



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## NORTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER

Carson City, NV

March 2011

### Chapter Leader's Message

#### Seasons Change & So Do We

Spring is a time of renewal; nature's promise of eternal life. The tulips, crocus, and daffodils pop up even through the snow. Some of us bereaved parents think of this as beauty and life and others think, "Where will I get the energy to take care of this now that our child has died?"

Try planting a small flower bed or a pot of special flowers in memory of your child. Tend it with love and watch it respond. It will give you pleasure and closeness with your child you can experience in no other way. The strength to face your bereavement will grow with the plants.

### Newsletter Editor's Message

Standing on top of the mountain, I watch the clouds roll in and adjust my jacket and mittens against the increasing snow. I check my snowboard and bindings, making sure all is secure. As my friends catch up and we ready to descend, I turn the volume up on my iPod, just in time to catch the opening riff of *Simple Man*, by Lynyrd Skynyrd. My heart stops for a beat, as it always does when I hear this sentimentally significant classic rock song; then I smile, tip my board over the edge and race downhill singing.

~Delores

When I first moved to Tahoe, I had planned on my brother Tom visiting, and showing him all the beautiful and wild places I've come to call home. More than anyone else I know, he'd totally "get it," and love it here, too. Since his death, I have carried him in my heart everywhere I go - sometimes talking out loud (*Dude, look... cows!*), sometimes crying quietly as I watch the sun set over "my" meadow - and on this Sunday morning, riding really, *really* fast down a fresh powder run in the Sierras. I know he dug it.

~GRR

### STEERING COMMITTEE

#### Chapter Leader

Delores Sherman

#### Treasurer

Kathy Schultz

#### Mailing List/Memorial Page

Kathy Schultz

#### Newsletter Editor

Georgette Riley

#### Regional Coordinator

Gene Caligari

#### Members

Betty Kalicki  
Jo Saulisberry  
Cathy Silva, Delegate  
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Reynese Wilson  
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Petra Wilson  
*Fallon contact:*  
Judy Dunning

#### The National Office

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[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)



### SPECIAL DATES

March 29<sup>th</sup>

#### Carson City Meeting

7:00 - 8:30pm  
Carson Tahoe Cancer  
Resource Center  
1535 Medical Parkway

April 26<sup>th</sup>

#### Carson City Meeting

7:00 - 8:30pm  
Carson Tahoe Cancer  
Resource Center  
1535 Medical Parkway

### NEW for 2011:

The newsletter is now available electronically as a PDF. Please email [editor@tcfcarsongcity.org](mailto:editor@tcfcarsongcity.org) if you wish to receive your newsletter via email.

## ***Our Children Loved, Missed & Remembered***

Our dear children, though gone from our sight, are forever loved and will always be remembered. We remember, with compassion, the parents and families of these precious children on the birthdays and anniversary days listed below.

### ***March Birthdays***

#### ***Shara N. Capron***

Grandparents: Petra & Dave Wilson

#### ***Eric Scott Jahn***

Mother: Bonnie Jahn

#### ***Jason Marshall***

Parents: Jean & Phil Marshall

#### ***Jeff Poy***

Parents: Myrna & Robert Poy

#### ***Danica Marie Silva***

Parents: Dan & Cathy Silva



### ***March Anniversaries***

#### ***Serna Cisneros***

Mother: Mayra Cisneros

#### ***Debra Kay McDowell***

Mother: Maureen McCarthy

#### ***Devon Lane Mondragon***

Father: Dan Mondragon

#### ***Mark Robert Schafer***

Parents: Robert & Cheryl Schafer

#### ***Sharie Jean Swenson***

Mother: Kay Kessler

#### ***Michael Thomas Whalen***

Father: Tom Whalen



## ***Love Gifts***

Betty Kalicki in memory of daughter Kara

***"... in memory of the children we love,  
miss and remember every day."***

## **What is Grief?**

It's soaking your pillow with tears at night,  
Your thoughts flying 'round in your head.  
You feel like you'll never sleep again,  
Wondering why you went to bed.

It's softly crying in the shower  
And hoping no one will hear.  
When sobs wrack your chest, taking your breath,  
You'll surely be heard, you fear.

You blow your nose and wipe your eyes,  
Come out looking innocent.  
The silly games that we all play,  
You wish you knew what they meant.

It's having swollen eyelids,  
Your nose peels all the time.  
You go through boxes of Kleenex,  
Then people say you look fine!

It's guilt and depression and anger,  
Emotions are magnified.  
Good days and bad days are measured  
By the amount of tears that you cried.

It's hanging in limbo from lawsuits,  
Your grieving has been put on hold.  
You feel like you'll never start healing  
Before you're a hundred years old.

It's when someone says, "It's God's will,"  
And you're sorry you nodded and cried.  
You feel you've betrayed your child,  
Your precious child that died.

It's feeling abandoned by God,  
Wondering if He really does care.  
Then on a good day, believing,  
Convinced, all the time, He was there.

It's crying to God in your sorrow,  
Imploring Him for some reprieves.  
He comes to you in His own time,  
Conveying that with you He grieves.

It's having compassion for others,  
Supporting them when their child dies.  
It brings back the painful memories,  
But, "Lord, help them," is what your heart cries.

*Elizabeth Dent  
TCF McMinnville, OR*

### **Welcome New Members**

We welcome new members to our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. *Each meeting is different and the next one might be the one that really helps.*

Meetings are held the last Tuesday of every month, 7:00 - 8:30pm, at the Carson Tahoe Cancer Resource Center, 1535 Medical Parkway, Carson City, NV.

## **THE FIXIT MAN**

Being a "jack of all trades and a master of none" all my life, our children thought I could fix anything that they broke. I, myself, thought that anything that was made could be fixed and maybe even fixed better than when it was new. Many times, our children would bring me something that was broken, though they didn't know how it got broken, and ask me if I could please fix it. Most of the time, I would attempt to fix whatever it was, and, one way or another, I would succeed.

Then one day, something broke that I could not and never will be able to fix. One of our children died. This time, the something that broke, I could not fix. There are no tools to bring a dead child back to life. How and why did I end up with something that I cannot fix? Since that time, it is hard for me to fix something that breaks. It brings to mind the one big thing I will never be able to fix: The Death of our Child.

*Bill Krieglestein  
TCF Fox Valley, IL*



## **Promise**

The colors of life change as we go through grief. We begin black and white, then gray settles over us seeping into our pores, surrounding us, smothering us for a long period of time, then slowly the colors change, we may not even be aware of their changing 'til one day we see a rainbow and know it was meant for us.

*From Songs from the Edge, Memoirs and Poetry  
by Fay Harden*



There is a comforting discovery that many bereaved parents have confirmed: the realization that when a "special day" arrives - such as the anniversary of our child's death or birthday (or Thanksgiving or Christmas) - it is truly not as bad as we have anticipated.

The same holds true for attending a meeting of The Compassionate Friends for the first time. Many bereaved parents long to attend a meeting, but cannot find the courage to do so. We want to reassure you that, although there may be a few tears, there are also smiles and a warm feeling of caring. Our meetings are not morbid in any way. Most parents find that the meetings leave them with an "upbeat" feeling. Just being with parents who understand and care can lift a terrible weight from your shoulders. It can be one of the most important steps you can take on the road to recovery.

It is important to remember, as we go about the business of rebuilding our lives, that the worst is behind us. We have survived the death of our child. Nothing else can be as bad. This in itself can give us the courage to tackle anything. So many doubts and fears that we had experienced before our loss seem terribly insignificant now. This ultimate tragedy can either break us or strengthen us. Surprisingly enough, the majority of parents do become stronger and less afraid. Many have even stated that they have lost the fear of death itself that is so predominant in our culture.

As we go about rebuilding our lives we need to keep this thought in mind: we have endured the worst, nothing else can be as bad, we can cope with anything now.

*TCF Enid, OK*

## ***Is Winter Paradise in Disguise?***

Winter comes until we understand that death only takes the arms we long to hold, the voice we strain to hear, the face we see so clearly. Winter cannot take the love that melts the heart and warms the secret inside places. Even though winter comes, love endures long past the icy blasts of death.

Love paints the sky with sunshine and cradles the aching heart and fills the empty arms. We did love and so we shall again... in some other place, some other time. But only if we learn to slip and slide across the icy spots of our grief and practice falling and GETTING UP ... AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN. There is a purpose to winter.

So, bundle up, lay in a good supply of chocolate and tissues and let the memories skate across your mind. Curl up with the scrapbooks, put on the music, and let the tears flow. Claim it all, for we have earned it all. We could not understand light if we had not known dark. We would not sing sweet if we had not tasted bitter. We could not laugh if we had not cried.

We cannot hide... it is time to remember and experience again the depth of love given and received.

*Excerpts from Bereavement Magazine, Jan.-Feb. 1996  
Article by Darcie Sims*



***What we have once enjoyed,  
we can never lose.  
All that we love deeply  
becomes a part of us.***

*Anonymous*

## ***Just for Today...***

*Just for today* I'll do something I've been putting off for a long time. I'll finally write that letter, make that phone call, clean out that closet, or straighten out those dresser drawers.

*Just for today*, before I speak I will ask myself, "Is it true? Is it kind?" And if the answer to either of those questions is negative, I won't say it.

*Just for today* I will make a conscious effort to be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk softly, act courteously and not interrupt when someone else is talking. *Just for today* I'll try not to improve anybody except myself.

*Just for today* I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it, thereby saving myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

*Just for today* I will be unafraid. I will gather the courage to do what is right and take the responsibility for my own actions. I will expect nothing from the world, but I realize that as I give to the world, the world will give to me.

*20th Century Christian  
contributed by Dorothy Powers*



***Happiness shared is happiness doubled;  
Sorrow shared is sorrow halved.***

## **Suicide**

One of the best responses to a suicide that I have ever heard came through a sermon delivered by the pastor of a young man who shot himself. With great eloquence, his pastor was able to convey tremendous hope through these words: "Our friend died on his own battlefield. He was killed in action fighting a civil war. He fought against adversaries that were as real to him as his casket is real to us. They were powerful adversaries. They took toll of his energies and endurance. They exhausted the last vestiges of his courage, and only God knows how this child of His suffered in the silent skirmishes that took place in his soul."

*An excerpt from HELPING SURVIVORS SURVIVE  
by Victor M. Parachin  
Bereavement Magazine, January 1991*

## **Sometimes**

Sometimes,  
Memories are like rain showers  
Sprinkling down upon you  
Catching you unaware.  
And then they are gone,  
Leaving you warm and refreshed.

Sometimes,  
Memories are like thunderstorms  
Beating down upon you,  
Following you around.  
Then they disappear,  
Leaving you sad and confused.

Sometimes,  
Memories are like comforters  
surrounding you with warmth,  
Luxuriously abundant.  
And sometimes they stay,  
Wrapping you in contentment.

*Marcia Updyke  
Bereavement Magazine*

## **For My Son, Jeffrey**

In loving memory of Jeffrey Ehler  
8/27/63 -2/10/95

You were here and now you are gone,  
How quickly 31 years flies by,  
A fleeting moment when compared to eternity.  
The pain, emptiness, loneliness is overwhelming at times,  
I long to hear your voice and the ring of that special,  
"Hi Mom."  
I miss your wonderful boyish grin.  
I miss the way you rolled your eyes when laughing in jest  
at one of my blunders.  
I miss your hugs - strong, but too few.  
I miss your enthusiasm for life,  
I miss your comforting words,  
I miss your loyalty to family,  
I miss your tenacity about relationships,  
I miss our fights and making up,  
I miss your physical presence in my life.  
I will miss you always, but have you in my heart forever,  
My special boy and handsome man.

Love you with all my heart,  
Mom

*Corrine Ehler  
TCF South Lake Tahoe, CA*

## **But It Hurts Differently...**

There is no way to predict how you will feel. The reactions to grief are not like recipes with different ingredients and certain results. Each person mourns in a different way. You may cry hysterically or you may remain outwardly controlled, showing little emotion. You may lash out in anger against your family and friends, or you may express your gratitude for their concern and dedication. You may be calm one moment - in turmoil the next. Reactions are varied and contradictory. Grief is universal. At the same time it is extremely personal. HEAL IN YOUR WAY.

*Rabbi Earl Groliman*

## ***When the Aging Outlive Their Children***

We are horrified when a young child or young adult dies, but we react with less concern when a middle-aged "child" dies.

We forget that, for a parent, the age of the child has no relevance.

We focus our attention on the spouse or the children of the one who has died and ignore, or at least not recognize, the pain of the surviving mother or father.

However, the pain of their loss is as real and as intense as that of the parent who loses a very young child.

When aging people lose their children they face particular difficulties with their grief.

Many have lost spouses, siblings, or even other children (the loss of an infant or a stillborn child many years in the past should not be discounted).

In addition to the losses by death, many have lost their youth, health and/ or independence.

Grief accompanies these losses. When an adult child dies, the aging parent may feel overwhelmed.

Often, the attitude of the aging parent is an impediment to active grieving. He is of a generation that generally discourages open expression of emotions. Therefore, he has difficulty letting himself grieve in a healthy manner.

An aging bereaved parent also faces a lack of support and encouragement to grieve.

Family and friends mistakenly believe that it's not healthy for the older person to cry and talk about her lost child. They encourage the aging parent to suppress her grief.

*If you are an aging parent who has lost your child, the following are some suggestions for helping yourself:*

- Recognize that your physical and emotional reactions to your child's death are normal and that you are not losing your mind as you may fear. Reading books on grief will assure you that what you are thinking and feeling is to be expected.

- Forget everything you've learned about "being strong" and "keeping a stiff upper lip." Crying and expressing your pain will give you relief. Pushing your pain down won't.
- Ignore others when they tell you to concentrate ONLY on the good things in your life. This is impossible. Your loss is real and you do hurt. Face that reality.
- Don't let others keep you busy "so you won't think about it." This won't work and will only exhaust you.
- Allow yourself to cry and to talk about what you are thinking and feeling. Attend a support group if possible.
- Take especially good care of your health. The stress of your grief will make you more susceptible to illness and exacerbate any illness you may have already. Eat balanced meals. Get plenty of rest (even if you can't sleep). Exercise daily, even if it is only walking short distances.

*If you are a relative or friend of an aging bereaved parent the following are some helpful things you can do:*

- Read about the grieving process to learn that the bereaved parent is reacting in a normal way.
- Encourage the parent to talk about the child who has died. Listen non-judgmentally. Help him sort through what is real and not real in his anger and guilt.
- Remember that birthdays, anniversaries and other special days will be difficult. Expect and permit the parent to talk and reminisce about the child, especially on these days.
- Know that their grief may last well over a year. A two- to three-year duration is not abnormal. Understand that for the aging parent, grief might never be completely resolved.

*Margaret H. Gerner M.S.W., C.G.C.*



***Because***

Because you can't feel me,  
Doesn't mean I'm not there.  
Because you can't see me,  
Doesn't mean I'm not near.  
Because you can't hear me,  
Doesn't mean I don't speak.  
Because you can't see me,  
Doesn't mean I'm out of reach.  
Because I am dead,  
Doesn't mean I'm gone.

*Beth Oldani, bereaved sibling  
TCF Arlington Heights, IL*