

Donor Family Connection



Butterfly/istock.com

Arkansas Donor Family Council Newsletter



SHAWLS OF COMPASSION - FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Shawls of Compassion**
- **In Touch with Tammy**
- **St Patty's Day Live/Silent Auction**
- **April Donor Week-end**
- **Recipient Story—Carolyn Berry**
- **Donor Story—Eli McGinley**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

IN TOUCH WITH TAMMY	2
SHAWLS OF COMPASSION - CONTINUED	2
APRIL DONOR WEEK-END	3
DONOR FAMILY COOKBOOK	3
DONATE LIFE T-SHIRTS	3
RECIPIENT STORY - CAROLYN BERRY	4
DONOR STORY - ELI MCGINLEY	6
AN ESSAY - THE ROOM	8
ST PATTY'S DAY LIVE/SILENT AUCTION	10
KALI SPARKS MEMORIAL FLOAT TRIP	10
DONOR MEMORIAL	10
COUNCIL PHONE NUMBERS & E-MAIL ADDRESSES	10
DID YOU KNOW?	11
BOOKS FOR YOUR GRIEF JOURNEY	11
DONOR FAMILY COUNCIL MEETING	11
A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR	11

The Shawls of Compassion project held it's first meeting on December 2, 2010. Lots of volunteers had already been busy making shawls and presented us with 32. We've had so many volunteers join us that it didn't take long to use up all the yarn that ARORA so generously bought for us.



At the January Council meeting the members voted to donate \$2,000 to the project to make sure we had plenty of yarn going forward.

In February, thanks to Mary Gabardi, a generous husband gifted his wife's collection of yarn. His wife was a liver recipient of 22 years who passed away.

Rhonda Sparks is using some of the donated yarn to make a shawl for her daughter Kali's heart recipient, Brooke, who lives in Orlando, Florida. She plans to give Brooke the shawl on her 3 year anniversary of her new heart.

Becky Gertsch has taken on this project and has done such a wonderful job organizing it...thanks Becky!

In her words, "OH.MY.GOODNESS!!!! I

wish you could have all seen the shawls that arrived yesterday at the March meeting. There were 69 of the most beautiful shawls you have ever seen. Each one unique... different patterns, colors, yarns. Each one made with love and compassion for a family who has just experienced a devastating loss. The room was filled with love & SHAWLS! Absolutely wonderful!"

A world of thanks goes to Rhonda Sparks who has enlisted several ladies in the Conway area. One group of ladies works in Dining Services at Hendrix College. The other group is called the *Yarn-aholics* and meets every Tuesday at the Faulkner County Library. These two groups have made over 60 shawls already.

Thanks to Becky, the shawl mission led her to another amazing, beautiful group of women at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church. Their shawl ministry group plans to make shawls for donor families in honor of one of their members who was an organ recipient. The blessings continue to flow. God is good.

The mission of Shawls of Compassion is to present each donor family with shawls at their time of donation. Tissue donor families will be presented with their shawls at a planned Candlelight Ceremony hosted by ARORA. No date has been set at this time. Look for an upcoming announce-

ment on ARORA's website. Several shawls have been presented to the donor families by ARORA staff members. These are some of their comments:

"I had the honor of presenting ARORA's first shawl to a donor family in southeast Arkansas. It was given to a husband and a mom. I explained to them that this was made and given by people affected by Organ and Tissue donation whether from the donor side and/or recipient side. I put it around both shawl recipients and told them how sorry I was to be meeting them this way and for their loss, but I thank them for those whose lives their loved one is saving and whom she will live on through. When I gave it to the husband, he thanked me. The donor's stepfather was with him at the time and was so moved and excited that this man was given the very first shawl...that he shared this with all of their family which was many. Once I gave it to the mom, she wrapped her arms around her shawl and then around me and thanked me for honoring her daughters wishes and for giving her something that she can hold on to this moment. I told her that every time she is missing her daughter to wrap this around her to remember what an amazing hero she now is to others and

In Touch with Tammy



Tammy Sisemore
Chairman - ARKDFC

I think most of you know who I am but, for those who don't, I thought I would start with a little background. I began volunteering with ARORA in September after Robbie's death in May of 2002. I wanted to learn as much

as I could about the process that finds and shares such hope in the midst of such tragedy. I have shared Robbie's story in many venues schools, hospitals, symposiums and late night on the phone with newly bereaved parents. I am just as passionate, if not more so, about organ and tissue donation today as I have ever been.

Most recently, I was elected as Chairman of the Arkansas Donor Family Council. I am deeply grateful for the confidence placed in me by the Council members. The Council is comprised of donor family members, transplant recipients and ARORA staff. Our purpose is to assist and support donor families in whatever capacity is needed and to increase awareness about organ and tissue donation.

I have been a member of the Council for 8 years. At first it was a "cause" that I could immerse myself in. Over the years it has grown into an extended family that I look forward to seeing and spending time with. They are friends and family that always remember. When I stepped into the role of chairman in January, I had no idea what

that role might look like. The transition has been a little difficult but, with the help of our dedicated members I am able to navigate it quite nicely.

Moving forward we are working on updating our website, www.arkdfc.org. I really want it to be a place of information, connection and empowerment for all who visit it. Until we get it up and running you can get the latest meeting and event information by joining our group page on Facebook. Our meetings are held at least quarterly and are open to everyone. If you think you want to get involved but aren't sure how, the Council meetings are a great place to start.

Hope to see you there!

SHAWLS OF COMPASSION - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the mom said 'Absolutely'! It was very moving and emotional and I feel that this is an incredible project that we have started!

"The donor was a young 27 year old exchange student and rugby player from South Africa. It was complicated notifying her family and getting them to Arkansas. Mom and dad were gracious and appreciated the shawl. Following her memorial service, I started having second thoughts about her brother who is a young adult and not living with parents anymore. I drove out to the rugby field where he was watching her team play. We had a nice visit and I gave him a shawl, as well. He loved it. I wasn't sure how I would feel offering a man a shawl, but I am so over it. He has something tangible to remember his sister."

"Just got off the phone with a donor wife who said she and her son have both been sleeping with their

shawls every night!

She lost her husband last week and she and her two sons were presented with shawls.

I also delivered three to a donor husband whose wife of several months died and he was happy to present one to his wife's mom, and the donor's two sisters."

"I gave a shawl to a donor wife when in Little Rock and she and her friend thought it was a very nice gesture and gladly accepted the shawl. It was unusually warm in the hospital that day so she didn't put it on. We had a lot of family in and out that day so we didn't talk about it much. I felt that it was genuinely appreciated. I won't do this much in my role, but this one experience that I have had was very positive."

"I was one of 3 people who gave a shawl to one of 3 family members for a 20 year old that died tragically in a car accident. She was

from out of the country so I gave it to the mother after the memorial service. They had said yes to honor their daughter's wishes from Africa, over the phone, only a few hours after this very unstable young girl was injured and trying to arrest. We had rushed to the OR without placing organs 1st. The mother was very preoccupied at the service but, I believe that when she got quiet, she put that shawl over her shoulders and felt the love that was poured into it in the making. I am so glad we are doing this. It makes us not feel empty handed too!"

"I gave out my first shawls to family members during my last donor case a couple of weeks ago. The donor was a woman who had 3 grown children, one daughter who was the eldest and two sons (who were her legal next of kin.) I initially offered a shawl to her daughter who so graciously wanted it & accepted it. Then later I thought I really should ask the sons. Now mind you, these men

were approximately 6' 4" and 200 + pounds. BIG GUYS. So I asked the youngest son if he would like one and with tears in his eyes he nodded his head yes. I went out to my car and happened to have a shawl that was black with green trim. Perfect for a man. I gave it to him and he grasped it with love. Then his older brother arrived and saw the shawls and I asked him if he would like one. Without hesitation he said yes. I went back out to my car and luckily had one shawl left. The only problem was it was pink. I brought it to the oldest son and said, "well, I'm sorry but all I have is a pink one." And he said to me, "That's ok, pink was my mother's favorite color." Very poignant. I fought back my own tears.

The Shawl Program is a blessing. I thank all of you who have organized it and many thanks to our knitters and crocheters."

If you are interested in joining our wonderful group of volunteers who make these beautiful shawls, please contact Becky Gertsch at 501-429-5469 or bgertsch@arora.org

APRIL DONOR FAMILY WEEK-END

ARORA's Aftercare program is hosting "The Celebration of Life - Night at the Zoo" April 15th.

The event is held from 5:30 P.M - 8:00 P.M. at the

Little Rock Zoo
#1 Jonesboro Drive
Little Rock, AR

The zoo will only be open to ARORA Donor Families and Transplant Recipients.

Dinner will be served at 5:00 P.M. and provided by Adams Catfish Catering.

Saturday, April 16th ARORA's after-care program is presenting "Lives Changing Lives" the 15th Annual Donor Family Recognition Ceremony.

The event is held from 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. at

Next Level Events
1400 W. Markham
Little Rock, AR

Donor families may honor their loved one by submitting pictures and written tributes to their loved ones. These tributes will be added to the donor pictures and tributes from the past.

Additionally donor families may pin a

quilt square in honor of their loved one to the unfinished quilt or pay tribute to their loved one's square on an already finished quilt during the ceremony.

For Information on donor pictures, tributes, and quilt squares, please visit ARORA's website at www.arora.org and look under Donor Family Services and Calendar of Events.



Please RSVP to Judy Buie @ 501-907-9125 or Rebekah Keese @501-907-9150 by April 8th if you are planning to attend either event.

DONOR FAMILY COUNCIL COOKBOOK



The Maxwell family has graciously volunteered to put together a cookbook for the Council. It will contain recipes provided by our donor families. Once we have enough recipes then we can go to print and start selling them.

provided by our donor families. Once we have enough recipes then we can go to print and start selling them.

Gather all your favorite recipes and send them to:

donorcookbook@ARKdfc.org

If you do not have electronic copies and have no way to create them, mail your printed copies to:
Rhonda Maxwell
4304 Janet Lane, Texarkana, AR 71854

The proceeds from the sale of the cookbooks will go to the Council to support

our families and for sending athletes and donor families to the transplant games.

Thank you Rhonda and Ann for taking on such a worthwhile project. We appreciate your efforts.

WE NEED RECIPES...please send in your favorites. We want this to be a really good cookbook AND NEED YOUR HELP.

DONATE LIFE T-SHIRTS—ORDER YOURS TODAY!

ARORA and the Council are selling DONATE LIFE *Arkansas* T-shirts. There are still plenty available.

The shirts are available in Blue or Green in Adult sizes S, M, L, XL, and XXL

Youth sizes S, M and L

The profit from the shirts benefit the Council.

This is a great money making opportunity for us!

Buy yours today.

Sell to others.

Order forms are available on ARORA's website at www.ARORA.org



\$10.00 each

RECIPIENT STORY - CAROLYN BERRY

Cardiomyopathy was a word that I had never heard before.

That's the name the doctors gave my heart disease. It is disease of the heart muscle accompanied by ventricular tachycardia, which is a fast erratic heart rate. The year was 1995. For months I had endured a persistent non-productive cough, feelings of suffocation, shortness of breath, and no energy.

When I finally made my way to the doctor for treatment, it was immediate hospitalization. For 19 days tests and procedures were performed, and a defibrillator was implanted in my chest. I left the hospital armed with more information about heart disease than I ever wanted to know, a lot of medications, and instructions to follow a low-sodium diet. For the next seven years, I continued on with a semi-normal life. I continued my career as an eighth grade teacher, was able to enjoy the graduation of our older daughter from college, her marriage, and the birth of a grandson, and our younger daughter's graduation from high school and college. During these seven years, the defibrillator had to be replaced because the batteries ran down. At that time, I told the doctors that the defibrillator had never "shocked" me and that I didn't need it. They assured me that the defibrillator was my "safety net" and that if I needed it, I needed it.

In 2002, that "safety net" came into play. While my husband and I were babysitting our infant grandson, that defibrillator shocked me. My husband rushed me to the hospital where I spent the night. Medications were adjusted, and the doctors told me that maybe this would not happen again. Three weeks later at school the defibrillator shocked me three times in a ten-minute period. I was rushed to the hospital by ambulance. When the doctors interrogated my defibrillator, it showed that my heart rate had been 220 beats per minute. The doctors sug-



Carolyn Berry

gested strongly that I retire from teaching. I took their advice and retired from a career that I dearly loved.

For the next two years, I became involved in various activities to keep myself busy. I volunteered at the school I retired from and also at the Red Cross. I also took 12 hours of college Spanish. I had a need to stay active and involved. But, I could tell that my strength and stamina were decreasing and my heart was becoming increasingly weaker.

In 2004, I had a heart attack. Once again I was in the hospital. The doctors started the tests, procedures, and evaluations to determine if I qualified for a heart transplant. I did. I was placed on the transplant waiting list. One month later, at 5:30 in the morning I received a call that a donor heart had been found for me. My husband and I rushed to the hospital. We were so elated that I was being given the gift of life. I was being given a second chance at life. We were shedding tears of happiness and expectation, but we knew that somewhere another family was shedding tears of sorrow. This unknown family was grieving because of the loss of their loved one. Their compassion, unselfishness, and love were enabling me to continue to live. How could I ever thank them?

One month out from my transplant, I experienced my first round of rejection. I was back

in the hospital for medication to get the rejection under control. For the next 11 months, I did everything the doctors told me to do. I took all my medications on time, kept every doctors appointment, watched my diet, and began exercising at cardiac rehab.

On my one-year evaluation of my heart transplant, the doctors discovered that I was developing vascular rejection; my blood was making antibodies to fight against my heart and was causing blockages that could not be repaired with surgery. The doc-

RECIPIENT STORY - CAROLYN BERRY - CONTINUED

tors told me at this time, that if we could not get this under control that my only hope would be another heart transplant. For the next one year and nine months, my health was a roller coaster. My heart was failing. I was in and out of the hospital. New medications were tried that did not work for me. I reached the point that I did not have the energy to eat, I could not sleep because I could not breathe, and I could not walk more than 15 steps without having to stop to rest and breathe. In February 2007, I was back at UAMS and was being evaluated once again for a heart transplant. The doctors told my family and me that they did not think that my heart would last long enough for a donor heart to be located. They transferred me to Baptist Hospital where the doctors planned to install a cardio-pump that would help my heart until a donor heart could be located. Once I arrived at Baptist Hospital, the doctors determined that I was not a good candidate for the cardio-pump because of the blood issues. Within four hours, I was placed on the heart transplant waiting list. I was placed in CVICU on life-support drugs and monitoring devices in my heart and lungs. For the next several weeks, we waited and waited. Finally, on April 14, 2007, a donor heart was located for me. I was once again being given the most precious gift, the gift of life. Another donor family was grieving. During a time of great sorrow and sadness, they had

reached out and given me this chance to live. Not a day goes by that I don't think of my donor families.

Today, I am healthy and active. I exercise three times a week at cardiac-rehab and take dance classes twice a week. I am once again volunteering at the school I retired from, I am actively involved in my church's music program, and I am a volunteer speaker for ARORA.

Because of the decisions made by my donor families, I have been able to watch my grandson grow to be a wonderful loving eleven-year old boy. I was able to care for my mother in the last year of her life, when she needed me most. My husband and I have celebrated our 41st wedding anniversary. I helped our younger daughter plan her wedding two and a half years ago and watch her walk down the aisle on the arm of her dad. I was able to be with this daughter and her husband at the birth of their first child in March.

Every day is a beautiful, precious day. I have been so blessed and have so much to be thankful for. Through the grace of God, excellent medical care and my donor families and the decisions they made in donating their loved one's organs I am enjoying each beautiful day.



A symbol of change, new life and hope.

DONOR STORY - ELIJAH "ELI" COLE MCGINLEY

The Story of Eli & Walker *We call him Lifesaver.*

After 4 years of marriage, we thought we had it all figured out. We had finished college, bought a new home, and we wanted to start our family, which we could only assume would happen as planned. But that served to be quite the challenge for us; our 1st pregnancy resulting in a dramatic miscarriage, fertility testing that deemed no answer, painful fertility treatments that became more aggressive per failed attempt, and yet, another miscarriage one year later. We assumed adoption would be our fate. But as we finished up adoption paperwork, we also finished up our very last fertility treatment which would be the most aggressive of all: In vitro-fertilization (IVF). And it worked.

Several weeks after the IVF, our doctor found two healthy beating hearts on that ultrasound screen. We immediately began praying for a miracle, as we wanted these babies to pull through this pregnancy. But complications arose very quickly in our pregnancy. We were immediately referred to a high-risk specialist at UAMS to monitor our pregnancy closely and were given devastating news midway through our pregnancy. Not only were we told that we were having twin boys, but that Twin A would be born as a special needs child. Twin A had been diagnosed with Spina Bifida, a neural tube defect that causes paralysis. We had never known what it was like for our world to "stop", but it absolutely did that day. We left our doctor's office in shock. But after a few days, we got our minds right to prepare a place for a special needs twin and his healthy brother.



Walker Daniel McGinley

Elijah "Eli" Cole McGinley

August 3, 2009 - August 8, 2009

On August 3rd, 2009, we delivered:

Elijah "Eli" Cole

6lbs 3oz

&

Walker Daniel

5lb 7oz

Eli was rushed to Arkansas Children's Hospital upon birth as planned for observation by their Spina Bifida Team and Walker remained at UAMS with his Mom. But the news that we were

to receive about our precious Eli would change everything. Eli's MRI results showed a much more severe diagnosis than even the best high-risk specialist in the state of Arkansas could see in-utero. Eli had multiple anomalies associated with his Spina Bifida and he would be a vegetable for the rest of his life. We immediately felt a rush of strength that we know was

our Lord and Savior

preparing us for what was to come. And we immediately requested to be in contact with ARORA in hopes that Eli would be eligible to give the gift of life. That day, we met a true angel, Lissa Madigan, ACH ARORA Family Specialist. It was there that she informed us that Eli's heart valves would be eligible for recovery and he would save 1 or 2 other babies' lives with his heart valves. So we planned the removal of his ventilator for the next day for our entire family to be able to say their goodbyes.

"Once Eli's hand was placed onto Walker's little body, Eli's color began to return and a slight smirk came across his face. We saw proof of the power of twins."

DONOR STORY - ELIJAH “ELI” COLE MCGINLEY - CONTINUED



On August 6th, we watched as our doctor and nurses removed Eli's ventilator & monitor wires from him. We were told to only expect minutes with him. But against all odds, Eli kept breathing. Fourteen hours later, after very encouraging words from doctors from ACH & UAMS, we finally opted to have Eli transported to UAMS to be with his twin brother during his last day of life as a family instead of split up between an interstate. It was obvious that Eli had “unfinished business” with his twin brother and we didn't want to keep them apart any longer.

Eli was taken to UAMS within an hour of consent and gently placed beside his sleeping twin brother. Once Eli's hand was placed onto Walker's little body, Eli's color began to return and a slight smirk came across his face. We saw proof of the power

of twins. And for the first time, we were finally able to enjoy our Eli, celebrate his life, and mourn peacefully, *as a family*. Eli passed away in our arms later that evening, after an amazing 31 hours after his ventilator was removed. Those 31 hours gave us a lifetime of peace.

Throughout this journey, we witnessed the strongest of strength, the most beautiful of compassion, and the good deeds of friends, family, and medical personnel. We cherish each day we have with Walker and are in constant awe of God's plan for our lives. Eli's 5 days of life created a whirlwind of change for hundreds of people, as the *Team Eli* Foundation was created and a pro-life Spina Bifida Documentary was renamed after him after his passing: *Project E.L.I.: Every Life Inspires*. Eli's life was not ours to have here on earth. God had much larger plans for Eli, as his heart valves are out there right now, pumping away in another baby.

On August 8th of 2010, we were given our own *Gift of Life* from Eli. You see, as we were mourning the 1-year anniversary of Eli's death that day, we unexpectedly found out we are expecting again. And more recently, we found out that this miracle baby is a *baby girl*, whom we have named “*Ellie*”, due in April. We can't wait to share Eli's life with Walker & Ellie. I want them to know firsthand in the power of prayer, the attribute of hope, and the Gift of Life. And I want them to know that their big brother was a “lifesaver”.

“Eli's life was not ours to have here on earth. God had much larger plans for Eli, as his heart valves are out there right now, pumping away in another baby”.

AN ESSAY - "THE ROOM"

17-year-old Brian Moore had only a short time to write something for a class. The subject was **What Heaven Was Like**.

"I wowed 'em," he later told his father, Bruce. It's a killer. It's the bomb. It's the best thing I ever wrote." It also was the last.

Brian's parents had forgotten about the essay when a cousin found it while cleaning out the teenager's locker at Teays Valley High School in Pickaway County .

Brian had been dead only hours, but his parents desperately wanted every piece of his life near them, notes from classmates and teachers, and his homework.

Only two months before, he had handwritten the essay about encountering Jesus in a file room full of cards detailing every moment of the teen's life.

But it was only after Brian's death that Beth and Bruce Moore realized that their son had described his view of Heaven. It makes such an impact that people want to share it.

"You feel like you are there," Mr. Moore said.

Brian Moore died May 27, 1997, the day after Memorial Day.

He was driving home from a friend's house when his car went off Bulen-Pierce Road in Pickaway County and struck a utility pole. He emerged from the wreck unharmed but stepped on a downed power line and was electrocuted.

The Moore's framed a copy of Brian's essay and hung it among the family portraits in the living room.

"I think God used him to make a point. I think we were meant to find it and make something out of it," Mrs. Moore said of the essay. She and her husband want to share their son's vision of life after death.

"I'm happy for Brian. I know he's in Heaven. I know I'll see him."

Below is his essay:

The Room



In that place between wakefulness and dreams, I found myself in the room. There were no distinguishing features except for the one wall covered with small index card files. They were like the ones in libraries that list titles by author or subject in alphabetical order. But these files, which stretched from floor to ceiling and seemingly endless in either direction, had very different headings. As I drew near the wall of files, the first to catch my attention was one that read "*Girls I Have Liked*."

I opened it and began flipping through the cards. I quickly shut it, shocked to realize that I recognized the names written on each one. And then without being told, I knew exactly where I was. This lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalog system

for my life. Here were written the actions of my every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory couldn't match.

A sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as I began randomly opening files and exploring their content. Some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that I would look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching.

A file named "*Friends*" was next to one marked "*Friends I Have Betrayed*." The titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird. "*Books I Have Read*", "*Lies I Have Told*", "*Comfort I have Given*", "*Jokes I Have Laughed At*." Some were almost hilarious in their exactness: "*Things I've Yelled at My Brothers*". Others I couldn't laugh at: "*Things I Have Done in My Anger*", "*Things I Have Muttered Under My Breath at My Parents*".

I never ceased to be surprised by the contents. Often there were many more cards than expected. Sometimes fewer than I hoped. I was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the life I had lived. Could it be possible that I had the time in my years to fill each of these thousands or even millions of cards?

AN ESSAY - THE ROOM

But each card confirmed this truth. Each was written in my own handwriting. Each signed with my signature. When I pulled out the file marked "*TV Shows I Have Watched*" I realized the files grew to contain their contents. The cards were packed tightly, and yet after two or three yards, I hadn't found the end of the file. I shut it, shamed, not so much by the quality of shows but more by the vast time I knew that file represented.

When I came to a file marked "*Lustful Thoughts*" I felt a chill run through my body. I pulled the file out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. I shuddered at its detailed content. I felt sick to think that such a moment had been recorded. An almost animal rage broke on me. One thought dominated my mind: No one must ever see these cards! No one must ever see this room! I have to destroy them!"

In insane frenzy I yanked the file out. Its size didn't matter now. I had to empty it and burn the cards. But as I took it at one end and began pounding it on the floor, I could not dislodge a single card. I became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it. Defeated and utterly helpless, I returned the file to its slot. Leaning my forehead against the wall, I let out a long, self-pitying sigh. And then I saw it.

The title bore "*People I Have Shared the Gospel With.*" The handle was brighter than those around it, newer, almost unused. I pulled on its handle and a small box not more than three inches long fell into my hands. I could count the cards it contained on one hand. And then the tears came. I began to weep. Sobs so deep that they hurt. They started in my stomach and shook through me.

I fell on my knees and cried. I cried out of shame, from the overwhelming shame of it all. The rows of file shelves swirled in my tear-filled eyes.



No one must ever, ever know of this room. I must lock it up and hide the key. But then as I pushed away the tears, I saw Him. No, please not Him. Not here. Oh, anyone but Jesus.

I watched helplessly as He began to open the files and read the cards. I couldn't bear to watch His response. And in the moments I could bring myself to look at His face, I saw a sorrow deeper than my own. He seemed to intuitively go to the worst boxes. Why did He have to read every one? Finally He turned and looked at me from across the room. He looked at me with pity in His eyes. But this was a pity that didn't anger me. I dropped my head, covered my face with my hands and began to cry again. He walked over and put His arm around me.

He could have said so many things. But He didn't say a word. He just cried with me.

Then He got up and walked back to the wall of files. Starting at one end of the room, He took out a file and, one by one, began to sign His name over mine on each card. "No!" I shouted rushing to Him. All I could find to say was "No, no," as I pulled the card from Him. His name shouldn't be on these cards.

But there it was, written in red so rich, so dark, and so alive. The name of Jesus covered mine. It was written with His blood. He gently took the card back He smiled

a sad smile and began to sign the cards. I don't think I'll ever understand how He did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed I heard Him close the last file and walk back to my side.

He placed His hand on my shoulder and said, "It is finished." I stood up, and He led me out of the room. There was no lock on its door.

There were still cards to be written.

"Here were written the actions of my every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory couldn't match."

ST PATTY'S DAY LIVE/SILENT AUCTION - REPORT

The 2nd Annual Live/Silent Auction hosted by ARORA and the Arkansas Donor Family Council was held at the Judy Kohn Tenenbaum Gallery in the THEA Center for the Arts on March 17th.

The turnout was great and the items donated for auction were wonderful. Some of the live auction items sold for as much as \$800.

The total raised for the Council was around

\$6000.00. What a great fundraiser!

Hats off to Natalie, Judy, Rebekah and all the folks at ARORA who worked hard to make this a success. Special thanks go out to all the Council members who solicited items and were at the auction to help.

We are certainly looking forward to the 3rd Annual event in 2012.



JULY 8 - 10, 2011 - KALI SPARKS MEMORIAL FLOAT TRIP



Michael and Rhonda are hosting this annual float trip on the Spring River. This event is for the Southwest Regional Air Traffic Controllers. NATC has agreed they will match the money raised by the event.

Michael and Rhonda anticipate the number of participants to be more than last year. It was great fun last year and the word is out.

The net proceeds will benefit the Council.

Thank you Michael and Rhonda!

DONOR MEMORIAL—UPDATE

No news to report. The memorial keeps getting pushed back due to the other activities.

The committee welcomes any ideas for the memorial design as well as a location.

Please send your ideas to linda.weadock@ARKdfc.org



COUNCIL PHONE NUMBER & E-MAIL ADDRESSES



866-345-8889

The Council now has a new toll-free number 866-345-8889.

To reach the officers of the Council you can press:

- 1 - Chairman, Tammy Sisemore
- 2 - Treasurer - Paul Turner
- 3 - Secretary - Linda Weadock

Or you can reach them by pressing "8" for the name directory and then key in the first two letters of their last name followed by #.

If the officers are not available, please leave a voice-mail message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

The following are the e-mail address of the Council officers.

Tammy.Sisemore@ARKdfc.org

Paul.Turner@ARKdfc.org

Linda.Weadock@ARKdfc.org



Arkansas Donor Family Council

...supporting Donor Families, promoting donor awareness.

1704 Aldersgate, Suite 4
Little Rock, AR 72205

Phone: 866-345-2229
E-mail: Tammy.Sisemore@arkdfc.org

Did you know?

We're on Facebook

"Donate Life Arkansas" - ARORA

"Arkansas Donor Family Council"

"Shawls of Compassion"

Arkansas has an on-line Registry

www.donatelifearkansas.org

Alternative to registering through DMV

You can become a Volunteer

Contact Bobby Walker - bwalker@arora.org
or 501-907-9140 for information.

BOOKS FOR YOUR GRIEF JOURNEY

Rhonda Sparks suggested that we compile a list of books that might be helpful for those going through their grief journeys. If you have read books that were especially helpful, please send the title of the book as well as the author's name to me at linda.weadock@Arkdfc.org, and I will begin compiling a list. It would be helpful to know your relationship to the donor. We would like to suggest books specifically for those losing spouses vs. those losing a child, etc.

DONOR FAMILY COUNCIL MEETING

The Arkansas Donor Family Council meets quarterly at the ARORA offices in Little Rock.

The next meeting is scheduled for **June 11, 2011 from 11:00 AM—1:00 PM.**

We want to encourage people to take advantage of the call in conference line. For those who cannot or would prefer not to drive to Little Rock, it gives you the opportunity to join the meeting. We would love

to have more members at the meeting.

To join by phone toll free, call **866-642-1665**, then enter the **passcode 415041** and you will be connected.

Please RSVP by calling the Council phone number 866-345-8889 or reply to the Meeting Announcement RSVP e-mail. To be sure we have the right amount of food, please let us know whether you will be calling in or joining us in Little Rock.

ARORA is very kind and generous to provide a lunch during our meeting, with the amount based on the number of people attending.

If you've told us you're attending and find you cannot, please be kind enough to let us know.

You can call Natalie Mills at 501-907-9138 or Judy Buie at 501-907-9125 as late as the Thursday before the meeting to cancel.

A message from the editor

The Winter and Spring issues were combined. My sincere apologies.

We have all been waiting anxiously for word about the 2012 Transplant Games. As of this writing we know they will be held, but a final decision has not been made on the location. They do, however, have it narrowed down to two locations. According to the National Kidney Foundation, an announcement is to be made sometime in April.

Well, finally Spring has Sprung. I'm sure you are all as glad as I am to see the snow

come to an end. I've never felt so trapped for such a long time. I live on a mountain top and could not get out for days. I'm really looking forward to pretty weather and getting outside more.

I hope you all have a great spring and I'll be in touch again with the summer issue.

"Spring has sprung!", said the bumble bee.
"How do you know?", said the old oak tree.
"I just saw a daffodil blooming on a windy hill!"

Linda

The Ripple Effect

Each choice we make causes a ripple effect in our lives. When things happen to us, it is the reaction we choose that can create the difference between the sorrows of our past and the joy in our future. ©2008