

NORTHERN CONNECTION

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**Wexford Resident
Traci Kovacic is Turning
Her Devastating Loss
Into a Mission To
Help Others**

Plus...

- Shopping Local This Holiday Season
- St. Alexis Dedicates New Church
- Holiday Worship Guide

*Photo taken at Double Tree Cranberry
courtesy of 5427 Digital Media*

Give the Gift of PEACE of MIND

BY JANICE LANE PALKO

Traci Kovacic of Riverfront Financial in Ingomar knows well how important it is to be adequately covered by life insurance. Sadly, in 2015 Traci lost her husband, Mike, unexpectedly and inexplicably. She and Mike were both 2001 North Allegheny graduates but did not date in high school. It was only when she moved to Denver and shared an apartment with several roommates, including Mike, that their friendship blossomed into love and they were married. When they started their family, Mike and Traci moved back to Pittsburgh to be near family. In 2012, Traci joined Riverfront Financial, the insurance and financial planning business her father-in-law, Joseph E. Kovacic, started in 2002 after working 28 years in the industry.

"When I first began with Joe in the business, my vision was to explain life insurance to families in a way that they understood—essentially how I would want it explained to me," said Traci. "I wanted families to leave our meetings feeling knowledgeable and comfortable with the policies discussed—and not feel overwhelmed and confused."

While Traci can explain and advise on the intricacies of life insurance, her expertise surpasses that because she knows from personal experience how important it is to be insured. "On October 25, 2015, I suddenly lost my husband when he collapsed and died at the finish line of a 10-mile race. He was 32 years old and very healthy. Our daughter, Josie, was two weeks away from her third birthday and our son, Calvin, was just five months old," Traci said. They have never been able to determine a cause of death.

Like many young families, Traci and Mike were living paycheck to paycheck and had little in savings. Mike was the family's breadwinner and when he died, Traci and her children not only lost a beloved husband and father, but they also lost their main source of financial support. "No one thinks something like this is going to happen to them. My world was turned upside down. When Mike died, there were no more paychecks. You get no severance package from work when someone dies. I was struggling just to survive; paying bills was the last thing on my mind," Traci said.

While Traci's world had shattered, the outside world continued on. "Just one week after Mike's death, I received a notice

At this time of year, our thoughts turn to gift-giving; we mull over what to give our loved ones. But before you hit "place order" on Amazon or take out that plastic card to swipe it through the card reader at the store, there's something you could purchase that may be above any other gift and that is the gift of security provided by life insurance.

Photo taken at Streets of Cranberry courtesy of 5427 Digital Media

from our health insurer that if I couldn't pay out-of-pocket for our coverage, it would be cancelled," Traci said. In addition, mortgage and car payments and utility bills still came due. Final costs for Mike's funeral and burial came to \$30,000 alone.

Mike had a life insurance policy through work that was equal to one year's salary. Most of that went to his final expenses and just keeping Traci and her children in their home until they figured out how to live without Mike. Thankfully, Mike had also made sure that the family was further protected with additional life insurance.

"I told Mike when he added the additional insurance that I hope it's a waste of money, that he'll never have to use it, but if his family ever needed it, the additional life insurance would be the best investment, he'd ever made," said Joe. "Turns out it was."

"Life insurance eliminates a lot of stress," said Traci. "It pays immediately, and it is tax-free to the main beneficiary. Having

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additional life insurance has allowed me to move into a townhouse and receive an income each month." But more important than that, it bought Traci time. "I desperately needed time to

readapt to life without Mike and to figure out the next steps for my kids and me."

Unfortunately, many people are not insured or underinsured. "There's a lot of myths surrounding life insurance including the one that it's expensive, but that's not true. You can't afford not to have insurance. Also, we're brokers, and we can shop around to find the right policy for you," Traci said.

Riverfront Financial also advises insuring a stay-at-home parent. "You must consider how much it would cost to cover all the responsibilities a stay-at-home parent has," said Traci. Also, it may be wise to insure children. "Taking out a policy on a child locks in insurability for the rest of the child's life."

Losing Mike not only changed Traci's personal life, it changed how she views her career. My old approach was to present the various policies available, but now I want to share my story. I want people to know that when you come to Riverfront Financial, you are getting personal care. This is a family business and though we are casual and comfortable here, we are very professional, and we want you to get the best advice possible."

There is never any obligation to obtain a policy through Riverfront Financial or change what you already have. "We spend a lot of time just reviewing people's current policies and answering questions that they may have about them," Traci said.

In addition to life insurance, Riverfront Financial offers retirement planning, group benefits, key-man life insurance for business owners and college savings plans.

"My goals at Riverfront Financial are three-fold. First, I want



to educate people on the importance of having the right life insurance and planning for the future. Second, I want to make sure that your family has the protection that it needs. Finally, I want to inspire you to take action and not wait until it's too late," Traci said.

"People buy life insurance because they love somebody," said Joe.

If you love someone, this holiday give them the gift of security. Schedule your financial review by calling: (412) 837-2400 or by emailing Traci at: Tkovacic@riverfrontfin.com. Find out more at the new website, which launches in 2018 at www.Riverfrontfinancialpgh.com. ●●●

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Traci Kovacic and her father-in-law, Joseph E. Kovacic of Riverfront Financial