



20th Annual Memorial Picnic and Dove Release

We would like to thank all those who joined us for the 20th Annual Memorial Picnic and Dove Release at Lake Shawnee in late September. While the day began with dreary skies and rain, the sun broke through by lunchtime and for the Dove Release. About 70 people attended the memorial event and had the opportunity not only to share in the wonderful array of food a potluck always brings, but also had the chance to share memories of their children, grandchildren and siblings with others who had gathered to honor and remember all those who “left too soon”.

Following the Memorial Program we all gathered outside the shelter house at Memory Point for the release of the beautiful white doves that have become such a cherished part of this event. We would like to thank all those who helped by coming early to get things set up and stayed to help clean up after the event. Your assistance was very much appreciated. Below are a few photos from the event provided by Heather Blindt.



This beautiful Dove Cake was one of many great desserts those attending shared at the event

Our event offered not only the opportunity to share great food, but also great fellowship and sharing with other TCF families.



Many of those attending sponsored a Dove in memory of their loved one.

Christmas Eve



*Silent
Night, holy
Night ~~*

*“It’s about time,”
he says quietly.*

*Deliberately, wordlessly,
they gather the materials
carefully put away last year,
the matches, candle, candle jar
to fend off the harsh winter wind.*

Tis the season to be jolly ~~

*Slowly they drive toward the town’s edge,
past homes with bright, blinking bulbs.*

Cars of faraway relatives fill the drives.

*Happy, laughing families, children home from school
pass on the way to midnight Mass.*

It’s the most wonderful time of the year ~~

*At last, town lights left far behind, they sit mute,
each wrapped in private cocoons of memories of
Christmas past, excited whispers from their room,
silly giggles, fervent good-night kisses, anticipation of morning.*

On a cold winter’s night that was so deep ~~

*Through the gate, down the drive, engine killed,
frozen grass crunching underfoot, hand-in-hand
they walk up the hill to the familiar moonlit stone. With
practiced hands they brush it clean, then prepare their votive Noel.*

The world in solemn stillness lay ~~

*Lumps in throat, arm-in-arm, candles lit, they stand and weep,
But not so bitter as in years past. The pain’s as deep but not so long,
as once again they dream of things that should have been but never were.*

The stars in the sky look down where he lay ~~

*“Let’s go,” he says. She nods assent. They leave, though turn back once to see
the lonely flame of their lost child gleaming peacefully through the dark.
He whispers softly, his visit done - “Merry Christmas and good-night, my child.*

~~ Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace ~~

By Richard A. Dew, MD, TCF Knoxville, TN

*“Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our
children. They died, taking with them our hopes and
dreams for the future, but never, never taking away their love.*

*Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight,
the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the
storms of grief and bring it with you into today.*

Love never goes away...”

~ Darcie Sims



What Do I Have To Be Thankful About?

*By Sabrina Rahe
Parker, Colorado*

To me, the fact that my eight-year-old son is dead is reason enough to have nothing to be thankful about. I must confess that I have truly felt that way for most of the five years he’s been gone. Not constantly, but a great deal of the time.

When grief takes hold with that “hard grip” (you know the times), it’s not easy to be unselfish and to continue to be “thankful for what I still have.” I’m too consumed in despair for what I don’t have. Do you feel that way, too, sometimes? For me, it’s especially painful during the holidays. They say “time heals all wounds,” but time has done its best, and a heart as broken as this just doesn’t “heal up.” I believe it will probably remain cracked and festering off and on forever.

So ... what do I have to be thankful about? The fact that my wonderful son was alive is a lot to be thankful about! (But sometimes it’s hard to remember that when I’m missing him so). For me, time has lessened that “hard grip” of grief. I still have family, friends, and especially a husband and son who love me, which is more than some have. I am very thankful for that!

I also have eight years of memories; my sons playing (and fighting) together, our family as four, whole persons instead of the three broken spirits who are here now. But, even my memories sometimes don’t seem to be enough. I always want more - I want Brandon back! But, still, I am very thankful for those few years of memories. Since Brandon’s death, I have my new and very dear “grief family,” my Compassionate Friends, and you can bet I am very thankful about that!

And so ... this year I will be thankful for all these things, although even being thankful is painful sometimes. Maybe you can find something to be thankful about, too. If not now, well, maybe down the road. While all the holidays are difficult, I find Thanksgiving to be an especially hard time because it’s usually so “family oriented.” I guess missing my son so much has precipitated this writing, but it’s also in part from missing my younger brother, Denny, who died last year. I miss him a lot, too.

I know for a lot of us the usual, “Happy Thanksgiving,” won’t be very happy. So instead, I’ll just wish you love and say to you, “Try to find some peace somewhere inside yourself, or with others you’re comfortable with, but most of all take care of yourself.”

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