

Raising Her Family Alone: A Mother's Faith Spotlight: The Clay Family

"When I first heard about Jill's House in January of 2012, my husband was on an international mission trip," said Megan Clay. "I decided to wait until he came back to take a tour of Jill's House. Unfortunately, he never returned. We know he's alive, but I believe the stress of life and raising two children with autism just got to him."



Typical sibling Savannah (center) sometimes stays at Jill's House, too, giving her mom a weekend of total rest.

"I have three beautiful children," Megan continued. "My oldest, Natalie, is 13 and has autism. The older she gets, the harder she is to handle. My second child, Albert, also has autism. He's nine. Savannah is eight, and she is typical."

"When we married 17 years ago, my husband and I had the same goals and purposes. I thought our marriage would last forever, through any trial. I never, ever thought I'd have to do this alone. But God gets me through it."

While Megan shows amazing strength and courage as the sole provider for her family, her children struggle to understand why their father is not there. "Savannah can process this, and she and I talk about it," continued Megan. "But the other two can't express their loss. They just know he's gone. One day at school, Natalie, who doesn't talk, started crying 'Daddy! Daddy!' so clearly she misses him, too."

"I continue to pray for my husband, and explain to my children that sometimes prayers take a long time to be answered. I do believe God is working on his heart."

In addition to raising three active children on her own, Megan is also encountering financial challenges. "We purchased a new home based on our dual salaries right before my husband left," said Megan. "So it gets very tight. But I also feel that it's where we are supposed to be, and God always provides."

Megan's three children occasionally visit Jill's House together. This gives her a complete break. "It also provides the children with something that is theirs," said Megan. "They have a good time, get to be free, and make friends. Everywhere else they need to fit into someone else's structure. Jill's House is just for them. And when they come home on Sunday nights, I feel caught up. The grass is cut, the house is clean, they are clean, and we can just have a nice dinner and love each other again. I can't express what a blessing Jill's House is to my family."