

Listening Hearts



A GATHERING OF BEREAVED MOMS...

Volume IV, Issue 5

September/October 2012

An Open Window

No longer lost
I found my way home
Where the air is fresh and clear
And the universe is simply breathe taking
No words are needed
Your heart is filled so you are contented
And I'm truly speechless
I found my way home
And laid my eyes upon you, son
For you're happy, successful, and now made complete
Everything I said it would be but more than I ever expected
If I close my eyes I can see the place
I just have to believe we are together even from here
I found my way home and I have been truly set free
Now I allow myself to find peace and time to rest
Sean, you have given me the greatest gift
An open window to heaven to peek through when the
darkness becomes too heavy
In loving memory of my son, Sean Austin Powell,
10/24/88-3/10/07



In this issue:

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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.

Gladys Reagan, in memory of her son, Greg

Anonymous

...Thank you!!!

Listening Hearts

September 2012 Listening Hearts Children

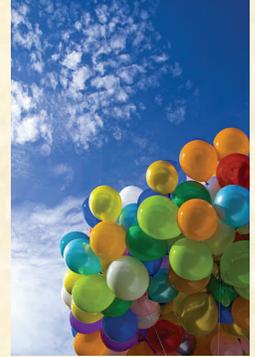
These cherished children have birthdays this month:

21st Joseph Stevens

Mom, Sue

29th Lorelei Dortch

Mom, Amy



These cherished children have anniversary dates this month:

18th Michelle Lee Bell

Mom, Shelia

Grandmother, Barbara

20th Byron Clay, Jr.

Mom, Janice

20th Eric James Hurst

Mom, Terri

29th Lorelei Dortch

Mom, Amy



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

September 2012 Other Beautiful Children

These adored children have birthdays this month:

13th Joey Scarpa	Mom, Linda
16th Brian Christ	Mom, Lee Ann
26th Leo McPhee	Mom, Rose
29th Cassandra Taylor	Mom, Jayne



These adored children have anniversary dates this month:

4th Adam William Hess	Mom, Trudy
7th Natasha Whitmire	Mom, Katrina
24th Davey Chavez	Mom, Anita
30th Joe Torma	Mom, Linda



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

Listening Hearts

October 2012 Listening Hearts Children

These precious children have birthdays this month:

3rd Tony Phillips

Mom, Amparo

24th Sean Powell

Mom, Scarlett

25th Davey Hurst

Mom, Buffy



These precious children have anniversary dates this month:

13th Sawyer Webb

Mom, Tracy



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

October 2012 Other Beautiful Children

These adored children have birthdays this month:

24th Alex Wolf

Mom, Tamara

31st Daniel Pallick

Mom, Betsy



These adored children have anniversary dates this month:

7th Elyse Cannon

Mom, Libby

7th Tyler Straun

Mom, Elane



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

Listening Hearts

What Moms Are Doing

During the early days of grief, sometimes it is hard to imagine that life will ever have purpose or joy again. There is no closure in the death of a child, but we do learn to carry the pain and joy in the same heart.

Bereaved moms do amazing things just by getting up and facing each new day.

Barbara welcomes two new great grandchildren.

Katie welcomed a new grandchild.



*"All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of
letting go and holding on."
~Henry Ellis*

Upcoming Events

Save The Date:

The Listening Hearts' moms will be conducting a Candlelight Ceremony at the December gathering. This group belongs to all bereaved moms, so please share any ideas you have for the group.

Poem in Memory of Caleb

Beautiful bouncing baby boy
My perfect gift, my perfect joy.
Big brown eyes that melt my heart
Sweet smiling face, set apart.
Run around, leaf in hand
Growing up, my little man.
"Draw a G"
you would say
And let me know "it's okay".

Then one day my joy was gone
My little Caleb had went Home.
Your laughter, hugs and special kiss
These are the things I terribly miss.
That sweet little hand that rubbed my face.
All the things I can never replace.
I miss you Caleb every day
But I know you couldn't stay.
God sent you here and your work was done
Now you're with Him, my precious son.
I know you wait for me there
I'll hold you again, stroke your hair.
Our hearts will beat together just like before
We'll never have to say goodbye anymore.

Beautiful bouncing baby boy
Now Heaven's gift, Heaven's joy.
Mommy's perfect angel above
But still in her heart, full of love.
- Becky Norris Allred



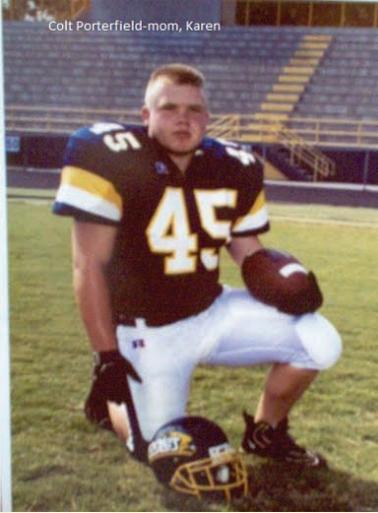
Caleb Norris
April 26, 2004-March 29, 2008

Caleb

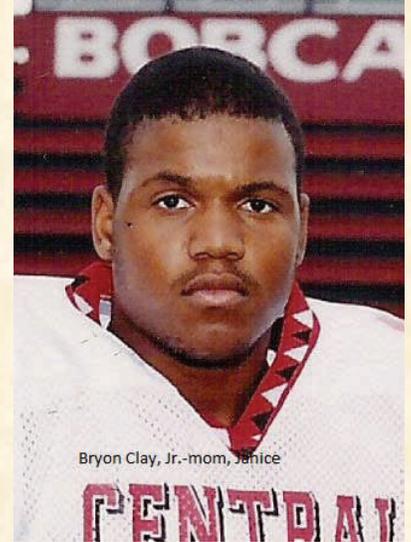


Listening Hearts

Fall Memories



Colt



Byron



Corbin



Sean



Alan

Fall Memories

The beginning of school can cause many feelings among moms. Feelings about children that will never go to school.

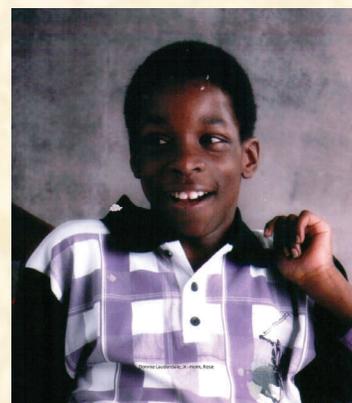
Memories of their deceased child's former school days.

Sometimes it hurts to think of life going forward for others.

Maybe you still have other children in school. At times this may offer as a distraction, but it can also be hard to think of life going forward without the deceased child. It is hard to think of siblings not sharing their days.



Caleb



Donnie



Danny



Davey

Listening Hearts

Baby and Infant Loss

Calvin and Hobbes

by Bill Watterson



I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HE EXISTED A FEW DAYS AGO AND NOW HE'S GONE FOREVER. IT'S LIKE I FOUND HIM FOR NO REASON. I HAD TO SAY GOOD-BYE AS SOON AS I SAID HELLO.

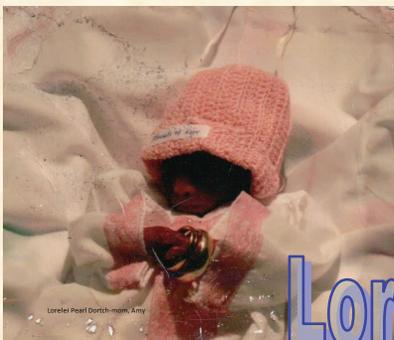


In no way am I comparing the loss of someone's precious child to an animal, so I hope you can overlook the first frame. (I suppose this is the way the author or someone wanted to bring up the difficult issue of death.) I thought the remainder of the frames might in some small way reflect the feelings of the loss of a stillborn.....such as, "I had to say good-bye as soon as I said hello".....that statement really tugged at my heart.

Within the pages of this newsletter, I hope you can find some small item that speaks to you, but I also hope you can disregard anything that does not speak to you at this time.

Each mother is unique and each deceased child is unique so in many ways our journey is unique, but in some very important ways we each share a grieving mother's heart. As long as you are not hurting yourself or others, the only journey that is right for you is your journey.

Thank you for the shared journey. Debra



Lorelei

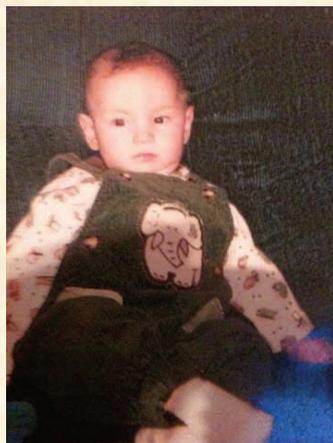


Calvin

Baby and Infant Loss

Grief fills the room up of my absent child
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his forms:
Then have I reason to be fond of grief.

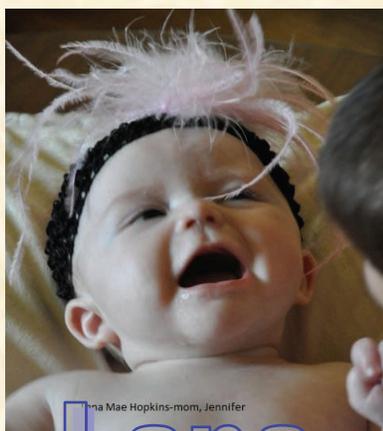
--Shakespeare, *King John*



Tanner



Kelby



Lana



Aiden

Listening Hearts

Book and Video Corner

Quote by Nessa Rapoport

"Undo it, take it back, make every day the previous one until I am returned to the day before the one that made you gone. Or set me on an airplane traveling west, crossing the date line again and again, losing this day, then that, until the day of loss still lies ahead, and you are here instead of sorrow."

Found in the book, *A Broken Heart Still Beats*
by Anne McCracken and Mary Semel



"If there is one thing I have learned....it's that we all grieve
in our own ways and on our own schedule."

~Cindy Lightner,
Founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving
in *When a Loved One Dies*

Excerpts

Two Years

From the very first moment, I've known you would not be
coming back.
Still I wait.
When I hear the door open....
When I see your head bobbing above others in a crowd.....
And when your scent fills the space around me.....
I hold my breath.
I wait for that moment when sleep ends and I can celebrate.....
"oh my, it was only a dream."
A nightmare of enormous proportions,
given as a gift to teach me of love,
remind me of wonder,
and fill me with compassion.
I wait endlessly....
But alas, there is no awakening, no revelation.
The horror is true.
It is but the wind at the door....
a stranger's bobbing head.....
and someone else's scent, drifting in the breeze.
I am left with only a realization that even harsh reality....
can teach of love,
remind of wonder,
and fill with compassion.
A gift wrapped in barbed wire is as precious as one in tissue.
It is the anguish of finding the center that strengthen our souls.
-Sandy Goodman, 1998

Found in her book, *Love Never Dies*



Listening Hearts

Hide the Pain

Buck up, move on
Don't live in the past
Work, stay busy
His memories will last

Go shopping, go eat
Don't think about him
Let it go, don't cry
You cannot give in

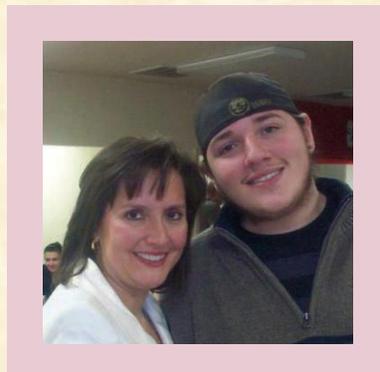
Pretend you're okay
Laugh loudly, hide sad
Don't think for a moment
Of the child you had

Shower and dress
Don't go back to bed
Do laundry, run sad thoughts
Right out of your head

Dust tables, now chairs
There'll be company soon
You must look alright
You can't stay in your room

Make beds with clean sheets
Vacuum the rugs
Lysol the sinks
And scrub down the tub

Go to the store,
Get groceries for guests
Plan well balanced plates
And cook up your best



Prepared is the meal
For all to enjoy
Now listen intently
And don't sound coy

So that they will think
"You listened to me"
You must stroke their hopes
And not let them see

Inside are struggles
That only you know
Tell jokes, be happy
Don't let their fears grow

The loss, the mourning
Don't let them see
That you can't believe
This happened to me

Do grieving in silence
Don't share and don't show
That inside you the pains
Are stabbing you so

Wash dishes, pay bills
You used to do these
Things I'm telling you
Now please do them, please

Fold clothes and sweep floors
There's so much to do
My brain shouts to me
But I'm missing you

continued.....

Sawyer

These things that I tell
Myself in my head
Protect those I love
No worries to dread

No one should suffer
This pain that I know
No one loved Sawyer
Like I loved him so

So maybe hiding
My feelings inside
I'm being selfish
In no one confide

Our bond is unique
As close as can be
A mother and son
Without him where's we?

I turn inward now
to see what is there
I dig way down deep
In memories we share

Confused and distraught
Are words that describe
The feelings left there
On my heart's inside

To show and share them
Would only cause grief
To those I care for
That is my belief



So for now family
And all my friends too
I'll huddle my feelings
And mask them from you

You'll have to be patient
And know that this ghost
Concerns my baby
The boy I love most

The thing that haunts me
October to now
I've lost my baby
And I don't know how

I could let this happen
To him in the end
I just wasn't there
For him to depend

I sense his great fear
With what he should do
Right at that moment
Without me there too

I'm sorry today
I'll hurt forever
I wasn't protecting
The one I savor.

Love, Mom
(Tracy Bradshaw)

Sawyer Webb
February 5, 1992-October 13, 2011

Listening Hearts

Poem of Joy by Katie

Joy and Release

By: Amiee Kate Helms 8-26-2012

I cried in Church this morning...
I cried the whole service through...
I cried Tears of Joy...
And Release....
My precious Grandson was born only 2 days ago...
He is beautiful...
Just like his Daddy... and his Mommy...
He is Healthy too... Thank You Dear Lord....
He has all of his fingers and toes...
And they're LONG to play music.... IF he chooses...
And he is my Grandchild...
Offspring of my Offspring...
my descendent... a 3rd generation...
A Blessing in human form...
But Actually...
The Best Part...
The most wonderful thing...
So very special... bringing Joy to my Heart...
Deep strong Joy...
The cause of my tears this morning...
Was remembering the sight of...
The look... on my youngest child's face... my Ben...
When he first gazed upon this new child.... His own baby... His Oliver...
With Love SO deep and SO strong...
Intense love... that had Just swept into his Soul...
Protective Love... that had Just burst into his being...
Like a Sweet Anointing filled with Hopes and Dreams...

Continued.....

Poem of Joy by Katie cont.

Continued...

A Wonderful, amazing, life changing Love....

For his own beautiful child...

The Gift of Love from our own True Father, Creator, Lord...

The Author of Love... The Giver of Love... The Essence of Love...

And this morning...

As the Tears of Joy Flow...

The Release is so...

I have cried many tears of pain in the past...

Over the loss of my older son, my Gabriel...

My own personal hurt... and the hurt on my Ben's sweet face...

Parental pain from seeing anguish in the eyes of our child is Very intense...

I've felt the broken heart of Ben, as well as my own...

As Ben missed his so Beloved Big Brother...

Well...

We will still miss our Gabriel...

Until we see him again...

In the Sweet By and by...

We will still cry some tears before that time arrives...

But for Now...

A New Day has Dawned... 



Listening Hearts

"Baby, Can You See Me"

Baby, Can You See Me?

August 24, 2012

Amparo Atencio



The culmination of all the training runs...the throng of like-minded people...the crack of the starting pistol...ah, race day jitters! Nothing could motivate me more than the start of a 5K, 10K, half-marathon, or triathlon back in the day. That was then. Back then, I never looked up. I never noticed the blueness of the sky. I never noticed the vastness of the stars. I never paid attention to the sun rise. I never saw the craters of the moon. That was then.

That changed at 5:25 a.m. on August 8, 2011, when I received the news that my son, *Tony James Phillips*, had drawn his last breath at 22 years, 10 months, and 5 days. Unwilling to believe my new reality, I spent the next year dazed and confused, still not looking up. In my haze, I continued to put one foot in front of the other: going to work, going to school, and yes, even laughing and socializing, presenting the image of a strong woman. As reality set in and the haze lifted, I cracked. Like shards of broken glass and jagged rocks, the pain of my forever changed future pierced my heart, my soul, my mind beyond endurance. The cracks in my façade grew larger, as my focus and concentration disappeared. A perpetual sob lodged in my throat, even as keening wails escaped from it. My lack of memory grew even worse. Finally, I raised the white flag of surrender and admitted that I had lost my way. I was derailed from my linear grief journey and accepted the journey for the circular path that it is. With the compassion and support that I needed from my management, I took a hiatus from work. I started to look up.



Gifts in Nature

I started to look up with the realization that Tony now possessed knowledge that I did not have. In life, he had turned to me for wisdom so many times. Now, I would turn to him. Serenity washed over me when I sensed his energy in the skies as I looked up. Among the twinkling stars, one shone brightest of all. I asked, "Baby, can you see me?" Another night, the stars over the quiet sky enveloped me like a blanket, and I felt the peace that only a mother can feel when she embraces her child. "Baby, can you see me?"

That began my foray into seeking gems from Tony in the natural beauty of East Tennessee. Energy only changes form and does not cease to exist, and so I know that his spirit lives on. Gems come to me on the wings of butterflies, in the chirping of birds, in thunder claps and flashes of lightning, in the warmth of the sun. Every living creature, every rustling breeze, every whisper of leaves, every gurgling stream carries his spirit. All the goodness and beauty that surround me on my walks encompass the good, the true, and the beautiful of my Tony. When I see a butterfly, or a squirrel, or a honey bee, or a deer, I believe these are my "shout-outs" from Tony! I rejoice and send him a silent message back, "I will never forget; I will never stop loving; you will never be harmed again." And, then I ask, "Baby, can you see me?" I know that he can.

Continued.....

"Baby, Can You See Me" cont.

....Continued

During my hiatus, I sat on a huge rock at the half-way point to the Gentlemen's Watering Hole in Rugby and heard the call of doves overhead. It was an uphill walk on the way back to the trailhead, punctuated by the rustle of the water when I came across small rapids. The River Boardwalk at Ijams Nature Center eventually led me to a natural quarry with only the sounds of my footsteps to accompany me. At the University of Tennessee Arboretum, I stood absolutely still, watching a deer serenely nibble on leaves and enjoy the sun as much as I was. A misty orb appeared over my mouth and heart in a picture that was taken of me at Obed Wild and Scenic River, kisses from Tony. I watched the miniature fish in the water by a fishing dock at Clark Center Park before I leaned back to watch the fluffy clouds above. This day, my grief consumed me as my sadness carried across the water and my tears fell without ceasing. Other nights, I saw the moon as a crescent, a tiny sliver, and even in its full glory. The majestic skies revealed planets and constellations that I had never noticed before, when I didn't look up. Riding a horse in Townsend, my guide and I were surrounded by a menagerie of butterflies along the trail that flew in a cluster beside us for several breathtaking moments. I dangled my feet over rocks at The Sinks in the Great Smoky Mountains as I basked in the sun. I stood in awe, looking into the spectacular gorge for miles in the horizon of Big South Fork.



Tony

Tony Phillips
October 3, 1988-
August 8, 2011

I stopped midway across a tall walking bridge in Stearns, Kentucky, to watch the dragonflies hover over the still waters below. Butterflies with blue wings, some yellow, and orange-black ones fluttered along my walk at Elkmont. The Blue Ridge Parkway leading to the scenic Tail of the Dragon on Highway 129 revealed more majestic vistas and billowing clouds.

It was at the Tail of the Dragon, on the anniversary of Tony's death, that I laid some of his ashes along his beloved route. I drove through "S" curve after "S" curve until I finally found the perfect spot, shaded by a massively tall tree. I rested against the tree with his ashes on my lap and then plunged my hand into the bag, feeling bits of bone and ashes sift through my fingers. As I gently poured out his remains at the base of the tree, a honey bee landed next to me and crawled through the ashes. Its tiny wings dipped—my "shout-out" from Tony! Through my tears, I stroked my heart with my hand that was covered in his ashes, wanting to absorb him in any way I could. Time passed in solemn minutes until I had to acknowledge that I could not sit against the tree until the end of my days, and I slowly gathered myself up to continue the journey home. I received one more "shout-out" on the way, although this was a man-made one. Too awesome to ignore, this sign was that of two contrails from jets that had flown in opposite directions, forming a huge letter "T" in the blue, clear sky!

Yes, baby, I hear you—you are letting me know that yes indeed, you can see me!

Listening Hearts

In Loving Memory of Joel

An Anniversary Happening

Last week was my son Joel's 5th anniversary and we had a small gathering of family and friends at the private memorial garden where Joel was laid to rest. We included a butterfly release as part of the day and it was wonderful. We released 12 butterflies and while most flew off straight away, a couple stayed around on the bushes and one stayed on the box I was holding for a long time. We were pretty amazed at that, but when it flew from the box, to the front of me and then crawled to my shoulder and then my back before flying away – we were just in awe of the experience. I was able to walk from one place to another, and have photos taken and all the while it stayed with me. It is something I will always remember. We all agreed Joel was surely with us, not wanting to leave. I know he didn't want to leave this earth when he did, five years ago, nonetheless he spread his wings and now soars as free as the butterfly.

In the first few months of Joel leaving us, I was told by other bereaved mothers that the following two years would be worse than the first one which simply amazed me – how could the following years possibly be worse than the year my youngest son, my baby, died. I was also told that the five year mark can see a shift in how we are feeling/coping/learning to live without our child.

I have been counting down the years until that fifth anniversary, subconsciously looking and waiting for a sign that this would also be true for me. I didn't consciously think anything over the week leading up to the anniversary, nor the day itself, but what I did find was a new inner strength and a peace. I feel it was a turning point in my grief journey. While I will forever mourn the loss of Joel, it is the beginning of learning to remember the life that Joel lived, his time with us and that we are all different people for the joy of knowing him.

As long as I live I will miss Joel and wish he was here with us, only now I can also celebrate his life and the new life I have been thrust into. In one sense I also feel like the butterfly – I have been forced to shed my old life and now embrace a new life, leaving the deep, dark pain of the past and finding a new course to fly, with my precious memories tucked away in my heart.

By Julie McGregor in Memory of Joel

Continued...

In Loving Memory of Joel cont.



Joel

Joel McGregor
October 10, 1988—August 19, 2007



“The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering.”

—Ben Okri (b. 1959); poet, novelist

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 second meeting place in Morristown. See below.

Listening Hearts A Gathering of Bereaved Mothers

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

***Walters State Community
College
500 South Davy Crocket
Parkway
Rm 105, Humanities
Complex
Morristown, TN 37813***

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

2012 Morristown Meeting Dates:

***Saturday, January 7th
Saturday, March 3rd
Saturday, May 5th
Saturday, July 7th
Saturday, September 1st
Saturday, November 3rd***



***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
Becky Allred
Tracy Bradshaw
Katie Helms
Amparo Atencio
Julie McGregor

Listening Hearts Knoxville 2012 Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held on Saturdays 3:00 – 5:00 pm.

- ♥February 4th
- ♥April 7th
- ♥June 2nd
- ♥August 4th
- ♥October 6th
- ♥December 1st

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.