

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 94

middle

October, 2005

Dear Fellow Travelers,

As I think of the beginning of fall, I am reminded of not only the changes in temperature and colors of the leaves, but also the changes in us, whether we want to accept them or not. Even though we can't change the weather, we have to accept the changes. Even though we can't change what has happened to our child (ren), we have to accept it...and in accepting, we are changed. As you read or have read the newsletters, you can see how the death of a child has changed parents and families, and in many, many cases, they in turn have changed laws, lives, and have become a beacon for others. Just think of what Rosemary Smith has done in changing all of our lives. As you read this current newsletter, you will read about other parents who are changing things...and that is what we must do. We must not let our children's deaths be in vain.

Because of Young Jim's death, one of the changes I had to make was to get a guardrail constructed where Young Jim was killed so no one else would be killed there. I felt that if I didn't, and someone else was killed, it would have been my fault. I had to make another change, and that change was the need to be with others who understood my grief, and who wanted to share their children with me as I wanted to share my child with them, and to join us together. Think how the choices we make for our children's symbols give us an avenue each day to talk about our children with others who didn't have the honor of knowing them.

You change each time you contact another parent who has lost a child. You know how important it was for you to hear from a fellow traveler, and now you are to do the same for other newly bereaved parents. When you meet these new parents, I hope you will let me know so they and their children can be added to the website and thus will continue to be remembered. Each month, I hope you look at the birth and angel dates on the website of each child and remember them. If they have a website, I hope you will visit it. These are remarkable children and deserve to be remembered.

Please share how you are changed and how you are making changes in others, in the law, etc. There are several parents who make websites for others so their children will be remembered. I know our children want us to be busy, to find something to do that has meaning, and to help each other. I truly believe that our children know each other and want us to stay in contact with each other. We all need to be encouraged by each other and by sharing what you are doing, you can teach us how. We know we are strong or we won't be surviving, we just need direction. Let's help each other.

Grief Grafts

Gary & Robyn Nichols' son, Justin (9-6-78), died from tainted drugs, 7-7-00, and their daughter, Malori (8-22-84), died from an overdose, 8-2-03.

Want to thank-you for remembering my children on the special days. People just seem to think when they are gone from sight we forget them. I so much enjoyed the conference this year. Don't know about you, but Cindy's (Bullens) music says it all for me. I feel as if I have known all these parents forever; guess that is that special bond we all share. Thanks for all you do. Am sure young Jim is really proud of his Mom and Dad.

A fellow traveler,

Robyn Nichols

Mom always of Justin Nichols and Malori Nichols Holmes

9/6/78-7/7/00

8/22/84-8/02/03

Justin's symbol is a sunburst face with a tear, and Malori's symbols are a butterfly and a mushroom.

Mike and Maggie Peters' daughter, Meredith (11-19-76), died from Osteosarcoma, 9-24-90.

Maggie shares some of her adventures:

Dear Dinah-- thanks for that site update and general seasonal encouragement! I am just now offering to do some kindness, something like that, actually. I am helping assist

(volunteering) in teaching a low level English class at Christ's College, a Presbyterian Church in America missionary effort here in Taipei. The college was donated to the PCA in its early years (about 30 yrs ago?) by its aging founder who wished the college to go forward beyond his death. I help the professor out; it's nice to have two of us to go around the room and look at the students' efforts at composition. The kids are appreciative, though very weak academically. I take a taxi up & public transportation back (subway is called MRT here, followed by a city bus). CC is closer to our new apt. than from our old apt. in the city. We are now more in the suburbs and the college is even further out than that, which is actually pleasant, as the dense city can be oppressive in ways beyond heat and humidity. Regarding fall being a tough time for many of us bereaved parents, I can relate indeed, yes. Someone else comes to mind though... I have a friend who, although she never lost a child to death, nonetheless always had a deep sadness every autumn as her 2 kids would return to school, eventually to college, and later to their own lives after summer visiting. Her wise husband bought them a cabin in western NC and always took them to pop off together there for an early fall respite, just the two of them. To give them each the refreshing time to begin another year. How wise a man he is! And how sensitive a man too... He was in academic medicine so he benefited, too, from recharging a bit come fall. Hope you & hubby together can do something sweet and dear in September for a respite. Autumn is such a busy time for a college president. Well, I must quickly look over some papers before I head up to the College. Maggie, the Taiwan Transplant XO

Meredith's symbols are a cross with a heart on top of the cross.

Robert & Jackie Searl's son, Alex (10-13-65), died from a heart arrhythmia, 6-7-96; and her son, Dan (4-6-61) died from an inoperable brain tumor, 4-30-00.

How true what you said regarding doing something in memory of our children.

Robert, my husband and I, send to those that find themselves on this "new journey," a copy of Charlie Walton's book...When There Are No Words...it was his story, but became our story and is the story of others on this journey, that I adopted it as my gift back to those who have so many unanswered questions...I write on the inside cover that this book is presented in loving memory of my sons Alex and Dan...I hope that others will remember what was a helpful tool for them and that they wish to pass it along to others in the memory of their loved one.

We order about twelve books at a time from the publisher and keep them on hand for when

we learn of one just starting the journey...this has become an important part of our on-going healing and helping others...it also keeps Alex and Dan a part of this journey...the sharing and reaching back is, in my opinion, what we should do for not only others, but for ourselves and the memory of our precious ones.

Wishing you well and I hope one day that we can meet.

*Many blessings,
Jackie Searl*

Alex's symbols are a deer and a fish; Dan's symbol is his dog Buddy.

Ted & Becky Showalter's son, Jeff (12-9-85), was killed in an auto accident, 9-6-04.

Ted has done a wonderful thing in Jeff's memory:

Dear Dinah,

I appreciate your emails and have enjoyed reading your updates. I have been very busy in the past six months preparing for a charity golf outing that I chaired in memory of my son Jeffrey. He and I enjoyed the game of golf and I really wanted to sink my teeth into something. There are so many people out there that don't understand how important this event was to me; in fact, most people saw it as just another golf scramble. Well, I really put my heart and soul into making it a great golf outing, and with the help of many people on Aug 17th, we had the best golf event around. We had celebrities from the NFL, former pro baseball and basketball players; it was a true Christian event. One day I'll have to put this all in my journal so I will never forget; as I said so many people didn't understand why I wanted to do this and, to be honest, at times I didn't know why, I just had to do it. I know as a fellow traveler you understand. I attached the front of our brochure with Jeff's picture on it so you could see his face. I feel very confident he was proud of all of us that day.

In only 9 days it will be a full year since Jeff died. It seems like it was just yesterday. I never realized what people went through until now and I certainly pray I never have to feel this way again.

Thanks for being a part of my life.

Ted Showalter

Yes we do plan on the second annual golf outing for next year.

Jeff's symbol is a car.

Anthony and Kelli Hatfield's son, Cole, was stillborn, 7-21-01.

Kelli is another parent who is remembering Cole in a very special way:

Dinah,

*I wanted to say thank you ever SO much for all that you have done to keep my spirits up throughout our journey since we lost our only child on 7-21-01, *Cole Morgan Hatfield.* Although our son was stillborn- lost in the eighth month of pregnancy-and our stories are very different- grief has treated us very similarly I am sure. I have enjoyed reading your previous newsletters and your cards have brought smiles to us at times when tears are more on our minds.*

I wanted to share with you that I am now part of a support network here in Michigan called Tiny Purpose - with women who have also lost children to stillbirth, miscarriage or infant death. I have been elected to coordinate the Walk to Remember on October 15, 2005, here in Adrian. Your outreach to others really has been an inspiration to me. Doing something positive in memory of our angels is the key.

Again, thank you for everything that has not only inspired me- but the multitude of other families on this road as well. You may never realize how important your work has been for all of us- what a tremendous tribute to your son.

*Sincerely,
Kelli Hatfield*

Cole's symbols are stars and cherubs.

Regina Blanton's son, A.J. (5-2-86), was hit by an auto, 6-8-03.

Regina wrote about a visit to Williamsburg and J.I.M.'s Commons:

Little Red Bricks

On the way home from Tennessee, I found myself getting off at the Williamsburg exit. I had no plans to do so! I had no problem finding the little red concrete bricks with the flag in the middle. I know just where to find my son B.J.'s brick, his father's, and his half sister's

too! I talked to him like I do everyday. But this visit was different, because over to the left I saw Julie's name, and I started talking to her. I told her how proud I was to call her mother my friend! And how very proud she was of her, but I felt she knew that already! Next there was Jacob's name and I told him how much his mother helped me with our long talks on the phone. And I wish I could be as strong as she is! I told him how hard she works for our group Compassionate Friends, and all her hard work has helped so many like me! Michael's name popped out at me next. I told him I hope he met my son B.J. because they could tell some good wrestling and football stories to each other. I told Michael how I wish B.J. had had a father like his. There were so many times B.J. would call his dad and ask him to come to a meet or a game, but he never did!! When I turned to leave, there was Ryan Rhodes. I almost over-looked him, but I don't think he was going to let me go just yet. I told Ryan how his mother and father had not just opened up their hearts, but their home to all of us at Compassionate Friends. I told him how his dad loved my mother's blackberry jam, and how he called me to come to a meeting and I didn't show. By this time, I was crying like a baby, and there were college kids walking by but no one said a word to me. So I walked back to my car. I looked back one more time at the square of red bricks, and I noticed college kids walking all over the blocks. Church had just let out up the street, and I guess they were in a hurry to get to their rooms. So I took my B.J. button off my purse and put it in the little flag hole above his name, and the next college kid that walked by, I told her with tears in my eyes, "this is my son B.J." I told her all of these names are someone's child who lived and died. So please don't walk on these Little Red Bricks.

B.J.'s symbol is a bandana.

Marge Nunn's son, Kenny, completed suicide, 8-19-04.

Dear Dinah,

I just wanted to thank you for the card you sent. I did receive it on Kenny's Angel date. I really love the ship story by Henry Scott Holland and I believe, too, that Kenny was welcomed by a host of family and children. I do know he is safe.

I miss him terribly, of course, and have learned a lot in this last year. As I write each day and think of him, things seem to get clearer, at least for me to cope better. Of course, life without him is or never will be the same.

Thanks again for your kind words. There have been special people in my life who have kept Kenny's spirit and memory alive with me. You have always lifted me up, too, in your special way.

Love,
Marge Nunn

Kenny's symbols are a rainbow, baseball glove, fishing pole, and a golf club.

Fred & Rebecca White's son, William (12-1-71), died, 8-5-00.

Rebecca is writing about her struggles and acceptance:

Dear Dinah,

So many wonderful emotions flood my heart in August when I see an envelope in my mail with your return address on it. "She understands and remembers," comforts my grief. "Why does she care about me?" I wonder. Then, it doesn't matter, "Why?" and I open the envelope. Tears come to my eyes as I look for your hand-written signature. I don't care what words are printed on the card until later. My first love is for the words you write to me about William. Then, immediately, I hope that someone remembers your son and you on your special day. I want to thank you for taking the time to remember my son and me.

William was born December 1, 1971. A prescription medicine I took for morning sickness caused his spinal deformities. He lived with them rather well, but I felt guilty.

William loved music and played the cello, piano, bass guitar, classical guitar and guitar. He had perfect pitch and a beautiful singing voice. He loved to laugh and that was music to my ears.

William had overcome great obstacles in his life and started college late. He was on the Dean's List at Eastern University. He was preparing to move to his dorm room when he died here at home. An autopsy revealed he passed out after drinking too much alcohol. Then he inhaled his vomit and died. He had told me earlier he drank alcohol to kill the pain-physical and emotional.

His death was very hard for me because I felt responsible for it. Five years of therapy have helped me to be able to accept the truth about a lot of areas of my life when I believed lies. I am writing a book about it.

Thank you for the notes.

Lovingly,
Rebecca

William's symbols are anything musical.

Brent & Angela Ellefson's son, Jayden (2-20-02), died of asphyxiation by food aspiration, 4-3-03.

Angela wants you to meet Jayden:

What a thing that has found it's way to me. I lost my son Jayden on April 3, 2003. He was 13 months old. He died after choking to death on macaroni and cheese (more to it but fastest description) The technical term is asphyxiation by food aspiration. He is still such an amazing part of our life. He is survived by me and his Daddy Brent (who is currently serving in Iraq) and his big brother Ty who turned 6 in July. I hope you will visit Jayden and lots of his angel friends at www.celestialfriends.com

Jayden's symbols are orange stars.

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

The Coynes established a foundation in Colette's memory to educate others about the danger of sun tanning:

Dinah:

How right you are -- our work in "Colette's" Foundation is what keeps us going. Did I tell you we got a Tanning Regulation Bill passed in Nassau County "Colette Coyne Skin Cancer Prevention Bill."

Am still working on Suffolk Co. and then, when that finally happens - the State!

Check out our web site www.ccmac.org all that has been happening. Colette broadened our world while physically with us and is continuing to do so spiritually. It is a comfort to feel our angels' presence!! Give yourself a hug.-

Blessings,

Colette

Colette's symbol is a sunflower.

Carl & Barbara Kinne's son, Joe Frank Banks (10-30-77) committed

suicide, 7-17-01.

Barbara explains what “anniversary” means to her:

They call it an “anniversary.” I cannot. This is my day of remembrance.

Four years ago, on a sunny July 17, Adam, my youngest son, threw his fishing poles into the back of his truck. He would finish his work in the hay field and then head to the pond and fish till dark. "Come go with me," he said to his brother Joe Frank. "Nah, you go ahead. I got things to do. It's my day off," Frank jokingly replied to Adam.

As Adam loaded hay bales onto the wagon, Joe Frank loaded one single shell into his brother's gun. All alone in our home, he went into his room and sat down on his bed. He placed the shotgun against his chest and ended our lives.

Today, again, part of me will die. I will cradle his work boots and kiss the tear streaked picture of him. I will wail and moan as I fall to the floor like a wounded animal, mourning for my child. I call out his name just to hear the sound of it. "Don't you know I love you?" I will scream out to him. "Why didn't you know that I needed you?" I ask into the air. I do not know why he chose to end his life. A great burden of guilt will always linger over me. What didn't I do. What could I have done. Why didn't he know that he meant everything to me. Did I let him slip away, could I have prevented this? I will walk in the valley of the shadow of death all the rest of my days.

I pray for peace, for comfort, and strength. I have found hope, been blessed with joy. I have been given what some shall never find. I know real love. Through horrific loss, I have gained knowledge and compassion. I have been left his unused years. I have to make them count.

"Mom, when I grow up, I want to be a hero." He told me as a child. I couldn't save hi, but it is possible that his death will direct me to save someone else's son or daughter. Maybe he will be that hero that he hoped to someday be.

Today, for me and for Joe Frank, will you take the time to let someone know you care. Smile at someone who is sad. Comfort those that hurt. Encourage those who think they are failing. Talk to the lonely. Listen to the one that thinks they are unimportant.

A tender touch can be felt all the way to the heart.

"Let not my loss be in vain."

*As you send your e-mails to and fro
Would you forward this in memory of my Joe.*

Joe Frank's website is: <http://www.joescloud.com>

Joe Frank's symbol is a hand sign for the deaf "I love you."

**Donna Adams' son, Jonathan Holliday (8-3-90), committed suicide,
10-18-04.**

Donna would like for you to visit Jonathan's website:

<http://www.angelfire.com/blues/jcr/Jon.html>

**Elaine Craven's daughter, Maureen (7-29-69), died in an auto accident,
11-5-89.**

Elaine shares what she did in memory of Maureen at the beginning of this school year:

I have donated school supplies here in Memphis for our school children who cannot afford to buy any.

Maureen's symbol is an anchor.

**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.**

Diane would like for you to read the stories of her two children. In less than four months she lost all of her children.

<http://www.geocities.com/pammispages5/dianemain.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/pammispages6/michele.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/pammispages6/jj.html>

<http://www.michele-wade.memory-of.com/>

<http://www.jj-wade.memory-of.com/>

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

Tom and Pat Regan's son, Dave (6-1-72), was killed in the line of duty as a New York City Policeman, 5-28-00.

Pat shares her experiences on September 11, 2005:

SOS

The NYPD and the City of New York will have a ceremony on October 1, 2005, to rename the street near Dave's precinct in his memory. As we talk to Mike Mauro from the 62nd precinct and discuss the details, it brings back memories of that day in May 2000 and the wake that followed. The street naming is both good and bad.

Today, September 11, at 8:45 a.m., Tom and I left our home to go to Mass at Notre Dame. We were attending the 9 a.m. Family Mass and at the end of the Mass would be "Sent Forth" with Eucharist and bulletins to do a prayer service at Denton Green, a senior residence in Garden City Park.

We did the prayer service at Denton Green on Easter Sunday as well. Just before we left our home that morning, the call came in from Sun Harbor Manor that my Mom had died. We felt Mom would want us to bring Eucharist to Denton Green residents and we prayed for her at the service.

It was a beautiful morning today in NY...sunny, cool, clear... yet Tom and I were remembering...and we were sad as we left our house.

At Notre Dame, we found that the Family Mass was the Mass of Remembrance for families in our parish who lost someone in September 11, 2001. About 8 names were read and three families were present. They were called up to light candles. Remembering 9-11 caused more sadness.

The pastor at Notre Dame did a fine homily. It was about remembering, accepting, appreciating the gift that our deceased loved ones had been, not understanding the mystery of life or why tragedy happens... Msgr Martin used the word "noble" and I remembered Brian saying that about David wanting to be a police officer. In my mind I could "see" Brian speaking with great emotion from the altar at Dave's funeral Mass.

Then, today at Mass, Msgr. Martin spoke about being angry... at God... and at our loved one as we thought of all that we had imagined their life would be...the dreams we had for them and for our relationship as our lives intertwined, matured and developed.

Martin was good...not negating the pain or the feelings...but pointing out the belief that our loved ones came from God and are with God now...That they are in a good place...

Today, near the end of the Mass, Tom and I went on the altar and received the hosts to take to Denton Green. We are sent forth before the congregation is dismissed and must be at the senior residence by 10:15.

As we were leaving, Tom spotted Fr. Pie (a Chinese priest) who would be saying the next Mass and Tom began to talk to him. Tom told father that we were going to the senior residence. Fr. Pie wanted to talk to both of us, so he called me over. Fr. Pie is an elderly priest, a gentle man...who wanted to tell us a story about two friends. The men had been in business together. One man began to gamble and lost all his money and the business went bankrupt. For 15 years the men had not spoken. Then, one day, the one partner and his wife were Eucharistic Ministers and were told to bring communion to a senior residence.

There was the elderly, ailing former business partner. Through the Eucharist God worked to heal them... to allow reconciliation to happen. I'm not telling the story well... but Fr. Pie was crying as he told it to us... I have never seen him cry before... Something in that story touched the priest deeply...and he had to tell it to us today ...We were meant to be together...There is the mixture again...sadness...but God's goodness, too.

The music I had chosen for the prayer service is the music the children's choir sang today in Notre Dame...The main song was Christ Be Our Light...which has special meaning for me with Tom and the diaconate...and it was the entrance song in Dave's funeral Mass. When we don't understand...we ask God for the light to see more clearly...and for the help that we need.

The residents of Denton Green are so appreciative!! They notice everything and are very welcoming. I bring special candles and flowers... and the residents comment on them... They join us in the readings and the singing...We are blessed by the experience...

Today, after the Gospel, Tom did a brief reflection and I did, too, retelling Fr. Pie's story and describing how Notre Dame was remembering September 11. Then I asked the people to remember what they were doing when they heard about the planes crashing into the World Trade Center on 9-11, 2001.

I reminded the people that Dave had died in 2000 in a line of duty accident. As family of a deceased police officer, we are permitted to have special license plates that indicate we are Survivors of the Shield. Tom chose to have the special plates on his car. They say: SOS and a number. I did not want to be reminded each time I looked at my car.

Tom had the plates for about a year. One day, returning from the pool and only half a block from our house (as he was driving straight across Stewart Avenue going south on

Edgemere) a young man in an old car made a quick left in front of Tom. Not much happened to the cars, but the front license plate on Tom's car was a mangled mess. In early September, Tom got another car but we had the plates to surrender at Motor Vehicle Bureau.

On September 11, 2001, I went for an early blood test and told Tom I'd drop off the plates at MVB. When I got to the women at the desk, I did not have the registration and, when she checked the computer, she could not locate the plate. She asked me what SOS meant and I said: Survivor of the Shield... and then I added...For most people it means: HELP...and that's what I've needed since my son died...HELP from God... and from caring people... HELP to find strength and hope again. The woman was a good listener...

I was very pensive as I drove home. When I came in the house, Tom was watching TV...It was unbelievable to see pictures of the planes hitting the twin towers...Unbelievable to see them collapse... to worry about our daughter-in-law... SOS... we were a country who needed HELP... as 23 more families became Survivors of the Shield... and 60 people in our community lost loved ones...

It's still hard to believe... And yet four years have gone by...One of the children who went up to the altar at Notre Dame today to light a candle must have been in utero when his Dad died.... And so we remember... we try to honor those we loved...we go on... and we continue to ask for help...

SOS

There is the mixture...Some things very sad...some things lifting our hearts...giving us light...allowing us to move on in hope...Sharing stories...Thanks for reading my ramblings... God bless.

Love,

Pat

September 11, 2005

Dave's symbols are a rabbit, star, #102 (his badge #) and an Iris.

Vickie Dunlap's son, Cody (8-20-79), died from Ewings Sarcoma, 8-1-02.

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for remembering my son and my family. I also believe Cody was welcomed in Heaven, it was truly a great celebration. Taking care of him had become my entire life. I feel so lost and alone without him. It's hard to put your life back together when

a major piece is missing--so few people understand. I find peace in knowing Cody is with our Lord in Heaven, free of pain--happy!

The month of August is very emotional for me now. It leaves me feeling raw and exposed. I don't believe anymore that time heals all wounds, but I do still believe in the glory of life, so I get up every day and live my gift of life as best I can. It took two years to get to that point; to get to a stage in my life where I wasn't wracked with guilt every time I laughed. Our children want to know we still laugh and love and live. I know that.

Cody is such a special guy! I've come to the decision that I will speak of him as if he were alive because he is, just not on earth. I'm his mother; I feel him. His body died, my son moved on. If his life force were gone, I'd know it. People think I sound a bit off-center--I think, "whatever."

*God bless you,
Vickie*

Christy Caldwell's daughter, Rebecca (6-29-75), was killed by her abusive boyfriend, 9-18-00.

Christy is proactive in the prevention of domestic violence:

The following speech was given at the dedication of the new center for Women And Families in Louisville, KY, in April. In October, I will speak at a "Take Back the Night" rally at University of Louisville and at another one at Indiana University, Southeastern campus. In November, I will participate in a roundtable discussion—a survivor's panel of 4-7 women (victims of Domestic Violence who survived—and myself—a mother of a victim who died)...we will briefly tell our stories for a group training to work or volunteer at the center in Louisville. After all this, I hope to make up a pamphlet and video tape of my speech and pitch to civil organizations, schools, and churches—for speaking in return for a small fee to cover my expenses...I especially want to gain access to those training to work in the legal system.

My daughter's abuser had been wrongly released to his father on a bond reduced from \$10,000 to \$1,000...when the error was discovered almost immediately and a bench warrant issued for his arrest, the warrant did not get served—it languished in a woefully inadequate system for 6 days until he strangled my daughter to death in her apartment, stayed with her body for 31 hours, then turned himself in—while I frantically tried to reach her by phone... I learned of her murder on the local TV news.

Her Speech:

MY NAME IS CHRISTY.

I'D LOVE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER, REBECCA CAY CALDWELL--THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE...

HER 30TH BIRTHDAY IS COMING UP--I'D LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO A BIRTHDAY PARTY. I'D LOVE TO SHOW YOU PICTURES OF HER WEDDING...PICTURES OF GRANDCHILDREN SHE BLESSED ME WITH...

I'D TELL YOU ABOUT HER COLLEGE DEGREE FROM SPALDING UNIVERSITY IN 2002... ABOUT HOW SHE WORKS WITH CHILDREN AS A TEACHER & MENTOR... & ABOUT HER BEAUTIFUL SMILE, HER LONG EYELASHES & BEAUTIFUL BIG GREEN EYES...EYES THAT LOOK INTO YOUR SOUL & KNOW YOU & WILL WANT TO WRITE YOUR STORY...

AND ABOUT HER INFECTIOUS HUMOR THAT LIGHTS UP A ROOM...ABOUT HER COMPASSIONATE HUGS...HER ENCOURAGEMENT--"YOU CAN DO IT MADRE"...

ABOUT HER BOOK OF POETRY--IS IT HER 2ND OR 3RD?...

...I WOULD LOVE FOR YOU TO HEAR REBECCA'S VOICE...I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO HEAR HER VOICE ONE MORE TIME...

BUT REBECCA COULD NOT BE WITH US TODAY...THERE WAS NO WEDDING, NO COLLEGE DEGREE, NO CAREER,-- NO PUBLISHED BOOK---NO GRANDCHILDREN...

REBECCA CAY CALDWELL NEVER MADE IT PAST 25...

HER BODY LIES IN A COLD LONELY GRAVE...SHE DIED IN A CASE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2000...STRANGLER TO DEATH IN HER OWN APARTMENT BY A MAN SHE ONCE LOVED...A MAN WHO HAD ABUSED HER BEFORE-- A MAN SHE WAS TRYING TO END IT WITH...REBECCA'S LIFE WAS ENDED--- THOUGH HER SPIRIT LIVES ON...

THE GRIEF & PAIN I FEEL AS HER MOTHER IS INDESCRIBABLE--THE DEATHS OF MY HUSBAND, MY SISTER, MY BROTHERS, & OF BOTH MY PARENTS--THE PAIN DOES NOT COMPARE...THERE IS NO ANGUISH, NO LONELINESS, LIKE LOSING A DAUGHTER OR SON TO MURDER.HER SISTER, CATHERINE; BROTHER RICHARD & OTHER LOVED ONES--- OUR LIVES ARE FOREVER SHATTERED... WE LIVE IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION... IN THE WORDS OF RONALD GOLDMAN'S FATHER 10 YEARS AFTER THE MURDER OF HIS SON--"IT DOES NOT GET ANY EASIER--YOU SPEND EVERY DAY JUST TRYING NOT TO BE CRAZY"...

NOW, I AM REBECCA'S VOICE...I AM TELLING YOU---REBECCA IS TELLING YOU--- IF YOU ARE LIVING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AT ANY LEVEL--GET OUT NOW...IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS LIVING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, TELL THEM REBECCA'S STORY--& HELP THEM TO GET OUT NOW...IF YOU WORK WITH SUCH CASES IN ANY CAPACITY--DON'T GET FRUSTRATED & SEE THESE VICTIMS AS FACELESS NUMBERS... REMEMBER, THEY ARE EACH SOME MOMMA'S REBECCA...

I AM EXCITED FOR THE GOOD THIS NEW CENTER WILL DO--THE REBECCA'S YOU WILL

SAVE...
THANK YOU!

Rebecca's symbol is a hummingbird.

Marsha Freeman's son, Jonathon Cornett (1-16-74), died in an auto accident, 9-25-98.

Dinah,

Thank you so much for hanging in with me all these years. I do appreciate your thoughts and efforts. I stay in FL part of the time now, and I realize I'm running away, but it gives me time to regroup. I always think of you and the Children of the Dome when I go through Williamsburg, and will one day stop and visit. I carry Jonathon with me wherever I go. I'm always glad to be home, however, since his presence is so strong here. He is buried in the Lilly Cornett Woods, in a family cemetery, so I don't get to visit his grave very often, and when I do, usually on his death date, it's like reliving the whole thing again. People tell me to let it go and move forward, but these people are ones that either don't have children, or have never lost a child. I know they mean well, but I don't even try to explain to them anymore the depth of the loss, because there is no way they will ever understand.

I'm sending you a poem I wrote a few years ago. I'm not a poet, but the words just flowed and I truly believe God's hand was on mine. Thank you again for your diligence, and I'm sorry it's taken me so long to respond.

JONATHON'S POEM

*There's a pain in my heart where joy used to be
I've hidden it away so no one else can see.
At times I let it out when no one is around
I keep it quiet and hide my tears and try not to make a sound.
Sometimes you might see the pain flicker in my eye
I blink so it will disappear and no one sees me cry.
Every day is difficult, but holidays are the worst
I look around and you're not there, and my heart threatens to burst.
The holidays can be so hard with the joy that abounds
From strangers, friends, loved ones, and others all around.
I'll try this Christmas season to put the pain away
Long enough to celebrate this special holiday.
I'll try to feel joy and not dwell on the pain*

Until I get the chance to be with Jonathon again.

Marsha Freeman

Thank you for your remembrances of Jonathon and of me. Please feel free to use whatever you want for the newsletter. I don't know why I chose a beautiful bird as Jonathon's symbol... it just came to me as I was writing the letter to you. I've struggled for years trying to think of what his symbol should be to no avail, and then it just popped into my head. He WAS such a free, beautiful, spirit that I can just imagine him soaring in heaven.

Dan & Betty Bryl's daughter, Jessica (1-19-77), died in an auto accident from a cell phone user, 4-3-00.

The family has been very active in getting the laws passed about cell phone users. I hope you will look at Jessica's website and read about the trial, etc.

<http://jessicalyn2000.homestead.com/Pictures.html>

<http://www.homestead.com/jessicalyn2000/index.html>

The Bryls give another example of how our children are changing lives:

It's been a long road to get word out about the dangers of cell phone use while driving, but I think as a whole we in our own way are getting the word out to the dangers & we hope we can save lives.

Dan & I went to Burger King yesterday for lunch & the manager came up to us saying he needs to do a persuasive speech for a class he's taking & has decided to do it on the dangers of cell phones. He knew that Jessica was killed as a result of such negligence & asked us if we could give him some important information to give his speech the "punch" it needs in 8 minutes. We felt good that Jessica's legacy is being kept alive to bring the dangers of what a single phone call can do while driving.

I then was coming out of work last evening when I noticed a lady reading our bumper stickers on my car & I asked her if I could give her Jessica's picture we pass out with her web site & she said sure. We talked for awhile & we ended up crying together, with her saying she was going home & putting Jessica's picture on their refrigerator to show her 17 & 20 year old the importance of "Drive Now.....Talk Later" so again we've brought some awareness to the dangers.

Jessica's symbols are an open book, her cherished teddies, and an angel.

A Good Friend Is Like Good Chocolate:

Quality ingredients, nothing artificial and ALWAYS appreciated (sometimes a few nuts thrown in)!

Please visit the website and let me know if you see any omissions or errors. This is your website and we want our children to be honored and remembered.

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

Dinah@cumberlandcollege.edu