

A Mother's Love Finds Shelter From The Storm.

While Hurricane Katrina raged outside Beth Moore's New Orleans home, another storm had been raging inside it.

Over the past several years, Moore's 13-year-old son Bobby, diagnosed with bipolar disease at age 9, had become increasingly more violent, angry and out of control. The hurricane only made things worse. "Everything in our lives became unsettled," says Beth Moore. "For Bobby, it was the beginning of a very bad period."

The teenager who had once made As and Bs was now making Ds and Fs in new schools far away from home. He was getting into fights with classmates, teachers – anyone and everyone who got in his way. And even when the family was able to move back to New Orleans, Bobby's extreme behavior resulted in six suspensions from school in just three months. When Bobby began talking of suicide and cutting himself with knives, doctors recommended a psychiatric hospital. He was admitted to the closest one available which was five long hours away from home.

Beth and her husband, still reeling from the storm's devastation to their home and business, were beside themselves with grief about Bobby. In desperation, Beth Moore sat down and wrote a long and heartfelt letter. She let it all come flooding out – the hurricane, the ravaged city, her family's pain and Bobby's problems. Moore sent the letter to half a dozen private schools around the country for help. "We couldn't afford to send him to a private therapeutic school yet he needed one so very badly," says Moore. "I was like a blind man, in the dark." Bobby's psychiatrist had mentioned to her that he'd heard some wonderful things about Montcalm School for Boys in Michigan so she included Montcalm on her list. It was a good thing she did. "Not only was Montcalm the only school to respond, I've since learned that it is by far the best," she says. "I know God's hand was in this."

Joe and Clara Stewart believe it, too. The longtime Starr Commonwealth supporters are well-known in Michigan for their philanthropic work. Clara, a member of Starr's board and Joe, a retired senior executive with Kellogg Co. in Battle Creek, were both originally from Louisiana. The two had set up a fund, "Ubuntu Katrina," to help those from their native state recover from the tragedy of the storm. When Starr told them about Bobby, they didn't hesitate for a moment. Between the Stewarts' contribution and Starr's own funds from faithful donors, Bobby was given a spot at the school. "Ubuntu" is an African word that means 'a person can only be a person through other

people,' ” says Joe Stewart. “I have never met Bobby and that doesn't even matter,” he says. “Helping him has helped us be fulfilled as human beings.”

Today, Bobby is settling in to life at Montcalm and while it hasn't been easy, his mother says she's seeing signs that the old Bobby is coming back. “I saw that familiar twinkle when he was here last on a home visit,” she says. “You just can't imagine how good it was to see it.”