E. Innovative Program

TRIBUTE TO JACOB AND TRAVIS FINDLEY

It was a cold winter day February 3, 2007. The day before Super Bowl Sunday. Two young brothers were looking forward to watching the game. One was a Colts fan and one was a Bears fan. Unfortunately this happy event was not to be. Jacob Findley, age 12 and Travis Findley, age 9 were killed on their way home with friends as a result of a train collision between a train and the SUV that the brothers were riding in. The crossing had no crossing gates or flashing lights.

Due to the huge outpouring of support for the family, there were 350-400 people in Attendance so the viewing was held at Mount Pleasant Church in Greenwood, IN. It was a very heavy snow the day of the viewing. In the foyer of the church tables were set up for scrapbooks and other school projects were displayed. There were also Pictures of the boys displayed also.

The Funeral Service for the boys was held the next day. It was also at the Church. Pastor Chris Philbeck presided. During the service four friends of Jake and Travis Shared a few happy memories as well as one of their schoolteachers. A beautiful Music Video/DVD Memorial Tribute for the boys was played. As another tribute to the boys, several friends purchased bricks with Jake and Travis's names on them to be put in the new Indianapolis Colt's Stadium.

When we received the call for these two boys, we felt we needed to do something for this family besides the normal procedure. One thing we did was set up a special website for the boys. There was a guest book for visitors to sign. We also assisted in selling wristbands with the boys names on them. The proceeds were then present to the family in a check from Forest Lawn Memory Gardens and Funeral Home.

As a result of this tragic accident the Jake and Travis Arms of Life Fund. This fund has Been created to raise funds to build crossing gates and flashing lights at crossings in the Greenwood, IN area that do not have them to ensure that this never happens again. This fund has a webiste where people can donate to the cause or purchase items that benefit the charity. The community is also hosting a list of fundraisers such as Motorcycle Rides, Golf Tournaments, Basketball Tournaments and Benefit Concerts.

These two children will always be remembered for the short lives they lived and for the difference they have made to the community by their death. We at Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens and Funeral Home are proud to have been a part of the Jake and Travis Findley Legacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert T. Holland Funeral Director/Manager Forest Lawn Memory Gardens and Funeral Home

Lensing Funeral & Cremation Svc.

I met with the parents of a 22 week gestation baby – about a week prior to the baby's delivery. At the time that I met with the family, the baby was still living but the doctors had informed that the baby would not survive delivery and might very likely die in utero.

The parents had no clear idea as how they wanted to memorialize this infant. They came into the funeral home to gather information from us and to review options. It was decided that we would host a private family viewing with a small, private service at the funeral home – followed by earth burial. A small Wilbert Loved & Cherished casket was chosen.

We received the call about ten days later that the mother had delivered the stillborn child and that we could schedule the services. In meeting with both of the parents, the mother and father had both decided that they would still like to keep the service private but did want to recognize the death as a life – although taken away from them.

As we received the initial call mid-day on a Friday afternoon – the family requested a Sunday afternoon service and burial. Upon confirming the availability of the clergy, we set the service for 2:00 pm on Sunday. A brief obituary would be placed in the newspaper the day following the burial. The immediate family would meet at the funeral home Sunday afternoon for the service and we would then process to the cemetery after the service. A tiny casket spray of brightly colored flowers was ordered.

These plans all seemed well suited to what the family was wanting but I felt as if there should be more than just the "usual" meet and greet and go to the cemetery - as this death was anything but the norm. I suggested that we have a balloon release at the cemetery – with the specific colors of the balloons chosen by the family. We omitted any "feminine" colors as this was a male infant. Balloons were ordered, 14 to be exact, set to be delivered to the funeral home on Sunday with a few extra "just in case".

I drove to the family's home at approximately 3:30 pm on Friday afternoon to pick up the infants clothes, his blanket and some toys for the casket. I informed the parents that all was in order and had mentioned that the weather was forecasted to be very pleasant on Sunday. I still felt as if we were missing something unique so I asked the parents about a butterfly release at the cemetery. We could have the balloon release as we arrived and the butterfly release as a special way to conclude our time at the grave...instead of slowly walking away in tears.

I glanced at my watch and noticed that it was now 3:45 CST and the butterflies originated out of the gulf coast of Florida. I scurried back to the funeral home and had a colleague find the website and phone numbers that I needed. I made the call and had 1 dozen Monarch butterflies (hopefully) being shipped overnight to our firm by 9:00 am on Saturday. The butterflies were delivered to our door by 9:30 am on Saturday, all very much alive and very anxious to be set free.

Sunday afternoon arrived, the family met at the funeral home with their minister, spent about an hour with the baby and we then started the very brief service. We prepared to leave for the cemetery – the parents in the lead sedan with the father carrying the casket. They placed him on their laps for the short procession to the cemetery. The sun was shining, the wind was calm

and it was a beautiful day. After arriving at the cemetery, I had everyone follow the parents to an open area, clear of trees near the grave, while I placed the casket on the device at the grave. Everyone stood in a circle, the minister shared very appropriate remarks about the balloon release and on the count of three......the balloons were let go. No one spoke – the light breeze gently lifted the cluster of balloons up and into the eastern sky. We all watched until they were out of our sight. I invited the family to gather at the grave. The minister shared words of comfort and again, offered very appropriate remarks about thee letting go, the innocence and the beauty of the butterflies. As he spoke, I handed each family member and the minister a butterfly. We had one butterfly left (which was good as one of the grandmothers let her butterfly flit out of her hand!). The minister had everyone release their butterflies on the count of three and it was a very profound sight to witness. All but two of the butterflies found their way to open spaces but one in particular, landed on the casket spray and just stayed there.

I had charged another colleague with taking digital pictures at the cemetery. We took a number of close-up shots of the butterfly on the casket spray. You could hear most everyone whispering about this unique butterfly that had chosen these particular flowers to rest on. (it should be noted that we were only 6 days out from Memorial Day so the cemetery had a host of fresh flowers for the butterflies to choose).

The family eventually worked their way back to their cars and I stated that I would be just a moment – as I wanted to assist in placing the casket in the grave. As I nodded to the cemetery staff, I carefully lifted the casket spray off of the casket and set it adjacent to the grave. The butterfly remained there. As we removed the device and lowered the casket into the grave, the butterfly remained in its place. As I walked away from the grave, the butterfly remained on the spray – every few moments gracefully moving its wings.

I made a disc of the pictures taken at the cemetery and dropped it off at the family home. About two weeks later, I received this card in the mail. Something so simple and easy for us had made a monumental difference in their lives.

I asked if the family had any special music that they would like played - which they did. They had a compact disc of quiet and gentle children's Christian music. We played a specific track that was special to the parents.

I. Basic Requirements (E)

E. On June 12, 2007 the city lost five beautiful children (ages 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) in a deadly fire in the Lincoln/Larimer neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA. The Samuel E. Coston Funeral Home (also in the Lincoln/Larimer area) was given the honor of burying three of the five children. Within less than 3 days, the staff created a "Child's Play" viewing to help ease the pain for the youngsters playmates and families.

Every detail was mapped out in order to create the "kid-friendly" atmosphere. Three delicate caskets, blanketed in pink and blue were mounted on colorful building blocks. In addition, the staff added each of the children's favorite items including "Dora The Explorer" dolls, a WWF Wrestling Belt, and "Dress-Up" clothes to each of their individual caskets. The stage was also decorated with oversized *Crayola Crayons*, a Gingerbread man, and a Lollipop. Placed in front of the display were two park benches for the immediate family to sit while overlooking the play area designed for three of God's angels.

In the second chapel, the staff set up three ft. easels accompanied with *crayola* markers for the children's playmates and friends to sign the non-traditional guest book. Coloring books, crayons along with small tables and chairs were also added for children to draw pictures in memory of their loved ones.

There was an outpouring of support generated by the community. Local biker clubs sponsored a ride and collected money for the families. Nearly 100 bikers rode to the visitation, lining their bikes outside the front of the funeral home to show their support. Several city officials, clergy, firefighters, policemen and dignitaries came out in support of the children along with many community organizations.

The viewing attracted a frenzy of media attention including three local television stations, radio stations and all the local news publications. (see attachment I - E)