A Decade....Ten Years...3652 days.....

Submitted by: Nancy Webb

A decade....ten years...3652 days.....

Tonight into tomorrow marks a decade of my grief over the death of Gavyn! Those who have not experienced grief cannot grasp the despair it causes and the pain it leaves behind. Grief does not get easier, the pain I feel today when I think about Gavyn is still the same pain I felt when I first heard those excruciating words.

After 10 years, I can still replay the day Gavyn died in my mind over and over again. It is a memory so clear — not one second of it has been forgotten. I can still hear the doctors voice as his words echo in my head, a doctor whom I have never forgotten and never will. I cannot fathom the pain of him having to tell a parent their worst nightmare, for that I will be forever grateful! I remember the devastation that crushed my entire body and made me want to die that night too. Even after all these years my heart has never healed, and I’ve accepted the fact that it never will. I remember holding Gavyn as I could not fathom how I could ever let him go. I cried more tears than I ever thought possible.

There was a time in life where I wondered how I was suppose to carry on. For awhile my grief over Gavyn blanketed everything. I began to navigate by minutes then by hours which turned into days and now years. Gradually overtime I began to learn to cope never forgetting how powerful a mother’s love is. This I could not do on my own and have been blessed to have many supportive people in my life. My hard days over time have become fewer and farther in between, but those days will always remain. A piece of me will forever be lost. It would be an understatement to say that these years have been the longest and hardest years of my life. However grieving these last ten years has given me the opportunity to reflect on life. I have learned the importance of remembering to cherish small things in life as those memories one day will be meaningful later. It has taught me that grief is pain and that pain is something that is meant to be felt. It is from Gavyn’s existence here on earth that I have learned the true meaning of love and loss.

There is no doubt in my mind that Gavyn is the one who drives me to believe in my dreams and work hard to achieve everything I want to accomplish in my life. Gavyn is the reason behind my passion to be a support for other parents who are faced with the horror of the death of their own child. To be able to give them hope whether it be through co-leading Compassionate Friends, supporting the Iowa SIDS Foundation and promoting safe sleep or advocating for Organ and Tissue Donation and giving someone in need the Gift of Life.

Life, it is what you make it. If I save one baby...one parent from the pain of losing their child...help one parent to come to grips with the loss of their child...then Gavyn’s life and the legacy he left behind has meaning. I’m not sure where my life will lead but I can only hope that it is destined to be great, that one day I will again hold Gavyn in my arms and give him the biggest hug and kiss I have longed for the last decade and never have to let him go!

Bad things do happen; how I respond to them defines my character and the quality of my life. I can choose to sit in perpetual sadness, immobilized by the gravity of my loss, or I can choose to rise from the pain and treasure the most precious gift I have - life itself.
Handling a Holiday with Grief

Suffering the loss of a loved one at any time of the year is difficult, yet during a holiday those grieving often experience a more intense sense of loss. The world is celebrating life but for the one experiencing grief a sense of darkness can overshadow the holiday.

All of the expectation about this “special time” may come with feelings of apprehension. When grieving you have the goal of achieving a new relationship with your loved one who will no longer be physically present during special occasions. You may struggle to understand what the holidays should mean now that your loved one is not there.

Remember that expectations are not always based on reality. Remember that you are adjusting to a new life. The following suggestions for self-care may be of benefit in addressing how you handle a holiday with grief.

**Acknowledge the fact that this year will be different.** Try to identify ways that this holiday will be different and accept these realities. Evaluate what traditions you do not want to be changed; determine if an old tradition could be eliminated, adjusted or delegated; and, contemplate ways that new traditions could be established. Discuss these with family and friends and how these realities make you feel. This does not mean you have forgotten your loved one rather that you are beginning to adjust to your loss and this new reality.

**Accept your feelings.** Sometimes people who have lost a loved one feel guilty that they are here to enjoy the holidays and their loved one is not. Sometimes anger creeps in that they are without their loved one. Often loneliness is a feeling that overshadows the holidays, even when we are in a crowd.

**Plan ahead and prioritize.** Anticipate triggers and give yourself permission to cry. Give others permission also to reflect on special moments or talk about your loved one with or around you; or, guide them not to and tell them why.

**Know your limitations.** Assess what the most difficult times of the holiday season will be. Say no and delegate! There is no reason to accept every invitation or take on every holiday task. Take a close look at your emotional and physical energy levels as a measurement of what you want to do.

**Take support from others.** Look to others to help you with things your loved one did in past years. Be open to the help of organizations, like Genesis Hospice, that provide free individual grief counseling, grief education, and grief support groups. Consider the most comforting people to be with on the holiday, even if that is not family.

**Care for yourself, totally.** People don't often realize that emotional stress is one of the hardest kinds of stress to cope with. Grief can be very draining - and not just emotionally - but mentally, spiritually, physically, socially, etc. Take time for you to be alone or to be with an affirming person, just to rest.

**Share memories.** Storytelling is a natural therapeutic way we accomplish life review bringing catharsis to our lives - not that we get over grieving our loved ones, not closure, but celebrating their life and the relationship we’ve shared with them. The holidays will bring up memories, good and bad. Try to find a sense of peace by focusing on your loved one’s life and not on his/her death. Remember too, it is okay to laugh. George Bernard Shaw said, “Life does not cease to be funny when people die, any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh.” Laughter helps us to heal.

**Search afresh for meaning and purpose in life.** For example, consider volunteering or giving in a way that was meaningful to your loved one as a way of continuing your relationship with them and continuing to build their legacy.

**Count your blessings.** Make an effort to write down all the ways your loved one blessed you or others. Share the continued joy you and they experience because of your loved one.

**Trust and hope in your faith.** Trust points us back to the foundations we and our loved one have stood on. Hope points us toward the assurance of precious promises we look forward to being fulfilled. Let your spiritual relationships with the Divine, others in person, in community and with special texts feed your soul.

*Article shared with permission from Genesis Hospice, https://www.genesishealth.com/care-treatment/hospice/

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We talk about them, not because we're stuck or because we haven't moved on, but we talk about them because we are theirs, and they are ours, and no passage of time will ever change that.

**SCRIBBLES & CRUMBS**

**November**
- Anthony Allan Appley
- Jacob Alexander Boles
- Sydney Ann Davidson
- Sophie Ann Kracht
- Shawn Leon Levi
- Taylor Rose Levi
- Grant Michael Palan
- Matthew Thomas Samuelson
- Jaelyn Macie Jo See
- Nathaniel Charles Seymour
- Easton Steele Sims
- Tanner Richard Skelton
- Isaiah Thomas Swailles
- Taryn Suzanne Tuttle
- Tjay Scott VanLangen

**December**
- Robin Christopher Carrell Beimer
- Isaac Paul Gellett
- Brock Adam Gould
- Nekeia L. Hunt
- Catherine Louise Jacoby
- Ashlee E. Kallsen
- Baylee Ann Ludtke
- Alyssa Renee Lux
- Camden Ray O'Connor
- Jaxton Daniel Plathe
- Kennedi Eve Sherwood
- Preston Douglas Spahn
- Andy Duane Whiteside
- Tyler Wayne Williams
- Wyatt James Wilson
- Keaton James Wirtz

**January**
- Frederick Robert “Robbie” D. 
  Dean Mortimer III
- Justice Marie Ruthann Newsom
- James Nupp Jr. “JJ”
- Benjamin David Person
- Skyler Eugene Smith
- Derek Steinkamp
- Austin Micheal

**February**
- Tyree R. Barnes
- Hannah Jo Blair
- Alyssa Coulbourn
- Rowan James Dolezal
- Bentlee Jacob Edwards
- Christopher Scott Evans
- Grant Philip Evans
- Kenneth Edward Giffin

**November**
- Elizabeth Grace Atzen
- Nathaniel Frederick Borelli
- Cody Michael Coleman
- Rylee Elizabeth Erwin
- Kristina Ann Kriener
- Dawson John Lewis
- Amara C. Magee
- Abigail K. Mar
- Shelby Jo McConnell
- Johnathan Daniel Prescott
- DaeShawn Marquis Rodriguez
- Laikyn Allyn Shuts
- Jared John Smith
- Beth Marie Stukerjurgen
- Devon Own Tripp
- McKenzie Lynn Wakeman
- Gavyn Darwin Webb
- Warren Edwin White

**January**
- Dylan Peter Christian Andersen
- Kai Maurice Barnhill-Philius
- Cody James Beck
- Robin Christopher Carrell Beimer
- Shialoh Marie Christopher
- Sydney Ann Davidson
- Robert Carl Davis III
- Kory Lynn Dunkin
- Isaac Paul Gellett
- Hailey Erin Lincoln
- Jacob Anthony Lipski
- Gunner Jacob Alex Nail
- Jessica Lynne Otto
- Ariel Faith Rattler
- Zachary Kyle Renaud
- Easton Steele Sims
- Kellan Rayne Christine Starrett
- Taryn Suzanne Tuttle
- Andy Duane Whiteside
- Tyler Wayne Williams

**February**
- Matthew James Avery
- Jacob Alexander Boles
- Rita Marie Chadwick
- Kaleb Dean Hargens
- Nekeia L. Hunt
- Alexa Jean Jonas
- Ashlee E. Kallsen
- Peyton Jo Lehman
- Justin Evan Miller
- Samantha Allina Parks
- Ryan Allen Robinson
- Matthew Thomas Samuelson
- Skyler Eugene Smith
- Jadin Diane Vega

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**In Loving Memory**

**January**
- James Ray Griffin
- Tysen Jacob Imbus
- Danika Jo James
- Hazel Christine Liston
- Jalen Joseph Litscher
- O’Malley
- David Mikel Logan
- Abigail K. Mar
- Jackson Andrew Mueller
- Rylan Joseph Ogden
- Tanner Lee Port
- Alex John Schlotfeldt
- Izzabella Marie Tambornino
- Lauren Elizabeth Nichole Vaene
- Zayden Robert Vote
- Elizabeth “Ellie” Christine Williams
- Lexis Dawn

**December**
- Kayla Sue Brewer
- Cael David Burmeister
- Max David Bushlack
- Cara Lynn Eddie
- Dash Riley Ellingworth
- Ryder Martin Harnish
- Chelsea Miranda Jones
- Abigail Ileen Knoop
- Quinten Matis
- Jackson Andrew Mueller
- Knox Owen Palmer
- Darran Dasan Perkins
- Isaac Thomas Pressley
- Jaelyn Macie Jo See
- Erika Elizabeth Story
- Shane Adam Tate
- Kyle Anthony Timmons
- Noah James Zarate
20th Anniversary Walk for the Future Exceeds 2019 Goal

The twentieth anniversary of the Iowa SIDS Foundation’s Walk for the Future was held on August 24, 2019. Walks were hosted in Bettendorf, Cedar Rapids, Johnston, Le Mars, Mason City, Washington, and What Cheer.

There were families and friends that were attending their very first walk and others who have participated in EVERY Walk since it began in 1999. While each Walk site offers different activities, the primary focus of each Walk is to honor and celebrate a special baby whose life was truly too brief! It is always our hope that each and every family and/or walker found comfort in the day, made connections with other families, and were surrounded by family and friends as you honored and remembered your special loved one.

Not only were we blessed with beautiful weather at all seven locations, we are humbled and thankful for the twenty six new and returning corporate & community sponsors. Please consider thanking those listed by visiting their businesses, referring their services, or simply taking the time to say thank you!

In addition to our sponsors, the Walks would not happen without our dedicated and amazing Walk Coordinators and their team of local volunteers. From reserving parks, to gathering prizes, securing food, and hosting the walk, these teams of volunteers make your local Walk happen! Their commitment, teamwork, connections, and creativity make each Walk unique and special for the families that attend. Thank you to Todd & Christine Thoeming, Rachel Sutton, Erin Veenstra, Jes Sauser, Kent & Roberta Studer, Pam Jeneary, Tony and Tricia Lipski, and Robin Wright for sharing your time and leadership!! THANK YOU!!

Last but not least, thank you to each of you that attended or supported the walk through your participation or your donations and pledges. The Board set a goal of $53,000 for the 2019 Walk. This goal was surpassed as statewide, this annual fundraiser grossed approximately $55, 773 with 857, registered walkers. These funds help provide grief support, safe sleep education, printed materials, and general daily operating costs. Thank you for helping the Foundation meet our goal.

Thank you again to all of our sponsors, volunteers, walkers, and community businesses! We look forward to seeing you at the 2020 Walk on August 22, 2020! If you would like to volunteer to help in walk planning, have a connection for a corporate sponsor or are simply interested in helping on Walk Day, please call our office at 515-965-7655 or email us at info@iowasids.org.
We are excited to be a partner in a new statewide social media campaign designed with the primary objective of educating Iowans about safe sleep to help reduce the risk of SIDS and possibly prevent other accidental sleep related infant deaths. The target audience for the campaign are new Iowa parents with children ages 0-1 and expecting mothers. The secondary audience are grandparents and care givers in the state of Iowa.

The campaign includes a variety of marketing techniques including programmatic banners when key terms are searched on line, single image ads on Facebook, safe sleep posters, and other media ready images. Each of these resources link parents and caregivers to the www.safesleepiowa.org page found on the Iowa SIDS Foundation’s website.

The safe sleep campaign began November 1st and will continue through December, 2019. During the first fifteen days of the campaign, 5,748 individuals have viewed the safe sleep page. Additional data on the education outreach efforts will be provided in the next newsletter.

This project was in response to the data and recommendations shared by Iowa’s Child Death Review Team. Partners in this project include Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Human Services, the Iowa SIDS Foundation, and the IDPH Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control and the Iowa State Medical Examiner’s Office.

Facebook Fundraising Campaigns

We continue to be humbled by the number of people choosing to host an online fundraiser to benefit our Foundation. Special thanks to the following who opted to celebrate their birthday by raising funds to help support newly bereaved families and to advocate safe sleep. Happy Birthday to the following: Ruth Driskell, Elizabeth Jordan Felton, Jeremy Hand, Riley Hope, Lexi Hubby, Cody Kelley, Mariah Klomp, Caroline Mackey, Mary Beth Palan, Teresa Marie Popp, Elizabeth Reed, Kallie Rubendall, Amanda Starrett, and Helen Wares. Your kindness and advocacy is very much appreciated. Thank you!!

In addition, we appreciate all of the following individuals for supporting these campaigns or for making a Facebook donation through 10/21/19.

Louise Ahrens  
Teresa Ahrens  
James Allen  
Kathy Kerr Beal  
Jasmine Ca  
Kayla Caryl  
Deann Cook  
Molly Cooper  
David Crooks  
Diana Speas  
Swati Dasgupta  
Heather Dawn  
Lori DeMoss  
Gina Doogs  
Lauren Downey  
Jonathan Driskell  
Katy Elder  
Sheryl Fitzpatrick  
Farm Forager  
Craig Ford  
Lori Frahm-Dittmer  
Cindy Gerke  
Sylvia Gillette  
Trish Girmus  
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Lisa Gonzalez  
Becky Honeycutt  
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Carolann Jensen  
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Kristen Klomp  
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Stephanie Knox  
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Arnezz Liz Xiong  
Colleen Loefller  
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Victoria McDaniel  
Mary McKinney  
Rose Middleton  
Stephene Middleton-Wright  
Annette Miller  
Patti Mills  
Katie Modrell  
Jerry Murley  
Wendy Nove  
Renie Osterlund  
Elizabeth Paton  
Mary Quilter  
Jesse Rawley  
Rose Reed  
Amber Richards  
Rusty Rogerson  
Patsy Ruth  
Teri Sacks Elsbury  
Renae Salaba  
Jon Sanford  
Kathy Schooley  
Bridie Sellers  
Tamara Shearer  
Mary Shipman  
Leslie Sourwine  
Danielle Steinkamp  
Ryan Stowe  
Andi Summy  
John Toro  
Lori Towsley  
Carrie Tresemer  
Zach Walters  
Gabe Winter  
Wendy Woodruff
Thank You... The Iowa SIDS Foundation wishes to thank the following donors for their generous gifts.

Gifts Given In Memory Of:

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   Dean Paulson
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   Mary Krafta
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   Tony and Tricia Lipski
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   Steven VanDerSchaaf
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   Sheila Sandy
McKensie Lynn Wakeman
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Sophia Halas Welch
    Shelby Welch
Wyatt James Wilson
    Jenni Ackland
    Debra Doran
    Elaine Gould
    Home State Bank
    Dalieith Johnston
    Sid Jones
    Lois Olsen
    Kara Ristal
    Jennifer Schoff
    Robin Snocker
    Gary Stein
    Naomi Waldo
    Molly Whitaker
    Megan Wilson
Noah James Zarate
    Dave and Linda Gord
    Mary Panther

Gifts given in Honor Of:
Patricia R. Shutts in memory of
    Laikyn Shutts
    Estate of Patricia Shutts
    Carol Thomas
Gary Seeman
    Barbara Brooks
    Kathryn Campbell
    Anonymous
Don Marker
    Jill Matthias

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Bob and Janelle Bixenman
Carl’s Body Shop
County Bank
Rosalie Ellefson
Mr. and Mrs. Farley
Marissa Forbes
James and Jacki George
Jean Heeren
Timothy Heisterkamp
Martina Houglund
Ralph Klemme
Kroese & Kroese P.C
MaryAnn Kunkel
Kelli Langel
Lions Club of What Cheer
James and Lorrie Luense
Penelope Lumley
Chad and Deana Lutter
Midwest Pipe Supply Inc.
Jessie Mireles
Connie Moore
Melanie Murphy
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Outback Steak House
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Daniel Pick
    Donna Rasmussen
    Susan Rossow
    Greg and Jan Schmidt
    Tyler Schroeder
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    Peggy VanDerMolen
    Timothy and Sali Van Weelden
    Wellmark Foundation Matching Gifts
    Rick and Kris Westhoff
    What Cheer Fair Board
    Brian and Deborah White
    Beth Wiebecke
    Loren Wilken
    William and Jill Young
    Susan Young

Donations allow us to offer grief support, provide safe sleep resources, produce the newsletter, offer support groups, conduct trainings & support research. These donations were received as of 10/15/19.

HOLIDAY DONATIONS: We appreciate that each of you have many worthy and notable causes that you chose to support throughout the year. We hope you will consider continuing your support through a holiday donation. Your kindness and generosity is appreciated! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

This holiday donation is in memory of: ________________________________________________

Donated by: _________________________________________________________________
(Please print name and address.)

Amount: ____________

_____ I would like 100% of this donation to be included in the research campaign.
_____ I would like this donation be used for general operating funds.

_____ Please send a note to the above baby’s family to let them know that I was thinking of them and their baby.
_____ Please send me a receipt for my tax deductible donation.

Mail to: Iowa SIDS Foundation, 2962 99th Street, Suite 3, Urbandale, IA  50322.
Spring Newsletter Deadline: February 14, 2020

General Submissions
The Iowa SIDS Foundation offers all parents, grandparents, relatives, childcare providers and friends the opportunity to submit information for the newsletter. This may include letters, poems, sharing your family’s story or perspective, or highlights of events held in your local community to benefit the Foundation or to bring awareness to SIDS and SUDE. Please note that due to space limitations, submitted material may have to be edited or held until a later newsletter.

It is our hope to give as many parents and family members the opportunity to share. For more information or to submit your story, please contact the Iowa SIDS Foundation by calling 515-965-7655 or by email at info@iowasids.org.

New Arrivals
Congratulations on your newborn! If you are interested in sharing your new family member with our readers, please provide your baby’s name, birthdate and parents’ names to the office.

Remembering Our Babies
If you would like to honor your baby in our Remembering Our Babies section of the newsletter, we do require a written parental consent to be on file. Consents may be requested to either be mailed or emailed to you. Contact our office by phone or email to request a parental consent.