



Kenneth Christian Nilsen

October 13, 1977 - November 13, 2025

Kenneth Christian Nilsen, 48, a long time Lexington group home resident, went to sleep and woke up completely healed in Heaven on Thursday, November 13, 2025, after a lifetime of many challenges.

"Kenny", as he was known to many, was born on October 13, 1977 in Fayetteville, Arkansas a son of Richard and Lynda Canary Nilsen. He was born with multiple birth defects, including Spina Bifida, Hydrocephalus, double clubbed feet, and a diagnosis at age 3 of Autism. Ken had numerous surgeries over the course of his lifetime, but was a happy, healthy and active child.

All throughout his life, Ken was part of many wonderful special needs classrooms with loving, dedicated staff. Despite his physical limitations, Ken eventually learned to walk and developed some speech to express himself. His quick responses to spoken words showed that he understood speech quite well, but his ability to speak was very limited. His older sisters, Christa and Cara, were devoted companions of their sweet little brother. When Christa began taking piano lessons, Ken amazingly began to sit beside her and play along. All his life, he was able to play skillfully for an audience and shine. Ken's musical ability and talent were tangible proof of the person trapped inside his ailing body and mind.

Ken lived at home with his family until about age 20, at which time he became a Lexington Center resident. While in various group homes over the years, he made many friends and continued to enjoy piano and musical and many other activities. His last years were spent at the O'Neill Avenue residence in Johnstown, NY and he enjoyed a happy, safe and peaceful life in that warm, kind, little second family.

Ken was always particularly excited to go on his weekly outings with Mom and sister Christa to Burger King for onion rings and diet coke and whatever game, book or activities had been brought for the day. He also played his car-sized keyboard and with his favorite Fisher Price marble game. It is a comfort to us that he was happy and smiling when Mom and Christa took him out on his last day - singing, playing music and actively participating in a spell and read words game. O'Neill staff reported an equally pleasant, normal evening before he fell asleep for his last night.

Ken was pre-deceased by his paternal grandparents, Nils and Catherine Nilsen, and maternal grandparents, Ken and Phyllis Canary.

He is survived by his parents, Richard Nilsen of Caroga Lake, NY and Lynda Canary Naske of Johnstown, NY, his sisters Christa Germain of Caroga Lake and Cara Nilsen-Ramirez of Long Beach, CA, as well as aunts, uncles, cousins, and his niece and nephew, Katey and Corey Germain.

Calling hours will be held on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, from 11am -1pm at the Robert M. Halgas Funeral Home, Inc., 111 County Highway 106 (Corner of Route 29 & Black Street), Johnstown. A funeral service will be held at 1pm at the funeral home with Rev. Dr. R.W. Williams, officiating. Burial will be in Broadalbin-Mayfield Rural Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the Lexington Foundation, in care of the funeral home.

Cemetery Details

Broadalbin-Mayfield Rural Cemetary

Broadalbin, NY 12025

Previous Events

Calling Hours

NOV 18. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Halgas Funeral Home
111 County Highway 106
Johnstown, NY 12095
(518) 883-5323
debbie@halgasfuneralhome.com
<https://www.halgasfuneralhome.com/>

Funeral Service

NOV 18. 1:00 PM (ET)

Halgas Funeral Home
111 County Highway 106
Johnstown, NY 12095
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Tribute Wall

KC

“ I remember Kenny playing music at Perth. He liked saying Nike for his shoes. He has a new body in Heaven with Jesus. Praying for your family.

Kathy Cassidy - November 19, 2025 at 07:24 AM

JG

“ I'm so very sorry to hear of Ken's passing. He was a student at Mayfield elementary in our classroom when I first began my career at HFM BOCES. Ken and I both shared an ability to play the piano by ear and I thoroughly enjoyed spending my lunchtime a couple of days a week playing the piano with Ken. He and I also played for several of the graduations for the older students. I really found his talent quite remarkable and enjoyed his company. I also work at Lexington and would see him now and then, not sure if he remembered me but I'd like to think he did. He truly was an inspiration to many and he will be missed. I take comfort in the fact that I know he's in an amazing place we know as heaven. My condolences to his family

Jaynee Gonzales - November 17, 2025 at 04:28 PM

SD

I will miss Ken very much I used to clean his house

shannon demagistris - November 22, 2025 at 09:06 AM

NB

“ Dear Lynda, Cara, Christa, and families, I remember Kenny in Sunday School. May God grant you peace knowing he is fully healed and that he was treated well by family and caregivers.
Nelsa Barnett

nelsa Barnett - November 17, 2025 at 03:50 PM

MT

“ Lynda, I am so very sorry for the loss of Ken. From what I read, he was an amazing man. Maria Tambasco

Maria Tambasco - November 17, 2025 at 08:03 AM

PL

“ We are sorry to hear of the passing of your so . We are keeping you in our thoughts and prayers.



Paul and Jennifer Ligon - November 16, 2025 at 06:38 PM

KW

“ God bless you Kenny you were an amazing guy.

Katrina White - November 16, 2025 at 02:20 PM

LL

“ Richard, Lynda and family...I was saddened to read about Kenneth's death this week. What a loss for you all. I remember him so fondly as a little guy in our classroom... he had a great sense of humor, a beautiful appreciation for music and a gentle spirit. Hoping for peace in your hearts during this time.

Lisa Lane - November 15, 2025 at 07:38 PM

DL

Dear Lynda, I am so very saddened to learn of the passing of Kenneth. He was such a very gentle soul. I can only imagine what your reunion will be like in heaven when you meet him whole and free. It's almost impossible to believe that I babysat him 47 years ago! God's blessings to all of you as you both mourn his loss and rejoice in his new life with Jesus. Much love, David Larsen

David Larsen - November 17, 2025 at 10:37 AM

LR

“ *My deepest condolences to Ken's entire family. I truly enjoyed being Kenny's nurse for the past almost 5 years. I will miss every song, every silly saying and his mischievous laugh. May he forever be our angel. Love and prayers to all.*

Lisa Westerling RN - November 15, 2025 at 07:02 PM

MJ

“ *Oh Lynda, I am so sorry to read that Ken passed away. I am sure that you have many happy memories that will give you strength and comfort during this time.*



My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family,

Love you

Marj Jones - November 15, 2025 at 05:31 PM