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Listening Hearts

A Gathering of
Bereaved Moms...

2013...We Can Do This!

While many will ring in 2013 with festivities and resolutions, we find ourselves at the precipice of another new year, facing the continuing journey of our lives without our babies. True, some of us may smile and join in the countdowns to the ball drop and toast with friends and family, but a part of all of us will go back to the year that changed our lives forever.

We think in terms of before and after that particular year. In all we do, as we incorporate our "after" lives with the memories of our

"before" lives, we find the strength to carry on. We carry on because we know our children would have wanted us to.

Some of us are newcomers to the journey, while others have been walking the path for many seasons now. Where ever we are on this walk, we know we only need turn our heads within our group to see the faces of courage, strength, determination, love, and beauty.

We see the mom who has the courage to keep living,

despite how badly she wants to join her baby. We see the strength of the mom who brings a sense of normalcy to the lives of her other babies. We see the determination of the mom who keeps putting one foot in front of the other. We see the love of being lifted up and lifting others up, even through our own pain. These acts that we witness within our group express the beauty of each and every mom among us. How we wish it were not so.

-- Amparo Atencio
(Tony's mom)

Meetings and Events

Since we cannot change that which is out of our control, we work to help ourselves and each other to process this devastating and life-altering loss by gathering together. We meet monthly at alternating locations, in Knoxville and Morristown. You can join us at both locations, or choose one that is most convenient for you.

Knoxville

The Eye Institute
Conference Room
2020 Kay St.
Saturdays
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

- ♥ February 2
- ♥ April 6
- ♥ June 1
- ♥ August 3
- ♥ October 5
- ♥ December 7

Morristown

Walters State Community College
Humanities Complex, Room 105
500 S. Davy Crockett Parkway
Saturdays
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

- ♥ January 5
- ♥ March 2
- ♥ May 4
- ♥ July 6
- ♥ September 7
- ♥ November 2

In Remembrance

These adored children have birthdays in January and February.

January Dates

- ♥ Steven Anderson
(1/22/78)
- ♥ Joey Hernandez
(1/10)
- ♥ Molly Perrell
(1/22/91)
- ♥ Donald Ray
Lauderdale, Jr.
(1/23/97)
- ♥ Scott Ward
(1/5/77)
- ♥ Nicholas White
(1/4/88)

February Dates

- ♥ Jennifer Adair
(2/7/75)
- ♥ Elyse Cannon
(2/16/89)
- ♥ Alexis Goudelock
(2/15/07)
- ♥ Chad Raby
(2/27/84)
- ♥ Sawyer Webb
(2/5/92)
- ♥ Noah Dean Winstead
(2/14/02)



These cherished children have anniversaries in January and February.

January Dates

- ♥ We thankfully have no January anniversaries to report.

February Dates

- ♥ Kelby Lee Akins
(2/9/08)
- ♥ Alan Armstrong
(2/5/98)
- ♥ Danny Michael
Berry
(2/8/05)
- ♥ Davey Hurst
(2/26/11)
- ♥ Molly Perrell
(2/23/11)
- ♥ Brittany Thomas
(2/27/10)
- ♥ Aiden Thomas
(2/27/10)
- ♥ Timothy Van Winkle
(2/6/95)

Some say you are too painful
to remember, I say you are too
precious to forget.

Baby Kisses

Tracy Bradshaw

There is nothing like my baby's kiss
 When he pulls my face to his little wet lips
 The love he shows is stronger than steel
 When in my heart I know that feel
 That no one loves me more than he
 And that's the way it's meant to be
 A bond so strong must be God's will
 And as his mom I want him still
 His baby hands upon my face
 No one can ever take his place
 I dreamed about my baby just last night
 For my loss and pain were in his sight
 He kissed me on my mouth so hard
 And all my normal woes were barred
 From ever meaning quite so much
 Because his love with just one touch



Let me know while things aren't right
 That he always has me in his sight
 For all I have to do is look
 Inside my soul as if a book
 'Cause there he is with his little kiss
 Telling me how I will not miss
 If I close my eyes and sleep
 He'll give me a kiss that I can keep
 And when I open my eyes that day
 I'll bow my head to God and pray
 That on the nights I need him more
 God will open that heavy door
 And let my baby come to me
 Bringing comfort only I can see
 He'll give me that sweet tender gift
 And by doing so my spirit lift

To get out of bed another day
 As life continues without his stay
 I love my son, and I miss him here
 Each day I wake but live in fear
 On Earth he gave me strength in love
 And continues to from up above
 Though I'll never, ever understand why
 My sweet young man had to die
 I long for him to hug him tight
 Daily routines are a constant fight
 I want him to pull me near him now
 Talk, hug, kiss me, he shows me how
 For these things happen in my dreams
 Sadly no longer in life it seems
 I must rely on dreams themselves
 And pictures placed upon the shelves

(continued of page 4)

Baby Kisses

(continued)

Of happier days with him gone by
And the speedy progression from baby
to guy

Who's still as sweet as sweet can be
And put a heart right in the tree

I miss him now, and I'll miss him later
As I won't have him for which to cater

To make his soup with grilled cheese
As only his mommy could make these

And be there whenever he needs me
Supporting him always he would see

I hope he visits during the night

And maybe, just maybe, well I might

Make this journey with a broken heart

Relying on memories while we're apart

Until that day he squeezes me tight

Until that day there is no more fight

I long to see his spirit anew

But first on earth I have to do

Some things to touch the others who

Are grieving the loss of their son too

I'm not sure how much help I'll be

As others try to lean on me

They'll need comfort and good advice

I'll give them hugs and be so nice

I'll have to pull that love from him

And it will guide me on a whim

How to help and what to say

To get them heading the right way

I'll encourage them to dream

As it may bring back their family team

For when my body is at rest

My spirit does just see the best

Of what I long for and what I miss

It is that baby and his sweet kiss

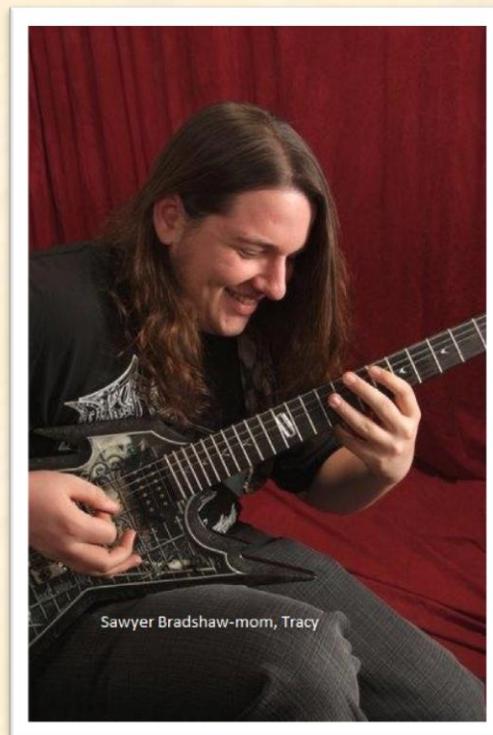
I'm thankful for the kiss last night

And having him in my sight...

I love you, Sawyer.

Mom

*A bond so
strong must
be God's will*



Candle Light Ceremony

“An Evening of Remembrances”

Listening Hearts moms, some dads, and special guests gathered on December 1, at the Eye Institute in Knoxville, for the 5th annual Candlelight Ceremony. The theme was An Evening of Remembrances, to celebrate the memory and the joy of our children.

Moms had the opportunity to decorate glass jar candles before the event, which kicked off with a welcome by Wade’s mom, *Ruby Buchanan* and an invocation by Gabriel’s mom, *Katie Helms*. Katie and *Mitzi Akins*, Kelby’s mom, shared their musical talents. Mitzi sang a hauntingly beautiful melody, and Katie shared her rendition of a bereaved mom’s “Silent Night.” Eric Griffin, *Deb Griffin’s* son and brother of Zach, performed a song he wrote in memory of his brother, accompanied by his guitar. Sawyer’s mom, *Tracy Bradshaw*, read “Baby Kisses,” a poem she wrote in memory of her beloved son (see page 3). Colt’s mom, *Karen Archer*, read the names of each child, as Katie Helms tolled a single chime in remembrance, and moms who were present lit their decorated candles. Votive candles were also lit and represented the children of moms who were not able to attend. *Debra Reagan’s* son, Blake, captured photos of the activities.

The mood of the somber ceremony lifted as moms celebrated the joy and humor the children brought to our lives with fellowship and a white elephant gift exchange. The evening ended with the kick-off of the Secret Sister program (see page 6).

We owe deep gratitude to those who made not only this evening possible, but to those who selflessly and quietly contribute to the success of all of our meetings and events: the guards who provide security at the Eye Institute, the moms who provide materials for crafts, the moms who provide goodies for door prizes, and all the moms who share their many talents.



Secret Sisters Kicks Off

This year's Candle Lighting Ceremony ended with fellowship and a new program, *Secret Sisters!*

This program is designed to bring cheer and uplift another mom by secretly remembering her throughout the year with cards, gifts, and notes! At the end of the year, moms will reveal who their partners were in a final gift exchange reveal.

Those who were present and wanted to participate filled out a form that included information about their special dates, interests, and hobbies,

then randomly drew a name to be partnered with another Listening Heart sister.

We are delighted to see how the program has already taken off, as evidenced by the Facebook posts giving thanks for an unexpected treat or a surprise greeting in the mail! Let's get the ball rolling if you haven't honored your sister yet, or keep the momentum going if you've already started!

Not everyone who would like to participate was able to fill out a form. It's not too late! We've already received some requests and would love to partner more sisters. Send me an email ASAP that includes your mailing address, your birthday, your child's birthday and anniversary date, and some of your likes and interests, such as your favorite color, jewelry, or hobby.

Send to:
amparo.atencio@gmail.com

You can still participate!

One sister, reaching out to another sister throughout the year.

Announcements

Listening Hearts Directory

We now have a good start for a hard copy address book of Knoxville and Morristown area moms. We would love to include as many moms as possible in the directory to make it easier to send cards and letters for those difficult occasions.

Confirm your contact data and provide consent for release of your information. Include your mailing address, phone, e-mail, your birthday (month/day) and your child's birth and anniversary dates if you'd

like to be included in the address book, to be published in early 2013!

Send to:
drdreagan@gmail.com

Listening Sisters

Another new initiative is our *Listening Sisters* program. This new feature of the newsletter will offer a listening ear for moms who need to talk or reach out during a particularly difficult time. Several moms will be listed each issue.

If you would like to be available to provide support and a listening heart to another mom, let

us know by sending your contact preference (phone or email), your child's life stage that he or she reached, and the nature of your loss as soon as possible.

Send to:
drdreagan@gmail.com
 or
amparo.atencio@gmail.com



Listening Hearts

PHONE:
(865) 679-1351

E-MAIL:
ListeningHearts08@gmail.com
AmparoAtencio@gmail.com
DRDReagan@gmail.com

WE'RE CONNECTED!

Visit us at:

www.listeninghearts.net

Join the conversation on:

 facebook

Closed group for private posts;
email us for access

LOVE GIFTS

Your tax deductible donations make it possible to reach out to other grieving mothers through this newsletter, group sessions, and website.

Love gifts can be made at all group meetings or mailed. Make checks payable to Listening Hearts.

Thank you for your generous support!

Melissa Price, Josh's mom

ANONYMOUS DONATIONS

Thank you for the contributions!

Resources

Free Grief Books

www.freegriefbooks.org

The Centering Corporation offers many complimentary books for bereaved parents and siblings.

Parting is Not Goodbye, by Kelly Osmont and Marilyn McFarlane, gives encouragement and suggestions on coping with grief in creative, healthy ways. *No New Baby*, by Marilyn Gryte,

is for children whose expected sibling dies. *Meditations for Bereaved Parents* is a book to read a little at a time when you're hurting and need to know others have had similar experiences and survived what you are going through.

We Need You for the Next Issue

Our next issue will feature change of season memories for the March/April edition.

Do you journal, write poetry, or snap interesting pictures? One mom's precious memories, favorite quotes, random thoughts, or photographs may uplift another mom in her time of sorrow. Share your spring photos, treasured cards, or love notes from your child.

Hard copies as well as electronic files will be accepted. We will try to include all entries received in the next edition,

although we may hold your submission for a future newsletter, based on space limitations.

For your convenience, we will have a scanner available at all meetings, at both our Morristown and Knoxville locations. Your items will be returned as soon as we get them scanned! If you can't attend, you can still submit! Simply send your content by regular mail or e-mail.

Please include the following information for any items submitted:

- Name of your child
- Approximate age of the child when the photo was taken
- Relation to the child of any other people in the photo
- A brief memory of what was happening in the photo
- Any other background information you'd like to share for any writings, drawings, etc. your child may have done

About Us...

Listening Hearts is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. It is a self-help gathering of bereaved mothers from all walks of life. We wish every day that there was not a need for such a group.

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. All bereaved mothers are welcome.

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.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the making of this newsletter. We are honored to share the love and memories of your precious child. Photographs and articles submitted may be used on the website, unless otherwise noted.