

Listening Hearts



A GATHERING FOR BEREAVED MOMS...

Volume I, Issue 3

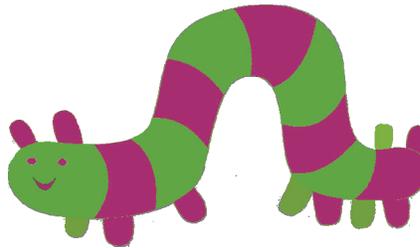
May 2009

Greetings

Any holiday can be difficult, but especially Mother's Day. Early in my grief journey, I wasn't sure what the day meant after Clint's death. There are cards for someone that has lost a mom and many other situations, but not one for a bereaved mom.

All I wanted to be was a mom, therefore I wasn't sure how to define myself after Clint's death. I wasn't even sure I deserved a Mother's Day. Now I know I will forever be his mom and he will forever be my child. There is a bond between mother and child that surpasses death. This year I will celebrate that forever bond along with celebrating my relationship with Blake, my surviving son.

Hugs,
Debra



Mommy, Please Don't Worry

Mommy, please don't worry 'cause
I'm doing really well,
Even though I miss you on
This Happy Mother's Day!
Wishing you were with me 'cause
In that case I could tell
You all the things that happened to
me
While you were away.
I love you even though you can't
Be with me just for now.
And I know you love me, too,
'Cause I'm your little child.
And I'm sure that you will come
To me someday, somehow,
And I will see you look at me
And know that you have smiled.

~Author Unknown



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Love Gifts

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

- ♥ Ruby & Mack Buchanan, for Wade Buchanan (4/21/83 - 7/18/05)
- ♥ Scarlett & Jack Powell, for Sean Powell (10/24/88 - 3/10/07)
- ♥ Kate & John Helms, for Gabriel John Miller (4/22/81 - 8/14/06)
- ♥ Janice Clay, for Byron Clay (5/14/83 - 9/20/06)
- ♥ Karen & Dana Archer, for Colt Porterfield (4/17/84 - 6/20/06)
- ♥ Anonymous
- ♥ Anonymous

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 Birthdays

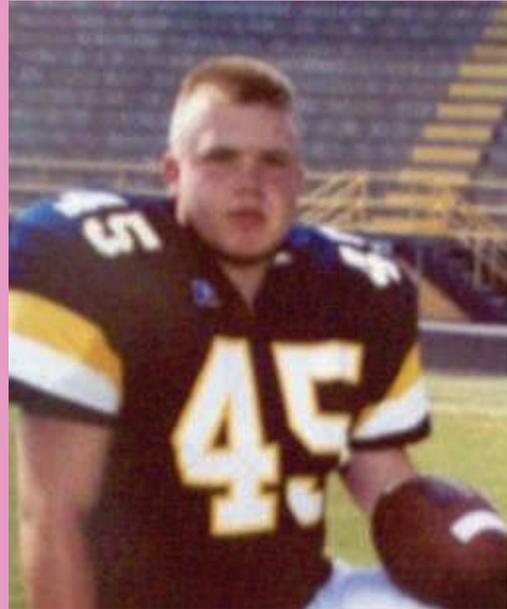


Byron Clay, Jr., 5/14



Clint Tyler Reagan, 5/15

Children's Death Dates



Colt Porterfield, 6/20

Mom's Birthdays



Karen Archer, 5/1

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Cassie Taylor July 23, 2007

By Jayne Taylor

Thank you for your reply and the encouraging words. It helps to know that these feelings are normal. I have attached a picture of Cass. I called her Cass but she preferred Cassie. It was just Cass and her brother Zach who is four years older. They have very different personalities. With Zach, no meant no but with Cass no meant that she had to figure out another way around it. Until they were teenagers, they got along fabulously. Actually, even when they were teenagers they had incredibly touching talks with each other. She adored her older brother.

Cassie was always such an active girl. She was always moving. She loved to be outside when she was a little girl and found bugs fascinating. She would bring the bugs in to show her dad and me. Her dad had to finally show her the ones not to touch because she wasn't afraid of any of them. Of course, she outgrew that phase. Our house was the gathering spot for the neighborhood kids, friends, nieces and nephews. There were always a lot of kids around. Cass was a bit of a tomboy growing up. Cass played softball and basketball from the time she was little. I remember the neighbor boys would come down to play basketball and if Zach wasn't home they would play with Cass. She always won! If she wanted to do something, she would practice and practice until she mastered what she was trying to learn. Her softball coach told her one year that she couldn't pitch. So, every night for two weeks she had her dad out in the backyard practicing pitching. Needless to say, she pitched that year. However, her very favorite position was catching and she was very good at it. She learned to dribble the basketball with both hands when she was little.

I have to say that everyone who really knew Cass loved Cass. She was funny and so quick witted. She was one of those people that there was always a group of people around her laughing. Her grandpa used to call the house and pretend he was a lawyer, salesman, etc. in a disguised voice. It only took a few times for Cass to figure that out. She always knew it was him and had a great one liner for him. He got the biggest kick out of that.

Not quite a year before she passed away, Cass brought home this little female puppy that was so sickly looking. She had saved it from someone who was just going to let it starve to death because she was malformed. She had a split nose and her head weighed more than she did. You could see her little ribs and we thought for sure she was on the verge of death. Her dad and I told her that it probably would have to be put down. She cried and said no we needed to help it. So, of course, we took the dog to the vet. She was so small and malnourished that the vet thought she was a Chihuahua. Well, guess what, she is part pit and boxer. She weighs 20 lbs and is one of the sweetest, brightest little dogs we have ever had. She is healthy and strong. When we look at Mitzi we see the heart of our daughter. She was always helping the unfortunate whether it was people or animals. I bought so many groceries for people in town because she could not stand the thought of someone doing without. This and so much more was my daughter.

Well, Debra, thank you for letting me share Cass with you. I started this letter wondering how to put in words all that she was and not sure where to start. Now, I think I could go on and on. Again, thank you.



Listening Hearts

Ain't

Submitted by Kate Helms

He was just a little boy,
On a week's first day.
Wandering home from
Bible school,
And dawdling on the way.



He scuffed his shoes into the grass;
He even found a caterpillar.
He found a fluffy milkweed pod,
And blew out all the 'filler.'

A bird's nest in a tree overhead,
So wisely placed up so high.
Was just another wonder,
That caught his eager eye.

A neighbor watched his zig-zag course,
And hailed him from the lawn;
Asked him where he'd been that day
And what was going on.

"I've been to Bible School ,"
He said and turned a piece of sod.
He picked up a wiggly worm replying,
"I've learned a lot about God."

"M'm very fine way," the neighbor said,
"for a boy to spend his time.
"If you'll tell me where God is,
I'll give you a brand new dime."

Quick as a flash the answer came!
Nor were his accents faint.
"I'll give you a dollar, Mister,
If you can tell me where God ain't."

Psalm 91: The Angels are watching over you and me.

God Bless.

Deb's Book Idea

Our group is such a diverse group of moms, each having a unique story. I believe that something divine led to the creation of this group and my discovery of the group. I would like for each of us to be able to share our story in a book. I'm considering focusing the book on letting others know what each of us were doing when we found out our child had died. Each story would be a chapter in the book. The story of our emotions: the non-belief, the sickness, the raw emotion, etc. And then how you are and where you are today. Each one of us is unique. There is much that we can learn from each other and share with others. There is not a lot written on this matter. I feel like we don't get any exposure and people might find it interesting to hear our real stories and emotions.

I am not a writer. However, I have a desire to share the experience of death with others. Most people cannot imagine our loss, but a book featuring our stories might help others understand. As for myself, I put on a "pretend face" and go out each day pretending that I'm OK. When, in fact, I cry myself to sleep each night.

Sometimes I think we need to make T-shirts that read, "You can say 'Hi.' I won't cry." Many friends and relatives do not even speak to me anymore because they are afraid to say something that might upset us when, I think in most cases, we would love to talk about our child and how we are really doing.

Debra Prosis"-)

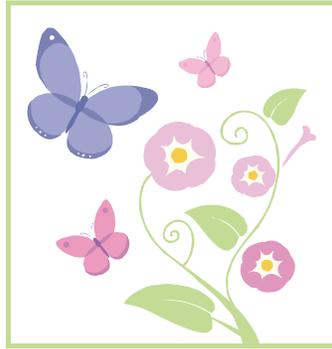


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Eighteen Should be the Beginning - Not the Ending

Submitted by Scarlett Powell
April 5, 2009

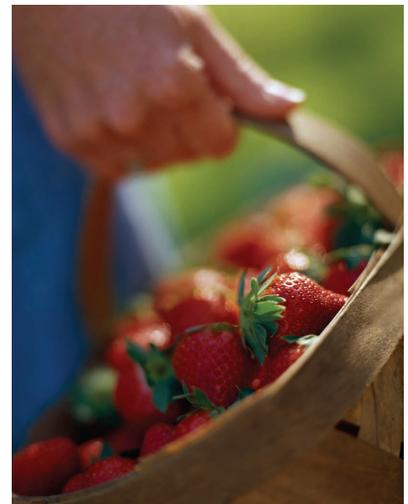
God, I'm trying to understand
I hear your words stating
Inspiration is a word of action
Held at a level of great magnitude
Asking me to provide compassion
& seek forgiveness
Begging me to climb out of this state of
depression
But I can't get you to understand now
inspiration is
Only located up above the northern sky
Where only angels fly
I listen to your voice telling me to close my eyes so I can see the place
Where our son, Sean, lives today
In a mansion with double-doors
Among his earthly peers
Telling me Sean's existence is very present
Without a doubt he is very happy
Surrounded by you, our heavenly father
You tell me Sean's life is eternal &
Sean is no longer out of step with reality
Finding only truth in every word spoken
Walking in the light & singing in the right key
I listen to your voice asking me the question:
So why do you cry with such sadness and scream in such anguish?
Please listen with compassion and understanding as I give you my answer:
The promises I made to our son, Sean, were in vain
The world would make a place for Sean to grow into a man
Allowing him to make mistakes and be given a second chance
Sean would be allowed a life with opportunities
A future filled with great achievements
Now I have to accept our son's earthly life ended too soon for those words to
ring true



Submitted by Scarlett Powell

I wanted to share some of Sean's
writing with you:

"Why give when tomorrow takes everything away, for yesterday has given me everything that I love, Oh how I love yesterday more than tomorrow. A neighbor to itself, a cycle that knows no end as long as the sun continues to give, Giving life, how fragile. I hear it all the time but never bring myself to believe those lies, for I am still here. Maybe I am not fragile. I know only one love at a time and hope to hold it until tomorrow, but remember yesterdays love. I hope that tomorrow will become a yesterday that I will love."



In remembrance of my son, Sean Austin Powell
October 24, 1988 - March 10, 2007

Listening Hearts

Time Stands Still

Submitted by: Lori Coniglio in memory of her son, Jim

I know that life...it must go on...
Despite my very will...
But now that I have lost my child...
I find...that time stands still.
While others go about their days...
And time drifts quickly by...
My life can't ever be the same...
No matter how I try...
I close my eyes and see his face...
And all that he might be...
But when I reach out with my hands...
I find... their still empty.
Yes...heaven must be beautiful...
In splendor and in glory...
Yes...lives have been forever
touched...
By hearing my child's story...
That doesn't change these aching
arms...
And somehow...time stands still...
For there's a space within my heart...
That only he can fill.
And yes I remain thankful...
For each day we could share...
But please don't say...that time will
heal...
Just tell me that you care.
Don't be afraid to say his name...
If you are so inclined...
Don't worry that you'll make me cry...
He's always on my mind.
And if I cry a thousand tears...
That time cannot relieve...
Please...just try to understand...
That I will always grieve.
I know I'll see my child again...
God promises I will...
But part of me went with him...
Sometimes...time stands still.

~Author Unknown

Poems & Quotes

"A friend is one to whom one may pour out all of the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away."

~ Arabian proverb



"I believe in the sun even when it does not shine, I believe in love even when I do not feel it, and I believe in God even when He is silent"



Jarvis Allen's tattoo in memory of his brother, Alan Armstrong

Memories of Michael by his mom, Anne Dionne

3/30/82 - 5/15/01

- 1) His smile
- 2) I tickled him under the chin, and he would crack up. Did it since he was a toddler, and continued when he was a teen.
I only had to say the word "chin" and he would roll on the floor laughing.
- 3) Watching him play baseball--so many great memories!
- 4) Dressed up for first day of kindergarten, and catching the school bus for the first time.
- 5) His excitement on Christmas Eve, handing out & opening presents
- 6) His gentle hugs
- 7) Coming to church with me without complaining, then squeezing my hand during the service.
- 8) The Sunday that he told me how many ceiling tiles there are in our church (think he was bored!)
- 9) The day he left for Marine Corp boot camp.
- 10) Parents' Day at Parris Island after not seeing him for 12 weeks of boot camp--the happiest day of my life.
- 11) His high school graduation party
- 12) The day he was born, and nursing him on the delivery table
- 13) His infectious laugh when he was a little boy--you couldn't be depressed around him, he always cracked me up

- 14) Visiting him at the garage where he worked with my husband--seeing him in his work clothes with grease on his hands
- 15) The day he came to my work place to fix my flat tire
- 16) Watching him racing lobsters across the kitchen floor just before we cooked them
- 17) He was a chatter box at the dinner table when he was younger
- 18) Going for a ride in his Firebird and out to dinner with him on Mother's Day--two days before he died
- 19) Watching him grow up, playing in the back yard, having fun in our swimming pool
- 20) Having a birthday party sleep over with 8 of his friends
- 21) Cub scouts
- 22) Lying in bed with him as a toddler and singing the Muppets Rainbow Connection song to him
- 23) Having lunch with him at the Bootlegger Restaurant when he was a teenager
- 24) Every day seeing him come home--standing in the same spot in the kitchen--greeting him (missed that terribly!)
- 25) His sweet kisses
- 26) The phone always ringing--his friends calling
- 27) The wonderful vacations we took as a family, and his love of family

Nature's Rainbows

We held him in our parent arms for days or weeks or years. Now we hold him in our hearts and cry the darkest tears.

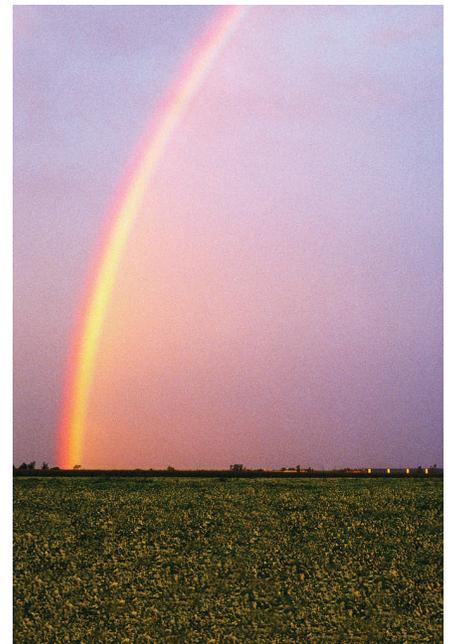
The cord attached to children, eternally fine and strong. We never leave the missing; it holds us all life long.

Our child now inside us - our souls tattooed with gold. His love, his words, caresses, are hugs that we still hold.

If we open to the knowledge, that he isn't completely gone, we will sometimes feel his touching, sometimes soft and sometimes strong.

When he shows us nature's rainbows, we can feel his proud delight, sending signs to show he is living, only far beyond our sight

-Author Unknown



LISTENING HEARTS

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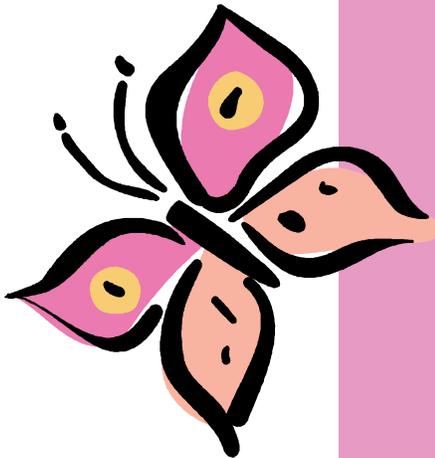
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Heather Reagan

Deadline for submissions for our
July - August newsletter is Friday,
June 12th.

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.



In Memory of Our Last Mother's Day Together

By Janice Clay

I remember Mother's Day 2006. That year Byron Jr.'s birthday was on the Saturday before Mother's Day. Byron and his girlfriend had gotten a cabin in Gatlinburg that weekend and he wanted us to come for Mother's Day. He wanted to cook something for me and the family. I had to work that Sunday and I was so tired when I got off. It was cold and I really didn't want to go, but we went anyway.

Byron had cooked on the grill, fixed bake beans and a salad. It was really great! He had bought me a card and watermelon, because he knew that I love watermelon. I had bought a cake with Happy Mother's Day and Happy Birthday Byron Jr. written in blue because it was his favorite color. We had a great time and I am so glad that I had gone. He was so happy that the family came. It was the best Mother's Day I ever had and I often think about it.

Loving My Angel in Heaven,
Mom

Wishing you, **Byron Jr.**, a Happy 26th Birthday on May 14th

Love,

Mom, Dad, Lashundra, Ambra, and Byran