

Karla Donley Castillo

August 2, 1962 ~ September 6, 2023

Karla Donley Castillo was born August 2, 1962, to Ralph and Lucille Donely in Salt Lake City, Utah. She passed away on September 6, 2023, following cardiac arrest on September 1, 2023.

Karla attended West High School and continued her education at Salt Lake Community College, studying early childhood development. She spent her lifetime enriching the lives of children, toddlers and babies. She spent many years working at The Neighborhood House and the last several years at Bio-Kids on the University of Utah campus. Her classroom was always a fun place to be and she specialized in Reggio Emilla Environments. She loved to bring the outdoors into her classroom.

Her family was always first in her life and in her heart. She had a great love and compassion for animals and collected several strays. We are sure that all of her beloved pets were waiting for her at the rainbow bridge. She had that same compassion for helping others and was always willing to help people in need.

She loved Mother Nature and being outdoors. She loved gardening (except for goat heads) and she loved working in her yard. One of her favorite things was sitting on her patio during thunderstorms. She was so proud to make homeownership a reality in her life and her home was always a warm and welcoming place for family and friends. She enjoyed making Mexican food and loved to share it with everyone.

After watching a movie about elephants, Karla developed a great respect for them and began collecting figurines of elephants, making sure they always had “trunks up”. Her favorite color was purple.

Karla is survived by her children Abel Castillo, Shaymen (Tosha) Castillo, Kelsie (Miranda) Riley and “adopted” daughter, Kaylyn Walker; grandchildren Shaymen Jr., Gabriel, Talia, Aleena, Areyon, Shaya, Shia, Seria and Kiaran. She is also survived by her sisters Lora Richardson, Rynda Monson, Tova (Alan) Taylor and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Karla was preceded in death by her parents, sisters Lynette Montgomery and Jan Morgan, and lifelong friend, Lydia Martinez.

The family wishes to thank the Medical Intensive Care Unit at the University of Utah Hospital for their loving and compassionate care and for the transparency they shared with her family. Karla was a registered organ donor and wanted to bless more families even after her life, but in the end was unable to fulfil that part of her wish. We would also like to thank the donor team, who was there to support us and walk us through the process.

A viewing will be on September 14th from 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. at Larkin Mortuary at 260 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah and directly following, a graveside service will be held at Salt Lake City Cemetery at 11:00 a.m. Also, a celebration of life will be held on Saturday, September 16th at 1040 North Redwood Road (enter from 10th North), Salt Lake City, Utah 84116 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.