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Remembering Mom by surprising moms for Mother's Day

MacNiven and friends lend a helping hand

By **Ann Butler** Herald staff writer

Article Last Updated: Saturday, May 09, 2015 6:28pm

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Approaching his first Mother's Day without his mother, Casey MacNiven came up with an idea – help other mothers, in her memory.



Courtesy of Casey MacNiven

“Last September, my mom (Annette MacNiven) took her own life, and it’s been a series of ups and downs for me since then,” he said. “So, I was trying to do something special to remember her. In a sense, it was therapy for me.”

MacNiven, the owner of Squeegie Monkey Window Washing, selected mothers who either deserved it or needed help. He and a crew of nine visited three homes on the weekend of May 2-3.



Courtesy of Casey MacNiven

“It was a surprise,” MacNiven said. “I told them I was coming, but they didn’t know why, and they didn’t know I was bringing all these people.”

The surprise began when he knocked on the door with a card and a rose.



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Among the crew was Darci Olsen of Hearts to Hands Massage Therapy, who brought her massage chair and gave massages to the moms while the rest washed windows, cleaned gutters and hard-to-reach places, repaired screens, power-washed houses and did yardwork.

“I met Darci at the Suicide Survivors Day in November,” MacNiven said. “She had lost someone close to suicide, too.”

The group brought a truck full of window-washing equipment, two lawn mowers, one edge trimmer, one pressure washer, two vacuums, a wheelbarrow, a couple of bags of tools, garbage bags and a “plethora of ladders,” he said.

How did they select the recipients of their labors?

“My wife was the first to join the Durango Moms and Kids Play Group,” MacNiven said. “We selected one mom from that group because she was so proactive at helping other moms, and we felt like she deserved recognition for that.”

The other two women selected were a grandmother whose own mother had died two days earlier and a single mother and teacher who had just bought her own home.

“One said she had a breakdown a few days earlier because she was just overwhelmed,” he said.

MacNiven hopes others might be inspired to reach out in a similar way.

“There were tears everywhere we went,” he said. “It was an emotional day for us all, and the love was real.”

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Jessica Mitchell-Upshaw · Owner at Jessica Upshaw Bookkeeping Services

Casey..this is the best story I have read in a long time! You are an amazing person. A huge Thank You to you and your crew for what you did for these special moms :)

Reply · Like · Follow Post · May 11 at 1:28pm



Betty Quast · Orono Senior High School

How lovely. Darsie Olson is my niece and she has a wonderful heart.

Reply · Like · 1 · Follow Post · May 10 at 4:56pm



Sandy Pepin Owen · Sag Harbor, New York

Over six miles, trained with & ran our first half marathon, almost got hit by deer during a night run and, of course, taught me how to blow my nose on my sleeve. Your Mom was such an inspiration to me. And through it all, she was a class act....as it appears you are, as well. God bless you Casey.

Reply · Like · Follow Post · May 11 at 9:40pm



Kip Koso · Penn State

Casey- You have done what the best of mothers do every day. A random act of kindness without any thought for payback. I don't know any of the individuals involved, but thank you for making such a special moment for the mothers you helped. My mother passed away last year and she would have loved your idea and you for making it happen. I hope you and your team have a great Mother's Day.

Reply · Like · Follow Post · May 10 at 10:09am



Sandy Pepin Owen · Sag Harbor, New York

Casey, I'm sure you don't remember me; but I used to run with your Mom when you were little. She was the first person I ever ran ov

Reply · Like · Follow Post · May 11 at 9:28pm



Bliss Bruen · University of Colorado at Denver

Beautiful story. Thank you Casey - and Ann Butler for seeing it was told.

Reply · Like · Follow Post · May 10 at 11:03am



Diane Severns

Casey, your mom would be so proud of you. What a special son you are!

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