

# Listening Hearts



A GATHERING FOR BEREAVED MOMS...

Volume II, Issue 1

January 2010

## Crossroads in Grief: To Hide or Persevere

This article was originally published on [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com), a website whose mission is to help those who have suffered a loss to cope with their pain and invest in the future.

Submitted by Debra Reagan on December 4, 2009

To most folks, August 6, 2005, was an ordinary day, but for me it became the worst day in my life. I woke up that morning expecting to celebrate my birthday; instead, I learned of my youngest son's death. Despite the fact that I had many loving family members and friends, I found myself feeling isolated and numb. It took so much of my energy just to make it through each day that I had nothing left for anything else.

I drifted through my days in a fog of pain over Clint's death. There were moments that I was sure I would never find my way back. But earlier this year, I began to feel the dark clouds part. I even dared to anticipate the warm rays of hope again. The tension was leaving my body; my strength was growing and my mind was clearing. The smiles I had faked for four years were beginning to feel real again.

Just as I was beginning to think about my new normal, I was hit hard by the reality of the outside world. First, Clint's cat got sick and died. Later, my neighbor's kids accidentally caught my back yard on fire. Then, I had a couple of minor medical issues. The last straw was multiple problems with the house: there was a major plumbing problem in the bathroom, a foundation situation, and then a water leak in the kitchen.

All of this left me longing to run back into my world of fog and numbness. I suppose I was experiencing the beginnings of self-pity. The realization of my journey came to me; I had reached a crossroad in my grief. I knew that somehow I had to find a way to continue forward.

Inside, I wrestled with the feeling of unfairness. A large part of me wanted to run and hide. It did not seem right to lose a child and then be expected to deal with everyday problems. I did not want to handle the ordinary things of life, but I knew the truth was that it was time for me to acquaint myself with the real world again. I knew I could handle this transition the same way I handled my grief – one step at a time.

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### Love Gifts

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

- ♥ KAREN AND DANA ARCHER IN LOVING MEMORY OF COLT PORTERFIELD (4/17/84 - 6/20/06)

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

## January 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 New Year's Day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Janice Clay's Birthday	16
17	18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



David Poore  
2/6/64 - 2/16/08



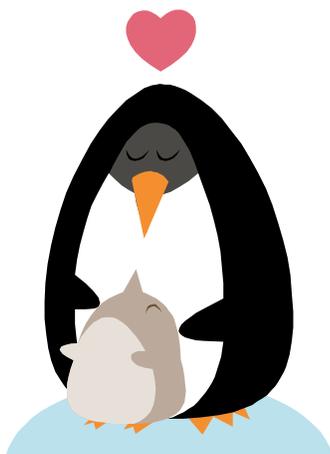
Alan Armstrong  
11/22/82 - 2/25/07



Chad Raby  
2/27/84 - 3/16/09

# February 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6 <i>David Poore's Birthday</i>
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14  <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15  <i>President's Day</i>	16 <i>David Poore's Death Day</i>	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 <i>Alan Armstrong's Death Date</i>	26	27 <i>Chad Raby's Birthday</i>
28						



# Listening Hearts

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## Thoughts on Losing a Child ... More Than 3 Years Later

By: Lana Golembeski

After more than 3 years after the death of my only child, I sit and reflect on that loss. The tears do not come every day like they did before. The pit in my stomach has healed...or at least it appears to have healed. On the outside, I appear to be whole again. I laugh and joke with my friends. I play golf, sing, and continue to live my life like I used to...before my only child was taken from me. So have I truly healed? Have I "moved on"?

It seems to me that we do not move on as much as we learn to live with it. My pain has become my

friend and goes with me everywhere. I do my best to forget it is hanging around me. And I manage to do that for extended periods of time. But if I let down my guard for a moment, it appears and the heart-wrenching pit in my stomach returns. I think to myself that it just can't be. It has been more than 3 years...she surely must still be here. The tears return. The emptiness in my soul overtakes any joy or happiness I have found.

So, when the tears are gone, does that mean we have accepted the horror of our lives? Have we learned to live again? It seems to me that we manage to go on with our

lives; not because we want to, but because we have to. Our lives have been forever shattered but we have chosen to continue in the memory of our children. I have become calmer now since she left me but the pain in my heart is still there. I am more accepting of the reality of her death. And peace has been a part of my life. But the grief will always walk hand in hand with me. It is now a part of my life that I have accepted. We cannot fight it because reality cannot be changed no matter how much we wish it. And maybe that is what true acceptance is: accepting our grief in an impossible situation...with grace, courage, and honor.

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## What Moms Are Doing

Pam Johnson graduated from Tusculum College on December 19, 2009 with a Masters of Education - Human Resource Department. Congratulations Pam!



Pam and the learning team with the professor and the chairman of the program at Tusculum College.



## Dreamscape

By: Sean Fewer

The sights and sounds of what's around slowly fade away  
A flood of precious memories return from yesterday  
Encircling me and moving past, like a fast approaching tide  
I catch a ride on one of them as I turn inside  
The world outside seems so far off  
Like a bustling distant land  
Here is where you hold my heart  
And I your little hand  
My lips stay sealed, but my heart speaks  
Of the love I have for you  
When I come here, I feel you near  
Wistful...but it's true  
No weight of being, no encumbrance of sorrow  
Just surrounded by love with hope for tomorrow  
Then the return of sight and sound  
Brings me back to the place you left  
The tide recedes, but the affect profound  
Poignant memories of a family bereft  
A pensive journey of the heart and mind  
What I seek there, here I cannot find  
Tears of the soul in searching for peace  
Are nurtured by faith and a love that won't cease.



Karen Archer in front of HARMD<sup>®</sup> billboard, located in South Knoxville, TN. Karen is a member of HARMD<sup>®</sup>, a non-profit organization founded by surviving family members of loved ones lost to methadone. Their objective is to decrease opiate-related addiction, injury, and death.

## In Memory of My Son

Submitted by: Reneau Howard

As I pass the one year mark of losing my precious Carson, the next steps I must focus on is to release my old dreams that will not come true. The upcoming year I will focus on creating new dreams and this will help me heal.

### Dreams

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.  
Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.

~Langston Hughes

For her son, Carson Howard

December 31, 1990 - December 2, 2008



Photos from the balloon release for Carson Howard on the anniversary of his death in December.

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I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the ocean.  
She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.  
Then someone at my side says: "There, she is gone!"  
"Gone where?" Gone from my sight. That is all.  
Her diminished size is in me, not in her.  
And just at the moment when someone at my side says: "There, she is gone!"  
there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout:  
"Here she comes!"  
And that is dying.

~Henry Scott Holland

## Christmas 2009

By: Sean Fewer

I miss my son so very much  
His precious smile, his loving touch  
In the midst of Christmas cheer  
Torn emotions bring forth fear  
Trapped in a season I cannot evade  
My thoughts are in turmoil, my heart feels betrayed  
No festive or joyous, no merry...no jolly  
An apparent ambience of melancholy  
Hurt in the eyes of others held dear  
Aware of the influence of what's soon to be here  
Pervasive and persistent, with little recourse  
Emotional havoc from a metaphysical force  
Uncomfortably waiting for relief from the hold  
Of a time once so happy, now must be consoled  
Others before me bring hope when I hear  
The grip slowly loosens with each passing year



## Hymn of Promise

In our end is our beginning;  
in our time, infinity;  
In our doubt there is believing,  
in our life, eternity,  
In our death, a resurrection;  
at the last, a victory,  
Unrevealed until its season,  
something God alone can see.



## LISTENING HEARTS

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We're on

facebook

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*Deadline for submissions for our  
March/April newsletter is Friday,  
February 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.*

### Listening Hearts 2010 Meeting Schedule

*All meetings are held on Saturdays*

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



### Picture Request

The more pictures we have of your child the better. Please send any pictures you would like to see of your child in the newsletter, such as pictures to be used with the calendar. These pictures can be emailed to [hreagan1@gmail.com](mailto:hreagan1@gmail.com).

Thanks!

