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Once-Homeless Family Struggles In Wake Of Mother's Death

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Rebecca Summers Died Monday

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- A homeless family with six kids who surmounted incredible odds to move from a shelter to a home has been hit with an unexpected tragedy.



It's a family [WLKY profiled two years ago](#).

Jesse and Rebecca Summers and their six children caught WLKY's attention in 2009 because they proved to be incredible examples that the homeless don't have to be helpless.

Now, their hardest battle is ahead of them after Rebecca Summers unexpectedly died.

"She worked so hard in keeping all of us together, keeping me healthy, keeping all these kids together, keeping them in school. It was hard on her," Jesse Summers said.

In 2007, the Summers family moved to Louisville from Arizona. When Rebecca Summers' Arizona nursing credentials couldn't be transferred and Jesse Summers suffered a massive heart attack both lost their jobs.

When the money ran out, the whole family stayed in shelters.

WLKY profiled them as they fought to support their large family with Rebecca Summers' waitressing job.

"We live day to day with tips, and when I'm off two days, I think, 'What am I going to do this day, you know?'" Rebecca Summers said in 2009.

"Sometimes you just feel like you can't provide no more for your family," Jesse Summers said in 2009.

Working with Volunteers of America, the family rose from its circumstances. It got its own home last June.

"We were so happy. The kids have their own rooms and our own place now," Jesse Summers said.

Monday night after taking their 14-year-old son to school orientation, Rebecca Summers got sick. She went to rest, woke up for a few hours, went back to bed and never woke up again.

"My 14-year-old, Logan, who we went to orientation with, I was in watching TV and he came in and said, 'I can't wake Mom up,'" Jesse Summers said.

At 40 years old, Rebecca Summers died in her sleep, possibly of a heart attack.

Now the family is again at a huge disadvantage. The only income is Jesse Summers' disability. It helps with his medical needs but lacks for the six children, ages 4 to 18.

"School supplies, clothes. We had to borrow money to get their clothes to go to the funeral," Jesse Summers said.

The family is holding on to Rebecca Summers' tenacity.

"She was so proud of her family. She wanted us to stay together, not to give up," Jesse Summers said.

For years the family couldn't afford medical insurance, but Rebecca Summers finally applied.

Her benefits went into effect on the same day as her death.

Volunteers of America is once again helping the family as much as it can, but it's also hoping the community will help.

Visitation for Rebecca Summers is scheduled until 8 p.m. at O.D. White Funeral Home on Third Street.

Her funeral is Saturday at noon.

If you'd like to help the family, you can make a donation at any PNC Bank under the Summers Family Memorial Fund.

Previous Story: [!\[\]\(6a9b39b98eb945faa14c645ec99e4eaa_img.jpg\) Working Homeless A Growing Segment Of Local Population](#)

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