
LAMENTATIONS

Issue 97

middle

January, 2006

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! Isn't that what you should say to everyone?

The new year is here and what are we going to do with it? The following is a Bereaved Parents' Wish List, do you have any other statements that you would like to add to this list, if so, let me know.

MBereaved Parents Wish List **M**

I wish my child hadn't died. I wish I had him back.

M

I wish you wouldn't be afraid to speak my child's name. My child lived and was very important to me. I need to hear that he was important to you also.

M

If I cry and get emotional when you talk about my child, I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me. My child's death is the cause of my tears. You have talked about my child and you have allowed me to share my grief. I thank you for both.

M

Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me. I need you now more than ever.

M

I need diversions, so I do want to hear about you, but I also want you to hear about me. I might be sad and I might cry, but I wish you would let me talk about my child; my favorite topic of the day.

M

I know that you think of and pray for me often. I also know that my child's death pains you too. I wish you would let me know these things through a phone call, a card or note, or a real big hug.

M

I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over. These first years are traumatic for me, but I wish you could understand that my grief will never be over. I will suffer the death of my child until the day I die.

M

I am working hard in my recovery, but I wish you could understand that I will never fully recover. I will always miss my child and I will always grieve that she/he is dead.

M

I wish you wouldn't expect me "not to think about it" or "be

happy." Neither will happen for a very long time, so don't frustrate yourself.

M

I don't want to have a "Pity party", but I do wish you would let me grieve. I must hurt before I can heal.

M

I wish you understood how my life has shattered. I know it is miserable for you to be around me when I'm feeling miserable. Please be as patient with me as I am with you.

M

When I say, "I'm doing okay", I wish you could understand that I don't "feel" okay and that I struggle daily.

M

I wish you knew that all of the grief reactions I'm having are very normal. Depression, anger, hopelessness and overwhelming sadness are all to be expected. So please excuse me when I'm quiet and withdrawn or irritable and cranky.

M

Your advice to "take it one day at a time" is excellent advice. However, a day is too much and too fast for me right now. I wish you could understand that I'm doing good to handle an hour at a time.

M

Please excuse me if I seem rude, certainly not my intent. Sometimes the world around me goes too fast and I need to get off. When I walk away, I wish you would let me find a quiet place to spend time alone. I wish you understood that grief changes people. When my child died, a big part of me died with her/him. I am not the same person I was before my child died and I will never be that person again.

M

I wish very much that you could understand ~ understand my loss and my grief. But, I pray daily that you will never understand.

MMMMMMMMMMMMMM

--Poem from The Compassionate Friends.

Here are five that I would like to add:

M I wish you enjoyed hearing Young Jim's stories as much as I love telling them over and over again. I wish you understood that I have no new memories as you have, but I want to be able to join in the conversation and share old memories of Young Jim as you share your new ones, and to be as attentive to Young Jim stories as I am of yours.

M I know this is cruel, but I wish you could experience my pain and loss for just 30 minutes so you would have some idea of not only what that first 30 minutes felt like, but the way it feels everyday for a very long time.

M I wish my dearest friends didn't have to be parents who have lost children. I have found this to be so because everyone else is tired of hearing me and my stories, and are tired that I "haven't gotten over it."

M I wish I didn't feel the yearning need to get to know each of you and your precious children. I would much rather be spending time with grandchildren (which I will never have) I wish we had all met and become friends for any other reason than because our children have died, and they have brought us together.

M I wish a new year for you that will bring some peace and joy to your life and will help your heart to heal. I wished we all lived closer together so we could see each other more often.

Grief Grafts

Michelle Brooks' son, Mario Vidal, Jr.(9-16-88), was murdered, 8-6-04.

Michelle and her family still have a trial to face. Please keep this family in your prayers.

Dear Dinah,

Thank you for remembering Mario on the day he joined the angels and also on his birth date. Your kind note helped to lift my spirit, which I sorely needed.

There are days when I sink to such despair over losing Mario, and often feel like I have nothing left to give.

Our last year has been filled with court proceedings, and we still have to try and get through a full jury trial in early next October.

With counseling, support groups, reading and the support from people like you, I am trying to manage each day as it comes.

I know that Jim is very proud of you for reaching out and helping all of the bereaved families whose children have joined him and the angels.

Love,

Michelle

Mario's symbols are musical notes.

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

On Tuesday December 6th my Dad died at U.K. Medical Center in Lexington. He had fallen on the previous Wednesday and broke his leg. They done surgery to put a rod in and repair that. Being in poor health he suffered a mild heart attack days after. They had done another surgery to open his arteries to the heart. He was just not strong enough to pull through. He was 81 years old. A strong, honest, sincere, remarkable man. He and my Mom have been married 62 years and raised 9 children.

When my son Joe Frank took his life I was so sad that he died alone. I was the one that saw death come into my fathers eyes and I told my sister "the time is now" so she witnessed it also. Mom was on the opposite side of the bed. I told her, "Mom, come and hold Dad's hand because he is going. Talk loudly to him and give him a kiss." She immediately came to the side of the bed that I was on. When she kissed him, he took his last breath. Dinah I have never witnessed that before. I feel like it was a "gift" to me, because I would be the one to understand and know what to do. I feel like because of my actions, mom got to kiss him his final goodbye. I talked loudly to him when I saw death come into his eyes. I told him to "take Joe Franks hand. He is reaching out for you Dad, take it." I feel a great sense of peace in knowing that my Dad has reached the other side and is with Joe Frank in happiness.

Over the past four years since losing Joe Frank, I have had to do a lot of coping on my own. Other family members tended to avoid my pain when and if they could. So I thought that I would return that sentiment. But I can't. I have traveled the road of grief and I know how hard it is to walk it alone. So I have been the "rock" for my family in the past few days.

I also thought that I could not survive another death in our family. But I was strong enough that I was the one that was asked to write and deliver my Dads eulogy. It was an honor to do that. I feel he is proud and the family was also. My family says that they "can not believe the wisdom I have gained."

All My Love,

*Barbara Kinne "always Joes mom" Joe Frank Banks 10-30-77-----
7-17-2001*

Joe Frank's symbol is "I Love You" in sign language.

Shirley Rulon's son, Phillip Ray Sheldon (4-30-67) died in an auto accident, 9-14-90; and her son, Darin Scott Sheldon (5-31-70) completed suicide, 12-9-02.

Shirley has wonderful news to share:

Dinah,

You are truly a blessing in my life for the work that you do. How do you do it all????

You are so very faithful in sending out the cards on birth and death anniversaries, and I felt compelled to let you know how much they mean to me. Sometimes when they have arrived I could not open them for a few days, all I could do was lay it on the kitchen table unopened and just stare at it. Today when I received your note I couldn't wait to open it and not only was there this wonderful poem but a hand written note as well. I am just in awe and again say thank you so much for your acts of love and kindness.

Sometimes, Dinah, I think that I am going crazy all over again. With Darin's death it begins on Thanksgiving and I relive the last days of his life in my mind. I think of the last times that I saw him and the things that we said and the things that we shared. I think of the last time that he was with his children. I think of all of the things that I wished that I had done or said. This year I described it as going into deep mourning on Thanksgiving and not coming out of it until after the date of his death. With Phil I start around Labor Day until the date of his death (September 14). This probably all sounds a little crazy, but if anyone understands it has to be you and any others that have walked the path.

With both of my children deceased and my husband passing on December 10, 2001, life seemed to be pretty much laid out that I would be a widow for the rest of my life. This role I had accepted and could deal with it, as I had my grandchildren to love.

But now I must tell you a story of happiness. In April of 2003 a friend of mine introduced me to a gentleman and we began to date. In fact our first date was on May 31 (Darin's birth date) and his name is Phil. I did not think too much about all of this until months later when the friendship turned into something else. We were married on September 17, 2005 in a small church wedding with family and friends. The friend who introduced us was my maid of honor. Darin's son, Joshua (age 14) walked me down the aisle and on my bouquet I carried a locket with pictures of Phil and Darin, so they also walked me down the aisle to marry my Phil. It was a beautiful day; the sun was shining and my angels in heaven were there to see their mother marry a wonderful man who took me with all of my faults. He has not walked in our shoes thankfully, but is a wonderful listener and helps me through the rough parts of this process.

May your life be richly blessed here on earth and I know that someday, when my work is done here, I will see my children once again.

I wish for you peace, love and joy at this holiday season.

Shirley Rulon Hayes

Ron & Debbie Baker's daughter, Tammy Smith, was murdered, 1-30-03.

Debbie was involved in the third annual Allegany County celebration of the National Children's Memorial Day. Click here to read the article:

http://www.wellsvilledaily.com/articles/2005/12/13/local_news/news02.txt

Tammy's symbols are a dolphin and a rose.

Billy & Trish Barton's son, Michael (12-5-63), died in a logging accident, 4-3-96.

Billy & Trish are helping others:

Dinah -

Your website is wonderful and so valuable. This year we are remembering Michael and many humorous ways about him as a young child. As you have said - "Our love grows and grows and grows - a living love for him!"

We have become members of the Gideons. We have new Christian brothers and sisters. We are being trained now to distribute new testaments to spread God's word around the world - but especially right here in Murray, KY.

For all things we are grateful. Truly grateful for you and your love for us!

These are some of their memories of Michael:

Michael grew up loving nature and hunting and fishing. His dad took him to a youth hunter safety program when Michael was in the second grade. Michael studied the process to recognize ducks in flight and the points that each duck counted for the day's hunt. He shared this knowledge

with his second grade class. The whole school thought he was a duck genius!

His dad kept working at how he was going to keep his son dry out in the water fowl preserve in Kansas. Billy bought waders at an army surplus store - the smallest he could find. Then he tied them and taped them to fit his eight year old son. Of course they had suspenders - but the feet were way too large. When Michael stepped in the deep mud - his foot would get stuck and then he couldn't get out by himself - he was stuck! Dad had to help him get out!

Billy & Michael would go off at 3:00 am with another father and son and they would have a wonderful day of bonding and hunting. We moms would get up to send them off with a warm breakfast and enough food to last 'til supper time! We took turns at this - smart moms! Wonderful memories! Michael graduated from the University of Montana and earned his Wildlife Biology degree. He lived his lifelong dream!

Michael's symbols are an elk bulging, fish jumping, duck in flight, horse running & Michael the archangel.

Eva Daniels' son, Landon (6-11-04), was murdered by his father, 3-18-05.

Eva is new in her grief:

Hello, my name is Eva Daniels I recently lost my son to his own Father. He killed my son then himself in Pikeville while being pursued by police. I have been in an awful nightmare that I can't awaken from. I still have my older son who is 6 and is a wonderful child that has suffered soooooo very much. My cousin was at a park when she found a balloon that read "Tina Mayne I love you," and she thought of me instantly. (This balloon was one that was released at J.I.M.'s Conference last year) It's an awful situation when you know someone you loved took from you the most precious gift that GOD has given you. I had Landon Randall King for 9 months and that was not enough!

He was the wind beneath mine and Jared's spirit, so I thought a butterfly is his symbol. Even though it is small, it carries so much.

Landon's symbol is a butterfly.

Chad & Christy Fitzpatrick's daughter, Jordyn Ashleigh (3-30-98), died from AML, 5-8-00.

Christy shares how she has become ALIVE again:

I met this lady online, she has a wonderful journal that I read and she is going to be running in the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society Marathon (26.2 miles I believe it is!!). She's running in memory of her niece, Lindsay and earlier this week asked if she could run in memory of Jordyn as well! I'm so touched and overwhelmed at this.

If you would like to donate and help her reach her goal, that would be so awesome! Here's the link: [Team in Training](#)

God shows me so many amazing things daily on how even though Jordyn's with him, she lives on. Chad and I try to carry her with us the best way we know how. The boys know her, and Jacob's never shy about talking about his "big" sister.

5 1/2 yrs after the death of Jordyn, I've grown in a lot of ways, that I did NOT want to grow right after she died. I wanted to hold onto that fresh, stabbing, piercing pain. God knows, though. He knows that I HAD to go through that horrible, blinding pain, to feel joy again. To feel ALIVE again. I am alive. My husband is alive, and my children are alive. Jordyn's spirit is still alive!

The main purpose of this is to show and share with you this amazing lady and that even when we have never met someone in the flesh, doesn't mean that we can't effect their hearts. I don't feel like I so much effected Linda, as I feel that Jordyn and her love of life did!

If you don't want to or just can't contribute to Linda making her goal, I ask that you pray for her and cheer her on, even if only in your hearts and through prayer!

Jordyn's symbol is a goose.

Doug & Anita Dowdle's son, Christopher (4-17-79), died from electrocution, 9-29-00.

Dear Dinah,

You are an inspiration to me! Thank you for your thoughtful words about Christopher.

We were in New York City with our second daughter waiting for the arrival of "Christopher Hudson Hausmann." He is precious and our Christopher would have loved him so, along with his three other nephews.

Christmas is such a special time of year and doesn't seem to get easier, we just put on a better face.

We must all move somehow in a positive direction because helping others and encouraging people to appreciate the little things in life is honoring what our children were all about."

Merry Christmas and I just wanted you to know you make a difference.

*Love,
Anita*

Christopher's symbol is a golfer angel.

Steve and Jan Ulrich's son, Nathan Eisert (5-27-82), completed suicide, 6-8-02.

The following article was written by Bill Hill, a writer for The Courier-Journal, about the recent suicide of Tony Dungy's son and includes Nathan's story:

<http://www.courier-journal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051229/COLUMNISTS05/512290389&SearchID=73230932729283>

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

Dearest Dinah:

Many Blessings at this special season of the year. Yes, we miss our special Saints but know they are watching over us. Tomorrow Patty and I will have been married 49 years so-----to begin our 50th year of marriage, we are going on a retreat 12/31-1/1/06 - what better way to thank the Lord for all our gifts. I am attaching a poem I wrote recently fyi - hugs to you both.

Colette

Colette wrote the following poem:

Our Colette

*There is no end without a beginning
One must acknowledge their grief!
To allow the moments for tears of today,
Will free memories of happiness, when you came our way.*

*A child born of love, a gift to us all
Older brothers and sister, there to guide when so small.
Amazed at your questions as you grew through the years
Challenged as you spoke, as you formed your ideas.*

*Respect and justice were part of your life
Goals and ambitions for success within sight
Though undetermined by youth, your wisdom was there!
Always a listener, for those needing to share.*

*While choosing close friends, one or two you held dear,
You recognized others, who needed to be near.
Life lived with enthusiasm, no regrets you would have
October your birth month, Fall days made you glad.*

*Holidays were celebrated but Halloween was the best
Your Thanksgiving Feast was gourmet more or less
Dad smiled as he tasted each dish you prepared
Later hesitantly admitting, Rosemary need not be there*

*Those moments were joy filled, we never suspected
Days spent together would change without warning
Now faced with this challenge, you handled so well*

Courageously you fought, though your Mask was not sad!

*While sharing your journey with just a select few
It was family you wanted as your time became due
Awed by your spirit, through pain to the end
Promising your love, you always would send*

*Feel my love always, are your words written on a card
True to this day, for never are you far
We cherish and feel your presence in unexplainable ways
Guiding and supporting us and we struggle with each day*

*Though life has changed forever, we have learned so much from you
We know you will be waiting, when each one's time is due*

My Angel!!

Colette's symbol is a sunflower.

Luther and Rosemary Smith's sons, Drew (4-23-74), and Jeremiah (7-4-77) died in the same auto accident, 7-23-92.

The following article was written by Karra Bussabarger The Southeast Outlook, a Christian newspaper in Louisville, KY about Rosemary and her



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wonderful ministry:

Drew and Jeremiah's symbols are yellow butterflies.

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

This is the letter sent to the families who participated in her first "Celebration of Life."

Thank you to the families that participated in my first annual Celebration of Life on December 31, 2005. There were 150+ beloved angels represented at the ceremony, some from as far away as England and Sweden. The event was blessed with guest speakers, songs, poetry read, sharing of precious memories, lighting of candles, releasing balloons, fellowship, and refreshments. During the entire ceremony, an overhead projection slide show continuously showed the loved ones.

Dr. Patsy Joyner and Chris Smith, from Paul D. Camp Community College, talked about keeping our loved ones memories alive. My beloved daughter, Michele Wade, attended this college and maintained a 4.0 GPA, while juggling three children and a job. We introduced scholarships established in honor and in memory of my two children, Michele and JJ Wade.

The names and pictures sent to me for the event are posted on the www.angels-arms.celebration-of.com website. Two of the poems read at the ceremony were written specifically for the event. I wrote "Faith, Family, and Friends" (posted below) and Michele's oldest son, Jeremy--13, read the poem he wrote "In Remembrance of You." Jeremy & his sister, Morgan--8, created www.diane-wade.memory-of.com website in memory of their Mom...his poem is posted there, if anyone would like to visit...

Pictures were taken at the ceremony, when they are returned, I will share the pictures with everyone that sends their private email address to me at angelsarms2004@verizon.net I'm trying to get a CD made for families that are interested and the CD will be offered at cost. Thanks again to all the families that sent your beloved angels' cherished memories.

[Faith, Family, and Friends](#)

[Dedicated to beloved angels around the world](#)

*Always remember to extend a caring hand
To the grieving loved ones around our land
Take time to cry, laugh, or reminisce with them
And realize they will forever need a true friend*

Angels' time on earth, whether short or long

*Yesterday's treasured memories to us belong
After they have gone to their heavenly homes
Our hearts beat as one, until our time comes*

*God will continuously provide for you
Spiritual, physical, and emotional too
Strength from faith, family, and friends
Provides peace and comfort until the end*

*The wonderful gifts the good Lord gives
Sharing the lives our beloved angels lived
Counting our precious blessings is easy to do
When prayers to God, end with "Thank You"*

**Copyright ©2005 Diane Craddock
Angels Arms poem presented at the 2005 Celebration of Life**

Diane wrote these 2 poems:

Pain and Grieving

*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 through.*

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

"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal... Love leaves a memory no one can steal."

Written by Diane Craddock on August 26, 2005 "In loving memory of my children...JJ and Michele Wade"

Sisters and Serenity

To the special sisters in my bereavement support group

*A loving group of sisters in prayer,
Dedicated mothers from everywhere,
Strong faith, love, hope, and care...
Are precious bonds that we share.*

*Tragic circumstances make us hurt and cry,
We all have suffered having a child die.
Our baby may have died during birth....
Or years after sharing time here on earth.*

*A parent's love is given, pure and true,
It is heartbreaking here without you.
Our time together was a precious blessing
That part of our soul will always be missing.*

*Tender loving memories rewind everyday,
Searching for peace and comfort as we pray,
Lord, mend our broken hearts from within...
And grant some serenity until we meet again.*

"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal... Love leaves a memory no one can steal."

Written by Diane Craddock on May 31, 2005 "In loving memory of my children...JJ and Michele Wade"

In Remembrance of You

*Whenever I look at a light,
It reminds me of you.....
Because you are the light of my life
And your light shows me the way
To the Footsteps of Jesus.
You seem to pop up in my mind
When I feel sad
Because the image of you
Is always happy and joy-filled.
I wrote this poem
In remembrance of you
Because when you come to me
You seem to be saying
For me to spread your love and happiness.
I love you and thank God for you,
Of all women, that could have been my mother.*

This is the poem Jeremy, Michele's oldest son (13), wrote on the way to the Celebration of Life. He read this poem, along with another one he chose from a book, at the ceremony.

Diane Craddock, Loving Mom of Angels JJ and Michele Wade
"Death leaves a heartache time can not heal...
...Love leaves a memory no one can steal."
757-562-7727 home & 757-438-7812 cell
www.angels-arms.celebration-of.com
www.michele-wade.memory-of.com
www.jj-wade.memory-of.com

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

Joe & Ann Kechter's son, Matt (2-19-83), died with 12 other people at Columbine 4-20-99.

Ann Kechter was the Keynote Speaker at J.I.M.'s conference last year.

Shortly after the tragic events at Columbine, a group of students, faculty, parents and community leaders organized a committee to plan and raise funds for a permanent memorial to the Columbine shooting victims. This committee, with assistance from consultants, from the community, and from parents of the victims, has spent the past three years gathering public input, selecting a memorial site, and developing design concepts for the memorial. This Web site has been created to assist in distributing public information and to assist in the effort to raise funds for this important project.

Within the Web site you will find information regarding the memorial site, design details, contributions, public input, and the project schedule.

For more information on the Columbine Memorial go to:
www.columbinememorial.org

Matt's symbols are an eagle and a door.

I hope you will get behind this project. This will be another way you can remember your child.

A balanced diet is a Chocolate cookie in each hand.

TRAVELER

Mother finds mission in comforting those who grieve

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

a pool and tickets to UK basketball games," Rosemary said. "It was a good life and I always said we had the perfect life."

But that ended July 23, 1992, when Drew and Jeremiah—driving back from a concert in Indianapolis—died when Drew's red Mazda Miata crashed.

"Even though the sun was shining that day, darkness like none I had ever known settled over my whole body," Rosemary said. "All of a sudden everything I believed in was questioned. I asked God how He could let this happen. We did so much in the community, cared for people, raised good children and tried our best to do everything right."

The what ifs began after Rosemary and Luther told the news to their youngest son Jordan and Drew's fiancée, Erin.

"I dealt with the what ifs over and over again—thousands of times until I didn't ask them again. But every time after the accident that I saw a red Mazda Miata, I would get chills. Luther still says he shouldn't have gotten Drew the car. But now we don't think about it anymore," Rosemary said. "Now we see red Mazda Miatas at the most unusual times and it gives us comfort."

Rosemary also found solace in her faith. While following hearses to the burial site, she heard church bells toll 33 times.

"As I sat there and counted, it hit me that when Jesus died he was 33, which was also the combined ages of my sons," she said.

Two weeks after her sons died, Rosemary received a grief workbook from Dinah Taylor, whose only son died one year earlier—the night before he was to graduate from high school. They eventually met and became friends.

When Rosemary heard about two teenage girls who died in a single car accident like her sons, she called the family. That phone call led to numerous others and the rela-

tionships formed with grieving parents led to the formation of the group Fellow Travelers.

"I feel this is my mission on earth," Rosemary said of the ministry. "I now have a higher purpose than what I was doing, and the death of my sons took me there."

Every day Rosemary reads the newspaper and searches the Internet for child obituaries.

"People might think it is morbid, but I don't," she said.

She either calls the families or sends them special packets consisting of books on loss, a music CD, a large, three-ring notebook of inspirational messages and more.

"Different things speak to different people," she said.

She gets about 50 emails a day from people requesting one of her packets. More than 5,000 packets—paid for by Rosemary and her husband—have been sent all over the world including Australia and England.

One book included in the packet was even written by Rosemary entitled *Children of the Dome*. It contains her testimony of loss as well 27 other stories of survival and hope after the death of a child. She has given away more than 10,000 free copies and recently had it translated into Spanish.

FOR MORE INFO.

If you would like more information on Rosemary Smith and her Fellow Travelers ministry or would like to receive a bereavement packet, call (606) 464-3901, write P.O. Box 346, Beattyville, KY 41311 or email childrenofdome@cs.com.

Additional information on Rosemary and her ministry can be found at www.childrenofdome.com.

Rosemary currently is working on a documentary that features 12 families discussing the loss of their children from 9-11, Columbine, the war in Iraq and more. She hopes to have it in packets by 2006.

Rosemary created her own database of deceased children that includes a photo, correspondence with the family and the cause of death. When a woman in Lexington backed over her own little girl and killed her, Rosemary looked in her database and found a father who did the same thing. Rosemary called him and asked that he contact the grieving mother.

"I work to put families to-



Brothers Jeremiah, 15, left, and Drew, 18, were killed in a tragic car accident on July 23, 1992. Their mother, Rosemary Smith, now sends packets with books, CDs and inspirational messages to other survivors of loss across the world.

gether," Rosemary said. "I learned through my experience of losing my sons what matters most in life. I learned that we are here for a purpose and are not to muddle through life. We are to help other people. It gives me great joy thinking God is using me to help others."

Rosemary still misses her sons, though. Every night she slips into Drew's old T-shirt and crawls into bed thinking about her sons.

"There has not been a day that I have not missed Drew and Jeremiah—missed the feel of their hugs, youthful exu-

berance, adventuresome spirit, messy rooms and fights, and the promise of their future and their love," she said.

"I often tell people that I now live in two worlds—one foot on this earth and another

with them in heaven. We are still a family. Death has not changed that one important fact."

Kara Bussabarger may be reached by email at kbussabarger@secc.org.



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