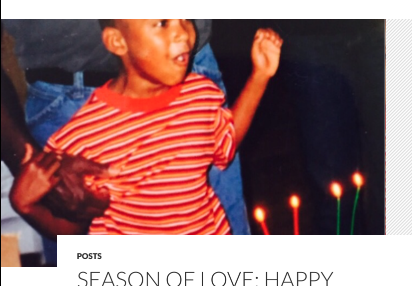


POSTS

SEASON OF LOVE: HAPPY 24TH BIRTHDAY JUSTIN

SEPTEMBER 12, 2020 · SUSAN TOLER-CARR · 17 COMMENTS

Happy 24th Birthday Justin

The Season of Love

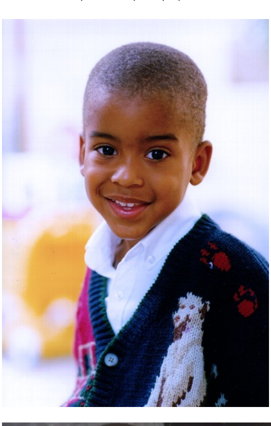
How Do you Measure a Year?

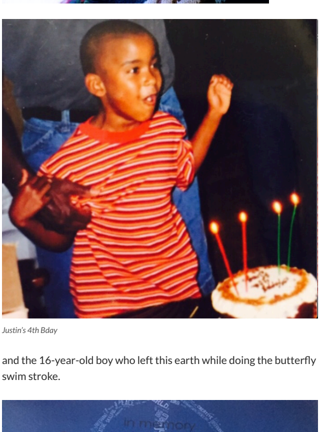
Justin would be 24 years old today. He was our 24-karat humble child who did not know his true brilliance. He was also our little golden Junior Olympian

Like 24 karat gold the color cannot be changed without changing the purity.

All things we knew about Justin can never be changed either…

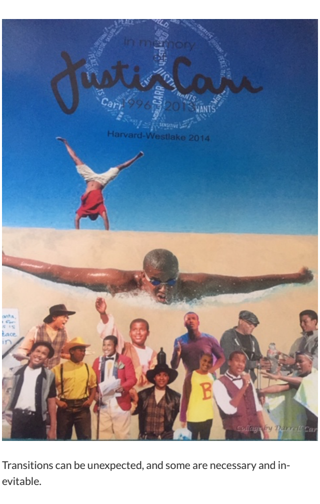
Justin was the 4-year-old boy who prayed for World Peace





Justin's 4th Bday

and the 16-year-old boy who left this earth while doing the butterfly swim stroke.



Transitions can be unexpected, and some are necessary and inevitable.

A timeless birthday ritual is making a wish before you blow out the candles on the cake. Growing up in our household when it was your birthday you got to choose your favorite meal for dinner and your cake of choice. We always knew when my brother Greg's birthday was coming because he frequently asked my Mom not to forget his steak every time she went shopping and it had to be a big steak at that. To this day Greg's wife still cooks him a steak on his birthday.

Well it's September 13, 2020 and another year without Justin— our forever young Renaissance man. The thought of his absence is sometimes hard to comprehend. Just when summer is over our stomachs start to turn as September approaches. Justin was born on this day and it marks a glorious day for us, our family, and friends. We celebrated Justin arrival into this world and now it's sometimes a dreadful marker. He is not here to eat his favorite Thai food or a chocolate mint kind- of -cake and Oreo ice cream in celebration of his special day.

On Justin's last birthday I baked him the receipe he found for the craziest double mint, chocolate loaded- with -sugar brownies that he wanted to take to school and share with his friends.

Since it was a school night and homework was not unavoidable he devoured his favorite Thai dishes and as he was blowing out the candles he looked into the camera and said, "Thank you guys for raising and loving me." Who would have even imagined that this would be his goodbye message to us?

So now I must thank Justin 24 times. Here are 24 karats for You!!

Thank you, Justin for being:

1. Observant*
2. Skillful*
3. Creative*
4. Helpful*
5. Sensitive*

*These above 5 traits are how Justin described himself and now they are the branding on our peace sign logo.

6. Talented
7. Selfless
8. Compassionate
9. Courageous
10. Passionate
11. Ambitious
12. Loving
13. Empathetic
14. Caring
15. Determined
16. Future Focused
17. Discerning
18. Motivated
19. Flexible
20. Logical
21. Peacemaker
22. Family orientated
23. Humble
24. Our Superstar Son

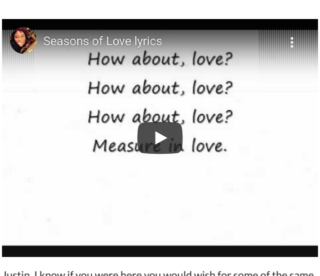
My 24 Wishes for Justin and the World as we strive for peace are:

I hope you are

1. Safe
2. Happy
3. Curious
4. Creating
5. Helping
6. Enjoying
7. Loved
8. Dancing
9. Singing
10. Smiling
11. Designing
12. Acting
13. Hopeful
14. Peaceful
15. Joyous
16. Engaging

My Wishes for the World are:

17. Unity
18. Equality
19. Inclusiveness
20. Honesty
21. Kindness
22. Anti-racist
23. Happiness
24. How about Seasons of Love



Justin, I know if you were here you would wish for some of the same things that I did.

Happy 24th Birthday Honey. I will miss you always and will love you forever.

A thought of Justin's 21st birthday just crossed my mind. I brought a cake. The saddest thing for us was the thought that Justin had to watch us from afar mark this occasion. I told my friend Valerie that I burst into tears after I lit the candles. She wrote me the following:

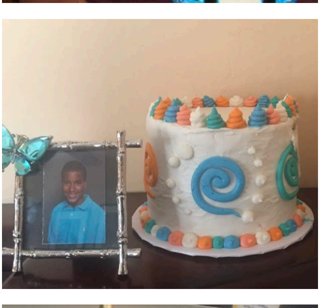
"Those are the bumpy steps, the stairs of sand, the boulders you have to climb over. He is 21. His spirit is present. So yes. Celebrate his birthday. Have a cake. Light candles. Burst into tears. The best thing I read about crying is that it is memory coming out of your eyes."

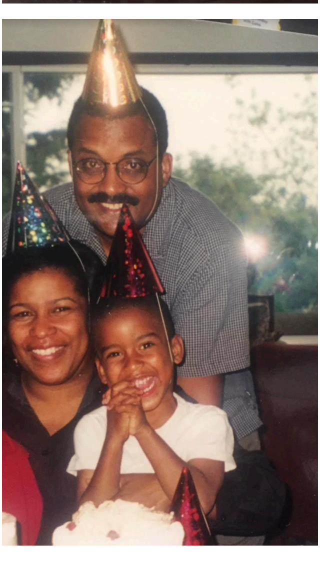
We will light a candle on a cake in honor and memory of Justin's light that shined in our lives and we will probably burst into tears. It's okay. This is a part of the seasons of love we have for you Justin.

Uncle Marty's tattoo in honor of his nephew Justin

Love,

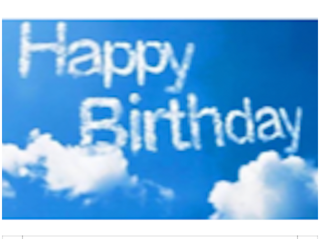
Mom aka OTTO





How Do you Measure a Year? You Measure your life in Love…

Justin's Custom BDAY cupcakes he designed



"Seasons of Love" Jonathan Larson

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

Six hundred minutes,

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

Moments so dear

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

Six hundred minutes

How do you measure, measure a year?

In daylights, in sunsets, in midnights

In cups of coffee

In inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife

In five hundred twenty-five thousand

Six hundred minutes

How do you measure a year in the life?

How about love?

How about love?

How about love?

Measure in love

Seasons of love

Seasons of love

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

Six hundred minutes

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

Journeys to plan

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

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a tree of life (For two Justin's MOMS) WAS IT A COINCIDENCE?
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December 14, 2020

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NOVEMBER 2021

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Six hundred minutes

How do you measure the life

Of a woman or a man?

In truths that she learned

Or in times that he cried

In the bridges he burned

Or the way that she died

It's time now to sing out

Tho' the story never ends

Let's celebrate

Remember a year in the life of friends

Remember the love (you got to remember the love)

Remember the love

Remember the love

Remember the love

Measure measure you life

Measure measure you life

Measure measure you life

Measure measure you life

Measure measure you life

Measure measure you life, ooh (seasons of love)

Seasons of love

Seasons of love

Seasons of love

Seasons of love

Seasons of love

In diapers, resort cards

In spoke wheels, in speeding tickets

In contracts, dollars

In funerals, in births

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

Six hundred minutes

How do you figure

A last year on earth?

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

Six hundred minutes

How do you figure

A last year on earth?

Five hundred twenty-five thousand

Six hundred minutes

How do you figure

A last year on earth?

Remember the love

Remember the love (remember the love)

Remember the love

Seasons of love

PREVIOUS POST
Let me be the first to say…Good grief 6/1/2020

NEXT POST
LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH…

17 THOUGHTS ON "SEASON OF LOVE: HAPPY 24TH BIRTHDAY JUSTIN"

Gail Hash
SEPTEMBER 20, 2020 AT 4:34 PM
Such a beautiful tribute for a beautiful boy.

Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful boy.

REPLY

Anonymous
SEPTEMBER 20, 2020 AT 9:20 AM
Thank you for sharing. I was so engrossed in the reading I could not stop.

God Bless You and Your Husband!!!!! I must not forget Justin!!!!!!!

Love,
Kimberly Major

REPLY

Gloria Johnson
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 9:42 PM
I will never forget your beautiful child. I always think of him on Phyllis' birthday because he was born on her birthday
Always love,
Auntie

REPLY

Anonymous
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 9:35 PM
I will never forget your beautiful child. I always think of him on Phyllis' birthday because he was born on her birthday.

Always love,
Auntie

REPLY

Dr. Gail L. Gail Thompson
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 1:04 PM
Susan:
You are such an awesome Mom and such a gifted writer. This beautiful tribute to your beautiful son–who was such a gift to humanity– should be published. Thank you for sharing Justin with the world.
Hugs, blessings, and continued prayers for you and Darrell. Justin is celebrating his big day in Heaven.
Gail T.

REPLY

Margot Riemer
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 1:03 PM
Thank you for sharing this beautiful post. The song is perfect. Justin embodies all the characteristics you shared, and I am so fortunate that I got to work with him at school. It was not enough time!! We love you, Susan and Darrell and Justin!

REPLY

Denise Bradley
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 12:40 PM
I think Justin would be proud of you and Darrell for what you have done in his name. Love you both, Denise

REPLY

Robin Turner
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 9:11 AM
Justin was definitely a one in a BILLION!!!!! I truly believe that he would have found a way to make world peace possible. Happy 24th birthday to your 24 karat son. His memory will never fade and his works will go on forever. I love reading your posts and hearing everything you share. Love to both of you. I am blessed and honored to know you.

REPLY

Marianne Wright
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 8:32 AM
Lovely post – you are so creative and thoughtful. Thank you for sharing!

REPLY

Anonymous
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 6:37 AM
I cried good tears reading this exceptional birthday wish. Love you Susie. Happy birthday Justin!

REPLY

Noreen Coup
SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 AT 5:36 AM
Your heartfelt messages of love, peace and grief remind us just how precious life really is. Thank you for sharing Justin with the World. We will never forget him. ❤️

REPLY

Kathleen La France
SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 AT 10:17 PM
What a beautiful and heartwarming tribute to your 24 karat son. The love the three of you shared is undeniable.
Please keep writing. Your messages and shared stories are making an impact more than you will ever know.

REPLY

Jeru I Suda
SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 AT 9:33 PM
Beautiful! I miss Justin, too! Hugging you from afar. Love you and Darrell.

Jeru

REPLY

Diane Scoglio
SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 AT 4:39 PM
I cry with you and then I remember his beautiful smile and spirit and it brings joy…and I think it's just like Justin to make me smile!

REPLY

Diane Scoglio
SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 AT 4:37 PM
I cry with you and then I remember his beautiful smile and spirit and it brings joy…and I think it's just like Justin to make me smile!

REPLY

Ann Diederich
SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 AT 2:17 PM
What a beautiful post and what a way to continue Justin's legacy. I will never forget how Justin made me feel– whole, hopeful, caring, compassionate and thoughtful. His memory and your great work will help us not only get through these challenging times, but make us a more cohesive community. Much love to you all.

REPLY

Tommy Overton
SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 AT 2:14 PM
I love you both so much! I love listening to your heart and your love for Justin. Thank you, again, for sharing your hearts with us!!

REPLY

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