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SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE

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# HOMETOWN

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Mishawaka

## Shared experiences can begin healing

South Bend Michiana Based Band 7th Floor has the ability to change lives. My name is Melissa and this is my story.

The change in my life began just about a year ago. My husband left me with my 2 small children. I am 22 years old, born with cerebral palsy. The motor part of my brain is the only affected part. I have basically taken primarily care of both my children since birth.

When my husband and I got together, I began to lose my independence. After having my children, I began not having control of my weight. My husband and I were no longer communicating. One day saying he had a meeting to attend, he left and never returned.

Not long after being alone I was depressed and needed something besides two small children and my mother in my life. I began thinking, and settled on beginning voice lessons. I began my lessons with Lauren Lane Powell of Teachers Music Studios. Stemming from this I joined Lauren's choir, just a short while ago. Choir member Dave Henry mentioned that the choir should perform as a backup for *7th Floor*.

The choir took the challenge, and as time went on, rehearsals began.

Meeting the members, Dave Henry, Julie Ward, Elise Mauro, Mark Neary and Lauren Lane Powell was a powerful experience in itself. The two shows at Notre Dame's Washington Hall drew closer. I personally began a friendship with Julie that started to build my interest in the band.

7th Floor's Rock Opera tells a tale of going from deep depression as in *Train Song* and *Do You Ever Cry For Me*, to recovering and letting go of your fears as in the song *Let Go*.

For me, seeing the power within the show has enabled me to bring myself to tears. After the Saturday night show, the tears I cried has since allowed me to let go of my deepest fears. The fear obviously is losing my children through my divorce. To explain the emotional power behind every song in a two hour show would take a lifetime.

My greatest hope is that someone somewhere will give 7th Floor and it's Soundtrack To Life the opportunity to change their life in the positive manner it has changed mine.

Thank you 7th Floor for all that you have done. You have given one single mom her much needed strength to go on.

Melissa Shires  
South Bend