

Montana Perspectives

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THE DAILY INTER LAKE

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What a woman

By SHELLEY DORAN

Anyone in the Flathead that is or was involved with family court knew how much Susan Christofferson was LOVED and by so many.

She had a way about her that made parents know there was hope. Susan knew how important it was for the children to have a relationship with both parents and made it possible for so many of us to see and spend time with them.

When I and my family got to see our grandchild at the Nurturing Center, Susan made us feel like we were at home. She sat with us and watched our child play with his family. She allowed me to bring dinner for all of us to eat together. Susan was one of those people you could and wanted to wrap your arms around and knew that she was doing her best and would do better if she could.

I met Susan five years ago, and she became a dear friend to me and my family and we are going to miss one of the finest people in the world. She was one to stand by her word and we will be lost without her.

Please, people of Flathead

County, let's remember what she was all about. She promoted and helped keep family and children together and for them to have a loving relationship with both parents. Our child loved his time with Susan, as well as with us, and was full of hugs and kisses for all. We were one of the lucky families that got to know and share time with Susan. All the children that came to the Nurturing Center loved Susan and the love Susan gave to them was special, like no other.

Since meeting Susan in her professional environment, we spent many hours talking about children. We talked mainly about our own situation but many others as well. After talking to her, I was going to make a fuss about how unfair the system is, creating attention for myself and others in similar circumstances and become the best advocate for one's wrongful loss of rights that she had ever seen.

That was six weeks ago. Not knowing that I/we were going to lose the best friend we had on our side. My heart is broken today. I will use her words for HEALING... Goodbye on this side, my friend.

Doran is a resident of Columbia Falls.

A true hero

By DUANE DIERENFELD

I am sad to see Susan Christofferson of the Nurturing Center is gone from this community, as she passed away recently. She was and still is a true hero of our community. The love and passion for children and the gift of her skills to bring families together was such a blessing.

So many people have been affected by her in a way that can never be measured. Susan had a lot of wisdom and knowledge to help families reunite in a positive way that led to healthy relationships.

My daughter and I have had a personal experience with Susan by reuniting us. I was in a time of recovery a few years ago of substance abuse and by making bad choices in the past, I lost the relationship with my daughters. Susan was able to bring one of my daughters and I together in a way to where we now have a solid father-daughter relationship. She personally taught me patience, held me accountable, how to look at perspectives

from a child's eyes, how not to put children in the middle of their divorcing or divorced parents, and she encouraged me at times when I felt discouraged.

She never took sides of either parent. She was always on the side of the child and their best interest. The positive relationship that my daughter and I now share is having a positive effect in our community in so many ways.

I will personally miss Susan as a teacher, counselor, and as a friend. My daughter and I are living testimony of Susan's hard work. I ask that people will donate funds in honor of Susan to the Nurturing Center by continuing the hard work she and the staff have put in place for our community. Donations will only help by investing in the children's future and community as a whole. Thanks to Susan and the staff of The Nurturing Center for your hard work by investing into the families.

Susan will greatly be missed.

Dierenfeld is a resident of Kalispell.