



Location

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
5401 South Street, Lincoln, NE
(Lancaster Room)

Date & Time of Meetings:

Meetings are held on the
Third Thursday of each month
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
There is no fee for attendance

Supported by:

BryanLGH Medical Center
St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

For Information about the meetings
Call: 481-3068 or 477-0857

Community Friends

A self-help program facilitated by
qualified volunteers and professionals.
This group offers support & networking
to promote healthy grieving and
recovery for those who have experienced
the death of a child.

These monthly on-going meetings are
based on the process of sharing
experiences, seeking information, and
offering support.

Future Meeting Schedule:

April 17, 2008
May 22, 2008

Location

BryanLGH Medical Center East
1600 South Street, Lincoln, NE
(Conf. Rm. #2, in the Medical Plaza)

Date & Time of Meetings:

Meetings are held on the
First Wednesday of each month
7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
There is no fee for attendance

Supported by:

BryanLGH Medical Center
St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center
Sharon's Support System

For Information about the meetings
Call : 402-477-0857

H.O.P.E.

(Helping Other Parents Endure)
A self-help program facilitated by
qualified volunteers and professionals.
This group offers support for parents
who have lost their baby due to
miscarriage, stillbirth, or death of a
newborn. These monthly on-going
meetings are based on the process of
sharing experiences, seeking
information, and offering support

Future Meeting Schedule:

April 2, 2008
May 7, 2008

APRIL/MAY 2008

MY TREASURE CHEST

The month of May marks the 11th year since I last saw my daughter, Brooks. She was standing outside of her apartment door, waiting for me to drive by, knowing that if I saw her I would stop as I headed home from work. I rounded the curve; I saw her standing there, red-blond hair blowing softly across her face, gray/green eyes blinking hard against the setting sun. Her stomach gently swollen with her 20 week unborn yet unknown daughter. She saw my car, and began to wave hard, as if she thought I could pass her by unnoticed.

I can close my eyes, now, and see it all so clearly...surely not 11 years ago. I see her and I think "her hair is out of style" and indeed by today's fashions, it is. And that's how I know that I, not she have moved on; it has been 11 years and she is forever dead.

What I have are her "things"; things that belonged to her that have special meaning to me, and the things that were important to her, things that graced her chest of drawers: Mardi Gras beads, dried roses from a long ago prom, a coronet of fade silk pink carnations from a wedding, a photograph of her with a girlfriend grinning into a \$2 mall camera, things like that. I have her wallet, her expired driver's license, faked hall passes, and a hairbrush full of her hair. I have the baby blanket she cherished from babyhood to "big girl" hood, her high school graduation cap, which she never got to wear having died four days before it was to be worn, and I have her diploma with her first name spelled incorrectly. I also have her High School Memory Book, packed right

alongside her In Memorial Book the funeral home gave me.

For many years, these items have been packed away in various boxes, all cardboard. And it always disturbed me a little that her 18 years of existence was now condensed into one cardboard box. And without realizing it, I have searched for something more worthy to contain these sacred items, more representative of who she was, and what she meant to me, to her family.

This year, on Mother's Day eve, I found it.

It was a wooden trunk, exactly the size of the cardboard box. It was painted henna black, with dark metal straps studded with brass tacks along the edge of the lid and body. Using oil paint, someone had painted a pot of flowers; blooms of deep rose colored cabbage roses, muted pink mums, and dark white daisies. The trunk was rich in color, in form and in shape. It was small and beautiful, like my child.

On Mother's Day, I emptied the cardboard box and put the treasures where they rightfully belonged all along; in something beautiful and special, now a treasure of love and memories.

I think it is true as is sung in the Love Theme from *Titanic* that

*Near, far, wherever you are,
I believe that the heart does go on.
Once more, you open the door
And you're here in my heart,
And my heart will go on and on.*

Lyrics by Will Jennings

Thank you Brooks, for the lovely Mother's Day present.

*By Hazel Woodward
Mobile, AL*

MOTHER'S DAY
*Another Mother's Day
But a different one this year.*

*For you see, I am a mother,
 But my child isn't here.
 I'm a mother who is hurting
 For this child who was dear,
 As I face this and other occasions
 Each and every year.
 I am a mother who feels emptiness
 Over and over again,
 Because I miss THIS child
 And all that could have been
 I am a mother who cared
 As I watched my child grow,
 And truly loved her more
 Than anyone will ever know
 I am a mother, who has memories,
 And many tears to cry
 Over regrets I'll have to live with
 Until the day I die.
 I am a mother who is thankful
 For the miracle of birth,
 And all my child has taught me
 About life and my own self-worth.
 I just can't stop being a mother
 Just because my child isn't here,
 Because the love we had for each other
 Will continue for years and years,
 And so..on this special Mother's Day,
 I will feel within my heart
 All the pride, love and joy
 Which are the parts
 That make me who I am,
 And what I'll always be...
A MOTHER
 Just remember that...please!!!*

By Judy A. Sittner
 Bereaved Parents Share, May 1999

**"Memories are the windows that hold the past
 in view. Through them we can see again each
 joy we ever knew."**

GRADUATED INTO GLORY
 How can it be that your not here?
 For that preschool ceremony?
 Or maybe the kindergarten one?
 Or if I got to hold you longer
 My heart doesn't want to believe

You won't physically be at your
 eighth grade graduation
 How much I planned for a party!
 Whatever the age you would now be
 I know that when I get
 Those High School announcements
 My heart skips more than one beat.
 I am happy for those
 who are blessed to
 walk down the aisle to
 Pomp & Circumstance
 But the "Why couldn't you
 Be graduating?
 Or have been able to graduate?"
 Is a question I ask every time?
 Whatever amount of time we were
 Blessed to have you walk
 With us on this earth
 We will always miss you not
 Wearing a cap and gown
 At this time of the year.
 For any of the milestones
 In life that call for
 Celebrations, open houses and
 A party to honor you!
 For any precious moments we
 Were able to celebrate with you
 We hold those memories.
 Deep within our hearts.
 We hold on to God's promise
 That from whenever God received
 Into His arms.
 Whether you were received even
 Before you left your Mother's womb
"You truly graduated into glory!"
 It's how I survive these months
 Each and every year!

MEMORIAL DAY

For each grave
 where a soldier lies
 at his rest

For each prayer
 that is said today

out of love.

For each sigh
of remembering
someone who died.

Let us also give thought to
the mothers and fathers
and brothers and sisters
and friends and the lovers
whom death left behind.

*Recopied from Bereaved Parents of the USA
June 1997*

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNUAL
REMEMBRANCES** – can be difficult
days for bereaved parents and siblings.
Perhaps you would like to lift these
families up in thought and prayer as
these difficult days approach for them.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Elise LaRae Byler	04-15-1990
Baby Carlson	04-13-2002
Anna Anh T. Do	04-09-1995
Hannah Burnison	04-01-1986
Tadd Q. Ellis	04-10-1968
Erik Robert Wentzel	04-15-1984
Johnathan Michael Young	04-22-1987

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Michala Check Becker	05-01-1992
Chandra Blood	05-11-1980
Brian John 'BJ' Brinker	05-29-1980
John Christensen	05-25-1989
Nathan Thomas Fisher	05-30-1997
Douglas Joshua Hoegemeyer	05-24-2004

RonTavious Brian Patterson	05-06-2005
Forrest Reents	05-11-1995
Laura Renee Schmidt	05-10-1978
Dawn Renee Schuster	05-25-1978
Tanner Eldon Simpson	05-03-1997

APRIL ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

Baby Carlson	04-13-2002
Benjamin Tyler Chloupek	04-19-1999
Alexis Grace Crockett	04-05-2002
Megan Elizabeth Churchill	04-01-2007
Clinton James Eckhout	04-10-1997
Nathan Thomas Fisher	04-16-2007
Damian Ray Gerdes	04-08-2005
Brandon Thomas Staley	04-25-2007
Patrick Stinson	04-09-1982
Erik Robert Wentzel	04-27-2007
Robert Daniel Whitney	04-30-2005

MAY ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

Aubrea Carman	05-27-1987
Aydan Lee DeFruter	05-10-2007
Colsom McCoy Dirrim 'Cole'	05-31-2000
Chad Hunt	05-02-2005
Ryan Lamberty	05-23-2006
RonTavious Brian Patterson	05-06-2005
Rachel Scher	05-28-2005
Tanner Eldon Simpson	05-03-1997
Shelley Thompson	05-31-2006

In remembering are precious children, there
may be errors or omissions for which we are

deeply sorry. If there are any errors, please contact Trish Schuster at 402-673-5395 or trish_schuster@yahoo.com. If you have attended a meeting, and have not filled out a database giving us permission to print your child's birthday and annual remembrance please let Trish know.

Please remember when it is your child's birthday/ and his remembrance date you are welcome to bring their picture, a poem, a keepsake, a candle to that month's Hope or Community of Friends meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Volunteers for Healing Friends for the Future

**July 18-20, 2008
Nashville, TN**

31st National TCF Convention, Nashville, TN

If you want further information you may visit and register on line at www.compassionatefriends.org
Or call 1-877-969-0010

The National Walk to Remember July 20, 2008 At the National Convention Nashville, TN

If you wish to register your child's name for the Walk to Remember at the National Convention in Nashville, TN you may do so at the above web site or phone number.

If you wish to sponsor a centerpiece for the banquet or a workshop or session in honor of your child you may also do that at the above website and number.

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

Please remember we are always happy to accept any poem or article you wish to contribute to our newsletter. If you

wish you can do that in honor of your precious child/children. Please send them or e-mail them to Trish and be sure you indicate it is for the Hope/Community of Friends newsletter, so I open it.

Also, we are going to be doing a RESOUCES LIST for bereaved parents/siblings and their families. We are the ones that "are living the nightmare after the death of a precious child." So we are often aware of resources that are not always known to other bereaved parents, siblings, and families. These resources can include books, songs, newsletters, web sites, items for memorabilia. I hope to have this ready to go in the next few months. Please share whatever has been helpful to you. If you are sharing a book, or song. Please try to check and be sure it is still available and if possible where it can be ordered or purchased. Especially when we are first thrown into this nightmare are energy levels usually become very low. We may not have the time to even dial too many phone numbers or check if stores have a book or CD.

Some of you make items that can be personalized in memory of your child and some of you have shared you have a web site or can make web sites in memory of our child, sibling, grandchild, or friend. Please share this info with Trish and it will certainly be included in our resource list.

WITH HOPE

*This is not at all how
We thought it was supposed to be
We had so many plans for you
We had so many dreams
And now you've gone away*

*We can cry with hope
'Cause we know our goodbye is not the
end, oh no*

*And we can grieve with hope
'Cause we believe with hope
(There's a place by God's grace)
There's a place where we'll see your
face again.*

We'll see your face again

*And never have I known
Anything so hard to understand
And never have I questioned more
The wisdom of God's plan
But through the cloud of tears
I see the Father's smile and say well
done*

*And I imagine you
Where you most wanted to be
Seeing all your dreams come true
'Cause now you're home
And now you're free, and...*

*We have this hope as an anchor
'Cause we believe that everything
God promised us is true, so...*

*We wait with hope
And we ache with hope
We hold on with hope
We let go with hope.*

Lyrics by Steven Curtis Chapman
The above song was written as a tribute to
special child in Steven Curtis Chapman's life
that lost the battle to cancer and was received
into heaven.

SPRINGTIME'S BURDEN BECOMING PROMISE

Seasonal changes are difficult for many
bereaved parents. This is often most true
as winter yields to spring. The land
seems to throb with life once more as
your buds emerge and robins return from
their sojourn in the south. Lilacs bloom
and the breeze carries their fragrance.

Woodland animals begin to lose the
leanness of winter hunting or quiet
hibernation.

The day is longer and filled with
renewing vitality to match its length. It
is as if a cold hand had loosed its bitter
grip and earth is reborn. It is this quality
of resurrection that seems so bitter. For
as we struggle in the darkness of loss, all
around us is the vigorous rush of life
breaking forth, in colors and song. But
our children do not come forth. They
dwell in the land of death and the nether
world nightmares of our anguish.

But I believe we can see as well the
promise inherent in spring's unfolding
glory and grasp the continuity its return
affirms. Last fall we saw an acorn, but
this year we see the tender shoot of an
infant tree. From gnarled, dead looking
stumps, the cut back rose send tendrils of
green to drink and absorb the sun.

In each full cycle of our planet
around its sun, we encounter irrefutable
testament to renewal. In this we can
sense the defeat of death. This is the
time of year when twilight surrenders to
darkness, to stand outside and feel the
rays of countless stars, smell the scents
granted by the new earth, hear the chorus
of night creatures and sense the rebirth
that has no end.

Stand silently then, beneath the
constancy of the night sky and upon the
rejuvenating earth, and sense our
children, constant and growing too, yet
beyond our sight...Life continues.
There are no endings. There are only
beginnings. This is the promise of
spring.

By Don Hackett
Reprinted from Comforting Friends 4/2008

**"Can't you hear their voice calling in
your heart? WALK IN THE WORLD
FOR ME"!!**