

Sometimes fame comes to people who do not want it. Seven years ago the world first heard of Michael Dunahee and since that nightmare began, who would envy Crystal and Bruce Dunahee their terrible burden of international recognition. Despite the passage of time, life has yet to return to normal. "How can it?" Crystal states crisply.

They live in Esquimalt where they both were born and grew up. For a brief period they lived all the way over in Vic West and that was only until they could afford to buy a house here. Three years ago they purchased the Donair Shop on Esquimalt Road. Most people work full time in a restaurant and squeeze in part-time jobs; the Dunahees, however, go to other full time jobs as well as work at the Donair shop. And then there is the work to bring Michael home. If Caitlin Dunahee wasn't in same Brownie pack as my daughter, I doubt I'd have found Crystal standing still long enough for this interview.

Several people I've talked to mention how Esquimalt feels like a small town. Does that work for you and for your "Keep the Hope Alive" work?

It supports us a great deal. I can't imagine living anywhere else.

The people support the Michael Dunahee Search Centre and the Keep the Hope Alive Drive. The businesses all help--whatever I need. I have no problem getting any support.

Does that carry over to Victoria?

Oh yes. The businesses are there for us too. And the media, I just have to ask and they're ready to help.

When I wear my one of my Michael shirts, I've been asked, "why don't they give up?" I want something from you that I can say, as a direct response, next time this happens.

I can't believe people are like that. When I read that I was shocked but then I remembered a woman who approached me in the mall recently—I was wearing a Michael shirt, I don't think she knew who I was--and she said pretty much the same thing. I was floored but if I had the chance again I would say, "if it was your child, would you give up?" I mean, would you really give up on your own child?

It's an important message for children too. We are telling them mommy and daddy won't give up on you, ever! I mean, are these people saying they would 'give up' and stop looking for their own child? Think about what you are saying to your children when you say something like that.

I think you've done a remarkable job with Caitlin in bringing her up with Michael so she feels involved and not resentful of the attention he gets.

Thank you, we have a positive attitude and try to raise her with it. She likes to play in Michael's room and is careful to clean up when she's done. She talks about things they can do together when he comes home.

Are you ever concerned, however, that you might be too protective as she grows older?

It was hard to let her go out with her friends but that's life; she is growing and we have to let her. She does have rules: she tells me where she is going and phones me when she gets there. If she brings someone home to play then that child has to phone their parents to say they have arrived here safely.

She speaks strongly and answers each question directly, simply. There is no polish to her replies: disarmingly, they still come straight from the heart with no sign of too many interviews over the too many years that have passed since a kidnapper thrust her into the spotlight. She is not a celebrity; Crystal is simply a mom who wants her boy to come home.

The last words belong to Crystal. "This is to someone out there: we won't give up. Whoever you are, you will have to give up; we want him back and we won't ever give up. "

March 13, 1998

Note to Editor:

Could you please run this with a side bar about the Michael Dunahee run as that will be on the 22 and with the dance the night before at the Rec Centre.

Crystal refused to have her picture taken, she wants a side by side of the original Michael picture—should be on file--with the newest age-enhanced version. Bruce will contact me to bring that one in sometime today (he is waiting to get them back from the lab...!)

Thanks again