



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September 2010 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 16, 2010 cx
October 21, 2010
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 585-219-4570 or 716-601-9648
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Donations can be mailed to Pat
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Reed Vogel 585-535-7783
Secretary:
Genevieve Mahoney

*Our Regional Contact; Al Visconti
altcfny@gmail.com
Visit our local web site: www.tcfowny.org*

Send Pat photos &/or stories of your child(ren)
for our website 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

August Birthdays

Victoria, daughter of Eric & Laurie Claus
August 7
Thomas, son of Marie Moran
August 7

August Remembrance Dates

Liza, daughter of Marti Austin
August 22
Sharon, daughter of Catherine Horton
August 23
Mickey, son of MaryJane Metcalfe
August 25
Wyatt, son of Pat Wheeler, Grandson of Mae & Larry
Wheeler
August 29

September Birthdays

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 219-4570
Or email at wwpatsuw@comcast.net or mail to home address
at
447 Ellicott St
Batavia, NY 14020

Thank you to the following donators:

Mae & Larry Wheeler, donation in memory of grandson,
Wyatt Zuber
Bev Thomas, raffle Basket donation in memory of son,
Jason

Challenge and Change

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun loving, but now we are serious and absorbed. Our friends and families miss the old us too, and their comments show it. "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again. Like the caterpillar that shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when a child dies. We wonder, our families wonder-when will we come out of it? Will we make it through the long sleep?

What hues will we show when we emerge? If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of the cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy- but worth the effort! We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from the cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge, then we can say proudly: "I have survived against overwhelming odds." Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and the challenges give me hope that I can be happy. I can feel fulfilled again. I can love again.

Sherry Matcher TCF/Appleton, WI

Hope for the Day

What am I going to do today? Every day that is the most difficult question that a person who is suffering loss faces. Am I going to get up and get out of bed, Or am I going to pull the covers up over my head and not face the day? Grief is hard work. It is painful. It is lonely. And, nobody can do the hardest part of grief work for you-feel the pain. Yet we have help along the way. Every one of us has an extra source of help called "HOPE" that is lying dormant inside the depths of the heart. And, when we call on this HOPE, we can be certain we will be given the strength to get through each day! Are you having trouble facing today? Call on the source of HOPE and wait for an answer. Sometimes it comes in the form of a butterfly lighting upon your window sill. Maybe you will see hope in a fluffy white cloud that is in the sky. Perhaps you'll see hope spelled out in a rainbow that follows a storm. Or maybe your hope will come in the still whisper of the gentle breeze blowing in your ear that reminds you that you are never, ever alone. Take courage in today, and look for YOUR special HOPE! It's there, and it will not fail you. Don't worry about tomorrow, as that's another day. Just look for your HOPE for TODAY, and be assured that you will get through!
"Today I will deal only with today, and I know that I can do it hour by hour, minute by minute, hope by hope!"

Clara Hinton

This Season Of Grief

Book Review

I Have No Intention of Saying Good-Bye

by Sandy Fox

Sandy writes of the story about her daughter's death and the courage to live again. The first few chapters are about her story. She then interviewed 25 families and in these stories the parents recounted their losses with love and encouragement for those who wish to be survivors. Readers will perhaps find the stories familiar and find strength in the messages. The parents interviewed are grieving parents from five years or longer. I found comfort in the stories and different ideas of how the families coped. The chapters are short, so for those of us who have difficulty concentrating the stories were short enough to get through. At the end of each chapter Sandy writes a commentary of how she thought the families were getting through, their strengths and different coping strategies. I highly recommend this book. She also has a new book out, "Creating A New Normal;.. After The Death of a Child".

After I've Lost My Baby, Please...

Don't ignore me because you're uncomfortable with the subject of death. Acknowledge my pain, even if you think I shouldn't be feeling it because I've lost "only a baby." And don't expect me to be "over this" in a month. If you invite me to lunch, expect to talk about my loss. Don't change the subject if I should start crying. Tears and talking are the healthiest way for me to release this intense emotion. Don't remind me that I'm lucky to have the other kids-I am and I know it, but my pain is for this baby, and the others don't take that away. Don't devalue my baby-to me, he was a very special, unique person and there is no way he can ever be replaced. When you ask my husband how I am doing, don't forget to ask him how he is doing too. Hug me; tell me you care, that you're sorry this has happened. Be available to me often if you can and let me talk and cry without judging me.

Elsie Sieben
Worcester, MA

It hits like the first blast of winter.
Icy fingers spreading within, numbing,
The mind, heart and soul.
Shrouding us in a protective haze...
Seeing, but not seeing
Knowing, but not knowing
Here in this season of grief.
The first hint of spring arrives, and the tiny seeds, well
Planted, begin to stir.
They take root and begin their journey of growth, spreading
Throughout.
So begins the seeing and knowing this season of grief.
The heat of the summer brings with it the storms.
The raging, the floods, the calm before.
All that was growing is entangled with weeds
Slowly suffocating all that it needs
Here in this season of grief,

.
The coolness of autumn settles within
Silently taking all that had lived.
The garden lies empty, barren and cold.
No place to hide..
For now we must know
Now we must see
That we have become this season of grief
The spring bursts upon us
The untended garden no more
For we have come through the winter
We let grow all the seeds
We weathered the storms and let ourselves bleed
For we began a new garden without even knowing
The scars on our soul no longer openly showing
One day we look back and sigh with relief...
For we have survived this season of grief.

Kathie Simenson 1997

Remember...

I'm there in your heart.
I know there is sorrow where
Laughter once played.
And lingering tears,
Causing gladness to fade.
But there's a sweet comfort
Our memories impart.
So always remember
I'm there in your heart.

Alan Pederson, the songwriter and performer has contacted me and will be in our area on September 29th. It will be held at The Northgate Free Methodist Church on Bank St in Batavia, near the road that goes to GCC. It will start at 7pm and we're hoping to have a candle light service. For those of you lucky enough to have attended his concert last year, you know what a great performer he is. We are very honored and lucky that he is willing to perform for us. There will be a free will offering for both Alan and Compassionate Friends.

[The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference](#)
[July 2-4, 2010-Arlington, VA](#)

Pat, and Mae and Larry Wheeler attended the conference this year. It was such a memorable, moving experience. We arrived late Friday afternoon, got settled in and attended the performance by [The Capitol Steps](#). This was a very funny group that poked fun at our President, the Clintons, Sarah Palin, the Toyota recalls and other funny things. I purchased one of their cd's so if you want a laugh just let me know and you can borrow it. Unfortunately it does not come in DVD as the faces and different clothes, wigs, etc really added to the humor. After the performance we attended a sharing session for families experiencing the sudden death of a child-non-vehicular. There were probably 50 people in attendance and we shared how our child had died. There were people newly found in their grief and others farther down the road.

Saturday offered several workshop choices. We attended 4 different ones. The workshops were all very informational; unfortunately we could only attend 4. That evening was the banquet and candle lighting service. The speaker, Cathy Read spoke of her daughter's death at the Virginia Tech shooting 3 years ago. She is working hard to change gun legislation and improving campus security. The candle lighting was awesome.

Sunday morning, July 4th was Wyatt's 30th birthday. We participated in the 2 mile walk to remember. We carried a banner with pictures of our kids that I had received. Mom and I were not able to do the entire 2 miles so Larry trudged on and met us back at the motel. It was very memorable and quite a sight to see. After the walk we were heading to our room to pack. There were many people waiting for the elevators. My parents and I spotted this young man near the elevators. He had a Texas Longhorns hat on backwards, like Wyatt used to wear. He started talking to us. He had been in Afghanistan and Iraq for 3 years and had buried some of his friends. When he returned his duty was to carry the caskets in the Arlington Cemetery and fold and present the flags to the families. The more he talked it was if we were talking to Wyatt. His name was Shawn. My only regret is that we didn't get his name and address.

The closing ceremony took place about 10am. The siblings did a performance. There was also a signing group who performed to one of Josh Groban's songs. That was when my tears started. I definitely want to go again and highly recommend attending the conference in the future.
By Pat Wheeler

[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 farther 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 seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but 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.](#)

[WISH LIST](#)

Someone to do the newsletter printing each month or if you know a business willing to do it (we print about 30 newsletters each month)

Computer Paper

Stamps

Ink Cartridges-size HP27 & 28, & HP21 & 22

Avery mailing Labels # 8160

Gift cards to Wal-Mart, Target, Kmart, Office Max

Monetary Donations

If anyone is interested in taking over the monthly newsletter please contact Pat 219-4570