

Listening Hearts



A GATHERING FOR BEREAVED MOMS...

Volume I, Issue 4

July 2009

A Tribute to My Husband

By: Debra Reagan

With Father's Day approaching, I would like to take this opportunity to express my love and gratitude to the father of our sons, my husband, Alan. He carried us through those darkest times of early grief after the death of our youngest son. As I come out of the fog of anguish and begin to re-enter our new normal, I can appreciate all the many ways he cared for us.

There were times in the early part of mourning that I was angry at myself, Alan and even Clint. I wanted someone to fix all of this pain. Despite my anger, Alan carried on with the daily duties of our lives. He kept up the cleaning, the yard work, grocery shopping and meals. Most days I would fake my way through the day, cry all the way home, and then crawl into the bed. Daily chores of life were not a top concern of mine.

Alan took it upon himself to care for us. He did the shopping and even learned to make a few simple meals. Gradually, I began to accompany him on his grocery trips. Most of the time, I am sure I was of no help at all. I would cling to his arm, as if seeking protection, until I spotted an item that had been one of Clint's favorites. I would drift away and ponder the item. Then I would call out to Alan, "Look, Honey, Clint loved this. Look. Do you remember this?" Continuing to think out loud, I would add, "Oh, the number of times I bought this for him in the past." Alan would nod his head in acknowledgement and continue shopping.

We would approach the cereal aisle and I would begin my memories again. Alan would acknowledge my ramblings and patiently remind me to pick something for myself to have for breakfast. To which I would usually reply, "I don't know what I want. You pick something for me. It doesn't matter." Tears would stream down my face.

Sometimes I would beg Alan to share all his food related memories of Clint with me. I was afraid I might forget one precious moment. Looking back I suppose if another shopper in the store had taken the time to observe us, they would have thought that I had completely lost my mind.

The weight of those shopping trips was so heavy. I felt as if I had done hard physical labor for hours. I would be exhausted. At times I would ask my husband, "How can you do this? Doesn't it bother you?"

Alan would reply, "Of course, it bothers me. It hurts a lot, but we must have food." This is the way our shopping adventures played out time and time again. Alan, quietly and patiently, continued to care for us while he dealt with his own pain.

Alan is the poet of the family, but since Clint's death he has not written much. About a year ago after one difficult and draining shopping trip, I asked him to join me in writing a poem about the hidden pain in the grocery store.

Our poem recently won 3rd place in the Second Annual Grief Blog poetry contest. I thank them for giving me the opportunity to revisit that time in our lives, so I could view it through different eyes. I can appreciate how my lovely husband carried us through the valley of despair.

In this issue:

- ♥ CALENDAR, PAGE 2
- ♥ SENSES SPARK MEMORIES, PAGE 3
- ♥ SIBLING NEWS, PAGE 4
- ♥ WADE BUCHANAN FLOWER, PAGE 5
- ♥ KOOL-AID MAKES US CRY, PAGE 6

Love Gifts

Thank you to the following families for their gifts given in memory of their precious children

- ♥ Lee Ann Christ, for Brian Christ (9/16/82 - 12/15/04)
- ♥ Jack and Scarlett Powell, for Sean Powell (10/24/88 - 3/10/07)
- ♥ Janice Clay and Shundra, for Byron Clay, Jr. (5/14/83 - 9/20/06)

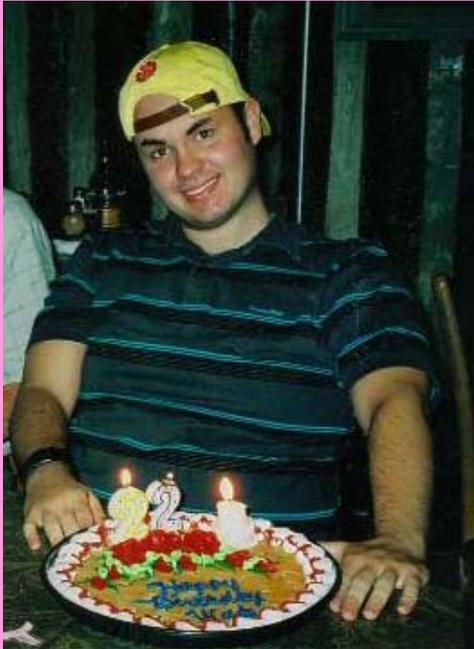
Their generous donations make it possible to reach out to other hurting mothers through this newsletter, group sessions and the web site.

...Thank you!!!

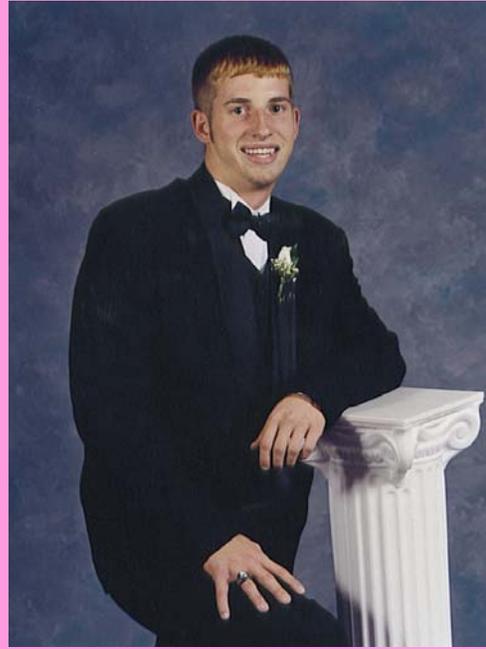
Listening Hearts

Calendar

Children's Death Dates



Wade Buchanan, 7/18



Clint Reagan, 8/6



Eric Wolf, 7/22

Mom's Birthdays



Debra Reagan, 8/6

Senses Spark Memories

By Debra Reagan



There is a smell that is part of my memory of Clint. Since the blessing of this smell doesn't happen often, I cherish each moment. Recently, I encountered the precious smell several

times over the span of a day and a half. I enjoyed the bitter sweetness of it and went about my day with a smile in my heart. The next day the following took place.

I had a glass hummingbird ornament, that Clint had given me when he was 16 years old, hanging on the bathroom mirror. I enjoyed looking at it each morning as I got ready for work. After his death the little hummingbird meant even more to me. The day after I had encountered my special odor, I noticed the glass ornament was dusty so I took it down to clean it. I seemed to hear a voice that said I should get a picture of the hummingbird, but then in a split second I dropped it. The precious little bird hit the sink and it broke into tiny pieces. As I was cleaning up the broken pieces, that special smell surrounded me again.

One part of me ached because I felt as though I had lost of yet another piece of my Clint, but another part was assured that it wasn't necessary for me to have material items to remember him. I would like to think the smell that surrounded me was his way of comforting me and reminding me that he is with me always.

As I was describing this event to a friend, she told me that the hummingbird is an important symbol to some folks. I did a little research and found this quote.

"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."

Our Clint

By Debra Reagan

The joy you gave when you came that day
forever in our hearts will stay.
And the love you gave to us here
will always in our lives endure.



Your special hug and wonderful grin
your love of animals our hearts did win.
The games you played and the friends you had
sure made life busy for mom and dad.

Those beach memories when we played all day
are never going to fade away.
And all the trips to Disney World bring us joy
as we remember the characters, the rides with our baby
boy.

But each memory of you is always a treasure
and our love for you, time cannot measure.
We'll never understand why you left that day
but in our lives you always will stay.

Words cannot describe the loss and pain we feel
and four years later, it still doesn't seem real.
but as time slips swiftly away
we know we'll see you again one day.

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Sibling News

Jarvis Allen Honored at Men of Tomorrow Banquet

Info submitted by Pam Johnson



OAK RIDGE, Tenn. —

The Men of Tomorrow 19th Anniversary and Annual Scholarship Banquet was held on Friday, May 15th 2009 at the DoubleTree Hotel.

The keynote speaker for the affair was Kevin Greenough, an engineer and senior manager at the National Nuclear Security Administration in Washington, D.C. The master of ceremonies for the banquet was Hubert Glover, president and CEO of REDE Inc.

Seven graduating seniors were awarded scholarships and Men of Tomorrow gifts at the banquet including Jarvis Allen, who attended Central High School and is the son of Johnny and Pamela Johnson, and Alphonso and Lola Allen. Jarvis is also the brother of Alan Armstrong.

The Men of Tomorrow Program is a mentoring program that promotes the development of a good self-image, positive role models, academic achievement, career development, and cultural development among youth. The program was established in 1990 and has awarded scholarships to deserving young men and women since its existence.

All activities of the Men of Tomorrow Program are supported through generous contributions from businesses and the community. There has never been a charge to the participants in the program for any of the activities, including field trips. The program is open to young men and young women in the surrounding area, from sixth through 12th grade. The program currently has more than 60 participants.

The Men of Tomorrow kick-off meeting for the 2009-2010 school year will be the third Sunday in September. The Men of Tomorrow Web page is at <http://menoftomorrow.googlepages.com>.



Amy Smotherman Burgess

Webb's Shawn Panella tries to stop Central's Jarvis Allen (right) during the championship game of the summer Air Attack passing league between Webb School and Central High School on Wednesday July 16, 2008

Volume 1, Issue 4

Wade Buchanan Flower

Submitted by Ruby Buchanan

The following is an excerpt from the Citizen's Tribune, Morristown, TN on Sunday, May 28, 2006. The article was titled Passion for Peonies by Diane Barnes, Tribune staff writer.



One of Randy's (Wallace) goals is to produce an unnamed peony and register it with the American Peony Society, of which the couple has been members since 2003.

"From what I can tell so far, five of the seedlings that grew to maturity may be different from any other peony," he said. "If we do get to name it and register it with the society, we have a name already picked out. One of our friends, Ruby Buchanan, had a son who passed away, so we chose the name Wade Buchanan as the one we'll use."

Mention My Child's Name

*The mention of my child's name
May bring tears to my eyes
But it never fails to bring
Music to my ears.
If you really are my friend,
Let me hear the beautiful music
Of her name.
It soothes my broken heart
and sings to my soul.*

~Author Unknown

~Death~

What a Wonderful Way to Explain It

Submitted by Pam Johnson

A sick man turned to his doctor as he was preparing to
Leave the examination room and said,
'Doctor, I am afraid to die.
Tell me what lies on the other side.'
Very quietly, the doctor said, 'I don't know.'
'You don't know? You're, a Christian man,
And don't know what's on the other side?'
The doctor was holding the handle of the door;
On the other side came a sound of scratching and
whining,
And as he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room
And leaped on him with an eager show of gladness.
Turning to the patient, the doctor said,



'Did you notice my dog?
He's never been in this room before...
He didn't know what was inside.
He knew nothing except that his master was here,
And when the door opened, he sprang in without fear.
I know little of what is on the other side of death,
But I do know one thing...
I know my Master is there and that is enough.'

LISTENING HEARTS

120 Huskey Valley Road
Seymour, TN 37865

E-mail:
listeninghearts@yahoo.com
Website:
<http://listening-hearts.memory-of.com>

Contributors this issue:
Debra Reagan
Pam Johnson
Ruby Buchanan

Editor:
Heather Reagan

*Deadline for submissions for our
September/November newsletter
is Friday, August 14th.*

Listening Hearts, a nonprofit corporation, is a self-help gathering of bereaved mothers from all walks of life.

It does not matter the age of the child or the cause of death. Nor does it matter the length of time since the child's death.

No one should travel this journey alone. Join us as we help each other find ways to carry the pain of this loss and the joy of the love for our child in the same heart.



Kool-Aid™ Makes Us Cry

By Alan & Debra Reagan

It may seem strange as time goes by
how such small things make us cry.
As we go through the aisles at the food mart,
little memories tug at the heart.

We see things that once brought him joy
during those years when he was a boy.
When we pass the place where drinks are displayed,
we see the many flavors of Kool-Aid™.

There is purple, red and blue
and several other food items, too.
We see Fruit Roll-Ups™ and pizzas galore,
Goldfish™, Froot Loops™ and many more.

It may seem strange throughout the years
these little innocent memories still bring us tears.
We hope you understand if you happen by
while we are shopping, if you see a tear in our eye.

*In Loving Memory of our Precious Son,
Clint Tyler Reagan
5/15/85-8/6/05*