



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
**ROCHESTER CHAPTER**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Nov. / Dec. 2012

[www.tcfrochester.org](http://www.tcfrochester.org)

**Light a Candle**

Light a candle  
How the occasions have changed.  
From lighting your birthday candle,  
And singing to you...  
To a special night, with you, celebrating,  
with candles at dinner.

And now to send our thoughts and prayers to you.

Each minute a candle burns,  
The flame lights up the moment.  
But the wax melts and the candle gets shorter,  
Unit it disappears, and the flame goes out...

Like you light up our lives,  
But your life was too short,  
Melting away before we wanted it to.

As this candle and many more are lit,  
Your memory will live on,  
Never going out, like the flame  
You will be in our thoughts and prayers, forever,  
Forever, until we meet up again.

**George Carafos, in loving memory of son David**  
**TCF Rochester NY**

**Wherever You Are**

In the sunlight, that's where I'll be  
In the moonlight, close your eyes, you'll see me  
In the sunrise, in the twilight,  
I'll be the morning and the evening star  
I will be there with you wherever you are.

**Celeste Prince, Shared by Life Time Care**

**A Flicker in the Distance**

In this time of grief,  
When the darkness is so great,  
And your heart is aching so,  
You feel that it may break.  
Remember that in this darkness  
There is a candle's light  
A flicker in the distance  
Small but intensely bright.

That tiny little glow  
That seems so far away  
Will grow brighter and brighter  
With each passing day.

Time does not heal, as they say,  
But it tends to numb  
The ache we feel inside our heart  
When that darkness comes.

In time your heart will feel lighter  
And the memories won't bring such pain  
The tears won't flow as often  
And you will find laughter again.

So keep your eye on that distant glow  
To see how far you came...  
Because at the end of the darkness  
That flicker becomes a flame.

**Jacquelyn M. Comeaux**  
**TCF National**  
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**Close By**

When the morning dew sparkles  
 I'll be near by your side  
 When the afternoon sun fades  
 My love I won't hide  
 When the autumn leaves change  
 And fall is in the air  
 I'll always be close to you  
 I'm around you everywhere  
 When the winter snows come  
 And covers the earth all white  
 I'll be watching you Mom  
 Everything's going to be all right  
 When Christmas time arrives  
 And you feel saddened missing me  
 I'll not be far away  
 For your heart is where I'll be  
 I'll be there when you're saddened  
 On lonely nights when you feel alone  
 I'm never far away mom  
 I'm in my Father's home  
 I'm ok mom, I really am  
 So please don't cry  
 I'm never far from you or dad  
 I'm the angel at your side  
 So when you look around you  
 And see beauty everywhere  
 Just remember I'm beside you  
 In your heart, I'm always there  
 The beauty that surrounds me  
 Is something you will one day see  
 I can't wait until you share  
 This wondrous beauty with me  
 God promised us eternity  
 And that promise was kept  
 I've made it to His home  
 I have no regrets  
 So please don't worry mom  
 I'm happy and I'm fine  
 One day you will understand  
 When you cross that thin line  
 Love,  
 Your child

**Sharon J. Bryant, TCF National  
 In Memory of my son, Andy Dunbar  
 January 22, 1972 – October 24, 1977  
 I'm his mom and he's my angel...forever  
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**I wish, I wish upon a star  
 for my dreams to carry me  
 to where you are,  
 to hear your voice, to sense your touch  
 to feel you near would mean so much.  
 I know you're never far away,  
 and you're with me every single day,  
 so I'm wishing now with all my might  
 that you'll come to me in my dreams tonight.**

[www.tranquilwaters.uk.com](http://www.tranquilwaters.uk.com) , poem copyright Mary Joe  
 Shared by Becky Price, in loving memory of son Josh

**Endowment**

Hope gives us vision for regaining  
 the tenderness of memories.  
 Hope carries us through  
 to survival and healing.

Hope offers us courage  
 for acceptance and overcoming.  
 Hope gives us  
 new spirit and new laughter.

Hope is among the greatest gifts  
 to be found in time of sorrow.  
 But hope cannot restore on earth  
 what is lost to death.  
 Hope can only go forward  
 and make us new.

Give space to hope in your life.

**Sascha Wagner  
 © The Compassionate Friends  
 From LARGO, Fall 2001**

*TCF Candlelighting, December 11, 2012* 7 pm Lifetime Care, 3111 Winton Road South, Rochester, NY (our regular TCF Meeting location).

Each December, the Compassionate Friends holds a National candle lighting Ceremony to honor the memory of all our children "...that their light may always shine".

Our Rochester chapter traditionally holds our own ceremony the first meeting in December. The Program consists of readings and songs, as well as the actual candle lighting.

This year, we are asking our TCF members for a quote, song and/or reading to be included in our Candle Lighting Ceremony. Each entry will include your name and your child's name – for example – "The Prayer sung by Josh Groban, contributed by Becky Price in memory of her son Josh".

Contributions from our members will make our ceremony extremely personal and deeply meaningful. It is also a means to bring our group even closer together. Please submit your contribution to Becky Price by November 27, 2012. You can give her a copy at one of our meetings, or send the information to her via email at [rprice01@rochester.rr.com](mailto:rprice01@rochester.rr.com) Thank you all!

I share with you the agony of your grief,  
The anguish of your heart finds echo in my own.  
I know I cannot enter all you feel  
Nor bear with you the burden of your pain;  
I can but offer what my love does give:  
The strength of caring,  
The warmth of one who seeks to understand  
the silent storm-swept barrenness of so great a loss.  
This I do in quiet ways,  
That on your lonely path  
You may not walk alone.  
**From Mediations of the Heart, by Howard Thurman**  
**Shared by Life Time Care**

*Welcome New Friends*

*At nearly every meeting we welcome new members to our group, always with mixed emotions. We are glad you found us, but we are so sorry for the circumstances that bring us together. We understand your pain; we hope our unconditional friendship and understanding will help you through your grief.*

*Attending a meeting for the first two or three times takes courage, but for many it is the first real step toward healing. It may seem overwhelming, so we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable.*

*TCF Rochester donations:*

*If you would like to contribute to our Compassionate Friends Chapter, please forward your Love Gifts And Donations to:  
The Compassionate Friends of Rochester, 130 Portview Circle, Rochester, NY 14617.*

*Please make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends of Rochester, New York. Sincere Thanks!*

### Love Gifts

*Mary Ann & Tom Dobbins, in loving memory of Colleen Josephine Dobbins*  
*Maria & Louis Fantozzi*  
*Peter Kubarycz*  
*Nicholas & Cynthia Oliva, in loving memory of Stephanie Anne Oliva*  
*Delores Swanson, in loving memory of Scott*  
*Linda Viola, in loving memory of Shawn Viola*  
*Larry & Mae Wheeler, in loving memory of Wyatt Zuber*

**Meeting Location:**

Lifetime Care

3111 Winton Road South

(across from Valley Cadillac)

**Meeting Days :**

Tuesday the 13th and Tuesday the 27th (November)

Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> (December, TCF Annual Candlelighting Event, please see pg. 3)

7:00 P.M. to 7:15 P.M. - social

7:15 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. - meeting

**Contacts:**

Brenda Schmidt 585-370-6095      Becky Price 585-346-2441

TCF Regional Coordinator:

Jacquie Edwards-Mitchell 718-451-0814

TCF National :

877-969-0010 or [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Send newsletter inputs or web comments to:

Joan Carafos, [carafos12@frontiernet.net](mailto:carafos12@frontiernet.net)

*See Brenda for TCF Bracelets (\$2.00) and Memorial votive candle holders (\$5.00)*

**Rochester Chapter TCF Mission:**

*The MISSION of the Rochester Chapter 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.*

## The Journey

I stand looking in the mirror, seeing to my daily routine, brushing my teeth, applying my makeup and suddenly it's like I'm looking at myself for the first time in a very long time. I actually take a step back. I can't help but think – who are you? You seem vaguely familiar, someone I should know but I can't put my finger on it. I study the features in the mirror. Hair is pretty much the same, skin – a little more aged to be sure, but not altogether that different. Ah, the eyes. I see it now. But what? Why?

They're blank. I don't see the sparkle I remember, the gleam, the anticipation. How long have I been this way? Everything is in its rightful place but somehow out of place. I study more closely. There is a depth there that I didn't see before. Like I could somehow enter a hidden, dark passageway. I want to go there but at the same time I am afraid. Of what, I don't know. I feel like I could get swallowed up in the blackness but at the same time, I can't resist the temptation to explore. I let myself slowly enter the circle of darkness and timidly walk down a hallway, off of which there are many closed doors. Doors leading to what, I am not sure but I need to know what's behind them. There is a desperate ache that I can't seem to shake. I hope to find something there that would explain this empty feeling I have inside. If I find it, maybe I can fix it and bring some recognition back to myself.

Slowly, timidly, I open the first door. A little girl, giggling, twirling in circles round and round, watching the skirt of her new dress fluttering out around her knees. The sun is shining, the grass is green, the sky is blue. Suddenly, I recognize her. It is I at age five. Smile as bright as the sun, hair in long curls down my back, eyes bright and full of life. The act of twirling in that new dress is all it takes to make me joyful. All is well. That is not the door I am looking for.

I continue down the hall to another door. Opening it, I see a young teenage girl lying across her bed, music blaring in the background and she is on the telephone, laughing about the day's events at school with her best friend. There is anticipation in her eyes and pure giddiness in the life surrounding her. She is so untouched, so fresh, so innocent. There is the usual teenage angst of first boyfriends, lost love and secret crushes. Again, I recognize her as myself, in my room, safe, secure, loved and carefree. All is well. That is not the door I am looking for.

My journey continues down the hall to yet another door. What will I find behind this one? I open it and see a young woman, in a beautiful white wedding dress, fragrant bouquet of flowers in her hand and a beaming smile on her lovely face. She is walking down an aisle, leaving the past behind and walking towards her future. Excitement and promise lie ahead. Smiling to myself, I recognize her. I am her, looking forward to a fresh new beginning of love, joy and experiences. No, that is not the door I am looking for.

From the next door down the hallway, I hear the muffled sounds of children's laughter. I am anxious to open this door. I am not disappointed. Inside is a family - Mom, Dad and two children. They are picnicking at the park down the street from where they live. It's a beautiful summer's day with a sweetness to the breeze that drifts across the wildflowers. A girl and a boy – running, laughing, playing tag, doing summersaults. Watch me Mommy! Look what I can do? I look deep into the woman's eyes. She is soaking up this place in time knowing that it will soon be over. Children grow up. They leave the nest. She knows she is trying to do the very best she can to prepare them for the world outside their safe place. Her life up till now hasn't always been what she dreamed of. There have been ups and downs, disappointments, struggles. She knows this is part of what life is about. She accepts the changes

and all that they bring, but for today, she is living in the moment. Her children are her life's greatest accomplishments. She will continue to do her best to protect them, keep them safe and happy. That is her job and one that she accepts without question. Slowly wisdom is taking the place of innocence. I feel a tug at my heart knowing that I am her. I have come to accept the reality of life rather than the perfect picture in my head. It's not all that I dreamed of, but I know now that it never will be. As hard as it is to let go of those illusions, I know that I must. Again, that is not the door I am looking for.

The next door is puzzling. The other doors were pleasant looking enough. But this one is stark white! Even the handle is white. There is a coldness about it. Sterile looking. Hesitantly I open it. The strong odor of alcohol, blood, sanitation and various other chemicals almost overwhelms my senses. This whole room is sterile. Doctors and Nurses are on the scene. IV poles are everywhere and a series of tubes, needles, pills, bandages and bedpans. I recognize an irritating beeping coming from one of the machines. It's relentless. Will someone please stop it? Then I understand.....this is the hospital room where I battled my cancer. There are two beds here and I have to think for a moment. One was for me and the other.....my son. My poor son. He too was battling cancer. Both of us. What a pair! Two little bald heads! I remember being on both sides of the bed – one side where I was in it, the other side where I sat and nursed my son. That was a frightening time. The endless stream of tests, machines, follow-up doctor appointments and waiting rooms. Always questioning – is it back? We got through it. We shared this awful experience and continued our journey. That is not the door I was looking for but it's not a door I want to open again.

I come upon the next to last door. It's darker than the rest. There is an eerie feeling as I approach it. Something dark looms at its doorway. I freeze. My body suddenly feels weak. My mouth is dry, my heart beating too fast. I don't want to open this door. My fear is too great. I want to run from this door, but something holds me fast. It might hold the answers to this drifting soul that can't seem to rest. I hesitate but the search for an answer outweighs this dread. I need to know. I reach out and turn the handle. With all the courage I can muster, I open this door.

The first thing that hits me is the overwhelming smell of flowers! So odd. It is not a pleasant smell but rather cloying, pungent, stifling. I walk a little farther into the room. It's dim and windowless. I feel slightly claustrophobic. Soft music is playing in the background but not the kind you want to move to or sing along with. All around there are colors that fade in and out of the grayness. It must be the flowers struggling to take center stage but can't. They are not beautiful. They are not the ones that people stop to admire. They are setting the stage for something else. My eyes slowly move around the room. There is a presence here that I feel but it is elusive. Its energy is weak, as if it is draining away, but still clings. I am moved to something over in the corner of the room.

With great effort, I take one step, then another, all the while feeling a strong pull toward it. I know I must continue. I sense that whatever I encounter is both horrible and healing. I approach this object. What is it? Why does it terrify me so? Finally, I reach it. Slowly the picture becomes clearer. It is a coffin. Rich mahogany, satin lined. With a heavy heart, I know I must press on. It is important. I lean over the edge. My strongest fear is realized as recognition hits. I am looking upon the beautiful face of my son, so still, so white. No! No! No! It can't be. It can't be true. I never should have opened this door! Why? Why? He was so young, so good. Hadn't he gone through enough already? Grief overwhelms me but the guilt is stronger. What didn't I do? How did I fail him? Why couldn't I protect him from this fate? Why him and not me?

My sorrow is deep. I understand now. It all makes sense. Yes, the woman in the mirror is relatively the same – the changes run deeper. It's the emptiness in my soul, the blankness in my eyes, the way I carry myself, the dullness of my speech. How long have I been this way? Since that horrible day when my son died. I now have the answer. This was the door I couldn't open for such a long time. It was there but hidden from me, from my conscience mind. I'm not sure if I can bear it now. I have been walking through my life in a daze. I am doing all the everyday normal things but somehow just going through the motions.

I am spent, exhausted, my mind is weary. I slowly make my way out of this room. This door I want to close forever. Out in the hallway I let out a heavy sigh. What now? I turn to leave but notice there is still one more door at the end of the hallway. Do I dare? I can't survive much more. I've come so far but feel my journey is not yet over. I see a light shining out from under this door. This light is different - warm, soft, comforting. An invitation. I'm no longer afraid of this last door. Maybe this door is the one I seek. Maybe I will find refuge through this door. I stand before it now. This one is different – I can sense it. As I open it, I am immediately filled with joy! Beautiful music and colors fill my senses. I see pictures projected like a slideshow – a beautiful sunset, lovely greenery of trees and flowers, cherished friends and family, majestic mountains, cloudless blue skies, nature-filled forests, calm ocean waters that lap upon the shore. They speak to me of promise, hope, courage, peace. These pictures and more flash before me. They are the backdrop. Only I can fill in the rest. This door holds nothing of the past – it is of the future. All is well. This is the door I was looking for. I have only to go through it..... and I will be free.

**From the poems & prose of Deborah Streb  
TCF Rochester NY**

## **Healing Grief Rituals To remember our loves ones**

The value of creating “Grief Rituals” is to help us remember our loves ones in loving, healing ways and with a sense of peace.

- ❖ Buy a Christmas ornament each year to remember your loved one.
- ❖ Buy a special candle and light it at times that are special to your loved one’s memory.
- ❖ Christmas stockings – hang one up for a loved one and have everyone write a note to put inside.
- ❖ Create a scrapbook of memories / photos ... a memory book.
- ❖ Create a scholarship in your loves one’s name.
- ❖ Donate gifts, quilts, etc. in a loved one’s name.
- ❖ Find a tree in the woods, tie a yellow ribbon around it. Go frequently to remember (this is especially helpful when ashes have been scattered and there is no grave site).
- ❖ Have a birthday party for your loved one on his/her birthday.
- ❖ Have a family “memory” evening where you share pictures, reminisce about special times, create a scrapbook of memories, etc.
- ❖ Help feed the hungry/homeless at Thanksgiving, holidays, etc.
- ❖ If you go on a trip , do something special to remember your love one (ie throw a rose in the ocean or light a candle).
- ❖ On birthdays, remembrance days, holidays, or other significant days, buy your loved one a gift and donate it to a hospital, nursing home, etc.
- ❖ Plant a strong, healthy tree or rosebush in a loves one’s name.
- ❖ Write messages on balloons and let them go up.

**From: To Touch a Grieving Heart, Paracome Inc. and Healing Resources, 1995  
Shared by Life Time Care**



*Our Children Remembered*  
*November, 2012*  
*Birthdays and Remembrance Days*



*Birthdays*

<i>Cheryl Lee Segal</i>	<i>November 3</i>
<i>Zachary Michael Chasman</i>	<i>November 3</i>
<i>Lisa Ann Rupp</i>	<i>November 5</i>
<i>Christopher Robert Crawford</i>	<i>November 7</i>
<i>Sabrina L. Joy</i>	<i>November 7</i>
<i>Elias Masanka Charles Kabongo</i>	<i>November 15</i>
<i>Reese DeBlase</i>	<i>November 17</i>
<i>Patric Michael McGowan</i>	<i>November 17</i>
<i>Michael Matthew Brown</i>	<i>November 20</i>
<i>Michael Benvenuti</i>	<i>November 22</i>
<i>David Raymond Coates</i>	<i>November 28</i>
<i>Grant Matthew Lintala</i>	<i>November 28</i>
<i>Randall John Lis</i>	<i>November 30</i>
<i>Steven M. Blahyj</i>	<i>November 30</i>

*Remembrance Days*

<i>Slade Gerstner</i>	<i>November 1</i>
<i>Stephanie Anne Oliva</i>	<i>November 4</i>
<i>Graham Wilson Smith</i>	<i>November 12</i>
<i>Patric Michael McGowan</i>	<i>November 17</i>
<i>Benjaman Allen</i>	<i>November 18</i>
<i>Jeffrey James Yates</i>	<i>November 22</i>
<i>Bailey Ann Marie Desalvo</i>	<i>November 22</i>
<i>Aaron R. Vogel</i>	<i>November 26</i>
<i>Robert "Rob" Stultz</i>	<i>November 28</i>
<i>Donald Thomas Page</i>	<i>November 30</i>





*Our Children Remembered*  
*December, 2012*  
*Birthdays and Remembrance Days*



*Birthdays*

*Brenton Tyler Jacob*  
*Brian Charles Oster*  
*Matt Loomis*  
*Erich Lee Anderson*  
*Douglas Edward Outterson*  
*Brenda Jean Tastor*  
*Christi Grace Juliano*  
*Michael David Mueller*  
*Christopher Czerw*  
*Tina Rheinwald*  
*Abbagail Leigh Buzard*  
*David Henry Outterson*  
*Bailey Ann Marie Desalvo*  
*Curtis Aaron Seibert*  
*Shawn Patrick Viola*  
*Michael Schaub*  
*Donald Thomas Page*

*December 5*  
*December 7*  
*December 7*  
*December 12*  
*December 14*  
*December 14*  
*December 17*  
*December 19*  
*December 22*  
*December 23*  
*December 27*  
*December 27*  
*December 27*  
*December 29*  
*December 29*  
*December 29*  
*December 31*

*Remembrance Days*

*Scott Martin Johnson*  
*Ryan Patrick Todisco*  
*Steven Laurence Britt*  
*Nate Riley*  
*Tristan Folley Hanna*  
*Andrew Urquhart*  
*David Henry Outterson*  
*Nora Elizabeth McMahan*  
*Matthew Gabe Fogarassy*  
*Jessica Lyndsey Frey*  
*Jennifer Lyn Quackenbush*  
*Jason S. Grizzanto*

*December 5*  
*December 6*  
*December 7*  
*December 7*  
*December 10*  
*December 13*  
*December 13*  
*December 18*  
*December 22*  
*December 25*  
*December 30*  
*December 30*

