



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## NORTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER

Carson City, NV

March 2012

### Chapter Leader's Message

March: The winds blow. The birds sing. The trees start to bud. Crocuses peek through the ground. For many years we were happy to see winter go and spring to come. This year we didn't see a big difference. That is kind of like the way things happen in our lives since our children died. Day to day we change from good days to bad days. If only we could discard the anger, regret, disappointment and sorrow. Better days do happen with time. Hold onto the good memories. Cherish their love forever.

Here are wishes for you to live with happy memories.  
Our children are loved and missed.

*Forever in our hearts,  
Delores*

***"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal,  
love leaves a memory no one can steal."***

*Author Unknown*

### Who We Are...

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.

We gather to listen, to share, and to support each other in the resolution of our grief. You need not walk alone, we are the Compassionate Friends.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

**Chapter Leader**  
Delores Sherman

**Treasurer/Mailing List/Memorial Page**  
Kathy Schultz      kathy@tfc Carsoncity.org

**Newsletter Editor**  
Georgette Riley      editor@tfc Carsoncity.org

**Regional Coordinator**  
Gene Caligari      (480) 703-2963

**Members**  
Betty Kalicki  
Jo Saulisberry  
Cathy Silva, Delegate  
Sonja Strom  
Reynese Peterson

*Hawthorne contact:*  
Petra Wilson  
*Fallon contact:*  
Judy Dunning



### SPECIAL DATES

**March 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**Carson City Meeting**  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
Carson Tahoe Cancer  
Resource Center  
1535 Medical Parkway  
Contact: Delores (775) 849-1979

**April 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Carson City Meeting**  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
Carson Tahoe Cancer  
Resource Center  
1535 Medical Parkway  
Contact: Delores (775) 849-1979

**May 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**Carson City Meeting**  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
Carson Tahoe Cancer  
Resource Center  
1535 Medical Parkway  
Contact: Delores (775) 849-1979

### Phone Friends

**Cathy** (775) 883-5388  
(youth, illness)  
**Delores** (775) 849-1979  
(teenage, car accident)  
**Kathy & Norris** (775) 883-3132  
(teenage, illness)  
**Sonja** (775) 783-8020  
(multiple death)  
**Judy** (775) 423-7286  
(car accident, daughter & grandson)

**The National Office**  
PO Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
(877) 969-0010  
www.compassionatefriends.org

## ***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 here.*

### ***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



## ***The Compassionate Friends Credo***

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love, to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends.

## **Can You Feel My Pain**

*In Memory of  
Seth Jordan Ridgely 7/18/95 and  
Seth Lee Little 11/3/11*

Can you see my tears  
Can you hear my screams  
I have already lost a child  
I have had my soul ripped from me  
Why have you forsaken me  
Why did you not intervene and save him  
Why did my daughter have to face this pain  
She lost her brother now her son too  
Did you not see me on my knees  
Or see my tears begging you to save him  
Did I not pray loud enough for you to hear  
Why have you forsaken me  
Was I not strong and kept my faith when my son died  
Did I not keep believing and always be your faithful  
servant  
Why was the price I paid not enough for you  
Why did you need to take my grandson too  
Why oh why have you forsaken me  
I feel abandoned and left alone in the dark and the rain  
To feel the cold and the wind blowing thru what is left of  
my soul  
To see the tears of my daughter as she buried her son  
too  
To know the pain, she too will have to carry on  
Why have you forsaken me...

*MeLinda Ridgely for son and grandson  
TCF Carson City, NV*



## **Love Gifts**

*Betty Kalicki in memory of her daughter  
**Kara***

*Bonnie Jahn in memory of her son  
**Eric Scott Jahn***

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

## **Thank You**

*The Northern Nevada - Carson City chapter of The  
Compassionate Friends is funded solely by contributions.  
There are no dues or membership fees. A LOVE GIFT is a  
donation to honor a child who has died, or sometimes as  
a memorial to a relative or a friend. Your gifts allow us to  
continue to reach out to other bereaved families through  
our books, programs, and newsletter. Thanks to each of you  
for your generous gifts and support. LOVE GIFTS are tax  
deductible and may be mailed to:*

The Compassionate Friends  
Kathy Schultz, Treasurer  
1111 Liberty Ct.  
Carson City, NV 89703

## ***On Not Saying It***

I never got around to saying it.  
There was always tomorrow,  
When the time would be more appropriate.  
Besides, you hated "embarrassment,"  
Or was the embarrassed one really me?  
Now I say it a lot,  
To the sky, to your photo, to a gravestone,  
Knowing facts say you cannot hear it,  
But believing inside me you can.  
When a child, a youth, then a young man,  
I remember how you watched my face,  
First as your god, then as your monitor,  
Finally, I hope, as a friend.  
But "I love you," as years went by,  
were words we kept bottled inside.  
Now that you've left, the bottle overflows,  
Until I, too, cross the Divide.  
I have to believe you knew,  
And forgave me for not saying it.

*Leonard Ruppert, TCF Stone Mountain, GA  
Reprinted from the March/April 2005 newsletter of the  
Idaho Falls, ID Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

***When someone you love  
becomes a memory,  
the memory becomes a treasure.***

*Author Unknown*

## ***What Do I Do With My Child's Things?***

This is a problem that faces all bereaved parents. We discuss it from time to time at our meetings.

Some of us keep the child's room just as it was before the death. We don't want anything touched or moved.

Some of us find solace in giving things away to close friends or relatives. Knowing that someone we love is wearing our child's clothes or playing with his or her toys brings us comfort.

Some of us find we can deal with only a few items at a time: clothes, one month; books, another; perhaps toys, a few months later.

Some of us find that, as time goes on and we would have gotten rid of the things anyway, it becomes easier. For instance, after awhile we realize that if the child were still alive, he/she would have outgrown the clothes. Then it's easier to give them away.

Or he would have graduated from college this year and therefore would no longer use the study desk or clock radio. We can give these things away in the normal time sequence.

The important thing is not to let others rush us into doing something before we are ready and not to let ourselves feel guilty about the amount of time it takes us to make decisions.

When the time is right and the decision is right for us, we'll know what to do.

*Nancy Mower, TCF Honolulu, HI  
Reprinted from the newsletter of the  
Ventura County, CA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

### ***Newsletter Items***

Please submit your stories, poems and pictures for our newsletter. Newsletter items are free of charge, but donations are welcome to assist with printing and mailing costs. E-mail your newsletter items to [editor@TCFcarsoncity.org](mailto:editor@TCFcarsoncity.org). You can also mail your items to: 1111 Liberty Ct, Carson City, NV 89703. Or bring to a meeting and give your item directly to Georgette.

All submissions must be received by the 20th of the month to be included in the next month's newsletter.

Photos sent via e-mail must be in a .jpg format.

If you have not been receiving the newsletter monthly whether it's by e-mail or postal mail, please let Kathy know so that we can update/change postal or e-mail information.

## ***Another Way We Change***

Loud music and wild dancing. At one point in my life, not that many years ago, those were things I enjoyed. But, things have changed a lot in the past few years. That happens when your child dies.

My daughter, Jessica, was 14 when she was involved in a car crash five years ago. When she died, my whole world changed. Not just my family structure, not just my friends, not just my work. Everything changed, including the music I listened to... or didn't listen to. In the first two years after Jessie died. I didn't listen to the radio or play CDs. Not once. Not at all. I'm not totally sure why. But I think music was something that I associated with being happy and I was anything but that. I would drive to work every day in silence. I had a lot running through my head at the time and music wasn't going to interrupt it. Actually, looking back on it, my time in the car was very therapeutic, sometimes totally silent, sometimes just the opposite. A lot of screaming and a lot of conversations with God happened as I hypnotically made my way down the highway with thousands of other commuters who didn't know the turmoil that was occurring in the vehicle next to them.

I remember the day I started listening to the radio again: September 11. I was on my way home on the afternoon of that horrific day, and I couldn't help but tune in to what was happening. I guess I realized that lots of other Moms and Dads and siblings were going to begin the painful journey of losing a loved one. After that, I would occasionally turn on the radio. At first it was just news and talk radio, but one day, I decided to buy a CD of classical music. Strange. I had never bought anything like that before. It had always been rock. Just another sign that life was different. So, on my way home that day, I listened to and enjoyed music... again. It was another first. And, it was okay. Actually, it was very nice. Relaxing. Soothing.

I discovered that listening to Brahms and Beethoven wasn't so bad after all. Actually, beautiful violin music can make a grown man cry without too much trouble. Somehow, this new music felt right for me because I felt a connection to Jessie and I thought she would approve. I wasn't the fun-loving guy I used to be and this music fit my mood.

Over the next year, I slowly began to listen to more music. It wasn't the stuff I had once enjoyed but, instead, music that I could relate to in my "life after Jessie" state. The words, of course, had to have meaning. I didn't care for singers screaming... after all, that was for me to do, not them.

The business world these days thrives on target markets and is full of specialty items for anything and everything. And grieving people are not immune; they are a market just like everything else. That's a good thing when an artist is a grieving parent too. A CD that captured my wife right away and that eventually held me was Cindy Bullen's *Somewhere Between Heaven and Earth*. The CD is about her 11-year old daughter who died of cancer in 1995. Like us, her daughter's name was Jessie. That was enough of a connection right there to listen to the CD. But the words and music that describe her Jessie and her journey are so heartfelt and insightful, you can't listen and not be touched. Even though I would listen to the CD only when my wife played it, I realized there was something special about it.

Before Jessie died, my favorite musical artist was Bruce Springsteen. I had been to a few of his concerts and bought most of his albums. But I hadn't heard any of his music in nearly three years when he released *The Rising*. Little did I know that his music would touch me more than ever. Pretty amazing since I had basically stopped listening to "his" type of music. *The Rising* was released in 2002 and many of the songs were based on what happened on September 11. About losing a loved one. About grief. About going on. There is an enormous amount of feeling that went into the lyrics. And the songs, for me, evoke a lot of emotion. Some are sad, some are full of energy, some are slow, all are heartfelt. Once again, the words were so important to me.

There are lots of wonderful songs on many CDs. Six years after Jessie died, I'm glad there are times that I can enjoy them now. I needed my time to be alone, to be in silence, but now I'm at a place where I can choose some music that will give me peace and, yes, pleasure. And, I think Jessie thinks that's okay.

*Don Murphy, TCF Frederick, MD*

*Reprinted from We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends, Spring 2006*

## Sarah Lynn Miner

July 13, 1977 - April 12, 1997

*"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."*

Henry David Thoreau

Sarah marched to her own drummer all of her life: like at ballet recital at age 6, right in step to the music, but facing the opposite direction with all the amused parents watching. She probably thought that she was right and everybody else was facing the wrong way. Or maybe she just felt like it. In Middle School she received an academic award at the graduation, after spending most of the semester in the hospital with Lupus. Often the music was all too painful, but march on she did.

Sometimes the music was fun for her but painful to her parents, like when she became obsessed with playing the feared Dr. Frankenfurter in the Rocky Horror Picture Show. Many midnights found Sarah and her little band of ne'er-do-wells acting out the scenes from the movie, in the front of the theater, in full regalia, acting and saying the dialog right along with the actors on the screen. She loved the culture, but it was certainly different by "normal" standards. You should have seen the costumes she tried to wear, only to be brought back to reality by her watchful and loving mom. She still got away dressing radically.

One year she won first place and prize money for her group's rendition of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" at the High School Air Band Concert. Another year at the same Air Band Concert, she gave, with her good friend Anthony, a very serious "Music of the Night" performance from *The Phantom of the Opera*, which won no awards

but brought everyone up a few cultural notches from the norm of rock and roll productions that evening. She was at home with different music, quite literally.

Sarah loved *Talk Soup*, with Greg Kinnear, which few had ever heard of. She loved *La Femme Nikita*, *Highlander*, and of course Patsy and Edwina were her all-time favorites from *Ab Fab* (Absolutely Fabulous!) British Comedy. She hated all TV sports. Different music.

She tried so hard to make it for two semesters at UC Davis while she was so sick with Lupus and headaches and pain medication. But she loved having her own dorm room and being part of the college scene and meeting friends, even some with snakes. That's why we now have a pet corn snake named Esa. Who would have thought we would ever have a pet snake? Different music.

She hated to hike, but loved to climb on dangerous and high rocks. She hated ski racing, but loved to ski fast, leaving her dad in the dust (powder). She hated fish but loved fishing. She loved eating meat, *very rare* meat, and lots of it. How did this happen in a family where her parents were once vegetarians and owned a natural food store for 13 years? Different music.

Then one day the music ended. She decided to dance in a different direction once again. Keep dancing, Sarah. Step to the music which you hear, however measured or far away.

Love always,

Your Mom and Dad

Karen & Jeff Miner, TCF South Lake Tahoe

Reprinted from the March/April 2000 newsletter of the South Lake Tahoe, CA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

### 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 generally held the last Tuesday of every month, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., at the Carson Tahoe Cancer Resource Center, 1535 Medical Parkway, Carson City, NV.



## **Wondering**

What can I do about the empty swing  
Or the heartache I feel when others sing  
The song she loved above all the rest  
Or eat the custard pie she liked best  
Or smell the roses she planted one spring?

What can I do with the years to come  
Which now must belong only to some  
But not to her who I loved so much  
Whose beauty I can no longer touch,  
Whose goals and dreams are left undone?

How can I force all the world to see  
Life's fleetness and its fragility?  
That is the unique beauty of falling flake  
Or the red shadows cast by day's break  
Happen but once in reality?

I can write songs for others to sing  
About the miracles of each spring  
The soft surprise of a sudden rain,  
Or rabbits playing along a lane,  
But what do I do with that empty swing?

*Marcia F. Alig, TCF Mercer, GA area  
Reprinted from the March 1992 newsletter of the  
Atlanta, GA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

## **No Person is Ever Truly Alone**

No person is ever truly alone.  
Those who live no more,  
Whom we loved,  
Echo still within our thoughts,  
Our words, our hearts.  
And what they did  
And who they were  
Becomes a part of all that we are,  
Forever.

*Richard Fife  
Reprinted from the March/April 2006 newsletter of the  
Greater Providence, RI Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

## **Flight Into Fantasy**

Funny that  
Even after all this time  
I never give up  
Looking for you  
In crowds  
Of little girls;  
Way back...  
In the recesses of my mind...  
Hoping...  
I never realized  
That so many little girls  
Look like you.  
Strange  
Because I always thought  
Your features  
Were one of a kind.  
Now they continually  
Explode in front of my eyes  
And mesmerize me  
Into hope  
That it is you.  
But none of them  
Have been so perfect.

*Susan Borrowman, TCF Kingston, ON  
Reprinted from the March 1998 newsletter of the  
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

### **Special Notices**

The Carson City Park Foundation is accepting names for the Memorial Wall in Mills Park. The suggested donation is \$100. For more information, please contact Jo Saulisberry at (775) 246-5570.

If you move for the winter (or summer) months, please let us know your current address. This allows you to continue to receive the monthly newsletter. Email changes to [kathy@tcfcarsoncity.org](mailto:kathy@tcfcarsoncity.org).

## **When Someone Takes His Own Life**

In many ways, this seems the most tragic form of death. Certainly it can entail more shock and grief for those who are left behind than any other. And often the stigma of suicide is what rests most heavily on those left behind...

And my heart goes out to those who are left behind, because I know that they suffer terribly. Children in particular are left under a cloud of different-ness all the more terrifying because it can never be fully explained or lifted. The immediate family of the victim is left wide open to tidal waves of guilt: "What did I fail to do that I should have done? What did I do that was wrong?" To such grieving persons I can only say, "Lift up your heads and your hearts. Surely you did your best. And surely the loved one who is gone did his best, for as long as he could. Remember, now, that his battles and torments are over. Do not judge him, and do not presume to fathom the mind of God where this one of His children is concerned."

A few years ago, when a young man died by his own hand, a service for him was conducted by his pastor, the Rev. Weston Stevens. What he said that day expresses far more eloquently than I can, the message that I'm trying to convey. Here are some of his 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 his strength. At last these adversaries overwhelmed him. And it appeared that he had lost the war. But did he? I see a host of victories that he has won!

"For one thing, he has won our admiration, because even if he lost the war, we give him credit for his bravery on the battlefield. And we give him credit for the courage and pride and hope that he used as his weapons as long as he could. We shall remember not his death, but his daily victories gained through his kindnesses and thoughtfulness, through his love for family and friends, for animals and books and music, for all things beautiful, lovely and honorable. We shall remember not his last day of defeat, but we shall remember the many days that he was victorious over overwhelming odds. We

## **Impossible Wish**

I cannot always face the truth  
of death's finality  
It's easier to just pretend  
he'll soon come home to me,  
And yet, my spirit knows the son  
I loved so much has died;  
Reality, though harsh and cruel,  
must never be denied.

I want him back! I want my son!  
I want to see his face!  
How will my broken heart survive  
with this hollow, empty space?  
I must allow the tears to fall,  
allow my heart to grieve;  
To close my mind to fact is but  
to cripple and deceive.

With agony and sorrow,  
this world of mine is rife;  
My soul is struggling, battling  
the worst nightmare of my life.  
In bitterness, I'm much aware  
of all that I now lack;  
In utter pain, I can but cry  
"Oh, God, I want him back!"

*Peggy Koeiscia, TCF Albuquerque, NM*  
*Reprinted from the March 2000 newsletter of the South*  
*Bay/Los Angeles, CA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*



shall remember not the years we thought he had left, but the intensity with which he lived the years that he had. Only God knows what this child of His suffered in the silent skirmishes that took place in his soul. But our consolation is that God does know, and understands."

*Norman Vincent Peale*  
*Reprinted from the March/April 2001 newsletter of the*  
*South Lake Tahoe, CA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*



## Memories

When you need to... Reach deep inside and take out one of your precious memories. Wipe away the cobwebs, lay it out in front of you, and let the sunshine and the sounds engulf you. Revel in the experience of it... Re-live each precious moment, be overwhelmed by them and taste the wonderful, sweet tears that are their gift. When your needs have been almost satisfied, pause for one more second, then gently fold it back up, give it a big hug and a tender kiss and return the treasure to where you found it... Then to make the experience complete, find someone special and share the feelings with them... for surely something as wonderful as this is meant to be shared. Don't be afraid of using them - that's what memories are for. You will never lose them... for as certain as the sun will rise tomorrow, Love, once attained, is never lost.

*Steve Channing*

*Reprinted from the March 2000 newsletter of the Inland Empire, CA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

## What Did I See?

I looked out my window, and what did I see?  
The whole wide world waiting with open arms for me.  
I can sit here and look at the world passing me by,  
As I watch the snow falling softly from the sky.  
Or I can go out into the world of the living.  
I can begin by not taking but by giving.  
There is so much I have to offer the rest of the world.  
If only from my tight little ball I unfurled.  
I am full of life and laughter and giving.  
It is time I stopped grieving and started living.  
So look out world, here I come.  
One of life's difficult battles I have finally won.

*Carole L. Jackson, 1987*

*Reprinted from the March 1994 newsletter of the Southern Nevada Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

## When Will I Be Able to Accept It?

People keep telling me to "accept it." What does this really mean? And will I be able to do it?

People have different, personal interpretations of the word acceptance.

If acceptance means "to receive gratefully," then it's doubtful that we will ever accept the death of our children.

But if acceptance means to believe that our child is gone from us in this life and nothing that we do can alter that fact; if acceptance means that we can believe this yet still reach out to receive our own future gratefully, then, yes, it is possible to accept our child's death.

Acceptance is not one big spoonful of bitter medicine for which we shut our eyes, hold our nose, and swallow in one bitter gulp.

Acceptance is more like something we sip gradually over the years. Acceptance moves in stages.

The first step in acceptance is usually when we stop denial and acknowledge that, in this life, our child is lost to us.

We may have to look at the hopes and plans we had cherished for this child before we can lay them aside; it certainly facilitates our progress if we believe that we do not need to say "goodbye," but "until we meet again." Though we will never forget our child, when we have passed through denial, anger, and depression – the whole gamut of emotions we call grief – we will eventually be able to laugh again, love again, and love again.

This is acceptance.

*TCF Birmingham, AL*

*Reprinted from the March 1993 newsletter of the Tulsa, OK Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*



## **Grief: Our Act of Love**

"I had a child who died." How simple these words are, yet how painful they are to say. The death of a child is the harshest blow life has to offer; it destroys our trust in the world at the most basic level. Grief is our total response to the death of a child; our body, mind, emotions and spirit all react to the loss. While many of us wish to stop the intense grief work we are doing, we find it impossible for many reasons.

First, grief is an act of love, not a lack of strength or faith. The more we loved our child, the greater will be our grief. The more integrated our lives were with the life of our child, the more we will miss his or her very presence. The intensity of our grief is often representative of the intensity of our love.

Second, grief is a necessary process that we must go through in order to maintain our wholeness and sanity. If we do not grieve, we will not heal. One of the earliest and hardest lessons we bereaved parents learn is that men and women grieve differently. Women, in general grieve more openly than do men, and women on the whole, are more comfortable verbally expressing their feelings of loss. While segments of our culture dictate that it is more "manly" not to cry, we know this is not true. In fact, it has recently been found that tears of sadness contain an enzyme which inhibits the concentration of gastric acids, therefore, crying during times of stress will actually decrease the incidence of gastric ulcers many of us develop as a result of our loss.

Grief work also helps us to complete unfinished business with our child and close the past relationship that we had. We will never "get over" the loss of our child, nor would we ever really want to. We are who we are partly because of our relationship to that child. Our lives will always be influenced by our son or daughter, but most of us will eventually learn to live a meaningful life, despite our tragedy. Our child will always be with us in spirit and in love and we often feel a need to hold on to tangible items, such as toys or clothes, to maintain that feeling of closeness. But, intense grief work allows us to let go of the relationship we had and create a new relationship with our child. Our remembrances, love and feelings of oneness with our child can never be destroyed. I cannot see or touch my Philip, but I vividly remember him. I have completed earthly mothering, but I still have an intense mother-child relationship with my son.

## **Like a Rock**

LOVE has etched  
the contours of her face  
                  into my fingertips;  
the sparkle of her brown eyes,  
her shining smile  
deep into my heart.

LOVE has etched  
the feel of her loving arms  
                  around my body;  
the weight of her head  
                  upon my chest;  
the echo of her giggling laughter  
                  into the corners of my mind.

As I stand before you  
sculpted by life  
look closely,  
for there is Amber too  
                  etched deep into my memory and soul.

*Judy Vasas, TCF Winnipeg, MB  
Reprinted from the March/April 1995 newsletter of the  
Winnipeg, MB Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*



Grief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will ever do. While we all wish for the pain to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved intensely. It is unrealistic to expect the grief to ever totally go away, because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed.

*Elaine Grier, Philip's Mom, TCF Atlanta, GA  
Reprinted from the newsletter of the Cheyenne, WY  
Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

## ***Losing an Infant***

A baby's death is one of the most painful and traumatic experiences a parent will confront in a lifetime. Although nothing can take away the pain you feel right now, it may be helpful to know what others have experienced or found comforting as they struggled to deal with the intense grief that followed the death of their child.

It is important to give yourself permission to grieve. Grieving the death of a baby may last for longer than you and others expect. Frequently those around you may be uncomfortable with the intense emotions you experience. Be patient with yourself and do not expect too much too soon.

No matter what age, your child was and is a part of you, and when your baby died, so did many of your hopes and dreams for the future. Choosing a name as well as having a funeral or memorial service can help affirm that you are a parent and have the right to grieve as long and as intensely as necessary. When a baby dies, normal symptoms of grief are varied. Parental reactions and intensity of feelings may differ. Typical reactions include the following:

- Crying, loneliness, a feeling of isolation
- A need to talk about the death and the details of what happened
- Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, depression
- Anger, guilt, blame
- Loss of appetite, overeating, sleeplessness, irritability
- Inability to concentrate, comprehend or remember
- Loss of goals and aims in life, a sense of desolation about the future.
- Aching arms phantom crying, frequent sighing

Grief can last for longer than you or others may expect and has many ups and downs. The first year can be especially difficult when parents ask themselves painful

## ***Bereaved Parents***

Different ages  
Different stages  
Different issues

Same pain  
Daily strain  
Occasional tissues

Our children have died  
Often is all we know  
A fact we fear to hide

Despite our ever-present woe  
We live with pride  
Though broken-hearted  
To love, remember, and grow

*Victor Montemurro  
TCF Medford, NY*

questions or torment themselves with the following statements:

- Why did this happen to my baby, my child?
- Why did this happen to our family?
- Why didn't I know something was wrong?
- Why didn't I go to the doctor sooner?
- It's all my fault.
- If only...

There may be no adequate or satisfying answers to these questions or statements. Anger and guilt are common reactions and usually accompany grief. Try to share and express these feelings as a way of releasing them, eventually forgiving yourself and others. Also, many parents find it helpful to take time to acquire information that deals specifically with this loss and to become familiar with the problems associated with infant death.

*TCF St. Louis, MO/KS  
Reprinted from the March/April 2005 newsletter of the  
Idaho Falls, ID Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

The Compassionate Friends of Northern Nevada

## ***To all our "Old" Members who have not attended a meeting in quite a while...***

Remember your first Compassionate Friends meeting? You were hurt, confused, ready to scream, and feeling that you were all alone and crazy. Remember? Then your new Compassionate Friends helped you all during that meeting and you learned that you were not alone. You found that many, many had gone down your road before you. You weren't crazy, your feelings were all right for you, and remember the relief you felt from the comfort you received from all of those other members who had been attending meetings for a long time? Remember? Now you've grown in mind and spirit and no longer need to attend a meeting for comfort and aid. You're stronger. The grief process has worked in you, and the abject misery has receded for you, and we, your Compassionate Friends, celebrate this with you!

But what about newcomers? Where is the comfort they could gain from hearing and seeing you? What help are you passing on the newly grieved? As you once needed the aid and assistance from the "old timers," today's newcomers need your aid and assistance, too. Come back to our meetings and lend your support and comfort to the traveler just starting their painful journey. It's true, it does hurt sometimes to do this, but it also yields tremendous rewards! Come back and share - we need you!

*TCF Phoenix, AZ*

*Reprinted from the March 1998 newsletter of the  
Kansas City, MO/KS Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

### ***NEW for 2012:***

This newsletter is now available online.  
Visit our website [www.tfcarsongcity.org](http://www.tfcarsongcity.org)  
and click on "Newsletters."  
You can download PDFs of previous newsletters or  
subscribe to receive monthly newsletters via email.