



**ERIN
HARREL**

of Cape Coral
is the mother
of three children

What about ...?

My kids' questions led us to **an unusual New Year's** resolution

In December, I wrote about the importance of giving the gift of quality time. But when my children read it, they responded differently than I expected.

What about Hannah, our 8-year-old Riley asked. How would her mom feel about the article? Jude, 10, went on to ask how I thought the mother of a soldier in Iraq would feel.

I was stunned at their perceptive interpretation of the article. I was simply stressing the importance of making time to really enjoy and listen to your children. Something we all too often forget to do.

However, as my children pointed out, many people would be unable to do this. Six-year-old Hannah Grant was hit by a vehicle in mid August. She's has been comatose ever since, and the prognosis does not seem to be changing.

My heartstrings tore as Riley's eyes welled up, and huge tears formed as she thought of the suffering the Grants have endured. I began to sob with her as I realized our friends' lives were changed forever. Yet, finding 20 quality minutes with each of my children sometimes seems impossible.

Jude has followed the war in Iraq closely and often asks what happens to the families of the soldiers while they are at war. I try to tell him gently that they have to continue on with their lives without that family member for months.

Jude often pries further, inquiring about soldiers who are mothers and



Photos.com

"That day, I realized my children ... are genuinely sincere and compassionate."

■ ERIN HARREL, ABOUT HER KIDS


fathers with children at home. I have little advice or solace to offer him other than to continue to pray for their safe return and the families who wait for them.

That day, I realized my children, although they don't always listen and often argue more than necessary, are genuinely sincere and compassionate little people.

We continued to discuss how we could help families who can't spend time with their loved ones in the

ways we can.

Jude and Riley asked if they could donate their allowance to help make Hannah better or to help soldiers return to their families safely. I agreed to match their allowance with an additional donation over the next few months. Hence, we decided as a family not to make a New Year's resolution but a New Year's donation to those families who so desperately need our help.

Along with many prayers and well wishes, we resolve to donate to the Hannah Grant Fund and the Give 2 the Troops organization. And I encourage all families to enjoy the time we have together. 

— Donations for the Hannah Grant Fund can be made at Wachovia bank. Give 2 the Troops can be found online at give2thetroops.org.