



CHERYL BROOKS JOONDEPH

BANGOR — Cheryl Brooks Joondeph, 46, died Saturday, July 5, 2003, in Bangor. She was born April 13, 1957, the daughter of Donald and Florence Keezer Brooks.

Sherri was graduated from Brewer High School and then attended Husson College, graduating in the Class of 1988, with a Bachelor of Science in business administration. She taught as a substitute teacher in the Bangor schools. Sherri's passion in life was the great love she had for her children, Diana Opert, 19, Joseph Joondeph, 11 and Tyler Joondeph, 7. Sherri excelled in advocating for her children with special health care needs and became active in several ways. She attended workshops and conferences learning all she could about Autism Spectrum Disorders and participated in focus groups and forums. She was a board member of Protea Behavioral Health Services. She became involved and active in the Child Developmental Services Advisory Group and was a member of the Community Autism Task Force. She was also involved with the Autism/PDD, Parent-Professional Support group and the local Asperger Support Group. She also attended the Children's Subcommittee meetings to the Northeast Quality Improvement Council. She was always willing to do any task that needed doing from taking minutes or notes and sending out e-mails and announcements to making phone calls and networking with other parents offering support and information. In the process of educating herself about Autism Spectrum Disorders, she was able to obtain the services needed to promote the success of her beloved boys, Joseph and Tyler. Occupational and speech therapy, music therapy, horseback riding therapy, swimming lessons and attending any events that promoted inclusion in the community. She was a great advocate in the local school district obtaining services the boys needed. She was proud of her daughter, Diana and thankful to be present for the

birth of her first grandchild, Madison Elizabeth Belle in May of this year.

Sherri will be missed by her family, many friends and professionals who loved and respected her. She will never know how much she gave to others in living the example of a parent advocate and her contribution to enriching the lives of families who have children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. She was interested not only in her children, but advocating for all children with disabilities. Even as her health continued to fail she remained involved in her children's lives to the extent she was able to and had some wonderful times with her children during her last months. She was not wealthy, but had built a wealth of memories that evolved around the successes of her children. She continued to marvel at their accomplishments up until the day she died. Her last words were words of love for her children and her mother. She was always thankful for her blessings and the love of her boys and her daughter.

Sherri was a member of the First Baptist Church of Bangor and was baptized there. She also taught Sunday School there and was on the church board. Sherri would want to thank special friends; Roxanne Potter, Becky Morse and Linda Grant for their love and support over the past few years and members of the support groups she attended as well as the professionals who worked with her family.

Sherri is survived by her mother, Florence Brooks of Bangor; her daughter, Diana Opert of Bangor; sons, Joseph and Tyler Joondeph; and her grandchild, Madison Elizabeth Belle, as well as several aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews. She was predeceased by her father, Donald Brooks, in 1984 and her brother, Donald David, in 1988. She is now reunited with them and now knows the meaning of peace and joy and the freedom from earthly woes.

The family requests in lieu of flowers that donations be sent to the Autism Society of Maine Scholarship Fund 72B Main St., Winthrop, ME 04364 or Becky Morse, Asperger Library Fund, P.O. Box 715, Greenville, ME 04441. A service of remembrance celebrating the life of Cheryl will be held 1 p.m. Saturday, July 12, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 639 Grandview Ave., Bangor. A reception and time of fellowship will follow. Arrangements by Foley Funeral Service, Bangor.