

Sharing the Gold

One of the great heartbreaks of the 1988 Winter Olympics was the story of speed skater Dan Jansen. Just hours before his race, he received the news that his sister, who had been fighting leukemia for more than a year, had just died. Bearing the weight of his sorrow, Dan laced on his skates to race for his sister.

When the gun sounded, he sprinted from the starting line, only to slip and fall in the first turn. Four days later, in the 1,000-meter race, he fell again. The whole country mourned with him.

Many Americans sent Dan letters of commendation. According to *Sports Illustrated*, not long after returning home, Jansen received a letter from Mark Arrowood, a disabled 30-year-old from Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Mark wrote:

"Dear Dan, I watched you on TV. I'm sorry that you fell 2 times. I am in Special Olympics. I won a gold medal at Pa. State Summer Olympics right after my Dad died seven years ago ... Before we start the games we have a saying that goes like this, 'Let me win but if I can't win let me be brave in the attempt' ... I want to share one of my gold medals with you because I don't like to see you not get one. Try again in four more years."

Inside the envelope, Dan Jansen found a gold medal that Mark Arrowood had won in a track-and-field event.

Those who share their blessings are the greatest champions of all. Goodness is greatness.

--Beecher Hunter