“Beyond the Dream: Building Communities through Servant-Leadership”

Amy Biehl’s journey to South Africa began with her heart full of confidence and wonder of learning and helping the people of a tragic political decision, apartheid. The ambitions of helping the South Africans brought her to a place of political unrest and racial discrimination, putting her life in constant peril. Her cause had given her mental and emotional security, believing that these people would be able to see that she was only there to lend a helping hand.

Amy Biehl stayed at the Western Cape Town University in Cape Town, South Africa, working in underprivileged communities. She was deeply involved in helping the poor blacks in that area, and she was totally immersed in her work. She also helped with the registration of voters for the first all-race elections for the coming year, forwarding her goal of people’s rights and democracy. Her ebullience touched many people’s lives, letting them see that this “white” girl from an upper-class American family would be on their side in this rigorous struggle for justice.

Even though many people knew of Amy’s good deeds, those people were a minority. Taking a friend home in the midst of a protest against “settlers” (white), Amy Biehl was an innocent target. She was pelted with bricks and stabbed in the heart by the same people she worked so loyally to defend. Amy died in the land she wished to change for the better, and with her death, South Africa’s situation had drawn more attention. Her ruthless murderers were convicted, later regretting their actions.
In 1998, the four murderers of Amy Biehl were released, a decision endorsed by the Biehls. This act, that most parents would never support, gave the Biehls closure. Their daughter continued to teach her family about the need for acceptance with her death. Her death brought her family to the land in which she fought and sacrificed. To continue the work of their beloved daughter, Peter and Linda Biehl had founded the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust, which has given $5 million to social programs and business projects in and around Cape Town since 1997.

After being released, two of the four convicted murderers were hired to work for the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust. Amy’s parents knew that forgiving the murderers and helping them succeed would be one of Amy’s wishes. Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu said in a prepared statement, “What was so remarkable was that they not only forgave the killers of their daughter, but that they went so far as to rehabilitate them.”

Amy Biehl was a young ardent supporter of human rights, and her goals are slowly being accomplished by the foundation. She not only gave many other people the reason and the willpower to fight, but also a reason for her family to continue her dream of giving to the unfortunate. Amy wanted to make a difference in the world, and she accomplished it in ways no one thought possible.
A Better World

If you open the door and peer outside
What do you see?

A street?
A neighborhood?
A community?

If you look inside yourself what can you find?

A heart?
A soul?
An accepting mind?

To create a better world today
There are many things to be done.

Things that we can all do
That benefits everyone.

Reach out with your soul
And try to see

That there is no difference between
You and me.

With this new knowledge
You have opened your eyes

To the world that surrounds you
And the potential it hides.

Through hours of work
And service to all

We can see the hatred
Begin to fall.

And together as one
A community of many colors
We can all realize
We are sisters and brothers.

With all the same feelings
With all the same flaws

We can all work
For the same cause.

So the change begins now
Working hand in hand

As we all learn to accept
Our fellow man.
I wonder sometimes
If before we could talk,
When we could only listen
But not comprehend
If maybe the world
Was monochromatic

Then, I think not.

I think that the world
Was much, much more colorful
That all we could see were
A person’s eyes
A thousand flecks of red
Or gold, or blue, or gray

Then we understood.

Times when voices of equality
Were laced with hypocrisy;
Stained with the animosity towards fellow men.
When more often than not
One was too little
To soften the blow

And we repeated.

But little by little,
That one grew to ten
 Those ten to a thousand kindhearted men
 Who could see a man’s soul
 Through the sea of his eyes
 And see the tears rushing, streaming by

So we listen again.

Every person has his teacher
And mine is my dad
He taught me to value
The mind of a person beyond
The first glance, and the second and third
Because people are diverse and each is unique
And I watched.

My father spends
Every Monday through Sunday
Helping people who cannot help themselves
He uses the law to give people hope
Treating one person
Just like the next

And I wished.

My dad sees the soul, not just the face
And he listens before he judges
He wishes people could see past fear and anger and see
That difference is beautiful.
Martin Luther King discovered this hope
And I wish more people would dare to dream.