

November 1, 2015

When someone you know loses a child (at any age & for any reason) the first emotions you feel are heartbreak and despair and truly wonder how they will move forward with that sense of unimaginable loss in their life. I know that's what I felt the first time I heard Brigette's story and the loss of her successful and beautiful daughter, Amalia .

As a mother, school / psychiatric registered nurse myself I was beyond moved at the strength Brigette had to share Amalia's heartbreaking story yet at the same time found myself encouraged by the message of HOPE she sent to those in the audience. She took her loss of her precious daughter and turned it into a message of prevention, education and most of all hope for those who may be going through the same situation.....especially those who continue to feel shamed by the stigma that mental health and substance abuse still carry with their titles today.

I have only the utmost confidence that through Brigette & Amalia's story those who hear it are moved, inspired and know it's safe to ask for help no matter their situation. We as a society need to change the conversation from a hurtful stigma to one of understanding, caring and most of all HOPE....just as Amalia would want. We have the opportunity to learn from her devastating loss and the outreach path that her Mom has chosen.....this is what will truly help change our society for the better.

I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to get to know Brigette through Amalia's story but I am more blessed to call her my friend & mentor today and one of the most amazing advocates for Mental Health & Substance Abuse awareness. She has truly taken her own tragedy to make an amazing difference for those of us still fortunate enough to have the young people in our worlds.

Respectfully,

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