



LORNA S TAKE... ON THANKFUL PARENTING

By Lorna Dueck, host of "Listen Up"

Just how precious our children are to us was one of the strongest themes we learned when Calgary parents Karl and Donna Staddon shared their story on *Listen Up* recently. The Staddon's were the first parents on the scene of a murderous avalanche in Revelstoke, British Columbia, that killed their 15-year-old daughter Marissa. During a back country skiing outing, planned as a character building education experience, 17 people from Marissa's school were hit by a fast-moving wall of snow that was almost a kilometre long. Seven students, all 15 years old, perished in the accident.

As the pain of grief moved in on the Staddons with its own thundering effect, they decided to embrace thankfulness as a tool to cope with their loss. "What would we prefer," Karl asked Donna, "to never have had Marissa, or to be thankful for the 5,712 days we did have her?" They even referred to her funeral as a "Celebration Service."

While transparently unfolding their story to *Listen Up*, gratefulness coloured how they processed everything. To have a grateful heart amid grief is truly amazing, and it's a poignant reminder of the right way to approach the truth – that our children are gifts from God. We don't own them. Rather, we have been granted the enormous privilege of being a caregiver for their lives. &

The late Marissa Staddon

