

# Wanting to Be Wanted

In 1996, Thomas Hose, a 38-year-old security guard at a Pennsylvania middle school, befriended Tanya Kach, 14, a student there. He often took her out of classes to talk to her, and one day, when he caught her skipping class, he kissed her.

Over time, Hose convinced Kach to run away from her family and move in with him, which she did. For the next 10 years, Hose kept Tanya captive in the home he shared with his elderly parents.

To keep Kach from running away, her captor convinced the girl that no one cared that she was gone, and that her parents weren't even looking for her. He told her, "You're stupid. You're immature. Nobody cares about you but me."

Eventually, the security guard became so confident in Kach's loyalty to him that he allowed her to leave the house for short periods of time while he was at work. Through these daily excursions, Kach became friends with Joseph Sparico, the owner of a local Deli Mart.

In March 2006, Kach finally confessed her true identity to Sparico, who shared the information with his son, a retired police officer. Before long, Kach was rescued and reunited with her father. Sparico commented: "She wanted to be wanted, that's all."

Kach's father, Jerry, who had desperately tried to find his daughter through the years – posting her picture several thousand times on fliers and milk cartons – was overjoyed to see her. "There wasn't a day that went by that I didn't think of her," he said. "I just say thank you, there is a God, and He brought my little girl back home."

Kach, too, was delighted to learn that her father had never given up looking for her. "He's crying; I'm crying. All he kept saying was 'I got my baby,'" she said, describing their reunion.

"I'm touching blood, and I got to say, 'I love you, Dad,'" she said.

Kach has since written a book about her experiences entitled *Memoir of a Milk Carton Kid: The Tanya Nicole Kach Story*.

Sparico, the deli owner, had hit on a universal truth. People do want to be wanted. We want to know that we matter to someone.

(more)

Oftentimes, we discover that longing to be loved and needed in residents who come to us in Life Care and Century Park, but rarely – if ever, in some instances – see or hear from family members.

In a very real sense, our service to them shows them they are not alone. Our actions speak of our love for them.

*Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels* (Hebrews 13:1-2 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter

