

PARENTING

Van's crash reveals face of true love

A few weeks ago, on a golden autumn afternoon, my daughter, Teresa, and I picked up my son, Bobby, at his school.

Shortly after dismissal, a mother, arriving in front of the school to pick up her child, lost control of her minivan. The van jumped the curb a few feet from where we were standing and began driving through a crowd of parents, teachers, students and the principal. I watched in horror as I saw my friend Maureen struck by the van. Seconds later, the school principal, Mr. Bricketto, was also struck and knocked to the ground as he was pushing children out of the van's path. I saw a mother take her child and throw her into the arms of another mother to keep her from getting hit. This mother was then struck and dragged underneath the van. A pine tree finally stopped the out-of-control van, pinning the mother underneath it.

When I saw that my children were safe, I ran over to Maureen who was pleading that we find her daughter, Christine. By the time I ran over to the van, Mr. Bricketto was already there. The mother couldn't be moved in case of spinal cord injury, so Mr. Bricketto steered and eased the van off of the mother as those of us there lifted up the back of the van. In absolute terror, I looked underneath the van praying to God that I would not see Christine's face or any other child's alongside the injured mother — who I then realized was Nancy, the mother of one of my son's classmates.

As heart-wrenching as it was to see Nancy, I was relieved there wasn't a child under the van. I was also relieved that there were three nurses on the scene — two were mothers of students who moments before were in the minivan's path and were now treating Nancy.

Meanwhile, the rest of us tried to make sense of what had happened. We learned that the van's driver lost control of her vehicle when she saw that her second-grader was just about to slam the door on her 4-year-old daughter's hand. In her panic, she thought she was slamming her foot on the brake but hit the gas pedal instead.

When the paramedics arrived, Nancy was airlifted to an intensive-care unit where she remained in critical condition for 10 days. Through prayer and Nancy's remark-



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

David Sessions, 2, picks out a pumpkin Oct. 16 at Gro-Moore Farms, Henrietta, while shopping with his mom, Nancy, of Chili.



family matters

By EILEEN MARX

ably brave spirit, she was finally released from the hospital last week to begin extensive physical therapy. Maureen was taken to a local hospital where she was treated for two hip fractures. Mr. Bricketto finally agreed to have his shoulder X-rayed only after everyone was taken care of.

Following the accident, many of the neighborhood mothers and children who were at the accident scene, gathered at our friend Maria's house so we could all be together. We prayed for everyone involved. And then we talked about how it could have easily been any one of us driving the van or getting hit by it. We've all had our days when we're the mother doing all the wrong things. We want to believe that we're the perfect parent who never makes mistakes, who's always on time and whose patience never runs out. But we know better.

We're also the mother doing all the right things. We're picking up our children from

school and holding their hands as we ask about their days. We're following all the rules of safety in the place we feel the safest and still the unthinkable happens. In truth, most days we're both mothers. We're filled up with stress, commitments and pressures but we're also filled up with a love and a protective instinct for our children that runs so deep it can almost be terrifying. It's this love that caused one mother to protect a daughter whose hand was about to be caught in a door and another mother to save a daughter's life while risking her own.

The images of the accident have been difficult to erase from my mind these past few weeks. But in recent days they are being replaced with the more powerful images of a community that has reached out with love and kindness.

The images of children being pushed out of harm's way are now the images I find most comforting. Without a thought, Nancy risked her life to save the life of her daughter. I saw how our principal risked his life to save the lives of his students as if they were his own children.

In the months ahead, as Nancy, Maureen, Mr. Bricketto and their families struggle with emotional and physical pain, anxiety and confusion, may they never lose sight of the gift of love and life they shared on that afternoon. In their most difficult hours, may they find comfort in the words Jesus spoke in the Gospel of John: "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Marx lives in Lawrenceville, N.J., with her husband and two children.

Guardian Angels plans alternative Halloween party

Looking for a less spooky but still enjoyable way to for your children to celebrate Halloween this year? Some parents at Guardian Angels Church in Henrietta may have a solution.

The parish at 2061 E. Henrietta Road will host its second annual All Saints Eve Festival Friday, Oct. 31, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The night will include a brief talk in the church about the meaning of All Hallows Eve, then a procession in cos-

time — preferably as a saint or a biblical character — into the gym for such game as "Knocking Down the Walls of Jerico," "Golfing St. Michael's Maze" and the "Moses Basketball Toss," and can also make craft items.

"Cost" for the night is one bag of candy per child, with a three-bag maximum per family. The candy will be added to candy and gifts bought for the night, then distributed among the children at the end of the evening.

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NOVEMBER BINGO CALENDAR

SPECIAL PAID ADVERTISEMENT ■ CALL FOR HOLIDAY CANCELLATIONS

BINGO

SUNDAY	7:30 pm Holy Family Church	Water Tower Park, Rochester	716-235-0860
	7:30 pm St. Boniface Church	15 Whalin St., Rochester	716-271-1488
	7:30 pm St. Rita Church	New Location...Knights of Columbus, Barrett Dr., Webster	716-671-1100
MONDAY	7:30 pm St. Jude the Apostle Church	4100 Lyell Rd., Rochester	716-247-4322
TUESDAY	10:00 am Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church	Bingo Palace, Rochester	716-467-2725
	7:30 pm St. Helens Church	Gales Center Bingo, Weolmer Plaza	716-236-1210
WEDNESDAY	7:30 pm Holy Family Home School Assoc.	Water Tower Park, Rochester	716-235-0860
SATURDAY	12:30 pm Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church	Bingo Palace, Rochester	716-467-2725
	7:30 pm Good Shepherd Church	3288 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester	716-334-3518
	8:00 pm St. Thomas the Apostle Church	41 Colebrook Dr., Rochester	716-226-2343