

# REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN



## 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  
7:00pm to 8:30pm  
There is no fee for attendance

## Supported by:

Bryan LGH Medical Center  
St Elizabeth Regional Medical Center  
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

For information about the meetings,  
Call: 402-477-0857

## Remembering Our Children

A support group for bereaved parents.  
This group offers support & networking  
to promote healthy grieving and healing  
for those who have experienced the death  
of a child.

## Future meeting schedule

April 15, 2010  
May 20, 2010

## Location

Bryan Medical Plaza • (East)  
1500 S 48<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE

## Date & Time of Meetings

Meetings are held on the  
first Wednesday of each month  
7:30pm to 8:30pm  
There is no fee for attendance

## Supported by:

Bryan LGH Medical Center  
St Elizabeth Regional Medical Center  
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

For information about the meetings,  
Call: 402-477-0857

## H.O.P.E.

(Helping Other Parents Endure)  
A support group for those who have  
experienced the loss of a baby due to  
miscarriage, stillbirth, or newborn death.  
Promoting healthy grieving & healing.

## Future meeting schedule

April 7, 2010  
May 5, 2010

## June/July 2010

### FATHER'S DAY

Sunday is Father's Day and I feel awkward about it.

On a cold morning in January, our son, David, was born and I became a father. Before that cold day ended, our son was dead. Was I a father still?

I had dreams for him, hopes for him, love for him, as any father would. I grieved for him, longed for him, and missed him, aching as only a father could.

Did the grieving and the longing and the missing achingly make a father still? Though I no longer had the relationship or function, Father's Day is coming...I am feeling confused and awkward about it.

Today is Sunday – Father's Day. A friend approaches me and says, "Today must be terribly hard for you." Then he gives me a hug, a heartfelt embrace, and says, "I'll be thinking of you today, Happy Father's Day!"

Suddenly, the awkwardness and confusion is gone. I am a father. I always will be one...

*By Jim Nelson, in loving memory of David  
Pregnancy & Infant Loss Center  
Wayzata, Minnesota  
Reprinted with permission from  
A Journey Together Spring, 1999*



### BIRTHDAYS AND ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

These can be difficult days for bereaved parents and families. Perhaps you would like to lift them up in thought and prayer as these difficult days approach for them.

#### JUNE BIRTHDAYS

**Johna Jaye Berner Kozak** 06-21-1975

**Brooke Roberts** 06-30-1978

**Owen Samuelson** 06-21-2008

#### JUNE ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

**Michala Check** 06-25-2005

**Christopher Cicotello** 06-23-2006

**Lance Erdman** 06-06-2006

**Morgan Hohnbaum** 06-10-2007

**Christopher Morton** 06-23-2006

**Brooke Roberts** 06-04-1996

**Owen Samuelson** 06-21-2008

#### JULY BIRTHDAYS

**Lance Erdman** 07-22-1984

**Amy McLaughlin** 07-16-1977

#### JULY ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

**Wendy Notebloom Ewell** 07-08-2005

**Cory Stuart** 07-21-1987

**In remembering our precious children, there may be errors or omissions for which I am deeply sorry. If there are any errors, or omissions please contact Trish Schuster @ 402-673-5395 or [trish\\_schuster@yahoo.com](mailto:trish_schuster@yahoo.com)**

## FOR MY SON

As I awoken to this spring June morning, I realize that June 26<sup>th</sup> is my 56<sup>th</sup> birthday and June 23<sup>rd</sup> is the Third Anniversary of Christopher's death. I find myself reliving that day, minute by minute, hour by hour. It's odd that I remember everything I said but I can't recall the words of anyone else present. Christopher was comatose so my recollections included his facial grimacing, his involuntary movements and the specific moment I cut a lock of his hair. The tears streamed down my face like warm, comforting rain. It was 3:30pm and I was alone with him.

I held him tight and kissed his face gently. I also kissed his ears and in doing so, I spoke softly to him. "Chris, its Mom. I love you so very much, always have and always will. Listen, carefully, to me, now. Chris, it's time. Its okay to let go for you have fought very hard but God needs you and as much as I can't grasp the thought of losing you, you are needed else where. So it's ok to go, to leave this place and move on to do God's work. I assure you that those who remain will alright especially know you will be watching over us. So stop the exhausting fight for us.

We love you for your courage, but it time now... and we are all here with you. I have the unique gift from God that no one else has. I was there when you drifted into my life and I'll be here when your spirit drifts away to a better place. Sleep well, my son! I'll celebrate your life each day and recall special moments and the special gifts you gave to others. Sleep in peace and God will be waiting for you with your grandparents and Uncle Paul. They await you with open arms. I love you, Chris and I thank for hanging in there so I could get from Nebraska to California. At that point, he squeezed my hand, I kissed him gently and exactly at 7:27 pm June 23, 2006, his spirit left. I literally watched him go. His body turned blue and for the first time in 2 ½ years, I saw him rest at peace, and I rested too. My tears were them a comfort to me, my gratitude to God was that he never

suffered any pain through those months and in spite of his illness, he brought peace, joy, and laughter to so many. His was never scared as he told me many times. And as William E. Hanly wrote, "INVICTUS," "Beyond this place of wrath and tears loom but the horror of the shade and get the menace of the years finds, and shall find, ME unafraid."

Written and shared by Pamela Morton in loving memory of her son, **Christopher Cictoello, Born January 14, 1976 and died June 23, 2006.** Thanks Pamela for sharing.



*Not a day goes by we don't think of you*

*Never a night goes by we don't hold you.*

*Never a season changes we don't love you.*

*As long as we live we will remember you.*

By Mary Steighner, TCF Northeast Ohio



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **BUTTERFLY RELEASE**

**When: Sunday, August 15, 2010**

**Where: Madonna Rehab Hospital  
54th and South St.**

**Time: 2:00 PM**

**NOTE: Potluck at 12:30 pm**

**Please bring a meat dish and  
one other dish!**

**Hope you can be there!**



## WHAT'S IT LIKE AT TEN YEARS?

It has been ten years since Mark died. When I wrote *"Into the Valley and Out Again"*, I chronicled first one day, then one week, then the first month and year. Now it is ten. Here are my thoughts:

The hurt never goes away. We never forget. We never get over it. We don't want to. We hurt so much because we loved so much. But the focus on death and the event fades and the warmth of good memories replaces it. Oh, we can still go back there in an instant. Back to the call, back to the moment, the good-bye. Back to the night that will forever separate our life between "before" and "after". But we now go back less and less. Time helps a lot.

I have fewer friends. Better friends, mind you, but fewer. I am out of the circle now. My Rolodex is cold. My networking, which used to be razor sharp, has atrophied. My power lunches have become tuna fish sandwiches. But the amazing thing is how much I don't care. I miss some special people so I go out of my way to stay in touch. And that is enough.

I have new and different priorities. I move through life a little slower, a little more tuned to life around me, and to life gone too soon. I brake for sunsets. I hurt for people who share this walk with me. Since Mark, died, hundreds and then thousands of children have died. I feel for them and their families in a way I could never have understood before. I value people more than things, and I no longer equate what I do with who I am.

I am not having the life I expected to have. I recall an old saying, "Man plans....God laughs." Dennis Prager an author and Los Angeles radio talk-show host said that unhappiness equals image minus reality. What he meant is that you are unhappy when your image of where you should be is dramatically different from where you really are.

When a child dies, the reality of the life we were going to have is shattered forever; I am no longer going to be Mark's dad the

way I planned. I am no longer going the UCLA football games. I am no longer going to be a grandfather to the children he will never have. If that gap between image and reality is a recipe for unhappiness, well, then the reverse is also true. If you "solve" the equation for happiness, happiness equals image matched closely with reality. So I have had to change my image to match my new reality.

I like my new life better. This makes me feel guilty because I would trade my life in an instant if I could have Mark back. But I really do like the person I've become since Mark died. I don't even know that person from 10 years ago. Back then my life purpose was to run a large advertising agency. Today, it is to give back in gratitude for the joy I have been given. I want to make Mark proud. I want to be a blessing to others. And I want to enjoy the journey, too.

I still have a grief that goes unspoken. Who will listen at ten years? Yes, I still miss Mark. But I miss him quietly and silently. I grieve for his loss; for the loss of the person he would have become (he would be 28 now, but instead is forever 18); and also for the loss of the life I would be having if he were here.

I have an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I have been blessed beyond measure. I have a surviving son who has given me more joy that I could imagine any parent having....and now a beautiful daughter-in-law, and a granddaughter. Gratitude is one of the most helpful and healing things you can do on your grief journey. And with gratitude comes thanks. So in gratitude, Kitty and I made a list this week of the people who were there for us when we needed them most. These are the people who dropped everything in their lives on a moment's phone call and rushed to our side. These are the people who dropped everything in a moment's phone call and rushed to our side. These are the people with whom we are joined forever, and who no matter how far they drift, or what unimportant spats we might have, will always have a special place in our heart.

You make your own list. Then find those people wherever they are, and say thank you.

I choose joy over sadness. If there is an overriding thought in these years, including 10 TCF conferences in a row, it is simply this: Grief is inevitable; misery is optional. It does no good to sit in a hole. It does no good for the loss of one life to lead to the loss of two.

When is doing well doing well? When to decide to lead the second part of your life, *differently and better*, than you would have before—in your child's name. When do we do that? When we do one small act of kindness that we never would have done before... when we reach out to other bereaved parents because we can and because we have been there... then the world is changed in some small way for the better, and then the actions we take become a living tribute to our child's life. And then that child is never entirely gone.

And that, my fellow compassionate friends, is how it looks at ten years for me.

### **A FATHER'S DAY PRAYER FOR HIS LOST DREAMS**

Lord, my child has died! I want to scream at you, as if you did not already know. I hurt so bad inside that somehow it seems easier to endure if I scream at someone or at some power.

My grief is two-sided, God. I grieve for the life that will never be, the life that lived for a while in its mother's womb. I wanted that life. Lord, we wanted it desperately. It is over now and it has produced a grief that seems unbearable. The other side of my grief comes from my dreams and fantasies which have also died and been buried. Lord, I was going to be such a good father. My child would have known the joy of being loved and cherished. We would have walked through the scented woods,

touched the sky on lofty mountain tops, had fantasies of walking on the stars, whirled dizzily and we would have dreamed together. Now my dreams are gone, and I cannot revive them. Father, let me dream again the dreams of the hopeful and positive. Let me know that I shall beam with happiness and that this mask of grief will be shattered with an exploding smile and laugh.

Revive my dreams, Lord; they are so far from me now.

*Reprinted from A JOURNEY TOGETHER,  
Spring, 1999*



### **ANGEL OF HOPE CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL Where: Boystown, Nebraska**

**Sponsored by Omaha TCF Chapter  
If you would like to have your child's  
name on a brick please contact  
[www.tcfomaha.org](http://www.tcfomaha.org)**

This Angel of Hope statue is based on the story by Richard Paul Evan in the Christmas box. The original Angel of Hope was in Salt Lake City area and was ruined in the big flood there years ago.

