

## Even the saddest story can have a humorous ending

By: Robert Musial, Of The Oakland Press  
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**The calls always start the same way. You say "hello" and there's that annoying little pause as the automatic dialer switches the call to the next available telemarketer.**

**But this time, the call ended differently, in a way that may cheer anyone who's ever been bothered by one of these interruptions.**

In the Troy office building last week, people were busy with the final details for Monday's golf fund-raiser and raffle, so when the phone rang, event planner Renee Scarponi grabbed it.

The guy was selling Internet access and long distance service through Sprint and wanted to speak to Denise Rondo, the owner of Special D Events, the firm setting up the fund-raiser.

Scarponi looked around. Everyone was busy and she knew Rondo had no time for this.

Still, she listened and when the guy paused for a breath, she told him why everyone was so busy.

They were working for a nonprofit foundation that gives out college scholarships and grants to fight drunken driving. It's a foundation named for a local girl who was killed by a drunken driver.

Scarponi then asked the guy if he wanted to buy a raffle ticket to support a good cause.

The guy, calling from Kansas City, said yes. As they talked, he wrote out a check and promised to mail it. After all, for \$50, it was a chance to win a 53-inch TV. And he wanted to prove he wasn't just any telemarketer.

After she hung up the phone, Scarponi smiled.

"He was calling to sell us something and we ended up selling him something."

It was a funny moment amid the work for a serious cause.

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You see, Ashley Marie Easterbrook was the kind of daughter that every parent should have. A smart kid, an honor roll student, who had planned to study nursing at the University of Michigan. The kind of girl who tutored other kids, helped fellow students work out their problems and came to every girls' soccer game at Troy High School.

All that ended on June 3, 1997, when, just four days before graduating, Ashley was killed by a speeding drunk driver at Long Lake and Crooks roads. Two friends in the car also were killed instantly.

A few hours later, the 33-year-old Auburn Hills woman behind the wheel of the speeding Firebird also died, leaving behind an 11-year-old daughter.

Four grieving families.

Also left behind was a journal in which Ashley wrote of her fear of drunken drivers and her hopes that none of her friends or family would ever be harmed by one. So Ashley's dad, David Easterbrook, created the Foundation for Ashley's Dream to try to make something good out of every parent's nightmare.

That's who's having the memorial scholarship event Monday at the Indianwood Golf and Country Club in Lake Orion.

There's also a silent auction for airline tickets and sports memorabilia and a \$50,000 prize if someone shoots a hole-in-one. Plus a raffle for a new Chrysler Sebring LXi and, of course, that big TV.

If the guy in Kansas City wins it, wonder if he'll believe it when they call?

For information on the event, call (800) 790-1806.

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