VOLUME 6, ISSUE 7

July 2024

Chapter Leaders: William and Millie Hunton 504-265-0581 Email address: tcfnola@gmail.com

National Conference Memory Board Photos Needed

See Page 8 for more Information

TCF-GNO Chapter Gift Basket Items Needed

See Page 8 for more Information

SAVE THE DATE – OCTOBER 19TH Memorial Walk and Picnic

To be held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

"SIGNS"

Do any of you believe in signs or messages from your deceased child? I do, and it helps me with the grieving process and to overcome tough days, like her birthday.

Every time I see a penny that shouldn't be there or wasn't there the last time I looked, I think of it as the presence of Samantha. I could be having any type of day – good, bad, indifferent – and when I see a misplaced penny, I instantly sense a presence of her and say to myself "Samantha is thinking of me". I know this might sound crazy, but it makes me feel happy to believe that she's thinking of her dad and wants to let me know that.

Continued on Page 3 – See SIGNS

BIRTHDAY RECOGNITION: Birthdays can be found on "Our Children Remembered" page. We do encourage both you and your family to come when it is your child's birthday month, to share your child with all of us with photos and memories. You will receive a special birthday gift in memory of your child. Bring that treasured picture of your child that always makes you smile so we may smile with you. Refreshments in honor of your child, grandchild, or sibling are welcomed. The June Birthday Cake was sponsored by Jaimie Kimball in memory of her sister Jenny Kimball. The July Birthday Cake is sponsored by Rosan Springman in memory of her grandson Kendall Oliver Springman.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING: July 8, 2024

<u>Lafreniere Park Foundation</u> <u>Center Conference Room</u>

7:00 - 9:00 pm

2nd Monday of every month

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

8 Jan 24	19 Feb 24	11 Mar 24
8 Apr 24	13 May 24	10 Jun24
8 Jul 24	12 Aug 24	9 Sep 24
14 Oct 24	11 Nov 24	9 Dec 24
		ZOOM

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Denise St. Pierre 504-460-2970 denisestp12@gmail.com

NATIONAL OFFICE

The Compassionate Friends 48660 Pontiac Trail # 930808 Wixom, MI 48393

national office@compassionate friends.org www.compassionate friends.org 877-969-0010

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Butterfly Release

April 27, 2024 – held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

Memorial Walk and Auction

October 19, 2024 – held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

WorldWide Candle Lighting

December 8, 2024 – Held in the Foundation Center Patio in Lafreniere Park

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

So it's true, when all is said and done, grief is the price we pay for love.

Our Monthly Meetings

To all those newly bereaved, who are receiving this newsletter for the first time and to all our Compassionate Friends, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you and your family have many friends. We, who received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow, now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. You are not alone in your grief.

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at the Foundation Center Conference Room in Lafreniere Park at **7:00 P.M.** We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join with us at a meeting.

Grief support after the death of a child

The Compassionate Friends is a national non-profit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to be eaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

Big Thanks to Our Steering Committee





Contact:

Phone: (504) 265-0581 Email: tcfnola@gmail.com www.tcfneworleans.com

1104 Colony Rd. Metairie. LA 70003

Chapter Leader	William Hunton
Chapter Co-Leader	Millie Hunton
Special Advisor	Denise St. Pierre
Treasurer	Isabel Vigne-Miranda
Facilitator	Millie Hunton
Newsletter Editor	William Hunton
Webmaster	Jason Vicari
Database Management	Jerrie Vicari
Coffee Hostess	Patsy Ashton
Memorial Park Director	Jacques Bitoun

Steering Committee: William Hunton, Millie Hunton, Denise St. Pierre, Isabel Miranda-Vigne, Jan Dutilh, Patshy Ashton, and Dena Peters.

Denise St. Pierre, Regional Coordinator (504) 460-2970 TCF National (877) 969-0010 www.compassionatefriends.org

The Meeting Agenda

7:00 p.m. - The meeting will begin with a short introduction followed by lighting of candle and then reading of the Credo. Remembering our children's birthdays of the month. Then followed by smaller groups of sharing.

8:45 p.m. - Meeting will close by recognizing our children's names. Feel free to visit with each other and check out a book from our library.

Newsletter Submissions: TCF Greater New Orleans welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to: TCF GNO, 1104 Colony Rd., Metairie, LA 70003. You may also text photos and messages to 504-251-1938. As our chapter is only funded by your donations, we ask for a donation of \$15 or more for a dedication for our newsletter. This is tax-deductible. We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content. Deadline for submissions is listed below. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source. Errors and Omissions: Please notify me if any of your information is incorrect. Thank you!

Newsletter Dedications to be put in our newsletter are due the 20th of each month.

A Newsletter Dedication: is a special page dedicated in memory of your child with a poem or writing that you submit. A Love Gift: is a short one or two sentence message in your child's memory.



BIRTHDAY CAKE: Our child's birthday is still such an important day to us bereaved parents. In TCF this is where we can celebrate our child's birthday and remember the love we still have for them no matter how long it has been since they died. Our members are welcomed to sponsor our cake to recognize their child's birthday. Please notify me if you wish to sponsor our Birthday Cake, William Hunton (504) 265-0581.

TCF Greater New Orleans Memorial Candles and 3" Photo Buttons

We are asking for donations of \$20 per candle. Candles will have 3 photos, name, dates, and an LED insert. We are asking for donations of \$5 for each button or \$12 for three buttons. Email Your Child's Photo to tcfnola@gmail.com or call William Hunton (504) 265-0581 for info. Candles and/or photo buttons will be delivered to the next meeting if info is received 72 hours before meeting. Please make checks payable to: TCF – GNO, 1104 Colony Road, Metairie, LA 700

Signs (cont. from Page 1)

The most impactful penny sighting happened on Samantha's birthday – April 25, 2018. My birthday is on April 27th. Samantha would have been 14 in 2019. (She died in 2006 at the age of 17 months.) I was walking into work, and feeling absolutely horrible. Her birthday and death day are terrible triggers for me, and I was depressed and feeling a very heavy sense of grief that day. As I approached my desk, I saw a penny on my chair. In my 17 years of working at my company, I've never seen a penny on my chair, so this sighting was completely unexpected and a total shock. It wasn't there last night when I left work for the day. I asked around and nobody claimed putting the penny there. I immediately called my wife and said "You're not going to believe what's on my chair! A penny and it wasn't there when I left work last night." She said "What date is on the penny?" I picked it up, looked closely at the date, and couldn't believe my eyes that the date was 2006, the year she died.

I knew Samantha was thinking of me and telling me that she was OK and that I should not be sad. I instantly went from deep longing and sadness to euphoric. It was the best birthday present I've received in the 13 years since Samantha has passed away.

We all know that the grieving process is unique and personal. Some might believe in signs. Others may not. The bottom line is that if it's signs or looking at photos or visiting the grave site that gives you moments of happiness, then embrace it. I did and it's turned some pretty painful days into a positive.

By Jonathan Baer

MY FOREVER BROTHER

When I was 20 years old, I was awakened in the middle of the night to the terrible news that my only brother, Scott, and my cousin, Matthew, had been killed together in a car accident.

It seemed inconceivable that my 17-year-old-brother was dead. My brother, whom I had grown up with, shared a history with and expected to grow old with, was suddenly gone forever from my life. Scott had unruly blond curls and bright green eyes. He was very athletic, devoured Twix candy bars, chewed cinnamon gum, was a NY Jets fan, and loved playing jokes. I envisioned us attending each other's college graduations and weddings, raising our kids together, and growing old together.

Scott's death turned my world upside down and put into question everything I ever believed. Early on the pain was so great, I honestly thought I would die of a broken heart. People said things to me that were not helpful: "Well, at least he didn't suffer," "At least it was quick," and "At least you have sisters."

As I struggled through my own grief, I also worried a lot about my parents and felt the need to "be strong" for them. I often hid my grief from them, and grieved alone, so as not to cause them further pain. I felt guilty for having my own grief because my parents had lost a child.

As I went through my grief journey, I looked to others further along in the grief process for guidance and strength. The journey was bumpy; I had no roadmap. Grief came in choppy, unpredictable waves, not neat, organized stages. Well-meaning people told me that I would eventually get over it, and find closure. These concepts were not comforting and did not make sense.

I didn't want to "get over" Scott. To "get over" him felt somehow like I was erasing him from my life. I am the person I am today because Scott was in my life. To deny him would be to deny an important part of myself. The reality is that we don't forget, move on, and have closure; but rather we honor, remember, and incorporate our deceased brother and sister into our lives in a new way.

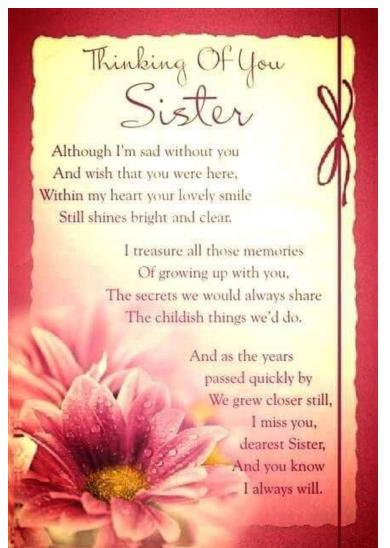
With time and support, I went on to transform my life and create a "new normal." I have found meaning, purpose, and joy helping others who have suffered a loss, and I have met many wonderful and caring people through The Compassionate Friends. Today, I keep my brother's memory alive through the stories I share with others. Although it has been 30 years, my brother continues to live forever in my heart. He is my guiding light, and although I am poorer for having lost him, I am so much richer forever having known him. He will always play an important role in my life, and he remains forever my brother.

HEIDI HORSLEY

Dr. Heidi Horsley is a grief expert and the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Open to Hope, an international organization committed to providing hope.

NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Níva Rosa Muríllo July 26, 1955 – May 10, 1994



Happy Birthday to My Dear Sister,

You are missed more than you could imagine.

Your memories are not forgotten and I think of you every day. I think of all the sisterly things we would have done. Staying up late and chatting about this and that, painting each other's nails, hours and hours of shopping, and regular lunch outings. I can imagine all the family get-togethers and all the little things we would have shared.

You would be so proud of Becky and all she has accomplished.

Happy Heavenly Birthday Niva! We all miss you so much.

Your loving sister, Millie









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NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF Robert Teague

July 10, 1985 - March 13, 2024



"Forever Remembered"

Even after life is gone
In our hearts your love lingers on
Even After you left our sight
In our thoughts
your light shines bright
Even after you are gone
In our memories
you forever live on.



With all my Love, Mom

Dedication sent in by Debbie Teague



NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY Grant Adair Gorman Born – July 4, 1992 Died – Jul 25, 1995

A Million Times "Happy 32nd Heavenly Birthday"

You never said "I'm leaving," you never said "Goodbye" You were gone before I knew it and only God knew why. A million times we've needed you, a million times we've cried

If love alone could have saved you, you never would have died.

In life we loved you dearly; in death we love you still. In our hearts you hold a place no one else will ever fill. It broke our hearts to lose you but you didn't go alone Part of us went with you; the day God took you home

Missing and foving you more each day.

Love, Mimi



Dedication sent in by Charlene Gorman

NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF Alexis Bounds





My Dearest Alexis,

I can't believe it's been five years since you received your angel wings. Forever 37 years young. I think about you every day.

I miss our time together, your love and hugs. I miss your Beautiful smile, hearing your voice and receiving your phone calls. I miss all the cards you would send me and the special notes you would always write in the cards. I'm thankful that I saved most all of the cards. I enjoy rereading them.

I reminisce all of the Mom/daughter fun times, teatime, lunches, trips, and adventures with Teddy and your boys. I continue to tell the boys how much you love them with hugs and kisses. I continue to keep your memory alive with Alexis stories. Recently, I attended Lincoln's field day at the park. He was playing football with his friends when all of a sudden he was mesmerized by a white butterfly, flying around him. At first, he couldn't catch the butterfly and then it came again and I captured it on video. The boys (9&5) are always interested in you and want to know more.

Occasionally, I will dream about you. I feel your presence every day, and I believe in the signs you send me, flowers, dragonflies, birds, butterflies, turtles, rainbows and pennies on the ground.

Roger and I continue supporting LSU's School of Interior Design in your memory. You graduated from LSU's School of Interior Design and went on to become an accomplished professional. Your award-winning designs in numerous facilities in California, Colorado, Texas and New Mexico stand today as testaments to your creativity, work ethic and talent. Recently the second recipient at LSU received the Alexis Bounds Scholarship for Interior Design Excellence. Roger and I received a very nice thank you letter from the young lady who received the scholarship.

Continue to pray for us and keep guiding us as we go on in life.

We all love and miss you dearly! Mom and family

















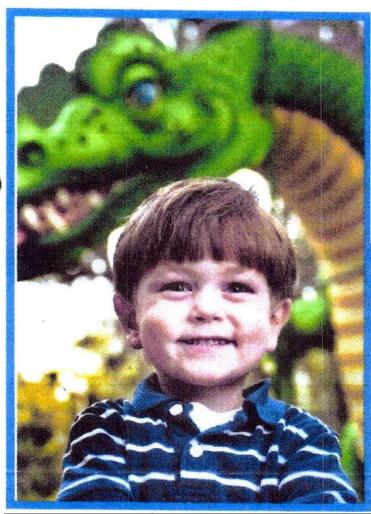
NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY

Kendall Oliver Springman

IN LOVING MEMORY ON YOUR 19th BIRTHDAY

JULY 12, 2005 - JULY 31, 2011







We miss you so much !!!..

You are forever in our hearts

Mom, Dad, Kaol, Grandpa and Granny



2024 TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The 2024 TCF National Conference will be right here in New Orleans at the Marriott Hotel. While many people will be volunteering to work during the event, Local Volunteers will be needed to assist our Local Leads. If you would like to volunteer for one of these Committees please contact me at your earliest convenience. This is a wonderful opportunity to volunteer for a wonderful cause and to be able to do so in honor of your child, grandchild, or sibling.

Feel free to contact William or Millie Hunton at tcfnola@gmail.com or at 504-265-0581.

47th TCF National Conference Silent Auction

TCF National Staff has asked if our chapter would like to donate a basket to this year's Silent Auction/Raffle at the 47th TCF National Conference here in New Orleans for July 12-14, 2024. We are welcomed to come up with your chapter's own original idea of what to put in the basket. My plan is to use a New Orleans Theme with a hand crafted pirogue. Members can volunteer to donate an item such as a souvenir. (Of course, New Orleans souvenirs with a butterfly on it would be ideal.) I hope this will give the opportunity for many of our members to be involved with something for the conference, even if they cannot make the conference.

Once the items are collected then we will place the items in the hand-crafted pirogue for the final presentation. Millie and I will transport the basket to the TCF National Conference and present it from the Greater New Orleans Chapter. Some suggestions for the basket are:

Cafe Du Monde Beignet Mix
New Orleans Souvenir Coffee Mug
New Orleans Souvenir Fridge Magnets
New Orleans Souvenir Spoon Rest
New Orleans Souvenir Glasses
Hurricane Drink Powder Mix

(Any other creative item, which would match the theme.)

Cafe Du Monde Coffee and Chicory New Orleans Souvenir Coasters New Orleans Souvenir Oven Mitt New Orleans Souvenir Hot Pad Fleur-de-lis Wine Stoppers

Please feel free to bring items to the meetings. You may also contact me at 504-251-1938 and I will arrange to pick it up from you.

JOIN US IN REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN WITH MEMORY BOARD PHOTOS

Millie and I will be displaying photos of our Chapter's children, grandchildren, and siblings at the TCF National Conference here in New Orleans. If you wish your child, grandchild, or sibling's photo to be displayed on the Memory Boards then please notify us via text or email. These beautiful Memory Boards have been built by our chapter members this year. We can use an existing photo or you can send us a new one. Photos will be displayed on the Photo Boards and will be view by members from throughout the nation. Please text or email requests to 504-265-0581 or tcfnola@gmail.com.

William and Millie Hunton – TCFGNO

A GRANDPARENT'S GRIEF: MAKE THE HURT GO AWAY

"Mommy . . . Daddy, kiss it and make the hurt go away." You probably heard it when your children were small, but if your child has experienced "the parent's worst nightmare," they're going to need more help.

As a family, we all live close to one another, and as grandparents, we feel so blessed and thankful to have our children and grandchildren as part of our daily lives. We share a deep bond and love with our grandchildren that is equal to, if not greater than, that with our own kids. Grandchildren are our reward. They are the fruit of our lives.

On June 14, 2007, we lost two granddaughters. Loral was 12 years old and Macy was 14 years old. They were cousins who died in the same instant as two other kids on that fateful morning in a terrible auto/train wreck, just down the street from where we live. Each of our two sons tragically lost a daughter in that one single horrific moment.

This unfortunate event and the terror and sadness of that day changed everything forever. Since that day, my wife and I continue to dwell in a realm of sadness, grief, and longing for the girls. We are survivors, however, and know we must live life as it is presented to us each day, but this tragedy has necessitated that we now live it in such a different way. As with bereaved parents, bereaved grandparents seek and need understanding as well.

I cannot speak for all grandparents, and especially those who live far away from their grandchildren, but I can say that when you raise your grandchildren, the bonds grow very deep. When you have reached the stage of life to "grandparent," you seem to become much more active and appreciative in observing, guiding, and reliving the "wonders of a child growing up." We have more time and we take more time for them. Our youthful years have passed, and our need for a social life is much less important. Our grandchildren are the hub of our world.

As bereaved grandparents, we deeply suffered the loss of our grandchildren, but we also have had the pain of watching our sons endure "the parent's worst nightmare." You question what you can do to make them feel better, what you could possibly do to make the hurt go away. You wonder how you can make things alright and if there's any way to help your children bring their lives back into a tolerable form.

Each of our sons lost a daughter, which also means four of our other grandchildren lost sisters. How can we make their hurt go away? What about the aunts, uncles, and cousins? What about our daughter in laws? Aren't we grandparents supposed to be the rock of the family?

We watched our two sons independently seek grief relief, and later wind up hitting rock bottom. The imaginary grief relief led to substance abuse. Now, both have risen above the use of substances for temporary relief through intense medical, spiritual, and self-help, yet they will remain vulnerable for the rest of their lives. Both marriages ended in divorce, and one daughter-in-law has passed on. Both sons continue their lives with their surviving children, but walk the crazy road of grief each day.

There is little you can do to "make the hurt go away." As bereaved grandparents, you know that already. I think it is important to simply observe and understand your child's outrage and their questions of "Why?" Support them through their tears, their confusion, their emotional roller coaster, their need for moments alone, their mysterious ways, their avoidance of certain gatherings, and the recognition of "that look" so deeply etched on their faces. I do not question their impatience or their disregard for self. I just know they think differently than before. I also recognize improvements in certain values brought on by their loss. These improvements are called "blessings." Psychiatric help and counseling may help some, but those counselors can never understand unless they are bereaved parents themselves.

As bereaved grandparents involved with TCF, my wife and I have helped other bereaved parents recognize and better understand a grandparent's pain. This recognition and understanding are therapeutic for both the parents and the grandparents.

I think some grandparents often try to appear strong for their bereaved children, to the extent they find themselves caught in a place of "holding it in." Consequently, they're not able to grieve as bereaved grandparents really need to do. I'm not able to hide my grief. I will be forever emotionally extended beyond complete comfort because I miss my granddaughters so much.

A family must "huddle together" through all of the steps along this journey, sharing the overwhelming pain. Showing strength in such a loss might really be necessary through the funeral arrangements and the service; however, the need for this kind of strength often isn't long-term. Could it be that displaying only strength sends a false message to the bereaved son or daughter that they also need to be strong? The grandparent's grief is real and needs to be visible in order to let the bereaved child understand that he or she is not alone in this world and forever carrying a full load of grief.

It has been more than four years since our lives changed forever. Impacts of our granddaughters' deaths continue to play out each day. For only a lifetime, each of us will continue our quest for normal, but most important, we accept ourselves as survivors of grief, carrying our load as we trudge forth each day.

Things are getting better, even if just in fleeting moments. I am soon to be 70 years old and will always live with this terrible loss, yet I still believe the "golden years" are going to be possible!

DONALD MOYERS

Donald Moyers is the father of bereaved sons, Dawson and Doug, and the grandfather of beloved Macy and Loral. He and his wife, Elizabeth, reside in Baytown, Texas, and are affiliated with the Galveston County Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

Our Children Remembered



Angel Birthdays

Bessma Hendawi	July 2	Daughter of Diane Hendawi
Grant Adair Gorman	July 4	Grandson of Charlene Gorman; Nephew of Denise
Jonathan Reid Caluda	July 5	Son of Faith Caluda
Jennifer "GG" Arnold	July 8	Daughter of Dee Arnold
Leia Roniger	July 9	Daughter of Lexus Edmondson; Granddaughter of Leslie Edmondson
Rene Pierce	July 9	Brother of Prashanti van Calsem
Robert Teague	July 10	Son of Deborah Teague
Je'Ryan T. M. Edwards	July 12	Son of Linda Edwards
Clint Butler	July 12	Son of Marilyn Strecker
Kendall Springman	July 12	Grandson of Rosan Springman
Jacob Cristin Buuck	July 14	Son of Alice and Arthur Buuck; Brother of Jennifer
Brian Christopher	July 14	Son of Gaynell and Sidney Leonard
Jason Lynn	July 17	Son of Nalani Lynn
Joseph "Joey" Burke	July 19	Son of Steven Burke and Anne Adams
Brent Ashley Isenberg	July 19	Son of Sandra and Jack Isenberg
Niva Rosa Murillo	July 26	Sister of Millie Hunton; Mother of Becky Greenup
Colby Wayne	July 27	Son of Stephanie and Wayne Adams
Clay Hubble	July 29	Brother of Shannon Andrews

Angel Anniversaries

Chase Anthony	July 1	Son of Sandy and Brent Chester; Brother of Molly
Lazaro Miranda	July 3	Brother of Isabel Miranda-Vigne
Jacob Cristin Buuck	July 3	Son of Alice and Arthur Buuck; Brother of Jennifer
Milan Arriola	July 3	Daughter of Imani Ruffins
Pearson Pratt	July 9	Son of Kelly and Andrew Pratt
Onzaye Morris	July 10	Son of Diane Morris; Brother of Nia Woods
Paul-Anthony A. Fenasci	July 10	Son of Nicole Fenasci
Joshua Paul Keller	July 13	Son of Jerry and Dana Keller
Christopher Brady	July 14	Son of Janice Brady
Patrick O'Neil	July 16	Son of Kathy O'Neil
Leia Roniger	July 16	Daughter of Lexus Edmondson; Granddaughter of Leslie Edmondson
Jennifer Lynn	July 18	Daughter of Mary Ann Piazza; Sister of Jonathan
Frank "Frankie" Castagna, Jr.	July 21	Son of Margaret and Frank Castagna
Jonathan A. Fenasci	July 22	Son of Nicole Fenasci
Jennifer "GG" Arnold	July 24	Daughter of Dee Arnold
Alexis Bounds	July 24	Daughter of Peggy and Roger Boardman
Grant Adair Gorman	July 25	Grandson of Charlene Gorman; Nephew of Denise
Jonathan Coslan	July 26	Son of Sheila and John Coslan
Chad Wershbale	July 27	Son of Debbie Wershbale; Sister of Brandi
Rebecca (Beca) DeMuth	July 27	Daughter of Kathy and Wilton DeMuth
Brian Christopher	July 28	Son of Gaynell and Sidney Leonard
Robert Weeks	July 30	Son of Ellen Dotter
Victoria Wintter	July 31	Daughter of Chuck Eagerton
Joshua Louis Matranga	July 31	Son of Jodi Caronna and Joseph Matranga; Brother of Jaclyn and Joseph
Kendall O. Springman	July 31	Grandson of Rosan Springman



Phone Friend List

Our listeners are willing to listen, understand, and share.

504-454-3293 – Melva Duhon, son, 41, suicide

504-456-8248 – Patsy Ashton, son, 24, drug overdose

504-559-2438 – Jaimie Kimball, sibling, 12, vehicle accident 504-265-0581 – William & Millie Hunton, daughter, 30, accidental overdose