



Jack Gene "Luke" Cheepo, Jr.

March 19, 1963 - May 20, 2021

Lost Boy Goes Home

Jack Gene Cheepo Jr. aka Luke passed away at the age of 58 at Jan & Gail Oaks Home, on May 20, 2021 in Tulare County.

Jack's story begins at Deerborn Hospital on March 19, to Jack & Morana Cheepo. He is the fourth child to Jack & Morana. Jack was diagnosed with Down Syndrome at the time of his birth.

Jacks parents gave him his nick name Luke. Luke from his birth, til the age of nine lived in North Fork with his family, an older brother and three sisters. Two older ones and one younger.

This is my memory of him doing things together and him getting lost. I would follow him around playing in the back forty. The back forty is what we called our backyard. We would follow the trails that our family and pets used. After a rainstorm we would follow the shallow runoff down to the main river. Along the way we would pick flowers, turn over rocks and just enjoy our day. Towards lunchtime we go home to find something to eat.

1973 my brother was lost for a couple of days, he was in the local paper called The North Fork Journal at that time. On the day he went missing Luke and I woke up got ourselves ready for the day. We went out to play as usual in

the front yard before we go out to the field. We started to go towards the field where we like to play in the tall grass. But that morning he didn't want me to follow him and tried to make me stay home. I didn't want too so when he tried to go towards the field I would run to catch up to him and he would stop and push me back. The third or fourth time he picked up a stick and proceeded to hit me with it to guarantee my way back home which worked, I ran back home to the house and waited a few minutes after calming my self from crying! I ran back to the trail where I saw him last and he wasn't around; I couldn't see him anywhere in the field I got scared and ran back to the house and sat and waited for him to come back I figured he just decided to take a stroll by himself that day.

While I was sitting there our mother came out to discover that I was playing by myself and asked me where Luke was I just pointed in the direction he went. She left me playing and I assumed she went to get my dad I think.

I do remember them asking me again which direction he went and I pointed out the direction, but the adults figured I was to young to know the direction he went and that it had been to long since I seen him last and I didn't remember. The local Sheriff got called in to help with some tracking dogs. More men began the search for him.

He was missing for a couple days, this happened in the fall so there was cool evenings and the search party was worried that it may be too cool for him to be out on his own.

Til this day I remember that morning. Most of my information is what I recalled on my own. The information here after is what I have gotten from our older siblings and what they remember of that day.

The next thing I knew our mother was looking for him and called for him in, getting no response I think this is when she went and got our father and

before I knew, there was a lot of people in our yard looking for him.. They called on search dogs, which were some big dogs to me (years later I found out they were blood hounds, good dogs) they went out to search for him. The Mount Bullion Boys CDF was called in to help out in the help to search for him. That's what my brother told me.

When he came back home it seemed he wasn't himself and we just fought over our toys more than usual and after his walk by himself that we didn't play out in the field.

Years later I found out that during that first night out they found a spot where a donkey had laid down with him to keep him warm during the cold night and the next day he kept walking. He was found in a garage that was two miles from our home. The residents where he was found was owned by Mr & Mrs Tilden's.

Due to him getting lost is why he left our home at an early age he was moved to Hanford, CA. to a boys group home with special needs like his.

He grew up with Mr & Mrs Richard Smiley.

They were his second parents and his new family. They took good care of raising him as if he was their own child.

In their home he was allowed to be himself he went to school, outdoor camping and activities he was able to do with assistance.

After their passing he was in the care of the Kings Rehabilitation Program where he continued doing his daily activities. This is when he moved to Tulare, County. While his stay with Gayle and Jan is where he liked to dance, listen to his music and sit outside on his swing and watch the traffic go by.

One of the things he liked to do was look at his J. C. Penny Catalog page by page.

His family, the Smiley's Boys Home, the King Rehabilitation Center, and Jan &

Gayle Oaks Home were much his family as we were.

Luke's you were loved very much and you will be missed by all who knew you. Continue watching the traffic here from on your swing up in those clouds.

He is survived by his Sister Karen Cornelison of Fresno, CA. Brother Adrian Cheepo of Mariposa, CA., Sadie & Darrell Jeff of Lemoore, CA., & June L. & Tom Eld of Mariposa, CA., Niece Gypsie McVicker of Michigan, Nieces Rhonda Garfield & Raylene Jeff of Lemoore, CA, and Nephew Darrell Jeff Jr of Las Vegas, NV. Niece Marjorie Jeff of North Carolina, Nephew Joshua Cornelison of Ahwahnee, CA., Nephew Jack Jeff of Lemoore, CA., Nephews Adam Eld & Thomas Eld both from Mariposa, CA. and his namesake great nephew Luke Garfield 10 other great nephews 10 great nieces, 3 great, great nephews and 1 great great Niece. Although Luke wasn't actually living with his family, he came from a family that loved him and visited when they could. He did get to meet many of his nephews and nieces.

Luke's parents Morana Turner-Cheepo predeceased him November 5, 2004 and his father Jack G. Cheepo predeceased him April 28, 2017, and a nephew Jeremiah B. Jeff predeceased him March 1997.

Services for Jack G. Cheepo Jr. aka Luke will be June 12, 2021.

At Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel located at 127 East Caldwell Ave., Visalia CA.

Viewing at 10:00AM in the morning with service following at 1:00PM

Honorary Pallbearers:

Adam J. Eld, Thomas J. Eld, Clarence Hawk Atwell, Eric Gomez, Luke Garfield and Joshua Cornelison.

A reception we'll be held at Lamp Litter Inn 3300 West Mineral King Avenue Visalia, CA. Celebrating his life. Contact June L. Eld if you plan to attend the reception at (559) 554 - 5471 or questions.

Thank you Alma Sanchez for contacting our family when you did. Jan & Gayle Oaks Home for allowing me to stay with him through the night and the next day. Steven P. Dillard for helping our family through this time of our grief, and Nick Galvan from the Lamp Lites Inn helping to arrange our reception for our brother Jack.

Previous Events

Viewing

JUN 12. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel
127 E. Caldwell Ave.
Visalia, CA 93277

Service of Remembrance

JUN 12. 1:00 PM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel
127 E. Caldwell Ave.
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Tribute Wall



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Jack Gene "Luke" Cheepo, Jr.*



Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel - June 12, 2021 at 11:41 AM



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Jack Gene "Luke" Cheepo, Jr.*



Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel - June 06, 2021 at 05:01 PM