



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

June 2009 Newsletter

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

June 18, 2009

July 16, 2009

August 20, 2009

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

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

Co-Founder, Parent Contact, Meeting Facilitator:

Pat Wheeler • 585-219-4720

Wwpatsuw@aol.com

Co-Founder, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor:

Margi DuBois • 3233 Pratt Rd., #7312, Batavia, NY
14020 • 585-343-2590

Margi_d@yahoo.com

Our Regional Contact, Al Visconti

Email: altcfny@gmail.com

Visit our local web site: www.tcfofwny.org

We are glad that the weather has finally cleared and we are seeing so many familiar faces returning to our Monthly Meetings. It's so good to see all of you!!

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.

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

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.

DAD

By Scott McFarlane ~ 9/20/65 to 1/22/96

I've watched his eyes grow tired, Liquid full with pain
from having to put dreams aside.

I recall leathery hands, large and warm as they
covered mine. I now realize caring that hid behind a
stone face, and hopes that patiently waited as I
searched for my own space.

I still hurt from times I couldn't succeed, I beg for
more time to show him the respect he needs. I see
his eyes, they still hold their light and I

Want him to wish me a million more good nights.

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.

Paul, son of Richard and the late Katherine Seymour,
6/8 to 2/17

Gary William, son of Sandy Wood
6/13 to 6/13

Michael, son of Delores Roblee
6/8 to 7/14

Brent Richard, son of Pat and Roy Hersee
6/23 to 7/24

Angela, daughter of Sharon Venuto
6/21 to 7/3

Donna Brister, daughter of Rita Cone
11/1 to 6/26



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

We're planning a balloon release in memory of all our children combined with a family picnic. We hope to be able to secure a date at a local park for a Saturday in June.

Since this will be our first family event, we're suggesting that each family bring their own food – either bag lunch or something to grill (if the park has grills.) The Chapter will supply cold sodas and dessert.

We will advise all of you when we get a firm date at a specific park, preferably in the city.

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.

When Fathers Weep at Graves

I see them weep
the fathers at the stones
taking off the brave armor
forced to wear in the work place
clearing away the debris
with gentle fingers
inhaling the sorrow
diminished by anguish
their hearts desiring
what they cannot have—
to walk hand in hand
with children no longer held—
to all the fathers who leave a part
of their hearts at the stones
may breezes underneath trees of time
ease their pain
as they receive healing tears
...the gift the children give.

---Alice J. Wisler

For David, in memory of our son Daniel
(August 25, 1992--February 2, 1997)

Happy Father's Day
To All Our Dads & Grandfathers

Wish You Were Here

By Steve Tutt ~ TCF, Tyler, TX

You'd be nineteen if you were here
But why you're gone still isn't clear.
Your things are still all in your room
As if you'd be returning soon.
Spongebob waits there by the door.
Your shoes are still there on the floor.

Your friends are all young women now.
They're working jobs or college bound.
Sometimes we see them and they say
We miss her so, wish she had stayed.

Your boyfriend's in the Army too
And by the way, he still loves you.
You thought his love was not so true
And that some other girl he'd choose.
But near two years have passed on by
Still to your grave he goes to cry.

Your niece and nephews miss you too,
And talk of the things you used to do.
Your Mother's going to be alright
And doesn't cry so much at night.
She puts the flowers on your grave,
And scrapbook pictures tries to save.

And me, I'm still the same old Dad,
The same old routine like I had.
I work real hard to make a way
To pay some bills and pass the day.

I'm not as funny as before
My world's not happy anymore.
I don't let on the pain I feel
But deep inside the hurt is real.

Time passes by year after year,
Life goes on with seldom a tear.

One wish I have, a wish so clear
My wish most of all, I wish you were here.

~Dad

Sometimes

Sometimes in the middle of the night as I read,
wash dishes, fold clothes, or sit quietly and
pontificate about this or that, I hear your voice.
The sound is so clear. "Mom," you say.

Sometimes I answer back in an automatic
response. I wait for a brief moment and
then your voice is gone. I am startled and
I freeze in place, not moving, not breathing,
not blinking, just listening.

Sometimes I think I see you in a store or on
the street, walking that unique walk that was
yours alone. I look twice and realize it is not
you. But it was a brief moment of joy to see
that special walk.

(continued next column)

Sometimes I think I have lost my mind. But
most of the time I am thankful for these little
reminders. Perhaps it is my mind giving me a
sense of you. Perhaps the keeping of you in
my heart brings this peace to me.

Sometimes when I come home from work, I
find something on the counter that wasn't
there that morning. A sock, a small socket
wrench, a matchbox car. I ask my husband if
he came home during the day. He didn't, of
course. I wonder about these things, but then
I also get comfort from them.

Sometimes I wish I could talk to you just one
more time. I would simply listen to your voice,
your excitement, your disappointment, your
happiness, your enthusiasm, your concern....
whatever you might be feeling. That would be
enough. I don't need great revelations, just a
conversation, just your voice.

Sometimes I could just scream at the inequity
of your death. You, my only child, the one who
gave purpose and meaning to my life, are gone
forever from this plane. But then, I get a grip
on my sanity and stop thinking negatively.

Sometimes I meet a newly bereaved mother
and I see myself. I know her heart, I understand
her torment, and I feel the pain that has wrapped
here in its horrible, crushing grip. I listen to this
mother whose world has been gnarled into a
grotesque shell of life, and I ask about her child.

Sometimes I accept my reality, sometimes I
don't. But I always keep you in my heart, taking
you into the future as far as I, myself, will go.
And that has to be enough. I cannot change the
past. I can only live today and plan for tomorrow.

Sometimes, though, I am glad that my mind
allows me these little forays into a parallel reality.
These give me peace. In this world, peace is as
ethereal as a fine mist near a waterfall.

Sometimes, reality is just too harsh.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX



Happy Father's Day
To All our Dads and Grandfathers

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
3233 Pratt Rd., #7312
Batavia, NY 14020**