

*Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.*

Helen Keller

Linda and Bob Samele braced themselves as they approached the door to the hospital room. *Keep calm*, Linda told herself as she reached for the knob. *You don't want to upset him any more than he already is.*

That sleety afternoon of December 23, 1988, their 15-year-old son, Chris, had been riding with five friends from the Sameles' hometown of Torrington, Connecticut, to nearby Waterbury. Suddenly, the teenagers' laughter turned to screams as their car skidded on an icy patch and slammed into a guardrail. Three of the kids, including Chris, were catapulted out the rear window. One died instantly, another was seriously injured.

Chris had been found sitting on the median, staring with dazed eyes at a torrent of blood gushing from his left thigh. Twenty feet away was his left leg, severed through the knee by a guardrail cable. He was rushed to