

Listening Hearts



A GATHERING FOR BEREAVED MOMS...

Volume III, Issue 6

November/December 2011

Someone is missing at Christmas

*Let this be a loving reminder
That someone is missing today
Someone our hearts hold on to.
As we travel along life's way.
Someone who made life so special
For each of us here,
Someone who won't be forgotten,
But cherished from year to year.
And now as we celebrate Christmas,
Let us fondly recall,
How deeply each of us loved him,
And oh... how he loved us all*

Author Unknown



In this issue:

- ♥ Calendars pgs. 2-5
- ♥ Christmas Memories, pages 6-7
- ♥ Christmas Eve poem by Dr. Dew, page 8
- ♥ 16 by Sean Fewer, page 9
- ♥ Thoughts of a Bereaved Mom, by Lana G., pg 10
- ♥ Gold Wrapping Paper, page 11
- ♥ More Christmas Memories, page 13
- ♥ Letter to Joel, pgs 14-15
- ♥ Christmas Memories, pages 16-17
- ♥

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

November 2011 Listening Hearts Children

These cherished children have birthdays this month:

4th	Carlos Santos-Silva	mom, Monika
17th	Karie Cain	mom, Debra H.
19th	Eric Wolf	mom, Pam W.
22nd	Alan Armstrong	mom, Pam J.
22nd	Zachary Griffin	mom, Debra G.



These cherished children have anniversary dates this month:

1st	Calvin Medicus	mom, Katie M.
8th	Bradley Prosis	mom, Deb P.
23rd	Carl Lewis Balogh	mom, Carol
23rd	Karie Cain	mom, Debra H.



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

November 2011 Other Beautiful Children

These adored children have birthdays this month:

5th	William Myers	mom, Brenda
12th	Dustin Kitts	mom, Debbie
15th	Natasha Whitmire	mom, Katrina
23rd	Damon Fewer	mom, Kim
23rd	Brett Friberg	mom, Beverly



These adored children have anniversary dates this month:

Chris Kline mom, Anne



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

Listening Hearts

December 2011 Listening Hearts Children

These precious children have birthdays this month:

31st Carson Howard mom, Reneau H.
31st Paul J. Sanders mom, Diane T.



These precious children have anniversary dates this month:

2nd Carson Howard mom, Reneau H.



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

December 2011 Other Beautiful Children

These adored children have birthdays this month:

28th Brandon Arms mom, Connie



These adored children have anniversary dates this month:

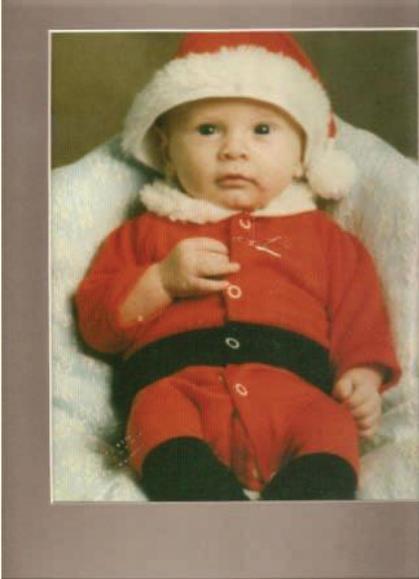
1st B.J. Outlaw mom, Cindy
2nd Billy Crocker mom, Nancy
10th Krystal Long-Duss mom, Jo Ann
15th Brian Christ mom, Lee Ann
23rd Brett Friberg mom, Beverly



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

Listening Hearts

Christmas Memories



Sean Powell

Together In My Heart.

Words alone cannot express the longing deep inside to hold you close this Christmas, and have you by my side... My love for you grows stronger each moment we're apart, for you and I will always be together in my heart.

--Rita S. Beer



Christmas Memories

Missing our Jim so much,
Jim Coniglio
6/03/1983 - 3/06/2009

~The holidays are drawing near, I fear.
I must put on the super mask,
not just the everyday mask
that I wear to hide my pain and tears.
The holiday mask must withstand so much more.
Our 3rd Christmas without you. ~



The picture is our last Christmas together in
2008.

Jim Coniglio



Memories from the Heart.

Christmas brings fond memories of loved ones we hold dear. . . We think of all the special times, and long to have them near. Our love for them grows stronger each moment we're apart, As we savor countless dreams and memories from the heart.

--Rita S. Beer

Listening Hearts

Christmas Eve by Dr. Dew

Silent night, holy night.....

"It's about time," he says quietly.
Deliberately, wordlessly,
They gather the materials
Carefully put away last year,
The matches, candle, candle jar
To fend off the harsh winter wind.

Tis the season to be jolly.....

Slowly they drive toward the town's edge,
Past homes with bright, blinking bulbs.
Cars of faraway relatives
Fill their drives. Happy, laughing
Families, children home from school,
Pass by on the way to midnight Mass.

It's the most wonderful time of the year.....

At last, town lights left far behind,
They sit mute, each wrapped in private
Cocoons of memories of Christmas past,
Excited whispers from their room,
Silly giggles, fervent good-night
Kisses, anticipation of morning.

On a cold winter's night that was so deep.....

Through the gate, down the drive, engine
killed.
Frozen grass crunching underfoot
Hand-in-hand they walk up the hill
To the familiar moonlit stone.
With practiced hands they brush it clean,
Then prepare their votive Noel.

The world in solemn stillness lay.....

Lump in throat, arm-in-arm,
Candle lit, they stand and weep,
But not so bitter as in years past.
The pain's as deep but not so long,
As once again they dream of things
That should have been but never were.

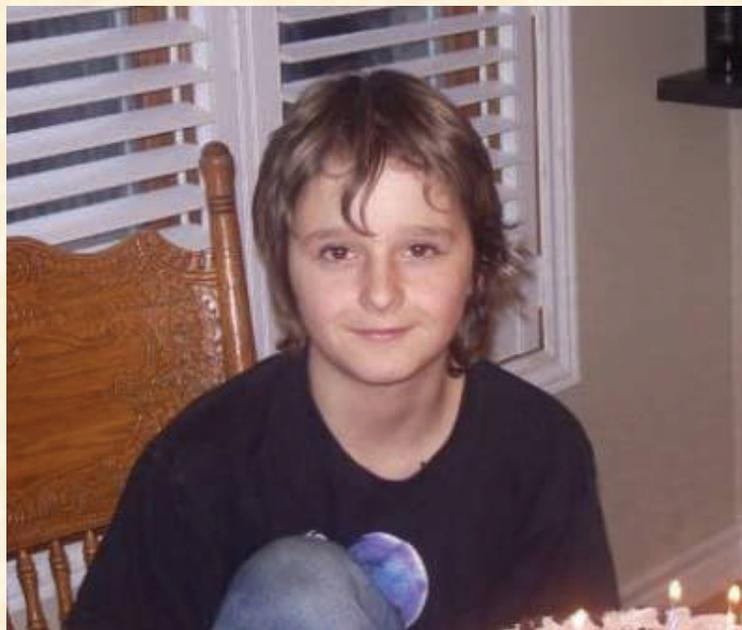
The stars in the sky look down where he lay.....

"Let's go," he says. She nods assent.
They leave, though turn back once to see
The lonely flame of their lost boy
Gleaming peacefully through the dark.
He whispers softly, his visit done,
"Merry Christmas and good-night, my son."

*Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

taken from the book, *Rachel's Cry, A Journey
Through Grief*
by Richard A. Dew, M.D.

In Memory of Damon

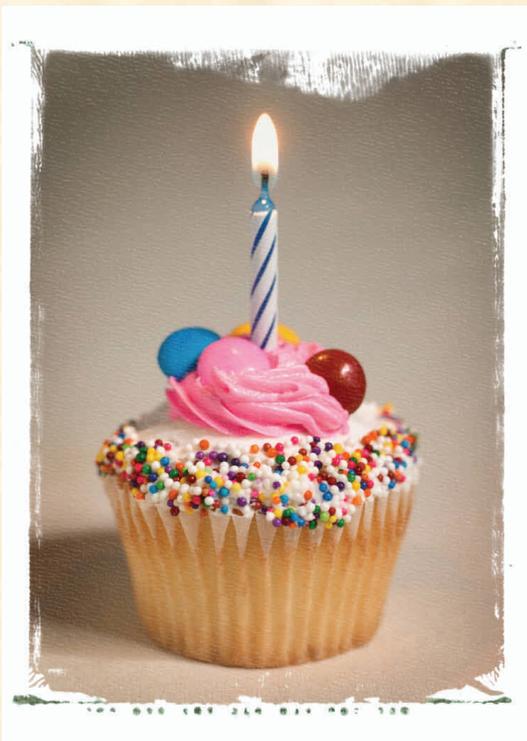


November 23, 1995-May 22, 2007

16

Our sweet little Damon, you'd be sixteen,
So many times go left unseen,
You filled our hearts with a special joy,
So full of life, such a precious boy,
You looked inside, instead of out,
You knew what life was all about,
A little hug, a heartfelt smile,
Very thoughtful was your style,
For now apart, but not forever,
That is the storm that we must weather,
To see it through, we will endeavor,
Our hearts and yours are linked together.

All our love always, we miss you dearly,
Mom, Dad, Aaron & Paige



Damon Fewer

Listening Hearts

Thoughts of a Bereaved Mom

You would think that after 5 years, the pain would dissipate. But it doesn't. You just bury it deep within your soul. Even YOU do not realize it is there! But it comes out...when you least expect it. You think you are getting better; that you are healing. But the reality is that it is still there and you refuse to accept it. You keep yourself busy and do your best to forget it. You tell yourself that you are better; that you are healing; that you are "moving on". But you only ignore those deep feelings until they come screaming out of your head at you. And you never know when that will happen.

It still hits you in the gut...tearing down all the work you have done. The tears come freely and your soul feels the emptiness of your loss. You just want your child back...nothing more...nothing less. You don't think so much of your loss but of your child's loss. You think of what your child would be doing today. You think of how much they had waiting them. You think of how much your child lost the day they died. And you cry for THEIR loss. This is not a pity party but true grief over what your child lost...of their future. And it hits you in your heart and the pain is greater than you can imagine. We want our children to have a wonderful life and they were robbed of that. Worse yet, we must continue and try to do the best that we can...without them. Now I am all alone in this world and I miss all of my family. And I ask "Why am I still here??" I do not understand why I am still here....made to suffer such a horrific loss....alone.

I just wish I could understand. Then maybe I could live with it.

Lana Golembeski
Mourning her daughter, Alicia
August 1, 1979-July 22, 2006

Alicia Golembeski

Gold Wrapping Paper

The story goes that some time ago a mother punished her five year old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and she became even more upset when the child used the gold paper to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree.

Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift box to her mother the next morning and then said, 'This is for you, Momma.'

The mother was embarrassed by her earlier over reaction, but her anger flared again when she opened the box and found it was empty. She spoke to her daughter in a harsh manner.

'Don't you know, young lady, when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package?'

She had tears in her eyes and said, 'Oh, Momma, it's not empty! I blew kisses into it until it was full.'

The mother was crushed. She fell on her knees and put her arms around her little girl, and she begged her forgiveness for her thoughtless anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later, and it is told that the mother kept that gold box by her bed for all the years of her life.

Whenever she was discouraged or faced difficult problems she would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us, as human beings, have been given a Golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family and friends... There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.



Listening Hearts

Every Hour of Every Day

**"I don't think of him every day;
I think of him every hour of every day."
-- Gregory Peck, in an interview
many years after his son's death**



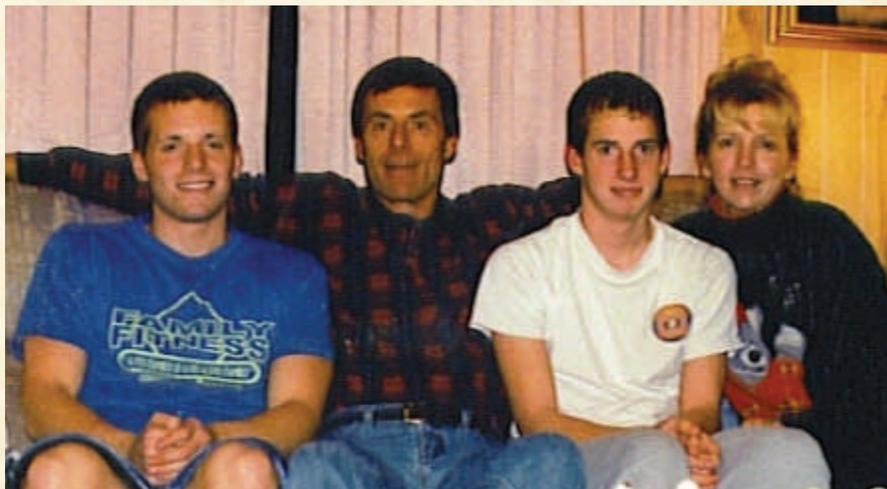
Thanksgiving

We are thankful for the time we had with
our children.

We are thankful that one day we will see
them again.



Christmas Memories



Clint Reagan

**They that love beyond the world
cannot be separated by it.
Death cannot kill
what never dies.
*William Penn***



Listening Hearts - Letter to Joel

Letter to Joel

Joel, it's four years and three months since that unbelievable day you left us. Unbelievable, but I have to believe it, because it happened. Where has the time gone? Sometimes it feels like a lifetime ago, and other times it feels like yesterday.

At first I wondered how life could go on without you, but while not easy, I've found out that it does. Life does go on, in a different way, without you present with us, but always present in our hearts.

I think of you every minute of every day, and while sometimes it's easier, sometimes I find it way too hard to comprehend that you're not here. I will always have regrets about what I could have, should have done, to help guide you more, as you navigated those past couple of years, with so much going on in your life. The things I didn't say to you, the things I didn't do for you, but a dear mother I met early on, who had also lost her son in similar circumstances, told me that I did the best that I could at the time with what I knew at the time. Yes I have to hold onto that and believe it. Even though I won't ever imagine I did it all right, I know I can't live my life focussing on these things, but rather on the wonderful years I had with you. We always had a bond, you and I, but I know as a teenage boy there were things that teenagers don't share with their mother, and I always believed we had time on our side.

You'd be smiling at me now, having recently got a tattoo in your memory – 'I see you in every picture, I hear you in every song'. How true is that quote, and yes Joel, I see you everywhere I go; when I'm driving past all the places we used to go together, in the shopping centre where you worked, when I'm at the movies, when I listen to songs on the radio, you're there with me. When I visit you at the memorial garden where you now lay, located in the grounds of the school you went to for 12 years, I remember all the times I was there with you from that first day, through to your graduation. I know it's a great place for you, with the air filled with noise and laughter from all the kids at school, going to and from class, and music playing in the chapel right next to you, where I still remember you doing your end of year piano recital when you were 10 – you added your own little flourish to the end of your song, and stole the show.

When it came to technology, you loved getting into all the new things and were the first one in your year at school to have a digital camera. You loved taking photos and there are still hundreds on our computer that I have, to remind me. Of course that love of photography developed over the years to a love of film, and coming top of your class for your short film, which I remember spending hours and hours helping you with! You were just about to embark on a film degree at University – we often talk at home of where you would be now – the world really is a small place, and even though you lived in Australia, there would have been nothing you couldn't have achieved, as many other Aussies have proven.

You loved music and I can still picture you sitting at your computer, calling me into your bedroom to look at a new music clip you'd just discovered, or watching something new on TV and asking me if I liked it. While a lot of your music, considering your age, wasn't my taste, there were many types that I did like. You had a wide variety of genres, and could relate to most music types. For years I have been 'stuck' on the same old radio station, listening to the old songs that I've always listened to, but recently I have changed over to a radio station that plays more up to date music, and it makes me feel closer to you. I hear some songs that I know you would have loved, and I can hear you laughing at, and singing the lyrics around the house. Just like you used to sing 'Momma's Boy' to me, and give me big hugs as you sang.

Volume III, Issue 6

I used to rely on you so much to help with the computer and even though you did get frustrated with me you still helped – now I have to work it out myself, and you would be proud of me and how far I have come. I had to - I needed to make a website about you to tell everyone your story, so people could visit so you can be remembered always. I had to set up new email programs, and then Facebook, to connect with other bereaved mothers out there who I have met on this journey. They are all going through the same loss, with varying circumstances, but are all living without their precious child. What a comfort they have been, all with their different ways of coping, but all sharing a common bond. Talking of technology, you would have loved all the new phones and ipads that have come out in the past few years. Again, you would have been one of the first amongst your friends to buy one and be so excited about all you could do. I miss sharing all that with you. You kept me young, and how I miss that connection and energy.

Family life goes on. I know you are watching down on us and smiling. Ben is doing well in his studies. He felt your loss very hard, and has many regrets also. I tell him too, that he did the best he could do at the time, with what he knew. There was a lot of brother ‘stuff’ that went on between you both, and yes, I know you had times when you both didn’t get along, but that was just an age thing, and you were both on the verge of growing past that stage, and I know you would have become good mates again, just as you were when you were both little. He is slowly learning to accept that and live his life to honour your memory and do the best he can do with his life. Of course Clint & Merrin are now married and have Kerala who you would have loved to spoil too. We miss the fact that you won’t be around to be part of all this, but we honour your memory and Kerala will know what a great uncle you were. Dad doesn’t let his emotions out too much, but then he never did, but he misses you and all the things he will never get to do with you. Of the three boys you were the one who really took an interest in cars with him, and you would have shared many good car times and stories over the years. He still has the hundreds of car photos you took on that first visit to the Wintersun rock and roll festival.

My life is different now, how could it be anything else. I am a different person. I’m travelling this journey one step at a time. Sometimes I travel a few steps forward, and then some back, but gradually I’m getting there. I am a stronger person these days. I want to be, to honour you and your memory.

Christmas is almost here. How you loved Christmas and all that went with it and the excitement over presents and the food! You loved your food, as all our family do, and at Christmas we remember how much you loved your roast dinners – and chocolate pudding of course! This Christmas again, we will light a candle for you, and have you in our hearts even more so if that is possible, as we celebrate this time and know that we will see you again, which is the one hope that keeps us going. ‘For God so loved the world, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life’. John 3: 16.

Joel’s last Christmas 2006



Listening Hearts



Carson and Grant



Carson Howard

“There is a curious social phenomenon of denying the importance of death at the extremes of childhood—that is, the deaths of infants and of adult children. Most of the books and movies that have been made about dying or dead children pertain to children who are school-aged or teenagers. Yet parents who lose infants or adult children are bereaved just as much as those who lose children in between.

Finally, keep in mind that with the death of your child you not only have lost that particular child but also the specific hopes, dreams, expectations, fantasies, and wishes you had for that child. You have lost parts of yourself, parts of your partner, parts of your family, and parts of your future.” Excerpts from *How To Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies* by Terese A. Rando, Ph.D.

Christmas Memories



Alan's 2nd Christmas.



Alan's 3rd Christmas.

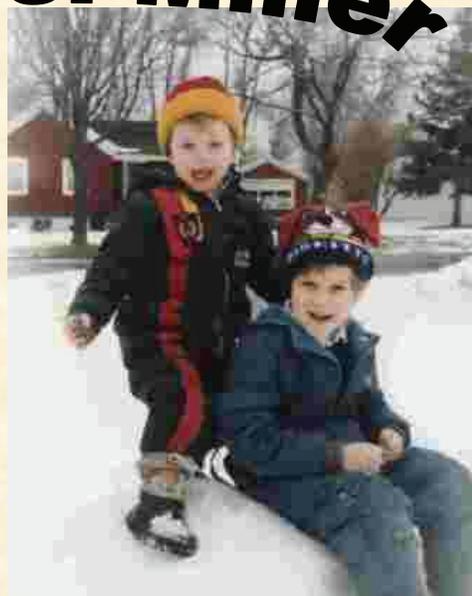


Alan Armstrong
Alan Armstrong



Gabriel and Ben

Gabriel Miller



Listening Hearts

Morristown Meeting Information

Listening Hearts is a gathering of bereaved moms. We wish every day that there was no need for such a group. Since we can't change things that are out of our control, we work to help ourselves and each other to process this devastating and life altering loss. We work to find ways to carry the loss and love in the same heart.

Our group meets every other month in Knoxville at the Eye Institute Conference Room located at 2020 Kay Street, Knoxville, TN 37920. The dates and times can be found at our website: www.listening-hearts.memory-of.com.

We also have a new second meeting place in Morristown. See below.

Listening Hearts A Gathering of Bereaved Mothers

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

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

***All bereaved moms are
invited.***

2011 Morristown Meeting Dates:

Saturday, November 12th



Meeting Time:

10:00 a.m. to 12 noon

LISTENING HEARTS

Donations may be mailed to
Listening Hearts
P.O. Box 51674
Knoxville, TN 37950

E-mail: listeninghearts@live.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:

Scarlett Powell
Lori Coniglio
Sean Fewer
Lana Golembeski
Julie McGregor
Reneau Howard
Pam Johnson
Kate Helms

Listening Hearts Knoxville 2011 Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held on Saturdays

- ♥February 5th
- ♥April 2nd
- ♥June 4th
- ♥August 6th
- ♥October 1st
- ♥December 3rd

Editors:

Debra Reagan
Heather Reagan

Thank you to everyone. We are honored to share the love and memories of your precious child.

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