



“WE’RE SO FORTUNATE THAT SHANE SURVIVED AND THAT HE HAS PROGRESSED SO WELL IN HIS RECOVERY. HE STILL HAS CHALLENGES, BUT THANKS TO WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT HE KNOWS HELP IS THERE WHEN HE NEEDS IT.”

Cindy Parsons credits her son, United States Army Sergeant Shane Parsons, as her inspiration to do more with life.

Shane's father died just six months after he was born, leaving Cindy a widow at age 29. She had to muster all the strength she had to raise her son alone. They made it through that difficult time, but when Shane joined the Army, Cindy's strength would once again be tested.

While deployed in Iraq in 2006, Shane's convoy was hit with an improvised explosive device. Shane suffered catastrophic injuries that included multiple cardiac arrests, a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI), a severed left leg, and an amputation of his right leg. His mother, Cindy, left her job as a registered nurse and flew across the world to be with her son while he underwent 15 surgeries and battled multiple infections.

For the next decade, Cindy served as Shane's primary caregiver and learned first-hand the challenges faced by the family members of injured veterans. Her passion for helping others led her to become a strong advocate for the family support members of other wounded warriors. In 2009, Cindy helped Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) lobby Congress for the passage of the Caregiver and Veteran Omnibus Health Service Act of 2010 – a bill providing assistance and support for caregivers of injured servicemen and women returning from war.

With Cindy's help, Shane's progress was slow and steady, but wildly successful. While attending a WWP event in Pennsylvania, Shane met her future wife, Jennifer. Now Jennifer is his primary caregiver, and his mother Cindy has been promoted to her favorite role of all – Grandma.

"Shane always says 'never give up,'" says Cindy. "And he never did. I'm so proud of him for his service, but also for his resilience. He always wanted children, but he didn't know if it was possible because of his injuries. Now he's so proud of his son, and he's such an amazing Dad. It warms my heart."

Today, Cindy travels the country to share her story of hope and perseverance. In addition to her public speaking and advocacy work, Cindy served on the board of the Brain Injury Association of Ohio for three years and is a member of the National Speaker's Association.

