



ERIN'S SOCK OF HOPE

Sometimes the darkest moment can be a catalyst for light.

At the 2010 international conference of the Academy of Eating Disorders in Salzburg, Austria, three Americans and one Australian – Kitty, Laura, Carrie and June – were eating lunch outside a sidewalk café when news came through that a young American woman, Erin, had died from Anorexia Nervosa – her death adding to the statistics that show the illness has the highest death rate of any psychiatric illness.

Kitty was very upset and was struggling to regain her composure, for she was to speak on the conference's main stage within 30 minutes. June rummaged in her shoulder bag, seeking a tissue. Instead, she pulled out a sock belonging to her daughter Amanda in Australia. The sock was far from sparkling white (it had got mixed up with grandchildren's clothes after a visit, and hitched a ride to Salzburg).

Kitty took the sock gratefully. An ankle sport sock with towelling inside, it was soft and 'squeeze-able'. Kitty dabbed her eyes and clutched the sock. Somehow it gave comfort. When Kitty walked on the stage, the sock went too. She made a great speech. Her courage was immense. After the conference, the sock hitched another ride, this time to the USA. Soon Kitty wrote to say the sock was accompanying her to Erin's funeral. This is how Erin's lost life gave birth to a global symbol that has become known as Erin's Sock of Hope.



VISION

The vision is for hand-made and commercially produced socks, and pins featuring the sock symbol. Hand-made socks and pins are a soothing gift for families when an eating disorder is diagnosed – the sense of purpose in creating and giving a sock and the comfort in receiving a sock is therapeutic for all participants. Besides comforting families directly affected by eating disorders, sales of pins and commercially produced socks emblazoned with Erin's Sock of Hope symbol in the wider community will raise A) awareness and B) funds for research and treatment-assistance.

Suggested slogan: **Let's Sock it to Ed**