



MISS Foundation

A COMMUNITY OF COMPASSION AND HOPE FOR GRIEVING FAMILIES

The Internet is helping to change the face of grief. Dr. Cacciatore was interviewed in this Daily Beat article, which discusses parents' decision to post videos or photographs of their stillborn babies on Youtube and other websites. The Daily Beast ran a follow-up article the next week. Both articles are included below. These parents find comfort in the public acknowledgment the Internet can provide of their precious childrens' lives.

Parents of Stillborn Babies Post Hundreds of Memorials to YouTube

By Brandy Zadrozny

Jeremy and Carey Bear's triplets died the day they were born. Carey Bear, 36, was only 22 weeks pregnant when the bag of water surrounding Baby A broke—too early for him to live outside her womb. Interventions to delay failed. Labor was chaotic and all too quick. Before the Long Beach, California couple could mourn the first baby, another was coming, and fading, and then the next.

Picking up a camera was last thing Jeremy Bear would have thought to do in those terrifying moments. But he had been blogging about the pregnancy and when premature labor started, he posted an entry titled "Prayer/Panic." A woman who had lost children of her own responded in an email, "If it goes badly, even though you won't feel like it, you need to take a lot of photos."

Read more here:

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/11/04/parents-of-stillborn-babies-post-hundreds-of-memorials-to-youtube.html>

Jeremy Bear says he hated taking them. "I just wanted it to stop. I just wanted to be past that moment," he says. But he took more than a hundred that day.

Missing them ...

Parents of Stillborn Babies Post Hundreds of Memorials to YouTube

Upcoming and Past Events

Brona: A Memoir

Daily Beast Readers React to YouTube Stillborn Baby Memorials

Gold Moon in the Night

Gravity: Movie Review for the Grieving Parent

Deaf Five-Year-Old Ears

It's About Time

Outside Looking In

Evan You Are

December 8th, 2013

In Loving Memory

For the Love of Daniel

Thank You

My Thanksgiving 2013

Contact Us

submission guidelines

Want to contribute to the MISSing newsletter? Send submissions to info@missfoundation.org for consideration. Thanks you

Upcoming Events

Selah: Pause, Reflect, Discover Meaning
April 17-20, 2014

In breathtaking Sedona, Arizona

Once the retreat fills, we will begin a waiting list.

See more at: <http://www.missfoundation.org/retreat>



Past Events

National Children's Day - Candlelight Memorial Celebration
December 8, 2013



Tucson's 1st Annual Kindness Walk

The MISS Foundation Tucson hosted its First Annual Kindness Walk on October 19, 2013, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

2013 Jimmie Johnson Foundation Helmet of Hope

The MISS Foundation was the recipient of the 2013 Jimmie Johnson Foundation Helmet of Hope



Brona: a memoir

We have a book before us now, one that is written by a bereaved mama and midwife. It is not a book that is easy, not one that is light, not one that glazes over the sensitive natures of our hearts, not even one that is meant for the greater population. No.

This book is special.



This book is for bereaved parents. It is meant for the sore hearts, the griever's. It is for the ones who miss their children beyond all comprehension and the ones who have ever felt alone...or crazy. This book speaks the language of the deep recesses of a griever's heart: raw, wild, angry, passionate, and so very real. This book is for any bereaved parent who wants to commiserate with someone else who has gone through a loss of their child. It is for the parents who want those around them to better understand what it is really like, not just what is imagined. In this book, it is spelled out.

Make no mistake, this book is primarily a love story, a love story between mother and child, because that is what grief really is after all...a love story.

This book calls out for anyone who loves a bereaved parent and has the tender and courageous desire to better understand the great transformation that has come upon the friend or family member.

This book is for any professional who cares for bereaved parents, most especially midwives, obstetricians, and others who care for birthing women, but all professionals from psychiatrists, to social workers, to even acupuncturists. This book is for them too, in order to overturn the garden stone and see what lies beneath and how their actions can crush or support the fragile nature of those in grief.

This book is a memoir about a mother, a midwife in fact, who so desperately loved her unborn son, only to lose him in childbirth and face the storm of grief and blame in the aftermath. It speaks of love, of birth, and of midwives, but most of all it is the story about her son—Brona.

Fifty percent of proceeds from this book go to the MISS Foundation and twenty five percent to Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep.

You can purchase the book on our online store on the website (missfoundation.org)

Daily Beast Readers React to YouTube Stillborn Baby Memorials

By Brandy Zadrozny

The Daily Beast published a story last week about the trend of grieving parents posting memorials to stillborn children on YouTube—and it struck a nerve. Dozens of parents responded with their own stories of stillbirth and details on how they manage their grief.

The letters that follow have been edited for clarity and grammar.

Through my tears, I applaud you for the courage to talk about this topic. The silent grief is the worst of all. My beautiful son Dhillon was stillborn at 36 weeks and holding him and memorializing him is the only way I know how to legitimize his short but meaningful life.

Sudarshana
Mill Valley, California

Read more here:

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/11/12/daily-beast-readers-react-to-youtube-stillborn-baby-memorials.html>

Gold Moon in the Night

Starlight when the moon is gold,
Love of the moonlight,
We're from the ceremony.

Starlight in the world, we give up our hearts.
And when the angels save us
We star the angels in the world.

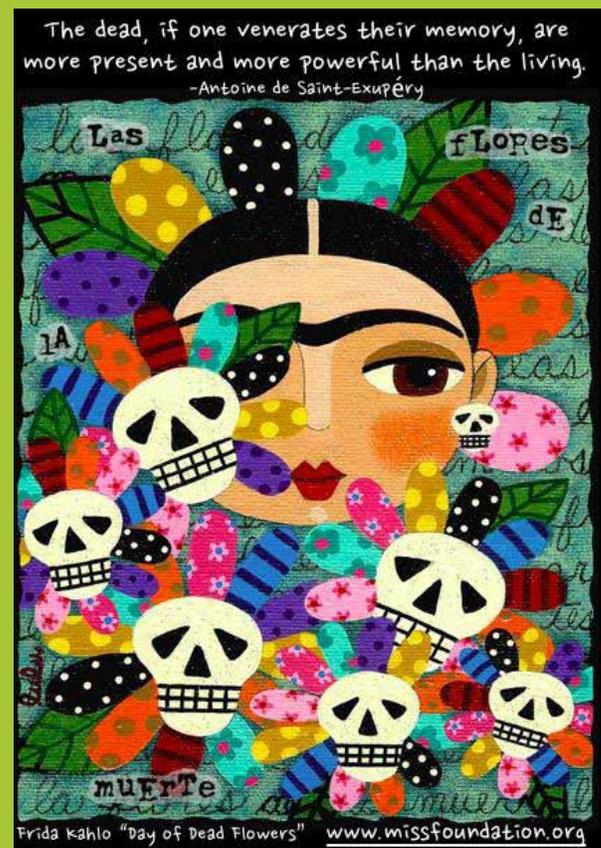
We are from the world singing in our hearts.
We love each other, we sing from ourselves to stars.
We love ourselves, we give ourselves the love of our heart.

Starlight's in the world we give on ourselves.
We don't have this much praying anymore.
Please, star in our lives, when the star comes down
to sing
to our feet, we give a title to ourselves.

When we have our hearts it went back up to our
heart place.
And then love came back to myself.

Then the sun came back up and we had another
rainbow.

~Haley Brooks Salvador; 7/4/99



Gravity: Movie Review for the Grieving Parent

By Mary Tyler Mom

Picture this: The grandparents are in town, we've enjoyed lots of great family time and fall activities with our two boys, and it is suggested that Mary Tyler Dad and I take a few hours for ourselves and go on a date. No need to twist our arms. Based on buzz and glowing reviews, we decide to see "Gravity" in 3D on the IMAX screen. Date nights are few and far between right now, so we were all in.

SPOILER ALERT -- you've been warned.

After nachos, a soda so large Leslie Knope would disapprove, and twenty minutes of previews, we prepare to enter space. We expected a film that looked like the previews, full of terror and thrills and beautiful people in space suits. All we wanted was a few hours of escapism and the opportunity to be transported.

Yeah, not so much.

SPOILER ALERT -- no more warnings.

Shortly into the movie, it is revealed that Sandra Bullock's character, Dr. Ryan Stone of Lake Zurich, Illinois (a local, yo), is the grieving mother of a four year old daughter who died in a playground accident. As Mary Tyler Dad put it so effectively in a Facebook status update,

Just saw GRAVITY. Very, very good, recommend it highly. But. Explain to me how a movie set among astronauts in space has a dead four-year-old daughter in it?

When this particular plot device was revealed, and make no mistake, the presence of a dead child is indeed an often used plot device, Mary Tyler Dad and I looked at each other in the darkness in a moment of solidarity. What can you do? We knew in that instant that this would be a different type of movie experience than for those sitting around us.

What we didn't know, what I didn't know, was how profoundly moved I would be by Gravity, how completely and thoroughly Sandra Bullock's space crisis is the perfect metaphor for grief, and how absolutely director and writer

Alfonso Cuarón captured the pain of child loss and intense grief that parents experience.

Leaving the movie, I was dizzy and exhausted, but I also felt understood, seen, and that I had just witnessed truth. This is a rare thing in filmmaking. Days later, I feel grateful for the experience. I want to sit down across from Cuarón, weep in his presence, and let him know how grateful I am to him for capturing something so profound.

I know, I gush, but it's true.

When we got home, both of our little ones were asleep. I couldn't wait to tuck myself into bed, in the dark and quiet of our bedroom, and Google reviews for Gravity. What a colossal missing of the mark did I find. Rotten Tomatoes gave Gravity 97%, but most every review focused on the visuals, the experiential aspect of the movie. A few loved it, but dinged it for lacking plot. Some thought the presence of a dead child was contrived.

UGH! Wrong, wrong, wrong.

One particular review really got to me. This is an excerpt (*italics are mine*) from Stephen Carty of Flix Capacitor:

A straightforward tale of survival, the film is decidedly slight when it comes to narrative and character, lacking the kind of underlying layers that might compel you to watch it again. In fact, it could be argued that there's not much more to the story than Bullock drifting from one space-based predicament to the next. Undoubtedly, each and every predicament is so spectacularly realised that many viewers won't care. They'll just enjoy being pulled along for the ride. But on a deeper level there isn't much to think about, with Cuarón offering little in the way of thematic weight or high-minded ideas. There's nothing inherently wrong with such an approach, of course, but the end result is never particularly involving in an emotional sense, despite the best efforts of both Sandra Bullock and George Clooney.

Methinks, blessedly, Mr. Carty has no personal experience with the death of a child, cause for me, Gravity was an intense experience both visually and emotionally.

For those of you who have seen Gravity, what most sticks with you?

- My guess is it might be the moments of sheer terror and isolation in the vastness of space, Bullock untethered, drifting, lost, spinning uncontrollably, with no anchor or sense of where she is or if she will survive.
- Maybe it was her tenacious capacity to survive, her ability to stay in the game, her strength, her perseverance, her reaching, grasping, clinging to anything she could that would get her where she needed to be.
- Perhaps it was those quiet moments in the Russian space station when she resigned herself to her fate, her own death, the shutting down, her embrace of her own ever after, the haven to be found in nothingness, and then the sudden appearance of Clooney, so calm, so reassuring, encouraging her to stay, inviting Bullock to find purpose and stay.
- There is the newfound resolve to survive, to remain, to return to that place of before, where you belong, but the only thing to get you back to that place is your gut, and a few manuals and buttons written in a language you don't understand, and your will.
- Or for some it might be the heroic hurtling through space, the impossible trajectory of speed and pressure and reentry, the movement towards the unknown, but wanting it, risking everything for it, choosing hope with every cell in your body.
- And then there is land, the grasping of sand and water, blessed terra firma, finding the capacity to stand, to walk, to move forward, not knowing what you would find, but moving just the same, impossibly forward, only forward, triumphant, powerful when stripped of everything, transformed but still here, still standing.

This, my friends, is grief, in its purest of forms. The predicament Bullock's Dr. Stone finds herself in so closely acts as a metaphor for intense grief, that I cannot shake it. Instead I embrace it, mulling it over, again and again, grateful for the opportunity to watch it, see it, feel it again through the comfort of dark, soda and nachos at my side. Bullock's crystalized tears that gently float off the screen were not overkill, they were my tears, the tears of every parent who survives loss.

The grief of child loss is lonely and terrifying and steals the only anchors you think you have. It unhinges you, flings you into this vast space that few others have seen, let alone walk

Child loss is disorienting, isolating, foreign, vast, unending, transformative, impossible. The parent that survives this grief is not the same parent, not the same person. You know things about yourself and the world that can never be unknown, ever again. Your eyes are opened, your heart is exposed, worn outside your body for the rest of your days, your capacities tested in ways you never imagined were possible. You are different, stronger, knowing, fierce, changed.

If any of you, dear readers, wonder what it is like to lose a child, watch *Gravity*. Know that while extreme and visually fantastic as it may be, it fully, completely, and truthfully captures the grief of child loss. And this is not a plot device, this is not a vaguely sexist tool used to make Bullock more vulnerable, cause I will tell you that there is nothing stronger than a mother who survives the loss of a child. Nothing. Make no mistake about it, *Gravity* is a visual and emotional and glorious depiction of grief, which happens to be set in space. Truth.

Deaf Five-Year-Old Ears

By Carver Bain

I think I knew that something was wrong when I woke up to familiar but unexpected faces. Doubtless I was glad that my best friend Will had shown up unexpectedly with his mom, yet it was the tone of his mother's voice and the absence of my parents that clued me in that something was going on.

At the age of five, I had a two-year-old sister and another sibling on the way; as I recall I was not pleased when I discovered that the incoming child was to be another girl. Everything was normal and good. I was as content with my life as any five-year-old could claim to be content with anything. I cannot speak for my parents, for adults tend to put on masks in front of children, but it can't be too much of a stretch to say they were happy, preparing for the arrival of their new daughter.

Why is that always when things go terribly awry?

It started the day I awoke to my best friend and his mother. I asked Angie, Will's mother, where my parents were. I cannot remember how blunt she was about the malign shroud that had enveloped our house the previous night, but I at least gleaned from her that my mother was in the hospital, and my father had gone with her; I don't know whether I knew it was because of the baby.

Whether this news was particularly jarring to my five-year-old ears or not, I do not remember. Regardless of how I felt, it wasn't long before I went to visit my parents in the hospital.

My mother lay in her bed, draped in hospital sheets; my father sat beside her, eyes weighed down by exhaustion, worry, and desperation. As with all hospitals, there was a thick film that permeated the room, dampening the fluorescent lights and wilting the plastic flowers outside the door, and everything was gray.

I won't ennoble death by giving it any sort of magnificent description or detail.

She died on May 29th. She was born on June 1st. People seem to cluster death and black together, but I think gray is a far more fitting candidate.

They gathered like flies to a light, the family and friends, with their "I'm sorrys," and, "I understands." These empty comforts slammed into my parents like a waterfall, and dripped off them like tar.

I did little to support my parents through the stillbirth, as I don't think I fully understood what had happened. I waited in rooms with televisions. I visited my mother. The adults adorned their masks and reassured me everything was fine. Someone gave me a Batmobile. That was exciting. I'm pretty sure I knew what was going on in a very basic way, but the implications and the impact of the event fell on deaf ears. Deaf five-year-old ears.

I remember being there when she was born, the sister I would never learn to begrudgingly love, or inspire with my older-sibling-perfection, or see with flush, rosy, life-filled cheeks. I just wanted to see her. They asked if I wanted to hold her. I did.

I said no.

"We named her Grace," my dad told me outside the hospital while we waited for my mother to come out. Grace Susie Bain, he said. As we sat there, freezing in June, I imagine you could see the ripples of cold steam rising off of us, under the hot sun. My dad hugged me closer, warming me, or perhaps I was warming him.

The toll this event took on my parents is at a level I hope I won't ever fully understand. When they didn't think I could hear them, they would take off their masks and be sad and

Birthdays & Death Days

Bi-monthly Birthdays and Death Days are now online on the MISS website.

[Click here to see the Birthdays](#)

[Click here to see Death Days](#)

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We'd like to thank all of you who give so much to support the MISS Foundation. All donor, memorial messages and sponsor listings are currently being updated on the website.

[Click here to see the Sponsors list.](#)

[Click here to see the Donors list.](#)



cry and even yell. I could sense a heavy sheet, stitched with iron that had drifted down to enfold our household, and the walls slowly beginning to crack.

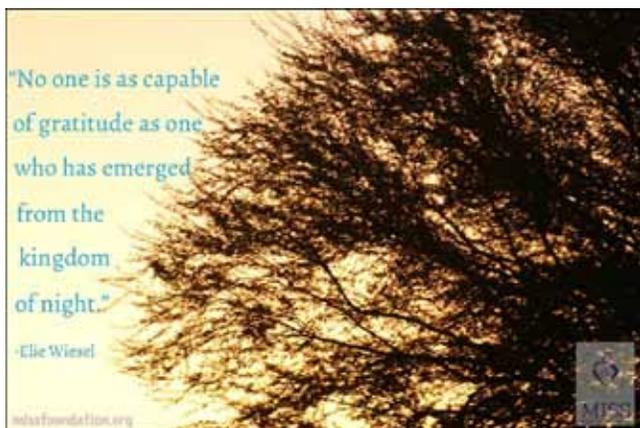
It went like this for some time. But as time tends to want to do, it kept on, rolling through days, then weeks, then months, then years. But despite the dullness that time brings with it, ten years later Grace never left. Though strange it might seem, being that she never arrived, she is still here.

My mother would tell me that it was a gift. That God works in strange ways. (This God I keep hearing about does seem to work in the most—eccentric—ways.) She would say that if it had not been for Grace's preemptive tip of the hat and slam of the door, our lives would be very different. My now seven-year-old brother probably would never have been born, maybe we wouldn't have been able to feed another mouth at that time, and maybe if she hadn't died my mother would have. Maybe, maybe, maybe.

Maybe.

All this can be boiled down to, we just don't know and there's nothing we can do about it anyway, so quit your blubbering and move on. But humanity demands a little blubbering, which is just fine.

I will never know Grace. Of course this still saddens me, even more so than it did ten years ago, but if I were to walk around my house right now and talk with my parents and my sister, I wouldn't see any negative consequences. What I would see is my little brother, and my dad cracking a joke, and my mom rolling her eyes, and all because—and in spite of—Grace's death. Good and bad are far too black and white for something like this, and Grace found life in that gray area.



It's About Time

By Ben's mom: My son died 6 months ago, in a car accident, after suffering from cancer, which he was diagnosed with 3 years prior.

It's about time, isn't it? Our lives are marked by time...how old we are, what grades are kids are in, how many days until..... And we learn so many of life's lessons with the passage of time.

Tomorrow it will be 6 months ago that Ben died. Six months. 26 weeks. 182 days.

A few years ago, one of my son Ben's friends started teasing me about being in the "autumn" of my life. I think that's about the time I started my deep reflections on what I'd done with my life to that point, who I am, and what I'd like to do before I die. Since Ben's death, that scrutiny has greatly intensified, involving a lot of introspection, self-loathing for the regrets that I have, and trying to find a way to live with my grief. All while dealing with the ordinariness of life.

I've decided that I am now in "my time". My "It's all about me....if I want to do it, I will--if I don't, I won't" time. Not much time has been spent by me in the last decades of my life looking deep within. I was too busy living and enjoying to analyze. I willingly gave as much of myself as I could to many people, helping as much as I was able to. I got my sense of self-worth by doing for others. But now, since it's my time, I'm devoting as much of my energy as I can to fixing me. My broken me. Anyone who knows me knows my brain works overtime. It's really been in overdrive since Ben's accident. Imagine mental ping-pong all day long. With thoughts so varied it's frightening. Continually churning and spitting.....sometimes crazy or happy, hurt or sad, wistful, angry, resentful. Ping ping ping. Some thoughts simply cannot be defined in my struggle to make meaning of it all.

I know my past, present and future are all interwoven, with all the colors intertwined, like the loop pot-holders I used to make as a child. It's nearly impossible to remove the present moment from what has happened before or what might lie ahead in my life. Often times I dwell on the concept of "time." My over-active brain is always spitting out random thoughts about time.

I was 27 when Ben was born. He was 27 when he died. Half of my life was with him. The rest of my life will be without. An eternity. An unfathomable amount of time to live without one of your children. How do I do that? How can I comprehend that amount of time “without” when the last half of my life has been with him?

My brain, of course, had to calculate that (counting leap years) Ben lived 9,996 days, just shy of ten thousand days. Why couldn't he have hit that milestone? At least? Why didn't he live twenty thousand? Or 30? or 40? I would have cut 10,000 days off the end of my life and given them to him if I could.

I picture myself as a 24-year old being diagnosed with cancer, as Ben was. Did Ben know, or did God know, at that time that Ben's time was limited?

I'm so grateful that when I became a new mom I chose to work part-time so I could spend all those extra days with my kids. I thank God that even back then I knew what a precious gift time was. I gave up many material “things” because I knew they could never compare with the extra time spent with my kids. Oh, yeah, and I absolutely loved snow days. I think I was more excited than the kids were when school was called off. I loved those “stay in your jammies and do nothing” kind of days. That down time.

I sink into a dark hole every Tuesday on my lunch break from work. I hate that time!!!! Every week, every single Tuesday, during my lunch hour, I flash back to my last phone call with Ben at 12:10, which lasted about 4 minutes. I received another call so I told him I'd call him back. His phone pocket-dialed mine twice in the next ten minutes while I was running errands. I answered both times and kept saying “Ben, Ben”....no response. I never got to speak with him again. 15 minutes later, the accident occurred. Regrets. Regrets. What if's. What if's. If I had talked to him for one minute longer when I had called him at 12:10. If I hadn't hung up to take that other call. Or if I had called him back when I said I would, he may still be alive. In my mind, that is how precious one minute is. The value of just one minute. I wouldn't even be sitting here spewing my thoughts, if I had taken that extra minute with him on the phone or we had talked for a minute or so when he pocket-dialed me. That one minute could have changed the whole course of events. Just the thought of one minute, just the teeniest tiniest speck of time, will

haunt me for the rest of my life. But all those what-ifs, they have no real answers, do they? Nothing solid to hold on to, so my brain just keeps churning.

Ben told me in our last conversation that I could never imagine how much pain he was in. Every minute of every day he felt like his insides were being twisted and turned, the effects of chemotherapy that had so damaged him. Saved his life, yet did so much damage to him. His days and nights were filled with pain. Fifteen minutes after I last spoke with him, his suffering ended. His days and nights filled with pain were over. Our days and nights filled with pain had just begun.

My past, that is so interwoven in my present, keeps looking at me in the mirror. The phrase “if I could turn back the hands of time” screams at me. If I had done this, done that, and on and on and on. So, at those particular moments in time, when I am attacking that person in the mirror, tearing her apart, I tell myself I can't live with the “should haves” or “could haves”. I need to invite the “would haves” into my life. If I had known at the time, I would have.....

Another weird abstract “time” thought: If I live another 20 years beyond Ben's death, I am already 1/40th of the way to being with him again. Another 27 years, which is my life expectancy, I'm already 1/54th of the way there. Then I put that all in balance. I pull myself back. I tell myself: Focus on the now. Enjoy my time here. Don't waste those years. Make good use of the coming years. Enjoy life. Enjoy Nick and Gina and their futures. Ben was cheated out of time. Don't cheat Nick and Gina. I'll get there, with that concept. But with all else, it's going to take some time.

And then I have basic “non-weird” time thoughts, like:

I'm glad I took the time to take the thousands of pictures of my kids that I did, of special events and plain old ordinary days. The simple times of ordinary life. So many memories are there, ready and waiting for me when I am strong enough to look at them for more than a few minutes.

I'm glad my boss is such a wonderful man who, when I was a new mom, appreciated my desire to spend as much time with my family as possible. The same holds true now. I tell him what hours I want to work, what I'm it.....I need the time to be with my family now.

I appreciate my 86-year old friend emailing me at least once a day to tell me about his day and ask about mine. I am glad that I take the time to respond to him, even though it is I who is receiving his gift....the lessons in life that he has learned from the passage of time. He has taught me so much and given me so much of his time.

I'm happy that Nick was given a deferral for a year (without asking) from the law school he will be attending so that he could be with us during this tough year. When he explained the situation, those people got it. He needed time.

I LOVE when my family and friends take the time to let me know they care. The sister who stops by once a week or so on her way home from work (often with dinner or goodies), and the others who call or text me or FB message me on a regular basis. My best friend who's persistent in reaching out to me nearly every day....often with the "Hi, how ya doing?" text. And our great friend who took the time to drive the 1,000 miles each way with us to and from Kansas for Ben's memorial service, the one who invites us over and stops by for coffee all the time. And also all of my new-found FB heart-broken moms. The time they all take to show they care is so heart warming. I appreciate those few minutes they give to make me feel loved.

Conversely, though, I've learned that some people, the ones I thought might be there for us, aren't. Is there not one minute, out of the tens of thousands of minutes in each month, to show they care? Others, some whom we barely know, reach out on a regular basis to say they're thinking of us. Just one of the lessons I've learned with the passage of time..... you just don't know who will or won't be there for you when you need them. Who will take the time and who won't? I am grateful for the great support system we do have and I know, with time, I will accept that others, for reasons only they know, can't find one minute. I think those thoughts during my hurting times. And then, randomly, lines from Desiderata (one of my all-time favorites) come to mind – "Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness." In other words, Susan, shut up. You're tired and lonely.

And, finally, my favorite time of each day is my "reward" time. Having made it through another day, I reward myself with one wine cooler. I sip it, it relaxes me enough to sleep, and then my brain goes into "down time." Sleep! Finally! The only time my brain is not working overtime, in overdrive, with crazy thoughts, processing this long, arduous journey I am on. My time. Good night. Please pray for me.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with this question: It's about time, isn't it? All of it.



Our fingerprints don't fade
from the lives we've touched.

Outside Looking In

Weston Max Yoder was born at 24 weeks gestation on July 7, 2012 and died July 28, 2012. His mother, Shauna Bryant Yoder, wrote this piece on December 5, 2012, and she expects some variation of it to be true every holiday season thereafter.

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Evan You Are

This beautiful poem was written in loving memory of the beautiful life of beloved son, Evan Nathaniel Nasky, transitioned to spirit, March 3, 2012, at the age of 21.

Wind on water
Flight of dragonfly and
The hawk's swift winged
Passage

Rare butterfly
Fluttering on the wildflowers
in endless Summer
The love in my heart

Golden Aspen leaves
dancing on a cool breeze
Dazzling diamonds on Colorado snow

A swim in the rain
That falls from the sky of drought

Evan you are every tiny miracle
I have ever seen and loved
The sunset's glow and
the North Star light years away
In darkest night

The sound of waves
on gentle shores
Sand castles
transient against the tide
The cry of seagulls
Your tiny hand in mine

Stormy seas
Descent into twilight
Your name written with love
in the crumbling sand
Beloved boy
You hold my heart
I hold your hand

~Marilyn Rea Nasky



A couple of nights ago, I went running in the evening. I usually go in the morning, so this was different for me. It was completely dark by the time I got home, which made me feel even more isolated. I like the isolation: it means I can be alone with Weston and my tears, and no one will bother me.

For some reason, it felt quieter. I'm certain that it was not actually quieter out, because it was rush hour. I played my Weston playlist, of course. About halfway through my run, I heard a song with lyrics about wanting to see a departed loved one smile.

I never got to see Weston smile. He did not live long enough. How completely, utterly unfair. Seeing your child smile for the first time is one of life's most precious memories for a parent, and I was cheated out of it.

The fact that I never saw Weston smile did not occur to me until I heard those song lyrics during my run. Maybe it's because, until now, Weston would probably not have smiled yet. He would have been five months old this week, but only five weeks old if adjusted to his due date. My daughter first smiled at five weeks, so I figure I would have been looking forward to Weston's first smile any day now.

Of course, after that thought came to me, I broke down in the middle of my run. The tricky thing is that it was not dark yet. I was not wearing sunglasses, so anyone passing by would have seen my meltdown. Another thing about running while crying is that...it's hard to see in front of you. I have taken a few tumbles during runs over the years. The worst was when I fell and twisted my ankle badly while running in the dark about twelve years ago. Now I run with a headlamp if I run in the dark: safety first.

But what do you do when the reason for your blindness is not darkness, but tears? If you're me, you just keep running. And you actually wish for a face plant, so you can be distracted from your grief by physical pain. And, hopefully, you would have an ugly physical mark on your face from the face plant so that you don't look so put together. You would be relieved that your outside matches your inside.

I kept running. But there was no face plant.

Coming home, I wound through my neighborhood streets lined with houses decorated for the holiday season. When I reached our house, my husband had turned on

our exterior Christmas lights. Our Christmas tree lights in the front room were on, and the shutters were still open, providing that iconic American snapshot. If you had been standing on the curb in front of our house, you would have seen all of this. You would have also seen two chairs and a small table on our front porch and a front yard with room for multiple kids to run around and play. If you had looked harder, you would have seen my daughter's toys strewn across our living room floor. Picture-perfect.

You might have thought to yourself, Look at the happy memories that can be made in that house: rolling around on the lawn, sitting on the porch, playing by that tree, etc.

That is how I used to feel. Standing outside of my house looking in, I was overwhelmed with the blessings bestowed on me. Now, I look at my house and think, What a facade. Our winter grass has grown in nicely, and the flowers are blooming (I live in Phoenix). Our decorations look festive. But the outside of our house is nothing but a shell that masks heartbreak and emptiness inside.

That night, the darkness was a blessing. No one could see the second breakdown that I had while pacing in front of my own house. What I wanted to do in those moments, staring at my house before anyone knew I was home, was channel Joni Mitchell and find "a river I could skate away on." And "I would teach my feet to fly."

Alas, there was and is no river to skate away on. By the time my husband walked outside looking for me, my tears had dried, and the darkness hid the emotion that was still on my face. So I gathered myself together and walked inside.



December 8th, 2013

I slowly open my eyes to the sun's first rays of light, and I miss you.

Make breakfast, pack lunches, start the laundry, all while passing by your pictures, and I miss you.

My To Do List is made, errands are done, a trip to the gym, and I miss you.

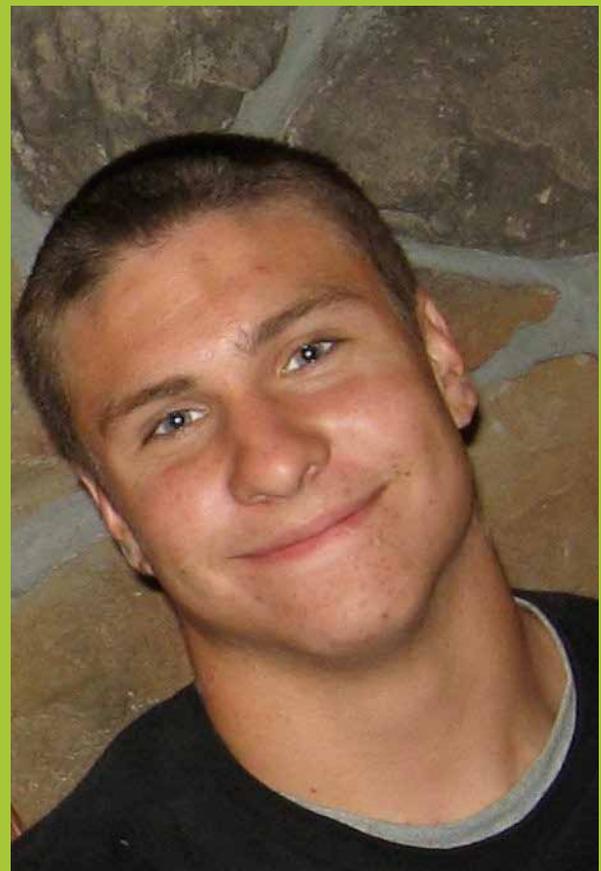
Passing through crowds, I say hello, I drive by your school and I miss you.

The homework gets done, chores too. The table is set, grace is said, and I miss you.

The sun has set, teeth are brushed, PJ's are on, and I miss you.

Everyone is asleep, I lay here watching the front door, my eyes close, and I miss you.

I slowly open my eyes to the sun's first rays of light and I love you...



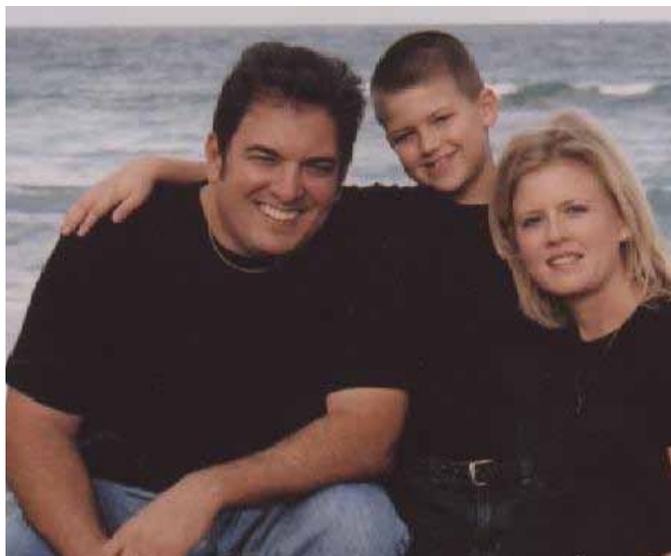
10 Ways to Face the Holidays Without Our Children

1. Remember them through ritual. Buy an ornament for him/her/them, light a candle, burn sage.
2. Honor them through giving: Do a Kindness Project, make a charitable contribution in their name.
3. Invoke their name at meals.
4. Write their name with pebbles or sand or branches and take a photo.
5. Include their memory in holiday greetings: "We remember our precious son during this time of year and always."
6. Ask siblings to write a note to their brother or sister.
7. Change your routine in some meaningful way because things aren't as they used to be.
8. Visit the cemetery or other special place and leave a card for him/her/them.
9. Send Kindness Project cards to family and friends with his/her/their names and ask them to do one or two in their memory.
10. Take 20 minutes in contemplative time and speak to your precious child/ren on the morning of your special holiday.

www.missfoundation.org



In Loving Memory



In memory of Daryl and his precious daughter Kathryn to the MISS Foundation, 1700 Alcove Ct., Austin TX 78757.

Personally, words just cannot express my sadness.

I want to say to all our amazing volunteers: Thank you for all you've done, for all you do, for who you are, and for sharing your children. You cannot imagine how much we appreciate you.

In loving memory of my handsome prince, Blake Wolfson, who had the amazing opportunity to Skype with Adam Sandler just days before his death.

Thank you, Adam, for your kindness. You can't even imagine how much we MISS our sweet Blakey. 6/20/93 – 11/17/12

A child that loses a parent is an orphan. A man who loses his wife is a widower. A woman who loses her husband is a widow.

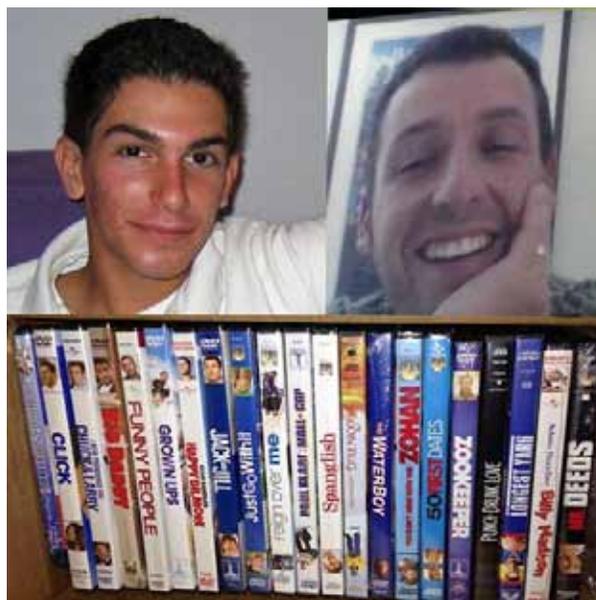
There is no name for a parent that loses a child, for there is no word to describe this pain. ~unknown~

-Mama ((Carole))

I am very, very sad to announce the death of long-time MISS Foundation volunteer, our CBRS Legislative Liaison and bereaved dad, Daryl Logullo. Daryl came to me after the death of his beautiful baby girl, Kathryn, who died during birth. Since 2005, we have worked hand-in-hand to enact the CBRS legislation successfully in 18 more states across the U.S. This was no easy task as we faced opposition from many of the most powerful and wealthy lobbying groups around the world. I also cannot count the number of hours we spent on the phone strategizing and planning how we'd take all 50 states soon enough. He even helped us produce this public service announcement for legislative promotion: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNvTDTK-0Jk>

Daryl was an amazing man, husband, and mostly father. His undying devotion to and love for Kate, his daughter, fueled his relentless efforts, and he helped bring comfort to many bereaved parents since her death.

For me, personally, Daryl's death is a shock. We've lost an amazing and devoted volunteer and a dear friend. Our deepest sympathy go to his beautiful and heartbroken wife, Beth, his two surviving children, and his family. Donations can be made



For the Love of Daniel

Ann Goffe

My son Daniel was a walking enigma, a charismatic bundle of contradictions. He lived his life with the sensitivity of an angel and the self-destructiveness of a demon. By his early teens he was diagnosed with bi polar and anxiety disorders, ADD and alcohol dependency. By his late teens he was a high school dropout and an opiate addict. To the world he bore all the trappings of failure. But to his close knit, far flung friends he was a legend and a star, an irreplaceable, unforgettable friend.

Daniel died from a drug overdose on the night of June 21, 2011. If it was before midnight he left on the last day of spring. If it was in the early hours, it was the first day of summer. Either one feels appropriate and poignant. He was 23 years old.

On a flawless July evening we gathered, 200 strong, in a neighborhood garden to say goodbye. There was great sadness but another feeling quietly engulfed the group. The evening lit up, vibrating softly in a gentle explosion of love. I listened as Daniel's friends paid tribute to his person and the way he touched their lives. He appeared more like a local super hero than an addict and chronic underachiever. The roles should be mutually exclusive but Danny, true to his paradoxical nature, had played both with ease.

After the memorial I began to meet regularly with Daniel's friends to share memories. Each one cherished tales of hilarity, bravado, tenderness and caring. Daniel was a spellbinder, a 21st century pied piper.... he beckoned some childlike part of ourselves, a buried, joy-starved spirit that loves each other and life. The fierceness of Daniel's addiction had been matched by the fierceness of his ability to love. His love had inspired his friends to feel uniquely loved, to be their best selves, to live their dreams.

Our reflections into Daniel's past were suddenly and dramatically shifted to Daniel in the here and now. Members of our gathering, including me, reported a gathering storm of strange encounters, elusive but compelling, unbelievable but undeniable, which persuaded us that Daniel was with us in the moment. He declared his presence, and his ability to intervene - to reassure, tease,

protect and make you feel your dreams. Just as he had always done. The only reasonable explanation was paranormal.

When in doubt – Google, and I discovered the phenomenon of After Death Communication. An ADC is a communication from the departed loved one without the use of psychic mediums, or devices. They are known universally and millions of Americans have reported ADC events. They can be distinguished from average circumstance by the timing and context, the uncharacteristic behavior of the creature, and by the receiver's sudden association to the departed.

ADCs are most common in butterflies and birds but can also come from the skies in rainbows, shooting stars, sunbeams and sunsets. In another kind of ADC there is a manipulation of electrical energy causing interference with electronics and appliances.

I marveled at these small miracles which bring so much comfort and assurance. Little did I know, Danny planned to use all of the above symbols, and add a few tricks of his own.

Danny's ADCs felt like an invitation to step further into this new world of friendly wildlife, and stunning skylscapes. I consulted a psychic medium and through her mediumship Daniel became a messenger, a go-between two worlds, making experiences of the new world tangible and real for those in his old world. He reached across the living dead divide to offer us the assurance of things to come, to show that neither time nor space can conquer love. That in the end love is all that matters.

On the anniversary of Daniel's passing we gathered by the river, his band of wounded pilgrims, to say goodbye again.

I looked at the young people around me, and it came to me that what had kept me going for the past year was love. Love, as I listened to Daniel's friends time and again, with wonder, tears and joy, revisit their lives with Danny. Love, as this re-living brought Danny's energy, his impossible, irresistible, lovable and loving self, into the room. Love, as each time the gathering lifted my spirits from sadness to celebration. Love had shown itself more powerful than grief, more permanent than life. In the end, love is all that matters.

I addressed the gathering:

"Most of you know that over the past year I have been talking to a psychic medium called DonnaD. Through her, Daniel has sent many messages and I have shared most of them with you. There is a special one for today. I quote Daniel:

I appreciate the gatherings you have for me. They make me know I am remembered. Now I am using my power and my talents to help other people in heaven. I will help you too. I will never leave you. I will be like an Angel on your shoulders, for inspiration and guidance (and to stop you doing foolish things like driving drunk). You must live your live lives, be who you are.

We launched Daniel's ashes from the river bank in a small vessel made of Jamaican wood. His sister made sure it didn't crash. Then we watched him sail away into his new life, and held him close in our broken hearts.

Sometimes the pull of the undertow is very strong, and yes, sometimes I do go under. I will visit this netherworld of grief, I have no choice; such is the inevitability of loving and losing. I will visit, but I will not dwell there. In the spirit of a poet unknown

*I will look at this world for the both of us.
As long as I can I will laugh with the birds,
I will sing with the flowers,
I will pray to the stars,
For the both of us.*

And this will be no cold or broken hallelujah. For if the Beatles are right and in the end the love we take is equal

to the love we make, then on the 21st day of June, 2011, Daniel was born a Prince. Joyous, light and free at last, already rich in the currency of the New Kingdom.

I am considered a person of reasonably sound mind and conscience, and certainly a credible witness. My experience of Daniel's death and afterlife invited me, my friends, and now my readers to take a leap into a world where the usual markers don't count. There has been an ongoing debate between my inner Skeptic and my inner Believer. Throughout this dialogue I have asked myself a recurring question:

eLoveofDaniel.net/"
Facebook/FortheLove of Daniel

Why when we profess belief in an after life, do we feel fearful or crazy when we see signs of it?

I leave that for each person to answer in their own way. I do not seek to convert for Daniel's life was not an example. It was a roller coaster ride of sadness and joy, heartache and solace, laughter, tears, tumult and rest. His life was, and continues in his afterlife to be, simply a love story: a tribute to the power of love that offers even ultimate human tragedies a softer landing, the possibility of a happy ending.

This article is excerpted from the book "For the Love of Daniel" by Ann Goffe
<http://www.FortheLoveofDaniel.net/>



THANK YOU

We would like to thank all of our donors for continuing to support the important work of the MISS Foundation in caring for families suffering the most unthinkable tragedy — the death of their child. Since 1996, the MISS Foundation has tirelessly helped families facing infant and child death through counseling, advocacy, research, education, and support. No one else does what we do.

Over the past year many changes have taken place, and, sadly, too much growth in our membership. In 2013, more than 953 newly bereaved parents have already registered for help, adding to the more than 962 grieving families from just the previous year.

In addition to serving the new families just finding out about the MISS Foundation, we help thousands more each year through our support groups, mentor network, counseling and online forums. We have an amazing volunteer network of bereaved parents who spend countless hours every day helping other bereaved parents nationwide. Our online forums totaling more than 116,000 views just this year, and our 30-50 support groups each month nationwide, provide a place of comfort and healing for grieving families. We provide affordable counseling to those in need. We recognize the birthdays and the death days of thousands of MISS Foundation children each year. We remember our children at MISS Foundation events like International Kindness Project Day and our Kindness Walks held in cities around the nation.

As we continue to grow at an alarming rate, the MISS Foundation has been inundated with requests to provide specialized training to professionals in the field who deal with child death on a day-to-day basis. In 2014, we will begin training professionals to provide appropriate support and care to families who have a child who is dying or who has died.

The MISS Foundation is able to care for grieving families because of individual and corporate donations. Many of our contributions come directly from the families we serve who want to give back to the MISS Foundation as a way to help others going through this tragedy, as well as to honor their child who has died. This year, KONG came through again as our main corporate sponsor. The Parker

Ortman Memorial Fund benefited the MISS Foundation with a golf tournament for the fourth year in a row. We were also recognized with a grant from winning racecar driver Jimmie Johnson's Foundation. For that, we are so grateful.

However, not unlike other nonprofits in this declining economy, donations have not kept pace with the growing need for our services. Granting authorities and many corporations think child death is just too sad to associate themselves with so they do not contribute. As such, we need your help to continue and expand our programs and resources to help families after the death of their child.

In the spirit of holiday giving, gratitude, and loving all of the precious children gone too soon, please support MISS Foundation programs and consider a donation of any size.

Every single dollar helps the MISS Foundation save families struggling in their darkest hours. Remember, not all families get to spend their holidays with their children. Please make your tax-deductible donation today.



Thank you KONG for your continued support of the MISS Foundation. And, our deepest gratitude to Doug and KD Frueh who have again offered a generous, targeted donation for a support staff person.



PARKER A. ORTMAN
MEMORIAL FUND

The MISS Foundation would like to thank Jeff, Kristina, & McKenzie Ortman for supporting our work, in memory of Parker. This year the Parker Ortman Memorial Fund raised \$7500 with a golf tournament and fundraising event. The Ortman's contributions have totaled more than \$41,000 over the past 4 years.

Special thanks to our chapter volunteers and MISS families who organized our 2013 events and contributed to our programs. Thank you for all you do!

My Thanksgiving 2013

by Terri DeMontrond in memory of her beautiful daughter, Misty

I'm grateful for the love I give and for the love I receive - and for the love I observe others giving and receiving.

.... for the moments in between words and actions where there is silence, calm and clarity - and where only there I believe is the deepest connection with the divine.

.... for all that comes from that non thinking, non doing place of the heart and soul that reveals innate compassion, empathy, patience, forgiveness...where the true nature of spirit resides.

.... the universally non-discriminating and boundless healing qualities of generosity, kindness, and caring for others.

.... the gift and challenge of awareness, the grace of acceptance, and the relief of non-judgment.

.... ongoing opportunities through vulnerability and life experiences to learn and become a better person.

.... and I'm especially grateful for the knowing that only in being completely present and offering a willingness to listen with an open heart can these things exist.



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Newsletter edited by Shauna Bryan Yoder in memory of Weston
Newletter design by Tanya Amos



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