



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

December 2011 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

December 20, 2011

January 17, 2012

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

447 Ellicott St, Batavia, NY 14020

Parent Contact, Chapter Leader, Founder

Pat Wheeler 585-219-4256 or 716-601-9648

wwpatsuw@aol.com

Donations can be mailed to Pat

Treasurer, Parent Contact & Advertising

Reed Vogel 585-535-7783

Secretary:

Genevieve Mahoney

Greeters: Mae & Larry Wheeler

Our Regional Contact; Al Visconti

altcfny@gmail.com

Visit our local web site: www.tcfowny.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.

We will be holding our annual candle lighting/Holiday program at the December meeting. Family or friends are welcome. We will have refreshments after the program. If you have any favorite songs or poems you would like included please contact Pat. Please RSVP so we know how much refreshments we need.

Buttons are available from Pat for \$3.00 each. Just give Pat a photo and a button will be made. Preferably a small photo, such as a 4x6. The buttons are 2 1/4 inches so plan accordingly. Contact Pat with the info

Pat is also making **concrete stepping stones**, which come in various shapes and can include birthdates, remembrance dates & a small photo. First one is free. Contact Pat with the info

OUR CHILDREN LOVED AND REMEMBERED

Let us remember our children who have left us too soon

November Birthdates

**Donna, daughter of Rita Cone
November 1**

**Jenna Helene, daughter of Sharlene & John Pratt
November 2**

November Remembrance Dates

**Edwin Joseph & Randiene Jo, children of Vicki Becker
November 5th & 7th respectively**

**Jeremy, son of Mel & Guy Brunner
November 9**

December Birthdates

**Christopher, son of Eric & Laurie Claus
December 2**

**Michael, son of Margi DuiBois
December 6**

**Reed, son of Reed Vogel
December 10**

**Patricia, daughter of Gen Mahoney
December 15**

**Alexandria Rice, daughter of Tammy Schueler
December 29**

December Remembrance Dates

**Jenna Helene, daughter of Sharlene & John Pratt
December 6**

**Krista, daughter of Al Visconti
December 25**

Please contact Pat Wheeler if any of your child(ren)'s
information is incorrect or missing. Phone 219-4256 or email
wwpatsuw@aol.com or mail to home address at
447 Ellicott St
Batavia, NY 14020

ONE LITTLE CANDLE

I lit a candle tonight, in honor of you
Remembering your life, and all the times we'd been through.

Such a small little light the candle made
until I realized how much in darkness it lit the way.

All the tears I've cried in all my grief and pain
what a garden they grew, watered with human rain

I sometimes can't see beyond the moment, in hopeless despair
But then your memory sustains me, in heartaches repair.

I can wait for the tomorrow, when my sorrows ease
Until then, I'll light this candle, and let my memories
run free

~written by Sheila Simmons, Dallas, GA

Ornamental Memories

Ornaments brightly decorate the Christmas tree,
Some delicate, some sturdy, some old, some
new,

Different shapes and sizes,
Crystal, glass, wood or ceramic,
Ornaments dangle on the branches,
Catching colors from a window, or a candle,
Or a twinkling light.

The old ornaments bring back memories of
Christmases gone by,
The new ornaments represent hope & promises
for the future.

And when the holidays are over,
The ornaments safely wrapped & packed away
in their boxes
till next holiday season,

We still recall the priceless ornaments
That are our precious memories.
Some funny, some happy, some sad,
Times of celebrations, birthdays, holidays, and
vacations.

They glow and sparkle in our minds, catching
the light of our memory
From hearing a favorite song, or seeing a
familiar sight.

We never pack away these ornamental
memories,
We recall them fondly and often, they are
cherished & treasured.

They brightly and forever decorate our family
tree
Throughout all seasons of our life.

In Loving Remembrance,
especially at Christmas,
of our son,
James



'Twas the Night Before Christmas"

~ For Bereaved Parents ~

'Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded
the days,

That I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.
The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
In hopes of drawing customers by day and by
night.

As others were making their holiday plans,
My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.
I had lost my dear child a few years before,
And I knew what my holiday had in store.

When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,
I sprang to my feet and was looking around,
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash

The sight that I saw took my breath away,
And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the
day.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.
With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from
above,
That my child was still near me and that I was
loved.

The message they brought was my holiday gift,
And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.

As I knelt closer to get a better view,
One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -
That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,
To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed I carried the thought,
Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -
That no matter what happens or what days lie
ahead,

Our children are with us - they're not really dead.

Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my
ears,

A message of hope - a message so dear.
And I imagined they sang as they flew out of

sight,

"To all bereaved parents - We love you tonight!"

-By Faye McCord - TCF, Jackson, MS

My Holidays

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
Celebrate with joy and good cheer
But don't blame me if I can't comply
For if I did, it would all be a lie

Be glad that you're you and not me
because the holidays only bring pain you see
My thoughts are of a Christmas past
And only my heartache seems to last

My only son that I loved so dear
That grew into a man, That I saw so clear
Never did I think that he would leave me
especially with all the presents neatly under the
tree

I miss his laughter, his giggle, his smiles
For one of those, I would walk a million miles
His presence was a wondrous thing
And his absence has brought this poisonous sting

My other kids just don't understand
why I can't seem to make a life plan
This, I won't get over and that won't change
I now know love on a different range

So go, be happy and shout with glee
But please don't look with disappointment at me
For my child is in Heaven and I miss him so
Just be on your merry way, but I can't go.

~by Judy Craig, West Memphis, AR
In Memory of her son Larry "Travis " Shaun
Carter

10/27/72 - 12/24/98



Holidays in Heaven

The Holiday Season is just not the same,
A smile is missing when saying one name.

For parents who've lost a daughter or son,
Nothing can bring back the delightful fun,
Of watching them talk, laugh, or just run.

The memories are all that we do have now,
We do go on.....only God knows how.

A New Year comes as midnight arrives,
Our Angels still a big part of our lives.

If only we could trade the presents we receive,
For one more day with those whom we grieve!

But nothing can bring back our beloved child,
The one that laughed, cried, and often smiled.

They are together in a much better place,
Watching us cry.....touching our face!

Although we miss them on Holidays to share,
Be assured their loving presence fills the air,
At home, in church, at New York's Times Square!

So celebrating the Holidays are now hard to do,
But always remember they are thinking of you too,

Wishing you happiness and showing their love,
Not on this Earth, but from Heaven above!

-Dan Bryl, Lawrenceville, GA TCF
In Memory of his daughter, Jessica
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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.

It is with great sadness that I must share that The Compassionate Friends of Rochester lost a dear friend on October 21st. Cathy Spoto was a dear friend and mentor. She offered much wisdom and direction in assisting the formation of our group. She was the first person we met when we went to TCF for the first time.

She had a special gift of welcoming and sincere interest in each of our stories. She was familiar with grief as she too, lost a son, Michael, from death shortly after birth. I only regret that our group did not have a chance to invite her to speak. She was great at presenting workshops. Not only has the Rochester group lost a friend, but all of Compassionate Friends has lost a leader. Our thoughts are with her family and TCF of Rochester.