

# Listening Hearts



A GATHERING FOR BEREAVED MOMS...

Volume I, Issue 6

November 2009

## The Day You Left

By: Sean Fewer

The day you left it seemed as though  
No sun would rise, no winds would blow  
There would be today, but not tomorrow  
Devastating effects from the deepest sorrow  
But the sun did rise, again and again  
The clouds still graced us with their rain  
The seasons turned, summer to fall  
Time marches on since you answered God's call  
The reminders are plenty, the comforts are few  
"Time heals all wounds"...if they only knew  
It happens so slowly, it's too hard to track  
Some days you move forward, some days you  
move back  
I keep myself busy, it's helpful I find  
For when I am idle darkness enters my mind  
I will make you this promise, true love of mine  
That each day I will rise to see the sun shine  
Live a life filled with meaning and I know in my  
heart  
That it won't be forever that we are apart  
Until that time comes when we are together  
My heart's filled with love, the memories I'll treasure



### In this issue:

- ♥ CALENDAR, PAGE 2
- ♥ GETTING BACK TO LIFE, PAGE 4
- ♥ ANOTHER YEAR, PAGE 5
- ♥ SILENCE, PAGE 5
- ♥ HALLOWEEN, PAGE 6
- ♥ TRIBUTE TO ERIC, PAGE 7
- ♥ BOOK REVIEW, PAGE 8
- ♥ 2010 SCHEDULE, PAGE 8
- ♥ CRAFT IDEA, PAGE 8

## Soggy Pillow

By: Debra Wilson Prosis

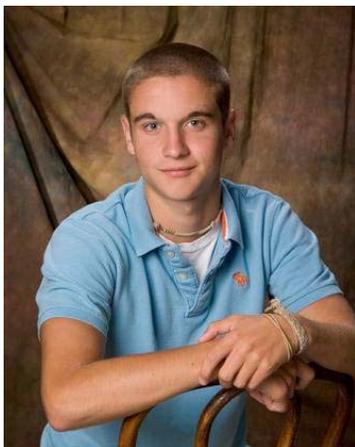


Each day is a kindly reminder of my loss. It appears no one recognizes this fact but me. Why does this mother continually remember each expression on his face, the quick cut of his eyes, the shape of his fingers, the cowlick in his hair and the way he said MOM. The memories never end... Each day my loss becomes greater, my tears heavier than the day before...The pain easily takes my breath away...and ..yet, I still exist. My heart forever broken, my dreams forever gone....Yet my life still belongs here. So another day I pretend to be moving forward, but my reality is miserable agony. I dress, open the door and escape to the world that surrounds me, work, smile, be kind and loving to others...and at the end of each day.....  
my head rests upon my Soggy Pillow.

# Listening Hearts

## November 2009

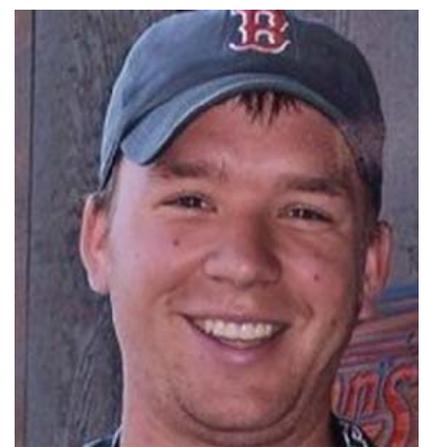
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Bradley Prorise's Death	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Eric Wolf's Birthday	20	21
22 Alan Armstrong & Zachary Griffen's Birthday	23 Damon Fewer's Birthday	24	25	26 	27	28 Ruby Buchanan's Birthday
29	30					



Bradley Prorise  
4/2/88 - 11/5/05



Eric Wolf  
11/19/75 - 7/22/04



My beautiful son was so wonderful and so much fun. We miss you terribly! Love, Mom  
Zachary Ryan Griffin  
11/22/83-05/26/06

# December 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 <i>Carson Howard's Death</i>	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 <i>Brian Christ's Death</i>	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 	26
27	28	29	30	31 <i>Carson Howard's Birthday</i>		



Alan Armstrong  
11/22/82 - 2/25/07



Damon Fewer  
11/23/95 - 5/22/07



Carson Howard  
12/31/90 - 12/2/08

# Listening Hearts

## Getting Back to Life

By: Pamela Quade



First you cry. You are hoping it's a mistake. A bad dream. It can't be. Our son Paul Anthony Kovacs, who we called Tony, was 25 years old when he died from a drug

overdose on August 15<sup>th</sup> 2006. Our family was devastated as any family would be. Worst of all I was clueless. My son had died because of a drug addiction that I knew nothing about. I'm his Mother, I should have known he was having problems. Our family has had problems with alcoholism as far back as I can remember and I am a recovering alcoholic myself with this year celebrating 17 years of sobriety. I thought I had broken the cycle and our family could be free of the disease. Tony drank too much and I was always on him for it. His brother who is five years older has had drug problems in the past but I thought he was clean and sober and getting his life together. Where was I? How could I have been so blind? I saw my sons often so I should have known.

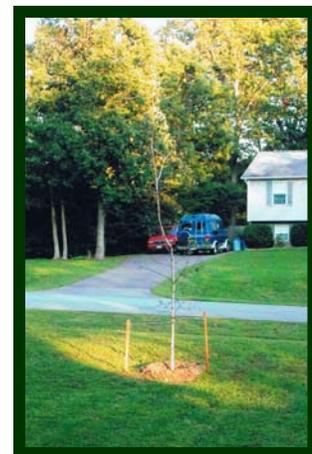
It didn't really matter now. The part of my heart where he had been was gone. I spent the first few weeks in a daze. My heart did not beat like it had before this happened. I found myself giving up and thoughts of suicide came to me often. I did not want to keep going. I asked God to take me too. I did not want to go on without my son. I am a Christian. I thought God would forgive me if I ended my life. I have struggled with depression for 6 years and this left me in a very dark place. I thought of everyone who might be impacted by my decision to end my life. I didn't want to put more on

them but I could not go on. I waited for an opportunity. I gathered papers that my family would need after I was gone and sorted thru my stuff and made a list to whom each thing should go to. Then I remembered the promise I made to my sons when I married their step-father. I had promised that I would never let my sons come between my husband and myself nor would I let my husband come between my sons and I. There had been times when I told my husband if they had been his children I would have left them all. It had become a family joke. But the realization came to me that I would be breaking my promise to my husband if I took my life. I knew I couldn't do it. He trusted me to keep that promise.

**"I PRAYED EVERYDAY FOR A SIGN FROM MY SON TELLING ME HE WAS OKAY."**

I spent the next few months trying to understand what I was supposed to do with only half a heart. I was mad at God for not saving my son from himself. I thought God would take care of him if I put him in His hands and let go. But God did not take care of him. I stopped going to church. I stopped reading my bible. I did keep praying. I prayed everyday for a sign from my son telling me he was okay. I knew he was in heaven but a Mother wants to know he arrived safely. Then one day some of our friends brought a tree for us to plant in our yard in Tony's memory. So I picked a spot and they planted it. My husband placed a little red wooden heart in the tree that I could see from my bedroom window. I prayed over and over for a sign from my son. A few months later, my son's girlfriend brought me a photo of him in a frame. He was wearing his Redskins Football ball cap. Later that same day, her son brought me a Redskins jersey with my sons nickname on it. We cried together and after he

left I got my camera to take a photo of the picture and the jersey to send to my family who lived far away. While I was trying to get the lighting just right, my two dogs kept barking at something outside. Several times I went to the front door and didn't see anything so I would go back to taking my pictures. The dogs were relentless in their barking. So I went to the door again to let my dogs out so they would stop barking and there in my front yard it was. The sun was only shining on my son's tree. The tree that was not there until a few months ago. Nowhere else in the yard or my neighbors yard was the sun shining down. "This was my sign", I cried with tears rolling down my face. This was the sign I had prayed for. It was a sign from a loving son to his Mother that she would know he was okay. I knew then that we would be okay. My son had accepted Christ as his Savior when he was 13. I knew that even though he had done some bad things, that God was still going to accept him into Heaven. He is waiting for me there. And one day when I am done here on earth, God will call me home. Until that day comes we will miss our son but we know he is always with us and watching over us. Our life has changed and it will never be the same. Some dreams will never be but we have each other and for now its enough. And by the way, I did get a picture of the sun shining on my son's tree. A forever reminder that my son is with God and he will be waiting for me at Heavens gate.



## Another Year

By: Pamela Johnson

*I'm missing you another year,  
More than you will ever know,  
I miss seeing your beautiful smile,  
I miss you saying, Mama "chill out"  
I feel your presence deep in my heart,  
I hope that you will know that  
As your birthdays come and go,  
I'm missing you another year.  
More than you will ever know.  
Happy 27th Birthday!*

**For her son, Alan Armstrong**

**November 22, 1982 - February 25, 2009**



## Silence

By: Julie McGregor

Music  
loud from your car.  
'He's home'  
we'd smile and say.  
Talking  
sometimes non-stop.  
'Give me 5 minutes'  
I'd smile and say.  
Laughter  
watching TV.  
'Have a look at this'  
you'd often say.  
'Okay, just a little.  
It's not really my thing.'  
Music  
loud in your room.  
'Listen to this one Mum,'  
You'd often say.  
Talking  
on the phone to friends,  
and to me.  
'Wake up  
You'll be late for work.'  
Silence  
No more loud music  
No more laughter  
No more talking.  
Not here, not now.  
You're in heaven  
Where the music  
is how you like it,  
never ending,  
and beautiful.

**For her son, Joel McGregor**

**October 10, 1988 - August 19, 2007**



# Volume 1, Issue 6

## Halloween

By: Katie Helms

*In loving Memory of my Gabriel Miller, in Heaven and with fond thoughts of my Benjamin Miller, in Dallas, Texas*

It was October 31<sup>st</sup>, around 1967, and I was a little Trick-or-Treater hitting the streets with my sister; I was seven, she was eight. The neighborhood was full of children, dressed in crazy home-made costumes, going door to door. I was dressed as a HoBo — I always dressed as a HoBo.

Anyways, it was dark outside, real dark, and some stupid teenagers had decided to drag race. I started to cross the street, when I heard the loud roar of the engine. I froze mid-stride and found myself directly in the path of a souped up car. It's headlights glaring into my wide, frightened, eyes. Suddenly, I felt myself being FLUNG out of the way by a neighbor's dad.

I don't remember who he was, I don't remember if I even knew him, but forty some years later I am Grateful. I know he saved my life that night. So.... I never let my kids out the door alone on Halloween and they never went trick-or-treating, but we found fun in other places.

Gabriel and Benjamin didn't sit around bored on October 31<sup>st</sup>. We always went to a Hallelujah Party at church. If our church didn't have one, we would "crash" another at a friends' church. Thank the Lord for Hallelujah parties. I LOVE the precious memories of helping my boys to dress up on that night.

Gabriel always loved to dress up; he dressed up crazy all year. He was a costume-crazed human being! Even when

he was young, wherever we went, he often wore a cape, cowboy boots, football helmet, or whatever he could find. :) I think that's why he liked the tattoos and crazy hairdos when he got too old for the capes and Ninja Turtle colored bands on his elbows and knees. (I'm sure ya'll remember those!)

However, after Gabriel moved to Heaven, Halloween was a different story. I dreaded the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, but



I wasn't ready for Halloween.

I sat outside, on that first October 31<sup>st</sup>, two and a half months after the horrible day. I sat there, as I always do, handing out candy and little booklets to the many children who come to our neighborhood. I had made a nice little booklet about Gabriel and asking kids to PLEASE stay away from partying with drugs, by telling what happened to my Gabriel. I felt good about handing the booklet out;

it felt as though I had a chance to keep Gabriel's death from being in vain, but it was bittersweet... (ya'll know what I mean).

In our neighborhood, parents go with their kids. There are several young families with young parents dressing up with their little kids. It's truly an adorable sight, but I found myself looking at these families and all I could think about was how my Gabriel would have been such a good daddy. How he would have dressed up with his child too; and now that would never happen.

I cried through that whole evening, but I knew in my heart that my Gabriel would have wanted me to enjoy those little kids and their dads. He may have even asked an Angel in Heaven to urge some of them to my house hoping to cheer me up. Gabriel knew how much I love children and that I absolutely love seeing little children with their daddies. It may have been a gift - a reminder that there is still good going on in life. Perhaps even a message that Gabriel is caring for the little children in Heaven, children who's parents haven't arrived just yet.

Then sadly, sometimes I wonder if there was a time when I had my children out on Halloween night. If I had crossed the path of a bereaved Mom who's heart was broken by the sight of me and my sons. But I pray that she would have been enlightened and encouraged. And that she too, though fighting a tear in her eye, could hear a song in her heart and enjoy the memories...

## Tribute to Eric

WHO BECAME AN ANGEL AT AGE 28. He would have been 34 on November 19

By: Pam Wolf

We remember ...

1. Your smile and your laughter.
2. Your love of sports.
3. Telling me you were proud that I came to all your practices and games from T-ball through high school baseball.
4. Your taking me to baseball, basketball, and football games -- just you and me -- as a special treat. You even attended tennis events with me, especially the one at which Billie Jean King (my idol) appeared, though it wasn't your favorite sport to watch. You just liked to play it.
5. Your friends, to whom you were "ring leader" for excursions.
6. Your friends spending the night at our house, sleeping on couches and sleeping bags so you could get an early start to Cedar Pointe.
7. The quality of your friends and how I loved that many of them called me "Mom".
8. Taping off the "strike zone" on our metal garage door, letting you practice pitching literally for hours at a time.
9. Your being "spoiled rotten" by your brothers and sister and your mutual adoration throughout your life.
10. Your love and lack of fear of water, from baths when you were little to the Gulf of Mexico swimming as an adult. This was not always good.
11. Your four special friends from fourth grade on: Tony, Larry, Andy and you. Through thick and thin, friends until death.
12. How proud and happy we all were when you were born, and then how supportive everyone was throughout your life regarding your immune deficiency.
13. For the myriad ways you fought your disease from birth on.
14. Your beautiful, big blue eyes and deep dimples, who everyone embarrassed you with their commenting on them.
15. Your affinity for cats: Stormy, Magnificat, Cimmaron, CATillac, Tigger, BillyGene, and Griffey (named for Ken Griffey) and whom you rescued from a busy road where someone had left him.
16. Your special relationship with your Uncle Meredith and his family.
17. How you loved to play pool with Grandpa Wolf when we came to Knoxville to visit them.
18. The picture of you in your high school baseball uniform that you laid in Granpa's hands in his casket.
19. The pictures I have of just you and me hugging and smiling back at the camera.
20. Golf -- it was so good for you. You couldn't get enough of it and played it several times a week until your date with the angels. In fact, the last known picture of you was taken of you and Scott sitting at the clubhouse waiting for a golf tournament you had entered to start.
21. You were so proud of your Walled Lake Central Varsity Jacket with letters in golf, baseball, and swimming (as the team manager).
22. How your friends came from Detroit to visit you several times. You loved showing them Houston and Galveston. They came, seven of them, to your fundraiser.
23. How you danced with me at your wedding. Your friends gathered around and hugged us both. Then as I left the floor, his friends all started applauding and you said it was for me, and you were grinning from ear to ear. What a special moment.
24. As you stood in the church waiting for Jennifer to walk down the aisle, you turned, looked at me and mouthed "I love you, Mom."
25. When you and your friends got too old for trick or treating you didn't miss a beat, just started giving halloween parties ... any excuse to dress up and act "silly."
26. Your high school graduation party under a big tent in our back yard and all the scrumptions (catered) food. You and your friends had so much fun ... it was worth all the work!
27. How good you were with all your "cousins by the dozens". They all adored you. Maggie even announced over Christmas dinner one year that she was going to marry you. You said that "would save you a lot of time and money."
28. We remember especially your SOUL. Your GIVING NATURE. Your HELPING ANYONE who needed it, which we had no inkling of until your fundraiser when people of all ages came to tell us of things you had done for them and your refusal to accept anything in return.

# LISTENING HEARTS

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- Pamela Quade
- Pamela Johnson
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- Katie Helms
- Pam Johnson
- Debra Reagan

Editor:  
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*Deadline for submissions for our  
January/February newsletter is  
Friday, December 4th.*

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

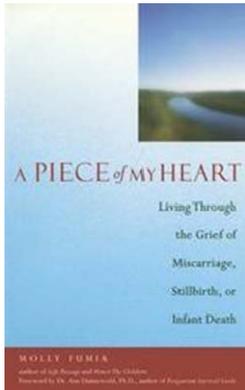
*It does not matter the age of the child or the cause of death. Nor does it matter the length of time since the child's death.*

*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.*

## Book Review

By: Debra Reagan

I read *A Piece of My Heart, Living Through the Grief of Miscarriage, Stillbirth, or Infant Death* written by Molly Fumia. I was intrigued by the first part of the title. I think you might find a connection with this book even if the loss of your child was not through any of the ways mentioned in the title. The book reaches beyond the cause of death and into the heart of the author and mother.



## Listening Hearts 2010 Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held on Saturdays

- ♥February 6th
- ♥April 3rd
- ♥June 5th
- ♥August 7th
- ♥October 2nd
- ♥December 4th



### Craft idea:

**Create quilts or bears using clothing of your loved one.**  
*Photos submitted by Debra Wilson Prosis - items made in memory of her son, Bradley Prosis*