washoe Medical Center, which her employer let her go (very sad at the time but the Lord had better plans for her). She put up with my bad days with love, patience and kindness. When I am scared, you always stop everything and come to my rescue. You help me more than I could possibly tell you.

I want to thank the Griffith family, Dan, Brandie and children, who willingly and lovingly opened their home to take care of my daughter as all my immediate family were constantly at the hospital and she needed a stable and loving home as she was dealing with this tragic day. I cannot think of a better family that I would have chosen to provide for her what she needed during this horrible time. The Griffith family also opened their home for my twin sister, my daughter and me to stay with them until I was physically and emotionally able to move on my own.

Schyler Beaty from the police department used his days off and moved me into my new place; what a gift he has been. Schyler also purchased Christmas presents paid for by the South Lake Tahoe Police Officer's Association for my

children so they would have a great Christmas. Thanks so much, Schyler, for your kindness. Maria Christ, owner of Kindertown Preschool, for her raising funds for Harmony's Christmas presents and the parents and staff who donated money and wrapped all the gifts. She would also kindly take care of my daughter at the drop of a hat. I needed that so much as Harmony has attended that preschool since 18 months old and that was considered her second home as a child of a working parent. I would like to thank Emerald Bay Towing for turning over property from the attacker's vehicle to us which they were not obligated to do. It's in a safe place for our needs to be met in an emergency. Thank you!

I would also like to express much gratitude for my hand surgeon Kirk Kaiser from Reno Orthopedic Center and my hand therapist Jana Mortellaro from Barton Memorial Hospital. Jana has done an exceptional job at getting my hands functional through all these months of therapy. She has not only been a professional in my recovery but has also become a dear friend. She is a great listener and keeps up to date on my life and has helped me overcome a lot of things that she is not even aware of doing. God Bless her and I will sure miss her when I complete therapy.

The staff at Emerald Bay Physical therapy (Haideh, Rick, Micayla and Kristen) has also been wonderful to me during rehabilitation on my knee that was cut in half during the attack with helping me strengthen it and they always lent an ear when I needed to vent. When I was having a tough day and not being such a nice person, they did not take it personal and did not judge me for those hard times. Thanks, Micayla, for all your time and effort on the church Web site updates on my recovery and letting people know of the prayer needs of my family. What a blessing you have been.

Also Dr. Stephen Bannar and his staff have been so kind to me and my daughter during our visits to Tahoe Fracture. My counselor, whom I choose not to name, is a big part of this healing process for Harmony and me while we recover from post-traumatic stress disorder as the result of what we endured that day. Thank you, Jill Morse, El Dorado County Victims of Violent Crimes, for recommending her to us and for all you have done to help meet our needs during this time. I want to thank Tony Sears and all the staff at the El Dorado County District Attorney's office who did a great job on the case and always looked out for our best interest. Your office has also been so kind to let me get my feelings off my chest as a victim of this crime and when I would get upset you were all so gentle hearted and went above and beyond the call of duty in this case.

The owners at Tahoe Gymnastics donated a year of continued instruction for Harmony at their business which has helped my daughter focus on the gifts the Lord has given her and put her attention to positive things that she loves, I am so thankful for that. May the Lord bless you for your kindness.

Bobbie Cole, owner of Alpine Rentals, who did not charge rent at the apartment where this took place, while I was in the hospital. Bobbie, you are a wonderful person and I have so much respect for you for what you did not have to do for me, you are so kind. You also have relocated us into a wonderful house that we absolutely love. Thanks so much for your love and concern for us.

The owner's of R & R Appraisals, Rick and Randee Pelcher, for taking over my job duties and not replacing me. Thank you so much for all you have done and your understanding of my disabilities and your willingness not to replace me while I recover. Not too many people would be willing to do that. You are both not only my bosses but I consider you part of my family. I don't know what I would do without you both.

I would like to express gratitude for the people I have not mentioned as I don't know your names. I know there were people behind the scenes praying, lighting candles and keeping us in your thoughts. And, this community of wonderful people still continue to ask how we are doing and offer all kinds of help. The smiles, kind words, unconditional love, and encouragement that I receive on a daily basis are all the ways that the Lord has used, as I said before, so many people in so many ways, which has carried me for this last year. I will be forever grateful to everyone.

Thank you to the Tahoe Daily Tribune for all your stories and efforts in keeping this community up to date on the events.

As a born-again Christian and a recovering alcoholic, I urge anyone who is struggling with fear and life issues that leave you hopeless, to reach out to people in your struggles. There are a lot of resources in this community, which I am so grateful for, and I urge you to find a church family that you can share your pain and sorrows with and allow people to come into your life and help you. NOTHING is too big for the Lord to handle. Jesus Christ has overcome the world and

His grace will get you through anything you have before you, by faith in the ONE and only true living God. This is what I have done in the past five years of my life despite the hard road I have had to travel, in many areas of my life, including this tragic day. These past five years have been the best part of my life by far. As our Pastor Dan Wilvers said it last week, "The church is not a hotel for the well and wonderful, it's a hospital for the sick. Come to Him empty handed and he will fill you." What a profound statement.

I am proud to be part of this community. As this next year unfolds for us, my prayer and hope is that we have continued thoughts and prayers on our behalf. We have a long way to go to put this behind us. May God bless you richly and abundantly as you all have done for Harmony and I.

Thank you,

Susan Rizk

[BACK](#) 