



# ***The Compassionate Friends*** ***of Northwest Houston*** **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

*Welcome to The Compassionate Friends. We are sorry for the reason you are here, but are glad that you found us. You Need Not Walk Alone, we are The Compassionate Friends.*

## **MAY 2021**

### **HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER**

[www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org](http://www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org)

**We meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.**

at

**Trinity Lutheran Church  
Family Life Center, Room #204  
5201 Spring Cypress Rd.  
Spring, Texas 77379**

The Church is located on the corner of Spring Cypress Road and Klein Church Rd. Please enter off Spring Cypress Road. The meetings are held in the Family Life Center, Room 204

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## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MISSION STATEMENT

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

### To the Newly Bereaved

As the years pass, we see new members come into the chapter, and we try to help them with their grief as we progress in our own. Over and over again, I have seen newly bereaved parents come to their first meeting totally devastated and convinced that their lives are over. Through the months (and years) I have seen them struggle and suffer and try to find meaning in their lives again. And they do! Through all the anger, pain and tears, somehow the human spirit is able to survive and flower again in a new life – perhaps a changed life and possibly a sadder one, but a stronger one nevertheless.

We feel so weak and crushed when our beloved children die, but I know because I have seen it countless times in the years I've been involved with The Compassionate Friends that we can make it together. When you walked through the door for the first meeting, you were frightened and nervous; but with that step you made a statement about your life. With that first step through the door, you said you wanted to try, you wanted to find a reason for living again, that you weren't willing to be swallowed by your grief. You wanted to go forward, and those first steps into The Compassionate Friends began your journey.

The journey will be a long one, for you loved your child with all your heart and soul. When that child died, a part of you was ripped away. It takes a long time to repair that large hole. The journey will not always be steady or constant; there will be many setbacks. Those of us who have taken the journey before you can assure you that, while there may be no rainbow at the other end, there is indeed "light at the end of the tunnel."

We want to help you as we were helped, but in the beginning and in the long run, you must help yourself. You have to want to get better, to talk about your loss, to struggle through the grief. We will listen, suggest, share and laugh and cry with you; and we hope, at this time next year, you'll be several steps along in your personal journey through grief. Then you can begin to help others.





*Our Children, Siblings, and Grandchildren  
Remembered*

**MAY BIRTHDAYS**

1993- Richard Allen Ginn, Son of Barbara & Richard Ginn  
2008- Aaron Michael Wolf, son of Laura Wolf  
2008- Bryan Russell Lewis, Son of Olga Lydia Lewis  
2008- Alexander Gene Davis, Son of Janice Davis  
2010- Tristen D. Hopkins, Son of Howard & Denise Hopkins  
2008- Kayla C. Ladner, Daughter of Stephen Ladner  
2003- Jeff Costin, Son of Carol & Richard Costin  
2006- Marlinda Raschke, Daughter of Gloria Raschke Sister of Kevin Rasche  
2000- Darrell Wayne McSpadden, Son of Janet & Robert McSpadden  
2006- Michael Beshara, Son of Mike & Elaine Beshara  
1983- Staci Kendall, Daughter of Larry & Tami Kendall  
1990- Sewika Tekle, Daughter of Medhin Boakai  
1976- Kristen Roberts, Daughter of Tom & Geneva Montgomery  
1984- Nancy Elizabeth Gonzalez, Daughter of Dulce Gonzalez  
1987- Cherelle Luter, Daughter of Sylvia Green  
2005- Nevaeh Ramirez, Son of Amy Ramirez  
1986- Allison Todd, Daughter of Ingrid Todd  
1977- Misty, Daughter of Terri DeMontrond  
1990- Traci Foehr, Daughter of Donna & Bubba Foehr  
1982- Justin Ross Heino, Son of Darryl Heino  
1986- Steven Jackman, son of Deborah Jackman  
2011 - Jamie Leonard, son of Carrie Newman  
1999 - James Ropp, Son of Janet Ropp  
1989 - Victor Alberto Renteria Jr, Son of Carla Renteria  
1985 - Aaron Kirby O'Neal, Son of Sylvia Ann Roushion  
1983 - Bryan Pfluger, Son of Penny McElhaney

**MAY ANGEL DATES**

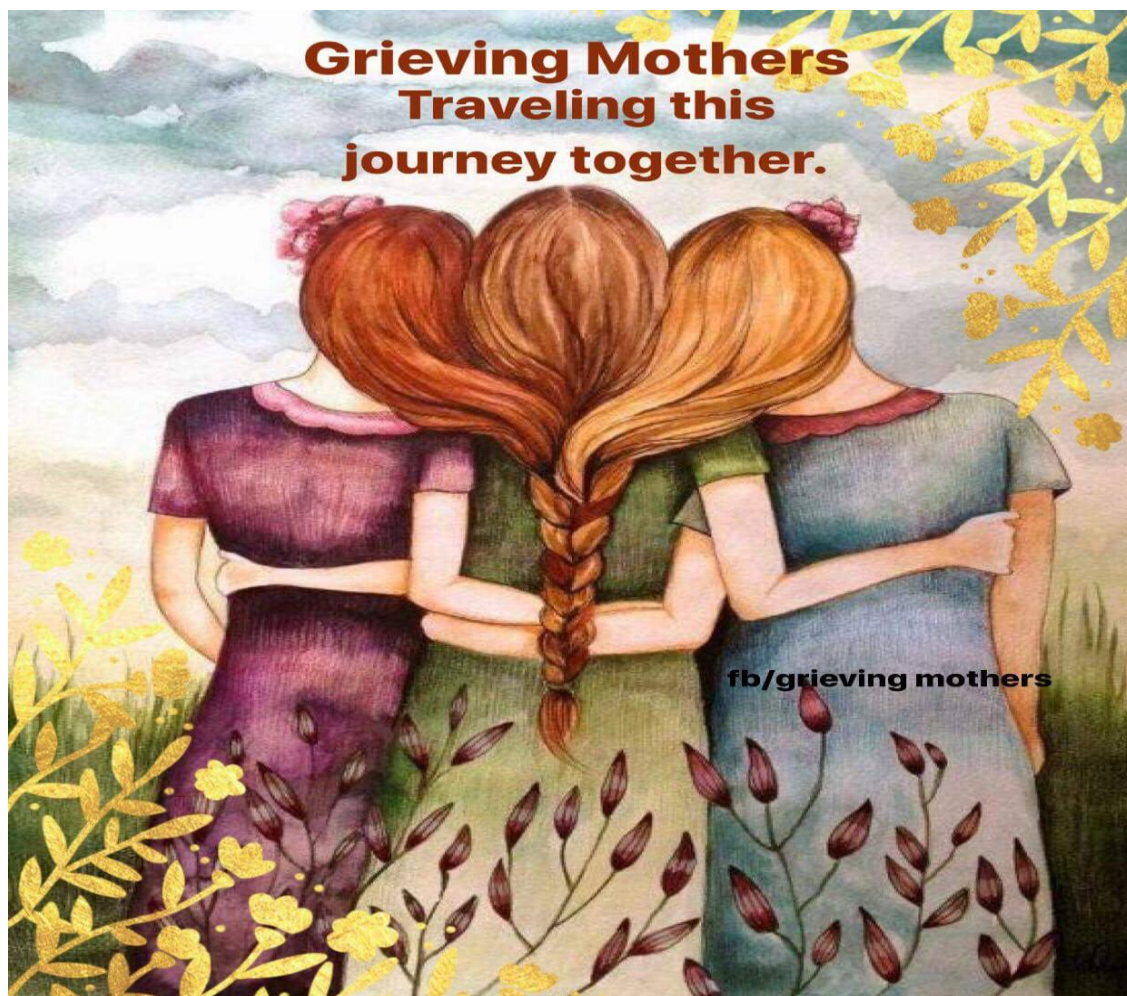
2009- Brendon Chase Mooney, Son of Richard & Joan Mooney  
2010- Shaun N. Finley, Son of Barbara Finley  
2002- Braden Hughes Patton, Son of Sherill & Chase Patton  
2006- Danny Ewing, Son of Steffani L. Ewing  
2003- Ronald Lee, Son of Ana Castellanos  
2009- Samantha Short, Daughter of Linda Short  
1998- Fallon Ginther, Daughter of Lisa Ginther  
2012- Hamzah Zubair, Son of Farah Zubair  
2012- Shelly Vick Hopkins, Daughter of Brandon & Paula Lansford  
2012- Danielle Basford, Daughter of Jerry & Laurie Basford  
2013- Patrick Bull, Son of Tom & Gayle Bull  
2013- Alan James Stokes, Son of Kellie Harris  
2014- Milana Ramirez, Daughter of Deann Ramirez  
2014- Tremaine Robinson, Son of Toya Robinson  
2014- Devyn Sloterdijk, Son of Janet Sloterdijk  
2015- Vanessa Whitford, Daughter of Russell & Nury Whitford  
2017- Joshua Bell, Son of Steve & Donna Bell  
2018 - Grace Sanders, Daughter of Mary Parker



## **CHAPTER NEWS**

**Our next meeting is Tuesday May 11th. 7pm. at Trinity Lutheran Church, 5201 Spring Cypress Rd. 77379. If you are unable to attend the in person meeting we will also have a zoom meeting Tuesday, May 25th. at 7pm.**

**This is a special Mother's Day issue of our newsletter. Happy Mother's Day to all moms.**



**The strongest person in the world is the grieving mother that wakes up and keeps going every morning.**



## **Cole Knight**

### **September 1996 - October 13, 2015**

On a rainy Friday night in September of 1996, my only son, Christopher Cole Knight made his appearance two weeks early as if to say, "let's get this party started". He weighed 6 lbs. 15 oz. so he wasn't early, just ready. From the beginning I knew what a miracle he was because I had been a preemie weighing less than 4 pounds. The fact that I was able to have a healthy boy was just miraculous. Cole was the son of two retail management parents so he bonded quickly with kids at daycare where he spent a lot of quality time. Soon he was (or so he thought) running the place that had opened when I was 6 months pregnant. He would stay at Kids R Kids until he was 12 years old.

He loved everything about it! School was also a fun time, and Cole started his social networking at a young age. He met his buddy, John Austin while waiting on the corner for the school bus at age 7. It was there that I also met his mom, Wanda. Wanda and I bonded quickly because she shared the name of my dear mom. Wanda was not a common name. Cole started hanging out with John Austin and his two younger brothers Cade and Riley. He would spend time with them sometimes while waiting for John Austin to get home. Soon enough they asked if Cole could attend church with them at Grace Presbyterian. He was thrilled to attend with them and soon was showing up at their house on Saturday night with a change of clothes for church hoping for another invite. Grace Presbyterian was Cole's new home. It was here that he soon learned more about giving back.

Cole had been eager at Gleason Elementary to have friends with special needs and be the guy to help them out whenever he could. He became a true friend to many. We also learned that Cole's lunch account was disappearing way too fast, sometimes by eating one extra lunch, but also by giving away lunches to friends who truly needed the money for a healthy lunch. At Grace, Cole soon learned about mission work. He learned that while working hard to help others, he would ultimately be the recipient of so much more. Soon he was going to Port Arthur to help with hurricane damage as well as mission work in downtown Houston helping the homeless. He soon made it to New York with John Austin on a mission trip. After graduation from Jersey Village High School in 2015, Cole accomplished his goal of getting baptized.

Cole was excited to attend a mission trip to Nicaragua with Grace and Living Water International, to build a well for a community where water was needed. The next day after returning home, he attended a mission trip to Denver, Colorado which would ultimately be his last mission trip. Both weeks were life changing for Cole and it was after these trips that he shared with me his plan of wanting to become a youth minister.

He would soon be starting at Blinn College in Bryan on the "Two at Blinn, then you're in, plan". As it was always his goal to be a Texas Aggie.

There is much more to share about our dear Cole, but he was in an automobile accident on October 6, 2015, and left us all on October 13, 2015. Unbeknownst to us, Cole had



registered to be a donor at the age of 16 and has been able to give the gift of life to many. We have been fortunate to know his liver recipient, Michael and continue to stay in touch. Such a blessing. Other blessings continue to allow us to be able to put one foot in front of the other on a daily basis, with Cole along side of us every step of the way.

Cole Knight Missions Scholarship at Grace Presbyterian was created by Cole's dear friends at church as a tangible way to carry on Cole's mission to help pave the way for individuals who display that same servant heart and passion for serving God through serving others. We have been blessed to be a part of the selection committee for the scholarships and the recipients are no doubt exactly who Cole would have picked himself.

We continue to be blessed by a scholarship in Cole's name at Jersey Village High School in the amount of \$1,061 dollars, which of course was his football jersey number. Cole was able to bring love and joy to so many, that he lives on through others. So blessed to have had him for 19 years and truly blessed to be his mom. Missing you, my Coleman.

Jan Knight  
Cole's Mom  
TCF Houston Northwest Chapter

*This was written by one of Cole's best friends.*

You're the greatest friend I ever had,  
And even though it may sound sad,  
I doubt that there's another man,  
Who can love his neighbor the way you  
can,  
For there isn't one that I have met,  
That can meet the standard you have set,  
It measures tall, and far, and wide,  
And your memory I'll hold inside,  
For even though your light is gone,  
Your legacy I'll carry on,  
Through the lives I touch and people I  
meet,  
I'll aim to show a love so sweet,  
That they will know the God that saves,  
His work, through you, still making waves,  
Is proof of the fruit of the gentle soul,  
I found inside my best friend Cole.





**Zach Doss**  
**December 1984 - March 15, 2018**

My son, Zach died on March 15, 2018. So I have just completed my year of firsts. Zach was 33 and truly I expected he would live forever. He often stated that he would. Apparently God had different plans for him and me I suppose. It has been a hard year. Zach was a PHD Fellow at University of Southern California. He had completed his first book and was on the cusp of a wonderful career doing what he loved most, writing.

Because we both shared a love of words, I have received comfort in the poems and letters friends and family have sent me. One of the things that has given me great solace is a poem my brother sent me. It is called "Surprised by Joy" by William Wordsworth. In this poem Wordsworth struggles to cope with the death of his little daughter. He refers to her as "my heart's best treasure". That so describes my son to me. My heart's best treasure. I love you Zach.

**Susan Doss**  
**Zach's Mom**  
**TCF Houston Northwest Chapter**

**SURPRISED BY JOY**  
**By William Wordsworth**

Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind  
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with whom  
But Thee, long buried in the silent Tomb,  
That spot which no vicissitude can find?  
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—  
But how could I forget thee?—Through what power,  
Even for the least division of an hour,  
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind  
To my most grievous loss!—That thought's return  
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,  
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,  
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;  
That neither present time, nor years unborn  
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

## Analysis of Wordsworth's Poem

*This poem, which begins in joy, ends in sorrow. At first, he experiences joy, and he is very surprised by the feeling. It is a feeling he never expected to experience again. And so he quickly turns to share it with someone, but that someone is gone. All at once, he becomes acutely aware of his grief. It sweeps over him and blots out any hint of joy that was once there. Wordsworth had turned to share his moment of joy with the very one whose loss he was suffering. Thus, it felt to him like he had just experienced the shock of loss all over again, and grief took over him as it had done when he first heard the news of the death of the one he loved so dearly. The poem ends with the realization that his joy would always be swept away in grief, because no amount of time could ever bring back to him that "heavenly face" which he was missing so dearly.*



## We All Need Support

By: Beth Crocker

Loving Memory of Cheyenne and Emily Crocker



It's been 20 years since our oldest daughter passed, and 16 since our second daughter went. So much has changed. I knew it would, I feared it would. The decades since came gently, for the most part. The only thing that would occasionally get me was whenever I'd realize how much time has passed, or how much has changed since then, I'd be shocked, because in many ways it still seems so much more recent. I can't say how long it feels, it's vague, but fresh. It's so long ago, but still so real on my heart.



I'd like to say it's better, it's easier, now... and it is, mostly. After 20 years I've pretty much run the routine cemetery visits into the ground. Posting pictures of the flowers I do four times a year... two birthdays and two passing dates. There was a time when family would join us. They faded away, making excuses, and who can blame them. I'd like to think I'm a happy person, or at least positive person to be around, I don't want my grief bringing others down, or sucking their energy from them. But when I'm left with no support, I find myself wondering, doubting, who I am. My husband, son, and I have been making those cemetery visits alone now for some time. It's nice, too. Maybe I miss the extra support, but it can also be more peaceful.

Then again, sometimes I need the support. The 20th was tougher than I was ready for, but I got through it. Barely. I was a wreck the whole week leading to it, and that might have been all, then back to my current life, but it wasn't all. By the end of the day I was very painfully aware that out of a combined sibling total of 7, between my husband and me, not counting their spouses, not a single one of them made any effort to reach out and check on us that day. My best friend did. Not my siblings. Not even a text message. I posted pictures on my social networks all week, mentioning my extra struggle with the 20th anniversary, and our siblings saw and acknowledged these posts, but not one of them had so much as commented on any of the threads. They knew. They didn't bother.

So why would I be using this not-so-supportive story to support bereaved parents? I want to remind you that you are not alone, and those with you are not necessarily who you would expect. We need support. We can't do this alone. It hurts when the flesh and blood of our children can't make time for us, I mean our children were their nieces and nephews, and the hard days just pass right by them without a thought. I know, they did think about our girls, and your children are remembered, too, but what we need is for them to tell us they are thinking of us on those days. First, we need to tell them that we need them in those days. After that, it's up to them, so surround yourself with those who support you. No matter the connection. Those are the people you need. Time does heal... almost. Create a new you. A you that still includes your child, and welcome only those who are ready to meet the new you, and walk the journey with you. Leave the rest behind. They are happy in their lives, and will never understand yours. That's ok, it's not their path. It's yours.

Beth Crocker  
TCF Houston Northwest Chapter



**Sean Weinstein**  
**By: Sherry Weinstein**  
**In loving memory of my son, Sean.**

After we lost our son, Sean, I found myself reflecting more on all the little things and all the milestones of his life growing up – his first steps, his first words, his first day of school, his first soccer goal, his first girlfriend, his high school graduation. There were so many memories that I had tucked away since he had grown. Now as I as I bring more memories to light, all those memories have become such precious treasures.

It was so wonderful seeing Sean grow through the years and become this thoughtful, caring young man. Around the time most parents were complaining about their teenagers, Sean was getting easier and easier. He was always one to have a good conversation, both with friends and parents. We were blessed to have so many wonderful conversations with him. Sean especially had a big impact on the people he met in just the three months he was in college. We could see that the bonds he made ran deep. In many of the notes we received, they spoke of long philosophical talks with Sean, being genuine and a good listener, being unique and thoughtful and of course, funny and a quick wit. We can see that the friendships and the impact he made will be with them throughout their lives.

Sean also started playing tennis at a very young age. He became more serious around the time he turned 10. The three of us would go to the neighborhood courts and hit for hours. Many Mother's Days were spent on the tennis courts – playing, talking, laughing and just having a lot of fun.

One of the things that I also enjoyed was when Sean told us that he was joining the orchestra and wanted to play the violin for his elective in middle school. I was thrilled since I had played the violin in junior high, which he had not known. So, for several years, we got to enjoy the performances and competitions through the beginning of high school.

One of my favorite Mother's Day, when Sean was in middle school, he and his dad surprised me as I was coming back from an errand. As I was walking back to the house from our detached garage, I noticed a bunch of goodies and flowers sitting on the patio table. Then, Sean came out from behind the garage, serenading me with his violin. They both made me so happy that day! That was a moment I will always treasure in my heart!

**Sherry Weinstein,**  
**TCF Houston Northwest Chapter**





## **My dear Danielle,**

Although I am technically still your mother, there is no longer any joy in my heart; only just an empty hole where it once was. I have lost the most precious gift that was ever given to me; you! I know that you were only on loan to me by God, but I wasn't ready to give you back so soon.

On March 29, 1988, I was blessed to become the mother of the most amazing human being. God chose me the responsibility to love, cherish, and protect you. You changed my life forever! I never believed that you, this tiny, little girl would give me the greatest purpose in my life. I could not believe that I could love someone so much. I saw you grow into this amazing little girl. As you developed, your personality started to shine through and make you into the wonderful woman that you would become for the rest of your short life. You were so kind by the way you would

always go out of your way to give and help those in need. You have no idea how proud I was of you. You were beautiful, caring, sweet, gentle, nice and so many other wonderful qualities. I hate Mother's Day, your birthday, holidays, and the day you died. Now I can only spend those days at your grave.

You gave me the most loving grandchildren, Talyn, Riley, Kacie, and Landon. This horrible, horrible disease robbed him of the chance to know what a loving, adoring, and gentle mother you were and you weren't given the chance to see his beautiful little face, his sad little lip when he was about to cry, the way he giggled, crawled, walked, talked, and so much more. It just wasn't fair. Your children shouldn't have to grow up without you.

You were my absolute best friend. I couldn't wait for my off days so we could eat Mexican food, get our nails done, and going to Hobby Lobby (your most favorite place in the world!) Oh, how I miss that. It seems like every place I go reminds me of you, I think about you all day and night and I can't get you out of my mind, the songs I hear, and I'll see or think of something funny and I find myself picking up the phone to tell you things, but then I remember, you're not here anymore.

Then in the beginning of January, you began to tell me and Kevin that you weren't feeling well. This was strange because you never got sick and if you were sick, you never told anyone. You were always so healthy. You never smoked, drank, did drugs, and you ate the right food. So when you asked Kevin to take you to the ER, I got scared. Then several more doctor's visits and more trips to the ER and no one could tell you what was wrong. After all the blood tests and every other test there were, the doctor's ordered a bone marrow biopsy. Then we were given the devastating news; you had Leukemia! You were immediately taken to MD Anderson. Over the next year. You were given chemotherapy and would get into remission and every time you would relapse while waiting for your bone marrow/stem cell donor. you would relapse. You went through this 6 times, but you kept fighting; You were a WARRIOR! I know you were fighting and fighting for the kids. You suffered through so much pain and disappointment. You were never going to quit because you knew those babies loved you and needed



you. Sweetheart, you fought with all your might, but this was just too much for your fragile, little body. I was so proud of you, and I didn't want to lose you, but I couldn't bear to see you suffer anymore.

I want you to know that the kids are holding up and I know how much they miss you. But they are fine, so don't you worry sweetheart. Dani, I know you wouldn't want me to, but the only place I find peace, is sitting at your grave. There, I can talk to you about the kids, how much I loved you and miss you. I tell you about what's going on in this crazy world and how much has changed. I can tell you how sorry I am for the things I didn't say or say enough and the things I should not have said. If I could only have you back for one more day so I could tell you how much I loved you, how proud I was of you, how blessed I was to have had you. I have so many regrets that I want to make right. These weigh so heavily on my heart and oh I wish I could take those back. You were the best daughter a Mother could have!

Momma loves and misses you so much and I know that I will see you again one day!



**Wendy DeVillier**  
**Danielle's Mom**  
**TCF Houston Northwest Chapter**

*Mother's Day is a day of appreciation and respect. I can think of no mothers who deserve it more than those who had to give a child back.*

*~Erma Bomback*



**The Red Guitar**  
**By Laura Hengel**  
**In Memory of Sean**  
**July 14, 1985 - October 10,**  
**2010**

The old red guitar sits mutely on the black metal stand. Silence from the instrument resembles the quiet found on cold winter mornings after snow has noiselessly fallen and blanketed the ground during the dark night. A mother tenderly picks

up the guitar and brushes away any dust that has accumulated since it was stilled. With tears flowing down her cheeks, she lovingly holds the guitar tightly to her chest, right in front of her broken heart. And she remembers.

This guitar once belonged to a boy, an explorer of life with a sharp mind, quick wit, and a deep love of music. He especially enjoyed listening to “oldies” that his father would play on their stereo. *Led Zeppelin*, *Crosby Stills Nash and Young*, and *The Allman Brothers* gave cause for him to smile, dance and twitch his fingers as though he were strumming his own musical instrument. He longed to “jam” like the great ones of rock and roll.

“If only I had a guitar!” he would dream as he imagined himself on stage with Eric Clapton or Stevie Ray Vaughn.

In second grade only one wish appeared on his Christmas list, a guitar. He knew exactly which stringed instrument he wanted. Electric, shiny, and red, it stood erect and proud in the front window of The Guitar Shop. After much urging and pleading with his father, they went inside where he held the guitar in his small hands. He stroked the long neck feeling the tension of the silver strings through his fingers. He just knew this would be the guitar for him. And it was.

The guitar and the boy were forever friends. When young, he and the guitar would go to lessons together. Hours were spent practicing chords they had learned. This task was difficult for him as his young fingers were not quite long enough to reach the strings just the way the teacher had shown. But they persevered; the boy and his guitar. Soon melodious sounds were heard coming from this twosome. Not yet the music of the “great rock and rollers”, but they were on their way.

As the years passed, the boy grew, into a teenager and finally a young adult. He never lost his love for his guitar and the music they made together. Sometimes they performed for family or friends. Other times, they played alone, just the two of them. The boy drew great solace as he became enveloped with tunes that came to life as he strummed his fingers over the nickel-plated steel strings on the red guitar. They had a wonderful life full of rhythm and harmony.

But that all ended on a fateful day in October. Train. Tracks. Explosion. Fire. Darkness. Nothing. That day the boy and the music died.



Now the guitar only gives comfort that comes from the silence of memories. It sits hushed on the black metal stand and waits for me-the boy's mother- to pick up the guitar that once belonged to the boy, my son, Sean, and hold it tightly over my chest, right in front of my broken heart.

And I remember.



**Laura Hengle**  
**Sean's mom**  
**TCF Houston Northwest Chapter**

## THIS BEREAVED MOTHER'S DAY

*Let us recognize all mothers who have lost a child*

*Let us acknowledge their strength and eternal love*

*Let us remember their beautiful children today and always*

*The Sacred Seashore*



## Phone Friends

All of the people on the following list are bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. They understand what you are going through and have all wished to be included in this list in the hope that anyone who needs to talk will reach out to them. They are willing to talk with you at any time you need their support. Some have listed the specific area in which they have personal experience but they do not intend to imply that that is the only topic they wish to talk about. We all have experienced this journey through grief and it encompasses much more than the specifics surrounding our individual loss. Having a compassionate person to listen when you are having a bad day or just need someone to reach out to when you feel overwhelmed can make the difference in getting through one more day. We have all been there and understand, please feel free to contact any one of us.

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