

# Listening Hearts



A GATHERING FOR BEREAVED MOMS...

Volume II, Issue 5

September/October 2010

Please help me to get the word out about the choking game my Leo died from this horrible game.

## HERE IS LEO'S STORY

My name is Rose McPhee my husband is Danny. We have two children, Danielle, age 19, and we had a 16 year old son who passed away on March 21, 06. His name was Leo Louis McPhee.

On the evening of March 21st we found our precious child hanging in our small (8x8) baby barn with a bike chain around his neck. I was out getting my hair cut at the time we assume he did this. While I was there I sensed something was wrong so I told my hair dresser I had to leave immediately. She said "you're not done", but I knew I had to leave at that moment.

As I drove home I keep trying to call Leo on his cell phone, but he never answered. Leo always answered my calls so felt even stronger that something was not right. As soon as I arrived home, I asked my husband (Danny) where Leo was. He told me that he was riding his bike. I felt relief thinking that he's around the neighborhood. It was moments later that

Danny said, "Rose, Leo's bike is in the garage". We both started to worry. I was sure something was wrong as I searched the house thinking that maybe Leo was in his room or downstairs on the computer.

It was then that I heard a sound that will forever haunt me. It was coming from outside our house. It was my husband screaming as he ran into our house yelling "Leo's hanging in the barn, call 911!" I grabbed the phone to call the police. I told them to hurry as Danny was trying to get Leo down. Our world was suddenly turned upside down. We were confused, horrified and scared. We both tried to break the beam that he was hanging from when I noticed the chain was on an S-shaped hook. We lifted Leo off of it. He looked so peaceful and he was still warm. I keeping screaming "Leo, wake up please, wake up". I begged to God to strike me now, just please don't take my baby from me. Danny started doing chest compression and I was doing CPR with hopes of reviving him. While I was doing this I recall a police officer taking my place. That is all I remember before the ambulance took him away. As they drove away with him I kept thinking "He's going to be ok". It wasn't until later that evening, after I asked, that neighbors and our family told us what they remembered. I guessed I screamed so loud that people heard me blocks away before the ambulance left.

Continued.....

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## Love Gifts

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

**...Thank you!!!**

# Listening Hearts

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## Leo's Story Continued

I BELIEVE IN MY HEART THAT THE POLICE AND THE CORONOR BELIEVE MY SON KILLED HIMSELF. WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED A CORONER'S REPORT SINCE LEO DIED. At first I thought his death may have been his choice, but I would be the first to admit it and I would still be proud of my baby.

About a week after his death I was sent an article in a newspaper (HERE NB) DATED MARCH 29-APRIL 6 (DEADLY GAMES CHILDREN PLAY). In addition, I was reading "My Life Before Me", AND I KNEW WHAT HAPPENED!

Two days before Leo died I found a bottle of eye drops in his jeans as I was doing the laundry. I confronted Leo and asked if he was doing drugs, Leo's response was "No way mom! Every hear of Space Monkey?" He knew that I had never heard of it even before he asked the question. Unexpectedly, his phone rang so he took the call and we just never got back to the subject of Space Money or the eye drops. His father and I knew that something was going on with Leo because he was having mood swings and had Advil with him all the time. When Danny asked Leo "Why do you always have Advil with you?" his response was "Dad, I never know when I will get a headache". We had also found Advil in his room, pockets, and even in our car where Leo would sit. Danny noticed marks on his neck a couple of time but we thought they were hickies, since he was 16 and we knew he had a girlfriend. Leo also started to wear "hoodies" all the time. We did not know that these are signs of a child that plays The Choking Game. We realized too late. If only we had known this game exist when my baby said "Space Monkey", I would have taken immediate action. I was uninformed of these signs and my precious baby died as I held him in my arms seven months ago.

A few days after his death, I was cleaning Leo's room. As I sat on my knees, tears streaming down my face, I neatly folded Leo's shirts and jeans a chain fell on to the floor. Danny said "Rose, it's a choke chain". We then thought that Leo may have been doing this at home and weren't even aware of it. We missed another sign! We then put the pieces together because Leo was spending a lot of time in his room watching TV...or at least we thought he was. A few days after Leo died we were also told, my another family member, that a police officer and a forensic officer searched Leo's bedroom for any possible notes or indicators that Leo's death may have been a suicide. They took Leo's computer as well to check it for any indicators. A few weeks later the computer was returned to us and the police department told us that they were not able to find anything suggesting that Leo intended to kill himself that fateful night. Leo's toxicology report also came back and said that he did not have any drugs or alcohol in his system at the time of death.

Our son has died because he was playing a stupid game that is known as "The Choking Game" but it's called by name other names, such as "Space Monkey". Leo is now ONE OF THE ANGELS WHO HAVE DIED FROM THIS HORRIFIC GAME Please go to this site and read it carefully!!! Look at the numerous children who have died when it could have been prevented. Some of them are young as eight years old. Your kids have to STOP playing this game! It kills! Read the stories of the families who are going through this. This could be your family, so please in Leo's memory and the memory of all the other children STOP THE CHOKING GAME!

Help me educate the teachers, schools and mostly yours friends and family. Other parents, doctors, coroners and the police need to beware that our children are doing this. We may think that our kids know better and would never do something like this. Some of even think that we know what our children are doing all of the time. We all think that our kids tell us everything. Well, I thought the same thing and I have learned the hard way they only tell you what they want you to hear. When Leo talked about "Space Monkey" I never knew what he meant and if I knew then about this horrible game, or the web site, my son may still be alive.

## Leo's Story Continued

Three of Leo's friends have come forward and said that they have tried this game before with Leo. I was also received a call from a doctor and he told me "Mrs. McPhee, my 8 year old grandson was shown how to do this by an older child". Perhaps Leo's death may have saved a few of these kids lives now that they know what can happen to them and now that some parents of his friends know the signs. Yet, there are millions of parents that still do not know that this game exists or the sign to look for. A child or teenager will not openly admit that they are playing this game, so it's up to us to educate parents, teachers and professionals (police, doctor's, etc), so that they all know the signs.

This is why we have come forward, in our sons' memory, to help prevent another child from dying. We want to help educate the public to the website, news reports, television reports and word-of-mouth. The medical field also needs to beware of the sign when they see patients. Teacher need to be able to know, as they see our children daily. Police and medical examiners need to make a stand for our children. These deaths are almost always classified as a suicide and they are not. These children made a miscalculation that resulted in their deaths. Their deaths were accidents...not an intentional act.

As one of my son's childhood friends said to me, "Rose, you and June D (another mother who lost her son to this game) are M.O.M.S. (Moms On a Mission to Stop-the-choking-game)

I'll always be a proud mom!

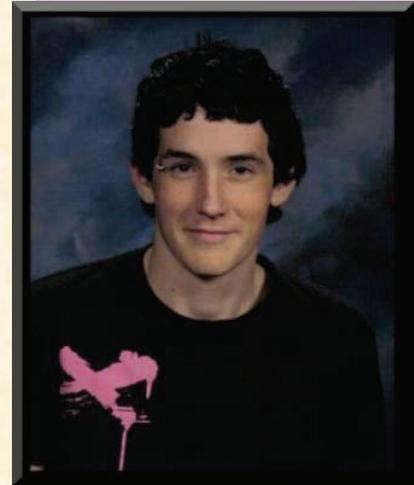
Rose McPhee  
Leo's Mom

### update on Leo's story:

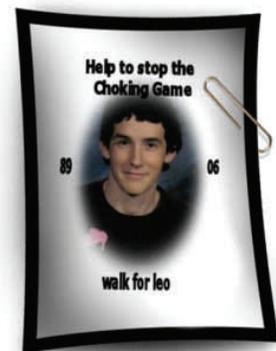
Mr. John Evans & Ms Diane Kelly of the New Brunswick Medical Examiner/ Coroner Office. After thirteen months of a thorough investigation, Leo's ruling was officially classified as an 'Accidental Death (Choking Game)' There are also recommendations to create public awareness to parents, schools, police departments & health professional that this game exists, the signs to look for and to continue ongoing education.

**To our son:** We love & miss you Leo. We are very proud of our Son and Danielle is very proud to be your sister. In life, you were always there to help people and after life, you are still helping. Because of your death, you have helped to save other lives by making this Choking Game recognized now in the Province of New Brunswick by professionals in health, law & education. Just take a few moments and look at this site, you will save a child

[www.gaspinfo.com/en/home.html](http://www.gaspinfo.com/en/home.html)



# Leo McPhee



# Listening Hearts

## September 2010

These children have birthdays this month:

9th Joshua Kenneth Carr (Lorretta)  
11th Nick Pippen (Diane)  
13th Joey Scarpa (Linda)  
16th Brian Christ (Lee Ann)  
26th Leo McPhee (Rose)  
29th Cassandra Taylor (Jayne)



These children have anniversary dates this month:

4th Adam William (Trudy)  
7th Natasha Whitmire (Katrina)  
20th Bryan Clay, Jr. (Janice)  
30th Joe Torma (Linda)



***FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS***

October 2010

These children have birthdays this month:

- 3rd Curtis Dawson (Judy)
- 5th Derrick Joseph Salvig (Tammie)
- 10th Joel McGregor (Julie)
- 24th Alex Wolf (Tamara)
- 24th Sean Powell (Scarlett)
- 31st Daniel Pallick (Betsy)



These children have anniversaries this month:

- 7th Elyse Cannon (Libby)
- 7th Tyler Strawn (Elane)
- 12th Rocky Weddle (Lisa)



*FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS*

# Listening Hearts

## What Moms Are Doing

### HARMD Washington DC Protest 2010



**In 2009 ...720 people died from Methadone.**  
Methadone was also present in 265 other drug-related deaths. Compared to 2008, Methadone related deaths increased by 5.2%.

**In 2008 ...693 people died from Methadone.**  
Methadone was also present in 243 other drug related deaths. Compared to 2007, Methadone related deaths decreased by 11.7%.

**In 2007 ...785 people died from Methadone.**  
Methadone was also present in 310 other drug-related deaths. There was a 9.6% increase in Methadone related deaths compared to 2006.

**In 2006 ...716 people died from Methadone.**  
Methadone was also present in 258 other drug-related deaths. There was a 15.5% increase in Methadone related deaths compared to 2005.

**In 2005 ...620 people died from Methadone.**  
Methadone was also found in 314 other drug-related deaths. Compared to 2004, there was a 11.5% increase in Methadone related deaths.

## In Memory of Colt

Karen works with this group in memory of her beautiful son, Colt.



## What Moms Are Doing cont.

The only thing this mom is "doing" is the Hospice is having a Celebration of Life ceremony that my Grandma will be honored in, on Tuesday Sept 14th, and I'm going to play my bagpipes in the service..... Probably play Amazing Grace.... This will be my first service, hopefully among many more future ones, and it will be for my Grandma... And for Gabriel and all of the other kids in our Listening Hearts group.....

## In Memory of Gabe In Memory of Gabe



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"You just do what you have to do. You wake up every day, and you summon up the energy from somewhere, even when you think you haven't got it, and you get through the day. And you do it day after day after day."

Terry Anderson



"Anyone who has lost a child knows that you don't 'recover'. Instead you learn to incorporate their absence and memories into your life and channel your emotional energy toward others. Eventually it has been said your grief walks beside you instead of consuming you."

~Mary Lou Hackett

# Listening Hearts

## Halloween Memories

### Halloween Memories.

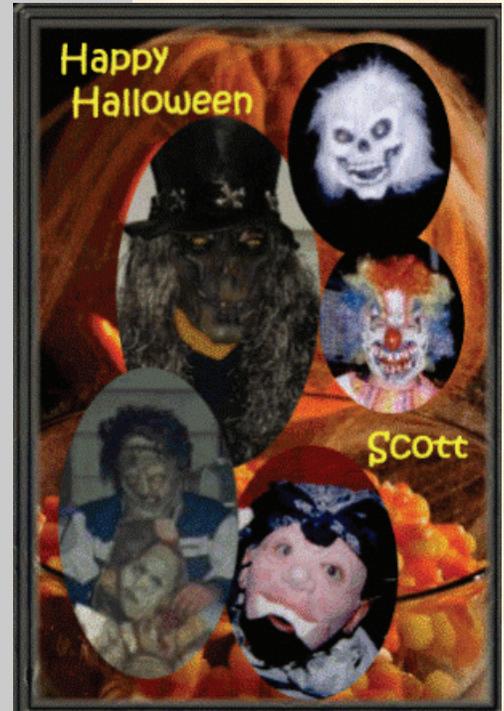
Scott & I, had a lot of fun at Halloween. He was my partner during that time. We both dressed up and had a grand time, scaring adults and children alike. However we went easy on the little ones for the most part, unless a parent was in on the scare. One Halloween night, a man brought his three children to the house. He told Scott, "Play along with me, I want to scare my kids!" That's all it took...The man grabbed Scott's arm and went to screaming, "He's got me, the monster's got me." Those kids started screeching like banshee's! The dad told the kids to run. They started towards the car with Scott on their heels. Scott was reaching in through the windows after those poor kids. Scott grabbed the bumper of the car, the man was yelling, "He's got us, I can't get the car too move!" Finally Scott let go of the bumper and started towards the doors, the man winked and took off. You could hear those children screaming all the way to the corner!

We had tons & tons of fun like that. From kids throwing their bags of treats up in the air, so they could get away from the monster, to falling on the ground kicking and even teens wetting their pants. What great memories! Have a Safe & Happy 2010 Halloween from Scott's Family. God Bless.

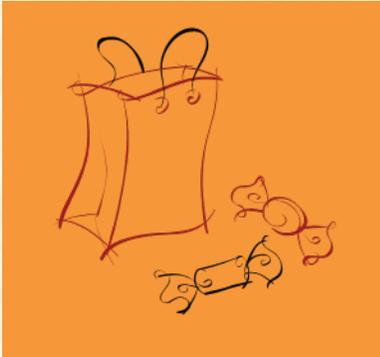
Some of the many faces of Scott at Halloween!

<http://william-myers.memory-of.com>

# Scott Myers



Halloween Memories cont.



# Damon Fewer

*Your Love*

*In your love I've found  
The value of a smile  
The warmth of one of yours  
Would always last awhile  
In your love I've found  
How precious time can be  
With every moment shared  
Is born a memory  
In your love I've found  
And in this I am truly awed  
That by sharing in your love  
I've touched the hand of God*

*by Sean Fewer in Memory of his son, Damon*



# Listening Hearts

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## More Halloween Memories

Here is a picture of my Leo in grade nine he was 13. In this picture is with Kendyl, a very special girl he consider his little sister, anyway when he got to school for the Halloween dance he walked in with two girls on his arms my adorable son decided he was a going to be a pimp with his girls. He was so excited when he came home because he had won first prize and he won one of the girls. Becky became his girl friend until he died three year later.



Leo McPhee

## School Days

### *I Believe*

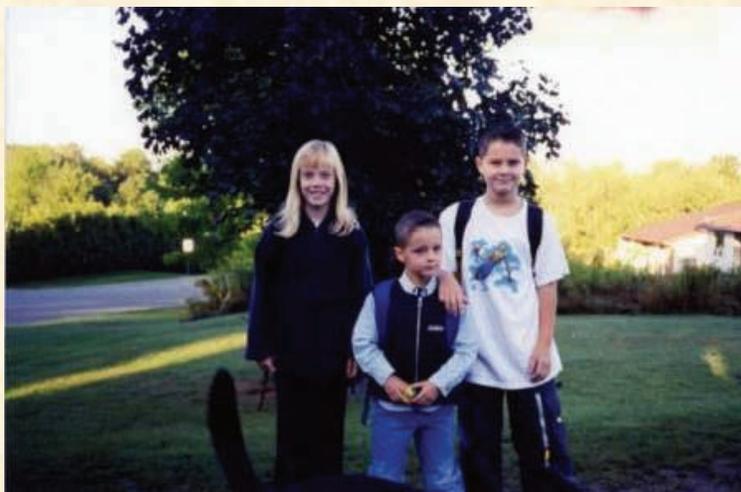
*I believe in the power of our love  
I believe in you  
The smiles not to be realized  
The relentless heartache  
What is left is what will have to do  
Courses and paths now changed  
Priorities and perspectives too  
You will always be with me  
I will always be with you*

*by Sean Fewer in Memory of his son, Damon*



1999-Damon's first day of JK (not yet 4 years old)

## Damon Fewer



Damon, Aaron, and Paige  
1st day of 2nd Grade,  
2002



# Listening Hearts

## Submitted by Linda in memory of her son, Joe

This poem and article was submitted by author John French, in the Open To Hope Newsletter, 6/9/10. I'd like to share it in your newsletter if it is acceptable to you. This author writes so profoundly, and expresses grief in a way that I feel not only I, but other parents will identify with.

Hugs,  
Linda Torma

Poem:

*I am hastened into facing another day.  
Woken by the onslaught of my mourning.  
It is a struggle to keep the sorrow at bay,  
as it strikes me without warning.  
The terror impacts me the instant I wake.  
But I must keep fighting for sanity's sake.  
Through the relentless oppression of laughter and song.  
To the constant regression as the war rages on.  
No source of shelter offers any relief,  
my only protection is the Armor of grief.*

Article: Armor of Grief

*In the daily battle with my emotions, I often feel overwhelmed. I find myself wallowing in the murky trenches of grief, at a loss for words, run down and utterly defeated. I am always fighting back the tears or retreating to engage my own internal struggles. Despite my tremendous loss and clearly diminished state, surrender is beneath me. So, to combat the oppressive forces of sorrow, I have developed some tools to fortify my position.*

*One of the ways I protect myself is by buckling down and hammering out the layers of my contention. Identifying my points of weakness prevents things from so quickly getting under my skin. Combined with a readiness to face events that are easy to anticipate, I am able to fend off the despair that strikes me unexpectedly.*

**Joe Torma**



## Submission cont.

### *Armour of Grief cont.*

*I think we can all benefit from equipping ourselves in emotional armor. But let's not use armor that is overly confining or rigid. Because, it is critical that we maintain our ability to be flexible and engaging.*

*The armor of grief is unique in that it not only provides a source of outward protection, it's facade of strength also enables us to hold things in. The thick skin helps us maintain our composure as we face mounting days and fleeting expectations.*

*The helmet is narrow enough to keep us focused in a forward direction while at the same time, its reflective properties make it easy to look back. The conical shape keeps our heads high even when everything around us appears to be collapsing. The thickness of the steel acts as a filter to minimize the impact of ambient sounds that constantly bombard us.*

*The breastplate protects our fragile hearts from the barrage of implications that so deeply impact our lives. It is forged from bonds that can never be broken. It is refined and polished to reflect the brilliance of love, and gilded with a faith that everything hinges on. It is cold and heavy, but that is perfectly fitting as it contains all the elements of sorrow, and the tremendous burden of countless lamentations.*

*The shield deflects the volley of painful reminders that are constantly hurled in our direction. It blocks ignorance, and guards against any inconsiderate bashing. It is a symbol of our unyielding devotion and clearly reflects our stance. Not only does it provide some space and shelter, it enables us to slowly push ahead.*

*The sword is the point of our sadness. It is short and blunt, yet incredibly poignant. Drawn from a glimmering past, it shines even brighter in life's darkest moments. It can never be tarnished, dulled or degraded. But, it is not for lashing out. It is used for countering thoughtless banter and cutting through the chains of thought that are hurled with good intentions.*

*Lastly, the shoes are extremely important. They allow us to make great strides in a positive direction. They instill us with a sense of stability and keep us from stumbling into the depths of self pity. They not only enable us to trudge through the depression, they empower us take a stand that will leave a lasting impression.*

*Because preparation is such an essential prelude to battle, spending the morning bracing ourselves is indeed a victory. But, if we can push the pain aside and extend ourselves to others, then we have truly conquered the day.*

# Listening Hearts

## Memories of Sean



Here is a picture of Sean Powell with his grandmother, Rosa Powell (Jack's mother).

Sean once said she was the best woman he had ever met, and I would have to agree with him. Mrs. Powell was one of the finest women

I knew myself. Sean was thirteen and about to start his freshman year. Sean was participating in therapy sessions during the summer, and we were preparing for a bright and successful future.

Sean was so intelligent, but his heart was broken at such a tender age it was just a struggle for him to see the world as a safe place. I now see through his eyes and understand

his pain. My heart is now broken and the words I used to say to comfort Sean

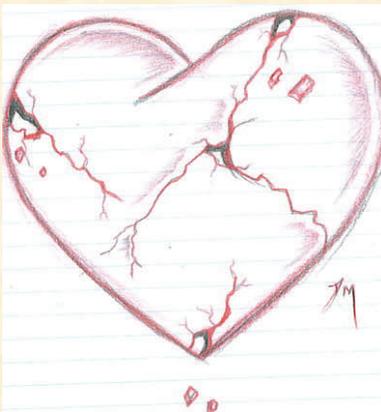
echo in my head. I would tell Sean, "Whatever happened in the past you can't change it

or relive it so allow me to assist you to move forward and live beyond it to

become a better person, a kinder person, a more loving person." I find myself hating myself for saying those words to Sean for now I have to live

those words, become those words, or I too will be a liar and a cheat, like all the others who disappointed my sweet boy, Sean.

# Sean Powell



I ask Sean daily to assist me to move forward to live beyond his death to become a better

person, a kinder person, a more loving person to honor him and show him how

he was more of an inspiration to me than I was to him. We continue to miss

and love Sean daily, but we are stronger in our faith. With our determination to heal as a family along with Sean's presence and assistance,

we will continue to heal with God's grace and mercy.

In loving memory of Sean Powell, 10/24/88 - 3/10/07

Jack & Scarlett Powell, & Family Members

## Poems

### The Secret World I live in!

Gaby Gonzalez

The secret world I live in...  
Where others have no clue  
Where pain lives on inside me  
Where dreams went on with you

The secret world I live in...  
Where memories are bittersweet  
Where missing you is endless  
Where life is incomplete

The secret world I live in...  
Where tears now flow with ease  
Where questions have no answers  
Where I'm treated as diseased

The secret world I live in...  
Where others think I'm fine  
Where a mask is worn as armor  
Where I look for daily signs

The secret world I live in...  
Where laughter causes pain  
Where happiness eludes me  
Where I often feel insane

The secret world I live in...  
Where others have no clue  
Where pain lives on inside me  
Where dreams will not come true



### What A Grieving Mother Really Thinks

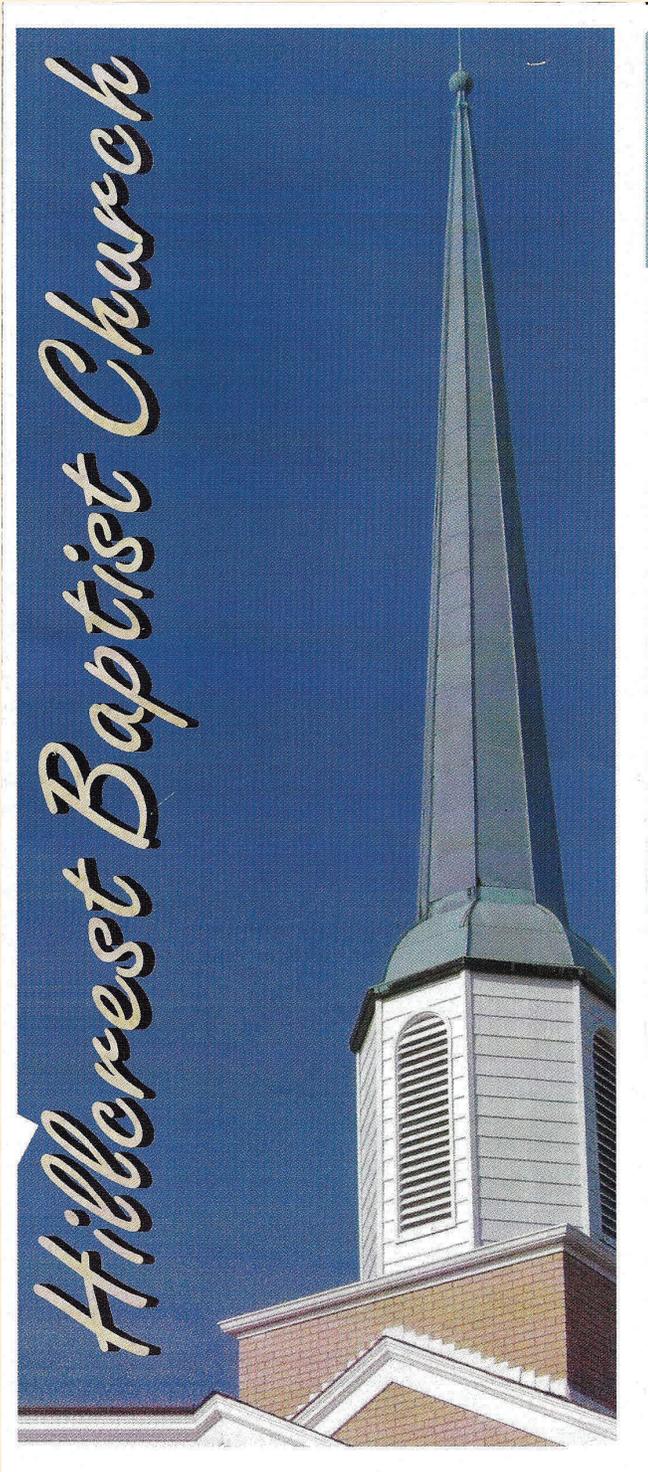
Written by Kelly Cummings

Hello old friend,  
Oh yes you know  
I lost my child a while ago.  
No, no please  
Don't look away  
And change the subject  
It's ok.  
You see at first I couldn't feel,  
It took so long, but now it's real.  
I hurt so much inside you see  
I need to talk,  
Come sit with me?  
You see, I was numb for so very long,  
And people said, "My, She is so strong."  
They did not know I couldn't feel,  
My broken heart made all unreal.  
But then one day, as I awoke  
I clutched my chest, began to choke,  
Such a scream, such a wail,  
Broke from me..  
My child! My child!  
The horror of reality.  
But everyone has moved on, you see,  
everyone except for me.  
Now, when I need friends most of all,  
Between us there now stands a wall.  
My pain is more than they can bear,  
When I mention my child,  
I see their blank stare.  
"But I thought you were over it,"  
Their eyes seem to say,  
No, no, I can't listen to this, not today.  
So I smile and pretend, and say, "Oh, I'm ok".  
But inside I am crying, as I turn away.  
And so my old friend, I shall paint on a smile,  
As I have from the start,  
You never knowing all the while,  
All I've just said to you in my heart.



# Listening Hearts

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## *Listening Hearts A Gathering of Bereaved Mothers*

*....now has a second meeting  
place.....*

*Saturday, September 4, 2010*

*10:00 a.m. to 12 noon*

*First United Methodist  
Church*

*101 E. First North Street  
Morristown, TN 37814*

*All bereaved moms are  
invited.*



Hillcrest Baptist Church  
410 S. Liberty Hill Rd.  
Morristown, TN 37813

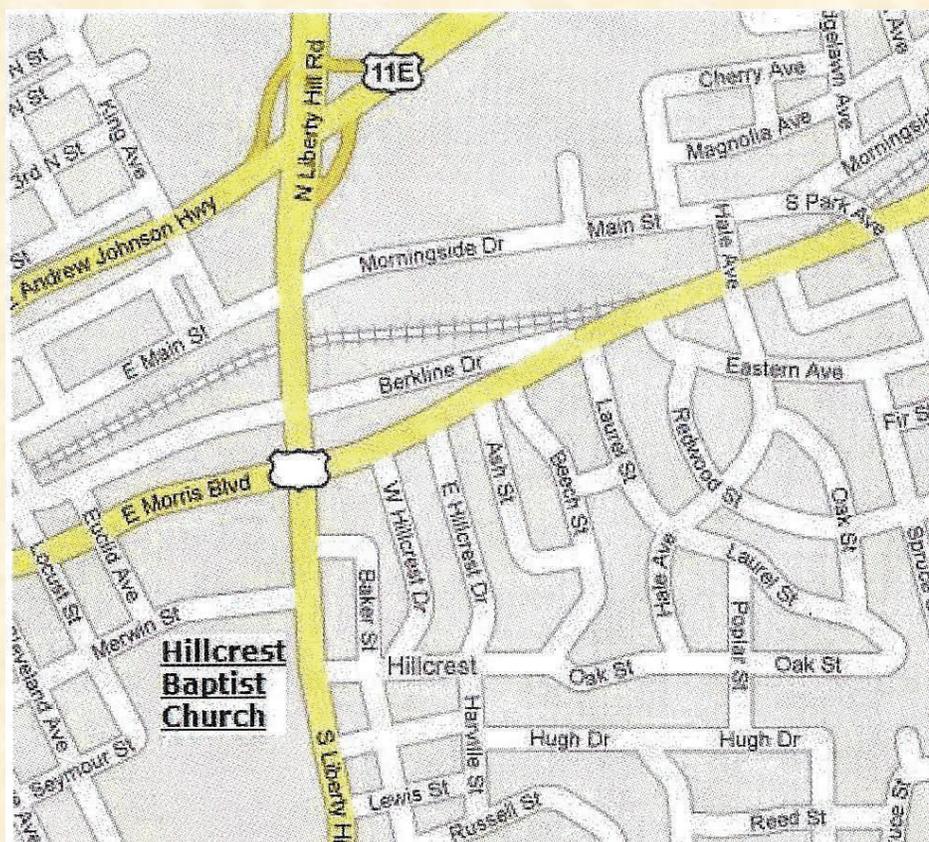
Phone: 423-586-0693

Fax: 423-586-0653

[www.hillcrestbaptistchurch.net](http://www.hillcrestbaptistchurch.net)

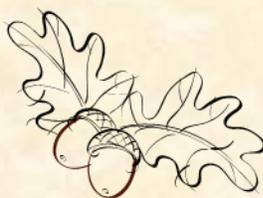
E-mail: [office@hillcrestbaptistchurch.net](mailto:office@hillcrestbaptistchurch.net)

*... The Caring Place*



# Listening Hearts

## Memories of Nick



# Nick Pippen

*Still*

*Lost in grief.*

*Alone in despair.*

*Longing to find a way back.*

*The darkness overwhelms.*

*A hole in my heart too deep to repair.*

*~Diane Pippen (Nick's Mom) Written on 9/20/09*

## LISTENING HEARTS

120 Huskey Valley Road  
Seymour, TN 37865

E-mail: [listeninghearts@yahoo.com](mailto:listeninghearts@yahoo.com)

Website:

<http://listeninghearts.net>



We're on

facebook



*Listening Hearts, a 501 ( c) (3) nonprofit organization, 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.*

### Contributors this issue:

Rose McPhee  
Karen Archer  
Kate Helms  
Brenda Myers  
Sean Fewer  
Linda Torma  
Scarlett Powell  
Diane Pippen

### Listening Hearts Knoxville 2010 Meeting Schedule

*All meetings are held on Saturdays*

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

### Editors:

Debra Reagan  
Heather Reagan

Deadline for submissions for our September/  
October newsletter is Friday,  
Thank you to everyone.

Unless otherwise noted by the contributors, the  
submissions will also appear on the website.