



**This Thanksgiving**

This Thanksgiving and always,  
 Through the grief,  
 Through the tears,  
 Through the loneliness,  
 Through the fears,  
 WE ARE THANKFUL  
 WE HAD OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

***Khaki Chambers***  
***TCF, Pensacola FL***

**Lights of Love**

Can you see our candles  
 Burning in the night?  
 Lights of love we send you  
 Rays of purest white

Children we remember  
 Though missing from our sight  
 In honor and remembrance  
 We light candles in the night

All across the big blue marble  
 Spinning out in space  
 Can you see the candles burning  
 From this human place?

Oh, angels gone before us  
 Who taught us perfect love  
 This night the world lights candles  
 That you may see them from above

Tonight the globe is lit by love  
 Of those who know great sorrow,  
 But as we remember our yesterdays  
 Let's light one candle for tomorrow

We will not forget,  
 And every year in deep December  
 On Earth we will light candles  
 As ..... We remember

***Jacqueline Brown***  
***TCF, Peace Valley PA***

**A Letter to Grief**

Grief,

I wish we never met. You are so mean! You make me feel so sad when I think about Brandon, when all I really want to do is be happy.

You are such a distraction. How am I supposed to stay focused at work when you keep rearing your ugly face!

You keep reminding me of how much I miss Brandon.

I keep trying to remember his beautiful face, goofy grin and gorgeous green eyes, but you, lousy grief, keep putting the image of my son lying in his casket.

All I want to remember is how sweet he smelled as a baby and how soft his baby hair was when I kissed the top of his head... but you make me remember what it was like to give Brandon his final kiss goodbye. That cold kiss – no warmth. No sweet smell.

Grief, you are rotten and awful. You have made me and my family feel such pain!

I know you too well. You are sly. You try to sneak up on me when I've pushed you away.

I am winning this battle you and I have going on.

You tried to smother me in the beginning but I have gained strength from Brandon's love. I will keep fighting you, lousy Grief! Every day I will make you a smaller part of my day. You will never completely disappear; but what control you had over me has been and will continue to be filled with Brandon's love for me, his Mom.

***Tammy Lass***  
***In loving memory of son Brandon Lass***  
***TCF, Rochester NY***

### *This First Year*

*It hardly seems possible that a year has gone by,  
Since you left this physical world my son and gained your wings to fly,  
Up above us all flitting to and fro on high,  
Through the branches of our family tree like a zephyr in the sky,*

*This year has been filled with such emotions and memories,  
One moment releasing molten tears to fall and the next causing hearts to freeze,  
As I look back upon this year of firsts,  
I feel the emotions in my chest filling near to burst,*

*Your first birthday missed... number eighteen,  
Was so difficult to get through... twas not a pretty scene,  
But four days later on the anniversary of our wedding day,  
We felt you so strongly with us throughout the night... you held the pain at bay,*

*And the firsts kept on rolling right on through this year that has past,  
Oh how it seems to have gone so much faster than fast,  
Our first Thanksgiving in Connecticut spent with family,  
Was not the same without you I know all would agree,*

*And all the rest of the holiday festivities throughout this past year,  
What can be said other than they weren't the same without your physical presence here,  
I have definitely felt your spirit with me during these trying times,  
Whether through a butterfly fluttering about or the musical tinkle of wind chimes,*

*But this wasn't just a year of firsts... it was a year of onetime events,  
It was your Senior year and with it all that represents,  
If I told you it was easy then that would be a lie,  
As the sports seasons, concerts and banquets came and passed on by,*

*Until we reached that day in June when upon that Graduation stage I did stand,  
My heart hammered away as your diploma was placed into my hand,  
And what did I see and hear as I turned to face the crowd,  
The faces of our community giving a standing ovation heartfelt and loud,*

*That is one of the constants that we have had to rely on throughout,  
It is what makes where we live so great without a shadow of a doubt,  
Living in this town of ours with such neighbors, family and friends,  
Knowing that when such things happen it is on them we can depend,*

*And lest you think that it was all sadness this whole year through,  
I'd have to say that is simply just not true,  
We knew great joy as our teams won championships in the name of Forty-Two,  
And was so proud as our Title Town banners were set out for all to view,*

*Continued on page 3*

*But it all comes back to how we are feeling today,  
It has been one year exactly since you were taken away,  
I do not know if the pain is as raw as on that day when we sat there on that road,  
But I can tell you that each day I miss you more than those that before this one has flowed,*

*I know these feelings will not change throughout the rest of my life,  
There will be those good days and then those days my heart knows strife,  
And tonight there was a little of both as I watched the lanterns take to the air,  
And looked all about me to those faces that truly care,*

*I have tried to be the family rock, . . . tried to show no fear,  
Yet every eve I say "Good Night" and "I Miss You" and then wipe away a tear,  
Every time that I have needed it I've felt your presence near,  
And that is how I have done it . . . how I got through This First Year!*

*Jim Lass*

*In loving memory of son Brandon Lass  
TCF, Rochester NY*

### **Falling Tears – Eleven Years**

As some tears begin to fall, I begin to write.

Eleven years and the tears still are unannounced,  
often unexpected, but they still come.

The loss is still strong, hurts all through me.

Yes I remember the good things.  
They can bring smiles, and laughter, but not erase the pain, the loss.  
How I wish, hope for your smile, hear your voice, feel you against me.  
I know you are here, but it hurts that I can't hear, touch, smell you.  
You were such a good boy, growing up to be a fine man.  
Not perfect, not always, but Great to have in our lives.

As always I talk with you often, knowing and believing you are hearing.  
Knowing you are watching over us.

Helping us like you always did.  
You were our son, our family, and our friend.  
We will miss you always and love you forever.  
You will be in our hearts forever.

Love you David,  
Mom and Dad

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

### My Frozen Heart

I stand here looking at the snow piling up ... falling, falling  
I listen to the wind move through the trees ... so cold, so cold  
I wrap my coat around me tighter still and face his grave.

So quiet. Even the birds, warm in their nests, are not venturing out  
I see the headstones of all the many souls here at rest, yet I am so alone  
Are they away from the cold, the wind, the enveloping grayness, the silence?  
Or are they wishing they too could be here experiencing what seems so tortuous to me?

My boy. Lying beneath me. So young, so helpless. As a mother, I still feel the need to make sure his needs are met. Is he cold, hungry, lonely, scared? I can't bear it. To think he may be suffering, mourning the loss of his life, want desperately to be back with his family again ...  
in his mother's loving embrace. Tears fill my eyes stinging.

My heart is frozen like the earth below me. I can't feel. I just exist. I don't want to leave this Place. I can't bear to walk away and leave him here cold and alone. Part of me wants to curl up next to his headstone and just let the quiet cold envelope me. Go to the place where he is. But I can't. There are others ... others who need me too.

As if my body were too frozen to move, I slowly stand. Walk away from him again I must. My soul is buried with him but my body continues to move forward. I hope someday they will catch up with each other. I long for a sign – a sign that he is at peace, that he is alright, that I am not a bad mother for leaving him there. As I make my way back, suddenly there is a hopeful chirp from a lone bird that has rested on a tree branch just out of my reach. He is there as if to say that even in the dead of the winter of our lives, the hope of Spring is still on the horizon.

I pull my coat closer and turn into the wind. For some reason, I feel a peace come over me.  
Thank you Lord.

*From the poems of Deborah M. Streb, in loving memory of son Adam Marano  
TCF, Rochester NY*

### Love Gifts

*Steve Colangelo, in loving memory of son Daniel Colangelo*

*Linda & Timothy Hale, in loving memory of son Timothy Hale*

*Nick & Cindy Oliva, in loving memory of daughter Stephanie Oliva*

*Support for the meeting on September 22, 2015 was donated by*

*Beck Price, in loving memory of son Joshua*



*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.*

**\*Upcoming Events:**

***Candlelighting Ceremony – Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> (a regular meeting night) First Unitarian Church (our regular meeting place)***

***Please join us for a beautiful program of music & readings, in loving memory of our children, grandchildren, siblings***

**NEW Meeting Location:**

**First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Road South  
Rochester, New York**

**Meeting Days :**

**Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> (November)**

**Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup>\* & Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> (December)**

**\*12/8/15 Candlelighting Ceremony (See above)**

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

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

**Contacts:**

**Becky Price 585-346-2441**

**Mary Ann Dobbins 585-872-0566**

**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, [jcarafos@photikon.com](mailto:jcarafos@photikon.com)**

If you would like to contribute to our Compassionate Friends Chapter, please forward your Love Gifts and Donations to: The Compassionate Friends of Rochester C/O 9 Lakeview Park Rochester, NY 14613  
Please make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends of Rochester, New York

**Sincere Thanks!**

**To receive this newsletter via e-mail, please contact  
Alice Torres at [alice3970@gmail.com](mailto:alice3970@gmail.com)**

***Rochester Chapter TCF Mission:***

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family. Adopted 2-25-12.

***Our Children Remembered***  
***November 2015***  
***Birthdays and Remembrance Days***



## Birthday

Katie Lyn Fields	November	1
Lisa Ann Rupp	November	5
Justin Adam Rifenberg	November	5
Christopher Robert Crawford	November	7
Michael Matthew Brown	November	20
Terah Lee Gates	November	21
Joshua Lee Prescott	November	24
Andrew Clay Parkhurst	November	27
Grant Matthew Lintala	November	28

## Remembrance Day

Slade Gerstner	November	1
Stephanie Anne Oliva	November	4
Alex R. Ketchek	November	8
Graham Wilson Smith	November	13
Greta Elinor Lindboom	November	14
Jeffery James Yates	November	22
Terah Lee Gates	November	25





***Our Children Remembered  
December 2015  
Birthdays and Remembrance Days***

[Birthday](#)

Richard John Tanner	December 2
Brian Charles Oster	December 7
Matthew R. Loomis	December 7
Peggy Jane O'Neill	December 13
Alexander Ryan Fitzpatrick	December 14
Melissa Ann Harris	December 15
Joel Ayite Ajavon	December 16
Michael David Mueller	December 19
Elaine Marie Liddell	December 21
Matthew James Straton	December 23
Clarence L. Ross, II	December 23
Shawn Patrick Viola	December 29

[Remembrance Day](#)

Douglas M. Slocum	December 2
Nate Riley	December 7
Jennifer Lynn McNeil	December 7
Steven L. Britt	December 7
Tristan Foley Hanna	December 10
Ethan Emerson Price	December 16
Matthew Gabe Fogarassy	December 22
Joel C. Stuhler	December 24
Elaine Marie Liddell	December 30



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

*The value of creating "Grief Rituals" is to help us remember our loved 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 loved 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 loved 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 loved 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*



## To Our Family and Friends

*The "Holiday Season" is a time of family – festive gatherings, worshiping together, sharing love and gifts, and cherished memories. For the bereaved parent, these aspects of the season are precisely what makes us dread its arrival.*

*The absence of our child when the "whole family" gathers seems to accentuate our incomplete family. We are sorely reminded of "how it used to be" and don't want to accept what is now. We need patience and understanding of our family and friends to help us through the holidays as best we can.*

*We may want to change the way we spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Hanukkah. If the family traditionally gathers at one house, perhaps the gathering place could be changed, especially if the gathering home is that of the bereaved. If we do prepare the meal, be aware that we may not have the energy we have had in the past and will need a lot of help.*

*Perhaps we'll try to avoid the holiday altogether by going away for a few days. Whatever our thoughts are for coping with the day, please take our feelings into consideration when you make your plans.*

*For some of us shopping for gifts is a painful experience. The stores' festive decorations and music belie our mood, as we feel forced into participating in the "season." We think longingly about that special gift we won't be buying this year. Again, our depression saps us of the energy to do the things we have done in the past, and we need your understanding for the things that remain undone.*

*Perhaps the single most helpful thing you can do for us is to include our child in the holidays. We want to hear his/her name, to have you recall fond memories of their lives, to know that you, too, are feeling their absence and remembering them with love.*

*Getting through the holidays is a rough task for bereaved parents. We need to handle them in a way that we feel is best for ourselves and our families. We ask for your love and support during this especially difficult time.*

*Marge Henning  
TCF, West Orange NJ*