



In Loving Memory of
Dr. Kimberly E. Esterman
Who Gave So Much
to Middle Earth
and to Alcohol and Drug Prevention
for Young People

When Kimberly Esterman was first diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a potentially fatal form of cancer, in 1989, she told her mother that she wanted to become a psychologist and have the opportunity to work with young people, and then she could die. With treatment, Kim became one of about 50 people with neuroblastoma that went into remission, and she subsequently completed college at Cornell University and pursued her doctoral studies in the Counseling Psychology program at the University at Albany.

From 1996-1999, while a student at UAlbany, Kim worked with the Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program. During her years with Middle Earth, she developed a peer mentoring program and associated curriculum and training manual that has been transformed into a credit-bearing undergraduate course in peer supervision through the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology. Kim also worked on the beginning stages of the *Middle Earth Players* peer theater program, an initiative which was later recognized as a model program by both the U.S. Department of Education and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Kim was well loved by the students of Middle Earth and was regarded as a mentor by many. She always “went the extra mile” for our program, and she approached even the most difficult and complex tasks with a smile and a sense of humor. In 1998, Middle Earth students nominated Kim for a President’s Undergraduate Leadership Award for Outstanding Advisor; though only one award is given each year and is traditionally awarded to faculty or professional staff members at the University, Kim won the award. As Kim carried out her exceptional work, students remained unaware that she was a cancer survivor and how significant her pursuit of a career path in prevention with young people was for her.

In the spring of 2000, as Kim was applying for her doctoral internship, she learned that her cancer had recurred and that the prognosis was bleak. Not allowing this to stop her from fulfilling her dreams, she searched for alternative ways of completing her doctoral requirements and achieving her career goal of working with young people. In 2000, during a very difficult and tiring course of cancer treatment, Kim wrote and presented a paper about the Middle Earth prevention program at a Symposium at the American Psychological Association Annual Convention, and in that same year, she earned the Distinguished Student Award from the Psychological Association of Northeastern New York. In May 2002, Kim graduated with her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology and was able to fulfill her dream by working with adolescents after that. She worked as a psychologist until August 26, 2003, two weeks before she died. Kim died on September 7, 2003.

In honor of Kim’s gifts to our program, the Middle Earth students will be establishing the **Dr. Kimberly E. Esterman Memorial Scholarship**, and we will begin a Memorial Fund in her name so that a scholarship can be given each year to a graduating senior or graduate student working in Middle Earth and applying to or enrolled in the School of Education who will have interest in alcohol and drug prevention with college students. By February 2004, we expect to have approximately \$3000 raised for the scholarship, and we plan to host a Dance-A-Thon in April to raise additional funds. Our ultimate goal is to raise \$25,000 so that we can establish an endowed scholarship in Kim’s name through the University. While Kim’s dreams ended too soon, we at Middle Earth are committed to keeping her dreams alive. We see the establishment of an award and scholarship fund in Kim’s name as a fitting tribute and a lasting memory of the hope that Kim had for young people.

With Love, The Students of Middle Earth