

The Jupiter Courier

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GINNY LUTHER • tcpalm.com/YourNews

Ginny Luther with her son Bart, who was killed by another soldier at Fort Hood, Texas, in 2008.

Mother of murdered soldier teaches conflict resolution

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Ginny Luther's most personal experience with challenging children was provided by her son, Robert "Bart" Fletcher.

Bart was an independent, bright and powerful child.

Like so many challenging children, Bart prompted his parents to look for new and better ways to bring peaceful discipline into their home.

Fletcher's powerful personality inspired Luther to learn and ultimately teach Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline. That same powerful spirit led Fletcher to become a dedicated, decorated and beloved tank commander in the Army.

In 2008, after safely returning from a tour of duty in Iraq, he was murdered by another soldier at Fort Hood, Texas, in an attempt to secure missing weapons.

Even as early as days after her son was killed, Luther continued to serve parents with unimaginable strength and understanding.

She attributes her ability to weather this tragedy with grace largely to her years of experience learning and teaching families to cope with stress. Since her son's death, she has dedicated herself to taking up his motto to "Go Big or Go Home."

She has embarked on a campaign to bring life-changing coping skills to all military families, many of whom face profound challenges in the course of their dedicated service to our country.

More information, including how anyone can help, is available on Fletcher's memorial Web site: <http://lrobertfletchermemorial.com/> and a Facebook group: "Help Ginny Go Big."

Despite her busy national speaking schedule, formal classes, and

individual counseling and parent coaching duties, Luther finds time to meet monthly with a group of Jupiter-area parents in support of their efforts in peaceful parenting.

At a recent parents' meeting at Turtle River Montessori School, Luther passed out blue glass STARS to all of the parents as a reminder to "Stop, take a deep breath, and relax."

She had given Bart a star just like it to help him remember to breathe for the troops under his command in times of fear and stress, a poignant reminder to parents to cherish every moment with their children.

Illustrating her deep understanding of the roots of violence, Luther openly shares that she feels sympathy for the man who killed her son, and then took his own life, because he lacked the very coping tools she works so hard to teach

families. Those events have only strengthened her commitment to "Go Big or Go Home."

And so she continues her work nationally and locally.

Meetings at Turtle River Montessori are parent-organized, and any proceeds collected above what is required to pay for meetings are donated to a philanthropic organization, Empower a Child.

Empower a Child was created by Turtle River Montessori parents and will use funds to provide scholarships for Conscious Discipline classes.

More information on upcoming Conscious Discipline classes and meetings is available at Luther's Web site: www.peacefulparenting.net.

This story was edited for space. For the full story, go to tcpalm.com/YourNews.