

The Six Pillars of Character provide the road to healing and hope

From Scott Raecker, Director, The Ray Center



Urbandale Mayor Bob Andweg, CHARACTER COUNTS! Founder Michael Josephson, and Scott Raecker with the Six Pillars of Character in Urbandale, Iowa.

The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University is housed in Des Moines, Iowa and many of our team members live in Urbandale, Iowa. These communities are a bit of Americana. Des Moines a thriving urban center attracting young and old alike and Urbandale, a 'small town' suburb with that tight knit community feeling where our neighbors are our friends.

This week, we experienced the horrific tragedy of two of our police officers slain in ambush attacks. Like other communities in America that have been impacted by dreadful grief, we are struggling to come to terms with our new

reality.

At a community vigil on November 4, Urbandale Mayor, Bob Andeweg, shared these powerful words of healing and hope that I thought would be good for our entire country to hear.

"We gather here tonight to mourn the loss—and honor the lives—of two of our heroes—Justin Martin and Tony Beminio.

We all understand that freedom is never free, but how often do we consciously think about it? How often do we take for granted that we live in a peaceful, orderly and secure society? For freedom to flourish, there must be some who are willing to pay the ultimate price. Those are very easy words to say, but few actually live it. Justin and Tony did.

How do we make sense of the senseless events of this past week?

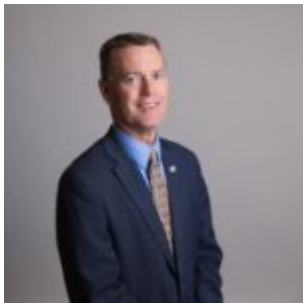
I know I can't. I have struggled all week long to find the right words to say. I've spoken to many of you here in the audience tonight. I've prayed and sought counsel to find discernment in this chaos. We are all struggling. And you know what? That's ok. The wounds tonight are still very fresh, and we all need to grieve. We all need to shed tears. I know I have.

Where do we go from here? After the initial sting of this senseless tragedy wears off, we must all make a commitment that we don't go back to business as usual. We must learn from this—and we must grow from this. We honor Justin and Tony by taking their best characteristics, and we live them.

Urbandale calls itself a CHARACTER COUNTS! community. We have the Six Pillars just up the hill as a visual reminder. Justin and Tony exhibited those characteristics in the way they lived their lives, and in how they died. How can you best honor Justin and Tony after tonight? By incorporating those characteristics into your daily living.

Trustworthiness–Respect–Responsibility–Fairness–Caring–Citizenship. It's very easy to say those words. What is difficult is truly incorporating those words in our daily lives. I'm asking all of you to honor Justin and Tony by not just saying those words, but living those words.

The sun is fading. Darkness is once again setting in. In a few minutes, we will be lighting candles. Let that candlelight be a symbol of this community pulling together to take us out of the darkness of this tragedy into a new day of a caring, committed and compassionate community.



Scott Raecker serves as Director of The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University – a position he has held since the work of the center was founded. Scott's commitment to positively impact the lives of others was also reflected in his 14 years of public service as a member of the Iowa House of Representatives from 1999 through 2012. Scott is a graduate of Grinnell College where he received his B.A. in Political Science and Religious Studies. Scott is also certified as a character development specialist and corporate ethics trainer through the Josephson Institute of Ethics and has recently been featured as a keynote speaker on ethics and civility to state legislatures across the United States.

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