



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September 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

September 20, 2011

October 18, 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

wwpatsuwv@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.

LOVE GIFTS

A love gift is a gift of money to our Chapter. It is usually in honor of a child who has died, but it can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of our chapter. Gifts to The Holland Land Office Museum are also appreciated.

OUR CHILDREN LOVED AND REMEMBERED

Let us remember our children who have left us too soon

August Birthdates

Victoria, daughter of Eric & Laurie Claus

August 7

Sharon, daughter of Catherine Horton & Sister of Martha Horton

August 8

August Remembrance Dates

Joshua, son of Tina Durham

August 7

Mickey, son of MaryJane Metcalfe, Fiancee' of Barb Snyder, brother of Chris Metcalfe

August 25

Wyatt, son of Pat Wheeler & grandson of Mae & Larry Wheeler

August 29

September Birthdates

Aubry, daughter of Jennifer Kubik

September 14

September Remembrance Dates

Matthew, son of Nancy & Jason Kota

September 1

Damien, son of Allison Watson

September 5

Patricia, daughter of Genevieve Mahoney

September 11

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

447 Ellicott St
Batavia, NY 14020

A Tribute to My Sister Lori Lee Smith

I Saw You

I saw you today in the morning dew
As brilliant as a sea of shimmering diamonds
I shared the most amazing sunrise with you today
A million shades of red so random in their perfection
I heard you today in the laugh of my children
I walked with you today and we talked about everything
..and nothing all at once I saw you today in the changing of the
leaves
The colors of your life, the close of one season
And the ushering in of another
I sat beside a stream with you today
The peaceful flow, steady and constant
I saw you today.. and you were perfect
And rest assured.. I shall see you again
By Avery Smith TCF Ada Area Chapter

CHAPTER LEADER'S CORNER

Adapted from Kathie Kelly, TCF

Summertime is here, or shall I say the end of summer.

This time of year that is hard on bereaved families as it is a time when other families go on vacation. For bereaved families it is a bittersweet time as we prepare for a vacation we think of our angels who are no longer with us. It is comforting for me to know that no matter where our family goes or what we do, that our son/daughter is still a part of the family and is with us. I hope you all have a great rest of the summer.

Think of the memories you had with your children. Please bring a picture of your child to share. Please feel free to share your memories of your children with us. For us bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents memories are ever so precious to help keep our children's memories alive.

I hope that you have a better month. If you are in need of anything please call me at 219-4256, if there is no answer, please be sure to leave your name and number so I can get back to you or e-mail me

BEACH SONG

Summer is here,
And for a week, I had to spend,
Conventioning at the beach
Summer, the beach and that special
Song.

Funny how, after almost two years,
That song, at the beach,
During the summer, almost drove me
To
The brink of insanity.

Why did it happen? I think it was
Because,
As in the song that you loved,
You were my hero and you didn't even
Know it.
Linda Walker, 8/13/92

MRS. BUTTERWORTH

“Every supermarket decision has a family memory connected to it. You’d never expect a package of spaghetti or a can of creamed corn to leave you crying in the aisle at the store” Excerpt from Charlie Walton’s book, “When There Are No Words.

Every parent who has lost a child knows these words to be true. Whether it is baby food or a toddler’s newly discovered favorite food, junk food for teenagers or an adult child’s old time favorite, the grocery store can be a rough trip. I lost my son, Stephen, when he was 18, so it was the junk food—potato chips, Funyums, French bread for pizza, Ragu sauce, pepperoni, Cheetos, cheese bread, cereal of all kinds, Chex mix and so on that haunted me and made me not want to grocery shop. But—it was the golden face of Mrs. Butterworth that brought me to my knees.

As I stared in horror at her face, I remembered sticky little handprints on the wass when the highchair had been just a little too close. I remember a chubby little toddler sitting next to me at the table, talking seriously, his green eyes wide, “I sink I saw her wink at me,” he said of Mrs. Butterworth, sounding a little like Tweety Bird. “Really?” I asked. Mrs. Butterworth always winked on the commercial—she seemed so lifelike.

I took Mrs. Butterworth and made her walk toward his plate. She tripped when she was just the right distance from his plate and syrup spilled from her head right onto his pancakes. He looked at me and I saw it coming in his eyes—laughter. It seems to start deep within and rolls from their chest until they lose their breath. He cackled, he gasped, his body shook with laughter as Mrs. Butterworth regained her footing and said, “Oh, my –silly me !” He laughed even more.

Therefore, Mrs. Butterworth made a ritual of tripping and spilling syrup onto his pancakes. Sometimes she would let out a shriek as she fell; other times she would say in an embarrassed, dainty voice, something about how clumsy she was or how she had tripped over her apron. Whatever she did, he rolled.

When Stephen was 15, the two of us often shared a quick breakfast before rushing out the door. He usually ate pancakes that he cooked for himself and I joined him for a granola bar and a diet coke. I was lost in thought one morning, a particularly stressful day ahead of me, when out of the corner of my eyes, I saw Mrs. Butterworth come walking toward me. She was helped by a hand as big as mine with slender fingers wrapped around her base.

“So-how have you been?” Mrs. Butterworth asked in a voice that tried to sound feminine but came out a little like a drag queen. She tripped suddenly and screamed in apparent horror, “Oh, crap!” she said as she stood back up. It may be the only time that Mrs. Butterworth has ever said “crap”—I’m not sure. I laughed until I was sick and left for work with a smile in my heart.

But now, I did not laugh or even smile when I saw her face I cried. Other shoppers probably thought I was insane. I walked away. I couldn’t look at her. Cheetos and Funyums and potato chips had already stabbed at me over on aisle four: Captain Crunch had almost tripped me; the Tombstone Pizzas had made me as cold as they were in the freezer just to look at them, but the little golden-faced lady broke my heart. For the next four years, I had a peculiar interest in shortening and oil—you see, they were across the aisle from Mrs. Butterworth and I had to keep my back to her. She was an old friend, but I couldn’t face her. She was an intentional emotional grenade. It was a sad situation and such a shame for two who had been so close not to acknowledge each other’s presence, but I just couldn’t look at her.

I always knew she was there, kindly, smiling and understanding that I couldn’t face her. But just last week, I felt the golden stare strongly on my back as I once again feigned interest in the Wesson and the Crisco. For the first time in four years, I dared turn and peek at her. She boasted of half the calories—so she too understood being mid-forties, huh?

I dared turn a little more to fully face the little lady who had meant so much to Stephen and me the fully golden one with all the calories. The tears came, but a smile came with them. The memories that the golden face evoked were gently, worth remembering forever. Older grief is, indeed, kinder.

I put her in my shopping cart and took her home with me. She stands on one of the top shelves in my kitchen pantry, guarding my granola bars and my memories—handprints on a wall, a toddler’s laughter, a teenager making his stressed mom laugh. And Stephen—you know, buddy, this morning when I grabbed a granola bar, I sink I saw her wink at me.

Marcia Carter, Waleska, GA, author of
“Stephen’s Moon”

NO VACATION

There is no vacation from your
Absence.

Every morning I awake, I am a bereaved parent.

Every noon I feel the hole in my heart.

Every evening my arms are empty,
My life is busy now, but not quite full.

My heart is mended, but not quite
Healed.

For the rest of my life every moment
Will be lived without you.

There is no vacation from your absence.

Kathy Boyett, TCF MS Gulf Coast Chapter

SOME HELPFUL WEBSITES

www.griefnet.org

www.goodgriefresources.com

www.thebereavementjourney.com

www.nationalshareoffice.com

www.survivorsof suicide.com

www.griefwatch.com

www.journeyof hearts.org

www.lexinfertility.com

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

www.healingheart.net

www.missfoundation.org

www.growthhouse.org

www.childrenofdome.com

www.spacebetweenbreaths.com

www.hospicesupportcare.org

www.holdingontolove.com

www.thecompassionatefriends.org

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.