



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

July 2009 Newsletter

Volume I; Issue 12

WNY Chapter #2303, Batavia, NY 14020

THE MISSION

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.

We are pleased, yet saddened, to have you join us at our meeting of The Compassionate Friends. We hope sharing your stories of the aspects of your journey through grief will enable you and your families to find a "new normal" in your life. We wish that you would eventually reach a state of peace where the wonderful memories you have of your children are more in the forefront of your heart and mind than the pain of your loss.

Upcoming Meetings

July 16, 2009 Balloon Launch (see Upcoming Events – this page)

August 20, 2009

September 17, 2009

6:45 PM at Richmond Memorial Library
19 Ross Street, Batavia, NY 14020

National: The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

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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 a meeting. Pat will forward the information to our Webmaster.

OUR BIRTHDAY TABLE ~ Parents/Grandparents: you may bring photos and other mementos to the meeting during your child's birthday month. You may also bring a birthday cake or your child's special treat to share with those attending.

32nd Annual TCF National Conference

Portland, Oregon

August 7 – 9, 2009

For more information about registration, check the National web site at www.compassionatefriends.org.

Upcoming Events

Our July 16 Meeting will be our first Balloon Launch releasing balloons in memory of our children or in honor of other family members or friends. We will supply the balloons. We have reserved the Kiwanis Park on W. Main St. Rd., Batavia, across from the Animal Shelter. Since it's our first launch and not knowing how attendance will be, we are asking our parents, families and friends to bring their own dinner. It can be a bag lunch or grills are available. Restrooms on site. The Chapter will furnish cold drinks and dessert. We will eat at 5:45 PM and let the "kids" play until 7:00. Then our short program including readings, music and the release of the balloons to the heavens. We hope this will be our first "Family and Friends" affair. Call Pat at 585-219-4720; let her know how many family and friends will be attending. We look forward to seeing you and meeting your family.

Upcoming Events continued on Page 2

Upcoming Events (Continued)

Pat is working on arrangements to have Alan Pederson with us in July. He will present a concert in memory of his daughter, Ashley. Pat and I had the privilege of hearing Alan in concert in Rochester. He was phenomenal. We are sure you will enjoy his music and his stories if these arrangements can be completed.

Alan has taken a couple years off to tour the USA in memory of Ashley. He writes and performs his own music in her memory and has recorded several CDs. We will notify you the way you receive our newsletters when details are firm. Thanks. Margi.

Our Compassionate Friends Library

We are adding to our library of informative, comforting books available for checking out. If you've found a book that you found helpful and would like to donate it, we would appreciate it. We have bookplates to put on the first page indicating the donor and whom it is in memory of. They *do not* have to be new books. Amazon.com is a great source for used books in *great* condition and at very low prices. You may also donate your books (permanently) to the Richmond Memorial Library. They will also put a bookplate in your donated book.

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Your voluntary tax-deductible donation is our only source of funds and is used within our Community for outreach and support of bereaved families. All gifts are greatly appreciated. They may be given at the monthly meeting or mailed to Treasurer Margi DuBois, 3233 Pratt Rd., #7312, Batavia, NY 14020.

Our Children ~ Loved and Remembered

Let us remember the children
who have left us too soon.

July Birthdays

- ♥ Wyatt Zuber, young adult son of Pat Wheeler and grandson of Mae & Larry Wheeler, July 4
- ♥ Rick, adult son of Delores Roblee, July 24
- ♥ James East, young adult son of Dan & Sue Vickers, July 27

July Remembrance Days

- ♥ Angela, young adult daughter of Sharon Venuto, July 3
- ♥ Michael, adult son of Delores Roblee, July 14
- ♥ Brent Richard, young adult son of Pat & Roy Hersee, July 24
- ♥ James East, young adult son of Dan & Sue Vickers, July 26

Please contact Margi DuBois if any of your child(ren)'s information is incorrect. Phone 343-2590, email margi_d@yahoo.com or mail to her at 3233 Pratt Rd., #7312, Batavia, NY 14020

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 the 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," "Survivors of Suicide." There are also sessions for surviving siblings.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit the national web site www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.

Reminder: July 31 is the deadline if you'd like to have another parent carry your child(ren)'s name during the Walk to Remember at the National Conference, August 9 in Portland, OR. Info was presented at the June meeting and was included in June's newsletter. Questions: call Pat, 585-219-4720.

LOST

Peter Smith, age 15; sibling to Gregory Smith

Because of my status in society
I can look below to poverty
and realize no matter how frustrated I get,
I will always be very lucky to have a family
who loves and cares for me.

But still the tears roll down my face
and my cheeks are forever stained
because I know as long as I live
my heart will always be pained.

I was left in shock, pain, and fear,
left with your unspoken words which I will never
hear.

But in my days of sorrow when I feel that I will fall,
I can only repeat the phrase to myself,
"It is better to have loved and lost than to never
have loved at all."

Catching Butterflies

by Dottie Williams ~ TCF, Pittsburgh PA

It often hurts to come upon reminders of
my son
Tho' often since I lost him I would search
around for one
Which always brought on sadness and
the tears that I would shed
Were caused by names or faces, all
things that I would dread.
But then one day I came upon a man
who'd lost his son
I found that things I ran from, he
wouldn't even shun.
But rather he would treasure and I said
I wondered why
He told me that he called them "Catching
Butterflies."

This view of his intrigued me; I wanted
to hear more
And learned that he took all of them and
carefully would store
All of the reminders that I chose to push
away
He would tuck deep down inside his
heart each and every day.
Now a name or likeness when catching
me off guard
Does not upset me as it did and I don't
find it hard
For now instead I see these times as
opportunities
To see my son awakened in these new
fresh memories.

July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month
And she chose this month to die.
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was she
Having been, and left her mark.
A glorious incandescent life,
A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.
The July birth, the July death of
my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
With love that never dies.

—Sally Migliaccio, TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY

Tissues, Tears & Treasures

A circle of chairs and boxes of tissues,
A roomful of tears and emotional issues.
Frightening at first, I did not want to enter
Into this strange group, and be in the center.
What I soon learned, as we sat side by side,
We were bound by the love of our children who died.
Each shattered heart,
desperately seeking a moment of peace,
from the pain and weeping.
So many things different, and yet all the same,
Hearts lost in a fog of loss and pain.
Those who have journeyed, much further than me,
Reached out in comfort, listened quietly.
Each shattered heart spoke, and the tissues were
passed,
We never avoid speaking of the past.
This circle of friends, have found a bond,
And here I'm still known
As "Tony's Mom."
Slowly, I've found
I can reach out to others
Who are newly bereaved, fathers and mothers.
Strength I have found in this
Circle of chairs,
To grieve and to heal
And to show that we care.

- Diane Barta, TCF of Portland, OR

On July 4th



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.

Margi DuBois for TCF
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