



The Compassionate Friends
Rochester Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Sept. / Oct. 2016 www.tcfrochester.org



A Letter From Christian

My favorite peaceful place, when I am in a rut, or feel bad I escape to the woods. It doesn't matter what woods. As long as I can get away from the problems of life, the commotion of people and their drama, and away from man-made synthetic way of life. There is an amazing peace that I feel when I enter into the wilderness. Nothing is ever the same, and I always observe something different and unique. I love the surprise elements of nature it's so peaceful and calm, yet unforgiving and suspenseful. The wildlife I observe, and have studied for years fascinates me. Trying to understand why, what and when of lifestyle's in the wilderness is amazing. The average person that walks into an old forest and sees nothing isn't looking hard enough. If you stop and pick a spot, wiping the dead leaves on the Fall ground away and patiently wait, you realize just how active and amazing the woods are. Teaming with wildlife and insects all busy working, often they are working for their lives. Everything has a purpose, even the trees. It all comes together in a mosaic to make a large picture. The picture gets bigger and bigger as you expand outward and think of our world as a whole. It scares me to know that we are losing vital plants and animals every day. When this happens we wipe away part of the picture, and it will not come back. It's a matter of time before we wipe out part of the picture and the whole thing crumbles. The peace, and serenity will be gone, that's why we need to work together to keep our Environment intact. Because it's usually the small things that nobody notices or recognizes, or even sees for that matter that may be the most important. Just like our human relationships, it's always the small little stupid things we think don't matter, but really they matter the most. So my advice to you is take a walk in the woods with someone you love and remember to take in all the small things in life which is what is most important.

**Shared by Marguerite Lester, in loving memory of son Christian Lester
TCF, Rochester NY**

A Bereaved Parent's Wish List

1. I wish my child hadn't died. I wish I had him back.
2. I wish you wouldn't be afraid to speak my child's name. My child lived and was very important to me. I need to hear he was important to you also.
3. If I cry and get emotional when you talk about my child I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me. My child's death is the cause of my tears. You have talked about my child, and you have allowed me to share my grief. I thank you for both.
4. I wish you wouldn't "kill" my child again by removing his pictures, artwork, or other remembrances from your home.
5. Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me. I need you now more than ever.
6. I need diversions, so I do want to hear about you; but I also want you to hear about me. I might be sad and I might cry, but I wish you would let me talk about my child, my favorite topic of the day.
7. I know that you think of and pray for me often. I also know that my child's death pains you, too. I wish you would let me know those things through a phone call, a card or note, or a real big hug.
8. I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in six months. These first months are traumatic for me, but I wish you could understand that my grief will never be over. I will suffer the death of my child until the day I die.
9. I am working very hard in my recovery, but I wish you could understand that I will never fully recover. I will always miss my child, and I will always grieve that he is dead. I wish you wouldn't expect me "not think about it" or to "be happy." Neither will happen for a very long time, so don't frustrate yourself.
10. I don't want to have a "pity party," but I do wish you would let me grieve. I must hurt before I can heal.
11. I wish you understood how my life has shattered. I know it is miserable for you to be around me when I'm feeling miserable. Please be as patient with me as I am with you.
12. When I say, "I'm doing okay," I wish you could understand that I don't "feel" okay and that I struggle daily.
13. I wish you knew that all of the grief reactions I'm having are very normal. Depression, anger, hopelessness and overwhelming sadness are all to be expected. So please excuse me when I'm quiet and withdrawn or irritable and cranky.
14. Your advice to "take one day at a time" is excellent advice. However, a day is too much and too fast for me right now. I wish you could understand that I'm doing good to handle an hour at a time.
15. Please excuse me if I seem rude, certainly not my intent. Sometimes the world around me goes too fast and I need to get off. When I walk away, I wish you would let me find a quiet place to spend time alone.

Compiled by Diane Collins
TCF, Bay Area Chapter, Houston

**Shared by Pat & Sue Vitek, in loving memory of son Jefferson Vitek
TCF, Rochester NY**



What Lies Beyond Dark Clouds and Shadows

*Has it really been two years...
Since the day I shed those mournful tears?
It seems so much longer my mind would have to say,
Yet in my heart it only seems like yesterday,*

*When that first year was over I felt some relief,
For the worst must surely be over now or so I had believed,
But that most certainly proved to be wishful thinking and untrue,
For I say it has not been any easier this year marked number two,*

*How best to describe it? Perhaps I can with this theme,
Of a sleepwalking moment right out of a dream,
Not a nightmare mind you for that has already come to pass,
But a dream of the reality that is and was you Brandon Lass,*

*This dream begins after the events of that fateful day,
My personal sky still overflowing with clouds of shadowy grey,
I float up from the earth towards that horizon filled murky haze,
Searching for a spot where the sun must surely blaze,*

*But the dark clouds will not release me
from their clinging, cloying grasp,
And as I begin to move through them my breath
comes in a sudden gasp,
For in those clouds I swear colossal faces do appear,
Visages of sadness, of pain and of fear,*

*As I plunge into the maw of one angry, wispy face,
I can feel the hammering of my heart as it begins to race,
For other aspects of this storm begin to rage with hurricane force,
Attempting to throw my journey off its already tenuous course,*

*The wind it howls as it tosses me this way and that,
It drives the rain down upon me as if to squash me flat,
The lightning blinds my eyes as it sizzles up, across and under,
And my ears are deafened by the great peals of rolling thunder,*

*Somewhat I've stayed the course and as quickly as it began,
The storm begins to dissipate... the dark clouds turn pale and wan,
The edges of those clouds gain an aura of backlit glow,
Then streams of light punch through it in a never ending flow,*

*The tapestry of dark clouds floats in tatters through sunlit skies,
The flapping of its frayed tendrils still tries to trap my eyes,
But it cannot compare to the virtuous light that is the heavenly sun,
And that darkness is obliterated and finally sent to oblivion*

*As the sun warms my face I realize
that during my fantastical trip,
I had awakened and that my mind had
begun to come to grips,
With everything I had dreamt and what it all really meant,
Perhaps it was an epiphany or perchance twas heaven sent,*

*The dark clouds are my days touched by pain,
grief and sorrow,
Oh how I wish for clearer skies in all of my tomorrows,
Those faces in the clouds I saw surely
represent grief's many stages,
I can only hope to continue flipping past
those angst ridden pages,*

*The wind is my heaving breath and
the rain my streaming tears,
Which demand to be released as this bitter day draws near,
The lightning is the white hot memories that are seared
upon my brain,
The thunder is my broken heart skipping beats
due to the pain,*

*The streams of light that punch through the gloom
are my memories of you,
The darkness cannot take those from me for they will
always break on through,
And fill me with the love to get me through
my days and nights,
As I continue on my journey may
they offer me true insights,*

*To live my life to the fullest the way
I tried to teach you my son,
To be a good husband, father and friend
so that when my days are done,
I can meet you on the other side where
there is naught but light forevermore,
No more storms to traverse just us together evermore...*

*With all my love!!!
I miss you more and more each day!!!*

Dad

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



It's been a year since I lost you
 But I can't believe you're gone.
 My mind's replayed a million times
 All the things that I did wrong.

I tried my best to save you
 But I never did know how.
 I'm still here, you're dead, you're gone
 I guess it doesn't matter now.

You know I love you dearly
 And I know you love me too.
 You helped me then, please help me now
 Find a way to make it through.

I pray you've found some peace at last
 I pray that you're close by.
 I pray that you've found bliss and joy
 And that you can't see me cry.

If our lives are just our lessons
 We've both found that hard to bear.
 But we've both tried with grace and love
 To show how much we care.

I will try to make a difference
 To the ones who struggle here.
 I will try to walk a path of love
 And not give in to fear.

They say that you are with me,
 They say you're near me still.
 Sometimes I feel your soul so close
 And I pray I always will.

I'll try to do what God has planned
 Though I'm waiting for the day
 When I can join you where you are
 And forever there I'll stay.

Till then rest easy child of mine
 Our bond can never die.
 Please meet me when it is my time,
 You can teach me how to fly.

Joan Hessenauer
 In loving memory of son, Jimmy
 TCF, Rochester NY



Thoughts of a Grieving Parent

As we hear about a child dying,
 we don't have to know them.

We have a connection.

We feel the prick of pain in our heart.

Is it our grief and pain from the loss of our child,
 coming back to the surface?

Or is it part of the new grieving parent's pain?

Are we connected to their pain?

Their grief?

Their feelings?

Our pain and grief never will be gone.

Now more is added to the pool.

The pool of tears, sorrow, and grief.

Another Angel to say good night to.

Include in our prayers.

Another parent grieving.

Never will it end,

for we all miss our children

and have them in our hearts forever.

Forever Loving and Missing them.

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



Remembering Cathy...

On Friday October 21st, 2011, Catherine Spoto passed away. On that day The Compassionate Friends of Rochester lost a very dear friend and mentor. Those of you who knew Cathy know that she was the heart and soul of our organization. Many of us have known her for a very long time and some of us barely had a chance to get to know her. In every instance, everyone recognized the special gifts that she brought to our group.

Love Gifts

Ed & Linda Bohrer, in loving memory of son Shaun Bohrer
Carol Ann Britt, in loving memory of son Steven Britt
Teresa Cicotte, in loving memory of son Richard Marrion Nelson
Ed & Margie Klehr, in loving memory of daughter Patricia Klehr
Bernard Coons, in loving memory of son Michael Bernard Coons
Linda Hale, in loving memory of son Timothy Hale
Stephen Kuitems, in loving memory of sons Robert & Joseph Kuitems
Edward & Kathleen Lynd, in loving memory of Ian David Duffy
Joanne Mix, in loving memory of daughter Laura Mix
Cynthia Nelson, in loving memory of daughter Kendra Nelson
Janet O'Connor, in loving memory of son Daniel Martel
Cynthia Oliva, in loving memory of daughter Stephanie Anne Oliva
Frederick & Mary Rupp, in loving memory of children Eric L. Rupp & Lisa A. Rupp
Carla Smith, in loving memory of son Paul McManus, Jr.
Larry & Mae Wheeler, in loving memory of grandson Wyatt Zuber
Dan Wilson, in loving memory of son Greg Crawford
Elaine Wilson, in loving memory of sons Keith M. Wilson & Duane A. Wilson

Support for the meeting on August 9th was donated by
Pat & John Loomis, in loving memory of son Matt Loomis
Sue & Pat Vitek, in loving memory of son Jefferson Vitek



SAVE AROUND ROCHESTER COUPON BOOKS HAVE ARRIVED !!!

Please see attached flyer

Meeting Location:
First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Road South
Rochester, New York

Meeting Days :
Tuesday the 13th & Tuesday the 27th (September)
Tuesday the 11th & Tuesday the 25th (October)

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:
Jacquie 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 3446 Rush Mendon Road Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
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

Our Children Remembered
September 2016
Birthdays and Remembrance Days

Birthday



Lesley Lauren Catchman - Rosato	September	1
Brian Keith Nelson	September	7
Carrie Jean Kubarycz	September	8
Michael B. Coons	September	12
Brandon Alexander Lass	September	12
Matthew Gabe Fogarassy	September	14
Tannya Ruiz	September	18
Douglas M. Slocum	September	18
Paul McManus Jr.	September	26
Brandon M. Sauer	September	28
Jennifer Lynn McNeil	September	29

Remembrance Day

Katie Lyn Fields	September	4
David George Carafos	September	7
Mary Jo Palka	September	10
Justin Adam Rifenberg	September	14
Rachael Marie Toombs-Lassiter	September	15
Joshua Daniel Price	September	18
Daniel Francis Colangelo	September	18
Brian Charles Oster	September	21
Clarence L. Ross, II	September	22



Our Children Remembered
October 2016
Birthdays and Remembrance Days

Birthday



Colleen Josephine Dobbins	October	5
Zackary Monroe McCarthy	October	5
Keith Martin Wilson	October	7
Patrick Blandford	October	8
Matthew A. Farash	October	8
Ashley Logan Pokracki	October	14
Daniel Francis Colangelo	October	19
William Peter Cook	October	19
Kelly Lynne Forrest	October	29

Remembrance Day

Richard John Tanner	October	2
Patrick D. Cooley	October	2
Thomas Joseph Drasch	October	3
Chris E. Saunders Jr.	October	4
Matthew Brian Rezsnyak	October	10
Ashley Logan Pokracki	October	18
Sam Lowery	October	24
Jason Dobrowski	October	24
Matthew James Straton	October	29

