



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November 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 16, 2010-
Christmas Program & Candle
Lighting

January 20, 2011

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

The Compassionate Friends of WNY

447 Ellicott St, Batavia, NY 14020

Parent Contact, Chapter Leader, Founder

Pat Wheeler 585-219-4570 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

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.

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.

Pat makes bricks in memory /honor of children or family members/friends. She routs out the name and dates if so desired. The writing is then in whatever color, such as red, green, blue or black. The brick can be scalloped or flat landscaping bricks. The bricks are free. Just contact Pat with your information. 219-4570

OUR CHILDREN LOVED AND REMEMBERED

Let us remember our children who have left us too soon

November Birthdays

Donna, Daughter of Rita Cone
November 1
Jenna Helene, daughter of Sharlene & John Pratt
November 2

November Remembrance days

Edwin Joseph, son of Vicki Becker
November 5

Randiene Jo, daughter of Vicki Becker
November 7
Jeremy, son of Mel & Guy Brunner
November 9
Thomas, son of Marie Moran
November 12

December Birthdays

Christopher, son of Laurie & Eric Claus
December 2
Michael, son of Margi DuBois
December 6
Reed, son of Reed Vogel & Chris Stoddard
December 10
Patricia, daughter of Genevieve Mahoney
December 15

December Remembrance days

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 219-4570 or email me at wwpatsuw@aol.com or mail to my home address, 447 Ellicott St, Batavia, NY 14020

Thank you to all who helped with the concert and to the following donors

Jamie Hudson and employer for graciously printing our newsletter

Make Worry Impossible

Worry is possible only when you forget how strong you can be.

Worry is possible only when you forget how creative and effective and resilient you can be.

When you feel worry, you're feeling something that is based on a misinterpretation of the truth. For the truth is that you can respond in a powerful, positive and successful way to whatever may happen.

You've successfully navigated a lifetime of challenges. You've made it through countless difficult and demanding situations.

With each new day, you've become stronger, more knowledgeable, more experienced and more capable. And as such, you can choose to replace every negative worry with multiple positive actions.

Remind yourself of all the good and valuable things you've done. Remind yourself of the outstanding opportunities available to you right now.

Fill your mind with thoughts of your strengths, your passions, your effectiveness, and your positive possibilities. And you'll make worry impossible for you.

Ralph Marston

Her Name is Grief

My new unwanted daughter Grief
Stands next to me.
She presses against my body,
Taking my shadows space.
She is always with me, always quietly watching.
I wear a mask for the others,
But as soon as I reach up to adjust it
She encircles my heart.
She pulls me into her darkness,
Crushing the breath from my lungs.
She drags me down to the edge
Of the underworld
Where I hear my voice calling out with entreaty,
"Anna-Rose, Anna-Rose, Oh Anna-Rose"
Over and over and over..
Finally I begin to struggle and break free,
Returning to the surface,
Taking in fresh gulps of air,
Only to begin again...
....when I reach up to adjust this mask...

Sherry Carter, TCF Montgomery, AL
For her only child Anna-Rose Carter 8/82-1/04

Memory Haunts Us and Comforts Us

Memory haunts and memory comforts us.
It reminds us of what was and what might have been.
It reminds us of the hopes we invested in the child.
It reawakens the old dreams we had for the child.
It reminds us of the time when the future looked so much brighter.

We remember the good times that are no more.
We remember the look in the child's eyes that made us feel that all was right with the world.
We remember the fullness inside us when we knew that in the child our best self was realized.
We remember the joy we knew in the child's accomplishments and the sympathy we felt at the child's frustrations and failings.
We remember our own shortcomings.

Memory brings back the powerlessness we felt when we could not take away the pain or prevent the death.
It brings back the times we got angry over what now seems as nothing.
It brings back the occasions we did not stop to share a moment, we did not answer the questions, we did not say, "I love you".
It reminds us of conflicts not forgiven, of frustrations not resolved, of words not taken back.
Memory haunts us because where there was life, where there was give and take, where there were ups and downs,

Now there is only emptiness.

But after a time, memory comforts us.
As we learn to live in a poorer world, memory becomes richness.
As we go on with our lives in the world which will never be the same, memory helps us return to joys we once knew.
We can find parts of ourselves which now lie dormant.

Everyone, as he/she goes through life, keeps an inner place of Solace.
For some, it is a bit of poetry, a saying, an image of a place, a song, an object safely locked away but which we know is there.

An activity we do which brings us calmness.

As we grow in our bereavement, the memory of the child becomes part of our Solace.
When the world seems wrong, the memory of the child reminds us of what was right.
When life seems sour, we know there is sweetness.

Yes, memory haunts us, but it can comfort us,
"Try to remember those days in September, when hearts were gay and life was mellow.

"Try to remember, and if you remember, Follow, Follow".

Author not listed, TCF St Louis, MO

Those of us who understand the word "grief" on a personal level know how important it is, especially during the holiday season, to remember and include our children, siblings, and grandchildren who we mourn. Yet the outside world often does not understand that need. The worldwide Candle Lighting gives us a special day every year, the second Sunday in December to devote to remembering the beloved children who live forever in our hearts.

The Compassionate Friends invites you to join in this moving event December 12 that encompasses the globe with the soft glow of remembrance. You can participate in the v14th annual Worldwide Candle lighting day in a number of different ways: attend one of over 550 worldwide services that we will have listed on our national website. You can light candles in your home with friends and family or alone in quiet solitude. Join in the remembrance on our Compassionate Friends/USA Face book Page.

There are Worldwide Candle Lighting Buttons available. You may order them on line or by calling the National Office at 877-969-0010

“Forever in My Heart” Wristband

Great holiday gift. The Compassionate Friends offers “Forever in My Heart” wristbands that have been very popular and are perfect for a giveaway. The wristbands are swirled blue and white durable silicone with two butterflies framing the popular saying. They are priced at \$2.50. If we don’t have any in stock we will gladly order them.

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.

First Thanksgiving

The thought of being thankful
Fills my heart with dread.
They’ll all be feigning gladness,
Not a word about her said.

These heavy shrouds of blackness
Enveloping my soul,
Pervasive, throat-catching,
I must, I must acknowledge,
Just express her name, so all sitting at the table,
Know I’m thankful she came.

Though she’s gone from us forever
And we mourn to see her face,
Not one minute of her living,
Would her death ever replace.

So I stop the cheerful gathering,
Though my voice quivers, quakes,
Make a toast to all her living.
That small tribute’s all it takes.

Genesee Bourdeau Gentry, from Stars
In The Deepest Night-After the Death of a Child

The Autumn Child

Thoughts of you go racing through my mind as the fresh air of autumn cleanses my soul. As the beautiful colored leaves come twirling down, my mind goes wandering back to the days of long ago, when catching the falling leaves was an exciting time to you. Raking and rolling in a pile of leaves with friends was better than a movie. The smell of autumn flowers was the best. The Halloween costumes, spooky or cute, rosy cheeks and little cold hands. Thank you dear Autumn Child for a harvest of plenty you gave-Wisdom, Caring and Love. I am so glad I have the pleasure of calling you my Autumn Child.

Donna Smith, TCF Huntsville, AL

Thanksgiving by Meg Avery TCF Lawrenceville GA,

**THANKFUL
VERSUS
THANKLESS**

The time draws near
And the calendar says
Thanksgiving is really here.
Time to reflect and time to gather
Thoughts of what to be *thankful of*.
Thankful? I think not.
My life is not full these days
And to be thankful is beyond my grasp.

But to give *thanks*?
This I believe can be done.
Searching my soul deep within
Reasons to give thanks
Surface to the edge.

Yes, I give thanks
For the memories of yesterdays,
The love, the laughter, the joy of each
Day when James was with us

The trials & tribulations
Of being an active parent
The rewards & challenges
Of raising a child,
The days of blissful ignorance
When I thought tragedy
Would never visit our home,
The days when life was normal,
Even though I took it all for
Granted.

For the treasures of todays,
The sunrise, sunset,
The changing of the seasons,
The new found friends along this journey
I reluctantly travel

The tried & true friends
Who stand by me still,
The strong and everlasting
Love of my husband
The warmth of wet kisses from my canine
Companion & feline friend,
The encouragement & support,
Compassion & caring I give
& receive as I survive
And help others survive.

For the hopes and possibilities of a
Peaceful tomorrow,
With faith, love, & perseverance
As I struggle to move on
With James in my heart
Forevermore,

Spiritually guiding me
With his new presence,
With sorrow and reluctance,
Each new day,
To yet, somehow, be open and loving,
Not to forsake what I've learned
Because of what I've lost.

This is the time of year when many bereaved parents start saying out loud what newly bereaved parents have been thinking for weeks and weeks *I am really dreading the holidays*. And why not? When your grief is so new you haven't had the necessary time to accept life as it is for you now.

On the other hand there are those of us who have had the necessary time and the proper support, who are able to observe the holidays in a less painful way. We have kept some of those old traditions that warm our hearts and thrown out those that are either too painful or meaningless now. We have created a life that doesn't include someone who was a vital part of who and what we were. We're different now, doing different things because losing a child forces you into that position if you are to survive in an emotionally healthy way.

The words *thankful and thankless* follow one another in the dictionary; so close together in a book, yet so far apart in meaning. When you think about it the difference between the two words is full and less. Though those of us have had more time, do, like the more newly bereaved, have less in the way of family, our lives do have fullness again because we have learned to be thankful and appreciate that which we have left in the way of people and memories-more so than we ever thought possible.

As you approach this Thanksgiving, if you haven't yet been able to make your adjustment, I hope you will feel what you must for now because whatever you are feeling is okay. It isn't until you have reached the place in your grief where the ability to make good choices returns to your life that you can make some important changes in how you approach the holidays.

I hope the transition from thankless to thankful will be soon in coming to you, for that will mean some peace has returned to your life.

Above all, I do wish you peace during this holiday season. I wish you more of the same in the New Year.

Mary Cleckley, TCF Atlanta, GA

The risk of love is loss,
And the price of loss is grief.
But the pain of grief is only a shadow
When compared with the pain
Of never risking love.

Hilary Stanton Zunin

***Thanksgiving
Isn't What It Used To Be***

We realize it is too hard for some of us to be thankful for anything when our child has died. But we hope we can all say a prayer of thanks for the very precious time we were allotted to spend with our child, because it was the most important time of our lives. Their lives here gave our lives meaning. If we had not had them at all, we would have not known the true joy of living. They were a precious gift from Heaven, and they had so much to give and blessed our lives. We feel they are still giving to us and are still blessing our lives. The love between parents and children just goes on and on. THEY TAUGHT US THAT. So let us lift our eyes and our hearts and say "thank you" this Thanksgiving.

Verna & Lee Smith, TCF Ft Worth TX

FLOW WITH THE SEASON, AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

We're well into November and it's almost time to take the "January Pill". After Tricia died, I decided I'd invent a pill you could take the week before Thanksgiving (to knock you out) and when you came to, it would be January! I'm still working on the invention. In the meantime, I know many of you are already dreading the approaching holidays. The true spirit and meaning of Thanksgiving (Christmas, Hanukkah, etc) are not necessarily exemplified by some of our "traditions". You are re-evaluating many aspects of your life so let this also apply to the coming holidays. You will not always feel as you do now. You will find joy in holiday activities again, but maybe not in all the things you once thought so very important. Flow with the season and with your sadness, knowing strength will come as you work with what you can do without overtaxing yourself. Resolve to be as generous with your energy and as selfish as you have to be to protect the emerging person you will become as a result of your loss. This person can be truly beautiful and loving because of what you have learned through grief. You will miss your child; no magic potion can wipe the pain away. Enjoy

what you can- you deserve some pleasure. And may some measure of peace overtake you before this year ends.

Elizabeth Estes, TCF Augusta, GA

Wish List

Postage Stamps
Gift Cards to Wal-Mart, Kmart, Target, Tops
Office Max
Mailing Labels(Avery 8160)
Envelopes, Ink Cartridges, Private Donations to
The Holland Land Museum

Thank you to all who support this group by attending meetings and keeping in touch. If you have any suggestions please contact one of the steering committee members.