

# The Celebrate Life List

## In Memory of my loved one, I Will Celebrate His/Her Life

1. **Organize a Cemetery Memorial Ceremony** in your town for loved ones. Get permission from the city fathers and contact a few people. Ask them if they would like to be included (honoring their loved ones) Select a date and make this an annual event. (It will grow) What positive things can you do at the graveside to celebrate the lives of these loved ones? If the ceremony is timed in the summer hours when the sun is still in the sky, plan a colorful release of balloons, each one with a nametag of the loved one. Invite a well-known local singer to sing one special song. Set out candles (in protective holders) at the graves so that when the sun goes down they are left in vigil. Plan a hot chocolate and cold juice drink to follow. You be the one to organize and pay for the refreshments. This annual event will be a memorial to your loved one (and to many others)!

2. **Put a photo of your deceased loved one on a stamp** (available in Canada, through Canada Post) or as one mother suggested, have a stamp created that can be used when letters or cards are being sent by existing family members, i.e. a rose (as her daughter loved roses)

3. Buy a birthday gift for him/her each year, and give it to someone in the community as a "secret pal," i.e. leave it on the doorstep, having it delivered anonymously, etc.

4. Each Christmas one mother adopts an angel off the tree of a local charity. She then buys gifts for this living child in memory of "my little boy."

5. "In Canada," one mother wrote, "we have a country wide trail and one can **buy a section of the trail** and dedicate it to the memory of a loved one." Someone did this for that mother in honor of her daughter Krissy and she runs by the memorial pavilion each week.

6. Live your life for two of you; time is precious and so are you.

7. **Plant a tree, or put in a flower garden in memory** of the loved one. Plant a flowering shrub. Betty's daughter asked that roses be planted in her memory (the daughter is dying as I write this) And Susan planted a Lilac tree that "reminds me of Angel's uniqueness, beauty and blue eyes."

8. **Place a single flower on his grave** and when you leave it there leave a promise to work hard to reach your own potential.

9. Go to a local elementary school and offer your time for an afternoon once per week. Or donate money to your child's school for supplies. Or donate something

needed to his former classroom.

10. One lady wrote, "I ask MOM to 'come' and join me for a cup of tea in the garden. If the weather is foul, I will have it at my kitchen table, with a cup for me and a cup for her. We always had tea together when she was alive, and it is a tradition that I have carried on with MY daughter. "

11. **Donate a book (or two) to a school library**, a public library or a College library, in his name every year. His name will live as long as books do. If you choose good books, he will live forever. Check with your public library or local College library. Or think about your child's favorite author and donate books by that author in her name.

12. **Plant a bag of wild flower seeds**, in your yard, in a desolate area, or some suitable location.

13. **Release butterflies** in honor of your loved one. There is one butterfly lady at 604 858 8991. Contact Adele LaRiviere and she will also advise you on how to start your own butterfly garden in memory of your loved one.  
madamebutterfly@telus.net

14. Many people have groceries delivered because they cannot get out. Think what a lift it would be if you contacted an organization that does the deliveries and sent along a single carnation to twenty of those people, with a sunshine card (cheery greeting) Then sign it in memory of your loved one.

15. **In Vancouver, B.C. and in a park in Scotland** there are park benches with brass metal donor plaques on the bench, saying "In Memory Of". Check with your city parks department about doing this in your area. Or donate a Memorial bench on the school ground of the school your child attended.

16. Become a member of a group or organization that seems connected to your loved one. **One Canadian mother started a chapter of Mother's Against Drunk Drivers** after her teenage son was hit by a car while he was cycling in a park. The drunk's car left the road and traveled right into the park! Another mother now gives her time to fund drive for cancer research after her child died following a long struggle with cancer.

17. **One woman selected special rocks for her pond** and garden in memory of her sister Angel. The rocks were not ordinary in that they had various inspirational messages written on them. She said, " I saw my perfect choice. There was only one and it had pretty spring flowers painted in the corner and the word "live" painted in big bold letters. I bought it and perched it on the edge of my pond. It sums up in one little word what Angel continues to teach me."

18. Make or **buy small gifts and visit a nursing home** and give these out to those patients who get no visitors or few visitors and stay long enough to talk with them. They too have lost many loved ones by this time and need a friend.

19. Carol wrote, "when my mother died, to try and deal with my grief and wanting to do something for her birthday (which was six months after she died) **I wrote a two page tribute to her.** It described all of her wonderful attributes and characteristics and included as many of the wonderful memories of her that I could think of. I truly paid her a tribute and then I sent a copy of it to my Dad and each one of my siblings. Now my sister and I light a candle for her each year on her birthday and always read the tribute. (She died ten years ago this year) It truly is a way of "celebrating" her life and keeping her alive in our memory. She played an incredibly wonderful part in all of our lives and it would be sad for that memory to fade.

20. If your loved one was in a sport, i.e., volley ball, soccer or baseball, football, hockey, then **purchase sporting equipment**, or whatever might be needed by a peewee team just getting started, in the name of your loved one.

21. If your loved one was the more intellectual type, **contribute a book or learning tool** in that person's name to an under privileged child.

22. With the help of friends, **create a memorial web page**, where other parents can visit and offer encouragement.

23. One lady wrote: "At the time when my mother was so sick and I knew she didn't have long to live, I attended a Christmas eve service and went up to the front and **lit a candle and said a prayer for her.** I felt very spiritual and am sure God was watching and hearing everything that was in my heart. Also try lighting beautiful candles on the birthday of your loved one!

24. Have a family birthday celebration so his little brothers and sisters can always remember, too.

25. **Adopt a child through World Vision,**

26. **Donate "his present" to Santa's Anonymous each Christmas,**

27. Support your local Music Festival with an award in the Family Music category

28. **Establish an annual "Quality Citizenship Award" at a local Elementary School,**

29. Do something special as a family each year on the weekend as close to his birthday as possible

30. **Do a "Celebration of Life" scrapbook album** showing for your loved one! Or help another bereaved mom do up a "Memory" scrapbook of favorite photos, drawings, etc.

31. One lovely lady wrote me about this expression of love: "when my cousin Jock drowned, his girlfriend **sent Jock's mother flowers on Mother's Day for years**. It meant a lot to know her son lived on in this woman's memory!"

32. If you know what his/her favorite Charity was or think you know what they would have chosen, donate either some money or your time in his/her name!

33. Celebrate a deceased loved one's life by reaching out to someone who you've lost touch with; **renew your relationship**; we all know that life is too short.

**33. Go for a walk with your memories of them and later look for opportunities to minister to others who have recently lost a loved one.**

34. **Write a poem, song, or instrumental piece** in memory of a beloved child.

35. **Adopt an animal at your local zoo or shelter** in his/her name. Or donate your time to an animal shelter. Also know that often they need pet food, newspapers, litter, old blankets and towels.

36. Many swimming pools, museums, and parks are in need of financial help, and many have wall plaques displaying the nameplates of the donors. Make a donation and place on it the name of your loved one.

**37. Whenever I donate even a small amount to a worthy cause I do it in honor of my child.** Every year on his/her birthday donate the amount of money of his/her age to a charity. You have a whole year to put some money away for this, in a special jar.

38. If you live in an apartment building or have nowhere to plant flowers ask around. At one senior complex a gentleman **planted and cared for flowers** that were chosen by the residents. When they blossomed, they picked some of their plants (a simple name on a stick identified the donor).

**39. The first book I wrote was dedicated to my deceased son.**

40. Have Birthday Party with family members or a few close friends. Dig out a photo album and spend fifteen minutes showing pictures of your loved one and traveling down memory lane. (Keep this short) Light candles, perhaps even enough for the number of years you shared with your child. Candles are so spiritual and I'm sure our departed loved ones would know

41. **Send a hand written note to your other children to tell them how proud you are of them.** One mother, who contributed to this list, sent me three pages of ideas (her daughter is in hospital dying). She mentioned that one of her daughters felt so left out as everyone constantly spoke of her dying sister. She knew (intellectually) that she was being silly yet emotionally she was a mess. Survivors often suffer when so much attention goes toward the dying. Be aware.

42. **Mentor someone.** Or become a Big Brother or a Big Sister.

43. **Visit a bed-ridden person** (hospital or nursing home) and offer your services. Bring reading material and offer to write letters and then mail them (you buy the stamps). If it is allowed take your animal to the nursing homes, as they often never see a live cat or dog after they enter. Do check first as some people have deadly allergies to animals.

44. Look around you. There are people suffering though many hard times. **Take someone out to lunch as a goodness gesture.** (In memory of a dad or mom)

45. **Donate a trophy for Special Olympics in memory of your loved one.**

46. **Become a volunteer at a food bank** or donate a huge hamper of especially good food to a food bank in honor of your loved one.

47. A woman in Illinois wrote a lady in Australia and offered to **send up a balloon in memory** of James. And then a woman in California said she would send up balloons, also. So on his birthday, in Australia, Illinois and California, colorful balloons hit the sky as a celebration of the life of James. Maggie, mother of James suggests you might wish to get something fancy like a butterfly shaped balloon, or something plain with a tag on it bearing the name of your loved one!

48. **Start a Journal** about all the Fun times you remember having with him/her.

49. **Stanford University was built in 1919 from an endowment in memory** of a 16 year old Leland Stanford who died of typhoid fever. Most of us won't be able to donate five million dollars, but it is wonderful to see so much generated because of love for ones child. Just do your best!

50. Have a star in the sky named after your loved one.

51. **Organize a Relay for Life Team in person's honor.**

52. Paint or sand blast a rock with the person's name on it, or inscribe something that will honor the person. Place the rock in a special place in the garden or home.

53. Put together a collage of pictures of your loved one. Start with baby pictures and include all and any over the years that evoke special memories (happy memories)

54. Instead of flowers, when someone dies this woman says, " **I give them a stuffed toy bear (for bear HUGS) or a beanie baby**: the angel bear or the praying beanie bear.

55. One lady says, "Where we live a group of women sell crafts during the year in their children's honor. Then at the end of the year they **give five hundred-dollar scholarships to 10 high school seniors** in the children's honor. The senior that gets the award is not the smartest or most athletic, they are the caring, hard working, outstanding ones that help the community. Each parent picks a child that was most like his or her own to be awarded. They are handed out during graduation and it makes the community feel good."

56. The same women as mentioned above **built a reading garden at the elementary school in honor of their children**. It has benches, trees, flowers, birdhouses and a birdbath. The fifth graders that show good citizenship in the school get to help maintain it. Every year they put turtles in the area one for each deceased child from the community. The kids love to go read there because it is so peaceful.

57. At any university you can **set up scholarships in honor of your deceased loved one**. It can be as little as a couple hundred dollars. That amount will help a student with a least a class or two! Another woman adds, " The way I celebrate my brothers life, who died in WW2 in France, I send money in his name to the Holbrook Indian School in Arizona, and they apply it on tuition for one of the children that attend there. It gives me great satisfaction to see his name in print, when they send out their monthly brochures, and they list the name of the donors. If desired you can pick out a special child, as they send photos and a description." That particular lady allows the school to decide where the money is needed.

58. One woman wrote, " We should go out and truly **let people know they made a difference in our lives**. Do this in memory of our loved ones. Another mother says that her son, Mike, used to do small acts of kindness for others and she is sure he would love to know this was now being done in his honor.

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**Editor's Note:**

It takes just one person with a quest to start something that may help millions. Think of Terry Fox, Canadian runner, who lost first a leg and then his life to cancer. And now every year tens of thousands run to raise money for cancer (in his memory). In memory of your loved one celebrate his life, move forward and make a difference. Let your light shine... **Ellie Braun-Haley**

With deep appreciation and a grateful thanks to all the contributors for this list of ideas. The contributors, from Australia, Canada and the U.S.A. are named and if known, their loved one is in brackets: Betty Brisson, (Kathy), Kathleen, Anne, Maggie (James), Rosie Ann Williamson, Carol Ellis, Kathe Campbell, Christian Fisher, Deneene, Joan Wester Anderson, Beth, Betty Stonehouse, Jan Henderson (Seth), Margie Rice (Ryan), Deborah Werner, Harriet Sardeman, Anne Goodrich, Karen Kasiskrafty, Lea MacDonald, Jo Walker, Laura Porras, Susan Fahnce (Angel) Bevanne (for Tom), Dusty, Regina, Sue, Kay, Anita Burney(for Mike), Mona Barnes, Vance Agee (for Mary Brown) Ellie Braun-Haley (for Jason)

**ABOUT ELLIE:** Ellie began working on publishing two web sites: Angels On Earth and "For Goodness Sake", following the death of her son, Jason (He was killed in an auto accident as he traveled to compete in the Canadian Western Finals in Track and Field). As God worked more and more in her life she began recording inexplicable stories of heavenly intervention and four years later the book **A Little Door, A Little Light** was published. Link to her books <http://www.evrcanada.com/creek.html>

Ellie has just completed her next book, **Seeds of Hope**. This is a compilation of stories from people who have seen the power of prayer, or have been involved in some way in a special event (generally as a recipient of a miracle), and it features other stories of heavenly intervention. While working on this latest project, Ellie has stopped publishing the stories on her two web sites, as her schedule has not allowed her to keep up. She has also just completed a new Power Point, colorful, articulate and uplifting talk on the Power of Prayer and is willing to share this with the public.

Ellie says:

**"Love of others, demonstrated without limitations, energizes the soul. I believe God puts amazing stuff inside of us and daily He pulls the best out of us to let it shine. All we need to do in the process is be willing."**

My thanks,

Ellie Braun-Haley

(Author of A Little Door, A Little Light)

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<http://www.evrcanada.com/creek.html>