



## Shelli Rae Graves

September 21, 1967 - March 27, 2016

Shelli Rae Graves- Born September 21, 1967 in Central City, NE; departed this earth March 27, 2016 at Bryan Hospital in Lincoln, NE. Services will be Wednesday, March 30, 2016 at 11:00 AM at Zion Church: PCA in Lincoln, NE with Internment at Bureau Cemetery (near Pierce Chapel) North of Central City, NE. Visitation will be at Central City United Methodist Church on Tuesday, March 29th from 6-8 PM and immediately preceding services Wednesday. Rev. Stu Kerns will be officiating the services. Condolences may be sent to the family at [www.soltwagnerfuneral.com](http://www.soltwagnerfuneral.com).

Shelli was the daughter of Jim and Kathy (Gregg) Graves of Central City. Shelli grew up in Central City and was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis at age 3. Despite the challenges of arthritis, Shelli graduated from Central City High School in 1986, and Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln, NE with a degree in Psychology in 1990. Upon graduation she began working in foster care as a foster care specialist in Lincoln and spent her entire career helping and serving disadvantaged children. Her service also encompassed her personal time, being active in Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Foster Care Closet, Royal Family Life Kids Camp, ICAN camps. Arthritis Foundation and personal involvement with several special foster children.

She loved to travel and Husker sports, and was determined to not let arthritis slow her down. Shelli had a special love for the Nebraska Volleyball and Women's basketball teams and received the 2006 Fellowship of Christian

Athletes Influence Award.

Shelli was a member of Central City United Methodist Church and later Zion Church: PCA in Lincoln. She had a strong relationship with Christ, was a devout disciple of his teachings and eager to share his love with others.

Survivors are her maternal grandmother Arnetta Reeder of Central City; father and mother, Jim and Kathy Graves of Central City; Sister LeAnn (Darren) Siekman of Bennington and their children Grant Siekman and Allison (Ethann) Barnes of Lincoln; as well as many aunts, uncles and cousins. Shelli was blessed with many close friendships, including Brenda Helvey and Goddaughter Beverly Frattalone of Lincoln.

Memorials may be given to the family, Christian Heritage Youth Services, or Zion Church: PCA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR **29**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

United Methodist Church, Central City

## Funeral Service

MAR **30**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Zion Church: PCA  
5511 S. 27th St.  
Lincoln, NE

## Burial

MAR **30**. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Bureau Cemetery by Pierce Chapel - Near Clarks

# Tribute Wall

KL

“ *Shelli was a dear friend and I miss her so much. I met her at NE Wesleyan Univ. when I helped her with her therapy back in '87. Shelli and I had some great adventures together including canoeing over manatee in FL. She had the biggest heart, the best smile, and always a twinkle in her eye. Her Light really did shine. Shelli also had a great sense of humor and was so selfless. Shelli was a true inspiration and being her friend was a gift from above. Know that she always spoke of her family fondly, especially you LeAnn and your family. I look forward to seeing Shelli again one day! My sincerest condolences to you her family for your loss. God's Peace,*  
*Kristin*

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**Kristin Larson** - July 13, 2017 at 07:54 AM

KC

“ *Jim and Kathy*

*I was so saddened to learn of Shelli's passing this week. I have so many memories and when I get back to my home (I am traveling right now) I will dig for some pictures I would love you to have. Shelli was my savior when I found myself a single parent in Des Moines IA. Bless you always for allowing Shelli to come and live with us for a summer. She and Mary and Adam and I had some great adventures together and made such good memories. My adult kids to this day remember Shelli very fondly! Shelli and I stayed in touch all these years, always at Christmas, sharing our stories and accomplishments and our life adventures. One of these memories was the day you all had Mary and Adam and I come out to see the baby pigs!!!*

*Shelli was a beautiful spirit that graced us all with her presence for the years she was given. She brought such light and love to all she came in contact with and I am forever grateful she chose us.*

*With fondness and love. . .Kathy Curry*

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**Kathryn Curry** - April 02, 2016 at 02:17 PM

IC

“ *Jim, Kathy and family,*

*We want to express our sincere condolences in the loss of your daughter. Know that you are in our thoughts and prayers.*

*Don and Ina Cotner*

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**Ina Cotner** - April 01, 2016 at 12:53 PM

BF

“ *Shelli. Was my godmother and a good friend*

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**beverly frattalone** - March 31, 2016 at 04:53 PM

JY

“ As an Arthritis Center of Nebraska, I have known, enjoyed, hugged and smiled many times with Shelli for over 30 years. She will always have a special place in my heart.

So sorry for your loss, Joan Young

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**Joan Young** - March 30, 2016 at 08:49 PM

JY

That's an employee at ACN....I am in shock about my friend Shelli

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**Joan Young** - March 30, 2016 at 09:22 PM

DR

“ I was saddened to learn of Shelli's passing. It was my distinct honor to have been one of her doctors, and a pleasure to have gotten to know her. She was an amazing and strong person. Always incredibly positive despite life's challenges. Truly an amazing human being. My sincere sympathies to you all.

Dr. Matt Reckmeyer

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**Dr. Matt Reckmeyer** - March 30, 2016 at 06:21 PM



“ Stacy Kellow lit a candle in memory of Shelli Rae Graves



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**Stacy Kellow** - March 30, 2016 at 01:24 PM

SH

“ I was shocked and deeply saddened when I learned about Shelli's death. My sympathy and prayers go to her entire family. To Jim and Kathy who have been great friends through the years, I understand the grief of losing your child. I will keep you in my prayers. Sonia Holbrook

Sonia Holbrook - March 30, 2016 at 11:23 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Shelli Rae Graves.



March 30, 2016 at 07:51 AM

EH

“ I am saddened to hear of the passing of Shelli. Shelli and I lived next to each other many years ago in an apartment complex in the Belmont area of Lincoln. I worked in In-home health care and was able to help Shelli for a short time. We got to know each other and became friends. Back in those day's, we could be found hanging out at Holmes lake or one of the parks laughing our behinds off at just about anything. Shelli enjoyed working with children and teens. I lost contact with Shelli while she worked at YSS and I moved out of state but we reconnected when I moved back to Lincoln and found she was working at Christian Heritage.

*I will miss Shelli's smile and her laughter, she was a person who could lift your spirits with just a touch, smile, an ear and a positive word! Rest in Peace my dear friend!*

Ed Holloway - March 30, 2016 at 06:44 AM

MS

“ *My most sincere condolences, Anita Schlager purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Shelli Rae Graves.*



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**My most sincere condolences, Anita Schlager** - March 30, 2016 at 04:59 AM

PH

“ *Shelli was a great help to myself and my foster daughter who I adopted. She was so kind and helpful dealing with issues. I remember her fondly and am sad to hear of her passing at such a early age. She was wonderful at her job and helped us during a tough transition time and did it was care and compassion. I am sending prayers to the family and wishing you peace. Pati Hughes*



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**Pati Hughes** - March 30, 2016 at 04:16 AM

MB

“ *We did youth camps in Lincoln and on the Omaha reservation for several years. Always admired her faith and perseverance. Stunned that we lost her so young.*

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**Mark Bryant** - March 29, 2016 at 11:17 PM

CW

“ Jim and I remember Shelli from Central City schools when we were teaching there. I had taught LeAnn first, and from that time was aware of Shelli and the challenges that she faced in life. We have nothing but admiration for her in the way she met life and took it on. She was one of the sweetest people I have ever met. We are so sorry for your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time.

*Jim and Connie Weir*

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**Connie Weir** - March 29, 2016 at 10:40 PM



“ We were classmates at Nebraska Wesleyan and graduated together in 1990. She had such a sweet spirit that she carried with her. I fondly remember her at FCA functions and talking to her between classes. I am so sorry to see her go.

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**Keith Rockefeller** - March 29, 2016 at 10:32 PM

KH

“ I met Shelli a number of years ago when she was a member of my P.E.O. Chapter, IA, in Lincoln. She was always cheerful and upbeat. I would occasionally see her at Husker Women's Basketball Games. I send my sympathies to her family and friends. Her death diminishes our world.

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**Kim Hachiya** - March 29, 2016 at 09:54 PM

LR

“ I met Shelli after she broke her leg the first time. I was one of her main physical therapists. Shelli with such a light and inspiration to not only me, but everyone she came in contact with. My prayers are with you Kathy and Jim, as well as your entire family. God must need a special angel by his side. And now she can be pain-free. All my love to you Shelli!

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**Lynn Rathbun** - March 29, 2016 at 08:39 PM

 Megan Ferris

“ Megan Ferris lit a candle in memory of Shelli Rae Graves



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**Megan Ferris** - March 29, 2016 at 07:55 PM

KB

“ I was so shocked to read of Shelli's passing in the paper today. I want to send my condolences and prayers to her family. I met Shelli many years ago at Snyder Physical Therapy. I will miss the positive attitude that she always had. I will miss seeing her at the volleyball and basketball games. I will miss a good friend.  
Kathy Berggren

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**Kathy Berggren** - March 29, 2016 at 06:12 PM

JM

“ So sad to hear the new of Shelli passing. I will miss her positive attitude and her great smile. I meet Shelli when she was at Home Lake Manor. I will miss talking with her and having lunch with her. She was truly a great person and I'm so glad that I got to know her. My prays and thoughts are with you.  
Jennifer Merwick

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**Jennifer Merwick** - March 29, 2016 at 05:52 PM

MC

“ I knew Shelli through the study of karate and spent many hours training with her. I admired her courage, kindness and unfailingly positive attitude. Condolences to her family.  
Margot Conrad

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**margot conrad** - March 29, 2016 at 05:52 PM

AJ

“ Our thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of Shelli. We will miss Shelli, her positive attitude, and especially her smiles. Shelli came to La Paloma Restaurant for many years and she will be missed by all of us. Vaya con Dios Shelli !  
Art Jimenez

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**Arthur Jimenez** - March 29, 2016 at 05:23 PM

SO

“ I was so sad to hear the news of Shelli's passing. I went to NE Wesleyan with Shelli and have great memories of her. She was such a giving person and a friend to all. I had lost touch and it was inspiring to read the impact she had on kids lives. My prayers go out to her family and friends. Sondra - class of 1990 NWU

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**Sondra** - March 29, 2016 at 04:35 PM



Christina  
Burkhardt  
Linder

“ *Christina Burkhardt Linder lit a candle in memory of Shelli Rae Graves*



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**Christina Burkhardt Linder** - March 29, 2016 at 04:25 PM

SS

“ *Sally Stalaker lit a candle in memory of Shelli Rae Graves*



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**Sally Stalaker** - March 29, 2016 at 02:13 PM

SS

“ *To the Family of Shelli Graves,*

*I have only known Shelli for a short time. She was such a great support to the Arthritis Foundation and to our Heartland Office. I enjoyed our visits and phone calls. She will be missed, greatly. Thoughts and prayers to the family.*

*Sally Stalaker  
Arthritis Foundation Nebraska*

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**Sally Stalaker** - March 29, 2016 at 02:12 PM

MC

“ *Shelli was such a sweet young lady! Your family are in our thoughts and prayer! Mark & Marcia Cockerill*

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**Mark & Marcia Cockerill** - March 29, 2016 at 11:54 AM

TL

“ I did not know Shelli well but she was always friendly to me She was one of the first people to introduce themselves to me when I started attending Zion Praying for the Peace of God to dwell richly in the hearts of her family and friends

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**Tim Lockwood** - March 29, 2016 at 11:12 AM

LA

“ Shelli was an amazing person and will be greatly missed. I enjoyed her positive attitude and smiles every time I saw her and Jim and Kathy! She will be missed!  
Latisha Dorton

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**Latisha** - March 29, 2016 at 11:08 AM

BM

“ Shelli made such a positive impact on my life! We worked together at the boys group home. We had many late night discussions. God bless her. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Bill Minnick

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**Bill Minnick** - March 29, 2016 at 10:39 AM

JE

“ I am very sorry to hear of the loss of Shelli, she was a wonderful person and I enjoyed working with her. I met Shelli as a CPS worker at DHHS and she was a foster care specialist with Christian Heritage. Shelli was always passionate about her work and advocating for her families. I will keep her family and friends in my thoughts and prayers!

Jenna White

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**Jenna** - March 29, 2016 at 10:34 AM



Cheryl  
Johnson

“ I worked with Shelli for a number of years in the child welfare field and she was always such a ray of positive sunshine. She was a kind and caring individual who will be missed. My thoughts are with you during this difficult time.

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**Cheryl Johnson** - March 29, 2016 at 10:25 AM



KF

“ Shelli was a wonderful lady. We got to know her well as she guided us through our foster care days. She was always so positive and helpful and was always available when we needed someone to talk to or work through a situation. She always had a smile on her face and cared so deeply for all the kids that she came into contact with. We were saddened to hear of her passing but know she is celebrating in heaven. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of her family.

*Roger and Kim Funk*

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**Kim Funk** - March 29, 2016 at 08:58 AM



Heidi  
Allgood

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. Sincerely,  
*Heidi Boelts Allgood*

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**Heidi Allgood** - March 29, 2016 at 06:22 AM



LC

“ My deepest sympathy to your family for your loss. I had the privilege of getting to know Shelli through the Arthritis Foundation. She was a courageous, inspiring, extraordinary human being who made the best possible use of her years on this earth to make the world a better place.

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**Laurie Collingham** - March 29, 2016 at 12:13 AM



“ *Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Shelli Rae Graves.*



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March 28, 2016 at 11:50 PM



“ *Shelli will always be in our minds as a strong believer in her maker....with no bitterness or remorse of the Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis she was challenged with. She excelled in her education and used it to help many people....She was a loving daughter, sister, aunt and had many friends. She will certainly be missed...love to her memory and her family...Jerry and Shirley Willhoft*

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**Jerry and Shirley Willhoft** - March 28, 2016 at 11:36 PM



“ *I was saddened to hear of your loss, and my prayers are with your family. I have fond memories of teaching Shelli and sponsoring her in FBLA. She always inspired me with her courage, perseverance, and intelligence! LaJean Hadenfeldt*

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**LaJean Hadenfeldt** - March 28, 2016 at 11:00 PM

CB

“ I was blessed to know Shelli in so many ways. Shelli walked alongside my family as we journeyed through the Foster care system and welcomed our son into our lives forever. From day one, she was a lifeline to us with honest advise and encouragement. Even after our case closed she stayed in touch and loved our children. My son would always get excited for her visits. She was a constant for us. As a fellow human service worker, I watched her correct with every young person see encountered genuinely. She saw beauty in every chid and fought to show that beauty to others and the youth. God truly worked thru her. Her light will be deeply missed.

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**Classy Blakely** - March 28, 2016 at 10:54 PM

MS

“ I remember seeing Shelli coming into church, the one thing she always wore was her smile. My sympathy is extended to her close friends and family. She will be missed.  
Marilyn Strahm

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**Marilyn Strahm** - March 28, 2016 at 10:42 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Shelli Rae Graves.



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March 28, 2016 at 04:06 PM

CD

“ Prayers go out to Kathy, Jim and LeAnne and Darren, and to all the people in Shelli's life. She was such a wonderful person with a big heart. Especially with kids. I will always remember her , she was such a great cousin. Rest in Peace Shelli. You will be greatly missed

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**Cheryl Dubas** - March 28, 2016 at 02:56 PM