



## Sara Parlow (née Beers)

February 22, 2018

Sara Parlow (née Beers) of Harbor Springs, Michigan, passed away peacefully and floated on her angel wings into God's loving embrace on February 22, 2018, following a graceful and courageous battle with ovarian cancer. Sara worked to build God's Kingdom by teaching children, building churches, helping feed the hungry, and being a friend to all.

Born Sally Jane Beers in Albion, Michigan, to Rev. Birt and Helen Beers, Sara spent her early years as a "PK" (preacher's kid), teaching her dolls and listening to the Detroit Tigers. Summers were spent at the family cottage on Lake Louise outside Boyne Falls. Sara was a 1980 graduate of Montague High School and earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Alma College and a Master's degree in Education from Western Michigan University. She followed her dream to teach young children, spending 26 years educating first graders at Dix Street Elementary School in Otsego. Sara met her future husband, Jon Parlow, at Alma College; they married in 1987 at Tenant Chapel on the grounds of Lake Louise United Methodist Community. The couple first lived in Wayland and later Byron Center. After Sara retired from teaching, they spent five years in Toronto, Canada, finally moving full time to their summer home in Harbor Springs two years ago. Sara's greatest passions were her faith, her home, helping others, sports, and reading. She loved and was so proud of all her students and enjoyed working with her colleagues at Dix Street. Sara derived immense satisfaction from mentoring and encouraging young girls to get involved in exercise and running

in the “Girls on the Run” program. As part of the program, she helped girls gain confidence, set and achieve goals, and complete their first 5K run — crossing the finish on the 50-yard line of Waldo Stadium in Kalamazoo. Dedicated to her own workouts, Sara was also an ardent sports fan, attending, watching, and listening to games particularly those of her Tigers (Ernie) and Pistons (George). She loved to explore new destinations, especially if there was a beach, antique shop, art gallery, or museum nearby. She had her own wonderful sense of style, and enjoyed remodeling and decorating her homes, planning and searching for just the right paper, paint, furniture, and accessories. Sara always loved time at any library and was an avid reader with numerous book groups and reading lists.

In addition to her teaching, Sara was an active volunteer, serving in roles with her churches, the Red Cross, and many other organizations. She was a strong advocate in fighting hunger, and spent several days a week working with The Manna Food Project and Harbor Springs food pantries. Sara is survived by her husband of 30 years, Jon, of Harbor Springs; her mother, Helen Beers, and stepfather, Greg Preston, of Grand Haven; her sister, Lori (Steve) Gillespie, of Downingtown, PA; aunts Diane Beers of Nicholasville, KY, and Bonnie Partridge of Huntington Beach, CA; mother-in-law, Carol Parlow of Jenison; brother-in-law, Pete (Katie) Parlow of St. Clair; sister-in-law Heidi (George) Pamerleau of Jenison; and nieces and nephews Turner (Sara Dittrich), Troy, Vielka, Sonia, Nate, Noah, Erin and Olivia as well as numerous cousins. She will be greatly missed by her many friends and the countless others whose lives she touched with her smiles, hugs, notes, and kind words of understanding.

Sara was predeceased by her father, Rev. Birt Beers; her father-in-law, Pastor Paul Parlow; uncles Rev. Alva Beers of Nicholasville, KY; Gary Partridge of Borrego Springs, CA; and Bill and Maxine Gebbie of San Marino, CA.

A service celebrating Sara's life will be held at Stutsmanville Chapel near Harbor Springs on Saturday, May 12th at 1 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts of time, talent, or resources are suggested to: The Manna Food Project,

8791 McBride Park Dr., Harbor Springs, MI 49740 or your local food pantry.  
Children can't learn if they're hungry. Arrangements are being handled by  
Toale Brothers Funeral Home of Sarasota, FL.

# Tribute Wall

LH

“ Jon, I am so sorry to hear about Sara's passing. I just found out through the Alma Accents newsletter. We took most of our education classes together at Alma. Sara was a sweet, caring person, and a natural teacher. Thinking of you.

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**Leanne (Ince) Hinz** - September 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

WL

“ What a honor to work with Sara at Dix Street. How she loved teaching. She was so gentle and patience with her students.

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**Wendy Larson** - April 10, 2018 at 12:00 AM

KS

“ I was so sorry to hear of Mrs. Parlows passing. She taught my son, Alex and daughter, Karley at Dix Street. Such a soft spoken, dedicated teacher

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**Kim Saucedo** - March 22, 2018 at 12:00 AM

IH

“ I was so sorry to hear about Sara's passing. Sara will always be in our hearts here at 9 Boardwalk where she so freely spread joy and enthusiasm. My deepest sympathy to Jon and family.

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**Ingrid Holzhueter** - March 20, 2018 at 12:00 AM

DH

“ *Jon and Family,  
Please accept my condolences for the loss of Sara. I am shocked and deeply saddened to learn of her passing from this life. At Dix Street she was always the picture of health and fitness. She organized after school aerobics and was always up for tennis or a walk. She was so kind and caring, Sara made this a better world.*

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**Dale Harrison** - March 17, 2018 at 12:00 AM

SO

“ *So sorry to hear that Sara went through ovarian cancer. I went to Alma with Sara & Jon. Both were always kind, dedicated to learning and a lot of fun to be with. Reading the other posts of what an amazing teacher she was don't surprise me. She really was special & did so much for others. Jon, know that you're in my thoughts and prayers.*

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**Sue Oblender** - March 14, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ *Sara taught my son Christopher at Dix Street almost 30 years ago. To this date he still speaks so fondly of her & loved her as his teacher. I so admired the kindness she showed & how she encouraged the students in their interests. Christopher was a huge Michael Jordan and Chicago Bulls fan. If I remember correctly, Jon was traveling and picked up a Chicago Bulls pin for Christopher that he still has. The letter that Sara wrote Christopher when he graduated high school has a prominent place in a scrapbook. She followed her students throughout school and continued to be a positive influence in their lives. She touched so many people and this world needs more people like her. She always had a beautiful smile on her face. She really touched our lives and I am thankful to have known her. Prayers for her family.*  
*Janet Miller*

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**Janet Miller** - March 10, 2018 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ I was so stunned to learn of my old classmates passing. She was so kind, smart, caring, beautiful and was loved by everyone in our class of 1980 in Breckenridge. I was lucky to have danced with Sara way back in Jr High and I'm so glad we were friends. I'm so sorry for all your family and those that were so amazingly lucky to know her. I know she is with her Lord and is so happy and healthy. Sara you made such a huge impact on so many, thank you and rest in peace my friend.

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**Mark Sterling** - March 07, 2018 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ She was such a kind soul it was an honor to know her at Alma College. I am sure that she made the world a better place.

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**Matt Mims** - March 07, 2018 at 12:00 AM

LC

“ I really enjoyed volunteering with Sara at Manna Food Project. She definitely was a ray of sunshine. I will miss her.

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**Lori Croyle** - March 07, 2018 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Sara was my first piano teacher in Montague when I was five. I absolutely adored her. Wishing you peace.

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**Carrie (Hunt) Hagen** - March 06, 2018 at 12:00 AM

J

“ Oh my gosh! I am shocked to read this. Sara and Jon were so good to us in Byron Center and helped support the Van Singel Fine Arts Center. Sara had such a good heart! I remember her walking in the neighborhood where we lived. I am so sorry to read this. Jon, please know our thoughts and prayers are with you. May you find peace through our Lord and Savior.

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**Joyce Bower** - March 06, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Sara was such a good friend and mentor especially when I first started teaching. She was so encouraging and always had good advice. I will always cherish the talks we had after school when I would come in to visit my mom who taught with her at Dix St. She will be greatly missed.

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**Jen Squires** - March 06, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ I am so sorry to hear about Sara. I worked with Sara in her classroom at Dix St school in 1997. She was a gentle spirit with her students. She told me that Darl and my wedding in 1969 was the first wedding she attended and thought I looked like a fairy princess walking down the aisle. Birt married us. What a sweet memory. Please remember that so many are wrapping you in their prayers during this difficult time. Sending our love, Darl and Joyce

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**Joyce Gilliland** - March 05, 2018 at 12:00 AM

PP

“ Dear Jon & family,

*It is with sadness we think of Sara and wished that we would have had the chance to spend much more time with you both.*

*Our sympathy for you and all who feel such a loss with Sara's passing....*

*Thoughts & Prayers,*

*Bonnie & Phil Preston*

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**Phil Preston** - March 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

SC

“ We are sorry to here of Sara's passing. We greatly enjoyed the time we had with her at church in Wayland and our friendship. Our sympathy and prayers to Jon and family.  
God Bless

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**Scott Mary Chestnut** - March 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

DO

“ We are so sorry to hear of Sara's passing. We remember Sara and Jon from Cornerstone Church. Our prayers are with Jon and the family.

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**Dan & Carol OMalley** - March 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ I was extremely sorry, to hear the very sad news. Sara will always be fondly remembered at 9 Boardwalk, and my deepest sympathy to Jon and family.



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**Susan Hanko** - March 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

KM

“ We were so sorry to hear of Sara's death. We remember her and Jon from Cornerstone Church as well. Prayers for the family.

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**Kent & Nancy McPherson** - March 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

BR

“ Dear Jon,  
We were so sorry to read about Sara's passing! We fondly remember your wedding and then it was so great that we got to reconnect with you and Sara at Cornerstone Church. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.

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**Betsy & Ken Raby** - March 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

KR

“ So sorry to hear of Mrs. Parlow's passing. She is now dancing with Jesus! She was my son's teacher at Dix Street. He loved her. What was so special is that she followed her students and sent them wonderful cards at graduation. So thoughtful. Prayers for peace and comfort. Kim Reed (Adam Reed).

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**Kim Reed** - March 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

TK

“ I have many fond memories of Mrs. Parlow as my first grade teacher at Dix Street. Sending prayers and sympathy to her family and friends.

Tera (Fisher) Kinnane - March 03, 2018 at 12:00 AM



“ Jon - my heart is breaking. I am so sorry to hear this news. You and Sara made a deep impact on my life and the strength of your marriage. May God be with you. - My thoughts and prayers are with you. Carmen (Reynolds) Tawney

March 03, 2018 at 12:00 AM

SB

“ Sara was a wonderful person, and a talented, loving teacher. I feel fortunate to have known her. The world has lost someone very special.

Sue Binning - March 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

BK

“ I am so sorry to hear of Sara's passing . I was honoured that while living here in Toronto that she trusted me with her sweet kitty Gogo when she and Jon would be away..  
Jon and family please accept my deepest sympathy.  
Take care and God Bless



Bernadette Knight - March 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

KF

“ .I worked a lot with Sara's classes. I enjoyed the many talks we had. She was wonderful to work with. and a great asset to Dix Street Elementary1 I am so glad I had the opportunity to know her!

Kathi Fuss - February 28, 2018 at 12:00 AM

BF

“ Your Toronto family loves you and misses you dearly and we'll be looking forward to the day when your husband is able to come back and visit us. God Bless.

Beach Family - February 28, 2018 at 12:00 AM

CM

“ Sara was an amazing teacher with a soft and gentle way with all of her students. So very sorry to hear of her passing. My prayers for peace and comfort to all of you.

Cindy Mills - February 28, 2018 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ My sincerest condolences to Jon and family. I met Sara a few times and she was always sweet and had a kind word to share. Her bright spirit will be missed. (Gerd and Hans' daughter, Toronto)



Suzanne Wredenhagen - February 28, 2018 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Sara was greatly respected at Dix Street Elementary and spent those 26 years making a tremendous difference.

Dave Sleep - February 28, 2018 at 12:00 AM