



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER

Carson City, NV

May/June 2013

Chapter Leader's Message

The general population does not understand the feelings and emotions that run deeply in our minds and souls. Our Compassionate Friends understand those emotions and the need to talk about our children and siblings. There is a sense of knowing you are not alone and isolated in your grief. The Compassionate Friends families share a common bond and understand what grief is.

*Forever in our hearts,
Delores*

PS: Please join us for breakfast on Saturday, May 18th, at 9 a.m. inside Bodine's in Carson City. This is an informal gathering, and an opportunity to get together in a more relaxed setting. I hope to see you there!

Newsletter Editor's Message

As I collect the essays and poems for the month's newsletter, I am at once saddened and inspired. Saddened, because there is real pain behind every word. Inspired, because so many have had the courage to give that pain a voice. Whether to bring comfort (to the reader or the writer), to give encouragement, to vent anger and frustration, or to share the joy of having a very special person in their life, if only for too short a time - no matter. Their voices have been heard, and I have tried to select pieces that meet the impossible task of being all things to everyone. I hope something in this newsletter speaks to you, and helps you on your journey of healing.

I have been grateful for the opportunity to edit the newsletter for over two years, but after a year of great upheaval and reflection, I have decided that I need to take a step back from my duties as editor. Please consider taking over this inspiring and comforting service to our members. Please contact Delores at (775) 883-4415, or myself at editor@tfc Carson City, NV if you are interested.

~Georgette

SPECIAL DATES

May 18th

Member Breakfast

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.
Bodine's Casino
5650 South Carson St.
(near Costco)
Carson City, NV 89701

May 28th

Carson City Meeting

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Carson Tahoe Cancer
Resource Center
1535 Medical Parkway
Carson City, NV

June 25th

Carson City Meeting and Annual Balloon Launch

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Carson Tahoe Cancer
Resource Center
1535 Medical Parkway
Carson City, NV

July 30th

Carson City Meeting

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Carson Tahoe Cancer
Resource Center
1535 Medical Parkway
Carson City, NV

STEERING COMMITTEE

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Our Children Loved, Missed & Remembered

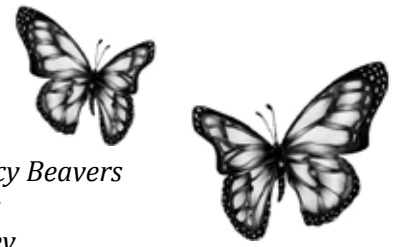
Our dear children, though gone from our sight, are forever loved and will always be remembered. We remember, with compassion, the parents and families of these precious children on the birthdays and anniversary days listed here.

May Birthdays

Michael Allen	Parents: Knowles & Helen Allen
Joshua Michael Calland.....	Parents: Larry & Cindy Marchant
Danielle Saulisberry Carpenter	Parents: Dan & Neva Saulisberry; Grandparents: Chuck & Jo Saulisberry
Eric Daphne	Mother: Kres Daphne
Larry A. Epley.....	Parents: Betty & Jim Epley
Kelsey Foley.....	Parents: Richard & Jody Foley
Andrew Gene Gialy.....	Mother: Mary Knapp
Travis Gleason	Mother: Debra Stewart
Samantha Harris	Parents: Carl & Kelly Harris
Tim Lane	Father: Don Lane
Brad E. Lauderbaugh	Mother: Myra Lauderbaugh
Leah Matlack	Parents: David & Barbara Neddenriep
Christiana Eve Medina	Father: Dave Medina; Mother: Maureen Medina; Sister: Natalie Leist, Aunt: Jolene Tomko
James Reilly.....	Parents: Shane & Pam Reilly
Michael Riley	Mother: Kim Young
Tracy Ralph Saulisberry.....	Parents: Chuck & Jo Saulisberry
April Schultz.....	Parents: Norris & Kathy Schultz
Vickie Lynn Silva	Mother: Reynese Peterson
Heather Youngblood	Parents: Donna & Jim Schumacher

May Anniversaries

Rick Beaty.....	Sister: Cathy Silva; Brother: Joe & Angie Beaty
Amber Bourge	Mother: Jeanne Hernandez; Father: Kevin Bourge; Grandmother: Donna Bachstein
Robert Bugajski.....	Parents: Andrzej & Teresa Bugajski
Shara N. Capron	Grandparents: Petra & Dave Wilson
Danielle Saulisberry Carpenter	Parents: Dan & Neva Saulisberry; Grandparents: Chuck & Jo Saulisberry
David Manual Fulghum "Festus".....	Mother: Vivian Casey; Sister: O'Donna Fulghum
David Lawrence Gordon.....	Mother: Arline J. Gordon
Jesse Hunton Gould.....	Parents: Michael & Susan Gould
Samantha Harris	Parents: Carl & Kelly Harris
Austin Hawk	Mother: Jackie Hawk
Eric Scott Jahn.....	Mother: Bonnie Jahn
Elise Marie Lowe.....	Mother: Stephanie Snyder
Christopher Dale Northam	Parents: Teresa & Michael NORTHAM
Ralph Thomas (Tommy) Ricketts	Mother: Delores Sherman
Matthew Ryan Silva.....	Grandmother: Reynese Peterson
Vickie Lynn Silva	Mother: Reynese Peterson
Randy Tancrell.....	Mother: Karin Tancrell
Adam Wetzal.....	Aunt: Carla Wetzal
Richard Wilson	Parents: Joe & Mary Wilson
Jeremy Michael Bruce Woolman	Mother: Andra Gail Woolman; Grandmother: Maxine Woolman; Aunt: Darlene Hatfield; Aunt: Barbara Wood



June Birthdays

- Stephanie Lou Beavers* Parents: John & Nancy Beavers
- Andrew Beldon Clark* Mother: JoAnn Herdt
- Thomas Hartley IV* Sister: Georgette Riley
- Brian Higgins* Mother: Jeane Higgins
- Mark Holder Jr.* Father: Mark Holder Sr.
- Anna Lytle* Mother: Irma Jay
- Lana (Lanie) McAlister* Mother: Leona Wood
- Brittany Nicole Rubke* Mother: Beth Rubke
- Richard Wilson* Parents: Joe & Mary Wilson
- Jeremy Michael Bruce Woolman* Mother: Andra Gail Woolman;
Grandmother: Maxine Woolman;
Aunt: Darlene Hatfield; Aunt: Barbara Wood

June Anniversaries

- Raymond "Tista" Baptista* Parents: Glady & Pete Goicoechea
- Travis Gleason* Mother: Debra Stewart
- Thomas Hartley IV* Sister: Georgette Riley
- Paula L. Holmes* Mother: Janae Holmes
- Ahmen LeDoux* Mother: Judith LeDoux
- Eric Steven Marchant* Parents: Larry & Cindy Marchant
- Ryan "T.J." Marich* Parents: Richard & Jill Marich
- Jordan Marshall* Parents: Jean & Phil Marshall
- Kurt Meunch* Parents: Patrick & Patti Williams
- Hugh Bryan Pearce* Parents: Carl & Arlene Pearce
- Aren Pederson* Mother: Anita Pederson
- Summy Satchyar* Mother: Georgina Satchyar
- Evan Vorreyer* Grandparents: Harold & Barbara Zaroff

Love Gifts

*Betty Kalicki for daughter
Kara Lee Kalicki*

*Stephanie Snyder for daughter
Elise Marie Lowe*

*Harold and Barbara Zaroff for grandson
Evan Vorreyer*

***"... 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.

For All Parents

"I'll lend you a little time, a child of mine," He said,
"For you to love while he lives, and mourn when he is dead.
It may be six or seven years, or twenty-two or three,

But will you, 'til I call him back, take care of him for me?
He'll bring his charms to gladden you, and shall his stay be
brief,
You'll have his lovely memories as solace for your grief.
I cannot promise he will stay, since all from Earth return,
But there are lessons taught down there I want this child
to learn.

I've looked the wide world over in my search for
teachers true
And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes, I have
selected you.
Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labor vain,
Nor hate me when I come to call, to take him back again?"

I fancied that I heard them say, "Dear Lord, Thy will be done.
For all the joy Thy child shall bring, the risk of grief we'll run,
We'll shelter him with tenderness, we'll love him while
we may;
And for the happiness we've known, will ever grateful stay.
But shall the angels call for him much sooner than
we planned,
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes, and try to
understand."

Edgar Guest

Submitted by Karen Wendling



Courage

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every
experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.
You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror. I
can take the next thing that comes along."... You must do the
thing you think you cannot do.

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, You Learn by Living
Reprinted from the June 1999 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Heart in Hand

The newly bereaved parents come to our meetings. Such
sadness on their faces, and yet that twinkle of hope in their
eyes. The hope that we have some answers. They come
with heart in hand. Can you mend? Can you make this hurt
go away?

Three years ago, I was one of those parents and yet after
three years, I still have no answers and no magical words.
Why do I still come? Because the people in this room all
know of the pain and grief of their child dying. I can talk
about my child here and not get strange glances. I can cry
and not be made to feel I'm crazy. The sharing and caring
I receive from the people in this room has made my grief a
little easier to deal with.

One day, I woke up and found I didn't carry my heart in hand
anymore. It's still battered and bruised, but ever so slowly,
the healing has begun.

Janey Bryant, Katie's Mom, South Central, KY

Reprinted from the June 2010 Newsletter of the
Tri-County (Potosi, MO) Chapter of the Compassionate Friends

For My Son, Jeffrey

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 bear 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

Reprinted from the March/April 2002 newsletter of the
South Lake Tahoe, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Mother's Day and Father's Day

This time of year is a bittersweet time for bereaved parents. Many are grateful for their surviving children and, at the same time, mourn for and wonder what it would be like if their deceased child had lived. It is difficult to be joyful when part of us is saddened due to the death of a child. This is especially difficult for bereaved parents whose only child or all children have died. Am I really a mother or father now? It is especially appreciated by these parents to be remembered at this time of year by friends and family members.

Grandparents hurt for themselves and also for their bereaved children. Many wonder what role to play when this time of year rolls around once again. Bereaved parents wonder how to handle the celebrations. Do I attend these functions to honor my parents, while I'm mourning my child? Do I make a spectacle of myself if I become unraveled during these ceremonies? Should I attend the gatherings, or simply avoid them to save my sanity? I do not wish to hurt my parents' feelings, and how long will they be alive to honor them?

There are no easy answers to these problems. Each individual must decide what he/she can handle, and that decision will have to be made on a yearly basis. What is helpful for one might be detrimental for another. Time may help to ease the pain and alter the decisions that are made. An honest discussion about the situation with those involved will help to ease hurt feelings. Try to plan other times with grandparents, and let them know you love them even though you may not be able to celebrate these special days. Wherever you are in your grief, may you know that many of us are journeying with you along this difficult path.

Kay Bevington, Van Wert, OH

Reprinted from the May-June 2006 newsletter of the Tuscaloosa, AL chapter of The Compassionate Friends

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 the support each other in the resolution of our grief. You need not walk alone, we are the Compassionate Friends.

When Grief Is New: Reminders

- Try not to imagine the future; take one day at a time.
- Allow yourself time to cry, alone and with loved ones.
- Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
- Try to be realistic about your expectations of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. If each of us is unique and different, how can there be perfect understanding?
- When a good day comes, relish it. Don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last.
- Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles. Drink lots of water, take stress-type vitamins, rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body to heal as well as your mind.
- Share your feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with you. You will find that as you begin caring about the pain of others, you will start to come out of your shell – a very healthy sign.

Mary Ehmann, TCF Valley Forge, PA

Reprinted from the May 2001 newsletter of the South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Footprints in the Sand

There was a day of sunshine
When you followed after me.
Bare feet in cool sand.
Small prints skipping
Through swirls of foam
Upon the shore.

Even as we danced and laughed,
The waves crashed against the rocks.
Yet when I looked behind us,
Only smooth sand remained.
The sea had erased our marks.

People have ceased
To speak of you
And grow uncomfortable
When I do.
But I refuse to let them,
Like the sea,
Erase your memory.

Karen Nelson, TCF Sioux Falls, SD

Reprinted from the June 1999 newsletter of the South Bay/Los Angeles chapter of The Compassionate Friends

For Kim

You are not gone...
For in each sunrise
Soft hues, pouring gently over the dormant city,
When the first breath of wind caresses...
I feel your arms around me.

In each playground
Sun-drenched, full of purple clover,
In the whispers of the butterflies kissing the
morning dew...
Once again, I hear your voice.

And in each schoolyard
Recess, small bodies in perpetual motion,
In the midst of the giggles of the children...
I enjoy your tickling laughter.

In each setting sun
Diamonds, dancing over a shimmering lake,
As the colors of the day meld into night...
I am blessed with a glimmer of your smile.

And in each nighttide,
Moonlight, washing over the sleeping meadow,
Out of your window, in the twinkling of the starlight...
I catch a glimpse of your eyes.

You are with me still!

*Steven L. Channing, TCF Winnipeg, MB
In memory of Kimberly Susanne Channing,*

Reflections From The Heart

Reprinted from the June/July/August 1996

newsletter of the Winnipeg, MB chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Please Listen

If tears could talk, what would they say?
They'd whisper, "I'm sorry."
They'd cry out, "I'm hurt."
Tears do talk, but they say too much.
So they are hidden and wiped away.
They could have told so much, like a grandfather telling a
story,
Or a mother singing a lullaby,
And even a friend giving a hug.
They are like a novel, a thousand emotions for thousands of
words.
I wish someone could read my tears.

*Kris, a friend of Morine George & Shirley Powell, TCF
Murfreesboro, TN*

Reprinted from the April 2001 newsletter of the

South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Death During or Following Conflict

A little-discussed problem for many bereaved parents is the state of their relationship with their child in the days or hours preceding the child's death. Most frequently the issue revolves around argument, anger, or harsh words between parents and child as the last contact before death.

Is it no small wonder that this should weigh heavily. None of us would willingly choose such an unpleasant, permanent parting. Yet, it is not entirely uncommon.

When children die in the midst of turmoil like this, it is only reasonable to expect a deepening of torment and guilt. For all of us, it is wise to accept that the love between parent and child before, during, and after teenage years keeps both vulnerable to disagreement or conflict.

If you are one of those parents who, like me, confronted the end of your child's life before conflict was resolved, I urge you to examine your relationship with your son or daughter in all its expressions during all the time you had together. I know you will feel again and see the love again. Know that your child saw and felt the love, too.

Remember, whatever your final words, you parted in love. In that same love, you remain. And many of us firmly believe that it is in that love, ultimately, that you will meet again.

Don Hackett, TCF Kingston, MA

Reprinted from the June 2001 newsletter of the

South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Newsletter Items

Newsletters are published bimonthly. 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.

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 whether it's by e-mail or postal mail, please let Kathy know so that we can update/change postal or e-mail information.

This newsletter is now available online. Visit our website www.tcfcarsoncity.org and click on "Newsletters." You can download PDFs of previous newsletters or subscribe to receive monthly newsletters via email.

Pictures

I set them out. I put them away... I get them out and start to go through them, filled with wonder that the daughter pictured there, is no longer going to call, or walk in the door, or send a card filled with love and humor. Cards that brightened my day -- made me laugh and always prompted me to call her and give her a big hug when she walked in the door.

Pictures. I get them out. I run my hand over her face, lingering on her lips, remembering "kissy face, mom." and, suddenly, overcome with grief, pull that picture to me and I kiss her and tell her how much I love her and how very much I miss her... and then I look again and see her eyes -- eyes that sparkled and twinkled with mischief, though at times, filled with deep reflection. She was a sensitive, intuitive young woman, who possessed wisdom and insight much beyond her years. She "left us" when she was only 24.

Pictures. At times I hate them. They show me what I don't have. They bring back memories of a time when Jody was healthy and happy. A time when life with her was a joy. I am not yet to a place in my grief-healing where I can remember those times very well. I'm still filled with memories of her illness, pain and death; and I'm still at the place that I want all of those horrible memories to be a bad dream, a dream that I will wake from, hearing Jody's voice calling me to come outside so that we can take some... pictures.

*Patty Fallon, TCF Central Oregon
Reprinted from the June/July 1995 newsletter
of the Kansas City, MO/KS chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Anniversary of Death

It's true that he's always in the back of my mind
But he's not always on my mind.
When I think of him now, I remember him warmly.
I rarely cry anymore out of hurt or anger.
But there are times when something can throw me right
back to that very day.
And the depth of my feelings of loss and pain once again
equal the depth of my love for him.
And I cry. And I hurt. But it reminds me all the more that he
will always be part of my life, and that he's special enough to
care about.
Time has healed me
But time has not made me forget.

*Janis Heil
Reprinted from the June 2000 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Some Thoughts on Helping Others Cope With Grief

- Don't push.
- Be patient. Be humble.
- Be honest.
- Be gentle.
- Confront rarely.
- Respect their defenses.
- Pay attention to your own feelings.
- Accept your limitations.
- Rely first on your feelings, second on your knowledge.
- When in doubt, consult.
- Remember that Grief is unique. Grief is private. Grief is individual. There is no cure for grief.
- Be practical. Be yourself.

*Homicide Survivors Newsletter, March 1998
Reprinted from the April 2001 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Balloon Launch

I took some words from my heart today
I let the ink fill out the letters on my card –
I love you, it read,
and simply added, I miss you.

I had pondered how to fill that blank space
with words of you.
I wondered whether to speak of laughter or of tears
to speak of hopes or of dreams and came to this –
I love you
I miss you

Through all the emotional gamut that death can bring –
these two thoughts remain most constant –
Through anger, pain, guilt, and that questioning ache –
they will remain etched forever on my heart
a human memorial.

I love you
I miss you

And now I send them skyward attached to my balloon
that seems to effortlessly lift to meet the clouds and I think
of you.

I love you
I miss you.

*Karen Nelson, TCF Box Elder County, UT
Reprinted from the June 2000 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Father's Day

Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem-solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong - must not cry.

But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem-solving and protecting has been able to stop our child's death. And, inside, we must ask ourselves about our failure -and we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mother's. But for the bereaved father, it is a poignant reminder of bitter-sweetness; sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost, child and bitter for the death and pain and recognition of our inability to have stopped what happened.

Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Oftentimes, they are unable to do so (a remnant of childhood learning's about the strength and stoicism of "big boys"). A father may even be uncomfortable opening up to his wife - and the wife who pushes her husband to talk may be pushing him too hard!

Father's Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, "I'm sorry we haven't talked. Let's do it now." But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug (he needs one, he's hurting!). Help with the chores and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. He has lost some of this support with the death of a child. And, like Mother's Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to one Sunday in June - it can be any day and every day.

Fathers often show their hurts differently, often internally,
BUT THEY DO HURT!!!

*Grant Hunt, TCF White River Junction, VT
Reprinted from the May/June 1998 newsletter of the
Ventura County, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

I am fooling only myself when I say my daughter exists now only in the photograph on my bulletin board or in the outline of my hand or in the armful of memories I still hold tight. She lives on beneath everything I do. Her presence influenced who I was, and her absence influences who I am. Our lives are shaped as much by those who leave us as they are by those who stay. Loss is our legacy. Insight is our gift. Memory is our guide.

*Hope Edelman
Reprinted from the June 2000 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

The Gift

I have a gift.
I did not want this gift; it meant suffering and pain.
The pain came because of love,
A love which had manifested itself in my child.
The child brought her love to me and asked for my love.
Sometimes I did not understand this,
Sometimes I did not appreciate it.
Sometimes I was too busy to listen quietly to this love.
But the love persisted; it was always there.

One day my child died.
The love remained.
This time the love came in other forms.
This time there were memories.
There was sadness and anguish and unbelievable pain.

One day a stranger came and stood with me.
The stranger said, "I understand," and did.
You see, the stranger had also been this way.
We talked and cried together.
The stranger became my friend as no other had.
My friend said, "I am always here," and was.

One day I lifted my head.
I noticed another who was grieving,
 gray and drawn with pain.
I approached and spoke.
I touched and comforted.
I said, "I will walk with you," and did.

I also had the gift.

Joe Lawley Coventry, England

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many of you have read this, which was written by one of the founders of TCF. It is worth repeating often and will be of comfort to the newly bereaved who may not have read it before.

*Reprinted from the May/June 2001 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.

Welcome Newcomer

Beneath the laughter and the smiles
Echoes the pain and anguish of children gone.
Don't be misled by the superficial joy.
Our normal appearance belies our eternal grief.

We rush to meetings to share details of death.
In better days we would have changed the channel
To avoid these stories of horror.

Priorities change.
Newcomers enter, confused and angry.
They wonder whether these laughing parents
Have truly lost their minds.
(They do not yet realize we do this so as NOT to lose
our minds ...)

Balloons of all colors decorate the room.
"Are we at a birthday party?"
Many are busy writing messages with their hearts.
Soon they will rise to the heavens, symbolically touching our
precious loves.

We know well this anger and confusion.
We remember believing we would never laugh again -
Now with newfound wisdom, we know it is possible and
necessary
To be able to laugh and cry through tears of grief.

Moe Bares, TCF Babylon, NY
Reprinted from the May/June 2003 newsletter of the
Winnipeg, Manitoba chapter of The Compassionate Friends

I Also Remember ...

I, too, have memories of the first spring after our daughter died. One day in our garden, I saw the purple lilacs in full bloom. They were so beautiful! I ran into the house and cried and cried for hours. I remembered the previous spring. It was during the first three months that our beloved daughter, Isabel, spent in the hospital while the seasons were changing. Every morning I left home wearing my heavy winter jacket; I never knew the lilacs were blooming!

That was many years ago; nevertheless, since then, I have always looked forward to seeing spring arrive. I have never forgotten my reaction and sadness when I saw those lilacs that first spring without Isabel, and I probably never will, but the following lines express how I feel.

*In our time
We strike a balance between
a past life that should be remembered
and our new life that must be created.*

excerpt from "When Your Child Dies" by Gloria Carton

Rooms and Things

How many people have suggested to you in subtle and not-so-subtle ways that you'd be better off if you'd only go ahead and get rid of your child's things and redo the room? You see, they think that holding onto these things is morbid. These people, who have never suffered the loss of one of their children, really do not understand that you have to do your grief work, and whether you do this sad task now or later really doesn't affect the length or depth of your pain.

Some parents need to make the changes and decisions about personal belongings as soon as possible after the death. Having the chore ahead of them is more painful than the doing. These parents are advised, however, to go slowly when disposing of belongings.

It may seem to you, also, that not seeing or having anything around to remind you of your dead child will somehow make your pain less. Later, though, when your grief has softened, you may find you need that special something, but by then it's too late. On the other hand, you may try to keep everything, and it may take many months and several acts of sorting through the belongings at intervals before you're able to decide on just the special things you want as mementos. As time goes by, you will be able to let go of the less important things without it ripping you to pieces. Not everything will forever have the same value to you. You may change in how you feel and find that it comforts instead of hurts to see your subsequent child wearing some of the baby's clothes, or that catching a glimpse of an old familiar shirt on one of your teenagers brings a warm feeling.

Whether you've made changes or haven't been able to make changes, it's okay. There's no rule about when you do it, and don't let well-meaning friends or relatives make you feel guilty because your needs don't meet their timetables. What we would like to suggest to you is, though there are no rules about when you do it, that you do have as a goal eventually making the changes; otherwise, the room and things become a shrine, and if you have surviving children, or a spouse, they may find it very difficult to live in this atmosphere forevermore. If they could be honest with you, many would tell you they don't want their dead sibling punished; instead, bring the record player and records into the den, or use the backpack and tent, or whatever, because it comforts them to feel that their sibling has once again become a part of the family and not relegated to "the room."

I don't think I know of anyone who hasn't kept some belongings of their dead child, so that must be normal. What we learn after the death is that life is tenuous at best; rather than hanging on to an unchanged room, try to value the important people who are left in this life, be they family or friends, and savor them, along with the memories of your dead child. For when all is said and done, those memories are truly the important part of what you have left of your child. That's a truth that doesn't need changing.

Mary Cleckley, TCF Atlanta, GA

Graduation Time

It's May and graduation time again. Your child would have been among those wearing the cap and gown, walking down the aisle to the ever stirring "Pomp and Circumstance." Now there will be a vacant spot in the line. Should you attend? Can you stand the pain? Will people think you're strange?

As always, you must follow your heart. So, go if you'd like to, and don't hide your tears. It's quite alright to miss your own child while celebrating the achievements of others.

Just remember that your own instincts are the most important ones; that no one else can make this decision for you, and that it doesn't really matter what other people think of you.

It was your child who died. This is your pain and you have the right to feel it and deal with it in your own way – and may a bit more healing take place in the doing.

Peggy Gibson, TCF Nashville, TN

I'm Tired of Being Strong

"Forgive me, Lord, but I'm tired of being some of the things I've tried so hard to be... I'm tired of being so capable, so efficient, I'm tired of the compliment, 'You are such a strong person; I admire your strength.' I'm tired of being considered so patient and understanding that people dump their troubles on me. I'm tired of being so cheerful. I want to be free to be cross and complain and not get a 'buck up, old chap' routine. I'm tired of being considered so independent, so strong. Sometimes, at least sometimes, Lord, I want to be weak and helpless, able to lean on somebody, able to cry and be comforted. Lord, I guess there are just times when I want to be a child again, running to climb on my mother's lap."

Marjorie Holmes, "Hold Me Up a Little Longer, Lord"



***May the depth of your crisis remind you of who you really are.
May your pain bring you into the light of awareness.
May your journey through it give you hope, and when you've made it through the storm, may you feel great peace and hope.***

Elizabeth Hill, TCF Carson City, NV

If I Had Only Known

If I had only known,
It was our last walk in the rain.
I'd keep you out for hours,
I'd give you a life line to my heart
Underneath the thunder,
We'd talk for hours.
If I had only known,
I'd never hear your voice again.
I'd memorize each thing you said,
And on those lonely days at home,
I could think of you once more.
Keep your words alive inside my head.
If only I had known,
I'd never hear your voice again.
You were the treasure in my heart,
You were the one who always stood beside me.
So unaware I foolishly believed,
That you would always be there.
But then one day I turned my head, and
You were gone.

Cortini, TCF Sibling Chapter, Valley Forge, PA

***You don't heal from the loss of a loved one because time passes;
You heal because of what you do with the time."***

Carol Crandall



If Only

"If only" is the whip with which we lash ourselves.
If only I had not bought him a motorcycle...
If only I had not let her cross the street alone...
If only I had forbidden him to drive while he was so tired...
If only I had not permitted the surgery ...
If only I had allowed the surgery sooner...
If only I had not waited for the ambulance...
If only I had waited for trained personnel to move her...
If only I were an all-knowing, all-powerful God,
I would not have allowed my child to die.
But I am only human.
How long must we punish ourselves for being human?

Theresa Hutchison

A Mother's Love

I need no pictures
to remember your warm smile;
the lines of your face
are embedded in my memory of you.
I gave you life
in one second of pain,
for which you returned years of yourself
sometimes quiet, sometimes noisy,
but always thoughtful.
Sometimes
I hear a voice that sounds like you,
and I pause.
That pang of hurt
stems from a tiny empty spot
you have left in my life.
I carried you in my womb,
then later in my arms

Joy Morning, TCF Phoenix, AZ



Loneliness and How to Overcome It

Why are there times when a bereaved parent feels lonely even though surrounded by loving people and people the bereaved parent loves? Loneliness is the outgrowth of separation from one who has given meaning to life. Yes, other relationships offer meaning, but it is normal for the searing pain from the loss of one's child to supersede the pleasure from other experiences. Part of yourself had been invested in another person. When that person has died, in a sense, you are lonely for a part of yourself that has been destroyed. At times you look around you and think that no one else is experiencing the pain you are feeling; no one's world has been shattered. This self-centeredness is a natural part of the grief process. Do not deny it, but DO NOT HOLD ON TO IT AS A WAY OF LIFE. Give yourself permission to accept help from others and then to reach out and help others. Although your child is not here to give continuity to your life, by having lived and having given purpose to your life, your child can be the bridge to your continuity with life as a thinking, loving and active person.

*Ruth Eiseman, TCF Louisville, KY
Reprinted from the summer 1982 national
newsletter of the Compassionate Friends*

Letting Go - Holding On

Someone recently told me that I have to let go of Missy; that I am holding on and not doing as well as I should be.

I think I've been doing pretty well in my grief process.

Missy had been dead three years and four months today, September 25th. I don't cry at all anymore. I do still think of her every day but I'm able to hear her favorite songs, look at her pictures, and talk about the funny, and yes, awful things she used to do without breaking down.

So what does letting go mean? Certainly, I'm not expected to forget her memory, her silly laugh, how she felt when I hugged her, am I? What, then, am I supposed to let go of?

I think these well-meaning people are saying, "Don't talk about her so much, it makes me feel uncomfortable," "You'll never get over her if you keep going to those Compassionate Friends meetings," "You need to quit thinking of her and get on with your life."

WELL, I have news for those people. I am letting go! I'm letting go of:

... The bad thoughts that creep into my head that say this is a bad dream and that I'll wake up soon.

... The habit of looking for her in every teenage girl I see.

... Saying to myself, "How much more I would be having if only Missy were here."

... The pain that has surrounded my heart since the day he died.

I WILL NOT let go of:

... Knowing that I was blessed with having given birth to her and knowing her for fifteen years.

... Remembering all the hugs, the laughter, and the joy she brought us.

Loving her and losing her has taught me how precious life is and how important it is to live each day being kind and thoughtful to those around me. Life is too precious not to treasure each moment.

I will not waste my time in "wishing." I will live as Missy did – a happy life – and begin each day looking forward to "holding on" to the treasures of life.

Jackie Von Behren, TCF Madison, WI



***Hanging on is fear.
Letting go is hope.***

Elizabeth Hill, TCF Carson City, NV



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

The Compassionate Friends of Northern Nevada

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.