

## My Afternoon with Jim and Jill Kelly



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It had been 9 years since I interviewed Jill Kelly in her home. She had been nominated March of Dimes' Mother of the Year and the interview was a chance to speak with her about caring for a special needs, critically ill child.

Hunter Kelly was 4 and had already lived twice as long as doctors said he would with Krabbe Disease-- an inherited neurodegenerative disorder.

I left the Kelly's with two distinct impressions. One, the closeness of Jill and her mother. My mom and I are close but Hunter's care brought Jill and her mom extraordinarily close.



My second impression was Jill's unwavering devotion to Hunter. I wondered how she did it.

Yes, she had the good fortune of being able to hire help to care for Hunter but Jill did much of it herself and the emotional toll, I felt, had to be huge. I had no idea about the toll!

Jill's new book "Without a Word" chronicles Hunter's story-- the profound impact he had on their lives and the impact caring for a special needs child can have a family and a marriage.

The book reveals Jim's infidelities during their marriage. It could not have been easy to talk about it but both Jim and Jill spoke rather graciously to me.

The Kellys want people to know the book is really about so much more. It is a story of a boy who while he couldn't speak said volumes. It's also a story about a marriage, human frailties and redemption.

My reports on Thursday September 9th will detail why Jill wrote a book revealing such intimate details of their lives.

How their two girls have dealt with it, how Jim and Jill fought back to save their marriage from the brink of divorce, and Jill reveals a secret: her darkest days following Hunter's death. It's a stunning admission and one in which many women, in particular, may be able to relate.

I felt like I knew the Kelly's story and then I read the book. Stay tuned!