

CURT AND CHRISTIE BRUNGARDT

Dr. Curt Brungardt and Dr. Christie Brungardt have a passion for making this world a better place! They are best known as social entrepreneurs who have worked tirelessly to address issues of injustice and inequality. Between them, they have 37 years experience in higher education where they have been active in the fields of leadership development and civic engagement.

Dr. Curt Brungardt is the senior member and creator of the Department of Leadership Studies and co-founder of the Center for Civic Leadership at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. He is the Omer G. Voss Distinguished Professor of Leadership Studies and the Executive Director of the Center for Civic Leadership. He specializes in political leadership, social change, and community organizing. Curt has authored and co-authored several books and numerous articles in the field of civic leadership. He is recognized nationally for his work in the area of social change leadership theory.

Dr. Christie Brungardt is an Assistant Professor of Leadership Studies, Director of the Women's Leadership Project, and co-founder of the Center for Civic Leadership at Fort Hays State University. She specializes in women and leadership and women studies. She has developed and implemented many of Fort Hays State's civic engagement programs and activities like the annual state-wide Kansas Women's Leadership Conference. Christie publishes and presents in the fields of service learning and civic engagement, gender issues in leadership, and the scholarship of engagement. She has been the recipient of Fort Hays State University's top advisor and community service awards.

On July 3, 2008, Curt and Christie's lives changed forever. Their daughter, Jana Mackey, a 25 year-old law student at the University of Kansas was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in Lawrence, KS. Like her parents, Jana was also a committed social activist. She was well known throughout Kansas for her advocacy for women's rights. She spent years volunteering to aid victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. She received her bachelor's degree in women's studies from KU and was an active participant in KU's Commission on the Status of Women. Jana was also one of the youngest lobbyists at the Kansas State Capitol for the National Organization for Women.

Since Jana's death, Curt and Christie have been active nationally in the effort to reduce violence against women. They have established *Jana's Campaign Inc.* with the single purpose of reducing domestic and dating violence. They believe it is their responsibility to use both the story of Jana's life and the story of her death to reduce violence. They both chair the Attorney General's Batterers Intervention Program Advisory Board for the state of Kansas; they have been active in improving sexual assault response in rural areas; they have recruited hundreds of volunteers (from 19 states and 4 foreign countries) to work in the areas of domestic violence; they have traveled the country raising awareness of this issue and have lent their support to many national and international groups dedicated to this same purpose; and recently, they successfully helped spearhead the most comprehensive domestic violence legislation ever to pass in Kansas. Last spring the state of Kansas recognized Curt & Christie Brungardt with the "State Champions" award for their work to reduce violence against women.

Lifetime activists, Curt and Christie Brungardt now face their toughest challenge - turning their tragedy, their grief, into social action for positive change. Their activism is more personal. Their activism has more purpose.