
LAMENTATIONS

Issue 95

middle

November, 2005

I have a challenge for you this November...The month that we are supposed to be thankful for all we have (and have had). On Thanksgiving Day, you will know that you have spent the day thinking of others and making it a day of hope for someone else who may need it even more than you:

If you planted HOPE today in any HOPEless heart
If someone's burden was lighter because you did your part
If you caused a laugh that chased some tears away
If tonight your name is named when someone kneels to pray

THEN YOUR DAY HAS BEEN WELL SPENT

ODYSSEY OF A BEREAVED PARENT

The loss of a child is too much to bear,
Each day cries out with more tears and despair.

The weight of your grief settles heavy on your heart
As you face the reality of this death tearing you apart.

You don't understand how life can go on
As you think each day of your child that's gone.

Your burden's quite heavy - not many understand.
the family you thought would be there have not held your hand.

Some friends have stood by to see you through,
Others have left, which you never thought they'd do.

A 'new normal' you now make as the years have moved by,
Letting laughter and joy in, where once you only wanted to cry.

You start to make plans - this is how your life will now be,
And again look forward to things - to a certain degree.

Yes, what I once thought would never, ever be,
Has begun again for me.

I'll miss my child forever and they'll always be,
the child that now rests inside of me.

Daily message from Healing After Loss by Martha Whitmore Hickman

To keep a lamp burning we have to keep putting oil in it.

~Mother Teresa

At first, when we lose a child, we are almost immobilized. We do what we have to do and are grateful for the customs and rituals that guide us through those first days. There are many to care for us - other loved ones, friends, members of our community of faith.

But then that wave of support recedes and we must learn to assume care of ourselves.

How to do that? We may cultivate new interests. Do we have a talent for painting? For music? Artistic ventures are wonderful ways to lose oneself in work - and also, a good way of expressing one's grief. Some people seek out grief recovery groups, in which you can share what is in your heart without wondering whether you're imposing on friends who may not understand your need to tell your story again and again. Some join service networks, like Foster Grandparents or Alive Hospice, which helps the dying and their families.

The important thing is that, like a lamp that needs oil, we, too, need to keep our sources of healing and energy fed.

Say to yourself:

I have the power - and responsibility - to keep my life moving.

We live in one sphere of existence, our loved one who has died in another, but with faith, undying love and the desire we can connect at the seam where our two worlds meet. Love never dies.

Quote by Mitch Carmody

Grief Grafts

Ideas already submitted to remember your child during the holidays:

Al & Sandy Hickey's son, Paul (1-1-73), died in an auto accident, 11-21-99.

We are approaching the "fall" time of the year; just the name "fall" makes me fall into a depression. Our Paul died the Sunday before Thanksgiving.... so the fall/winter holidays are exceptionally difficult for us.

On Thanksgiving we light a single tall candle in the middle of the centerpiece in memory of Paul. The family (and extended family) who eat with us that day - all hold hands and each one of us tells what we have to be Thankful for and then we add a "thankful memory" of Paul.

It always helps to get our annual Thanksgiving Card from Paul's heart recipient and their family. They too light a candle to celebrate the health of their dad/granddad; but also in honor/memory of Paul for his young heart that has kept Rev. Larry McEntire around for 6 more years to enjoy his family and grandchildren. In fact our centerpiece is usually sent to us from his family to say "thank you" each year.

At Christmas, I decorate a small "butterfly tree" with butterfly ornaments in addition to the family tree. And before our meal (which has

more recently become a home cooked brunch" - we do the "light the candle" tradition.

I purchase a candle holder that holds 5 candles for 3 siblings and mom/dad. We each light a candle for..... Love, memory, joy, hope, etc. and each person reads something.... I have the book that I got this out of - but can't remember who wrote it. We have done this since that very first Christmas without him.

Paul's symbol is a white butterfly.

**Carl & Barbi Kinne's son, Joe Frank Banks (10-30-77),
completed suicide, 7-17-01.**

Hello Dinah,

I have been so busy lately. I think of you always though, never too busy for that. I have been working crazy hours and the 12 hour night shift makes it even worse. Dinah, I have been responding to a select e-mail and guest book entry on my web-site. I feel that I am able to shed some light on a mother's new grief when they lose their child to suicide. It also helps me. I kind of feel like I have found a purpose. I have an immediate attachment to those suffering the same loss as I.

I have finished all my classes and am waiting for my final grades in the mail so that I may get my certification as a grief counselor. I have an appointment to meet with Hospice on Wednesday morning so that I can find out exactly what all I need to do to further this education. I do sometimes feel like that it is a bit late in life for me to try to start a new beginning, but I did not know that I would need to.

Do you know when Compassionate Friends will be having the world wide candle lighting ceremony? I am trying to schedule my remaining vacation days from work. And that is something that I would really like to attend. A friend of mine sent me the video that they had made in the past. Really she was my son's friend and I was fortunate enough to meet her. We now stay in contact. She said she cried because the song seemed like something that I would sing to Joe Frank.

I have had a couple grief attacks in the past week or so. Oh, Dinah I miss my baby so much. I know that you know how I feel. Oh God what I wouldn't give to have him back in my arms. His birthday is October 30. I

took my grandson to the grave on Sunday; he can almost say his (Joe Frank's) name. He helps me water his flowers. He waves to his picture on the headstone and blows a kiss into the air when we leave without me telling him to. It hurts me to see that little fella missing out on meeting his dad's only brother. Joe Frank would have loved him so much. I can visualize in my mind how happy he would be with Clayton.

I better go; I get started rambling on when it comes to wishful thinking. I love you Dinah, you really touched my life with a kindness and compassion that will never go unthought of. I hate to say it, but you know that we all think of death constantly now. Dinah, when the world loses the gift of your life, there will be a parade of bereaved parents there to remember you. I will be in that lineup.

Truly Touched By You,

Barbara Kinne

Always Joe's Mom

Joe Frank Banks 10/30/77-7/17/01

Later Barbi wrote:

I guess I haven't been too great at follow up info. I get swamped, but that's a good thing. There for a while I had nothing to do with my time but sit and stare at the wall. On one of those occasions I put the hole in my favorite personalized leather belt on a nail in one of the basement rafters. Having already put the belt around my neck while I stood on a rickety table. All alone in my basement, all alone in my life. My adrenaline was unbelievable. I could actually make this happen; right now I had the power to stop my pain, to put an end to my despair of losing Joe Frank. My hands were shaking, and then I had that second thought, Is this really what I want? Then I got real nervous because I could even cause this to accidentally happen. I begged God to help me. To show me how to function in this world that was now shattered. I made a deal with myself. (This happened in November of last year.) My deal was to give it one last effort and if I did not succeed, then I could say that I tried but failed and then and only then, I could be "outta here." So I set about a chain of events to TRY to help me go on with this life, to overcome my guilt and have a need or should I say a want to live again. I called Jason. I told him that I wanted to help. I wanted to do something because of my son. I then called Becky Levay and began going to The Compassionate Friends Meetings once a month. I thought that I would try to use my experience to help others. So I began studying Thanatology and Grief Counseling. I feel that I have given life a tremendous effort and have

learned a lot in the process. I tried to become involved in the many memorial events that were available. That is how I stumbled onto you, through T.C.F. When my husband and I walked through the door at J.I.M.'s conference, I felt like I was "home." I spend some time writing my book about my horrendous struggle through grief. Sometimes I feel like a hypocrite, being an advocate for suicide prevention when I myself was ready and willing to take my own life. The guilt over my son's suicide is so great. Surely I must have failed as a mother. I try every day to forgive myself. I pray for him to forgive me. If I only had one more chance, but he took that when he took his life. I don't know what life holds for me. I know that I have always been a fighter. I overcame being a battered wife, then single parent, the parent of a handicapped child; I then survived a near fatal car accident (my neck was broken). I believe the determination to take care of my boys made me beat the odds. I get through all of those trials only to be left to survive my son's suicide!!!! But after all these life-altering events, I can now smile and say "I am so lucky. I am so blessed. I am so thankful." I compare it to an alcoholic "I have been non-suicidal for eleven months now."

Joe Frank's symbol is an "I Love You" hand sign for the deaf.

Eric & Kacy Scott's daughter, Chyanne (11-28-99), died from a brain tumor, 2-4-03.

When I asked Chyanne's grandmother if the family had chosen a symbol for Chyanne, this was their reply:

We choose the Bear. Before Chyanne passed away, we had asked for people all over the world to send her cards and stickers to help us because she loved to get mail. She wanted her mother to read each and every card that she got and people also sent presents of all sorts, which were donated at Christmas after she died to children that would not have anything for Christmas. A lady from Canada had send Chyanne a gift from Canada and stayed in contact with Kacy. After she passed away, Kacy found out she was pregnant with Hope Rose and informed the lady she was to have another child (this was an awful time for us, the chances of the child having Muscular Dystrophy was so great). The lady stayed in touch with them and when Hope Rose was born she sent a bear from Canada. After that we found out that Hope Rose did not have the MD gene and would be ok. The bear is a symbol that even in heaven, Chyanne is still looking after us and this was

our answer. So every time we think of Chyanne, we think of "Canada the Bear." It is a toy that Hop e will not let go of. It is as though Chyanne were still with us.

Martha Jo Scott, the grandmother, said:

This couple (Eric and Kacy) have been a testimony to others with their faith after going through the cancer and SMA. Chyanne was my idol for what she had to endure and I am so glad that God blessed us.

Chyanne's symbol is a Canadian Bear.

Eddie and Sue Tutt's daughter, Julie Howell (3-3-64), died from a brain hemorrhage, 1-9-03.

I enjoyed Newsletter #94 immensely. You are so wonderful to keep all of this going. In reading the letters from fellow travelers, I found one statement so profound: "I have been left my son's unused years. I have to make them count." I am trying each day to make my Julie's unused years count. Thanks for the reminder.

Bless you Dinah and Happy Birthday to Jim, October 17th. He shares this day with my sister who will be 62 years young.

Julie's symbols are a rainbow and a rooster.

Gary & Barbara Christian's son, Scott (1-11-77), died from a soccer injury, 10-4-92.

The Christian family has formed the Scott Christian Memorial Soccer Foundation in memory of Scott. They have annual soccer tournaments and have now included a golf tournament to raise money for scholarships they give each year to a young man and a young woman in Scott's memory, this past year, one female and one male senior student athlete, who best demonstrated his/her commitment to excellence in academics and the game

of soccer, were awarded The Scott Christian Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship rewards students who strive to develop their individual talents to further the common good of their team and community.

A coach once said, “Scott is not a follower—he is a Trailblazer and others will follow him.”

Scott started playing soccer at the age of five for the St. Paul Panthers recreational soccer team. He stayed with the Panthers until the age of nine when he made the Northern Kentucky Cobras select B-level team.

At the time of his death, Scott still played for the Cobras but on the A-level team. He also played for a traveling team, played indoor soccer in Cincinnati and traveled to Holland as a U.S. Youth Soccer All-Star Team Ambassador. While in Holland, Scott's team played ten matches with Scott scoring eighteen goals.

A starting varsity player for the Boone County High School Rebels soccer team, Scott was their leading scorer at the time of his death. He also was the second highest scorer in the region and a member of the Kentucky Olympic Development Team.

Scott's love of life was manifested through his dedication to his family, academics and the sport of soccer. His dream of becoming a professional soccer player was a message of commitment, accomplishment and dedication that would inspire many.

To Scott, winning was a process of continual personal development. His team was his family as his family was part of his team. These attitudes prepared him for selection on the Kentucky Olympic Development team, the Midwest Soccer Academy All-Star Team, which toured Holland.

Scott was proud of his talent and ability to play the sport of soccer, and he gave God the credit. He loved his school, his family, his community, his friends, and most of all he loved life.

Scott's favorite pass-time was watching soccer matches, which he did at every chance, practicing in the backyard to better himself. His goal was to become a professional soccer player either in the United States or abroad. Scott's tragic death robbed the community of a young, talented and loved team member.

The purpose of the Scott Christian Memorial Soccer Foundation, Inc. is to perpetuate the memory of this fine, outstanding young man by promoting soccer among youths and establishing educational scholarships.

The family would like for you to look at Scott's website:
<http://www.scottchristiansoccer.net/>

Scott's symbol is a soccer ball.

Dale & Shan Kihlman's daughter, Brenna (4-22-75), died from cancer, 3-7-02.

A friend of the Kihlman's had a wonderful dream of Brenna:

I saw Brenna walking down a wide, brightly lit (very white) hallway. I do not recall anything else being in the hallway but her. She was walking toward me - wearing blue and white and a little bit of yellow, and possibly (I'm not sure about this one) a little purple. She was smiling, her hair was long and shiny, and she looked healthy and looked to be more the age she would be now. She said, "Tell Mom and Dad (or maybe Mother and Dad) that I am really well - I am better than ever." That is all she said, and all that I remember from the dream. I think it ended quickly after she spoke. I awakened with it on my mind, and feeling very happy that she was so happy. I knew that I had to call you - I did not know that you have received other similar calls in the past. I feel blessed that I was "chosen" to have this dream.

*Love ya,
Kathy*

Brenna's symbols are a paint brush and palette and a bee.

Paul & Nancy Hudak's daughter, Mary Beth Connor (4-10-58), died 9-24-01.

Nancy sent this poem and shared what the family is doing in memory of Mary Beth:

It is not for us to bestow gifts like benevolent persons in the world, but rather to bestow ourselves most freely, relying with unhesitating confidence on the Providence of God.

Catherine McAuley

You surely do this, Dinah, in your compassionate “mail ministry.”

Thank you for remembering Mary Beth, both on the anniversary of her death and her birth. It is such a comfort.

Our hearts are filled with memories of her (Mary Beth’s) goodness. We are happy that a fine young woman will be able to pursue her education through the scholarship established in Mary Beth’s honor. So the goodness continues, much from you.

Our love to you,
Nancy

Mary Beth’s parents call her “our star.”

Patty & Colette Coyne’s daughter, Colette (10-10-68), died from melanoma, 10-27-98.

Dinah:

Always good to hear from you. We have been busy over the summer - busy is good as we all know. Suffolk Co. finally passed the tanning bill to prevent teens from using tanning beds without parental permission. I would have liked a stronger bill, but had to make concessions to get it passed. Next year we hope to get it amended.

Planning our dinner dance for November 19th (a fund raiser for Colette’s Foundation) - and then hope to take a break. I intend to write the couple who started a foundation to support parents weekends etc. I never realized that so many families are split from the stress -

Certainly we all have become new people - not our choice, however, hopefully more caring and sensitive.

*Blessings,
Colette*

Colette's symbol is a sunflower.

David and Cindy Jo Greever's daughter, Michelle (8-24-84), died as a result of being struck by a car while attempting to catch her school bus, 11-5-93.

Cindy Jo has made many, many websites for others and tells how she remembers Michelle during the holidays:

November Fifth marks our Michelle's 12th year in Heaven.....

8/24/84 ~ 11/5/93

Michelle Marie Greever ~ Always Loved and Remembered

Some ways we remember Michelle are an Annual Donor Ceremony held each fall to honor our Michelle giving life and sight to others. This has always been a very bitter-sweet event for our family.

Decorating our home with the spirit that Michelle always had for the Holidays, to include Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas....

Making ornaments for our Christmas tree that incorporate Michelle's picture.

Including Michelle's name on our Christmas cards and letters as she is still and always will be a member of our family.

Writing a letter to Michelle upon the new year.

Our Michelle's Website: www.geocities.com/michellemaries/

Sincerely, David and CindyJo Greever and Family

Michelle's symbols are a 5-pointed star with a heart and flower in the center.

Janet George's son, Jerry McNew (9-1-54), died in an auto accident, 7-4-72.

Janet is our example that time does heal:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you for your cards and notes. My son was killed in an auto accident driven by his friend on the 4th of July, 1972. So when most other people are on picnics, parties, and just celebrating the holiday, I am at home feeling very sad and blue. It has been 33 years since his death so time has healed my heart and I have good memories of him.

Thanks again for your concern.

*Love,
Janet*

**Ronny & Teri Anderson's daughter, Mandy Taylor (5-6-83),
died in an auto accident, 9-21-00.**

Mandy is being remembered:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for always remembering Mandy. It is so sweet and thoughtful of you. I always remember the night I met both you and Rosemary. And I shall never forget your Jim and Rosemary's Drew and Jeremiah.

Ronny's children have named two of their children after Mandy. One is Amanda and the other is Taylor. It was such a sweet gesture. The first actually has a perfect red "M" birthmark under her heart. I can't help but hope this was a sign from our Mandy.

Dinah, again, thank you for always remembering.

*All my love to you,
Teri*

Mandy's symbol is a yellow lei.

**Les and Debbie Gambrell's son, Justin (10-22-77), died in an
auto accident, 9-17-98.**

I want to stress again how important it is that we remember each other's children.

Dear Dinah,

I wanted to thank you so very much for the card you sent us. It arrived on September 17th. In other years we had received cards or phone calls from family and friends and just when I thought our Justin was forgotten, we received a card from you. It really meant a lot to us.

Your dear Jim has so much to be proud of. His mother and father are awesome people.

Again, thanks so much for remembering our Justin. That card meant more to us than you know.

A Fellow Traveler,

Love,

Debbie & Les

Justin's symbol is a rainbow.

Roger & Lynda Alexander's son, Michael (4-21-77), died from a degenerative mitral valve, 10-4-99.

Here is another way parents have chosen their child's symbol:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for the card and the thoughtful words. It always helps to know that others are thinking of you at this still difficult time.

Michael's symbol is a deer. He was an avid hunter and was sitting in his deer stand bow hunting when he died.

Love,

Lynda

Michael's symbol is a deer.

Mike & Elaine Tassara's daughter, Michelle (10-12-82), died in an auto accident, 11-19-99.

The Tassara family would like for you to get to know Michelle through her website: <http://michelletassara.com/>

Michelle's symbol was chosen not only because she loved yellow roses, but they also remind them of the brilliant smile she had.

Michelle's symbols are yellow roses.

Adam and Fran Kempa's son, Chris (6-10-84), died in an auto accident, 11-20-00.

Chris' father has made the following request:

Please Help,

On November 20, 2000, our son Chris was killed in a crosswalk as he walked to school.

Our memorial web site is about 1600 hits short of 100,000. Really, in speaking to my wife, she is really hoping that our son's site Chriskempa.com will reach this goal by November 20, 2005. (The 5th year anniversary).

Please share this message with your members and forward it to other groups. I know this may seem silly, but it would really boost her spirits. (I guess we are the only ones to whom this may make sense). If you could visit us 2 or three times in the next few weeks, it would be greatly appreciated.

www.chriskempa.com

Adam Kempa

Larry & Karen Cantrell's son, Jacob (11-10-85), was accidentally shot, 10-25-02.

Karen wrote this on Jacob's 3rd angel date:

October 25 Jacob Hutcheson, son of Karen and Larry Cantrell,
brother of Jed and Jennifer Hutcheson,
Frankfort, KY USA

Reflections of Three Years

You would think that the morning of the day your child dies there would be some black cloud hovering. Some way to know that this day was not going to turn out like any other ordinary day. There are no signs; you unsuspectingly go about the daily routine, not knowing that the hours of your child's life are dwindling down right before you as the clock ticks away.

As I reflect on this 3 year date that our son Jake has been gone, it still amazes me that the day Jake died started out as any other day. Off to work, school, picked up Jake at Grandma's after school, went by the ATM to get Friday night spending money....off to home. Order a pizza, play, giggle, joke, tease....off to our separate ways for the evening not knowing we would never see Jake again once he got out of the car and walked up those steps and turned to wave goodbye. The conversation that evening in the car as we were taking Jake back to Grandma's to be picked up by his "friends" was one of playfulness but yet seriousness. We didn't particularly like one of the boys he was going to be with that evening. We even told him he may have to make choices that night, make sure you make the right choice; if you don't know what is right call us. No phone call, at least not from him. Only from his scared little sister because someone was banging on the doors and windows at our home at 9:30pm....The police were trying to get a hold of us to tell us the fate of our son.

This day marking the three years of Jacob's death has been fitting, dark, dreary, cold and windy like the vacant spot left in our hearts without Jacob here. How dare the sun come out at the end of the day but it has. Perhaps it is a sign that tomorrow will be a brighter day. The old saying to live every day as your last has so much meaning after the sudden death of a child. Make the most of it, dance in the wind, walk in the rain, eat with your fingers, kick the leaves, sing your heart out, but most of all, love your family and the precious moments you have together.

Jacob's symbol is a 4-wheeler.

Karen is also the chapter leader for The Compassionate Friends in Frankfort. This chapter is planning a one day conference for March 11, 2006. This is the information about the conference:

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal. *The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.*



“Helping Each Other-Helping Ourselves”

What: Grief Workshop for Families Who
Have Experienced the Death of a Child
Where: First Christian Church
Fellowship Hall
316 Ann St.
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
When: Saturday March 11, 2006
Keynote Speaker-Marcia Carter, author of, “Stephen’s
Moon” & “Ora’s Farm”

Registration Deadline: February 18th, 2006

Registration Fee: \$35.00 includes box lunch

Complete the form on back and return with
payment (check or money order made payable to:
The Compassionate Friends)

Mail to: The Compassionate Friends of Frankfort
PO Box 4075
Frankfort, KY 40601

TCF Workshop

“Helping Each Other/Helping Ourselves”

***Arrive early for Picture Buttons
Doors Open 7:45am**

9:00am-10:15am Welcome & Introduction of Keynote Speaker

Author of “Stephen’s Moon” and “Ora’s Farm”,
from Canton, Georgia Marcia Carter

10:15am-10:30am Break/Get acquainted

10:30am-11:45am Depression & Grief

Hospice Grief Counselor-Melinda Simpson

11:45pm-12:45pm Lunch-Book Signing & Button Making

12:45pm-2:00pm Faith & Spirituality

Asst. Pastor Chuck Henderson-Buck Run Baptist Church

2:00pm-2:45pm Break/Get acquainted

2:45pm-3:30pm-Panel-of-Bereaved Parents

Discussing-questions supplied previously by the audience
as time allows

Panel of Bereaved Parents:

Becky Greer-London KY.

Linda Norris-Radcliff, KY.

Dusty Rhodes-Frankfort, KY.

Sue Tutt-Frankfort, KY.

***TCF Frankfort Member Regina Blanton will be making 3” picture buttons before the session begins and again during the noon hour. Please bring a 4 x 6 picture of your child (ren)**

If you are a member of a TCF Chapter and have extra newsletters, handouts etc...that you would like to bring and share with others, we will have a space available.

We will also have information available on our “Children’s Memorial Garden” located at Cove Spring Park, Frankfort.

Panera Bread, Inc. is providing complimentary Bagels, Coffee Cakes and Cream Cheese for our morning session. Lunch will be catered by “All The Way” owner Linda Aldridge.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

How many attending?: _____ (no child care is available)

Check/Money Order in the Amount of: \$ _____ Made Payable to The
Compassionate Friends of Frankfort

If you are planning on staying the night of March 10, 11th we have a block of rooms reserved at the Holiday Inn Capital Plaza for a discounted rate of 1-4 persons per room \$69.00 plus tax. You must mention TCF when making advance reservations to receive the rate. Reservations must be made by February 18th for rate to apply.

Dale and Betty Mastley's son, Chris (9-2-67), died in an auto accident, 12-5-94.

The Mastleys are busy in retirement:

We are fine, keeping busy. Dale is teaching people to fly as his retired job. I continue to do garden work and keep up with Chris' memorial garden in our backyard.

We continue to receive gifts from and because of Chris in the form of people reading Scott's book (Surviving a Sibling) and being helped by it and other people wanting to start a memorial garden.

*Love,
Betty*

Chris' symbol is a garden.

Diane Craddock's son, JJ (9-22-72), died from carbon monoxide, 1-26-04; her daughter, Michele (12-31-76), died in an auto accident, 5-20-04.

"Pain and Grieving" that I wrote, in memory of JJ and Michele, if you would like to include it in the next newsletter.

The things I am doing to make things better for the present and future generations are:

Trying to make positive changes in children's rights for the "Commonwealth of Virginia" (where I live). Possibly be a federal issue, so they can be the same from state-to-state...children need love and consistency in their lives to thrive and flourish in life. "It takes a nation to raise a child"...I attended the Grand Rally in Washington DC September 13-15, 2005, to begin trying to make a difference for our children.

Trying to get a "with death involved" statute passed in Virginia where if a person kills another person with a motor vehicle and they are only charged with things like "failing to keep to the right"...they can attach on the end of the ticket "with death involved."

My grandchildren keep me busy; raising three of six....being a parent as well as a grandparent; on the last Saturday of each month I get all four of Michele's children together...this is the only time they see each other (had to fight in court for this...which caused me to realize how unfair children's rights were).

Six times a year, the six grandchildren and I (others if they want to help) clean a stretch of highway in memory of Michele and JJ ("Adopt-A-Highway")....picture included.

After Katrina, my church did an "Angel's Arms Outreach Program"....we sent a tractor trailer load of supplies (diapers, baby wipes, can goods, can openers, paper products, hand sanitizers, etc.) from the City of Franklin, Virginia, and surrounding areas...to Franklin County, Mississippi, and surrounding areas.

For myself, I write some poetry to help with some of the anguish I feel inside, I attend local bereavement support groups, and I go to a grief counselor.

I will keep all of the grieving parents, their families and their angels in my thoughts and prayers. I will visit the websites of their angels as soon as I possibly can. Thank you for compiling all of them.

*Diane, Loving Mom of Angels JJ and Michele
"Death leaves a heartache time can not heal...
...Love leaves a memory no one can steal."*

Pain and Grieving

written by Diane Craddock on August 26, 2005

In loving memory of my children JJ and Michele Wade

When you hear me laugh one moment in time,
Do you think...Oh great! she seems just fine.
The smiles you see, don't reach my eyes....
Nor do you hear my silent anguished cries.

My heart is breaking, can't you see....
Without my sweet child here with me.
My heart and soul have taken a big hit....
Yet some loved ones tell me, "get over it."

Each new day is an emotional strain....
I pray none of them experience this pain.
Only another parent that is grieving too,
Can understand what I am going thru.

My precious child has died...that is true,
But why must I hide this pain from you?

JJ's symbols are a Harley and a boy angel and Michele's symbols are a Harley and a girl angel.

Ron & Debra Baker's daughter, Tammy Smith (3-29-81), was murdered, 1-30-03.

Debra sent the following articles from their 3rd annual Day of Remembrance:

Allegany County holds 3rd annual Day of Remembrance



BELMONT—September 25th was chosen as the National Day of Remembrance for murder victims in honor of POMC (Parents of Murdered Children) founders Robert and Charlotte Hullinger, whose daughter Lisa was bludgeoned with a hammer and died on that day in 1978. There has been over 520,990 non-negligent homicides in this country since POMC was first founded.

In Allegany County a balloon release is held on the weekend closest to September 25th for families and friends who are also victims of homicide. This includes victims from surrounding counties. This

year, the 3rd annual balloon release was held Sunday September 25th in honor of the National Day of Remembrance for Homicide Victims. It is done in loving memory of Tammy Renee Smith who was shot, beaten and strangled on January 30, 2003.

Friends and family members began to gather around 1:30pm on Sunday at the Park Circle in Belmont. The local event is the brainchild of Deb Baker, mother of Tammy Renee Smith. Balloons, colored markers and refreshments were provided. Friends and family member brought pictures of their loved ones. Messages were written

and drawn on balloons which were then released into the air. As the balloon floated ever so slowly north-easterly over the village, family members and friends shared memories and thoughts of their loved ones.

Homicide victims remembered on Sunday included Tammy Renee Smith, Noah Boser, Jessica Sadler, Jennifer Bolender, Christopher Paige, Lavelle Matthews, Shawn Forness, Kevin King, Kaleigh Wilday, Samuel Swift, Penny Brown, Derrick Robie, John Gnewloski, Roland Deforest, Corey Taggart, Kevin Collins, Brandi Higby, Joey Starr, Vicki Baker, Betty Ellsworth, Paul Metlak and Janda Hunt.

At this time a foundation in the name of Tammy Renee Smith is being set up to help purchase headstones for young adults and children whose families cannot afford them. Tammy used to visit area cemeteries with her mom Debbie, and it bothered her to see gravesites without headstones.

Deb and Ron Baker send their thanks out to Ellicottville's BOCES Culinary Arts Dept., Cline's Tent Rental of Belmont and also Hannigan's Greenhouse in Belmont for their donations which helped to make the 3rd annual Balloon launch a success. Ms. Baker would also like to thank Shannon Ozzella for all of her time and help; Shannon is the Allegany County crime victim's coordinator.

Families gather to honor victims of homicide

Balloon release part of remembrance

By MELANIE STREETER
Daily Reporter

BELMONT — The sky over Park Circle filled with balloons Sunday afternoon, as the families and friends of homicide victims gathered to remember and honor their loved ones.

"I'm here to support my daughter, Noah (Boser's) mom," said Kathy Boser, whose grandson, Noah, died in Sept. 2002. "It helps to keep Noah's memory alive ... it gives her comfort."

Boser said she believes there is also comfort in knowing there are others who've lost loved ones as a result of violence.

"(It should be) a reminder to others; sometimes these are senseless acts," Boser said.

Julia Merritt said seeing that she is not alone in her loss is a comfort.

"When it first happens, you don't think anyone can possibly understand at all," said Merritt, whose fiancé, John Gniewkowski, was shot and killed in Birdsall in 2000, caught in the crossfire of a dispute between neighbors.

Merritt said losing a loved one to homicide changes lives in a number of ways, one of them being how she hears and responds to news reports of murders.

"Every day you hear it," she said. "When you hear it now, though, you know what's going on behind the scenes."

Merritt said the experience has taught her not to sweat the small stuff, so to speak.

"You see things from a different perspective," she said. "The pain never goes away, the ache and the emptiness."

But, she said, time eases those feelings. However, one thing hasn't changed.

"I sometimes still get so angry," Merritt said. "It didn't have to happen."



MELANIE STREETER/Daily Reporter

Loved ones who have been the victims of violent crimes were remembered in a ceremony in Belmont Sunday. Sylvia Swift, above, and Dylan Richardson, right, write messages on balloons for Samuel Swift and Noah Boser to whom they are related.



The event was organized by Deb Baker, whose daughter, Tammy Renee Smith, was a victim of homicide. Baker said she was not the only one to contribute, thanking Shannon Ozzella, Allegany County crime victims coordinator, the Ellicottville culinary arts class, Hannigan's Greenhouse in Belmont and Cline's tent rental along with all the other helping hands that made the event a success.

Tammy's symbols are a rose and a dolphin.

Monika Hedglin's son, Josh (9-13-78), was killed by reckless horseplay with a gun, 3-16-97.

Since Josh's death, Monika has been very proactive about keeping guns out of the hands of children. She has several websites and I hope you will visit each of them.

It gives me some comfort knowing I can do something to honor their memory. If you have other parents in your group that don't have a site for their children, I would be willing to help make their websites with them of course always free of charge.

I am so sorry that you also know this horrendous pain of losing your child and being he is an only child.....well, I am sorry to say this, but the truth is it is so much harder for us we have lost our entire future, we are destined to be alone forever at least on this earth.

I know there really aren't any groups out there that are specifically for only child with no grandchildren and I personally found only recently that I myself needed to find a safe haven for my own feelings on this issue. My first group "angels with wings of gold" is wonderful and I love all the members dearly but they just cannot begin to understand what I face and how hard it is for me sit and read about their grandchildren and see pictures of grandchildren and even some members have had new babies, which of course, I think is the greatest blessing on earth, but still it tears my heart out. I am too old for more children and besides that I could never have children anyway. Our Joshua is adopted. But still he is my greatest gift. Anyway, that is how angels with wings of gold only child loss was born.

You are so right when we die so does our legacy. There is nothing to leave behind, in fact, in a lot of ways our legacy has already died.

For me it is like this shell of an existence is left. Living is going thru the motions.....

Doesn't really matter to me if I am here or not....

Not that I would do anything about it.

As I said you are more than welcome to use the sites for the support groups or anything else from Josh's site you wish to use. There are many poems I have written in memory of Josh there as well.

Here is the link to both groups' sites.

Angels with wings of Gold Only Child Support

<http://iam.homewithgod.com/angeljeh/index.html>

Angels with Wings of Gold support

<http://iam.homewithgod.com/angeljeh/members.html>

I do have several things that make me think of my Joshua. One is the bright sunshine because he is my sonshine and always has been, always will be. The

other is the yellow rose because it represents all the joy and beauty and brightness he brought into my life, to say nothing of the fact he lit up my life.

The other is a rainbow because when the last thing I said to my son before they closed his casket was “God has given you a whole new color palette and the skies are your canvas, son, paint me a rainbow so I know you are ok.....” (Josh was enrolled for the fall session at Missouri State to become an art teacher) two days later there was an awesome vibrant double rainbow in the skies above our house. Actually, the one that reminds me the most of Joshua is the cardinal, so use the cardinal. All these things make me think of Joshua, but he has brought me so many answers by showing me the cardinal.

The night of the funeral my sister was sitting outside; she came running and said “come you guys hale bob is going over if you want to see hurry up.” We all went outside and in my mind’s eye I could see my son straddled over the star, one hand holding the point on the star and the other one waving in the air. In my mind I could hear his voice saying “whaaaaaaaahooooo I can fly mom see I can fly.....” what is important about this is when Josh was little he would sit for hours and watch the sky. He would ask me, “Mama, why can’t I fly like the birds do,” and I would tell him, “because, little one your mama's baby bird and it is not time for you to fly, but some day you will sweetie all baby birds gotta fly...”

When I see the awesome pinks and corals, oranges and purples in the sunset or even the sunrise I always say “Good job, Bear, that is awesome you’re becoming quite the Picasso....” and how could he not after all he is learning at the Master’s feet.

I look forward in a sad way to get to know and meet all the other moms who have been thrust on this long and painful road.....I truly believe that we cannot lose what we hold in our hearts and that together we are strong and tomorrow we will survive because we have each other.

My Angel and I

*My angel and I walked by the waters edge.
We talked of life long ago.
We talked of growing up in a world so strange.
My angel and I walked along the waters edge
We talked of memories we had shared.
We talked of climbing trees.
How much it hurt to skin your knees.
We talked of dreams we each held dear,
My angel had so many and so did I.*

*My angel and I walked on the waters edge together
again,
Or was it just my imagination?
We talked of growing up.
I answered a million mommy whys?
A thousand mommy what ifs?
We talked of becoming an astronaut,
flying to the moon.
or becoming a jet fighter pilot,
and flying the skies so blue.
Mom I decided to be an artist and teach.
We all have a talent, we just need to find it.
Mom I am in love... I love her so much...
My angel and I walked by the waters edge,
It seemed like hours had gone by.
Or was it my imagination.
I heard my angel speak.
"I have to go now mom my time is up.
I Love you mom, we'll walk the waters edge again."
Or was it just my imagination?
My Angel and I.
We'll walk in the clouds together one day.
I know that's not my imagination.
I love you son!*

Monika Hedglin

Love Monika
Mom to Joshua 4 ever
God Bless our broken hearts,
God give us a moments grace.

Please vote for Josh's site
Reckless Horseplay is Murder
<http://my.homewithgod.com/angeljosh/>

Angels with wings of Gold Only Child Support
<http://iam.homewithgod.com/angeljeh/index.html>
Angels with Wings of Gold support
<http://iam.homewithgod.com/angeljeh/members.html>

Josh's symbol is a cardinal.

December 5th is the date Richard Paul Evans has asked all who have a Christmas Box Angel to have a candle-lighting service. As you know, I am gone a lot and we will be in Atlanta on that date so it is now scheduled for December 7th at 6:00 PM. I hope you will be able to attend. This will be our second service. If you can come, please let me know by emailing me at dinah@cumberlandcollege.edu. If you haven't seen her, she is beautiful, if you have seen her, you will want to see her again because she will give you hope for the holidays. "Hope" is even written on her wings to remind us that there is hope in tomorrow.

In loving memory of all children who are no longer with us, The Compassionate Friends and all who have lost a child, extend an invitation for you, your family, and friends to join tens of thousands of persons around the globe for the eighth annual Worldwide Candle Lighting.

On Sunday, December 11, 2005, hundreds of community candle lighting ceremonies will be held in parks, churches, and other public places by TCF chapters, allied organizations, and other compassionate groups. Thousands more will be held informally in homes. The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting is held every year on the second Sunday in December at 7 p.m. local time for one hour in each time zone around the globe—a 24-hour remembrance of all children who have died.

I would like to encourage you to view Jim Miller's website, WILLOW- GREEN <http://www.willowgreen.com> There are books, tapes, photos, DVDs, etc. The different media are for people who are grieving. You will find every type of media for every type of loss. There is also a Presenter's Kit on Grief. This is uniquely designed to help busy professionals and volunteers communicate with others about working with the bereaved. There are PowerPoint files with "talking points" from which you can customize your talks for your particular audience.

http://www.compassionatefriends.org/2005_WWCL/worldwide_candle_lighting_inform.htm

RED FRIDAYS ----- Very soon, you will see a great many people wearing Red every Friday. The reason? Americans who support our troops used to be called the "silent majority". We are no longer silent, and are voicing our love for God, country and home in record breaking

numbers. We are not organized, boisterous or over-bearing. We get no liberal media coverage on TV, to reflect our message or our opinions.

Many Americans, like you, me and all our friends, simply want to recognize that the vast majority of America supports our troops. Our idea of showing solidarity and support for our troops with dignity and respect starts this Friday -and continues each and every Friday until the troops all come home, sending a deafening message that.. Every red-blooded American who supports our men and women afar will wear something red.

By word of mouth, press, TV -- let's make the United States on every Friday a sea of red much like a homecoming football game in the bleachers. If every one of us who loves this country will share this with acquaintances, co-workers, friends, and family. It will not be long before the USA is covered in RED and it will let our troops know the once "silent" majority is on their side more than ever, certainly more than the media lets on.

The first thing a soldier says when asked "What can we do to make things better for you?" is...We need your support and your prayers. Let's get the word out and lead with class and dignity, by example; and wear some thing red every Friday.

As I say a blessing before eating, I subconsciously add:

Give us this day, our daily...CHOCOLATE (and forgive those who don't give it to me)!

Please visit the website and let me know if you see any omissions or errors:

<http://www.cumberlandcollege.edu/lamentations/joininginmemory.html>

dinah@cumberlandcollege.edu