

The First Day of School
By Kay D. Falkenhan

I took another swallow from my coffee cup and watched as my neighbor's daughters bound out the door to the school bus stop.

There was much laughter and chatter that morning as they awaited the bus. They greeted classmates they hadn't seen all summer and shared the highlights of their summer vacations.

And then I spotted him. A little guy – his hair carefully combed and sporting his brand new backpack. He ran the back of his hand across his eyes....

I suspected to brush away a tear or two. He looked excited...and frightened...like every kid on his first day of school.

Suddenly my vision was blurred by tears in my own eyes. But for SIDS, our Aaron would be waiting at the bus stop too. I could "see" him...his strawberry blond hair, his huge chocolate eyes, his chubby cheeks and deep, deep dimples. He would be sporting new clothes, a new haircut and a new backpack – probably Thundercats!!! I would be feeling the pride...and the sadness...of every other mother before me as I watch my "baby" head off to school.

I wondered if anyone else remembered. I was surprised that I still felt the loss of what would have been. I missed him and felt sad that he wouldn't come home that afternoon to tell me what he had "learned in school today".

But I had to admit that I was "better". I was sad...but not bitter. I had accepted that I would never be completely "over" my son's death, that there would always be times that the memories – or loss of memories – would tumble around me.

I reached for the phone. I called my dearest friend, another SIDS mom. We talked. I laughed. And life went on.