

The Peale, Baltimore

Out of the Blocks Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the Out of the Blocks website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>



Mike ([00:01](#)):

Hello, I'm Mike and I'm at Deepdene Road, 622.

Carolyn ([00:05](#)):

I'm Carolyn. I'm also at 622. I'm Mike's wife. We have a 22-year-old still living with us.

Justin DuPont ([00:12](#)):

Justin DuPont, 622 Deepdene Road.

Carolyn ([00:15](#)):

He's very shy and he's very kind, very kind.

Justin DuPont ([00:19](#)):

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I don't really know how to describe myself, but I guess I am quiet and want to say things in few words.

Carolyn ([00:29](#)):

I kind of thought we'd be empty nesters by now. Instead, we're perpetual parents and we have twins who are 15. They came to us from outside of the family, but we're all one family now, we're blended together.

Christian ([00:44](#)):

Hi, my name is Christian.

Nick Von Schnell ([00:45](#)):

I'm Nick Von Schnell, I'm 14 years old going on 15, going to high school at Friends.

Christian ([00:51](#)):

And I was at Odyssey and now I'm going into ninth grade at Jemicy.

Carolyn ([00:55](#)):

Their father and Mike were high school buddies.

Mike ([00:58](#)):

And he is a very good friend of mine. We both went to Baltimore Polytechnic, but unfortunately he died from cancer. Now he wanted me to be the guardian for his boys and I said, "Yeah, I'd be honored."

Christian ([01:12](#)):

So, that's how we ended up on this block.

Nick Von Schnell ([01:14](#)):

My dad was diagnosed with cancer. He was in and out of the hospital so frequently until he essentially just dumped into a hospice. And then a few months afterwards, he died. And then my life began going into further down spiral. My mom had type 1 diabetes and she would constantly forget to take her insulin or take too much insulin or something and she would go into tantrum like moments where her actions were basically unreadable. And then I'm not sure what happened. We're all probably just assuming that it was like something diabetic, but she died in a car crash.

Mike ([01:56](#)):

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Who would have thought that both parents would be gone? I remember on the sad day when the mother was declared dead and a pastor came and she asked if we would take them. I turned to Carolyn and said, "Can we take them?" and Carol said, "Yeah." She put two thumbs up. "Yeah, we'll take them."

Christian ([02:17](#)):

Well, they became like every other mother and father, like my biological ones, nice caring and loving and wanting to do the best for us.

Nick Von Schnell ([02:28](#)):

It's been a really rocky road. I do struggle with frustration and depression and the negative emotions, but that's just the human experience.

Mike ([02:35](#)):

They're still getting over it. It gets... the pain is less and less every year and we do things like go to the graveyard. We don't want to forget. You want not to have the pain, but you want to keep the memories. So the boys are always afraid they're going to forget.

Christian ([02:53](#)):

I was mostly nervous when I started hearing I was trying to be the perfect child. After maybe a couple of months, I got used to living here and I started to relax more.

Mike ([03:10](#)):

You like the piano?

Christian ([03:12](#)):

Yes. I like it a lot for it's very interesting tones.

Christian ([03:25](#)):

It's called "Faraway Bells" just a small practice piece.

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