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Listening Hearts

A Gathering of
Bereaved Moms...

Shadows of Grief

Tracy Bradshaw, Sawyer's mom

Sometimes shadows that
follow me are
Close and small or tall and
far

Whatever the size the
shadow may be
Everyone sees that
shadow with me

It shows in my eyes and
on my face
It clings to my chest
always in place

Wherever I am does not
bare
The size of the tears, or
the despair

Whoever I'm with doesn't
subdue
The emotion the grief
shadow can do

I try to hide it and as I
struggle
It creeps all over me to
snuggle

It takes over my heart and
my soul
Reaching a sad sought
after goal

This shadow stays after
78 weeks
It waxes and wanes and
often peaks

Yet never does it
disappear
And all who know me
sense it's here

I can't shake it, can't walk
away
But I haven't tried
because that may

Feel like I have turned by
back
On the most important
thing I lack

So cover me like a blanket
now
I'll cry for you, I've learned
how

Love, Mom
April 2013

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

♥ December 7

Morristown

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

♥ November 2

In Remembrance

These adored children have birthdays in November and December.

November Dates

- ♥ Calvin Medicus (11/01)
- ♥ Danny Pedro (11/01)
- ♥ Ronald Cooper (11/02)
- ♥ Ryann McGhee (11/04)
- ♥ Carlos Santos-Silva (11/04)
- ♥ Mistye Holdway (11/11)
- ♥ Eric Wolf (11/19)
- ♥ Alan Armstrong (11/22)
- ♥ Zachary Griffin (11/22)

December Dates

- ♥ Marty Short (12/02)
- ♥ Kimlan Le (12/10)
- ♥ Lincoln Akers (12/20)
- ♥ Lana Hopkins (12/21)
- ♥ Brandon Arms (12/28)
- ♥ Carson Howard (12/31)
- ♥ Paul Sanders (12/31)
- ♥ Condrige Willis (12/31)

These cherished children have anniversaries in November and December.

November Dates

- ♥ Calvin Medicus (11/01)
- ♥ Bradley Prosisie (11/08)
- ♥ Louis Balogh (11/23)
- ♥ Bradley Shiling (11/18)
- ♥ Lisa Morgan (11/16)

December Dates

- ♥ Carson Howard (12/02)
- ♥ Danny Pedro (12/19)
- ♥ Devin Gorman (12/19)
- ♥ Carmen Hernandez (12/21)
- ♥ Ben Bohanan (12/24)
- ♥ Alicia Conner (12/28)
- ♥ Randy Allred (12/31)



Listening Sisters Have Listening Hearts

These moms offer listening hearts for another mom who needs to talk or reach out during a particularly difficult time in between gatherings.

If you would like to be available to provide support and a listening heart to another mom, let us know. Different moms will be featured in each issue.

Mom	Contact Info	Child's Life Stage	Nature of Loss
Mitzi Akins	423-581-1502	Infant	Heart Defect
Katie Helms	865-773-6672	Young Adult	Drugs
Deb Griffin	865-938-3664	Adult	Motorcycle Accident
Sue Anderson	865-773-9443	Adult	Leukemia
Karen Archer	865-679-3005	Adult	Drug Interaction



Secret Sisters Project

The December gathering will kick off our new session of the Secret Sisters project. Drawing of names will conclude when we depart from the December gathering.

Consider the following when deciding whether or not to participate:

- ♥ The program is purely optional, and the choice whether or not to participate has no bearing on future gatherings, events, or projects.
- ♥ Participating sisters will remain anonymous at all times – a reveal will not be conducted. The purpose is solely to encourage and lift another mom up.
- ♥ Secret Sister forms that list interests, hobbies, and special dates will be completed at the December gathering to help a participating mom send meaningful cards, notes, or small gifts.
- ♥ Any thoughtful gestures are at the discretion of the giver.
- ♥ No one will be overseeing the project; therefore, the Secret Sister form drawn will be the only copy. It is the responsibility of those participating to keep up with their forms.
- ♥ Acknowledgement of cards or gifts can be posted on our closed group Facebook page. Details of the gift or photos need not be provided.

We encourage all moms to participate at whatever level she finds comfortable, as the focus of the project is in the love and care, not the number or value of items given.

If you would like to participate but will not be able to attend the December gathering in Knoxville, be sure to ask someone who will be attending to be your proxy. That person will submit your name and draw a name on your behalf.

“Those we love don’t go away. They walk beside us everyday. Unseen, unheard, but always near. Still loved, still missed.”

--Mahr

December

Reneau Howard, Carson's mom

As I write this in late October, those unwelcomed guests who occupy my mind, anxiety and dread, have already started unpacking and setting up house for their annual visit. The "hap-happiest time of the year" is a myth for those of us who have buried a child, no matter how many years pass. If I were really honest, December really wasn't always that happy anyhow.... perhaps here and there of course; the music, lights, smell, food, celebrating Christ's birth....in truth I assumed responsibility to create a perfect Norman Rockwell image - exquisite meals, gifts to be cherished, a glittery tree... the list is endless. Note: "exquisite meals" is still part of my own myth, but it was good eats!

My sweet Carson arrived on December 31, 1990, on the day of a blue moon. I had a knowing even before he arrived that he was special and confirmed the moment I held him. He skidded off a sleet slick road on the evening of December 1, 2008 just a few weeks shy of his eighteenth birthday. He suffered a traumatic brain injury and died the next morning.

The world still turns, the sun still rises and shines and five years later, I am still breathing. In many ways, I feel frozen in time, the time before that phone call. In other ways, my life is so very different. Did I ever think life could look like this? I will say I have many unanticipated blessings – I find this a remarkable declaration. The tragedy has led me to redefine my values and what is important (and what's not). New friends have come into my life – the term "friends" really seems shallow, these are real souls brought to me with purpose. Some old friendships have deepened, others have slipped away. Life is full of ebbs and flows

naturally, and only now am I fully aware of this.

I left a career I was no longer interested in anyway. I left a house that was more than I needed. A lengthy romantic relationship ended, although in truth, it had been over for quite some time before my tragedy. I got a dog. I have a hobby, several, for the first time. I no longer feel responsible for everybody and everything. I don't have to be right ALL the time. I practice Reiki and meditate. I have an enlightened spirituality I never knew before. I express gratitude with intention. I rarely worry anymore, quite a shift. I have no fear of my own death. I don't ask "why" all day and every day, only from time to time.

Would I change it if I could? Of course I would but I can't. I imagine this is what the books call acceptance. Life is not all rainbows and glitter, but after five years I am grateful for both the blessings in my life as well as the ability to recognize them. I pray your journey leads you to exactly where you are meant to be.



Fundraising Efforts

As we strive to expand our programs and community outreach, we realize that it takes funds to implement some of our outreach efforts.

Although we wish there was not a need for this group, we recognize there is and that we are in a position to help moms who are struggling through the most tragic and painful event of their lives: the loss of a precious child. Help

comes in the way of caring and support, but we must increase awareness of our organization to be able to offer the hope and compassion these moms seek.

Plans are underway to start an annual fundraising drive to be able to reach out to the bereavement community and enhance our Internet presence with a custom website.

We are relying on your generosity to meet our

mission of providing compassion and hope. We ask that you pledge to make a commitment in the coming months by making a donation to Listening Hearts. Your contribution will truly make a difference.

Stay tuned for more information about our upcoming fundraising efforts.



Listening Hearts Officers

A new slate of officers has been appointed to continue the leadership that has kept our organization strong.

Introducing:

- ♥ President: *Deb Prorise*, Bradley's mom
- ♥ 1st Vice President: *Ruby McGaha*, Wade's mom

- ♥ 2nd Vice President: *Barbara Bell*, Cindy's mom
- ♥ Treasurer: *Debra Reagan*, Clint's mom
- ♥ Media Officer: *Amparo Atencio*, Tony's mom
- ♥ Secretary: *Jayne Clayton Dunham*, Chad's mom

We extend our deepest gratitude to *Katie Helms*, Gabriel's mom, and *Reneau Howard*, Carson's mom, for their dedication and service, as they step down for a break!

Listening Hearts

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WE'RE CONNECTED!

Visit us at:
<http://listening-hearts.memory-of.com>

Join the [conversation](#) on:

facebook

Closed group for private posts;
email us for access.

Follow us on:
twitter

Pin us at:
Pinterest

LOVE GIFTS

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

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

Thank you for your generous support!

Carol & Leonard Balogh, in
memory of Louie

Cynthia & Steve Turner, in
memory of Heather

Anonymous Donations

Thank you for your contributions.

Social Media Presence

As we grow, we're beginning to increase our social media presence on several networks.

A Twitter page has been set up, and we're quickly gaining followers! We follow interesting groups, professionals, and other moms, so there is always something interesting and informative to read on our feed. Feel free to tweet and retweet posts if you are a Twitter user.

Remember, using the #hashtag in front of any keywords will allow others to find us more easily in searches of topics such as #grief, #bereavedmom, or #bereavement.

We just started pinning on Pinterest and already have several boards with beautiful images and inspirational quotes! Board topics include feelings, memories, time, judgment, and holidays. Feel free to repin any of the items on our boards.

Of course, we've been on Facebook for a long time now, but did you know that we have a public page as well as a closed group page for us to share more personal thoughts? If you haven't already done so, please stop by the public page to "like" us and invite friends to do the same.

We are also excited to announce that plans are

underway to revamp our website to give it a more modern look and a custom URL that will make us easier to find on search engines. Stay tuned for more news.

All of our social media outlets can be accessed by clicking on the web links in the WE'RE CONNECTED box to your left. We hope you'll visit our pages and share with those who may be encouraged.

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.