Sossoman
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# Alexandra "Alexa" Joanne Paliyenko

**Dec. 29, 1960 - April 25, 2026**

Ms. Paliyenko, age 65, passed away peacefully after a brief illness on April 25, 2026 at J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center in Morganton, NC encircled by the love of her caregivers who knew her as "Lexi." She was born in Shelby, North Carolina on December 29, 1960. Alexa was predeceased by her father, Paul Paliyenko, her infant sister, Andria Roksolana, her maternal grandparents, Ivan and Maria Sawka, her paternal grandparents, Oleksandra and Mykola Paliyenko, and her aunt, Anna Palijenko, her uncle, Wasyl Palijenko and her cousin Marianna Palijenko.

She derived joy from the simplest things in life and expressed her joy exuberantly to all around her. Despite her handicaps, Alexa lived a full and rich life that was provided for her by the visionary leaders and caregivers at the Riddle Center. She bravely faced the many challenges in her life and exemplified the same resilience as the brave Ukrainian men and women from whom she is descended who are fighting for their own lives and destinies. Like here father before her, she lived the credo: "Never give up. Never give in."

Alexa is survived by her mother, Alexandra "Leslie" Paliyenko, her sisters Ava Gritzuk, Adrianna Kurylo and Annalisa Paliyenko along with her brothers Paul Paliyenko and Peter Paliyenko. She is also survived by her uncle, John Sawka, her nephew, Nicholas Gritzuk and her cousins, Peter Palijenko and Zoe Sawka Stoeckle.

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The family is forever deeply grateful for the wonderful, compassionate care provided by the residential, medical, habilitation and therapeutic staff at the J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center in Morganton, NC. This was Lexi's extended family that made her life not only bearable, but joyful and meaningful.

The memorial service will begin at 10:25 a.m. on Friday, May 29, 2026 at St. Gabriel Catholic Church with Father Richard Sutter officiating. Following the service at the church, a celebration of life will be held at the family home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Allegro Foundation (https://allegrofoundation.net/) or Maya's Hope (https://mayashope.org/help-children-in-ukraine/) or the charity of one's choice.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting with the arrangements.

# Tribute Wall

Doroha Alexa My wife Andrea and I were so touched by your joyful aura in the memorial photo. What a teacher you were to us all. No matter what each day would bring, to embrace it and be joyful each moment. We send you this poem written by Richard Wagamese. He writes of his own feelings but we think he has you as a co-traveller in time and space who felt exactly the same way he did. And as the Irish blessing says: May God hold you in the hollow of his hand. When I allow myself to feel my body, when I can inhabit it and allow myself to close off the world beyond my flesh, I become who I am - energy and spirit. I am not my mind. I am not my brain. I am stardust, comets, nebulae and galaxies. I am trees and wind and stone. I am space. I am emptiness and wholeness at the same time. That is when my body sings to me, a glorious ancient song redolent with mystery seeking to remain mystery. Connecting to it, living with it, becoming it even for a moment. I am healed and made more.

–Andrea Mozarowski and Peter Palijenko

How fortunate I was to meet Lexi years ago as I accompanied her Mom Leslie on a visit. She was, as described , joyful and full of smiles. She overcame setbacks with Ukrainian resilience. Be at peace , dear Lexi. Lois Stein Brookshire

–Lois Stein Brookshire

"Lexie Lou", what a pleasure to know you. I'm not sure how I started calling you that but it stuck. You seemed to find it amusing most days. What a determined and spunky lady. Your presence made hard days less hard. Most days when I was

working in that area you would be the very first person I would see in the morning as I came in. I am grateful I got to know you. You will be greatly missed and I will keep your area and family in my prayers.

–Joy Mcneely



–Anonymous



–Peggy G Wilson



RIP Alexa.

–Margaret Tate

Leslie, You may not remember me from the Center; you were always a stalwart support of our mission and Dt. Riddle's vision of the "joy quotient." Please know you have my deepest condolences on Lexi's passing. She did live life to the fullest irregardless of her challenges. May your memories be rich and fill as you celebrate her life. I will always remember your story of "tsking a plane that landed in the wrong country."

in the wrong country).

—Barbara Schneider