



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

April 2010 Newsletter

WNY Chapter #2303

Batavia, NY 14020

The Mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Upcoming Meetings

April 15, 2010

May 20, 2010

Meetings are held at The Holland Land Office Museum
131 W. Main St

Batavia, NY 14020

Meeting Times: 7 -8:30pm

National: The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
PO Box 3696. Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Toll Free 877-969-0010. Fax 630-990-0246
www.compassionatefriends.org

The Compassionate Friends of WNY
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Visit our local web site: www.tcfofwny.org

The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again. "

*Simon Stephens, Founder of The
Compassionate Friends*

To include your child or children on our web site, bring a photo along with a short story about them to the meeting. Pat will forward the information to our Webmaster so that your child or children can be remembered.

Our Birthday Table - Parents/Grandparents: We have a Birthday Table at our TCF meetings. If you would like to share your child's favorite cake or anything that will help you remember their birthday with others who are open to "celebrating" with you, please take this opportunity to share with us. You may bring photos and other mementos to the meeting as well.

The chapter is here for everyone. Please let us know what you are struggling with at this time. We will use that as our topic for an upcoming meeting.

If you know of someone who has suffered this ultimate loss, please let us know. We will send them our newsletter and invite them to share their grief with those of us still walking that path.

Welcome

To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly invite you to The Compassionate Friends. We are other parents who have experienced the death of a child and offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings and newsletter, support materials, and loving listeners. We know it takes courage to attend your first meeting, but those who do come to find other parents who have experienced the feelings of grief that you are now feeling. Nothing is asked of you; there are no fees; you do not have to speak a word if you do not care to. If you are more comfortable bringing a friend or relative along with you, please do.

The death of a child is one of the greatest tragedies of life. It is unnatural for a child to precede a parent in death and when this natural order of events is turned around, the resulting grief is too deep and lasts too long to bear alone. We need each other.

The Compassionate Friends is an international non-profit, self-help support organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age from any cause. There is no religious affiliation. The primary purpose is to assist in the positive resolution of the grief experience upon the death of a child of any age and to support efforts to achieve physical and emotional health. The secondary purpose is to help educate those in the community, including family, friends, employers and co-workers to be supportive.

We can't take away your pain. We can't do your grieving for you. But we can offer hope. Some of us are new in our grief and some of us are far along. You are not alone in your grief. Please know we understand and care and extend hands and hearts to help. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can know the pain.

We are an organization of bereaved parents who, having been through our own heartbreak, loneliness, and isolation can now offer hope and help to others. There is no miracle cure which can be offered, just comfort and consolation that broken threads can be picked up again.

EXCerpts from Dichotomies of Grieving: continued on page 2

The following paragraphs have been reprinted from the article, *Dichotomies of Grieving* by Diana deRegnier

Parents often belabor which words to use in reference to our losses. There is no right or wrong, just decisions we each need to make for what is best of the worst of us. I usually say I have a son who has died. Some prefer euphemisms like departed, lost or passed. Others insist on no softening to the blow. I "have" a son who has died. Some say "had". Some are tormented by how to answer the question "How many children do you have?" Adrian is still my son; I am still his mother. Whether there is an afterlife, that remains true". "Too often, loved ones who have died become forever identified by their exit rather than their life: oh, she was the one who drowned; he died of cancer at 10; oh, he was driving drunk at 18," ...

I want my son remembered as the little boy who offered to share his bottle with me when he was an infant; Adrian was a talented artist, musician and writer, adored by teachers and school administrators as well as by peers ... "

"Individuals in grief are forced to make choices about how they will incorporate their loss into their lives. Though they may never speak of their grief with you, they carry it until their death. Each person's experience is unique, even in the same family; and each day changes."

"If you desire the confidence of a bereaved person, the best thing you can say is, 'I am here to listen if you care to talk.' But with that, you will do yourself and them a disservice if you cannot listen and let go. If you need for their thoughts to be as you think they should be, both of you may feel uncomfortable, or worse, with the disclosure. Their experience may be completely different than what you expect. Their feelings may not be what you think yours should be. And then, tomorrow, they may feel very different, and so may you."

"I don't want to be better, wiser, kinder for knowing this pain. I am not grateful for these lessons. I flunk gratitude . Bring back ignorance, I beg."

"Though joy bores deep in my soul, opening my senses opens them all. To feel music lets in pain. Receiving my soul back into my body to dance and sing unleashes anguish I'd bound in numbness. And I am stuck in years of healing."

Grandparents are a Special Gift

Author unknown

Grandparents are a special gift ...
God gives them to each child.
Their love outshines the brightest star ...
Their love can never be defiled.
Oh, but when a child becomes an angel,
Grandparents feel the pain and sorrow.
Beyond any pain they've known in life,
or will ever come to know tomorrow.
For a grandparent holds a special love
For the child their child has had.
And, to lose what they hold dear ...
Leaves them heartbroken and sad.
Their legacy is their grandchildren ...
So how can they learn to survive?
Will the dreams of their tomorrows
Somehow be kept alive?
Yes, a grandparent is a survivor...
And life has taught them how to be.

The Legend of the Tear Jar

-Linda May and Pleasant Gill White, Sibling Connection

In the dry climate of ancient Greece, water was prized above all. Giving up water from one's own body, when crying tears for the dead, was considered a sacrifice. They caught their precious tears in tiny pitchers or "tear jars." The tears became holy water and could be used to sprinkle on doorways to keep out evil, or cool the brow of a sick child.

The tear jars were kept unpainted until the owner had experienced the death of a parent, sibling, child or spouse. After that, the

grieving person decorated the tear jar with intricate designs, and examples of these can still be seen throughout modern Greece.

Legends of tear bottles, or lachrymatories, also abound in stories of Egypt and Middle Eastern societies. In ancient Roman times, mourners filled small glass vials with tears and placed them in tombs as symbols of love & respect. In the Old Testament of the Bible, the notion of collecting tears in a bottle appears in Psalm 56:8.

In the Victorian era, a tear bottle was one of the greatest gifts you could give someone. It meant that you loved them, that you shared a grief which brought you together.

This ancient custom symbolizes the transformation that takes place in people who have grieved deeply. They are not threatened by the grief of people in pain. They have been in the depths of pain themselves, and returned. Like the tear jar, they can now be with others who grieve and catch their tears.

Submitted By: Norma Foote
EIPaso, TCF

TCF "Online Support Community" Offers opportunity for Grief Sharing

The Compassionate Friends national web site offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child.

The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand emotions you're experiencing.

There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under," "Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "Men Only Sharing Session," "No Surviving Children". Go to the National site and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.

Our Children ~ Loved and Remembered

Let us remember our children who have left us too soon

April Birthdays

- Jeremy, son of Mel & Guy Brunner

April 14

April Remembrance Dates

- Kaisie Jean, daughter of Charlie & Linda Dana

April 13

- Torry, daughter of Joann & Don Yahn

-

- April 15

- Aubrey, daughter of Jennifer Kubik

April 28

-

May Remembrance Dates

- Jason, Son of Bev & Roland Thomas
- May 31

Please contact Pat Wheeler if any of your child(ren's) information is incorrect or missing. Phone 219-4570, or email wpatsuw@comcast.net or mail her at 447 Ellicott St, Batavia, NY 14020-

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS SIBLING CREDO

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us. When our brothers and when our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed we are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even

Even when we feel the responsibility to be strong even and when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as

.....SURVIVING SIBLINGS OF TCF

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 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