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A father's wish after daughter is killed by car

Published: Friday, May 11th 2018, 6:12 pm CDT

Updated: Friday, May 11th 2018, 6:23 pm CDT

By Lauren Scharf, Reporter CONNECT

HUNTSVILLE, AL (WAFF) - A father who lost his only daughter this week wants to talk about mental health and drug abuse.

Rachel Haynes died after getting hit by a car walking on Chapman Mountain Monday night.

Billy Haynes nicknamed her "Smiley." He said she was always full of joy. However, he wants to shed more light on the consequences of mental health issues and addiction.

"I always called her 'baby girl,'" said Haynes. "If she saw someone hurting she wanted to comfort them. That's just the heart she had."

Haynes is trying to cope with losing his only daughter, Rachel, at the young age of 30. She was hit and killed walking on U.S. 72 on Chapman Mountain.

"I guess I may never know how exactly how her death came about," Billy added. "I don't understand why she would be there at that time of night walking on that street to be hit by a car going 70 miles per hour."

He believes Rachel battled with mental health issues from problems at home growing up.

"Yea, I do think all of this led to drugs, and drugs changed it. Rachel started stealing. She started lying. She ended up homeless," Billy explained.

He said her drug addiction started with marijuana but ended with smoking meth.

"That was not the Rachel I know," he said.

The family tried to get her the help she needed and tried to get her to go to rehab.

"There's people out here desperately needing help," Haynes said. "And they don't know where to turn to because society kicks them to the side like yesterday's news. It's so wrong. There are people that need this mental health help."

He wants people to be selfless and be a support system to those struggling.

"If we don't reach out to these young folks, we are going to lose them...I wish I could have done something more and my daughter still be here," he said.

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Haynes has not been up to the crash site.

Huntsville police said they received a call Monday night about a woman walking in the middle of the street and they were on their way to check it out when they got the second call that she was hit. Huntsville police confirm the driver cooperated with the death investigation and will not face any charges.

Her funeral is Saturday in Hartselle at Peck Funeral Home.

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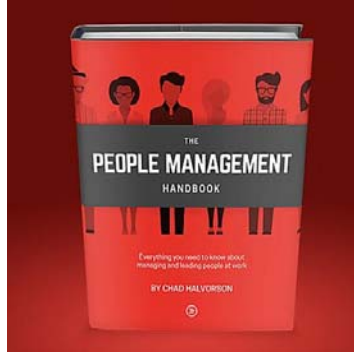
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