



## Mission Statement

FEEL supports families through the unique and devastating grief process that occurs after the death of a family member with a disability; the depth of the grief they feel is a reflection of the exceptional love, joy and commitment they experienced during their lives.

FEEL seeks to ensure that all bereaved survivors of people with disabilities never stand alone or feel isolated. To that end, FEEL offers support, knowledge and understanding.



### More Info?

Would you like to connect with another family?

Please contact us:

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## Remembering...

Nathaniel Brandon Mitchell Davison  
August 23, 1996 – January 16, 2011

Twyla May Dyck  
March 17, 2000 – June 11, 2011

David Christopher Gaebel  
October 25, 1981 – October 6, 2010

## Fall 2013

A decorative graphic of three autumn leaves in shades of orange and brown, with a thin brown line trailing behind them.

Tammy Louise Gumulcak  
June 10, 1983 – March 7, 2013

Alexander Jacob (AJ) Holdner  
February 16, 1988 – July 10, 2013

Piper Lynn Imrie  
August 12, 1999 – December 16, 2009

Bryan John Janzen  
August 9, 1988 – July 13, 2002

Kathy Barbara Janzen  
May 14, 1953 – December 23, 2010

David Matthew Johnston  
January 28, 1992 – August 2, 2005

Jessica Stephanie Kihn  
June 14, 1990 – September 16, 2012

Keenan William Philip Klisowsky  
September 5, 1990 – June 22, 2002

Seth Larry Koester  
February 8, 2002 – August 25, 2005

Kimberley Dawn Leir  
February 8, 1979 – May 18, 1985

Cash Jesse James Morin  
December 2, 2004 – February 18, 2009

Skyla Ann Penstock  
July 10, 2001 – June 13, 2005

David Matthew Joseph Petroschuk  
February 5, 1989 – October 31, 1989

Diane Lillie Poff  
March 28, 1954 – August 17, 2005

Rachel Lilli Schorr  
January 24, 1987 – March 23, 2004

Beverly Ann Scotton  
January 25, 1977 – January 19, 2010

Tori Lorraine Slade  
July 19, 2003 – July 2, 2008

Acacia Rachael Tisher  
August 12, 1993 – September 22, 2011

Alyssa Lynn Wilks  
January 7, 2004 – July 27, 2009

Cody Robert Wilks  
June 23, 2001 – May 6, 2002

Rachelle Elizabeth Wilson  
August 30, 1998 – April 3, 2003

Adam Barrett Yoner  
March 14, 1986 – January 2, 2011

If you would like your family member's name to appear in this section of the next newsletter, please contact us.

Community Living Association Saskatoon Inc. (CLASI)

presented last year's annual Shirley McGuire group. This award and every one of helped to create and maintain our unique group. Thank you!



presented last year's annual Vision Award to and the FEEL group. This award belongs to each and every one of you who has

## The Gift That Keeps on Giving

Christmas is a time where all of our senses are flooded: malls filled with canned music, shiny tinsel hanging everywhere, and of course, the taste of cookies, fruitcake and candy canes lingering on our tongues. Memories from Christmases past rise, often unbidden, to our minds, bringing remembered joy and sometimes pain.

For some of us, our religious adherence means that we see the season as a time to rejoice in the arrival of the Christ child and his message of hope, peace, joy and love. It is a lovely beginning, this manger scene; Jesus is surrounded by loving parents, furry animals and admiring shepherds. But those of us familiar

with the story know that the end of his life will be much different than the beginning. I wonder how those subsequent Christmas mornings were for his mother, Mary. Did her heart not continually ache at the loss of her beloved son?

Instead of spending all our time and energy trying to find the perfect gift, let us seek instead to BE the gift...to one another and the world. Yes, we have lost, but we have also loved: gloriously, extravagantly, outrageously! So few have experienced unconditional love, but we have known it intimately. We have given it and we have received it, and therefore, are far richer than anyone else who has ever lived. And when grief cuts too sharply and there is little that we can do, may we be able to SEE the gifts that are around us still...friendship, community, acceptance and those unexpected reminders our loved ones are with us still.

This Christmas, look up into the sky and find the brightest star. It is a gift to you – a sign that a beloved child was born on this earth and lived and loved and changed the world forever. I'm not talking this time about Mary's kid. I'm talking about yours.

*Michele Rowe, Dalmeny*

There is a crack  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in  
*Leonard Cohen*

## Tips For Coping With The Holidays?



Check out the website:  
**Whatsyourgrief.com**



## A Tribute to David Gaebel

(October 25, 1981 – October 6, 2010)

we want to say we miss you  
we want to say we love you  
we want to tell you that you, David, we still feel  
in our hearts  
but we miss feeling you in our hands and in our  
arms  
we even miss fighting with you  
life is not the same here, in the "partment"  
know that everything changes - but some are  
just different  
not hard just different to handle  
know that you had to go on to the next part of  
your journey  
but not being able to share any of it with you  
isn't easy  
not hearing about it is hard to accept  
apart from missing your physical being, your  
voice I miss terribly  
mommy misses you: your smell, your voice,  
physical being, everything  
still hear you breathe at night sometimes  
the other day when you came to see mommy,  
she needed that. thank you  
next time - come when more are here.  
everyone needs to see and feel you  
all of us miss you but no one misses you the  
way we do  
thank you for being a part of our lives  
- we are changed because...you were and are a  
part of our family

see you later,  
mom and Kelly



## A Caregiver's Story

Tommy (not his real name) was hurt at a very young age and, as a result of his injury, couldn't walk or talk or even hold his head up. He was blind and fed with a tube. He was four years old when I started to work with him. When Tommy was moved into the Care Home, he cried all the time because he was scared of the new place and all the different noises.

I was hired to keep him happy by taking him for walks in his wheelchair, reading stories to him, playing music, and visiting and talking with him. Tommy's inability to see made his sense of sound and listening very strong. Whenever a door would bang or some aides would come in to change him, he would jump. Often they would speak loudly when greeting him which would also startle him. He was blind, not deaf! Over the years Tommy and I became closer and he didn't cry as much. If I got up quietly to do something else while sitting with him, he would start to whine and cry, sensing that I had moved. The other workers would tell me to go back and look after him; he knew my voice. I celebrated his birthday, Halloween, Christmas and any other holidays with him. Tommy had a very large smile and you could always get a giggle out of him. He had his tickle spot and we played together and had fun. He loved "S" words and rhymes.

Over the years Tommy would get sick and I would visit him in the hospital. He would always settle down when I was there. One time, when he was very sick, the Care Home phoned me at 1:00 a.m. to come. Tommy was having difficulty breathing and was gasping for air. His heart rate number on the machine was very high – 150. They didn't think he was going to make it but, when he heard my voice, he was

able to relax a bit and catch his breath. Almost miraculously, his heart rate went down to 99.

I would have to say I loved Tommy like he was my own son and we had so many very happy years.

At the age of 13, Tommy was in the hospital a lot of the summer. I went to see him every day and stayed overnight when he was so sick. I didn't want him to be alone and scared with all the different noises. He passed away shortly after that. His big smile and giggle that touched the hearts of so many people were gone.

Tommy is deeply missed but now I believe he can run and play and talk in Heaven. And I have learned that working with children with disabilities makes us realize how lucky we really are.

(This caregiver could not give her real name for reasons of confidentiality)

We are our stories. Each story is a ripple that adds to the richness of the larger pool of stories. When we tell our stories, we come to realize that ours is part of something grander than we'd ever imagined. When we share our stories, our pain is released into a huge sea with no boundaries.

(Zimmerman, Susan, 1996. *Grief Dancers: A Journey into the Depths of the Soul*. Golden, Colorado: Nemo Press)

## Rachel's Story

Our angel, David, died in 1989 following open-heart surgery. He was nearly nine months old. Having lost a child with a disability has its own challenges and sensitivities. To me it is more profound. When we were told David had Down syndrome I grieved for the baby I had lost. The hopes and dreams I had for the baby I carried

for nine months were gone but I grew to love and accept David for who he was. Oh yes I still had my moments but I started focusing my energies to dream new dreams for our special little boy. My love became deeply unconditional and I started learning so much more about myself than I ever knew.

Then when David died I was devastated. I had empty arms, a broken heart and a bag over filled with unresolved and painful emotions. I found myself trying to overcome the insensitive comments of others saying things like, "It was a blessing that he was gone" or "You can have a life now" or "He would have been a burden." I found myself time and time again defending David's right to live even if he had a disability.

Everyone's journey through grief is his/her own. I found attending bereaved support groups and reading on bereavement helpful. I listened to music. I held on to the little faith I had left and asked God to help me even though I was very angry with him. I surrounded myself with those who truly knew David and understood the loss of my role not only as mother but as his advocate, nurse, teacher, therapist, etc. I had to overcome my guilt and forgive myself. I buried myself in the care of my older son. I thank God for him. I felt helpless not being able to comfort him at times when he had the same questions I had; i.e. "Why did David die?" I had to accept and respect that my husband's journey was different from mine and that was okay. This realization saved our crumbling marriage. I had to channel my anger. I had to learn to take care of myself and am still learning. I learned to take one day at a time. Through it all I have found peace and hope that I never thought I would.



David's Mommy

Rachel Petroschuk, Moose Jaw

This newsletter has been made possible through funding by the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living and Thyssen Mining. Please share it with other families, friends and colleagues. If you do not receive it directly and wish to be on the mailing list, please let us know!