



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

October 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

October 18, 2011

November 15, 2011

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.

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.

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

September Birthdates

**Aubry, daughter of Jennifer Kubik
September 14**

September Remembrance Dates

**Matthew, son of Jason & Nancy Kota
September 1**

**Damien, son of Allison Watson
September 5**

**Maryann, daughter of Muriel Sweet
September 10**

**Patricia, daughter of Genevieve Mahoney
September 11**

October Birthdates

**Damien, son of Allison Watson
October 2**

**Buddy, son of Eleanor & George Filowick
October 3**

**Torry, daughter of Joann & Don Yahn
October 5**

**James, son of Debra Hall
October 5**

October Remembrance Dates

**Sharon, daughter of Catherine Horton & sister to Martha
Horton
October 1**

**Buddy, son of Eleanor & George Filowick
October 7**

**Demitrius, son of Shely & Brian Plueckhahn
October 15**

**Reed, son of Reed Vogel
October 16**

Please contact Pat Wheeler if any of your child(ren's) information is incorrect or missing. Phone 219-4570 or email at wwpatsuw@aol.com or mail to home address at 447 Ellicott St Batavia, NY 14020

Dinner get together

October 8, 2011 at 6pm at Sport of Kings, across from Tops
Please RSVP to Pat so I can reserve tables
219-4256

An Open Letter of Thanks to Those Who Have Helped Us

- Thank you for the cards, especially those with personal notes. It helps to know that others are thinking about us.
 - Thank you for sharing stories about our child. We can't hear enough about him/her!
 - Thank you for not feeling that you don't know us well enough to help. We've been pleasantly surprised to hear from people who were only acquaintances. The extra effort it takes for you to send us condolences really means a lot.
 - Thank you for not hesitating to bring up our child's name. Everything we think, see and do is filtered by the knowledge that our child is no longer here. We can't be "reminded" of something that is always there.
 - Thank you for calling to let us know you still remember.
 - Thank you for being persistent with your phone calls and notes – even when you didn't hear back from us. We so appreciate your attention, but just can't muster the energy to pick up that phone ourselves.
 - Thank you for seeing through our façade of "doing fine." We are broken inside, and need help putting the pieces back together.
 - Thank you for casseroles, housecleaning, childcare and pet care. The attentions needed for everyday life seem enormous. Removing any of these demands leaves us more time and energy to heal.
 - Thank you for taking it upon yourself to research support groups and grief counselors. How ironic that those who need this help most, often don't know how to go about getting it.
 - Thank you for finding creative ways to help. Each of you offers a unique presence within our support community.
 - Thank you for listening to our questions and our fears. We realize there are no immediate answers, but still need to air our feelings.
 - Thank you for sitting quietly with us. No words need to be spoken when two hearts are sharing their grief.
 - Thank you for your prayers. Perhaps it was your prayer that strengthened us today.
 - Thank you for not stopping! You have helped with our immediate needs, but we have a long road ahead of us. The distance goes by quicker when passing the time with a friend.
- Paula Staisiunas Schultz
Thanksgiving, 2001

HEART

There are three major points for you to keep in mind as you go through your "work of mourning":

You will have your own unique way of expressing and experiencing grief. As long as it is changing, and moving, and "fluid", it is normal grieving. You are in for the roller coaster ride of your life. It is the nature of the beast. Grief is not orderly and predictable. It will wax and wane. You may reach a period of relative calm, and a break from the tears. "What a relief" you'll think, "Maybe I'm finally reaching the stage of acceptance". And then, WHAMO! Brought to your knees again by intense grief. And you'll wonder if you are making any progress at all. You are. The passage of time assures this. It really will come to an end. In its own time. You will come back to life with loving remembrance in your heart, ready to embrace life again without your beloved at your side. You will gradually feel stronger and more in charge of your life. It really does end.

AM I GOING CRAZY?

Your grieving heart...
No, you're not going crazy. And you are also not alone in feeling like you are "losing it". When you think about the overwhelming loss you've experienced, it is indeed a miracle that you *don't* lose your sanity! But there's a safety net built into the wondrous grief cycle that somehow keeps you safe in the storm. You will survive this, sanity intact, and eventually go on to reclaim your life and some degree of joy, despite your loss. There are many ways in which grief can touch you-- physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It's an all-encompassing thing, you know? You need to understand that there are a wide range of "grief symptoms", and you may wonder what is "normal" and what is not. Rest assured that almost ANY symptom you might have, although it would be considered alarming otherwise, is perfectly normal during grieving.

God Knows...

God Knows..... When you are tired and discouraged from fruitless efforts...
God knows how hard you have tried.
When you've cried so long and your heart is in anguish...
God has counted your tears.
If you feel that your life is on hold and time has passed you by...
God is waiting with you.
When you're lonely and your friends are too busy even for a phone call...
God is by your side.
When you think you've tried everything and don't know where to turn...
God has a solution.
When nothing makes sense and you are confused or frustrated...
God has the answer.
If suddenly your outlook is brighter and you find traces of hope...
God has whispered to you.
When things are going well and you have much to be thankful for....
God has blessed you.
When something joyful happens and you are filled with awe...
God has smiled upon you.
When you have a purpose to fulfill and a dream to follow...
God has opened your eyes and called you by name.
Remember that wherever you are or whatever you are facing...
GOD KNOWS!!
Author unknown

Grief Is A Solitary Journey

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows how great the hurt is. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.
...Helen Steiner Rice

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Your voluntary tax deductible donation is our only source of funding. All proceeds given to our chapter are used within our Community for outreach and support for bereaved families. All gifts, monetary as well as postage, printing, paper or other office supplies are greatly appreciated. Please also remember The Holland Land Office Museum. Any contributions to them for their generosity would be greatly appreciated.

We thank the following for their Love Gifts and Donations

WalMart in Batavia for their generous grant (Please send them a thank you note with the Attention to Rhea Hewitt)

... Your First Meeting?

Attending your first meeting takes courage. But those who attend find a comforting network of support that only other bereaved families can give. Please try attending at least 3 meetings before deciding if it is beneficial for you.

You Need Not Walk Alone

The Compassionate Friends is a nondenominational self-help group of parents, grandparents and siblings who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling, regardless of the age or cause of death. We cannot take away your pain, but we can offer hope, friendship and caring...you need not walk alone.

We welcome new members, we are truly sorry for the circumstances that made you eligible for our support group, but we are here to share your grief.

To those of you who are newly bereaved and are receiving this newsletter for the first time, we wish to extend our sympathy and warmly hold out our hands in friendship. At our monthly meetings we offer each other support through gentle discussions, occasional presentations, a lending library and resource materials. We have loving listeners to take your call if you need someone to talk to. However we can help, we are here.

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.