

# Little Bridges News

November 2021



## Calendar of Events

### Food Drive

11/1 – 11/30

### CLOSED – Veteran's Day

Thursday 11/11

### School Age

#### All Day Camp

Monday	11/1
Tuesday	11/2
Friday	11/12
Monday	11/22
Tuesday	11/23
Wednesday	11/24

### CLOSED – Thanksgiving

Thursday	11/25
Friday	11/26

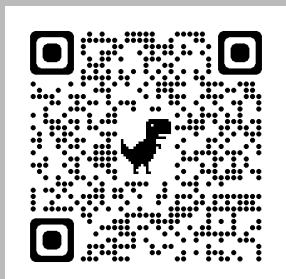
### Operation Christmas Child

All boxes due by Mon 11/22

### Harbor House Toy Drive

All toys due by Fri 12/3

Stay informed and updated  
with Little Bridges on Instagram



## Fighting Hunger, Changing Lives

Little Bridges and Canyon Creek Church are sponsoring a food drive for the **Contra Costa County Food Bank**. In addition to their “normal needs”, food banks have seen an increase of 40% - 50% in both people served and food distributed.

We will be collecting food for the entire month of November. Part of this month's curriculum focuses on sharing and caring for others. Please support this important lesson by donating food to others in need.

The most needed food items include canned ready-to-eat meals (chili ravioli, etc.), peanut butter, canned meats and stews, whole grain cereal, fruit juices, tuna, pasta, rice and beans.

## Share the Joy of Christmas

Little Bridges will again be partnering with **Harbor House in Oakland** to help share some Christmas joy with families less fortunate than us. There are 2 ways to help:

1. Drop off new unwrapped toys to the office by Friday, 12/3.
2. Select items from the Amazon wish list to be delivered.

**Operation Christmas Child** is also underway. If you would like to participate, grab a shoebox from the sign in tables and return it filled before November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Canyon Creek Church is a drop off location and will pass the boxes off to be distributed throughout the world!

## Little Bridges Christmas Parade

Come celebrate Jesus' birth with us at **4:00 pm** on Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Instead of an indoor concert, our classes will parade to the courtyard and perform live on an outdoor stage. More details to come - save the date and time!

## Traveling Over The Holidays?

The CDC continues to recommend that all unvaccinated people who travel get tested 3-5 days after travel AND self-quarantine for 7 days. If you are flying or taking your children to populated areas, we are asking that you continue to follow these guidelines.

We DO understand that a car trip to grandma's where everyone is vaccinated is very different than a flight trip or visiting places with large masses of people you don't know. Please let us know your plans!

## Thank You for Supporting NEGU

A huge thank you to everyone who baked and bought goodies from the bake sale. We raised over \$1200.00 and were able to buy 55 Joy Jars for children fighting cancer.

## How To Help A Friend Who Has Lost A Child

It's been one year since the death of my oldest son and the pain comes and goes in ways I cannot explain. I have been through a lot in my 57 years of life but this has been the most desolate journey.

So many friends have told me they feel helpless as to what to do or how to support me, and I get that. I was the same until I became a "member" of this club - parents who have lost a child - whose dues are more than anyone would want to pay and one in which no one *wants* to belong to.

To my friends who have asked, and those who may be looking for a way to navigate how to give support to a grieving parent on their sacred journey, here are a few tips that (for me) are valuable.

### ***Remember my child with me***

The loss of a child is a pain all bereaved parents share, and it is a degree of suffering that is impossible to grasp without experiencing it firsthand. Often, people's discomfort keeps them from approaching our grief head-on. But we want the world to remember our children who were ours and loved and wanted – no matter how young or old they were.

If you see something that reminds you of Curtis, tell me. If you are reminded at the holidays or on his birthday that I am missing my son, please tell me you remember him. And when I speak his name or relive memories, relive them with me; don't shrink away. If you never met my son, don't be afraid to ask about him. One of my greatest joys is talking about him.

### ***Accept that you can't "fix" us***

An out-of-order death such as child loss breaks a person (especially a parent) in a way that is not fixable or solvable. We will learn to pick up the pieces and move forward, but our lives will never be the same. Every grieving parent must find a way to continue to live with loss, and it's a solitary journey. We appreciate your support and hope you can be patient with us as we find our way.

Please: Don't tell us it's time to get back to life, that it's been long enough, or that time heals all wounds. We welcome your support and love, and we know sometimes it's hard to watch, but our sense of brokenness isn't going to go away. It is something to observe, recognize and accept.

### ***Know that there are at least two days a year we need a timeout.***

We still count birthdays and fantasize about what our child would be like if he or she were still living. Birthdays are especially hard for us. Our hearts ache to celebrate our child's arrival into this world, but we are left becoming intensely aware of the hole in our hearts instead.

Then there's the anniversary of the date our child became an angel. The process is similar to the time leading up to the arrival of a child's birth - first counting the days, then months, then the one-year anniversary, marking the time on the other side of this valley in our lives.

No matter how many years go by, I know the anniversary of the day I lost Curtis will bring back deeply emotional memories and painful feelings. This first year, the days leading up to that day felt like impending doom. It was hard to breathe and I didn't want to share it with anyone.

This is where the process of remembrance will help. If you have heard me speak of my child or supported me in remembering him, you will be able to put the pieces together and know when these tough days are approaching.

### ***Realize that we struggle every day with happiness***

Even as a Christian, it's an ongoing battle to balance the pain and guilt of outliving your child with the desire to live in a way that honors them and their time on this earth. I remember our first family holiday after Curtis died. On the first day, I bawled that I wasn't sharing this experience with him. Then I clearly remember steadying myself - recognizing that I was also creating memories with my surviving sons, and to enjoy the time with them in the present moment.

As bereaved parents, we are constantly balancing holding grief in one hand and a happy life after loss in the other. You might observe this when you are with us at a wedding, graduation, or other milestone celebration. Don't walk away—witness it with us and be part of our process.

### ***Accept the fact that our loss might make you uncomfortable.***

Our loss is unnatural, out of order; it challenges your sense of safety. You may not know what to say or do, and you're afraid you might make us lose it. We've learned all of this as part of what we're learning about grief.

We will never forget our child. Our loss is always right under the surface of other emotions, even happiness. I would rather lose it because you spoke Curtis' name and remembered him than try to shield myself from the pain and live in denial.

Grief is the pendulum swing of love. The stronger and deeper the love, the more grief will be created on the other side. Consider it a sacred opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with someone who has endured one of life's most frightening events and rise up with us.