



M.I.S.S.ing Angels

A publication of the M.I.S.S. Foundation: a non-profit organization

A Sanctuary for Bereaved Families

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Volume 9, Issue 2

The Globalization of Kindness

By Joanne Cacciatore

I began the Kindness Project in October of 1997 with the intent that we'd sell about 1,000 Kindness Project cards. I thought perhaps a few others would like to reach out and perform a good deed in memory of their child. To date, the Kindness Project has far exceeded my once-narrowed vision.

Since its inception, we have sold more than 500,000 Kindness Project Cards all around the globe! We've received orders from Canada to Switzerland and from Australia to Malta...and of course, every state in the U.S.

It is confirmation of the absolute courage and insight of our many members—parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, friends and neighbors - who reach out to help another because of the love for a child.

Those of you who have participated in the Kindness Project, thank you. We are changing a culture- transforming our way of life and responses to death.

We are here to show others that death does not end a relationship. An individual can indeed change the world that we live in...even if that person has died.

This story was sent to me by a participant of the Kindness Project...This family clearly has the same idea!

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past 10 years or so. It all began because my husband, Mike, hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it—overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting

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Take Note:

- See page 8 for details on...
Kid's Kamp for Ages 5-17
- See page 2 - *Volunteers Needed for Research Study*



It isn't for the moment you are struck that you need courage, but for the long up hill battle to faith, sanity and security.

~ Anne Morrow Lindbergh

WHEN CHILDREN DIE

*When children die,
they leave behind tears and scars,
but also memories and smiles.
When children die, tears are shed for healing.
The parents' tears fill oceans,
their shedding clears their minds.
The mind then heals, tears become scars in the soul.
The soul then heals, scars evolve into memories.
The parents then heal, memories grow into smiles.
There are no more sincere tears falling from human eyes
than those shed when a child dies.
Those tears will become memories.
Those tears will bloom into smiles.
Smiles of love.
The scar is the illness,
the alarming diagnosis,
the frightening possibilities,
the endless suffering,
the dreadful disease,
the pain in the soul,
the sadness of the end.
The scars then blossom into memories.
Memories of a happy beginning.
Our beautiful child, a cheerful event,
the handsome expression, the joyful times,
the pretty hand, the lovely occasions,
the twinkle in the eye, the child's smile,
the bright mind, the family together.
the good-bye kiss.
Memories filled with happiness.
Memories of the child's pretty smile.
Memories of love. Our child's smile.
When children die,
tears are shed,
scars are healed,
memories bloom,
smiles are born.
For every tear shed, as time goes by,
a memory is born, for every tear shed,
a smile blooms.
It is as if our child is telling us:*

*"When you remember me, do not cry anymore;
when you think of me, smile;
tears, yes, but less and less;
and smiles, oh yes, smiles,
forever more and more smiles,
oceans filled with smiles."*

*Guillermo A. Gutiérrez-Calleros, M.D.
Dedicated to the memory of Nico Gutierrez Cantin
A soul too beautiful for this world...*

MISS Foundation inspires memorial garden

Through the wonderful readings in the MISSING Angels I have been inspired to do something special for others in memory of my little son Kody on the anniversary of his death.

Kody was among God's earthbound angels with broken wings, he was severely disabled and was not given long to live after his birth. He fooled all the doctors and lived to be seven years old. For a little boy that could not walk or talk or use his hands he made more contributions to the world and bettered more people's lives than anyone I have met. And through the "kindness projects" that we, Kody's family, continue to do in his memory - his selfless spirit is being kept alive.

This past October marked 5 years since Kody left our world. I wanted to do something really special - really different, I walked outside last summer and gazed into the cloud dappled sky and asked Kody - "what can we do for others, how can we make people remember how remarkable you were ... show me the way?" Within two days, Kody's special education pre-school teacher called to ask me to talk to another family who had just lost a child. She said she wished there was something we could do to remember these children that have died so young. You see this was a school for extremely disabled children, and these teachers had experienced the loss of seven of their students in the past 10 years. Some of these children came from families so poor that they could not even afford a gravestone with their child's name in memorial. So - that was it!

I got a list of the "missing angels" the teachers told me what their favorite things in life were - such as balloons, music, trains, swinging, bubbles, cameras, shoes and laughing. I set out to paint a special tile for each child, then make those tiles into a mural. The mural was then cemented onto a large heavy elevated garden box - elevated so that the present student's in wheelchairs could water the flowers in the garden. We held a wonderful memorial service for all seven families; each family planted a unique flower in memory of their child. Kody's 10 year old sister Abbe played "Come Little Children" on the violin. We shared stories about our children, we laughed we cried and we remembered our little missing angels. At the end of the day, a grieving Father came up to me with tears running down his face and thanked me, he said the death of his daughter was more than his wife could take and she left him. There was never any service for his daughter; this was six years ago. He said he would come once a week to water her flowers and help the other children in her memory. You never know what a difference a kind act of remembrance can make.



From left are Aliso School special education teacher Laurie Bryant, Franklin School special education aide Mary Ann Ramey, Marian Von Metzger and Brooke Rye (kneeling). From right are Rory Rye, Abbe Rye and Franklin special education teacher Christy Swider.

The Globalization of Kindness

by Joanne Cacciatore - *Continued from page 1*

powder for Grandma, the gifts of desperation because you couldn't think of anything else. Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike.

The inspiration came in an unusual way. Our son, Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes. As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford. Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. And as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat.

Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids—all kids—and he knew them, having coached little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came to me. That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition—one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and so on and on.

The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It

was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure.

The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning, it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope. Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

An act of kindness

Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at Stanford Hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, "Yes, I'll do it if it will save Liz." As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?"

Being young, the boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood.

*R*eflection, *T*ontemplation, *H*ope

M.i.s.s. Foundation

Passages 2005 Parental Bereavement Conference

May 26 through May 29, 2005

At the Pointe Tapatio Cliffs in Phoenix, Arizona

FOR GRIEVING FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS

Continuing education credits and certificates available for professionals



Name/Names _____

Agency Name: _____

Address _____ Apt./Unit _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Phone () _____ E-Mail _____

Method of payment Check Invoice Agency Credit Card (Must register online)

PO Number # _____ Billing Dept _____

Deceased child's full name and dates of birth and death (if applicable)

Conference Fees Per Person	Bereaved Family Member	Professional Fee	Total Amount Due
May 26, 2005	\$60.00	\$80.00	
May 27 and 28, 2005	\$120.00	\$160.00	
May 29, 2005	\$60.00	\$75.00	
All four days	\$220.00	\$275.00	
Kindness Project Sponsor-a-child, parent, or grandparent to attend conference	\$120 per person	x _____	In memory of
Kids Conference Fees			
Evening of May 26, 2005	\$15.00		
May 27, 2005	\$20.00		
May 28, 2005	\$20.00		
May 29, 2005	\$20.00		
Child's name and age (for each one attending "Kids Kamp")			
TOTAL PAID:			

Fax Registration to 623.979.1001 or send your payment and registration to:
MISS Foundation- Conference Registrar, PO Box 5333, Peoria, Arizona 85385

2005 Conference and Gathering, Phoenix, Arizona

Track 1 Family Focus
Track 2 Open Forum (Professionals and Families)
Track 3 Psychosocial Intervention (Professionals only)
Track 4 Creative Arts (Professionals and Families)

Thursday, May 26, 2005 - Pre-conference workshops

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Registration	
8:30 am - 9:00 am	Pre-Conference Welcome	
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	To Help One Person is to Help the World: Culturally Sensitive Bereavement Support Facilitator and Peer Counselor Training Joanne Cacciatore-Garard, CT	The Dying Child: Helping Families as Children Face Death Angela Iverson Shayla Dugan
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Luncheon	
1:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Bereavement Support and Peer Counselor Training (Continued)	The Dying Child: Helping Families as Children Face Death (Continued)
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Mexican Fiesta Reception	
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	The Double Edged Sword: Grieving Grandparent Session Robin Kennedy	Grief, Anxiety, and Depression in the Subsequent Pregnancy Peter Barr, M.D., PhD

Friday, May 27, 2005- Main Conference Day One

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Registration	
8:30am - 9:00 am	Welcome and "Memories of 2004" Tribute	
9:00 am - 10:15 pm	Keynote Address: Vanessa Gorman, "Losing Layla" The Creative Alchemy of Healing after a Child's Death	
10:45 - 12:00 pm	Keynote Address: Dr Peter Barr Understanding Grief Emotions	
12:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Italian Grande Buffet Luncheon	
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	A Different Kind of Parenting Kara and Hawk Jones	The Power of Personal Beliefs: An African American Woman's Journey Through Grief Deborah Brooks
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Yoga and Centering John Michael Bliss	Creative Arts in Healing Clay Expressions Workshop Joy Kockerbeck
		Movie and Discussion: Some Babies Die: Psychosocial Intervention Peter Barr, M.D., PhD
		A Look to the East: Is Death the End or the Beginning? Katie Hodge Dean

Saturday, May 28, 2005- Main Conference Day Two

7:30am - 9:00 pm	Continental Breakfast on the Terrace	
9:00 am - 10:30 am	Keynote Address: Dr. Dan Baker The Gift of Ryan: One Father's Travel from Despair to Hope	
10:45 am - 12:00 pm	Bereaved Parent Panel Discussion Topic: The Journey into Grief's Past, Present, and Future Moderators Dr. John DeFraim and Joanne Cacciatore	
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Luncheon	
2:00pm - 5:00 pm	Bereaved Parent Support Group Meeting Dr. Peter Barr Vanessa Gorman	Transforming Grief: Finding Purpose in the Darkness of Sorrow Dr. Dan Baker
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Closing Ceremonies and the Candlelight Memorial Service Followed by the Festival of Chocolates	

Sunday, May 29, 2005- Post Conference Workshops

10:00 am -12:30 pm	Movie and Discussion: Losing Layla with Vanessa Gorman and Peter Barr, M.D.	
12:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Luncheon, Pool Party, and Hawaiian Luau	
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Faith Based Support: The Faces of Spirituality in the Death Experience Deborah Brooks	Putting the Past to Words: Poetry Workshop Kara and Hawk Jones
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Saying Goodbye: Post Conference Parental Debriefing Session Dr. John DeFraim	Ritual and Remembrance: Scrapbooking as a way to Remember and Honor Your Child Amber MacCarter
		Changing Laws and Policies in Your State: Don't just sit there! Start a Revolution! Joanne Cacciatore and John Nevells

"It was the most wonderful conference I have attended in my 42 years of nursing."
Sue Kunberger, R.N., Conference 2004 Attendee

"The conference was one of the most amazing experiences in our lives."
Gail and Dean Hermano, Bereaved Parents, 2004 Conference Attendees



31 Months

By Kelli Rivera

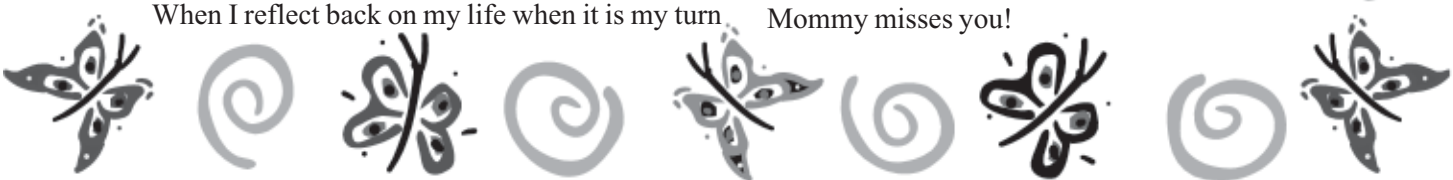
I looked at the calendar today and part of me was really taken back by what I have discovered. I am only five months away from my daughter being gone for three years. Today marks 31 months. The days are spinning by and I seem to keep myself busy. I am for the most part happy with my life, but have a void that will never be filled. But the sad thing is, most people mistake happy for forgetting or being "over it". Rest assured that will never happen.

I am at peace and confident of an after life with my child and that keeps me going from day to day. I must keep going and carry on her legacy so that the world will know my daughter and what she meant to me. My child's life, although brief, will not be one swept away and forgotten. Her light will shine in me as I reach out to others. She is in my heart, she is my strength from day to day.

When I reflect back on my life when it is my turn

to cross over I want to know that I have lived a life that ALL of my children would be proud of. Jennifer, although young, lived a life that was full of love, she was full of laughter and joy. Her innocence and unconditional love is something that some people could only dream of having. She brightened rooms and infected people around her with her contagious giggle. The way I reflect on the gift that I have been given as Jennifer's mother, I can only dream that my life will be just as meaningful when I am through. But you know what? It will, even if I never become rich and have all of the finer things in life.....that's okay, because nothing makes me more proud than just being a MOM!

And as I sit here and drink my strawberry/banana smoothie, I lift it and toast a life never to be forgotten! A child who blessed this world with nine years, nine months, and four days...thank you Jennifer Marie...I will see you again! I can only imagine what that day will be like!
Mommy misses you!



UPDATE on MISSING Angels Bill: Across the Country...

MISSing Angels States - by the numbers (as of 1/7/2005):

Eleven states currently offer an official, legal document that includes the words Certificate of Birth in the title to the parents of stillborn children. These states are considered 'MISSing Angels States'.

Six states currently have pending legislation that, when enacted, will qualify them as 'MISSing Angels States'.

Six states currently have citizens who have contacted their legislators and have asked them to write legislation that could potentially have them become 'MISSing Angels States'.

That's 23 states that are - or are potentially going to be 'MISSing Angels States'.



Seven states currently offer their citizens a 'Certificate of Stillbirth'. Although they are both worded very similarly, a 'Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth' and a 'Certificate of Stillbirth' are not the same thing. Legislators, Policy Analysts, and State Health Departments agree, there is a subtle, yet immense difference in the two. The MISS Foundation believes that all states should record births as births... whether live or still. Thus, our goal, for those states that offer a 'Certificate of Stillbirth', is to change the certificate to a 'Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth', which we view as a 'BIRTH' certificate.

Add these Seven (once changed) to the 23 above - that would be 30 out of 50!

Please see the state chart at www.MISSingAngelsBill.org for more detailed information about your state - or how you can become involved in your state.

Let it Go?

By Michael R. Chase

True Accounts of Grief, from the Heart of a Professional

As a firefighter in a small town, when we roll on a call there's a better than average chance we'll know our patient. An acquaintance? A friend? A loved one? Yes, the chances are very good. It's part of the job. What do you do?

LET IT GO.

Roll on a tone, 11:30 PM, to a motor vehicle accident and arrive to find a life long friend with his head pinned between a tree. No chance he's alive. Red and blue lights illuminate the operator - the drunk with his head hung in shame. He, too, grew up with me - loyalty, pity, anger, and grief. Which to show? Which to hide?

LET IT GO.

The day after Christmas- an evening rescue. The girl is in her thirties-young, beautiful, vivacious. Every day, you remember, she had a wave, a smile and a kind word. Storming up the stairs, you find her resting peacefully, but not resting. The needle and belt on the table tell the story as you start CPR and your partner readies O2 and defibrillation. Frustration as you feel your compressions break ribs in the frail girl. Someone called 911, traced from a bar while another user who'd been there wanted to be safely away before calling. Lost minutes. Lost life. Thirty-one years old. Frustration, anger, grief.

LET IT GO.

Interrupted afternoon with the family. Hit the lights and head for an injured child. A ten-year-old girl playing on the family yacht falls down the stairs. She has an obvious deformity of right forearm. Brave little thing, bites her lip as we pump up the vacuum splint. Her eyes fix on the salon door awaiting the comfort of mom. Her mother is seemingly too busy with her lunch in a world class restaurant

to be bothered. "Let the nanny handle it," and abruptly hangs up the phone. That little girl was the best patient I ever treated- so quiet, a good listener and not a tear. Anger, contempt, frustration, pity.

LET IT GO.

Transport, 1:00AM, routine turned personal challenge. An infant with a genetic heart valve defect. Thin thread of life glowing faint green on the EKG. I look down and see my own little girl, ages only days apart. Mother in the jump seat staring unblinking at the child who'd only months earlier filled her womb with new sensations. Those fixed eyes trying desperately to give this little one the strength she obviously lacks. Frustration, helplessness, yearning.

LET IT GO.

6:15AM, no problem for a morning person. A motor vehicle accident, a common one here but rarely urgent in the way of personal injury. Not today. Bad intersection, no signs, two car collision, roll over with entrapment. Cap on the pickup sheared, jagged fiberglass, occupant pinned half out of the vehicle. His arm is penetrated by the jagged fiberglass, grating, cutting. Short handed extraction, scoop and go. He lived but lost his arm. He once made his living with his hands. Pity.

LET IT GO.

A matter of time, short time. First sight on scene is a hysterical mother, an expressionless father, a very small motionless form and a mangled bike. A seven-year-old girl, helmet unsecured, open skull fracture, unresponsive. Load and go fast. Two shaken parents give details to an officer. The driver on a through street could not have seen them through the hedge. Happened in 1992. The girl has yet to wake from the coma. Much anger, incredulity, grief.

LET IT GO.

But we don't. We don't let it go, not completely. We can't. In the field we can't let it show. Remain composed, for

the victim and friends and loved ones. We show strength that is not always ours. Courage we don't always feel. Aloofness, which is always a lie. You see we are, after all, human. We hurt, laugh, cry, love and hate. We feel, just like our patients, grief, loss, shame and guilt. We do not, however, feel just our own. The cries. The pleading. The tears. The faces. They don't come off with the uniform. We can't let them go completely because we're caring human beings. If we weren't, we would not have chosen this career. So what happens to all these feelings? When we go home to our lives, we take a piece of each of them with us.

Michael R. Chase is a firefighter/ EMT with the Nantucket Fire Department in Nantucket, MA. Michael has been involved with the service and fire department for ten years. He has resided on Nantucket all his life. His family moved there in the 1700's. Michael is married and has a lovely three-year-old daughter. He says he has been writing since he can remember- "Since birth I think." These three things make up the center of Michael's life. "Okay," he says, "they are my life. I'm a simple man and my attitude in life is best summed up in a quote from Albert Einstein, "Only a life lived for others is a life worth living."





"The most honest, truth-telling in this world is done by children." Oliver Wendall Holmes

Children's Retreat: The Kid's Kamp for Ages 5-17



Schedule of Kid's Kamp

May 26-29, 2005

Thursday night movie and dinner
from 6:30 -9 pm!

Friday and Saturday all day and all night fun
sessions from 8am to 10 pm!

Sunday Kid's Kamp from 10am to 8:30 pm!

Activities Include:

- Fun with the Phoenix Fire and Police Departments
 - Art and Writing Expressions
 - Karaoke Fun
 - Sharing Circles
 - Balloon Releases
 - Fun with music and crafts
 - Drum circles

Breakfast and Lunch are included in conference rates for kids!

What Kids Say About Kid's Kamp Weekends:

"I had a lot of fun and met lots of new friends!"

"It was so cool and I got to talk about how I really feel."

"It was awesome and I want to come back again next year!"