
LAMENTATIONS

Issue 105

middle

October, 2006

This Halloween (Oct. 31), or All Saints' Day (Nov. 1), are you hiding behind the mask?

Hiding behind the Mask

~lovingly lifted from Bereaved Parents USA

I think we as bereaved parents wear masks 12 months out of the year, not just on Halloween, perhaps on Halloween we should just wear our own grief stricken face and not be noticed.

How many masks do you wear - even in a week or a day. Do you wake up in the morning feeling the pain, with the knowledge that your child is no longer here? Do you "mask" that face with your old normal face to say good morning to your spouse? You can take the mask off and cry in the shower...it somehow feels so good to release some of those tears. Time to wake the children for school, put on the cheerful, positive mom mask. After dropping the children off at school you can once again remove the mask and feel. Soon you will be pulling into the parking lot at work...get the next mask out...the mask of the competent professional. WOW! That's a lot of mask changing in a short time.

Strange, isn't it, how the MONSTER pain of grief makes us put on masks to cover the pain often to those who really care and who perhaps are putting on their masks to cover their pain when they see us? Maybe we could all be so much better off if we removed our masks and let the monster pain out.

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta Sept/Oct 2002 Newsletter

Grief Grafts

Jim and Dinah Taylor's son, Jim (7-26-72) was killed in an auto accident, 5-20-91.

Our sister-in-law, Lois Taylor, wrote this poem for our birthdays; Jim's, October 17th, and mine, October 11th. There has always been a contest in the family where we have to name 10 Good Things about each other:

*Remembering Young Jim
By Aunt Lolo*

*I remember his "Chesser Cat" grin,
And the trouble it sometimes got him in;
He'd say in consternation,
"There must have been a miscommunication."
He wasn't being bad
It was just an impish look he had.*

*I remember him telling ten good things about his dad,
Some not really good, but not too bad;
He'd say with some dismay,
"I can't think of more than five today;"
His dad would say: "Please, please,"
So he'd name five more with ease.*

*I remember his thoughtfulness of others,
But most certainly if he'd had his druthers,
He'd be with the horses
And not taking courses
Because competing for the prize
At the rodeo is what really lit up his eyes.*

*Most of all, I remember the boy,
To his family, he brought such joy;*

*He was kind, he was bright,
He was fun, not a fight,
And we miss him with all of our might!*

Young Jim's symbol is a Pegasus because he loved horses so much and he needs a winged-horse since he now has wings (hard to imagine Jim with wings... but I will guarantee his halo is slightly tilted!)

Lillian Cox's son, Darren (12-21-65) completed suicide, 6-25-98.

Lillian gives us good advice:

Dear Dinah,

You have been a true, loyal, and lasting friend and I thank you. You have helped me and others like me, through some awful times. It has been over eight years for me. Yes, time does help. There was a time I didn't believe that.

Darren is missed today as much as everyday since he left, but the awful pain has softened some. The regrets are still there and probably always will be. There are days the bitterness comes back and sometimes the anger. The love for him lasts through all that and more.

My health no longer allows me to keep Destin (Darren's son) on a daily basis. I miss him a lot and also miss seeing his dad in him on a daily basis. I do keep him occasionally for short periods of time. His mother has moved on to another love, and they are making a good home for Destin. That is the way it should be. Life does go on.

If I had anything to say to those parents that are going through this; it would be you just do it. There are no miracles or secrets to it. You just get up every day and do it. That really sounds too simple. And maybe someone else has a better idea, but that is what I have come up with.

*My good thoughts go with this to you and many, many thanks.
Lillian Cox*

Darren's symbol is a feather.

Debbi Foster-Murphy's son, Daniel Foster (9-9-79) was murdered, 3-26-04.

Debbi asks for your support:

A Search for the Truth

Hi, I'd like to introduce myself; I'm Daniel S. Foster's mom, Debbi. My son, Daniel, was murdered with two of his friend while 4-wheeling. They were doing nothing wrong, although it has been alleged they were trespassing. It happened on a beautiful spring day, the boys did not destroy property or anything for that matter. They had only been there a few minutes when they were murdered in cold blood.

I have been fighting the local justice system, and Alabama State, since March 26, 2004, when my son and his friends were murdered. I have received nothing but deception by officials involved, and an agreement of all that was recorded on record, as being the truth, by Alabama State Government Officials. An article written by Mr. Wallace is the first help in ANY WAY, that I have received, during this quest.

I am asking, begging, pleading, with EVERYONE, that has taken the time to read this article on my son, and his two friends, to help me...you can do this by simply giving your advice or adding your comments.

With the help of "The Weekly Readers," it is my sincere hope, that I will be able to put the memories of what took place to rest. That, my family and I, can finally continue on with our lives, and only have to think about what a treasure, a "God-Send," and wonderful person my son Daniel was.

I would like to personally THANK EVERYONE, that has taken the time out of their busy lives to read what was written about Daniel, Scooter, and Jason this week. I hope you will continue to read as we, meaning Mr. Wallace and myself, continue to tell the full story of my son's murder. This includes all the questions I have, all the things I've been through, and all the many things that are so unanswered because of the way it was handled by Officials.

I hope, through YOU, I can figure out what to do next, and I hope, TOGETHER, we can figure out a solution to what actually happened on March 26, 2004, to three very honest, sincere, and loving, boys.

If this news blog could help me, to do this, my GRANDEST HOPE, is that one day, I WILL BE THANKING YOU, for your consideration, help, honesty, and time, in SOLVING MY SON DANIEL'S murder. It is with a very

heavy heart I bring this story to you all, but through YOU, hopefully I can gain my SOLUTION, and JUSTICE WILL BE SERVED.

To read more about Daniel, and Debbi's search for the truth, please look at his website: <http://daniel-s-foster.tripod.com/>

I emailed Debbi to ask about a symbol for Daniel:

A race car would be a perfect sign for Daniel. He loved racing, his number was #13. The child had a need for speed, from the time he got into a walker!!! LOL He raced 2 different local dirt tracks, and was a candidate for Nascar rookie, for Toyota.

Thank you so much, once again Dinah. Please put me on the mailing list for your newsletter also. Thank you for your support.

*Hugs to You and Yours,
Daniel and Debbi*

Daniel's symbol is a race car with #13.

Tom & Jan Below's daughter, Samantha (9-20-82) died in an auto accident, 5-28-98.

I wanted to share a story that has touched my heart so much with everyone. For those of you who are new to the group, a little history about me. My name is Jan and I lost my daughter, Samantha May Zima, in 1998, auto accident at age 15. Two years later, I lost her half brother, Dakota Kenneth Below, Dec., 2000 at birth.

Many years ago Samantha gave me an idea of donating my gifts of afghans to people sleeping in the cold. I made this web site last year looking for help in this goal in both their memories:

<http://www.geocities.com/intermcare/samanthasdream.html?1131749732562>

I have donated many, many afghans to area hospitals, where I was working at the time, in the past two years. Last Christmas I donated a large box to the hospital where Samantha died, and they were given to parents

that were there with their own sick children on Christmas day. My next box will be donated to a homeless shelter in Milwaukee, WI.

I hear from some of the recipients of the gifts from time to time, but never am looking for thanks, just a personal goal for me to keep my angels' giving ways alive. But just recently I received an awesome letter from a wife of a patient I took care of, well over a year ago. I usually gave my gifts to parents of ill children, but on this night I had a patient that was newly diagnosed with cancer. His wife was planning to spend the night with him and at the time we had no children on the unit, so I gave her the afghan to use that night. I always include a card in each afghan, with Samantha's photo and a little prayer.

She wrote to me to tell me that she found her husband the following day when they went home reading my insert and crying. Later that day, they went to discuss his options of treatment for his cancer and his prognosis. He was set to start his treatment two days later. She says as they were getting ready to leave for the hospital, he was frantically searching through the house. She asked what it was he was looking for? He said, "where is that blanket???" She had no idea what he was talking about. He said, "Remember that beautiful blanket that nurse gave to you?" "Oh yes," she said, "it's in my closet, why?" He said, "I read her card and it said 'as you wrap yourself in the warmth and comfort of these gifts know that you are being wrapped in the loving, protecting arms of these two precious angels.'" He said, "I want to take it with me and use it during my treatments it sure can't hurt to know someone is watching over me during this right?"

She said he would never go in without the afghan, even though his MD teased him from time to time about needing his blanket! She was thrilled to report his cancer is currently in remission and he is doing well. And he feels it was this special gift and his family that helped him get through this all and he wanted me to know what a treasure my gift truly was to him and his family, and he would share it with all his loved ones for many years to come. I never thought in a million years that something I did for my own grief and dealing with my loss would have such a huge impact for someone else. How proud I am of my precious angels to bring him and his family such comfort during their time of need. Thanks for letting me share my story of how something we think is for our own healing can actually touch others this deeply.

Samantha at times made fun of me when I would drop money in buckets whenever I saw someone needed a helping hand. By saying, "aaahhh, do you feel better now," and I would say, "hey, you never know, we may one day need to ask for help and I would hope someone would help

us,” and she'd say, “I know, I'm just kidding!” Bet she isn't making fun of me anymore!

jansam15

I had sent them an email card on Sam's birthday:

Thank you so much for remembering our angel on her birthday. I got a sign from her this morning as soon as I came to the computer this morning. I awoke to hear Sylvia Browne her favorite Medium on TV and she was saying this person is one that loves to drop pennies where you are sure to find them when she knows you are sad, and sure enough there by my computer was a penny with the year she was born on it 1982! I smiled through my tears and said Thank you Sammy and God and Happy birthday my ANGEL.

*Again thank you this is beautiful.
Jan mom to Samantha May forever 15*

I do the afghans in memory of her and her half brother we lost at birth. His name is Dakota Kenneth Below he was born an angel on Dec. 12, 2000. She always wanted to help so many people that it helps me to keep that part of her alive always. God bless. Jan

Samantha's symbols are Unicorns and brown bunnies.

Ted & Linda Feeney's son, Todd (9-12-81) died 7-20-00.

Linda had the same thoughts so many of us had on the observance of 9-11:

Today is such a sad day for Americans (9-11). I feel selfish because all I can think of is that our son would be 25 tomorrow.... what would he look like now? Would he be married? Have a child or two? Would he live near us? Would he still have that charming smile?

Thanks for what you do!

Linda

Linda shared how Todd passed:

Todd was driving home from work, he worked at Claire's Boutique in the Anderson, SC mall. His friends made fun of him at first until they realized that nearly all of their customers are cute young girls - then they thought he was a genius! Todd had just graduated from HS in May - gone in July. He was supposed to go out with his friends after work that night, some of them were waiting to catch a ride with him, but he couldn't get his cash register to balance so he told them to go on without him, that he would catch up with them later.

For some reason, it appears that he was heading home instead. He was on I-85 when he evidently lost control and crossed over the median - he hit the back end of a semi and his car was airborne, exploded into flames and came down in front of a Ford Explorer. It had 2 women and 2 children in it. The women weren't wearing their seatbelts, but the kids were belted into their car seats in the back. The women were ejected and had severe injuries; one of them died 2 days after the accident. I don't know much about them other than that the children (who had no injuries) belonged to the woman that survived and the one who died was her best friend. They were from New Jersey, had been to Atlanta so the children could visit with their dad (parents divorced) and were driving home.

I had actually driven past the accident just minutes after it happened. I had nearly stopped because the kids were out on the road and there was only 1 policeman that had just arrived there. But then the traffic was so bad and heavy I was afraid I would cause more problems. It never occurred to me that it was Todd...it was on the other side of the interstate and the car looked very small. It was a Pontiac Bonneville. We never got to see Todd; he was so terribly burned that the coroner wouldn't let us. I begged but they wouldn't allow it. For months afterwards we both believed he was still alive, that someone else was in his car. But, of course, that was just the denial part. His autopsy said he died instantly from a broken vertebrae and a crushed heart.

I also saw the accident reported on the news that night - I was outraged that they would show the car burning and then said they couldn't reveal the name until relatives were notified - I remember thinking..."what if the relatives are watching this?" The accident was around 9:30 pm, the newscast was at 11 pm and at roughly midnight my world changed with a knock at the door. There was a man in plain clothes (the coroner) and a policeman there...they asked me if we owned a Pontiac...both my husband and Todd drove Pontiacs. I answered "Yes"...and then the policeman looked

at me and I recognized him as the one at the accident I had passed and I knew it was Todd. My husband was in Atlanta on business and not supposed to come home that night (we lived in Townville SC on Lake Hartwell). I remember collapsing into the coroner's arms...I remember giving them Ted's cell number and not being able to reach him at first and then he called back...the police didn't want me to tell him Todd was gone, but he knew by my voice. I remember waiting for Ted to come home and us falling down together in the driveway, making the decision not to call Todd's sisters until morning - they were in Ohio - we knew they would drive down that night and we couldn't bear the thought of something happening to them too.

Todd's symbols are a toad and blue dragonflies.

**Ted Showalter's son, Jeffrey (12-9-85) died in an auto accident
9-6-04.**

Ted reminds us how important it is to remember each other's children:

Thank you so much for the card you sent to me on the 6th of September, as you know it meant a great deal to me that Jeffrey is not forgotten. I received a few cards and phone calls on the 6th but as the days go by, fewer people talk about my son. I can only imagine the limited number of calls and cards that I'll get as the years go by. Two entire years passed since I saw Jeffrey and the entire accident and the days that followed are in my mind like it was yesterday.

Cards, letters and phone calls help, please let people know and encourage people to continue so we can help others to never forget those children that have left us.

Thanks again for being there and maybe someday we will meet in person.

Thank you

Ted Showalter

Jeffrey's website is: <http://www.jeffmemorial.com>

Jeffrey's symbol is a car.

Garren & Stacy Goss' daughter, Lila Michelle Goss Broadway (3-11-87) died as a passenger in an auto accident, 1-21-05.

Dinah,

I would be honored for you to include what Michelle wrote about herself in the newsletter. Let me share with you about that one....it was definitely a "God" thing. While my friend and I were developing the website, I was trying to write something for the "about" section and I just kept thinking "what can I write to really help people to know her?" Well, I was browsing around on my computer and found a folder labeled "Michelle." Of course, I checked it out!! It had school assignments she had done. She was a Senior and an honor student and it was her most recent assignment. I couldn't believe her teacher had assigned the Senior Honors Class this assignment – they were to write a "pen pal" letter introducing themselves to someone they had never met. WOW!! I could not believe it!! As I read through it, I knew it was exactly what I needed for that section. Who better to tell about Michelle than Michelle herself!! I am so thankful that I see God's hand in so many things surrounding her accident...before the accident and since the accident.

Thank you again for all that you do for all of us!!!

This is what Michelle wrote about herself:

"Hello, stranger! My name is Lila Broadway, but you can call me Michelle. On March 11, I turned seventeen years old. I was born in Montgomery, Alabama and now live thirty minutes north in a city named Prattville (a.k.a. hick town). I am currently a senior (05' baby) at Prattville High and I will graduate with honors. About four months ago my boyfriend, Bobby Jack Hollon, proposed to me.... so now I am engaged. I just recently grew out of the know-it-all stage of my life.

You know how annoying kids are that think they know everything? Well, yeah... that was me about two years ago. No matter what my parents said, they were ALWAYS wrong and I was ALWAYS right. You know what I mean...no one could tell me anything. Between the time I was fifteen and

sixteen, my dad, Garren, started looking like an old man, because of all the white hairs I gave him (or so he claims!). Luckily, my parents are Christians and therefore made it through that very patience, trying time.

My mom, Stacy, is one of the most influential people in my life, because of her Christianity and gentleness. Through her actions, she has taught me forgiveness and perseverance. No matter what wrong I have done in my past she has always forgiven me and loved me. I have seen her “turn the other cheek” to people who have done her wrong. She teaches me perseverance by always staying on my case, because she knows what is best for me (even when it makes me mad). There is one other person who is extremely influential in my life and that is God.

God has taught me to have faith and be courageous. If people living in shacks can have faith that God will provide.... why can't we? He teaches me courage through his son Jesus. Jesus had the courage to die on the cross for our sins, so why do we not have the courage to stand up for God. It is because of God and my mom that I have such great memories.

Do you ever have a moment that you hope no one finds out about? Yeah, I thought so. I have been told numerous times that I should dye my hair blonde because of these moments. I remember one of these moments very vividly.

My parents were draining the water out of their waterbed and my brother and I had the “privilege” of helping out. My dad had the hose running from the bed into the tub in the front bathroom. Well, I had the simplest job there was... checking to see if water was coming out of the hose. I am not sure what I was thinking, but I walked into the bathroom, stepping over the hose, placed my hand under the faucet of the sink, and shouted to my dad, “Nothing is coming out.” Then I realized the hose was running to the tub (not the sink) and I quickly corrected myself. Unfortunately, my family saw this “blonde moment” and still tease me about it. I just smile and say, “Yeah....that was me...a lil' bit out there.”

Because I am “out there”, I am told I am a lot of fun. I am very blunt and outspoken. If you ever meet me, that will be one of the first things you notice. I love to try new things and meet new people. I am not shy at all, which will help me with my career goals.

I plan to go to AUM (Auburn University of Montgomery) for a double major in business and early childhood education. One day I hope to own a daycare, but not before I marry Bobby (a.k.a. BJ) in May of 2005. My family is not too big or too small and this is why I plan to have three kids. Well, I do not know what else to tell you so I hope to hear from you soon.

Your Pen Pal

Michelle's website is: <http://www.michellebroadway.com>

Stacy was talking about getting through the holidays:

We just try to make it through the holidays. We have so much right there together. Thanksgiving, my youngest daughter Nicole's birthday, Christmas, my son's birthday and New Year's the same day, and then Michelle's angel date a couple of weeks later. So we just hang on for the roller coaster ride for about 3 months.

I have read a few of the newsletters, they are very helpful so, again, thank you for your hard work! I really haven't thought of a symbol just yet. I know I'll know when I find the right one.

Sherran McDonough's sons, Chris (9-6-70) was killed in an auto accident, 7-2-92, and Michael (3-10-74) was killed in an auto accident, 8-15-93.

Sherran has suffered a lot of tragedy, but has always had such an uplifting attitude:

Dearest Dinah.....

Well dear.....its hard to put into words how I feel about you.....but.....if you had been raised Catholic.....you would know what I mean when I say....."YOU SHOULD BE ON A HOLY CARD"!!!you should be canonized as a saint! You are absolutely one incredible lady and I want you to know how much I honor and appreciate your love and kindness as I know sooooooooooooo many others do as well. You are a light in the darkness to many. With your encouragement as help so many of us survive and survive well.

I am in the middle of completing a children's book about death.....I will most assuredly send a copy to you.....it is very beautifully illustrated by a local artist, Jane Conrad, and the story line is very authentic.....in that.....I merely wrote down the words I used to explain the death of my son, Michael, to his daughter, Whitney Michael. As you may remember, my son, Michael McDonough made his transition August 15, 1993....just 13 months after my other son, Chris McDonough made his transition on July 2, 1992. (you have continued to support and remember both by beloved children all these years on birthdays and anniversaries...and often times....you and I are

the only ones who remember....bless you dear one for allowing me to remember with you).

The story is light and airy and childlike, as it was when I told my granddaughter that day at the museum. I wanted to share with some others a way to discuss the passing of someone. Please keep me in your prayers as I continue to find a publisher for my book. I hope that it will bless others in a small way as you have blessed so many of us.

With much love and many blessings,

Rev. Sherran McDonough

(ps. I did go on and become a minister....and was ordained on the anniversary of my son Michael's angel date, 2 years ago)

Chris' symbol is a motorcycle, and Michael's symbol is a hammer.

Darraugh Butler's son, Brandon (10-21-84) was murdered, 4-11-03.

Darraugh reminds us how important it is to keep copies of pictures, movies, etc. in another place:

Hi Dinah,

It is one day past 9/11 and I re-read your letter and it touched me deeply, especially when you mention holding onto old memories because it is all you've got. I too relive moments and memories of my son Brandon, trying to make sure that there is absolutely no chance that I will ever forget anything about him. Not that I could. I recently started a notebook where I record certain things that I did not remember before or had not thought of. I also have thought of writing notes concerning the things I do remember as a keepsake for Damoni. I just started, but I find this very comforting.

Anyway, I had the recent misfortune of having my computer crash. It was doubly devastating as I am self employed and a lot of business ideas, project material and databases were lost in the process. I did not have the files for this year's business activities backed up. I am paying dearly for it. Also, I had quite a few pictures and family videos on it; however, there

were not many of Brandon. Since his death, family photos have increased in importance and I have expanded my skill in photography. Well, I had only one picture of Brandon on my computer. Guess what? It was one of but a few that was able to be recovered. It came up today without prompting not long after re-reading your E-mail. I felt it appeared for a reason and that he sent it that I might respond to part of your request. I believe his spirit is that strong. His birthday is next month October 21st - he would have been 22 years old. This will be our 4th birthday without Brandon. When he was alive, I would make him his favorite meal of spaghetti, Buffalo wings and cake with lemon icing. We will probably travel to his gravesite in Cincinnati and send messages in balloons to him. We have made this a tradition. His son Damoni is three now and still doesn't quite comprehend that his father is dead. He has so much of his father's strong, confident spirit, I pray that it is not broken when he is old enough to grasp the knowledge that his dad was murdered. I could go on and on, but I do want to send you the picture. This picture was taken at our wedding - Brandon was one of my husband's groomsmen. Isn't he a handsome fella? He was quite the ham, but he took his role very seriously that day.

I intend to write several books and one of them is about Brandon. I hope to be able to start soon.

Fondly,
Darraugh Butler,
Brandon's mom

Brandon' symbol is a Red Cardinal.

Dave & Bernie Karpan's son, Davey (12-12-76) died in an auto accident, 10-16-94.

Bernie's emails have once again reminded me how important it is to write about your child.

Dear Dinah:

You have helped me so much over the years. Thank you for being an angel on earth for us. Due to severe emotional and physical health problems I couldn't do this before. Now I think I can.

We lost our son and reason for living on October 16, 1994. Davey perished at 17, in a firey, tragic car accident 4 minutes from our country

home. I never saw him again after he hugged and kissed me goodbye that morning. His little friend, Andrew, 15 perished with him. Andrew was driving as Davey wasn't feeling well. Thank God, Davey appeared to have died instantly on impact. It hurt that they would not let me see him to at least hug him, but they were wise. I can only remember how beautiful he was before the fire. He was tall, 6'2", with blond hair and soft blue eyes.

What I remember most about my baby was his big heart. He rescued lost boys and brought them home for us to take care of until they could go back home. He gave away his clothes, his food, his love to those in need. Andrew was a boy he rescued and had been with us for 1 month only. He was an adopted boy who had apparently been in 24 foster homes during his short life. This shows what kind of boy Davey was - why does this world have to lose those beautiful little souls so soon. We had such a hard time to have children. I should have had 6 children, but due to miscarriages and his death we have only one - Leah - who is beautiful beyond words.

It's hard enough to lose my miracle baby in death, but you know what has been worse? Leah, 15, was crushed and devastated and has yet to recover. No words can express how it broke me to see my surviving child suffer so over these last 12 years. She is participating in Therapy with an excellent Mental Health Program at our local University Hospital. She suffered severe, debilitating anxiety and is happily waiting to start the program to deal with these childhood issues.

Back to Davey - as a baby learning to speak, one of his first words was "Owl". He was fascinated with owls and wanted them on everything, his towels, T-shirts, pictures, etc. I know that he watches us still, like an owl beholding his territory.

Today, near the date of his death, our family keeps telling each other how much we miss him. We need to see him and hold him. Our family is strong in faith and we know we will have a reunion again. Without that hope, we could not live.

I wanted to share this story.

We lived by a beautiful lake in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, but moved away before Davey grew up.

I dreamt that I was walking on the shore of this lake. In the distant sunshine I saw a tall man coming towards me, and after a short time I recognized my boy, Davey. He was wearing his usual Flintstone T-shirt and stylish prospector boots. He was perfect in every way, just as in life. As he approached, he appeared so happy, at peace and content, with his usual big smile and I could feel his intense love for me.

I asked him: "Davey, what are you doing here?" He smiled and replied "I came to tell you that I haven't gone all the way yet. If I do, I won't be able to come and visit you." I felt bad for him and told him "Sweetheart, you have to go. That's where God is and you have to go and it will be good for you. Mommy will be all right."

At that, he looked deep in my eyes with a gentle smile and I woke up. I knew he had come to ask my permission to continue his journey to life beyond. Whenever I think I cannot live or bear this pain, I remember my promise - "Mommy will be all right...," and I am.

I know Davey found it hard to leave me and came to ask for my permission. I am happy he is in Heaven with God. But oh, the loneliness is forever and so hard. I know I can endure.

I'm so sorry about your beloved Jim's early departure too. It hurts so much doesn't it?

Love and prayers - Bernie Karpan

Dearest Dinah - Thank you for listening - it's like all the flood gates have opened and I can share.....

This one is about Davey's phone call in my dream.

It was some time after Davey died that I said to my husband, "I miss my boy. I wonder if he still sees me, remembers me, loves me....." There was no reply.

That night in my dreams, I heard the phone ring. I answered "Hello," but all I could hear was a bad connection with static and in the background a male voice speaking an Asian language. All of a sudden through this interference I heard "Hello, Maw?" I screamed "Hello Davey, is that you?" He replied "I had to get permission to call you. I just called to tell you I love you"!!! Then the line went dead and I woke up.

I cannot clearly express how I felt. I was shocked, yet warm and glowing because I had talked to him. I knew it.

I know he watches me and cares and is still protecting me. The day I wondered if he still loved me is not a coincidence when he phoned me in my dreams. My little boy.....

He always came to hug me in my dreams and he was warm and lifelike. Later, my mom was dying of cancer and I dreamed of him at her bedroom door. As the days passed, he went closer to my mom, and the day he hugged her, his body became transparent. In my dream, I said "Davey, I can't hug you any more". He reached out his transparent hand to hold mine

and it was still soft and warm as in life". My mom died shortly after that. I know he was there waiting to take her to his world. She never recovered from losing her precious grandson and died 2 years after him.

I became ill and hospitalized during that time. The losses were so close and overwhelming.

Davey is now 30 years on December 12th. I look at men his age and wonder how he would have looked.

With love and prayers and in memory of your Jim,

*Take care,
Bernie Karpan.*

Hello my dear new friend:

It is a relief to share Davey with someone who understands and wants to hear about him. I also was saddened to think that people would forget him over these past 12 years. I, too, feel that no one wants to hear about him anymore. All his friends have grown up and married and have children of their own and have moved away and on with their lives. That is, except for Allen, he is so special and has a four-year-old son. We were at Davey's grave site cleaning it off when Allen arrived and told us he has come to the grave site over the past 12 years and would continue forever. He goes there every year on October 16 to leave a red rose.

I also know that like your Jim, Davey is still a part of me. I think of the miracle of their birth and know that they can never be separated from us in spirit. I know we are loved beyond words and they await our arrival when it's time. I feel honored that we have been picked by your Jim and my Davey to share their earthly experience. I know that they were on loan to us and had to take early departure, but we are all better people to have given birth to them and have met these heavenly little spirits.

I understand this from a dream. I dreamt I was floating in space like a transparent sheet and Davey's spirit was floating in another color. We met and I saw our spirits blend into the most beautiful hue of rose. It took me a while to understand. You are right; we are one with our boys. I also want to get to know your Jim, what he was like, what he did and things he said that mean a lot to you - that carry you.

I was unable to sleep and was tossing and turning. I thought of you and hope you enjoy this late message.

I enjoy how you state that we share a special journey. That is so true. I wonder why we, but then again I think how special we are to have been

picked to experience our special journey and I want to make it special to others.

Thank you and know that I enjoy your memories of Jim,

With love and understanding

Bernie

karpan@ssimicro.com

Davey' symbol is an owl.

Mary Treadway's son, Robbie (8-19-71) died in an auto accident, 12-14-05.

Dear Dinah,

I have just read the September newsletter and tomorrow Robbie will be dead nine months. I would like to add this to the October Newsletter.

My son Robbie died December 14, 2005; he was a drunk driver. No one else was involved in the crash. He was flown to the University of Kentucky Hospital where young doctors tried everything to save him. I spoke to Robbie last on December 12th in the evening; he lived about 35 miles from me here in Lexington, Ky.

On December 12th it was my neighbor's birthday, he had died on October 30th 2005. My neighbor's house had not been sold and I made a wreath out of his shirt given to me by his parents and hung it on his door that day. I emailed the picture to his parents in Florida. My neighbor was 46 years of age; he fell onto the floor of his house and another neighbor was there and called me. I did CPR until 911 arrived. My neighbor was put on life-support and was removed from the machine keeping him breathing until his family arrived from Florida. Without going into great detail it was alcohol related long-term. A very bright "functioning alcoholic;" we knew he was getting very ill, but he was clever at keeping a lot of secrets about his true immediate health.

On the night of December 12, 2005, after conversation with my son, Robbie, I went to bed only to be awakened by a dream that put my hair on end. I woke up and felt pure terror; nothing I have ever experienced in my life. In my dream, my Dad, who died September 25, 2002, and my neighbor who died October 30, 2005, were leading me up the front stairs to his house.

I knew or thought that it was me, because of the color of my hair which is a blondish brown color. Both Daddy and my neighbor had me by each arm and they looked great. But when we got to the door (which I had put the wreath on that day) my dream ended, and to this day I now know the meaning. It was not me that was being led up those stairs, it was my son, Robbie, who had hair the same color as mine. Little did I know that the next night, my son would go to a bar, binge-drink himself into a state, then crash his vehicle, resulting in death.

Robbie worked, never had a DUI, there were no illegal drugs. I just recently bought his monument which I designed in the shape of a baseball. It was installed on August 22, 2006, three days after his birthday. He would have been 35 years old.

Two nights ago I had a dream that two doves were facing each other with a very white baseball in between them. I then awoke because my dog took off running downstairs, which he never does, barking and went to the room that Robbie slept in when he stayed here at my house. I followed my dog and was surprised I did not fall running down the stairs, but had to know what was going on. My dog just stood there barking and then went to the back door and started looking out. I feel that Robbie was saying "thank you."

When Robbie had been dead maybe two weeks I had a dream that he was six years old, in his little pajamas with feet in them and his blonde hair, and his face was next to mine and he was sitting in my lap with his arm around me and holding on so close. I felt that good warm feeling of love that is now gone. Gone, no more real hugs because Robbie was a very muscular guy that gave great big hugs. I truly believe that it was God's way of letting me know that Robbie is okay. When the child is an adult and has his own world, there is no room to go back into.

My former husband, Robbie's Dad, would not even give me any of his clothes to keep to smell his distinct smell of life. I am very bitter and many old wounds have reopened. I tried two therapists, to no avail. I went to Hospice of the Bluegrass and have one-on-one counseling weekly because, to be quite honest, this is not getting much better. There are moments when I try to reach out to others, but when it comes right down to it, my mind is constantly on Robbie. My other child lives in another state. He is eleven months younger than Robbie. His wife's brother died December 13, 1999, while on duty in Korea from a freak car accident. I know that my son and his wife help each other with the grief of losing a sibling. December 13th and 14th will always be two difficult days for them.

I am not ready for compassionate friends although eventually may be able to go. I still drive to the cemetery 35 miles away every week. It is hard to leave. When I saw the monument, it was more real than ever. I will add that Robbie's former wife was killed on November 21, 2004; hit by a drunk driver here in Lexington, Ky. She was taken to University of Kentucky Hospital and died within one hour. Due to her driver's license address still having Robbie's address, the state police arrived at Robbie's door to tell him about her death. He had talked to her on the phone that night.

In the last conversation with Robbie, he told me he had no plans for Christmas Day and that we would all be together that weekend because his brother was coming home to have early Christmas. Yes, we were at the Funeral Home. I no longer work because my concentration is not good. I have locked myself out of the car so many times; lose things and my best friend and I no longer talk daily because three weeks after Robbie died she said to me, "I give you one month to get over this."

I still miss my Dad after four years. If someone comes up with a one month solution to grief, let me know. I am also involved in MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) not only are they very supportive, but also educational. I now see a whole new world and what driving while under the influence can do. It only takes one time. Kentucky laws are very lenient. I am a Christian, I go to church; that is the only commitment other than therapy.

My sister is very ill but keeps up a good front. We do talk about Robbie. She never had children and loved him, so I never cry or let my guard down when around my Mom or sister. I am finding that with my husband, the same is happening. If I tell him my dreams, he looks at me like my mind has melted, somewhat like he is afraid or does not want to hear it.

I was led to the book Children of the Dome, by Rosemary Smith, by my husband's co-worker who had lost his grandson. It has been a blessing. This newsletter has been a great source for me to communicate and read how others are doing on this journey that has turned me into someone that was never here before. Thank you Dinah and may God Bless for the work you do. I needed to talk about my story today to someone that would listen even if it may be a repeat.

Mary Treadway

Mother of Robbie Joseph

Robbie's symbol is a baseball.

Dave & Juanita Hicks' daughter, Brandy (5-21-79) died in an auto accident, 9-13-97.

Dinah

I knew I would hear from you today. I want to thank you so much for the way you care and share with others. I needed to hear from you so I could go to your site. I have been there for an hour or so and I needed to do this. You just don't know how big of a help you are to me. I had lost your email and I didn't know how to get to Jim's page. I could not get it to open until tonight. I think of him and his date of death being so close to Brandy's birthday. You are a special blessing to many.

Tonight has helped me to remember all the very good stuff that did happen while she was alive and even after her death. It is now nine years and I still don't understand. I don't hear from many people on this day and it hurts me. I always look forward to your card and note. I did sit and look at the clouds and think of her and all the love she gave so freely. I want to thank you and know that you have made a difference in my life. Keep up the good work on your site.

Brandy was a wonderful person. She was in her eighteen year of life when she was killed in a car accident. She was not driving the car, one of her friends was. Brandy went to David Crockett High School in Jonesborough Tenn. where she was a member of the Student Council, the color Guard and the Civinettes. She was named to Who's Who in American High School Students and had received her C.N.A. certificate in nursing.

She was a Christian and was a member of Grace Baptist Church. She loved to sing and play sports, she liked to play softball and swim. One of her favorite things to do was jump on her trampoline. She was very active.

When Brandy was 16, she came through the front door and said, "Mom, guess what? I am going to donate my organs." You could have knocked me over with a feather. I told her I did not want to talk about this and she said, "You have to listen and sign my license so I can do this if anything happens to me." I told her no and that I would be gone long before she. But she said, "Mom, if anything happens to me you have to donate my organs." I couldn't believe my ears when she said this.

Then on September 13, 1997, she died from injuries from the car wreck. The doctor came to us on the night that the wreck happened and asked if we had heard of organ donation, and we told him we had. Then he said the worst thing of all, he said that Brandy's chances were slim to none

and we could donate her organs. We were asked again the next morning when he told us she was gone and we told him we would. So we did and she saved four lives because that is what she wanted us to do. Today there is a woman in Mississippi who has her heart. There is a man in West Tenn. who has her liver.

There is another man in North Carolina who has her kidney and pancreas. There is another woman in Tenn. who has another kidney and all are doing well till this day. I have heard from 3 of them and it is bitter-sweet to know nine years later they have their lives because Brandy wanted to help someone out. She loved people and loved to be around children and old people. She worked in a nursing home her senior year of high school. I do wish everyone could have known this special young lady. She had a cat named Thumbs and she was crazy over her. The young man that she dated for two years still wonders what would have happened if she had lived.

Love, Juanita Hicks

Brandy's symbols are a daisy, a cat, and mushrooms.



Robert & Janet Smith's daughter, Kristi Wainscott (8-18-74) completed suicide, 10-19-05.

Robert & Janet had some very touching ways of celebrating Kristi's birthday:

Dinah,

Thank you so much for the beautiful poem you sent on Kristi's birthday. It was a terrible day for us, but we tried to make the most of it. Our family made a memory box with each person putting a special item remembering Kristi, and we buried the box at our family cemetery. Each person there was given a butterfly and they were released along with balloons with butterflies on them. Without her for the first time on her birthday was very emotional and depressing, as I am sure you know. But God makes all things new and someday we will see her again and we will always have her in our hearts. Thank you for all you do for so many people.

God Bless You,

Janet and Robert Smith

The butterflies came from an internet company called Fragrant Acres and their website is: <http://www.butterflyreleases.com>

Kristi's symbol is a parrot.

Byford & Carol Lyons' daughter, Ashley (7-21-85) who was 5 1/2 months pregnant with Landon, was murdered, 1-7-04.

*I think of you often and when I get the newsletters, well they help.....it's so hard being here without our children, and you've traveled this road a lot longer. My Ashley and my grandson Landon have been gone for two years and 9 months now. I am still so angry about what happened to her (them) that at times I feel like I am losing my mind and I feel like I am screaming inside all the time. Thanks for all you do for all of us fellow travelers to keep us going and may God Bless you and keep you strong!
Love ya' Carol Lyons*

Ashley & Landon's symbols are a mare with her foal.

Paul & Connie Spencer's daughter, Nicole (1-27-84) died, 2-29-04.

Paul and Connie have chosen a symbol for Nicole:

Hi Dinah

It finally came to me that Nicole loved playing volleyball so much, so a smiling angel with a volleyball in hand would be a great symbol Nicole, was always smiled and was always jolly. She faced so many trials in her short life time and though many times she would get down, but only for a short while and she would be smiling again. Lord, I miss her so. She was a people person, loved being with people, and wanted to be a doctor. She had such a heart for people with problems, she would have been a great doctor. It is hard to put to words the joy Nicole brought to our home. The Lord truly blessed us. Thanks for all you do. It is good to have Lamentations to go to when missing your loved one, and also the groww website.

Thanks again

Love

Connie

This is Nicole's website: <http://myangelnicoleky.tripod.com>

Nicole's symbol is a smiling angel with a volleyball.

Ken & Karin Arno's son, Chris (9-6-82) died from Ewings Sarcoma, 6-9-02.

Ken and Karin celebrated Chris' birthday with s'mores (one of Chris' and my favorites)

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for remembering Chris' birthday and for all the things you do for all our children. You really are a special person.

We celebrated Chris' birthday by blowing up balloons and writing messages on them and then sending them off to him. And we had cake and made s'mores (one of his favorites) in a little fire pit in our back yard.

Many blessings to you and thank you again,

KARIN + KEN

Chris' symbol is a Blue Jay.

Tracy Darna's son, Josh (9-18-84) was killed in an auto accident, 4-8-00.

April 7th - 8 PM - Who would have ever thought it would be the last time I would see my son alive. His father and I had been divorced about 1 1/2 years. Josh liked to stay at his dad's house because he had his own place out back and he could have as many kids as he liked over there. Dad had a lot more patience with the kids. I liked Josh in by 10:00 PM. (Josh always said "Mom, you are too protective." Yes.....I was but I always had that gut feeling.....something could always happen). Josh came over because his dad and I live close and asked for some money.....the usual. My friend that was over, was always good to my kids. He gave Josh some money and he said "thanks" and "bye." Never did I think, as I sat working with my new computer and telling Josh that he needed to pick an email address for himself and then him telling me "Later," that later would never come.

April 8th - 6 AM - The phone rang. It was my brother. He told me that Josh had been in an accident. I asked if he was alright.....and my brother not knowing any information said "I think so".....oh how I hear those words over and over again. Grabbing Josh's little brother up and running to the door as fast as I could.....things going through my mind a hundred miles a minute, this feeling hit me.....MY SON IS DEAD. I kept trying to shake that feeling the whole ride (.07 of a mile from my house) that seemed to take forever. My heart pounding, screaming for my boyfriend to hurry. I saw from a distance, the rescue trucks and the road seemed to be blocked. I thought.....Oh my God this is bad.....then when we got there.....I saw an ambulance leaving.....I thought....maybe my son is in that.....maybe the feeling is wrong.....he is ALIVE. Until I jumped out of the truck as we were starting to stop.....Screaming....."WHERE IS MY BABY?" That is when I heard the worst words of my life. His friend was sitting there telling me he thought it was best that Josh drove. Best that he drove....what does that mean? Forever will I remember "Best that he drove"....Josh didn't have a license.....I started screaming....and remember bits and pieces after that. I remember my brother coming, my sister, my friends, and screaming for

someone to get Josh's dad.....that he would fix all of this. Josh's dad usually could fix everything.....but not this time....my baby was gone.

I think now.....and after reading the accident reports.... something wrong happened.....too many stories have been told. One doesn't match the other. The police report told one thing.....and the kid told another. The girl in the car with my son.....doesn't remember. What really happened will always be in the back of my mind....I have learned to tell myself.....that Josh will tell me when it is my time to go be with him.....the anger.....it hasn't gone away. Forgiveness....I can't see that far ahead yet. People have their way to say things like.....Anger will kill you....it will eat you up inside....but the death of my son.....has done that already....I am not ready yet....or maybe I never will be....but this is eating me....inside.....and it is me that has to live with this....I don't want anyone telling me what to do.....I lost one of the most precious things in my life...My first son!

The WHY'S USED TO EAT ME UP...It wasn't until I got the accident report that I realized that my boyfriend identified my son...I think, "Why didn't I go see my baby laying there....he was right there and I didn't think to go to him. Would they have let me just hold my baby? Why did the police tell me that my son's friend was drinking? Why did my best friend's son let my baby drive? What really happened?" Too many why's.....and the conclusion to the WHY'S....I have to wait...until it is my time.....and Josh will tell me.....he always told me....so maybe I am healing in some way....the pain of losing my son.....that pain is there every day....missing him.....it hasn't lessened....but.....the WHY'S are put aside.....I had to realized that the only one to tell me the truth....is God.....and Josh. Note to the story.....my son had no alcohol in his little body.

I have also realized.....that after 16 years of friendship.....that my best friend wasn't my best friend at all.....all the trips we took.....all the things we did.....Godmother to my two youngest.....Best Friend?

Where was she when I lost the most precious thing in my life? Did she call? Did she send a note? Did she know how bad my pain was? I never heard from her. I walk a new journey.....the journey of the bereaved....my on-line friends.....there when you need them....there to try to help....there to listen.....and to understand. My heart is not the heart I had years ago....I have a new one...an understanding of what it is like to lose a child....to have to live life without one of my sons....and a compassion for those who walk before me.....that have buried their only child....or more than just one child....the ones that walk with me.....my life as it was.....playing games on the net.....to viewing web pages of children that have joined

mine....my heart goes out to all of you....for we all walk this same journey together. God Bless each and every one of you.

Please view and sign Josh's website: <http://www.joshdarna.homestead.com>

Josh's symbol is a baseball pitcher.

Bob & Sherri Hillis' son, Josh (1-25-80) died from an undetermined cause, 7-4-05.

Sherri talks about the difference between mother's and father's grief:

Dinah,

I wanted to thank you for your part in sending Bob & me the grief support package. When I came home for lunch on Friday, there it was. At first I thought, I didn't order anything from Beattyville, KY, and was going to return it unopened. But then curiosity got the better of me, and I opened it. And there are all these wonderful things from Rosemary Smith.

I have looked through things a bit, but have not yet started reading. I will have to work up to that. As you probably know from your own experience, I am oftentimes still in denial and think that I will put things off until I realize I am indeed in denial, and figure I might as well read because maybe then I will understand.

I don't know if I said that right or not - but I do appreciate the support.

I also read the most recent newsletter you have written. And it struck me, what you said about friends before, and friends after... and how true that is. I know that a lot of the people I work with don't really want to know how I am doing, because they think I should be my old optimistic, happy self. And in truth, I still see glimpses of that old self, but I certainly pull back - whether I can't let myself be happy, or whether I just will never be the same - and I suspect it is a lot of both - and I am not the person I once was.

There was a four-page pamphlet on a father's grief. I will give that to my husband. This has been really rough on him. And as I read through it, I thought how true it is. Many people will ask him, "How is Sherri?" but they forget to ask about him and how he is doing. And in truth, he is not doing so well... Josh and he were just getting to know one another again; there were nights when Josh would visit, where I would just sit in the same room with

them, and listen to the two of them talk - about their work day, about things that happened to Josh at work, etc., and while I didn't really "listen" (as in be able to repeat conversations word for word), I knew there was a lot more going on than just their visiting. I so miss the sounds of their voices, as they shared the male adult work world... Bob misses Josh, sometimes I think he misses him even more than I do.

Because Josh was an adult, and he was doing what adult children are supposed to do - live their lives in their own way, we feel guilty sometimes because we were not more "in his face" about his choices. We have spent a lot of days saying, why didn't we stop him from drinking, why didn't we take him to task and take him in hand; but the truth of the matter is, he was an adult, and we had to let him make those choices and live his life. The truth also is if we had interfered more than we did, we probably would have lost the close relationship we had with him, and that would have been even worse for us to bear when we lost him in death.

Anyway, I think men also have a harder time in ways, because they are supposed to be the support and the rock, and until a man realizes that it is okay for them to cry, too, he will continue to have a hard time...

Well, enough for now - again thanks for your part in getting a care package sent to us...

*Love from this Fellow Traveler,
Sherri Hillis"*

Josh's symbol is a Hawk.

Tom & Jan Zima's daughter, Samantha (9-20-82) died as a passenger in an auto accident, 5-28-98.

Please visit Samantha's Website:

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Meadows/2279>

Christy Caldwell's daughter, Rebecca Cay (6-29-75) was murdered by a former boy friend, 9-18-00.

Christy was like I, someone had to admit that it was their fault that our children were killed:

*When Rebecca was murdered on Sept. 18, 2000, there was a warrant for Ben Mills for assaulting her before...the warrant system was so deficient that the warrant was lost in the system for 6 days...there was no set routine for picking up warrants from the county court house to be taken to the city's police districts to be served, no tracking system, no prioritizing which warrant to serve first, etc...there was a backlog of over 70,000 unserved warrants (even though the problems had been exposed by the media 15 months prior & a joint city/county commission had been formed to fix the problem). My lawsuit is over the unserved warrant... it will have to be heard in court before a jury, unless settled out-of-court...It is a huge win for me because the case would've been dead in the water had the district judge not been reversed--too expensive to appeal at a higher level--we've had 2 district judges dismiss the case by granting summary judgments to the city--in a very political climate--but both times (Dec. '04 & now) the appeals court in Cincinnati ruled in my favor, asserting that I have a viable case...also, the issues that the appeals court has ruled on, cannot be argued in district court, which substantially weakens their case....
Thanks for remembering Rebecca...*

Please go to the link below--if it does not take you to my case, do a google search of 6th circuit court of appeals, click on their websites, then look for 9/18 opinions (actually the 6th anniversary of my Rebecca's murder) thanks for your prayers.

I want them to admit their faults...even though they started making changes the day after the murder, they deny it had anything to do with her death.

<http://www.ca6.uscourts.gov/opinions.pdf/06a0691n-06.pdf>

Rebecca's symbol is a Hummingbird.

Joan Ott's son, Bill Rambo, III (7-28-54) died from a self-inflicted gunshot, 9-12-95.

Dinah,

Thanks so much for your continued support. It means a lot to know someone else cares. Even though years have made it somewhat better, the love and pain remain. So often the tears will fall, even when we don't expect them.

Getting married again has helped, too, to have a kind and gentle person to share our last years together.

I have a hummingbird that is around all summer. He flies right up to our faces and hangs around for a while. I feel Bill's presence at those times.

I hope you are doing okay and wish you all of God's love and my prayers are with you also.

*Love,
Joan Ott*

Bill's symbols are a Hummingbird and a Labrador.

Steve & Irene Bacher's son, Brandon (9-14-88) died from a congenital heart disease, 3-24-04.

(If I have your correct email address, I send an email card to you on your child's birthday)

Dinah,

Thank you for remembering us and Brandon on his "18th" birthday. Every note, letter, poem, and remembrances about Brandon mean so much to us.

*God Bless You,
Steve & Irene Bacher*

Irene wrote this to Brandon on his 18th birthday:

Brandon, 🤔

After mass tonight, with Fr. Mark, Mrs. Gaeke walked over to us giving both of us a big hug. She started talking about YOU and that it had been 2 years since you went to Heaven. She talked about March madness and the kids wearing the same uniforms with "BSB" on the shoulder "in your memory". Mrs. Gaeke also mentioned that the kids in the lower grades, who

didn't attend Ascension School with you, know OF you, since people ALWAYS talk about you and what an inspiration you were to everyone.

I talked also to Fr. Mark about you for the first time. He guessed it had been 2 years since we lost you. I could tell he was saddened about you. He then asked about Ang and how she was doing. Fr. Mark had always had your picture at the festival on his website and also the picture of Ang and Stacy.

I am so proud of you and all you have done especially the impact you left on those who love you and those who are just beginning to know you as a memory. I AM SO HAPPY YOU ARE MY CHILD!!!

I miss you wherever I go and whatever I do. I still think I am going to see you as I turn a corner or think about picking you up at school. You are constantly on my mind and NO ONE will ever fill the hole in my heart where you belong.

Fr. Dave's email on 032106 concerning your anniversary on 032406 read, "When you are visiting with Brandon, tell him hello from me, and tell him how glad I am that he was such a beautiful part of my life." He is such an awesome person and he has done so much for me, honey!

The permanent monument was put in on Tuesday, February 14, 2006, on St. Valentine's Day. I asked Fr. Dave to bless our permanent monument and he said "will do." He will bless it sometime when he is out at Calvary for a funeral.

I want you to know that I will ALWAYS love you, ALWAYS remember your smiling face, ALWAYS feel blessed to have you and ALWAYS appreciate your impact on those you love and those who are learning about you now.

I LOVE YOU AND MISS YOU TO HEAVEN AND BACK!!!! I WISH I COULD HOLD YOU IN MY ARMS AND I LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WE WILL BE TOGETHER AGAIN IN OUR ETERNAL LIFE.

*ALL MY LOVE ALWAYS,
YOUR LOVING MOM 
HUGS &  KISSES, SWEETIE*

 Remember how we always used to touch thumbs as a "high 5"?? I miss that along with everything else about you!!!! Good night my sweet buddy!!! Always remember your Mom, please!!

Brandon's website is: <http://brandon-bacher.memory-of.com/about.aspx>

Brandon's symbols are a ladybug and a rose.

Stephen & Meredith Prue's son, Jeffrey Peak (3-10-90) died from auto-asphyxiation, 11-7-04.

((Hello))

Please feel free to give my email to any Angel Mom who wants to talk, cry, vent...anything...!!

My email is xoMel@inbox.com

My website is www.jeffreypeak.com

I absolutely know in my Heart that I would never have gotten THIS far without all of the emails, posts, kind words, and complete understanding from so MANY Angel Moms....

We're all on this awful journey together....and we all know that there are so many people who just don't "get it", you know?

We all just have to lean on each other...sometimes more than others....how else can we survive, you know??

(((Hugs Sweetie))))

Love & Peace,

Meredith

Jeffrey has an amazing website and I hope you will read under the different categories that are listed. The family has made it their mission to stop young people from playing "choking games" or "pass out" games.

I was particularly touched by Stephen's page. I hope this will encourage other "step" parents to share their grief and their feelings about how they are the forgotten ones:

"Just" a Step-Dad - by Stephen

Here are a few random thoughts from Jeffrey's Step-Dad. First let me start off by saying that there really isn't such a thing as a Step-Dad insofar as his loss has affected me just as much as if Jeffrey was of my own blood. The surreal day it happened, the heart wrenching, gut churning, and mental anguish aren't any less. People may neglect the feelings of a father, men react different ways, but it still hurts like hell.

I have lost a son.

I have also lost a very good friend, a great debating partner, and a very special little guy with a great sense of humor. Throughout all this I have been amazed hearing all about all the people that Jeffrey touched during his all-too-short a time on earth. He was an example for others to follow. Small comfort I know, but we, as parents, could not have wished for a better son.

Meredith and I are trying to make some sense of all this, but there is none. All the plans for driving lessons, dating, graduation, college – gone. Parents seem to coast alongside their children as they make their way to adulthood but when they are gone, in the space of 10 minutes, the future seems to disappear with it.

Now where do we go? What are we supposed to do now?

There are no answers, just plenty of questions. Jeff wanted to change his name for last Father's Day, but we thought him too young and asked that he wait for a year or so until he was sure. That now will never happen. That adds to the sadness and loss I feel.

Jeff, I love you, I miss you, may you rest in peace.

Your Loving Step-Dad.....oxoxoxox

Jeffrey's symbols are drums and a peace sign.

James & Dawn Vinson's son, Matthew (8-25-01) died in an accident at home, 9-15-03.

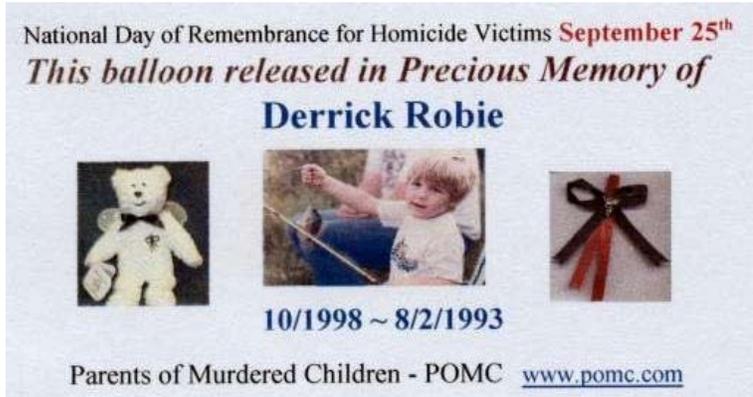
Well here it is, I did it. It is well worth it because of the reason I got it !!!!!!!!! Now I'll always have a visual reminder of my precious Angel Matt. Some of you may think I'm nuts for getting a Tattoo, but for me it's not just a tattoo, It's an Artistic Memorial. I got it on my left arm, so that it's close to my heart.....



Matthew's symbols are butterflies, an owl, a bus, balloons, bubbles, fries and anything yellow.

www.vinsons-n-angels.com

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



The family observed the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims:

These are the balloon cards Deb made and released at the Murder Victims Remembrance Day.

National Day of Remembrance

"So long as we live, they too shall live and love for they are part of us... as we remember them."

National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims

by Mary Elledge

September 25th is a very special day.

We will be honoring victims of homicide whose lives....
were so cruelly taken away.

We will remember that violence has no place in our land.
We will join each other to reach out our hand.

Remembering their loved ones is all families and friends have left.
The stealing of a life is the worst kind of theft.

We will release balloons with our messages of love to honor loved ones gone.
It is remembering that enables survivors to carry on.

Violence against even one person should never happen again.
It reduces our humanity and causes no one to win.

By uniting, we say that this is not the way.
If we do not, violence will forever stay.

If we forget these tragedies, they will happen to others.
So many have lost children, fathers, sisters, friends, and brothers.

By remembering, we are connecting with others in their grief.
It is connecting with others that we can offer some relief.

It is important for all of us to play a part.
Helping make a difference, comes from the heart.

Please, won't you remember to mark the twenty-fifth day of September.
For we honor homicide victims, when we remember.

All Homicide Victims & Their Surviving Families and Friends

BELMONT—Organized by Deb Baker in honor of her daughter Tammy Renee Smith, local residents observed the sixth annual National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims Sunday in Circle Park in Belmont. More than 70 people were on hand for this year's event. For some, it was their first time, others participated every year, but all had one thing in common—they all miss their loved ones. As they gathered around the scrapbooks, photos, letters and keepsakes on display, they comforted one another, reminisced about happier times and shared their pain and loss with others who understand because they too have suffered.

According to Ms. Baker, the event started with a group of friends gathering at the cemetery where her daughter was buried, just to remember. In an effort to include all families of murder victims, they moved the memorial to the park. The event has grown each year as residents gather to remember the young people in our communities who have died violently.

If anyone would like to volunteer to help with next year's event or make a monetary donation, please call Deb Baker at 585-268-5218.



Christine Bindics takes time to write a message to her sister, Yolanda Bindics, whose remains were recently discovered by hunters in Chautuqua county.



Grandparents Crystal and Bill Hibgy of Lakeland, Florida write messages of love to their granddaughter Brandi.

can least afford it

en deserve to be remembered'



KATHRYN ROSS/Daily Reporter

A friend of Samuel Swift, Roger Roney and Swift's sister, Jesse Swift, write notes to Sam at Sunday's National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims in Belmont's Park Circle. Along with more than 50 others the balloons were released into the sky.

we live, they to shall live and love for they are part of us ... as we remember them."

Baker said she personally contacts the parents or relatives of the victims to be honored, and asks permission to use names and photographs.

"They're 100 percent thankful," she said.

The ceremony included four tables with photographs and scrap books of those being remembered for the crowd to peruse, shortly before 5 p.m. balloons were passed out, and messages were either writ-

ten on the balloons or on cards that were then attached to the balloons. At five seconds to 5 p.m. children started a countdown and the balloons were released at 5 p.m. drifting south and disappearing into a cloud clearing blue sky.

Tammy's symbols are a rose and a dolphin.

Sandy Mettling's daughter, Amanda (12-17-82) died in an auto accident, hit by an off-duty policeman, 8-14-99.

Sandy has found a new hobby and a beautiful way of making Amanda's gravesite beautiful:

I planted tulips/Easter lilies/crocuses so from February through April, flowers bloom. I have planted the bulbs several different times. The grounds have settled there so I planted more on Friday. At the accident site, we planted tons around it too. I don't think anyone would want to dig and steal those. I also have two concrete flower boxes, I plant pansies/mums fall, pansies spring and summer flowers in the summer with hanging baskets, this type of flower doesn't need watering, can't remember name, only when I see it. I dug up the entire cemetery plot myself till my hands bled and laid down sod there too. I think doing stuff for her makes me feel better. I just planted spring bulbs at my dad's plot too. I am ordering a Christmas carpet soon for Amanda. It's expensive, but people don't steal there, it is a small town cemetery behind the high school. One of her cousins keeps up the cemetery, so he is good about letting people put things there. I did have her 350.00 angel light stolen. I love flowers, I planted about a hundreds bulbs over the weekend at home. I really didn't have an interest until after the accident.

Amanda's symbol is a butterfly.

Carolyn Bethea's daughter, Trissie Fetter (9-30-65) died in an auto accident, 9-24-03.

Carolyn tells how she decided to make a website:

This web site is the result of a dream I had in 1995. I dreamed I was in this glass room with my oldest daughter Wendy and a friend Mark McIntosh. There were all kinds of people trying to get in and Trissie was outside with them and asking everyone to give her 69 cents. Wendy said to me (because I could see myself lying on a glass bed, but I was also at the door) "Mama you are dead-you've had a heart attack." And I said "I know but I have to get Trissie thru the door first." I dreamed I opened the door and pulled her thru the crowd and then thru the door. When I got her in I

said "Trissie why are you bumming 69 cents when your mouth is filled with gold"? When she went to speak gold glitter came out of her mouth. The dream is just now becoming a reality because on 09/24/03 she passed in an automobile accident. But the battle she fought from 1997 to 2003 is truly the gold she has in her mouth. It is a remarkable story and all thru you can see the hand of God. I hope that her story in some way will help you to understand that we do not know God's plan for our lives but to know He has our lives in His hands. Truly on 09/24/03 when God called Trissie home, a part of me died with a broken heart.

I hope you will read more about Trissie on her website:

<http://www.trissiefetter.com/>

Trissie's symbol is a Unicorn.

Pauline White

Just wanted you to know we will open for "God's Business" on Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2006. No, we don't have everything we would like to have, but we have everything we need to get started. Thanks to wonderful Christian friends, the food boxes are more than adequate and so needed. So many at the factory is on layoff for retooling. We started registering families last week and they told us. We will be open 10:00 A. M. - 12:30 P.M. tuesdays & wednesdays at 111 Union Street in Clutts, Cumberland, mailing address P. O. Box 788, Lynch, Ky., 40855. We have 8 permanent full time volunteers on staff & others when special needs arise. Needs: any baby supplies, few available, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, mouthwash any health item, household cleaning supplies and any and all food items. Wants: freezer, cooler, racks for baby clothes. May this not only serve as an invitation to pray for us as we seek to serve, but also your invitation to Come and See what Our God has done, is doing and will do. "Thank you and God Bless" Pauline White, Ministry Director, Shepherd's Pantry, A Southern Baptist Ministry, Feeding His Sheep.

You know how I love chocolate and usually end the newsletter with something about chocolate. This would make me almost as happy as eating all the chocolate myself, if you will take the challenge of buying these M&M and supporting this cause.



Eat up, y'all!!

New M&M colors

Pass this on to all of your friends. There are many women out there who have breast cancer. Lets do all we can to support this cause.

New **Pink & White** M&M's

The maker of M&M candies has teamed up with the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation to raise funds through the sale of their new "pink & white" M&M candies.

For each 8-ounce bag of the special candies sold, the makers of M&M (Masterfoods) will donate 50 cents to the foundation. The next time you want a treat, please pick up a bag (now sold in stores nationwide) - you will be donating to a great cause and satisfying your sweet tooth. Just think...If each of us buy one bag or two.... how much will be donated. Buy a bag for a friend.....

Please pass on to all your family and friends. -- Thanks

Guess who turns 60 on the 11th? This is my mid-life crisis car. The gentleman sitting in the passenger's seat is "Sly." My husband, Jim, collects foxes and this is the latest addition to the family.

