

Anne Lee and her children, Austin and Taylor, keep Reagan's memory alive



Reagan was a student at Fielder Elementary when she was killed in a car accident



# Remembering Our Butterfly



Celebrating the life of my 8-year-old daughter, Reagan Elizabeth Lee, who was tragically killed in a car accident

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*I* It was February 25, 2014. This day changed everything in my life, not to mention the lives of my other children and my family's. It is interesting that all events in my life nowadays are spoken of as either before the car accident or after it. It is haunting that this date set into motion major sadness and grief whereas before this day, life was good - so normal.

The only thing I seem to be able to articulate some days is, "Why?" On February 25, my 8-year-old, Reagan Elizabeth Lee was killed in a car accident in Katy at 6 a.m. while she and I were headed to her babysitter's house.

### *Taken Too Soon*

Reagan was the baby of the family, my mini-me, the "surprise" child. She was in the third grade at Fielder Elementary, but seemed to be almost 21 years old on her upcoming March 15 birthday instead of her true age of 9. She was my butterfly - because everywhere she fluttered, a mess was sure to ensue.

Reagan was blessed with two siblings, an older brother Austin, 13, and an older sister Taylor, 18. At school, she was surrounded by best friends and "boyfriends," was the CEO of a "free hugs" booth, received some conduct marks for talking, and always had a backpack full of daily notes from her friends, but not all of her homework.

Then one day, the girl with a colossal amount of friends, the talkative girl who loved Starbucks, American Girl dolls, and getting manicures was gone. And gone with her was my life. I wished God would just take me immediately.

### *Saying Goodbye*

Little did I know the hardest parts of this tragic event were around the corner. The funeral, the viewing, and the burial are all still a blur. Thank God my parents, my brothers and their families, my best friend, all of my friends, and my church were present with their arms stretched open wide - ready to take on the enormous tasks that I never could imagine taking on by myself. The only thing I had to do was to attend each function if I even could take on that much. I did make it through each event and was as heartbroken as ever. However, within each of these deeply saddening moments, a glimpse of some happiness would appear.

At Reagan's viewing, the line of those who wished to offer their condolences to my family seemed to go on forever. What a blessing it was for me to get to see my friends, some from nearly 35 years ago. I got to meet people from Reagan's life that I had never laid eyes on, was loved on by family and friends, and we were able to say our goodbyes to Reagan.

### *Continued Blessings*

The blessings have not stopped there. While this story is literally a parent's worst nightmare, blessings have

come from the ashes. I am so grateful to be a part of a community that continues to love on me and my other two children. I have now made friends with other Katy moms who have also lost children. I continue to be a part of the Compassionate Friends Katy chapter that meets at Kingsland Baptist Church, and I have joined many other groups that I had no idea existed. These groups and this community have been lifesavers when I feel that no one could possibly understand my grief or pain.

I have learned in these past several months that even our worst nightmares can be - must be - survived. I have learned that Reagan would want me and my family to continue on life's journey with the sun shining on our faces, taking in all the little things that surround us - like butterflies. She would want us to get messy and smile with contentment and happiness everywhere, all the time.

### *Cherishing the Moments*

Life is precious and fast. My only option now is to honor Reagan and God by living out my days with thankfulness and gratefulness. It is not easy to do every day. Some days contain more grief than others. However, no matter what, the sun continues to come up, the birds continue to sing, the dog still needs to be fed, and my two children still need their mom. Why was I picked for this tragedy? I will never know, but I do know the spirit of Katy is alive

and well. The generosity of complete strangers is humbling, family and friends hold me up, and this beautiful life where I got to be a mommy to Reagan Elizabeth Lee continues to inspire me.

I know this journey will not be easy. My life will never be the same, but I choose to thank God every day for this place I have called home for the last 34 years. It is where I grew up and where my children were born and are growing up. While it is the place this awful tragedy took place, it is also where I seek and find my little girl fluttering around me like a butterfly, encouraging me to not only keep living but to live each day and moment with a huge smile on my face.

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For information about the  
Compassionate Friends Katy chapter  
visit [compassionatefriends-katy.org](http://compassionatefriends-katy.org)

*Editor's Note: We would like to thank Anne Lee for sharing her story of strength and hope. If you have an inspirational story you would like to share, email [editor@katymagazine.com](mailto:editor@katymagazine.com).*



The Lees keep mementos to remind them of their special times with Reagan