



THE INSPIRING STORY OF MARIA PE

 Zaneta Encarnacion

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As a new year begins, many of us embark on new beginnings that may consist of healthier eating, recommitting to a regular exercise regimen, new careers and, sometimes, an unexpected new dream and aspiration.

In 2012, Otay Ranch resident Maria Pe was embarking on a new journey of healing. That previous summer, Pe's two sons Sean and Kyle were killed tragically. Life stopped for Pe, and the pain of the loss seemed

unbearable.

Sean and Kyle had been Pe's inspiration ever since they came into her life in 1996 and 1998. They taught her a lot about sharing and giving of oneself. And soon after losing them, Pe started the Sean and Kyle Imagine Fund in order to continue to promote their ideals of peace, love, excellence and integrity, and to make a difference in the community "one person at a time."

"As hard as it may be to understand, this unimaginable loss in my life is actually a new beginning for me. It has opened my heart, mind and soul to the possibilities and realities beyond our physical existence, and has started me on a new path and purpose for the remainder of my life."

Since then the Sean and Kyle Imagine Fund created Kyle's Court at Bonita Vista Middle School – a complete re-pavement, repair and resurfacing of the school's basketball court. It also funded a student-led and designed Imagine Mural in honor of Sean at High Tech High Chula Vista, the school he attended. Other projects include the Kyle 21 Memorial Football Scholarships and the Peace Leadership League, a high school group dedicated to learning and spreading the message of peace throughout the world.

In 2014, Pe will be sharing her story in her book "Journey to the Upper Realm: How I Survived the Deaths of My Sons and Learned to Communicate with Them on the Other Side" to help and give hope to others who have experienced profound loss. (The book is available for free at www.seanandkyleimaginefund.com and will soon be available in hard copy on Amazon.)

Pe has lived in Chula Vista since 1969. She raised her boys in this community and continues to give back locally through the Sean & Kyle Imagine Fund and as a founding member of the Chula Vista Charitable Foundation.

May her journey and new beginnings be an inspiration to all. Happy New Year!

Zaneta Encarnacion is director of the Chula Vista Charitable Foundation.