



The Compassionate Friends
Rochester Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January / February 2016 www.tcfrochester.org



Dear Mom,

Just a few moments on earth can seem to be an eternity when in fact it's less than a silent sigh in all of the universe. All those times I would labor over Physics problems, Differential Equations and what seemed to be endless engineering assignments were just fleeting moments. Regardless of the profound affect time once had upon all of us, who were once granted the gift of life, now savor every moment in our heavenly bliss bestowed upon us by God himself. When I crossed the line from the realm of humanity to the most glorious light of knowledge and acceptance I was fulfilled with a level of contentment that no words could describe. You may ask how a spirit can be fully actualized knowing that those left behind are crushed by deep sorrow, grief, anger, pangs of isolation and an undying sense of emptiness. The gift of understanding granted to those who enter into the eternal light know the boundless beauty that waits for those who have not yet been escorted into the kingdom of heaven. We shall be together once again. When God the Father decides it is your turn I shall be waiting to take your hand and walk you into the brilliance of all eternity.

Your sadness is plagued by one word. The one word I always asked incisively as a child: "Why". Now each and every day you ask why I had to leave the warmth of your love and joy of life. You will not get an answer until it is your time to pass through the glorious light of ever and a day. It is then that you will understand the reason for my passing. This knowledge will bring you great joy.

I see the pain you and Dad go through each and every day. Human nature plays harmful deceptions upon those stricken by grief. The human condition screams depression, anger and hopelessness when it should sing out praises of joy. Blind faith will guide you to the path that I myself journeyed upon four years ago and what a wonderful path it is. Each day Dad says "Thank you Lord God in heaven for the twenty beautiful years you granted me with my wonderful son Matthew." Dad started to free himself from the strong arm of the human condition by embracing blind faith. Do you remember when Dad got away from reading books on the horrors of today's world and picked up a book written about the Jesuits solutions to all problems? I whispered in his ear to read that very book. He gained some valuable insight from that book that has helped through his sorrow. One awareness he has gained is meditative thanks for the gifts granted us while on earth. Dad now seems to find comfort in seclusion. That's such a change from the man I once knew. I miss our dirt bike rides through the woods, target practice and the hilarious moments trying to learn golf. I haven't seen Dad laugh like he used to. He needs to learn how to laugh again because that's the way life is intended to be.

(cont. Pg 2)

Mom, you are so very sad, so distraught, so lost. Regardless of what I say I realize my chances of bringing you a speck of joy is improbable. After all - you are Irish. I don't have a book for you to read, but I do offer you this: The bliss we shared on earth is still within you. Dig deep and feel that elation of those special times. We had so many grand experiences together. Don't fight it. It is OK to be happy. I will not be offended if you laugh once in a while. In fact the only sadness I feel is your sadness. So laugh as hard as you possibly can and I will laugh with you each and every time.

Love, Matt

John & Pat Loomis
In loving memory of son, Matt Loomis
TCF, Rochester NY



Shared by Becky Price

We want to share this support group information:

Face 2 Face Friendship Group -Rochester, NY

Providing support & hope to families coping with miscarriage, stillbirth, & infant loss

Leaders: Stephanie Brown, Melissa Ippolito, Jenn Rose Stremich

For more information:

585-454-9299

F2FRochestrer@gmail.com

<http://www.face2facerochester.com>

[facebook.com/Face2FaceRochesterNY](https://www.facebook.com/Face2FaceRochesterNY)

Effective January 1, 2016, Joe Stuhler will assume the co-leadership position currently held by Becky Price.

Joe – You bring new energy and ideas to our group. Your compassion, caring and thoughtfulness will be an asset to our Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. Your commitment to TCF is very much appreciated. We all look forward to working with you.

Becky – You have weathered this organization through several challenging situations in the past five years as well as providing a caring and loving heart to all of us. You have contributed endless hours of your time, talents, and compassion. I personally thank you for so generously staying on as a co-leader a year longer than you anticipated, so graciously easing me into the position of co-leadership. Our chapter would not be the successful organization it is today without your leadership. We sincerely appreciate your dedication, and all you have done and still do for TCF.

Barb – You have been actively involved in TCF for 13 years! We are so fortunate to have had your expertise and depth of knowledge, only years of dedication to TCF can bring. At each meeting you gave newcomers “hope” that some day, the pain would be different, not so debilitating. You have given freely of your time, talents, and caring heart. You truly care about each one of us. We thank you for your dedication and your hard work over the past 13 years.

Mary Ann Dobbins, TCF Rochester Co-Leader

“Barb has been an invaluable source of information about our chapter’s beginnings and has always been willing to do whatever needed to be done. She has been a constant support to our group, and especially to me as co-leader and more importantly as my friend. Many Thanks...”

Becky Price, TCF Rochester

Love Gifts

Support for the meeting on November 24, 2015 was donated by

Pat Loomis, in loving memory of son Matt Loomis



NEW Meeting Location:

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

Meeting Days :

Tuesday the 12th & Tuesday the 26th (January)

Tuesday the 9th & Tuesday the 23rd (February)

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

7:15 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. – meeting

Contacts:

Mary Ann Dobbins 585-872-0566

TCF Regional Coordinator:

Jacque Edwards-Mitchell 718-451-0814

TCF National :

877-969-0010 or

www.compassionatefriends.org

Send newsletter inputs or web comments to:

Joan Carafos, 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

***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.

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

Endless Winter

It's oh so very warm outside
 Sun blazing in the sky
 But my body feels an eerie chill
 And it makes no sense why

Is it my body or my soul
 That feels so cold this day
 My skin is warm, my eyes need shade
 But the shivers seem to stay

I'm lost in thoughts, they run so deep
 Not in the present anymore
 They're back in time, so far away
 Off on a distant shore

My mind sees only glimpses
 Of the landscape of the day
 The sun has lost its glory
 Behind a wall of gray

The wind sweeps through, we huddle
 close
 The ground is white with snow
 I stand alone amidst the crowd
 And say it isn't so

This coffin can't be for my son
 It must be some mistake
 My heart rejects the very thought
 Of being at his wake

But everyone is passing by
 Throwing flowers on his grave
 Words coming from the minister
 Telling me I must be brave

It must be true, I can't deny
 The sorrow on their faces
 Some give me looks of sympathy
 And others, warm embraces

I shiver through the ritual
 Can't make the shaking cease
 I want to run so far away
 Not face my son deceased

My mind snaps back to here and now
 And I start to understand why
 The sun can't warm my frozen heart
 And I begin to cry

No matter what the season
 I will always feel a chill
 My soul never left his gravesite
 And it remains there still

**From the Poems and Prose of
 Deborah Passero Streb
 In loving memory of son, Adam Marano
 TCF, Rochester NY**



David,

As I listen to the Josh Groban song " You raise me up" as it plays on the radio,

I see your pictures.

See you smiling at me.

Times and roles have changed.

We used to carry you in our arms, or on our shoulders.

Keeping you safe.

Keeping you up with us,

Having you up where you could see things, better.

Raising you up, as the song says, physically, but so much more.

Raising you, teaching you, watching out for you.

Now

Thoughts of you and who you were.

Pictures with your smile.

Raising me up, reminding me, of how I should be.

Looking out for me.

Thank you for all you are, and for all we had.

Damn, I miss you so much.

I will love you forever.

Dad

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



The New Year: A Time of Hope



Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories...sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF Katy, TX

Coping with Grief: Winter Blues

When the weather gets colder and the days get shorter, we often find ourselves feeling low. Some people call this the Winter Blues. When you are grieving, those blues can feel overwhelming.

Grief itself is hard to cope with and cold winds and longer nights can make those feelings seem more intense. Here are a few ideas that may help you cope with the Winter Blues:

- Winter only lasts a few months. Use this time to reflect on your relationship with the person who died. Sometimes in our efforts to deny our loss, we rob ourselves of precious memories.
 - Reach out to friends or family when you can. Often our isolation is worse because we do not allow ourselves time with others. You are not alone. There are many other people going through a similar experience. Although your relationship with your loved one is special, other people can understand. Take the risk to ask someone over for coffee or tea. Share with them.
 - Take time to look through picture albums. Gather family to share stories. Make a new tradition during the dreary months of winter for family to gather for an evening of remembering. The holidays are over and the pressure is off. Maybe other people are feeling the same way and are afraid to talk about it.
 - Try a grief support group. Sometimes all we need is to know other people hear us and understand. A group can help you to know you are normal.
 - Read ... favorite stories, comedies, novels, or information about grief to understand your own reactions better. Somehow reading about such topics helps us know we are not alone. You can look for grief materials in your local library, church, or local TCF chapter.
 - Take good care of yourself. Eat right, rest and pamper your body. This goes for any season. Your body is under a tremendous amount of stress in adjusting to your loss.
 - Since grief affects us physically, paying attention to our bodies is important. Whether you prefer to do things alone or with others, physical activity helps. Taking a walk, doing simple aerobics, indoor swimming, playing racquetball or other activities can help you keep your body ready for the continued adjustment to loss. Feeling better physically can make a difference.
 - If you feel sad and need to cry, know that is a normal reaction. You are not weak if you need to show your emotions.
 - Write a letter to your loved one. Sometimes we need to communicate with them. Going to the cemetery is okay and normal. If the weather prevents that, a letter can be very helpful.
- Remember that you will survive this loss. The pain and ache can seem like it will last forever. The intensity will lessen in time, although you will always remember your loved one. Time does not necessarily "heal" all wounds, but it can help us adjust to the change. Take it minute by minute ... then day by day.

**From TCF Newsletter, Pittsburgh, PA
Shared by TCF Lawrenceville, GA**



**Our Children Remembered
January 2016
Birthdays and Rememberance Days**

Birth Dates



Alex R. Ketchek	January 8
Benjamin L. Assenato	January 17
Daniel P. Martel	January 21
David George Carafos	January 24
Laura Collins	January 25
Sam Lowery	January 28
Daniel Michael Roach	January 29
Patricia Helen Klehr	January 30
Joshua Daniel Price	January 30

Rememberance Dates

Shawn Patrick Viola	January 1
Justin A. McLaren	January 8
Aaron Y. Wallace	January 10
Thomas William Costello	January 11
Adam V. Marano	January 18
Christopher Brian Budwey	January 23
Laura Catherine Mix	January 25

**Our Children Remembered
February 2016
Birthdays and Rememberance Days**

Birth Dates

Christopher Bedford	February 5
Greg Paul Crawford	February 10
Jillian Kristine Boda	February 12
Andrew Richard Primerano	February 12
Scott David Swanson	February 13
Molly Katherine Thomas	February 14
Jaden Michael Fournier	February 16
Amy Marie Iwasko	February 19
Nicholas Jay Kovaleski	February 27
Katie L. Piccone	February 27

Rememberance Dates

Karen Jill. D'Amico	February 4
Ricardo Bernabeu, Jr.	February 6
Curt AJ Hall	February 10
Timothy E. Hale	February 12
Brian Keith Nelson	February 13
Conor LeVan Driscoll	February 16
Caroline Elizabeth Harber	February 17
Grant Matthew Lintala	February 17
Mark P. Metzger	February 18
Lisa Ann Rupp	February 20
Graham Jackson Knight	February 22
Kimberly Susan Fitzsimmons	February 23
Daniel Michael Roach	February 25
Michael Ruiz V	February 27
Benjamin L. Assenato	February 27