

SPOTLight

June 2007



Mommy's Light Newsletter for Request Fulfillment Volunteers

Mommy's Light is excited to announce the celebration of our 10th Anniversary Year, which will run from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008! **A Decade of Traditions** made possible by you, our Request Grantors. To all of you who have given your time to take our training class and to serve the families of Mommy's Light, we applaud you! You make it possible for Mommy's Light to bring the "joy and comfort" to the children that we serve. Thank you for your continued service year after year and for your commitment to the families you serve with such dedication and care.

Check out the Key Facts of how we have grown in 10 years -
<http://www.mommyslight.org/pc/kf.htm>

The summer traditions being delivered include trips to amusement parks and the beach, as well as many of the spectacular places to visit in Philadelphia such as the zoo, Franklin Institute, and the Pennsylvania Ballet. Summer as we all remember, can be the most exciting time of year to be a kid. Once school is out, the long lazy days of summer begin bringing the joys of swimming, reading, the ring of the ice cream truck, fireflies, etc. I invite you to take a moment to remember a special time you spent with your mother during the summer. Remember the sights, sounds and smells of summer and find ways to bring them alive again this summer – enjoy yourself!

Remembering the JOY!

Dale Bennett, Program Coordinator
dale@mommyslight.org

A WARM WELCOME TO NEW CHILDREN FROM DECEMBER 2006

The need for Mommy's Light's services is great. There are more than 20,000 children and teens eligible for our free tradition fulfillment services in the Delaware Valley region. There are more than 622,000 maternally bereaved children nationwide. Please check this link for more information about the benefits of our services to a grieving child.
<http://www.mommyslight.org/au/need.htm>.

2007 has brought several new families to Mommy's Light. Mariah Rose, age 8, remembers how her Mother would take her to the Zoo and they would make a day of enjoying the animals, eating lunch, going to the petting zoo and feeding the ducks. Her absolute favorite part of the day was seeing the zebras and peacocks. Mariah now lives with her grandparents.

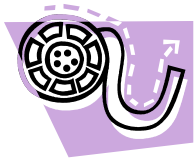
Angel, age 13, lives with her Aunt Modjeska and wants to continue the tradition of celebrating her birthday with a special dinner at Red Lobster,



which will include her favorite vanilla birthday cake, decorated with pink and yellow flowers.

Brittney, age 16, is a very active teen. Brittney wants to continue her tradition of dinner and a movie with her family, which will include her grandparents and older brother, just as it did when her mother was alive.

Brionna, age 7, lives with her cousin John in Delaware. Brionna chose to remember her mother with a Chinese style indoor picnic and games.



Bianca, age 14, and Brianna, age 13, are very busy helping to take care of their mother Nicole who has been diagnosed with end stage cervical cancer. This family will continue their tradition of an evening at the movies at the Franklin Mills Mall, and a Back to School shopping trip at the Mall in August.

The Mommy's Light website includes very important and useful information on bereavement support for Moms who are terminally ill.

<http://www.mommyslight.org/bs/momssupport.htm>

DELIVERY NOTES

Send us your delivery stories!

- All Request Grantors currently assigned to a family should have received a supply box containing what is needed for this year's deliveries. Just before a scheduled delivery, an e-mail will be sent to the lead volunteer with the information as to how to fill out the publicity and liability form as well as the request receipt that the guardian will need to sign. Please let Dale know if you have not received your supply box or if you need additional supplies for delivering a request.
- Always remember to ask the children about their memories. Laura learned something new in a recent visit with Max and Madi, the first children to receive Mommy's Light's services.

"Even after 7 years of serving this family, I learned something new about their garden...about Madi's treasured but broken and rusted heart planter. I think it is valuable to continue to ask about a child's mom every year - is there anything else you remember about planting flowers with your mom that you want to do this year? And, then to be comfortable with them taking the time to think, to remember. Max, Madi and I were silent for several moments before Madi remembered the heart planter."

Laura Munts, delivery on May 10th

"Crystal entrusted us with one of their precious photos of her mom so that we could have it duplicated, cropped, and enlarged and nicely framed for them. I love that she felt that comfortable with us to make the request. Jonathon looked well. The family seems to be doing very well."

Milly Elrod, delivery on April 14th

"I think that what stood out to me, more than anything else about this visit, was how much I enjoy getting to see the same child year after year. It is so great to have him and his dad remember us, and to really get to talk to them as if we're friends, rather than just simple "drop off" people. This was my fourth year visiting Craine and I look forward to it every year!!!"

Devon Weaver, delivery on April 11th

LETTER FROM ONE OF THE CHILDREN WE SERVE

Mommy's Light is Awesome to Extreme!

When Caitlin and Devon come over, we have a lot of fun but still get down to business.

This time when they came over, they got me just what I wanted, puzzles, games, and baking supplies. To be more specific, a Pooh puzzle (my style), a Scene-It game, Mad Libs cards, and hangman. So far, I've only played Mad Libs. I made a sentence like, 'Boys are desperate'. (Well at my age they are!) I haven't tried to do the puzzle because it looked pretty hard, but I'll get to it. Everything they brought is so cool! And the mugs are soooo cute!

And I just wanted to say thanks for inviting us to the Phillies game! It was so much fun! And I loved spending time with my dad! My first baseball game and they won and I got to share it with my dad! I will cherish those moments forever and ever, and the bear he got me will frame it forever! Devon and Caitlin help me and my daddy a lot and I'm glad we're all friends!

-Brianna

Send Your Pictures...



Over the years, the Mommy's Light Request Grantor and Request Support volunteers have demonstrated tremendous imagination and heart in the fulfilling the cherished traditions and simple pleasures of the children and teens we serve. Some volunteers have sent us photographs of their completed packages and we love to see how you take the details of the children's stories and make each package unique and special! We were recently contacted by a volunteer (Sandy Davis) who has generously offered her scrap booking talents to create a scrapbook with your photographs! Sandy is working to create a beautiful collection of not only the photos of your packages, but also a description of the special details that were considered in putting the package together – now we need your help! We need more photographs!

Many of the young people in our program are anticipating the arrival of their tradition fulfillment packages, so this is a great time to gather photos of all those fun summer traditions! Whether the package is on your kitchen table ready to go, or in the hands of the kids who will celebrate their tradition (if the family has signed the publicity waiver agreement) – please remember to take those pictures! Include some notes about the type of tradition represented in the photo, as well as any special touches such as the

inclusion of favorite foods, treats, hobbies or colors. This scrapbook will be a fantastic way to show new volunteers in our training class what we mean by a "tradition fulfillment package". The scrapbook will also be a beautiful addition to our information table to give people a colorful way to see what kinds of traditions the kids in our program have chosen to continue, as well as the incredible creativity and fun our volunteers bring to our service!

We need your help to make this project a success! Please contact Tracey Oberholtzer at tracey@mommyslight.org, or at #610-725-9790 if you have any questions, or if you have some photos to be included in the scrapbook. The photos can be submitted via email, or regular mail. Thank You!

SPOTLight ON OUR VOLUNTEERS

Shine the **SPOTLight** on **MARY BOYLE AND PEGGY TRILL** who conducted their first family interview and will be helping Mariah Rose fulfill her tradition of visiting the zoo. Because of Peggy's extra efforts, she was able to obtain generous donations from the Philadelphia Zoo and WalMart for not only this family's tradition package, but for the two other families that also share a traditional visit to the zoo. Thank you Peggy for thinking to ask me about how many zoo tickets Mommy's Light would need to fulfill all of our Zoo requests for the year! Great job!

E-mail from Mary Boyle:

"I wanted to share with you pictures that Peggy and I captured on Saturday when we delivered a tradition to Mariah. Mariah shared a tradition with her mom of visiting the Philly zoo and they both loved zebras. So, we bestowed upon her a picnic basket filled with goodies to go on a trip to the zoo. Peggy hooked us up with her client at the zoo, who donated tickets and a personal tour. WalMart donated the basket, and we filled it with a stuffed zebra, a book about animals, zebra sunglasses, a camera to capture the special moments, animal crackers, Swedish fish, soda, cookies, and a gift card to WAWA for the picnic lunch items. Peggy did a fabulous job with the presentation, using our red and yellow colors, but adding some zebra stripes to tie it all together. Mariah was thrilled, and as her grandmother said, "you made my day". This really touched us, because her grandmother has really been struggling with the loss of her daughter, so we were please to put a smile on everyone's face.

Thanks for letting us be a part of this special event."





Shine the **SPOTLight** on **KAREN BARNS-MANNKE, YEMISI OLANIYI, AND BARBARA GINN** who all completed their first family interviews. We thank you each for your kind hearts.

Shine the **SPOTLight** on **MAUREEN FOX** who took the lead volunteer position for a family she knows very well. Maureen's best friend died in September of 2006. Maureen delivered a Mother's Day planting request fulfillment package to Olivia, age 4, her own daughters' best friend, this past May. What a tremendous gift.

Check out **Highlights**, the Mommy's Light Volunteer Newsletter, for all the latest volunteer opportunities. <http://www.mommyslight.org/vc/newsletter.htm>

COMING SOON

Over the next several months, we will be redesigning the layout and content of our web site. Our redesigned site will contain video segments on many aspects of grieving and will have sub-home pages for children, teens, families/friends and professionals. Our goal is to build a user friendly/highly informative website that supports maternally grieving children, teens and their families wherever they live.

In this edition of **SPOTLight**, you will find links to our current website. Valuable information for all can be found throughout the site. We encourage you to take the time to familiarize yourself with the information found on our website, <http://www.mommyslight.org/index.html>.

Information about our upcoming events can be found at <http://www.mommyslight.org/events/events.htm>.

REMINDERS AND TIPS

- ❖ **Family Visits:** When you first enter the home for the interview, introduce yourselves to everyone there including the children (high fives, hand shakes). Offer the icebreaker gifts/treat. Be willing to listen – the family often shares mom’s story at the beginning of the visit. The lead should explain the program clearly, reinforcing that the tradition selected by the child(ren) must have been a regularly repeated event that was meaningful to the child and mother. Move into asking the children what traditions or pleasures they liked doing with mom.
- ❖ **Each Eligible Child/Teen May Make a Request:** It is important to remember that each eligible child/teen in a family may make a request, so be sure to ask each one about a special tradition they did with their mother. A family with 5 children can have 5 different requests or one shared request; several or all of children may identify with the same request.
- ❖ **Family Interviews in Subsequent Years:** After the child’s request has been fulfilled for two or three years, the volunteers, in consultation with the Program Director, may elect or be advised to do an update visit. The purpose of an update visit is to give the child a chance to discuss the selected tradition, to remember any new details about how it was done with his/her mother, and to discuss how the child would like the volunteers to fulfill the current year’s request. This also gives the child an opportunity to tell what he/she has liked about prior years’ request deliveries. For some children, it may be appropriate to find ways to make the treasured tradition age appropriate or to adjust the elements of the tradition.

Any major changes that are proposed must be approved by the Program Director. For instance, a child, after baking chocolate chip cookies for several years, asked in an update visit to bake chocolate chip oatmeal cookies. This is not considered a major change. In another instance, a child who was approaching adolescence, no longer wanted to continue her tradition of swinging in the park. In an update visit the volunteers and the child discussed going to a formal garden park as it maintained the original idea and her connection to her mother while bringing the tradition to a more age appropriate level. This major change was approved by the Program Director.

- ❖ **Enhance Equality:** Please ensure that each child in the family receives equal enhancements for each request. For example, when you deliver Sam’s Zoo request, all children in the family get the same enhancements; i.e.: each get a water bottle and t-shirt. It would be appropriate for Sam to be the one to receive the Mommy’s Light camera for the tradition.
- ❖ **Gift Certificates/Vouchers versus Cash:** Some tradition requests will require the inclusion of money for various reasons (shopping trips, taxi fares, etc). Please remember to use gift certificates, vouchers and gift cards whenever possible to ensure proper usage of the funds.

Bringing **joy** and **comfort** to children and teens by helping them keep alive **traditions** and simple pleasures they *shared with their mothers.*