



BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO-DURHAM REGION

NEWSLETTER

"Bereaved helping the bereaved learn to live with grief"

ISSUE 4

www.bfodurham.net

2016

2016 SUMMER FUNDRAISERS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



THE RIDE TO REMEMBER is proud to contribute \$15,000 to Bereaved Families of Ontario – Durham Chapter. This brings the total donation to over \$65,000 since the inception of the ride 6 years ago.

It was a beautiful day with the sun shining and 85 motorcycles touring the countryside with the riders in their matching orange T-shirts. Starting off in Uxbridge with complimentary refreshments from Tim Horton's, the riders proceeded to their first stop at the Riverside Restaurant in Norland. After lunch, we mounted up for a scenic tour down to a riverside park in Lindsay where the riders took a break and stretched their legs for the final leg of the trip which would bring us back to Uxbridge. Wixan's Bridge supplied the venue for the evening get-together where raffles, silent auction, food and live entertainment provided the backdrop for friends and family to get together in a pleasing atmosphere to remember loved ones lost.

Each year we are joined by new participants who enjoy the opportunity to dedicate the day to their personal loss. The positive feedback, in particular from people new to our event, provides the energy to look forward to next year.

Special thanks must go to ride organizers Lorne Johannessen and Donna Sherrard who donate countless hours to benefit BFO-D. Just knowing their efforts are having a positive impact on people handling the enormous challenge of losing a child is enough to motivate their efforts. We are fortunate to have friends that are so supportive.

Of course our sponsors are crucial to the success and special thanks to the many who have supported this event every year from its inception.

In closing, we hope that this event and BFO-Durham are pieces to the puzzle that help people navigate the challenges that grief presents.

OCTOBER 2016

Infant Loss Drop-In
Monday 3rd, 7-9 p.m.

Evening Drop-In
Wednesday 12th, 7-9 p.m.

Thanksgiving - office closed
Monday 10th

Afternoon Drop-In
Monday 17th, 1-3 p.m.

Evening Drop-In
Thursday 26th, 7-9 p.m.

Reconnect Drop-In I/L
CANCELLED

NOVEMBER 2016

Infant Loss Drop-In
Monday 7th, 7-9 p.m.

Evening Drop-In
Wednesday 9th, 7-9 p.m.

Father's Drop-In
Wednesday 16th, 7-9 p.m.

Afternoon Drop-In
Monday 21st, 1-3 p.m.

Evening Drop-In
Thursday 23rd, 7-9 p.m.

ANGEL TREE OF LIGHT

Thursday 24th, 7:30-9 p.m.

Reconnect Drop-In for C/L
Monday 28th, 7-9 p.m.

DECEMBER 2016

Brunch with Santa
Sunday 4th, 10 a.m.

Infant Loss Drop-In
Monday 5th, 7-9 p.m.

(SEE PAGE 4 FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY CALENDAR DATES)



BEACH DANCE - On September 10, 2016 we held another "Beach Dance" at the Harmony Creek Community Centre. It was a fun-filled night where family and friends danced to the music of DJ Steve Meek. There were many winners of the numerous raffle gifts and silent auction gifts. We had a booze basket and 50/50 tickets.

A special thank you to all the young volunteers who helped out tremendously during the day and at the "Beach Dance", these young people are always ready to lend a hand.

Thanks go out to our Dance Committee for all their hard work in selling tickets, getting prizes and helping out at the Beach Dance. Members involved were Debbie and Brad Brown, Beth Bryan, Chris and Suzanne Garvey, Rick and Sherry Mitchell, Wayne Wanamaker and Angela White.

We would like to thank all of our sponsors who generously donated gifts to make our Beach Dance a great success. \$7,000 was raised for Bereaved Families of Ontario – Durham Region.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR

This issue of your BFO-D newsletter has been a challenging one to put together and I want to apologize for my tardiness in getting it ready to go out to you. Personal circumstances sometime take over one's life in such a way that everything else sits on the back burner. Such was the case for me.

Having said that, I am very pleased and grateful that our members stepped up and contributed more to this issue than all the other issues combined since I have been your editor. Thank you for your contributions which made it so much easier for me to assemble some great reading material. I also want to thank Jane Carter for all her help in providing me with these submissions. So please sit back and enjoy!

As you will read in this newsletter, this year's fundraising efforts by our members and volunteers has been nothing short of fantastic. The Walk to Remember, The Ride to Remember Brent Foster, The Beach Dance, The Run to Remember Jeffrey Warne, the Bike, Blade or Board for Blake, the Shelby Anne Thomas 2016 Memorial Golf Tournament, Racquel's Chair and Danielle's Gift Bags are all contributors to the continuing running success of BFO-D. We thank each and everyone who gave their time and energy in making these fundraisers such a success. We are very thankful and lucky to have such great volunteers.

Please mark on your calendar the "Angel Tree of Lights" which is scheduled for November 24th from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Again this year, the Committee has been busy getting the angels ready; check the Sneak Preview of these angels in the making, on the next page. This is BFO-D's last fundraiser for the year and we look forward to seeing you there.

If you are receiving this newsletter and have never attended one of our meetings, it is because someone who cares about you feels that our newsletter may help you on your journey through grief. We're sorry for the reason you are receiving this newsletter but invite you to attend our monthly meetings. We cannot take away your pain but we can offer friendship and support.

Wishing you peace throughout the holiday season. ~ Micheline Ball

WON'T YOU JOIN US; YOU TOO CAN HELP!!

THE FOLLOWING VOLUNTEERS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT BFO-DURHAM ON A DAILY BASIS

ONE-ON-ONE AND GROUP SUPPORT FACILITATORS - Jane Carter, Charlotte McMorro, Margaret Fortune, Magda Zoelman, Joan Pearson, Nichole Dickhoff, Denise Love, Jackie Foster, Denise Robinson, Angela White, Cheryl Clarke, Jan Mclean, Yvette Byrne-Menard, Colleen Timmins, Louise O'Donnell, Lisa Fogg, Rebecca Alley-Wilson, Kimberley Williams, Denise Calbery, Donna Christie, Vicki Davis, Sherene Donovan, Gary Goswell, Chris Garvey, Janice Hicks, Wayne Wanamaker, Cara Tunney, Sherry Lancaster, Chantelle McNeil, Sherry Mitchell, Penney Claire Tilley, Andrea Onley, Jonathan Onley, Greg Wright, Brad Brown, Jennifer Carter and Kevin Goswell

LIBRARIAN - Denise Love - ASSISTANTS — Alexis LoveGordon FUNDRAISER — Marcy Miles

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS - Denise Love, Marlene Charewicz, Bev Campbell, Angela White, Debbie Brown, Kelly Grieg, Beth Bryan

ANNIVERSARY LETTERS - Debbie Brown

WEB SITE - Ronda Evans

NEWSLETTER - Micheline Ball

MOTHERS' RETREAT - Susan Hendricks and Joyce MacIntyre

BFO-DURHAM BOARD OF DIRECTORS - Gary Goswell, Louise O'Donnell, Marian Rehr, Margaret Fortune, Sharon Sears, Chris Garvey, Micheline Ball



YOUR FEED-BACK IS VERY IMPORTANT!!

THANK YOU TO THE MANY WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THIS NEWSLETTER, WHICH IS A VOICE FOR THE BEREAVED. WE ENDEAVOUR TO KEEP YOU AS UP TO DATE AS POSSIBLE WITH ALL ON-GOING INFORMATION AND WOULD LIKE YOUR HELP; SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS, IDEAS OR REQUESTS THROUGH THIS VENUE. RECOMMEND A BOOK AND WRITE WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT IT. SHARE YOUR STORY, SUBMIT A POEM, OR TELL OF THINGS THAT HAVE HELPED YOU ALONG YOUR GRIEF JOURNEY. WE THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR GETTING INVOLVED!

FROM THE DESK OF YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past August marked six months into my tenure as Executive Director of Bereaved Families of Ontario - Durham Region. I continue to be inspired by those caring and compassionate members here at BFO-D, all of whom share a common bond of sorrow that we would rather not have experienced in the first place. However, our "club" is filled with people who "get it" and who are more than willing to help each other through their grief journey.

At this time of year, as days get colder and winter approaches, we must all endure the unrelenting reality of a holiday without our children. Even after all these years, I still miss my lost children immensely at Christmas time. I truly look forward once again to the Angel Tree of Lights, where I know I am not alone on this journey. Please join us on Thursday, November 24th for this wonderful evening, now in its twenty-first year. This is another time where we have an opportunity to meet other bereaved parents and share stories of our children. The evening has become a very special night for many families.

Whether you are newly bereaved or have been bereaved for many years, please know we are here to support you through this difficult season. In December we will be holding our regular drop-ins as well as our unique "Getting through the Holidays" drop-in, which will be held Monday December 12, 2016. We also have an afternoon drop-in Monday December 19, 2016 from 1-3 pm.

Until next time, may the love in your hearts and the fond memories of those you have lost help you through those most difficult of times.

~ Jane Carter

TO ALL PARENTS OF TEENS

We are currently trying to arrange support for your teens in the near future at Bereaved Families of Ontario—Durham Region.

If you are interested, please call the office to register for an information night, so that we can determine the needs in our community.

905-579-4293

2016 ANGEL TREE OF LIGHTS SNEAK PREVIEW



Angels Painted by Volunteers



Angel Workshop

UPCOMING EVENTS

Evening Drop-In

Monday 12th, 7-9 p.m.

GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

Afternoon Drop-In

Monday 19th, 1-3 p.m.

OFFICE CLOSED

December 20th-January 3rd

JANUARY 2016

Infant Loss Drop-In

Monday 9th, 7-9 p.m.

Evening Drop-In

Wednesday 11th, 7-9 p.m.

Afternoon Drop-In

Monday 16th, 1-3 p.m.

Father's Drop-In

Wednesday 18th, 7-9 p.m.

Evening Drop-In

Thursday 26th, 7-9 p.m.

Mothers' Retreat

Friday 27th

Reconnect Drop-In I/L

Monday 30th, 7-9 p.m.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS' CORNER

A BEGINNING

**ONE DAY YOU WAKE UP AND REALIZE YOU MUST HAVE SURVIVED
BECAUSE YOU ARE STILL HERE, ALIVE AND BREATHING.
BUT YOU DON'T REMEMBER THE INFINITELY SMALL STEPS
AND DECISIONS YOU TOOK TO GET THERE.
YOUR ONLY AWARENESS IS THAT YOU HAVE SHED MILES OF TEARS
ON WHAT SEEMS TO BE AN ENDLESS ROAD OF SORROW.
ONE DAY, ONE GLORIOUS DAY, YOU WAKE UP AND
FEEL YOUR SKIN TINGLE AGAIN AND YOU FORGET
JUST FOR AN INSTANT THAT YOUR HEART IS BROKEN
AND IT IS A BEGINNING.**

~ Susan Borrowman, Kingston, ON



"RACQUEL'S CHAIR" FUNDRAISER

On September 17th, 2016 we held our second annual fundraiser "A ROSE GIVEN TO HER" in honour of our daughter Racquel Granato.

It was held at the St. Bonaventure Church Hall in North York where guests were treated to an amazing Greek dinner catered by Shrimp Cocktail in Oshawa, a comedian, Zumba dancing, silent auction, raffles prizes, games room and a grand prize giveaway of a weekend away in Muskoka. We had 145 people in attendance and were able to raise \$2,500 for BFO-Durham, as well as donate money to Sick Kids Hospital and a dance scholarship in Racquel's name.

We are hoping that some of the funds will be used to help get a program underway at BFO-D for kids under 18. We are so honoured to have raised these funds with the support of our family and friends and look forward to another successful event next year.

~ Rocco, Kelly and Ross

MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR

Wave of Light for October 15th

Everyone is invited to light a candle on October 15th at 7pm in ALL Time Zones, ALL Over The World

If everyone lights a candle at 7pm and keeps it burning for at least one hour, there will be a continuous WAVE OF LIGHT over the entire world on October 15th, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

This Candle Burns
In Loving Memory of
Our Babies

© www.october15th.com



2017 MOTHERS' RETREAT

UNMASK YOUR GRIEF – BE YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

How many of us have pretended to be "fine" when actually we are completely overcome by loss? Those who grieve often put on masks to disguise their true feelings. Later on, as we recover and are able to cope on most occasions, do we ever refuse to show our recovering face, fearful that we might forget our child? This year's retreat addresses these issues and more and includes the making of an actual mask.

Dates: Friday January 27 @ 7:00 p.m. - Sunday January 29, 2017 after lunch

Place: Villa St. Joseph Retreat and Ecology Centre
445 Monk St. Cobourg, Ontario

PAYMENT INFORMATION: Costs are separated into a residence fee payable to the Villa St. Joseph and a programme fee payable to Joyce MacIntyre.

RESIDENCE FEE: \$160.00
PROGRAMME FEE: \$ 90.00

A deposit cheque of \$60 is required for the Villa St. Joseph and the entire programme fee is due to Joyce MacIntyre upon registration. The remaining residence fee of \$100 is paid on the Friday evening upon arrival at the Villa St. Joseph.

Please note: The deposit of \$60 to the Villa St. Joseph and the full programme fee is non-refundable.

Registration is limited. Previous attendance within a group bereavement session is essential and participants must have passed a three year anniversary. Priority is given to those who have never attended the retreat before. Your cheques will be returned to you if we are not able to include you in this year's program.

Once you have decided to attend, contact either of the facilitators and a brochure will be sent out with all the required information. **Registration must be received with your cheques by December 1, 2016.**

For more information, contact:

Joyce MacIntyre at (905) 642-8771 or email joycemacintyre@rogers.com

Susan Hendricks at (204) 488-8334 or email susan.hendricks@gmail.com

INTERESTED IN A BOOK CLUB AT BFO-D?

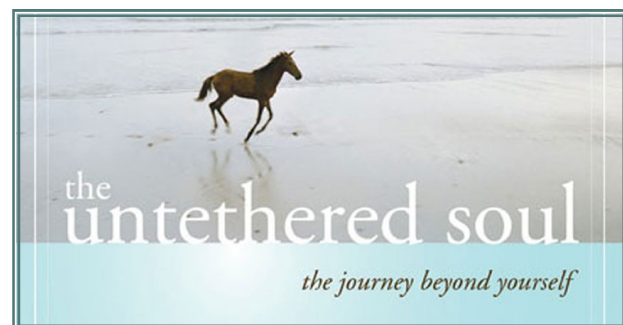
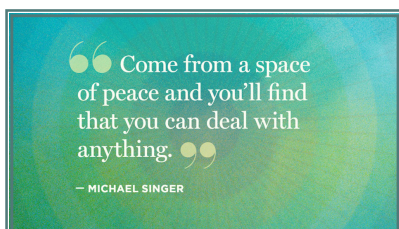
I would like to start a Book Club at BFO-D. I am thinking we could meet every second Friday night from 7:00 – 9:00. I am willing to facilitate and open and close the office.

The book I would love to share and discuss is "UNTETHERED SOUL" by Michael Singer. Over the years I have had several people tell me they are in book clubs to discuss "UNTETHERED SOUL". I have read the book and am inspired by it and think it could offer some great conversation and insight to bereaved parents.

There is also a reading book guide to refer to if we choose to use it. We could read a chapter or two a week and discuss – very informal. Please call the office if you are interested.

Let me know your thoughts,

Love, Penny-Claire Tilley



REMEMBERING VICKI JONES

VICTORIA (VICKI) JONES

1936 - 2016



I have put off writing this for well over a month. How does one do justice in writing to a dear friend who was a bereaved mother and fellow companion on this journey of life? It's well-nigh impossible. Most of you will not know Vicki as she was always a very much behind the scenes kind of person but for many years she donated prizes to the Walkathon, never expecting any kind of acknowledgement.

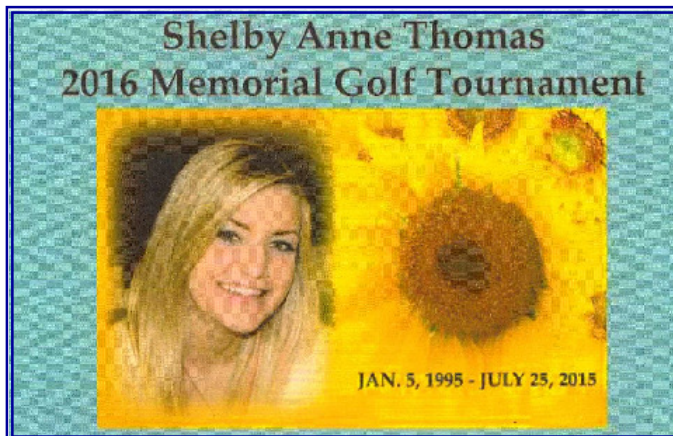
I first met Vicki following the death of her son, Paul, at the very first one-day retreat/workshop held by BFO-D. While her life had been punctuated by loss occasioned by change and immigration -- from her country of Cuba, to Jamaica where she met her husband, Sam, to Canada where they lived in several places as their teaching careers unfolded -- the loss of her son to chronic disease was unbearable. The sudden and unexpected death of Vicki and Sam's second son, Demetrius, from a pulmonary embolism could have been her undoing. But once the trauma had cleared, she went on to mourn in a constructive way. Vicki, perhaps, had one of the largest angel collections I've ever seen!

A retired Spanish teacher at Sir Sandford Fleming College and longtime teacher with the Durham Public School Board, Vicki was most known for her strong and abiding faith. It was this faith that carried her to an acceptance of the death of her children and to *live* her dying from cancer in a most positive way. More than that, her prayers always included her friends and members of BFO-Durham, with hopes they would weather whatever storms life brought them.

The deeply felt loss of Sam, her husband for sixty years and their remaining son, Granville, is a testimony to the animated soul she was and is. I miss her spirit-filled pep talks as they were such an inspiration to me. And now, as I am overcome by a sense of her loss, there is no more to say except, RIP dear friend. I know you will be praying for all of us from your newfound place where you are once more reunited with Paul and Demetrius and all of our children.

~ Susan Hendricks

SHELBY ANNE THOMAS—2016 MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 28TH, THE SHELBY ANNE THOMAS MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT WAS HELD AT BOWMANVILLE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB. \$3,000 WAS RAISED AND MATCHED BY PHOENIX A.M.D. INTERNATIONAL INC.

A TOTAL OF \$6,000 WAS DONATED TO BFO-DURHAM IN MEMORY OF SHELBY.

A SPECIAL LOVE STORY

The love we feel for our deceased children and the sacred threads that bind us together are a forever thing, yet often we feel the need to externalize that love as if somehow that will make all that was once again real in the present perspective. Such was our need this year when Kristina would have turned forty years of age and had been resurrected into the life of the spirit for twenty-five years. But how to do this in a way that met our needs yet was fitting to her memory? One was the memorial fundraising project called "Her Light Still Shines" for BFO – Durham. The other was a special trip to the sacred city of Machu Picchu in Peru accompanied by our friends, Mary and John Gallelo, the doubly bereaved parents of John-John and Tanya.

Located so high up in the Andes that the trains far below appear as teeny, miniature toys, this journey was both a physical, mental, and spiritual challenge that engaged all our senses. Not only were we fearful from the outset after seeing someone brought off the mountain in a body bag, there was also an all-encompassing fear that we would not have the "special moment" of presence we were seeking. Our angels did not disappoint us.



From the minute we entered the city, I was looking for a 'sign' from Kristina. Shortly after and right on the path in front of me lay a small shell. I quietly pocketed it as my special sign since shells represent the sea and the feminine in dream psychology. We had planned on holding a small ritual while there and our guide proved to be a wonderfully sensitive person and a practitioner of Incan spirituality who was honoured to facilitate the process. We had brought special amethysts from Canada blessed by a group of my Winnipeg friends, hoping to leave them at Machu Picchu. In return, we would take home a Peruvian turquoise. Xavier took us to a special, circular place well away from the crowds and explained Incan spirituality and the sacred Coca Leaf to us. He then held up the leaves in an arrangement of three, symbolizing the three spheres of existence, balanced by two others at the bottom representing the dualities of life. For us, it might just as well have been the representation of our three children balanced by the two couples who were there celebrating their lives. We all chewed a sacred coca leaf (consumed by the Incas for altitude sickness and strength) and Xavier said a prayer, leaving the ritual coca leaves near the large rock where we intended to leave our Canadian stones. We then had some quiet time on our own to remember our children and leave the amethysts.

Xavier had explained previously that the various realms of existence are represented by animals, both the condor and hummingbird for the eternal realm above, the puma for our earthly existence and the snake of wisdom for the unconscious 'below'. After we left our sacred circle, what should appear to us but a hummingbird, gently extracting nectar from a nearby bush! John had been hoping to see a condor while we were at Machu Picchu. He kept looking toward the skies but never saw one. Yet, when we returned home and looked at his photos, his daughter asked about a brownish mark that hovered in the sky in his photos. When we expanded the picture, what should we see but a condor! It had been there all along! As we meditated on this, we realized that our children are always with us but it takes an expanded spiritual awareness to see them or be aware of their ongoing presence in our lives.

(CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE)

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Where do I begin to tell the story

of how great a love can be

The sweet love story that is older than the sea

The simple truth about the love she brings to me

Where do I start?

With her first hello

she gave new meaning to this empty world of mine

They'll never be another love another time

She came into my life and made the living fine

She fills my heart

She fills my heart with very special things

Angel songs and wild imaginings

She fills my soul with so much love

That anywhere I go I'm never lonely

With her around who could be lonely

I reach for her hand

She's always there

How long does it last

Can love be measured by the hours in a day

I have no answers now

But this much I can say

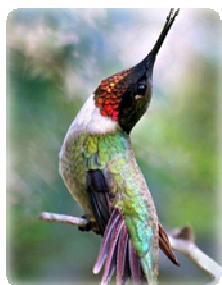
I know I'll need her until the stars all burn away

And she'll be there

How long does it last

(Theme from the movie, Love Story)

A SPECIAL LOVE STORY (cont'd)



Now Mary needed her sign! A few days later in the most southern region of Peru during a visit to La Isla Taquile (Taquile Island) she was doubly blessed. Mary had always rocked her children and grandchildren to sleep saying "coo-coo" in a slow and comforting way, so much so that she is known to her grandchildren as "Nona Coo-Coo." She prayed to her children and asked for a sign, standing still and waiting for them to reach out to her. Faintly in the distance, a quiet coo-coo was heard though she could not see the bird. This must be Tanya, she felt. Later and more loudly, she heard another one! That had to be her fun-loving John-John! And then silence fell; no more cooing. She walked down to the water-side with tears flowing from her eyes, at first unable to tell us what had happened, then the words came spilling out like a waterfall as she shared her special moment with us.



Since our return, we have shared this experience with friends and family whose first response is to ask "Will you go again?" How to explain that this was a special and unique experience that can never be replicated? We have learned from loss that there *is* no going back; there is only taking what we have learned and gained from the lives of our children and using it to create a positive future. At the same time, we know for certain, and if we did not then, we were strongly reminded, that if we wear our spiritual glasses our children will always be ever present with us, perhaps just not in the way they used to be. As the tee-shirt says, "My daughter is my guardian angel: she watches over my back."

~ Susan Hendricks

MY FIRST MOTHER'S DAY by Andrea Onley

I found out I was pregnant while I was at my annual physical. My doctor wanted to run some tests and asked if I was pregnant. I gave the old response "maybe, who knows" with a laugh; after all my husband and I were trying for a baby but it had only been a month. When she told me it was positive I was in shock. I was so happy and I didn't have my husband Jonathan there to celebrate with. My doctor laughed at me as I stood up and sat down in my seat, unsure of what to do, and opened her arms for a hug. On the ride home I stopped off at the store and bought a onesie, sized 3 months because after one look at my athletic hubby, I knew our baby would be big!

Six weeks later the doctors told me there was something wrong with my baby. There were developmental problems in the brain. They didn't know how bad it was. A week later they told me there was a problem with the heart too. My heart broke as they told me I would likely lose my baby, our little girl. They gave her a 1% chance of being born alive, they were confident that I would miscarry. When that didn't happen, they were confident I would have a stillbirth. When that didn't happen, they were confident that she wouldn't survive the birth.

When I was in labour at the hospital, we turned the monitors off and prayed. Sarah lived! Jonathan and I spent seven glorious days with her. She was absolute perfection from her full head of hair, to her soft lips, to her long legs. We would have been twins, she was my double in every way. Except her eyes, she had her father's eyes.

She never got to wear the onesie I bought her. She never got to see the room that would have been hers. We got to take her outside once, we sat on the hospital bench with the sun streaming down and it was one of the happiest moments of my life.

This will be my first Mother's Day. I don't know what I will do on Sunday. I know Jonathan will plan something, a gift from Sarah to me.

I protected my little lady as best as I could. I fought for her. I argued with doctors and nurses and demanded the best treatment I could get. And I am privileged to live in Canada, a country where I have access to the best health care for free.

The best gift I can give to honour my sweet Sarah this year is to help another Mother protect her child. That is why I am donating to effect: Hope's Protect a Child fund. It provides treatment and Vitamin A supplements to kids and pregnant women in Kenya for hookworm, roundworm, and whipworm. Plus, all donations are matched 3 times by the Government of Canada so for every \$1 I give, \$4 goes to the fund. I hope you will join me in giving Mothers in Kenya a truly Happy Mother's Day. (cont'd on page 10)

DANIELLE'S GIFT BAGS

My name is Karen Beckett and I lost my beautiful daughter, Danielle, suddenly and tragically August 24, 2014, exactly one week before her 25th birthday. In that instant my life as I knew it would never be the same. My heart shattered into a million pieces and I became a bereaved mother.

As any mom who has lost a child can tell you, a bereaved mother walks one of the hardest, most heartbreaking roads anyone will ever have to walk. It is one full of unimaginable loss and such an indescribable grief. A bereaved mother may sometimes find it difficult to take care of herself, especially in the early days when her grief is so raw. She can experience incredible anxiety, sleeplessness, and a lack of energy. This I know all too well.

Six months after I lost Danielle, I attended a "mothers' group" offered at BFO-D and it truly was a turning point for me in my grief. I made lifelong friends that are still a big support to me now and I know they always will be. There is a sisterhood among bereaved mothers and in some small way I wanted to try and help my sisters in grief.

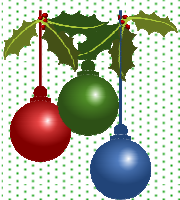
"Even as I rocked on my knees, howling I detected soft breathing behind the roaring. I leaned in, listened. It was the murmuring of ten million mothers, backward and forward in time and right now, who had lost children. They were lifting me, holding me. They had woven a net of their broken hearts, and they were keeping me safe there. I realized that one day I would take my rightful place as a link in this web, and I would hold my sister-mothers when their children died. For now my only task was to grieve and be cradled in their love."

~ Excerpt from *CARAVAN OF NO DESPAIR*

In Danielle's memory, I will be donating gift bags full of various comfort and self-care items to moms who are attending a "mothers' group" for the very first time. The bags will contain calming essential oil, a homemade remembrance candle, as well as ingredients for a natural rejuvenating spa bath. These items are meant to help relax, calm, and bring some comfort to a grieving mother's soul. It will also feature the book **"YOU ARE THE MOTHER OF ALL MOTHERS"**, a beautiful gift book to uplift the hearts and souls of bereaved mothers, no matter the age or cause of death, no matter the story.

I have received incredibly positive feedback from my family and friends. I had so many people generously give money towards the costs of the bags. Together we raised enough money to cover the cost of 30 gift bags with enough left over to be able to make a donation to BFO-D as well. Everyone wanted to help, not only because they love Danielle and they wanted to support me, but because they have seen what I go through on a daily basis and they also wanted to do something to help the moms who are grieving so profoundly. I am so grateful to be able to give these gifts to the moms who need them the most. As I put each bag together, I thought of my beautiful daughter and I hoped she was smiling as she dances among the butterflies.

BRUNCH WITH SANTA



This year's Brunch with Santa will be held

December 4th, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

\$7/Adult: \$5/Child

at the Harmony Creek Community Centre

15 Harmony Road North, Oshawa

with brunch, games and activities,

a gift from Santa for each child and a raffle.

Tickets can be purchased through the BFO-D Office

R.S.V.P. through the Facebook Event Page (BFO Brunch with Santa)

or send an e-mail to bfodurham@bellnet.ca



MY FIRST MOTHER'S DAY (cont'd)

~ Cynthia Reason
Scarborough Mirror | May 07, 2016

Before she even knew she was pregnant, Andrea Onley had a dream that foretold her very first Mother's Day would be spent without her daughter. "A week before I found out I was carrying her, I had a dream that I was holding a little baby girl, and in the dream I heard a voice that said, 'You don't get to keep her long,'" the Whitby woman said of her daughter, Sarah Teddy Ann Onley, who was born Sept. 2 and passed away in her mother's arms just seven days later. "I didn't know I was pregnant at the time, so I didn't think much of the dream. But looking back now, I think maybe it was God telling me to enjoy the short time I would have with her."

It wasn't until seven weeks after that dream prophesy that those ominous words would come flooding back to Onley, as she and her husband Jonathan's worst fears were realized. A routine scan revealed that their unborn child had a rare brain abnormality. The baby would likely be born blind, deaf, vegetative, and completely non-responsive, doctors said. A week after that came an even bigger blow. The Onleys were told the baby had a heart condition that was almost certainly fatal. Sarah was given just a one per cent chance of being born alive.

"I'm not going to pretend like that was easy to hear – it was devastating. But I guess the one positive we took away from the experience was that, because we found out so early, we were able to mourn and move forward," Onley said, noting doctors were confident she'd miscarry and urged her to terminate the pregnancy. "I consider myself pro-choice...My choice was to give Sarah every chance she could get. I wanted to give my daughter every opportunity to survive and thrive."

Describing her pregnancy with Sarah as a "wonderful" one, Onley said she and Jonathan squeezed every last moment of it for all the joy it contained. First, the expectant couple travelled back to Michigan where they went to school together and showed their unborn daughter "mommy and daddy's first apartment." Then, intent that Sarah "make her mark on the world" despite her dire diagnosis, they embarked on a month-long backpacking trip to Europe while pregnant with her – climbing Mount Vesuvius in Naples, checking out the Berlin Wall in Germany, visiting the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

Back at home, when the time came to induce her, Onley said Sarah's prognosis was still bleak, so she decided to have her doctors at Mount Sinai turn off all the monitors during her delivery.

"There's nothing you can do, you just have to be brave and face life as it happens," she said of Sarah's delivery, during which her daughter once again thwarted all odds and miraculously survived. "I can't explain it to you – she was just magic."

Told that Sarah's heart condition was ultimately inoperable, the Onleys spent three round-the-clock days and nights keeping constant vigil over their daughter's tiny, betubed body in the SickKids NICU - where she was transferred via underground tunnel from Mount Sinai after being delivered. They were later transferred to a private room to receive palliative care.

Despite the severe deficits doctors predicted she would be born with, Onley said Sarah was remarkably alert – opening her one eye, grabbing for her parents' fingers, reacting to the sound of her father's lullabies, and even smiling.

"When I imagine heaven, I imagine the three of us in that room together," Onley said, describing that time alone with her daughter as precious. "Every time I laid eyes on her, it was like falling in love again. Every time I saw her face, it was the most pure kind of love."

Still, the couple knew their time with Sarah would be short. On Sept. 8, seven days after she was born, they made the heart-wrenching decision to disconnect Sarah from her breathing tube and let her go.

"We knew in our hearts that if we kept her any longer, it would be selfishly for our needs, not for her benefit," Onley said. "The love we have for our children is this amazing love where you will do whatever is in her best interests at all times, even if it destroys you."

After removing her from ventilation, a full minute went by before Sarah took her first gasping breath on her own, again defying doctors' expectations. Finally freed from all the tubes and wires that had confined her to the hospital, the Onleys were able to take Sarah outside that "glorious" late summer afternoon, to sit on a bench together and soak up the sun for the first and last time as a family of three. Sarah died a few hours later.

"I know she stuck around just to give us that one very special day. Her body and her soul were ready to go," Onley said. "When she passed away, I was holding her and I just knew. I felt her spirit leave."

Thankful for the short time they were granted with their daughter, the Onleys have since launched the Sarah Onley Legacy Project. "Sarah changed our lives for the better, so now we want the world to know her name, to know her impact," Onley said, noting the goal of the project is to support special needs children around the world.

During last weekend's Goodlife Fitness Toronto Marathon, the Onleys' family and friends banded together as Team #SarahStrength to raise more than \$25,000 under the banner of the legacy project as a special thank you to the SickKids NICU for their "incredible support and love." Next summer, they hope to embark on a cross-country bike ride to the east coast in Sarah's name, with all fundraising proceeds to be geared toward the construction of a fully accessible playground in Whitby, where children of all abilities can play together.

But this weekend, to mark Mother's Day, Onley and her husband are shifting the focus of their late daughter's legacy project to a global issue with their support of effect: Hope's Protect the Child program. All donations to the program – which provides life-saving Vitamin A supplements and hookworm, roundworm, and whipworm treatment to children and women in Kenya – are matched three times over by the federal government.

Helping another mother protect her child a world away is the best gift Onley said she could possibly hope to give in honour of her "sweet Sarah" on this, her first Mother's Day.

"Because of our health care system here in Canada, I was given every opportunity to know my daughter and to make sure she had every opportunity at her best chance of health," Onley said.

"So, it brings my heart so much joy to know that, in Sarah's memory, mothers and their children in Kenya are going to have that same feeling because of the Protect the Child program. "My only hope for them is that they get 70 years instead of just seven days." For more information or to donate, go to www.effecthope.org/protect-a-child

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OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY TO THURSDAY — 10 A.M. TO 3 P.M. , CLOSED FRIDAY

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Loved, missed and never forgotten

OCTOBER

John Daniel Harvey	October 1, 1998	Curtis MacKinnon	October 16, 2009
Matthew Gregory Hickey	October 2, 1996	Shane Rodgers	October 16, 2014
Victoria Krol	October 2, 2014	Rebecca Rodriguez	October 17, 2013
James Kingsley	October 3, 2015	Gary Bambrough	October 18, 2008
Christopher Gilmore	October 5, 2014	David Cecil McNeil	October 20, 2013
Philip Brown	October 6, 2002	Brock Cody Kelly	October 23, 2014
Henry Vandergaast	October 7, 2012	Nicholas Storms	October 25, 2004
Journey Halupa	October 7, 2014	Sarah Zwolinski	October 25, 2007
Brent Heasman	October 8, 1996	Derek Lyall	October 26, 1996
Heather Joan Butcher	October 8, 2002	Calvin Burton	October 26, 2006
Amos Williams	October 8, 2006	Pat Gostlin	October 26, 2008
Cynthia Louise Amos	October 8, 2014	Bryan Frank	October 28, 2000
Rita Stone	October 8, 2014	Christopher Shannon	October 28, 2008
Spencer Tillapaugh	October 8, 2014	Logan Jeffrey Barkwell	October 29, 2001
Joseph Glode	October 9, 1994	Amber Young	October 29, 2008
Lori Webb	October 9, 2013	Journey Stickney	October 29, 2013
Gibson Maidansky	October 11, 2010	Isa Nilsson-Byberg	October 30, 2010
Joseph Trail	October 13, 2006	Nicholas ((Nick) King	October 30, 2012
Maria MacStravick	October 14, 2012	Tara Ross	October 30, 2012
Leonard Arp	October 15, 2009	Lee Mitchell Service	October 31, 1999
Lara Vandelangeryt	October 15, 2013	Patrick M. Beauregard	October 31, 2003
Dove Lancaster	October 16, 2002	Megan Grace Burchowycz	October 31, 2002
Nicole Wannamaker 2009	October 16,	Cameron Hicks	October 31, 2014



NOVEMBER

Scot J. Mailer	November 1, 1986	Tyron Bracken	November 17, 2010
Messiah Jackson-MacDonald	November 1, 2009	Charlotte Hannon	November 17, 2002
Liam Alexander Jan Meerdink	November 2, 2008	Jailene Bonnick	November 18, 2005
David Michael McCluskey	November 3, 1995	Erin Gladwell	November 19, 2000
Megan Lynn Craig	November 4, 1996	Pauline Larocque	November 19, 2010
Grace Johnson	November 4, 1996	Glen Allan Rowe	November 21, 1991
Kali Johnson	November 4, 1996	Kyle Sinclair	November 21, 2014
Amir Ghane	November 5, 2003	Austin Hill	November 22, 2015
Brook Lynn Rankin	November 5, 2011	Cody Ladd	November 22, 2015
Christine Lee Ouderkirk	November 7, 1998	Michael James Dunne	November 24, 1993
Abigail Watts	November 7, 2005	Ricky Otter	November 24, 2003
John Camilleri	November 7, 2012	Joel Fletcher	November 24, 2011
Kenton Carnegie	November 8, 2005	Robert Jones	November 24, 2012
Raquel Grenato	November 9, 2014	Kylie Mawby	November 24, 2012
Anthony Karson Grant	November 10, 1998	Jim Robbins	November 25, 2001
Nathan Michael Fohshow	November 11, 2004	Pierce LoveGordon	November 25, 2006
Simon Maddocks	November 11, 2009	Andrew Bond	November 27, 2006
Ricky Otter	November 12, 2003	Brandon Michael Argante	November 27, 2013
Connie Nock	November 12, 2010	Kyle Christopher Fair	November 28, 1993
Carter David Dickhoff	November 12, 2008	David Preston	November 28, 2004
Murray Charland	November 13, 2003	Marley Grace Silcox	November 28, 2008
Nicole Oultram	November 13, 2012	Leigh Anne Donavan	November 29, 2001
Hannah Larocque	November 14, 2007	Tanya Lynn Lebrun	November 29, 2010
Joshua Larocque	November 14, 2007	Sarah Lynn Hearn	November 29, 2012
Jeffrey Moore	November 15, 2010	Kyle Sinclair	November 29, 2014
Cody Gould	November 15, 1988	Vanessa Pritchard	November 29, 2014
Theresa Michelle North	November 16, 1995	Roberta Eileen Campbell	November 30, 1952
		Sylvia Ann Crowley	November 30, 1989

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Loved, missed and never forgotten

DECEMBER

Scotty Pennachio December 1, 1980
Payton Joan Beaulieu December 1, 2005
Trevor David Hunter December 1, 2009
Grace Anne-Marie Beaulieu December 2, 2005
Rachel Nicole Davidson December 2, 1998
Andrew Joseph Weaver December 3, 1999
Connor Campbell December 3, 2010
Nolan Michael McNeil December 4, 2011
Dan Phelan December 5, 1975
Grace Frysztacki December 5, 2014
Thomas Timothy Morrison December 6, 2013
Derek Penny December 7, 2001
Emma Skinner December 7, 2007
Debbie Meyers December 7, 2012
Johnny Bloye December 7, 2014
Nicholas Beatty December 9, 2001
Connor Fox December 10, 2010
Mark Heggum December 12, 1987
Frank Fillio December 12, 2012
Mason Stamp December 13, 2014
Michelle Lynn Andrey December 15, 1990
Simon Mitchell December 15, 1992
Johnny Pegg December 15, 2009
David Michael Hannah December 15, 2000
Luc Breau December 16, 2010

Ian Morton December 16, 2014
Gavin Daley December 17, 2015
Sarah Dorrian December 18, 1999
Alleya Alley-Wilson December 18, 2009
Rebecca Anne Leslie Sears December 19, 1995
Brad R. Thomas December 19, 1996
Jason Maxwell Normoyle December 19, 2002
Dawn Lent December 19, 2007
Daniel Frost December 19, 2015
Amanda Maja Vidulich December 20, 2007
Tanya Fellows-Karstulovich December 20, 2012
Drake Farrell December 21, 2009
Tristan Dixon December 21, 2014
Kaiden Burroughs December 22, 2015
Emily L. Mackie December 22, 1992
Iain Stirling December 23, 2004
Brenda Jo-Ann Perks December 24, 1990
Thomas Donovan December 24, 2003
Brittany Mabee-Wilson December 24, 2007
Danny Kent December 24, 2012
Colleen Gary December 28, 2008
Kimberly Margaret Hryniw December 29, 1997
Susan Josephine Nyland-Davey December 30, 1995
Amelia Linda Kent December 30, 2009

JANUARY

Shelley Nadine Taylor January 1, 1994
Ricky Van Den Oetelaar January 1, 2006
Lisa Lebitka January 1, 2012
Jacoub Favila January 1, 2013
Jamie Woods January 1, 2014
Christopher Thompson January 2, 1988
Vanessa Larocque January 2, 2009
Kyle Joseph Miller January 2, 2009
Madison Sevana Boyd January 2, 2012
Victoria Thompson January 4, 2005
Jose Eduardo Navas January 4, 2011
Tianna Vieira January 5, 2010
Chantel Gauthier January 6, 1994
Ashley Pittens January 6, 2001
Michael Upshaw January 6, 2002
Rayman Imran January 7, 2008
Derek Spicher January 7, 2013
Alastair Lahtinen January 8, 2010
David Norrish January 9, 2015
Stephen John Duthie January 10, 2010
Duane MacIntyre January 11, 1992
Ron Davis January 11, 2007
Brandon Tyler Baron January 12, 1992
Neil Warren Hembling January 12, 2000
Eerik Percival January 13, 2002
Khristian Robinson January 14, 2008



Jonathan Domenic Volpe January 15, 1995
Breanna Cousins January 15, 2002
Daniel Torreblanca January 15, 2013
Sara Ann Madore January 17, 2003
Austin Blake Madore January 17, 2003
Storm Gary Patrick Coad January 18, 1997
Nathan Michael Pennington January 18, 2010
Christopher Amos January 18, 2012
Layla Giberson January 18, 2013
Shanice Clark January 18, 2015
Thomas King January 18, 2016
Stephanie Joanna Coleman January 19, 1996
Alexsandra Kellie-Ann Hewitt January 21, 1995
Alexander Cade January 22, 2004
Bill Robins January 22, 2016
Antonio Thomas Cacciatore January 23, 2010
Vanessa Robyn Rivard January 24, 2007
Kelly Spencer January 25, 2012
Graham Charles Clarke January 26, 2007
Jeffrey Warne January 26, 2008
David Matthew Gilbert January 27, 2008
Eran Town January 28, 2005
Branden Christopher Viarruel January 29, 2009
Wayne Edwards January 29, 2009
David Stacey January 29, 2015
Angela Worona January 31, 1995