

# LAMENTATIONS

Issue 127

middle

June, 2009

## Father's Day

For all the Father's, may your day be a day of warm memories and may it be a peaceful day for you and yours. I hope something happens that will be very special and will let you know that your child is near.

Be a support to daddies when they lose  
lassies or laddies. Just because he's off  
working never forget his love and loss.

Deep down inside, behind that strong  
man, is a loving daddy who hurts so, that  
he can barely stand.

Remember please, just how important he  
is. For he has a big load to carry to raise  
all the other kids.

So show your love, appreciation and  
grace. For this daddy, who has tried to  
keep his children safe.

Daddy carries this heavy burden, feeling  
failure at best, because he could not keep  
his child from his final rest.

So love him, encourage and lift him up.

So he'll know we're here for him as he  
drinks from this bitter cup.

*~By Linda Camper TCF, Oklahoma City, OK*

## Grief Grafts

**John & Betty Cassidy's son, Paul (6-23-67) was killed in Iraq,  
7-12-03.**

Dinah,

*Thank you for your emails. You are a real inspiration. I certainly hope you continue with the conferences. I couldn't really help much financially, but I would be glad to help in any other way that I could.*

*I hope you have a holiday season filled with peaceful moments and sweet memories.*

*My wish would be that no other parent ever has to endure the pain of losing a child. Unfortunately, I don't think that wish will come true, so my hope is that each mother finds a fellow traveler to help her along this journey. No one should travel this path alone.*

*Thank you and Rosemary for all the work you have done in the grief field. Young Jim, Drew and Jeremiah will live on in all the work the two of you have done. They have touched many lives.*

### **Linda Provance's son, Gerry (3-25-82) died from pneumonia and drugs, 9-3-08.**

*Rosemary and Dinah-*

*I am so grateful that you two angels are there to reach out to us grieving parents and want to thank you for sending me the grief packet. I am sorry for your losses. I read the story of both of your losses in Rosemary's book (Children of the Dome) and cried for Drew, Jeremiah and Jim. I am so glad you included photos of the children in the back of the book and in the packet because it really does help to see the children.*

*My son Gerry, 3/25/82-9/3/08, died at age 26 of a combination of pneumonia and drugs. Gerry battled with addiction for 7 years. He was in rehab 5 times. He was living in a halfway house in Florida, but had driven 2 hours to my parent's home the night before he died. Gerry actually died in his grandparents' home and they feel so badly because they heard him snoring and did not realize they were hearing the death rattle. Gerry had been sober for 5 months and he did not want to go to my parents' home because my nephew was living with them and selling drugs.*

*When Gerry died we had been evacuated from New Orleans and in Dallas (my 20-year-old daughter is there at SMU) due to Hurricane Gustav.*

*We flew to Florida but did not know what to do since there were two more hurricanes in the Gulf and we could not return to the New Orleans area. The people at the half way house had a memorial for Gerry in Florida. Since we were from Penna and we could not return to New Orleans, we flew him there and had services. Once we found out the hurricanes bypassed New Orleans, we decided to have him flown there and buried. He was finally laid to rest Sept 11, the day before his sister's 20th birthday.*

*Gerry was a great athlete. He played soccer, basketball, track and field, baseball and football. He went to the largest boy's high school in Louisiana and was the only freshman to start on the varsity football team. He was recruited by LSU and he and Eli Manning were invited to attend a football game and meet the players. Unfortunately, Gerry decided not to play sports in college.*

*Gerry was 6'4" and had red hair. Since he was the size as Brett Favre and Payton Manning he was a stand in for these two guys in three commercials that were done in our area.*

*Gerry had a wonderful sense of humor and was very outgoing. He had a tender heart and was my best friend. I miss him so much! He could not understand why he could not control the amount of alcohol or drugs he did but most of his friends could. He would cry because he could not control his addiction and feared that he would die young.*

*Thank you for letting me share my son's story.*

*Linda*

*Dinah-*

*I really enjoyed the newsletters. It is so consoling realizing the things I am experiencing are not unusual. I want to mention two things.*

*Since my son had an addiction problem which I was aware of, I knew he was in danger of overdosing, although I thought he would get sober before this would happen. But I did realize his life may be in danger. But I feel so bad for you and so many other parents because your child was not engaged in life-threatening activities and you were completely unprepared for what happened. My heart aches for you.*

*Also, I have been so angry with my son. He should have overcome his addiction! His addiction robbed him of his life and did not allow him to become the person he could have been. For the first six months all I could think of was how angry I was at him. I am finally starting to allow myself to remember our good times.*

*Yes, you can use my letter in the newsletter. I think his symbol would be a penguin and Boston terrier dog. He loved his Boston terrier which I*

*now have. Her name is Spanki Doodle and since Gerry did not have children she represents a part of him. When she dies I am going to have her buried with him. She is now 7. Gerry would also talk about how he would like to have a penguin which he would keep in his freezer. He said he would make a hole in the freezer part of the frig so the penguin could stick its beak out to let him know when it was hungry.*

*I am so glad I found out about your web site and thank you for responding to my email.*

*Linda Provance*

**Gerry's symbols are a penguin and a Boston terrier.**

**Jerry & Carol Fazzio's son, Scott (6-21-72) died from an overdose, 11-30-07.**

Carol explains Scott's symbol:

*We lost our son, our only child, Nov. 30, 2007. Scott Fazzio, age 35. He died of an accidental drug overdose after years of drug abuse. We watched him slowly die over the years, helpless to save him. Still we were not prepared to lose our beloved son. Scott was bi-polar and had a panic disorder, and was unable to endure life without them.*

*We would be so grateful to receive your newsletter monthly. As you well know, life is hard to live when your child has died. We feel like orphans without grandchildren or any other children. Only our faith keeps us going day by day.*

*An appropriate symbol for Scott would definitely be a Green Trout Fish. Scott was an avid fisherman, especially Bass. From his earliest days he fished with his dad. He snuck bass magazines to school in grammar school, and his greatest joy was to be fishing. He wanted to be a Bass Pro, and fun for him was going through his many tackle boxes and pouring over the Bass Pro magazines. So definitely a Bass fish. Thank you for asking.*

*Thank you for being there Dinah. I don't know you, but I love you already.*

*God bless you with peace my friend.....*

*Caro, Scott's mom*

*I would love it to be in your next newsletter, since I didn't make the last one. What an honor for my son. Thank you so much for the offer. One of the things that hurt me so badly is that he didn't have much that was positive in his short life. Others were not always kind. People who do not have a child with such problems as being Bi-Polar, ADHD, and having a panic disorder have no clue. In spite of his problems, he had a generous heart and he loved his mama and daddy so much. There was nothing he wouldn't have done or given to us. He has given the last of his money to someone who needed it. It is so painful for a parent to watch the unacceptance of their child. He would say as an adult, "Mama, why can't I be normal like everyone else. I want a family and children. I would be a good father." I would die inside seeing his pain. He was in counseling since he was 8 yrs old, but as he grew older he would go to therapy but he refused the meds they gave him because they made him feel so badly.*

*So, the fear that the counselor's had of him eventually self-medicating came to pass. I watched him go from pills to Heroin over the years, in and out of detox, standing by helplessly as it slowly stole him from us. Then he was diagnosed with an incurable and very painful bladder disease that increased in severity and needed pain meds, so he was caught in a trap and couldn't get out. He was our son, broken, hurting, not able to function at times and he lived with us the last couple of years. Sometimes he could work, but sometimes the flare-ups would keep him on his back. He was offered to get on disability by the doctors, but he would not hear of it. He worked when he could. So, every day when I got up, I was afraid I would find my son dead of an overdose. It got to where he was shooting up in his juggler veins, and on one occasion I took his shirt off for him since he could hardly stand. He was so full of heroin and there was blood that had run from the sides of his neck down his chest.*

*I felt anger so many times, but this time I felt so sorry for him so I got a warm washcloth and wiped the blood off of him. He looked at me and said like a little child "I love you Mommy." I had an image in my mind and it felt like I was washing the body of Jesus. I said, "Oh my baby, look what you are doing to yourself, you're killing yourself." I led him to bed by the hand and put him to bed. How can a mother and father turn their back on their broken children? Our hearts wouldn't let us do it. We had tried everything we could. All the options were used up, so we waited, knowing that the drugs would take his life from us. I lived in horror and dread, but I wouldn't*

*leave him alone. God was good that I did not find his body. He died alone in a motel room while he was trying to work in another state.*

*So, I grieve for him for his painful life, his unfulfilled dreams, and for his precious face that I will never see again until Eternity. I have died a thousand deaths over these years, yet I breathe and God is always faithful to me. I am so grateful that I have had a deep relationship with God for years before all the horror of the drugs happened. I never could have endured what I did without His grace.*

*My husband was Scott's best friend, and they fished together, hunted together, and my husband trained him for his work of pipeline welding. Scott was proud for once about himself because he had a natural talent for it and was considered to be very good at his young age. He belonged to the Pipeliner's Union as did his dad and he worked all over the country including Alaska before it got too bad. He was our very life. Our only child. Like you, I had to have a Hysterectomy at 31 and at 33 I was in Menopause. It took us 5 years to have Scott and we never could have anymore, but he was heart. Now, we don't know what to do with ourselves. We feel like orphans. My husband and I are very close and will be married 41 years this month, in fact. I go to the big TCF meetings once a month and some of us have formed a mom's group and we meet every week. We help to hold one another up. Every week one new person usually comes and it breaks my heart. I have reached out to a lady I never met, but her sons were friends of Scott's years ago. All 3 of her sons have died from drugs at different times. I called her and she is open to me to call her again. I hope after a few calls she will come with me to TCF. In my thank you to Rosemary I told her about her and asked her to send the bereavement package to me and I would make sure she got it. Also, a high school friend lost her only son a few months ago so I asked Rosemary for her too. I did have her address.*

*I cannot believe I wrote all this to you. I had no intention to. But I am glad I did because I cried the whole time I wrote it. Thank you my friend and fellow traveler, for taking the time to read about our precious son and to care that he is remembered and honored. He was never honored in this life, and it gives me such a good feeling for him to finally be honored. He was a human being, created by God, he was just "one of the little ones Jesus talked about," and we will be grateful for him for all time. We almost lost him at age 2 and I begged God not to take him from us, and he saved him for us. He allowed us to have him for 33 more years and I treasure each one; even those that caused so much pain and sorrow.*

*Again, thank you for taking the time to read all this. And thank you for caring. You bring my heart some comfort. May our God continue to use*

*you to minister to His hurting parents as you yourself and your husband share our sorrow.*

*Love you....  
Carol  
Scott's Mom*

*Gerard "Scott" Fazio  
Happy Birthday*

*To Scott*

*My gift of God. My answered prayer. So many months, even years of waiting. Longing, hoping for you to come to us. Empty was our existence before you came. God knew you before you ever came to be, and in His perfect moment, He spoke forth life and behold, you were conceived out of love in my womb. God was present there as you were formed. Flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone. God's own fingers fashioned your beautiful face, and your heart after His very own. His love surrounded you, creating you in His own image, and when the time came for your birth, He called you forth from my womb and into my arms. Finally the miracle was here before my eyes. The little boy that changed my world forever. Each day was a blessing as we watched you grow. How could my heart hold so much love? Surely there was never a mother so blessed. I never tired of holding you against my heart, or kissing your little head that smelled so sweet. Surely our cup overflowed with unbelievable joy and happiness. Over our many years with you, we have experienced every wonderful emotion that God could give. And when life brought you pain, I held you against my heart and cried with you. Our days of untold happiness and joy slowly turned into years of agony and pain. We watched as the world chewed you up and spit you out, and you got weaker. Disease now ravaged your body and made choices against even your will. Still, I held you against my heart and cried with you. I was crucified each day as I beheld my son. Bruised, bleeding, broken, and left for dead by the disease that slowly drained you of life. It stole the funny person that could make me laugh so easily. The loving son that said, " Mom, I love you so much," and hugged me until my feet were off the ground. God gave you a beautiful heart and an adventurous spirit. You loved buying things for me, and making me smile. And you always told me how proud you were that I was your Mother. Your Dad was your best friend, and your favorite fishing buddy. We were so*

*proud of you. So tall and handsome and kind. With you Scott, we had everything. We fought the fight with you, and when the struggle was over, we stood with just our empty arms and shattered hearts. Was it worth it? You bet it was. God's miracle was ours for awhile on earth, and will be forever in our hearts until we meet again. And on that day God will wipe away all our tears, and our mourning will be turned into joy. We will see you with God face to face, and again I will hold you against my heart, and kiss that precious head that smelled so sweet. And we will live together again for all eternity. That is God's promise to us in our sorrow. And we wait in eagerness for it's coming. For now, you are in the beating of my heart, the breath within my lungs, and the memories that fill my lonely days. I love you, my sweet beautiful boy. My beloved. My miracle. My answered prayer. Until I see you again, God gives me treasures in the darkness. The memory of your face, your smile that could stop my heart, the smell of you, and the feel of you in my arms. They are not you, but must keep me until I hold you in my arms again. Forever your Mother. Forever your Father. The most blessed in this world. For once we had the miracle called " Scott."*

*With love eternal  
Mama and Daddy*

**Scott's symbol is a Green Trout.**

**Muril & Evelyn Whitener's son, Nick (2-11-60) died from a truck accident, 3-30-09. He is the brother of Jennifer Loeb who lost her son, Christopher, 2-18-99.**

This was written about Nick on the web page his brother made in Nick's memory:

*Nick was a man;  
That when he borrowed money he paid it back;  
If he loaned you money he expected it repaid;  
If you needed help he was the first one to arrive;  
If you needed a shoulder his was broad and always available;  
If you wanted to ride he was ready to go;*

*Nick was kind hearted but never a push over;  
Nick was much more of a gentleman than most knew;  
He was generous with his talents and time;  
Nick was extremely sensitive and soft hearted;  
Nick's love was true, even to the end.*

*He was a person trying to deal with broken dreams and a heavy heart but at the same time truly trying to enjoy life. Nick had started to move on with his life when he lost his most important battle and we unfortunately lost him to a needless accident that will never be totally explained.*

*Nick was truly a simple man but not a common one. He was strong, gentle, helpful a true friend and a loving person all wrapped up in one. He will be missed for all those attributes as well as many others. Yes, Nick is gone but not forgotten and we can only believe that there will be a reunion someday where we will all ride with him again!*

<http://www.nickwhitener.shutterfly.com>

**Nick's symbol is a Harley.**

**Hannelie Eksteen's son, Sam-Lee (2-22-88) died in an auto accident, 5-2-08.**

Hannelie tells us about Sam-Lee:

*Sam-Lee was busy with his Private Pilot License and three weeks before his graduation, the accident happened. We as his family decided to register the "Sam-Lee Eksteen Pilot Trust Fund" in order to provide bursaries to upcoming pilots, that way at least we shall see his dream come true in somebody else's life. He turned 20 on Sunday, 22 Feb. I'll send you some pictures of the launch as well. This is one of the reasons why I've decided to resign – to work on the trust fund in between building a new career as a consultant.*

*I actually found your details at the web site of "Children of Dome" and did receive the grief pack from Rosemary....it was a real blessing that*

*you can't describe in words! I'm reading a lot, still trying to find some answers.*

*I've met another mother a few months ago. She lost her son in November last year at the age of 14. I've shared with her my dreams and we've decided to start a supporting group here in Namibia – we call it 'Circle of Care' and we are going to use the butterfly as a logo.*

*We will do the launch of 'Circle of Care' on 16 May – I'll keep you posted.*

*Love you  
Hannelie*



This is the logo:

**Sam-Lee's symbol is a  
butterfly.**

**CIRCLE OF CARE**  
GRIEVE SUPPORT AFTER THE LOSS OF A CHILD

**Alan & Debra Reagan's son, Clint (5-15-85) died from an  
accidental overdose, 8-6-05.**

*There is a smell that is part of my memory of Clint. Much to my regret, I haven't had this smell for awhile. Well, yesterday and last night I encountered that smell several times. I enjoyed the bitter sweetness of it and went about my business.*

*I had a glass hummingbird ornament given to me by Clint hanging in the bathroom. I enjoyed looking at it each morning as I would get ready. This morning, I noticed it was getting very dusty so I took it down to clean it. I seemed to hear a voice that said I should get a picture of it, but then in a split second I dropped it and it broke into too many pieces to repair. As I was cleaning up the broken pieces, the smell surrounded me again.*

*One part of me hated that I lost yet another piece of Clint, but another part assured me it isn't necessary for me to have material items to remember him. I like to think the smell was him preparing me yesterday for today's events so I would be reminded that he is with me always.*

*As I was describing this to a friend she told me that the hummingbird is an important symbol to some folks so I looked it up. I found many things, but I found this one to be very meaningful.*

*"The hummingbird symbolizes love, joy and beauty. The hummingbird is unique in that it can also fly backwards, teaching us that we can look back at our past, but not dwell there, and continue to go forward. Its ability to hover while drinking nectar is a lesson for us to savor each moment, while appreciating its sweetness."*

*Love,  
Debra Reagan*

**Clint's symbol is a star.**

**Chuck & Jan Lehman's son, Bryan Holl (4-18-75) died in a motorcycle accident, 7-25-95.**

*Dinah,*

*Chuck and I read your poem and appreciated very much your remembering us - but most especially our dear son Bryan. He would have been 34 now... hard to imagine.*

*Of course, selfishly we wish he were here to chat with and see his matured self... but in truth, he is gone on ahead. Hopefully he and all our other children are indeed celebrating together & sending us messages of love and concern.*

*I have to believe in the Pennies from Heaven theory. Saturday I took three children to the park. When I bent down to tie the 6-year-old's shoes, I was amazed and had to say : "Happy birthday, Bryan"... as I picked up the single, brand new shiny penny lying right there on the ground in front of the shoes. I told the 6-year-old that I believed in pennies sending me a 'hello from Bryan'...*

*Hope you are well. Gentle hugs to you.  
Thanks again,  
Jan*

I asked Jan for permission to use her email about the pennies and she replied:

*Oh, please do include my Penny from Heaven from Bryan story in the next newsletter. I am always just amazed at finding pennies in the most amazing places & at the most needed times.*

*I should have kept a journal of the special pennies that have been sent to me through the years. Last Saturday's gift on Bryan's birthday was the best though!*

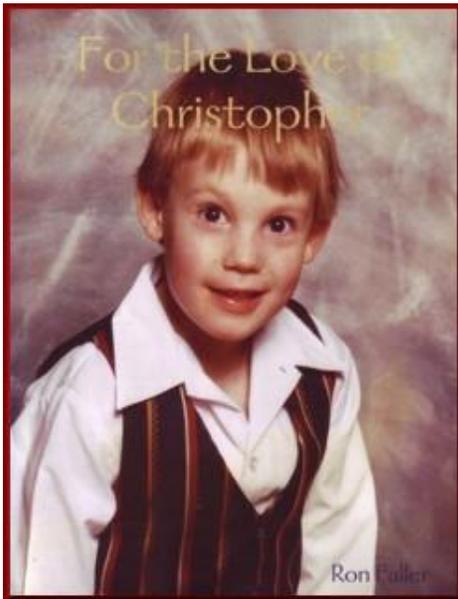
*Hope you are well.  
Jan and Chuck Lehman  
Bryan Holl's parents*

**Bryan's symbols are an eagle and a butterfly.**

**Ron & Maria Faller's son, Christopher (5-7-90) died from viral complications from piggyback heart transplants, 3-24-98.**

Maria has wonderful news:

*My Husband, Ron, has finished his book about Christopher and he found a place that helps you to self publish it. If you want to see more about it and perhaps purchase a copy, you can click this link:  
<http://www.lulu.com/commerce/index.php?fBuyContent=6103029>*



*Thank you for your support. I am very proud of my husband for his perseverance in getting this done in memory of our son Christopher.  
Love and hugs,  
Maria*

Maria has made over 500 web sites for parents. She is an angel here on earth.

**Christopher's symbols are legos, beavers, & 2 hearts.**

**Dickie & Beverly Baker's son, Harlen (4-13-82) died from an accidental shooting, 7-1-08.**

*Yes, remembering our children is exactly what we do:*

*On Thanksgiving we did the Balloon Release at his resting place.*

*On Easter/His Birthday (the following day) we did the Dove release at his resting place.*

*On his angel date we will release butterflies at his resting place in his memory.*

*This Thanksgiving we will light dragonfly candles for him.*

*We have a dogwood tree planting memorial planned for the next memorial.*

*We have family and friends speak of him, sing for him and write/read poetry for his memory at these memorials. They get us through until the next one and it carries us on until the next and so on.*

*We give memorial keepsakes to all that attend each memorial that are related to the theme, so they too will carry those great memories of him. I hope one day you can attend with us.*

*Please continue to view his site at [www.myspace.com/rip\\_harlen](http://www.myspace.com/rip_harlen) to keep the memory of our dear son alive. We will visit young Jim's often also.*

*Love, Thoughts and Prayers,  
Beverly*

The Baker's commemorated Harlen's birthday in a very special way:

*Dinah,*

*Here is a picture of his Memorial Dove Release on Easter Sunday for Easter and his Birthday. I will definitely keep in touch, don't worry.*

*Beverly Baker*

**Harlen's symbols are a deer, butterfly & rainbow.**



**Patsy Ashton's son, David Allen, Jr. (4-1-82) died from an accidental overdose, 5-10-06.**

*Hi, I lost my 24-year-old son to an accidental drug overdose on May 10, 2006. I would love to receive some grieving information. I do a Mom's Group once a week and have 10-18 in attendance each week. Any information you send will be appreciated.*

*Thank You,*

*Dinah, Thanks for responding to my email. I would love to have my son added to your web site under "Birth and Angel Dates."*

*His symbol would be a Fleur de Lis. I have attached some samples. He loved New Orleans and was devastated after Katrina hit and destroyed so much of the city. While he was in Birmingham he got a Fleur de Lis tattoo on his right forearm. It was the symbol of New Orleans' recovery and has been used in many different situations. I know he would want his symbol to be the Fleur de Lis.*

*Thank you very much for what you do to help grieving parents.*

*Patsy Ashton*

*David Allen Ashton's mom*



**David's symbol is a Fleur de Lis.**

**Dwight & Judy Trew's daughter, Heather (6-17-87) died from E-coli resulting in kidney loss, 5-8-07.**

Judy has been very busy with projects to remember Heather:

*I have been so busy with 2 projects and the first is completing Heather's website for Organ Donation and research, featuring her bracelets for sale. When you have a minute please check it out and let me know what you think. I have a section for Trew friends that will involve college kids working for blood donation and organ registration.*

*I would love to have a chapter at University of the Cumberlandst!!!!*

*The site is: <http://theheathertrewfoundation.com>*

*Judy Trew*

**Heather's symbols are a rainbow and a pink butterfly.**

**Dennis & Cheryl Sheppard's daughter, Mandy Walker (4-28-81) died as a result of Cystic Fibrosis, 5-15-03.**

Dennis and Cheryl remembered Mandy's birthday in such a worthwhile way:

*Dinah,*

*Thank you so much for the poem. This past weekend Dennis and I went to Gainesville, FL (where Mandy was followed - Shands U of FL - and where she passed away) and participated in the Great Strides Cystic Fibrosis walk. Mandy would have been 28 today and it will be 6 years on May 15th since we lost her. The walk was our first. It was bitter-sweet. We helped to raise over \$38,000 for the CFF and we will be there again next year. Participating in the walk somehow is helping to make today and the next two weeks have special meaning, a little more comforting, and bringing up wonderful memories of Mandy.*

*Blessings,*

*Cheryl Sheppard*

*Dear Dinah,*

*You give so much to all of us who have lost a child. Today is **your** day to reflect upon all your memories of Jim.*

*Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family always, especially on this day, Jim's Angel Date.*

*Thank you for all you do and may God bless you!*

*Have a "Happy Jim Day"*

*Blessings,*

*Cheryl A. Walker-Sheppard*

*P.S. As you know, Mandy's Angel Date was on the 15th. It was a bitter-sweet day for us because it was the first anniversary of Dennis and I buying our first home together and Mandy's 6th Angel date, so we planted flowers that attract butterflies and shrubs in her memory. It was a beautiful and meaningful day!*

*Here is a poem that Dennis wrote for me on Mandy's Angel Date (Dennis is not Mandy's father, but he knew her as a child and she would have approved of us getting married and Dennis would have been a WONDERFUL father.)*

*ANGELS ARE WATCHING OVER US EACH AND EVERY DAY.  
WE MIGHT THINK YOU ARE GONE, BUT YOU'RE NEVER FAR AWAY.*

*EACH DAY THAT WE LIVE, WE ARE SURROUNDED BY YOUR LOVE.  
THE KIND OF LOVE THAT CAN ONLY BE SENT FROM ABOVE.*

*ALTHOUGH THIS DAY IS SAD AND BLUE,  
WE WANT YOU TO KNOW WE ALWAYS THINK OF YOU.*

*WE ALWAYS HOPE THE BEST FOR EACH AND EVERY DAY, AND  
HOPE THIS DAY IS A DANDY  
ONE THING IS FOR SURE, WE WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU MANDY.*

*By Dennis Sheppard*

*May 15, 2009*

**Mandy's symbol is a butterfly.**

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

Brandon continues to watch over her:

*Dinah,*

*Thanks so much for continuing to remember Brandon. I appreciate receiving the note on his death day. Sometimes I feel like everybody has forgotten but me, so there is great comfort in getting that card from you each year.*

*God bless you!*

*PS - The Cardinals have really been coming around this past week. Brandon is still on the watch!*

*Dinah, as a PS to that message, I wanted to share something with you. My son John who lives in Columbus, Ohio came to visit me in Georgia mid April. We were in my car returning home from the store and as I drove down Lennox Drive into our development a red cardinal flew across the street directly in front of the car. I exclaimed to John - a red bird, did you see it? He responded no, he missed it - he had been looking down. I voiced my disappointment that he did not see. Immediately, two more cardinals flew in front of the car. We both saw them and we laughed and I knew, and it was confirmed, Brandon was indeed watching over us.*

**Brandon's symbol is a red cardinal.**

**Ronnie & Jackie Wesley's daughter, Teressa Houg (4-25-68)  
died from cardiac arrest, 10-2-93.**

Jackie wrote the following article for Mother's Day:

**We will never get over the death of our child**

*By Jackie Wesley*

*During our Compassionate Friends support meetings, we discuss how we never get over our children's death, but we do say it gets different, just never over it. There may be times when we don't think of it quite as often as*

*we did in the very beginning, or we have evolved to the place where there are better memories than the ones of our child's death.*

*There is a song that was written and sung by a bereaved parent, Alan Pederson who tells it like it is,, the song is called "A little farther down the road" and I have played the song at our meeting because it let the newly bereaved parents learn what we, who are farther along, know now.*

*In the beginning of our agonizing, desperate, feeling of grief, all of us have felt it would or could never be any better, and that's the message we at The Compassionate Friends want to share with all of the newly bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents and for that matter, any others who have lost a loved one.*

*Some may say time heals, but most of us say it's actually not time that heals; it's what we do with that time that is the true healing. When we do things in memory of our children, no matter how small of a task it may be, it promotes healing, it is always a good feeling when we can reach out and help another, through their pain, it is also a way to help us survive such a loss.*

*It has been fifteen years and six months since our daughter Teresa died; even though we miss her just as much as the day she died, we have learned to turn our memories into ways that we hope will help others in their time of grief.*

*I'm dedicating this writing in memory of my daughter, Teresa and all of our children for this Mother's day.*

***By reaching out to others I have gained the strength and the courage to go on.***

***By reaching back to help someone else, I have paid it forward.***

***Teressa's symbols are a butterfly, black cat & a dark-haired angel.***

***Donnie & Donna Brown's son, Donovan (11-17-76) died in an auto accident, 10-22-00.***

*Dearest Dinah,*

*A smile moment to share with you. Yesterday I got to meet a beautiful almost one-year-old that shares my son's name. His parents are two of our*

*son Donovan's wonderful college friends, who helped us through the worst days after his death in Oct. 2000. Tom and Jen named their son Ellis Donovan Hayes and we were thrilled that our Donovan was remembered in this way; his name will live on in this beautiful little boy. I think, according to his parents, they are seeing some of our Donovan's quirky sense of humor already. Just wanted to share.*

*Sending all sorts of good thoughts your way,  
Donna K. and Donnie Brown*

**Donovan's symbol is a lizard.**

**Dave & Melisa Fossier's daughter, Natalie (5-4-97) died when a tree limb fell on her, 2-13-07.**

*Dinah,*

*I thank you so very much for sharing Jim's sweet little poem with Natalie. Isn't it amazing how much our children are so with us? I was having a really tough day a couple weeks ago (not Natalie related) and that night her book marker went off in her room (the second time this has happened in over two years). And then I had a dream the same night, I was holding her on my hip. It was as if she never left us at all. She comforted me so!!!*

*Last night I dreamed that she was trying on a party dress. Do you think those kids are having parties for each other???? I sure do. I'm looking forward to seeing you at the Cincy Conference. I just want to tell you how much I admire you and Rosemary for all that you continue to do in reaching out to the broken-hearted. You both are thought highly of by our COPE group.*

*God Bless You and Rosemary.*

*Melisa Fossier*

**Natalie's symbol is a butterfly.**

**Ricky & Dorothy Hopperton's son, Brent (5-27-77) was killed in an auto accident, 7-1-02.**

*Hello Dinah:*

*I was touched by your e-mail and honesty. I do understand when others forget or don't acknowledge our "child" on holidays especially. It sounds like you have a very supportive extended family. My side of the family has been, but the other side has not been. There is one of my son's cousins who was very close to Brent. I do think they don't acknowledge him because they don't want to deal with our pain, let alone any they might feel. Fortunately, I do not have to be around them that much anymore since my husband's mother passed away in 2007. Even Rickey's mother was not really compassionate and caring through the whole thing or after. As you can see, I do understand your feelings to a degree. The 20th of May is my beautiful daughter Lori's birthday. Then three years and a week later our son Brent was born on the 27th of May. I will remember you and your husband on the 20th for sure and say a prayer for you.*

*It appears you have somewhat the same situation as me only in reverse. It starts with springtime and Mother's Day, then Brent's B-Day the 27th continuing on through to June 12th his wedding date and then July 1, 2002 the day that changed our lives forever. When spring hits and the balls fly through the air and the bats start swinging it is hard. Brent was an outstanding athlete in any sport but his love was baseball and he had been recruited his senior year of high school by Butler University in Indianapolis, Indianapolis, a division one school, which he was very proud of at the time. He chose to go to Eastern Ky. University and became a pilot. We graduated in 2000 Brent from Eastern and me from Northern Ky. University majoring in social work. Our graduations were in May on the same day. Now that took some work but what a memory! I have not done a web-page probably would need some assistance with all that. I do admire and gain encouragement from yours though, and others. I choose to give this month to things he would have loved and supported to help others usually within my church, a radio station to support or I went on a mission trip to Louisiana (Hurricane Katrina) with Operation Noah Rebuild (2008). All of us have to find ways to remember, honor and serve so that our children are never forgotten.*

*It does bring a lot of encouragement and joy to know others have benefited from a scholarship in your child's name and honor. Our local high school is no longer offering that since the young men that were doing it have gone their different ways. It was started and promoted through Brent's friends from high school. We appreciated everything they did for several years in Brent's memory. Well, I am sorry I have gone on and on. This past Mother's Day was even harder due to two young adults losing their lives in*

wrecks in the past two weeks. A young woman 26 (car accident) leaving three little girls and a young man that was 32 (motorcycle) leaving one son. The young man was the same age my son Brent would have been this year. So, remember in your prayers the families of Jessica Harp Rose and Tim Daniels. I feel your pain and will remember the 20th.

*Fellow Traveler,  
Dorothy  
Mother of Brent*

I asked Dorothy if she had selected a symbol for Brent:

*Brent was so active in so many things. I would have to say the most important thing to him was his faith at the time of his death and really before that. So, I believe the cross as a symbol would be appropriate for him. I know that is probably used a lot but he influenced so many lives as a Christian youth and young man. On his headstone the words inscribed are "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" which his wife Carrie said he wrote on all her cards, etc. as well as to me and others he wrote to or gave cards to. Thank you for your caring efforts.*

*Love,  
Dorothy*

**Brent's symbol is a cross.**

**Will & Mary Kearney's daughter, Abby (4-9-07) died from unknown causes, 5-23-08.**

Mary tells of the birth of Victoria:

*Hi Dinah,  
I wanted to thank you for your lovely note that you sent to my husband, Will, and me on the 1-year anniversary of our daughter, Abigail's death. It meant so much to us that others are thinking about our precious little girl. Abby would have turned 2 on April 9th. We miss her so very much.*

*We do have some good news to share with you. On January 29th, I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. Her name is Victoria Abigail. She is adorable and so much fun. Will and I never thought we would (or could) smile ever again after Abby's death, but Victoria makes us smile. We miss Abby so very much and wish every second of the day that she was here and that Victoria could grow up knowing her big sis. Victoria has truly been a life-saver.*

*Also, in the months that followed Abby's death I felt compelled to create some type of memorial for her that focused on how she lived and not how she died. Abby loved books. When Abby was hospitalized at Medical City Children's Hospital, Will and I wanted to read to her but there were no books available. We had to buy books from the gift shop. To think a children's hospital with no library! I asked the hospital if we could do a book drive. My goal was to collect 300 books. We have delivered nearly 2,200 books to the hospital since the book drive began. The hospital has agreed to open a children's library and it will be named, Abby's Book Corner. If you are interested in seeing pictures of Abby, we have set-up a website: <http://www.abbysbookcorner.com/>*

*Sometimes, I still don't know how to get through the day, the pain is so intense. Abby lived for 13 months and 3 days. Next month, it will be 13 months since she has died. I find that frightening that more time has passed without Abby than when we had her. I felt as though we had her our whole lives up until she died. It sounds silly, but I felt like I came alive when she was born...that I hadn't really lived until I experienced the joy of having my little girl. I love Victoria so much and am so happy with her, but it is still a different kind of happy because her big sister can't be here with her. I picture the two of them together all the time and how Abby would want to play with Victoria's toys and be jealous of her little sister. Sometimes I almost feel Abby in my free arm when I am cradling Victoria.*

*I hope you are doing well. Thank you again for sending us a note.*  
*Mary*

*Yes, my husband and I discussed it and we both agreed that a pinwheel would be the perfect symbol for Abby. She received a pinwheel from my mom for Easter last year. We were showing her how to blow on it to make it move...she grabbed it out of my hands and started spinning it with her hands! We joked that she must have thought, "come on guys, it is so much easier just to spin it rather than blow it!" We placed a pinwheel out at the cemetery shortly after she died. We usually take a favorite toy of hers or read books to her at the cemetery. We don't know if it is just our minds*

*playing with us sometimes, but on occasion, when it is absolutely still outside, when we pull up or bring out one of her favorite toys the pinwheel starts moving! We like to think that it is just Abby watching over us. When we were making the posters for the book drive at the hospital, we decided to include a pinwheel!*

*Talk to you soon.*

*Mary*

**Abby's symbol is a pinwheel.**

**Robert & Sue Matthews' daughter, Taylor (11-1-91)  
died from cancer, 2-22-08.**

*Hi Dinah, I am writing to you today, the day before the anniversary of young Jim's passing as I know the day before can be just as bad as the actual day, especially in your situation when so much happened in those dreadful 48 hours and the circumstances surrounding his passing. This year we have so many similarities. Taylor was born in the year 1991, the worse year of your life, but because of that this is the year she would have been 18 (your 18-18 connection) and the year she should be graduating from high school. I am going through sheer agony thinking of it. I can only imagine the agony and pain you experienced that he passed on the night before his graduation. I can imagine that year was pure shock but the following years graduation must hold a horrible memory. There is no time for our children to ever leave this world before us, but tragedy can be compounded based upon the circumstances. But you do have in your heart that he left this world in route to doing what was deep in his heart, to help his cousin, sacrificing his own honors ceremony. That says so much about his character and the person he was and so much about the parents you were and still are to raise a son who had those values. I can only offer you my love and prayers for today, tomorrow and always to survive the tragedy of your loss. I can only imagine the horror of thinking he has been gone as long as he was alive. To a parent it seems so cruel and I am sure you are awaiting the day when he welcomes you into his arms when you meet in heaven. I am sure you have heard the song "precious child" but if you haven't it is so beautiful. Listen to it tomorrow. I think it sums up everything in one song. The link to it is [http://www.karentaylorgood.com/free\\_mp3\\_downloads.html](http://www.karentaylorgood.com/free_mp3_downloads.html)*

*double click the title "precious child" at top of page and you can hear the song. You can also download the song for free to your computer.*

*With so much love and prayers,*

*Sue Matthews*

**Taylor's symbol is a ladybug.**

**Dennis & Judy Carpenter's daughter, Kellie (1-20-76)  
died in an auto accident, 8-14-92.**

I emailed Judy to ask what they were doing with themselves after retirement and this is the way they are remembering Kellie:

*We are like a Roller Coaster, we go up and down. I have been working at church for the last 9 days, helping feed and get clothes for the flash flood victims. You would not believe the mess we have here. I go at daybreak and stay until we serve the last meals at night. Dennis has delivered meals to parts of the county that we did not even know existed!!! We have had alot of support and donations from other churches and the community. I have been retired for almost a year now and love every minute of it. They have called me to sub, but I refuse!!! 34 years of teaching was great, but it is over! Dennis still subs some, but that is not for me!!! Take care and know that we love you and think about you often.*

*Judy Carpenter*

**Kellie's symbols are yellow butterflies.**

**Warren & Gretchan Pyne's daughter, Lulu (7-5-97)  
died, 7-14-01.**

Have you ever had a dream that was so real that you knew that you were there? How about a dream so powerful that when you woke up you knew that it had somehow changed you? Maybe the veil between here and there is much more transparent than we might think. The first thing that you would do with such a dream... Share it with everyone that you know and love!

A moment in Heaven

As I fell asleep that evening I was thinking of Lulu dancing underneath the double rainbows just moments before her death. How beautiful she looked with her beach wet hair as she twirled on her toes. The song, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" although beautiful was not quiet right... I know that Lulu is still present, I can feel her with me... but where exactly is she, who is she now? Those thoughts were on mind as I drifted off to sleep.

I stood in a place of empty white space. No noise, windows, walls or floors. Nowhere...

Lulu came to me squeezing her blankie; I scooped her up and squeezed her into my arms. I could smell her, feel her soft skin and the weight of her in my arms. It was so real... it was bliss... it lasted seconds or maybe a lifetime.

Lulu was so excited to see me! "Momma", she said, "Let me show were I am and what I do!"

Lulu brought me to a place, we were still in pure white with one big exception, there were the most vibrant, brilliant colors that my eyes had ever seen swirling and moving in a liquid form encircling us both. The only way to describe it would be the Aurora Borealis with a pure white background.

Lulu said, "Momma, look at what I can do!" The flesh of Lulu began to fade and all of the colors were "poured" into her and when she was filled, Lulu began to dance and twirl on her toes. The "world" began to move as she moved. Lulu was in charge of her world, it moved around her and through her and as she danced faster the world did the same. Lulu was giggling and laughing and I felt complete joy...

Lulu stopped and so did her world. "Take my hands Momma", she said, "I want you to do it too!" "Lulu", I said, "I can't, I really don't know how!" "Take my hands and dance with me now!" She commanded!

I took her little hands into mine and then flesh of me began to fade. I became just like Lulu, liquid beautiful colors. We danced. We were creating our world; we were the artist, the colors and the universe, we were beauty and joy in motion...

I have never felt such joy, bliss and utter love, it is indescribable.

I was in heaven...

I could hear the alarm clock buzzing... I knew that I had to wake up. I wanted to stay...

Lulu told me that I could not wake up just yet, that she had a message that she had to give. My instructions were to share it with the world as long as I live.

Lulu looked at me and said...

"Momma, I am not OVER the rainbow"...

"I AM the rainbow"...

"Momma don't you see? We all create our world the way we dream it to be!"

Not wanting to leave and knowing that I could not stay, I woke up. I think that we all have opportunities in our life to wake up. This was mine. Once again, Lulu is my teacher. I knew that I had to somehow share this with the world... Something had changed in me. I sat down and wrote another children's book. The end of the story goes...

"If you see this story or read it somewhere, a dream came true and it started in nowhere"... "Dream, Believe and DO! I am the rainbow and so are you!"

So...I am Dreaming, believing and doing and now we are partnering with Fablevision to produce a short animation and we are developing project "Dream, Believe and Do!" at our beta site school, the Alfred J. Gomes School in New Bedford, Ma. We are producing a documentary about our project.

Maybe, heaven and earth are not so far away from each other. Maybe we can all experience moments of heaven if we can clean our minds and go to that nowhere place with pure love. Maybe, if we believe in our dreams and have the courage to make them come true... it could be one of the greatest gifts that we can give to ourselves and to humankind.

This is the story behind "Dream, Believe and DO!" This is Lulu's gift to me and now I humbly give it to you... I hope that it will touch your life as it has mine...and I hope that you will share this with those you love!

Sending love and a BIG LULU HUG!

Gretchan Pyne

The Olivia "Lulu" Pyne Foundation of Hope

Dream, Believe and Do I am the rainbow and so are you....

Visit: [www.lulubellebooks.com](http://www.lulubellebooks.com)  
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email: [angels@lulubellebooks.com](mailto:angels@lulubellebooks.com)  
web: <http://lulubellebooks.com>

**Lulu's symbols are a butterfly and a double rainbow.**

**Catherine Chan's son, Chanlan Chi Hung Lee (11-27-00)  
died from viral encephalitis, 12-19-08.**

*I lost my incredible spectacular son, Chanlan Lee (age 8) due to viral encephalitis on 12/19/2008. I had never felt such tremendous pain 24/7. My life has shattered and I don't know how to pick up the pieces to live or laugh ever again. Chanlan Lee was my firstborn and the memories he left for me is unbearable to live without him ever again. My other son, Chandric (age 4) is the only reason why I am still here after my son, Chanlan had left. How do people pick themselves up ever again?*

*Chandric is 4 yrs. old and has started traditional Russian method violin a month ago. Actually, it was Chandric's teacher that recommended that I should pick up violin for my soul and for Chanlan and offered to teach me for free. Chandric's violin teacher lost her 7-year-old son to leukemia 20 years ago, so, she understands our suffering completely. I guess Chanlan is still watching out for me even though he has passed over.*

*I have been blessed to have so many people to come into my life at the roughest time of my life. Even our lawn maintenance person, offered to donate an ornamental tree in memory of Chanlan and will plant it right in front of our mailbox so cars from different directions will see Chanlan's tree. With Chanlan's passing, I realized that there are so many caring people out there like you. Also, Chanlan's school will be doing a celebration of Chanlan's life on 5/26 to honor him. The school will also commission an artist to do a sculpture of a monument crane origami to symbolize Chanlan. Chanlan was very big on making origami for many of his friends at school. During his 24 days in the intensive care unit, my*

*family & I folded over 1,000 cranes for Chanlan. It was so beautiful hanging in his room. With sadness, Chanlan didn't wake up to see this beautiful scene. Chanlan had always wanted me to do this for his bedroom but, as a working mom with two kids, who has the time to fold 1,200 cranes? We placed these cranes in his casket. Hopefully, these cranes will follow Chanlan to the next dimension.*

*Catherine*

*Dear Dinah,*

*Yesterday, I went to Chanlan's elementary school to meet the artists that will design the monument origami however, they changed the design. The artist came up with a totally different design which brought me tears. These wonderful artists did much research on Chanlan so, they came up with the ideas of doing a life size cut-out of Chanlan's silhouette playing the violin on a stainless steel with cut-out music notes and the music notes will be transformed to three-dimensional, with numerous doves flying toward heaven. It will be stainless -no maintenance upkeep. It will be standing right next to the entrance of the school. Also, the cut-out will allow children to walk thru Chanlan's silhouette to represent how Chanlan makes a difference in so many children's life. All the design and elements that the artists are planning to use represent who Chanlan was. Also, the school will raise funds for the project and I am praying that the school district will allow for the proposal to happen. I could not put in words what this design did for me. Talk about not-believing in angels but just that prior to Chanlan's passing, I never opened my heart to see God's wonderful creation.*

*Thank you for being there for me.*

*Dearest Dinah,*

*Please put this information in your newsletter. I always admired people like you who have the talent for writing. Last year, Chanlan wrote and illustrated a book which was very well done for a second grader. I didn't realize how talented he was until I went to his school to see other second graders' work. Sometimes, life is so unfair, especially when I look around and see some children his age who are so spoiled and Chanlan was always very considerate of other people's emotions and always wanted to serve others rather than people serving him. I just don't understand why this happens to someone as rare and brilliant as Chanlan. He was truly like a flawless diamond. I have no doubt that he would have been a great*

*humanitarian or a philanthropist. I don't understand why God has to take him away so soon.*

Christine sent me a copy of the Chanlan Lee Memorial Concert they had in Chanlan's memory at Haverford, PA. I wrote to her:

*How wonderful that you have established a fund for encephalitis research, and that the Nelly Berman Music School has established a scholarship in Chanlan's memory because he was the youngest scholarship student at the NBS Classical Institute. In his memory, the Chanlan Lee Scholarship Program will give a young violinist, ages 6-10, the opportunity to have lessons free of charge at the NBS School of Music.*

*Love,  
Catherine Chan*

I hope you will visit this incredible young man's web site. Go to this web site [www.Virtual-Memorials.com](http://www.Virtual-Memorials.com) and type in Chanlan Lee. You can google Chanlan Lee and learn more about him and this web site features him playing.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K56K2zueibU>

**Chanlan's symbols are a violin & crystals.**

**Fred & Julia Schroeder's daughter, Angie (3-15-78)  
died from an accidental overdose, 12-23-99.**

How wonderful when our children are remembered so many years later:

*Dinah,*

*I was recently contacted by a classmate of Angie's ... their 20th reunion is next month. They are planning a tribute to those who have gone before ... getting that together, it was an emotional roller coaster for a couple of days. The emotions never really go away.*

*Julia*

I wrote Julia: How wonderful that they are planning a tribute to Angie. What all did you put together for them?

*I sent a couple of high school pictures, from the choral group she was in. A picture of the quartet she played in while attending the Univ. A letter written by a close friend who could not attend the services. Another letter written by the mother of the young lady who purchased Angie's viola in 2000. I tried to keep it simple, but yet give her classmates a chance to see what Angie did accomplish some of what she set out to do....*

*Julia*

Angie was accomplished in playing the viola.

**Angie's symbol is a viola.**

**Drs. Dan Moran and Katie Bright's son, Benjamin (5-17-80)  
died in an auto accident, 5-23-98.**

Katie is the doctor who sent out a questionnaire to parents in Kentucky who had lost a child and wanted to know how they felt they were treated at the hospital if their child was taken there.

*Dear Dinah,*

*Thank you so much for your card this weekend and for remembering Benjamin's birthday last week, too. I especially like the quote from Helen Steiner Rice. This is such a hard weekend for us. And, as you know, it is comforting to know that others remember us and remember Benjamin.*

*I wanted you to know that I will soon be starting a 5-part course for second year residents teaching them about talking to parents at the time of a child's death. There will be separate sessions for Pediatric and Emergency Medicine residents. We have quite a few other faculty doctors who will be helping by participating in the discussions. I think it will be a good course. It begins in August and we'll have 90 minute sessions monthly through December. This all came out of the survey I did, which could not have been*

*done without you and the many parents who took the time to answer the questionnaire.*

*Again, thank you very much for your card and warm thoughts. You are doing such good work in reaching out to so many bereaved parents.*

*Sincerely,*

*Katie*

*[kbright@uky.edu](mailto:kbright@uky.edu)*

### **Benjamin's symbols are a star and musical notes.**

*A good piece of chocolate has about 200 calories. As I enjoy two servings per night, and a few more on weekends, I consume about 3,500 calories of chocolate in a week, which equals one pound of weight per week.*

*Therefore, in the last 3-1/2 years, I have had chocolate caloric intake of about 180 pounds..... and I only weigh 1\*\* pounds.*

*So... without chocolate, I would have wasted away to nothing about 3 months ago! I owe my life to chocolate!!*

My email address is: [dinah@ucumberlands.edu](mailto:dinah@ucumberlands.edu)

The web site's address is <http://www.ucumberlands.edu/lamentations/>