



The Compassionate Friends
Rochester Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January / February 2018 www.tcfrochester.org



Did I Hear A Sigh Of Relief

The holidays are finally over, and we can put our hurt and pain back in the boxes along with the Christmas decorations. Oh, how easy that would be, if that were so.

Early on in our grief, dealing with the anticipation of the holidays without our loved ones is devastating. We find ourselves not wanting to cope and wishing away the oncoming celebration. This is a natural reaction, of course, and one we must fight to overcome. Memories and the thought of celebrations without our children are fraught with tears and heartache.

We can only hope that the next time we must encounter a specific holiday, we will find it less painful to cope with because we have put one more year behind us. Time does have a way of helping to soften our grief, but the road can be very bumpy along the way to recovery.

Our children were our reason for life, and their memories are our reason to go on living.

Because of my sons, my affiliation with TCF has given me many treasured friends whom I can sympathize with and have empathy for. Let's all start the New Year with the promise of mending our bodies; holding the memories of our children, so loved, in our hearts, and helping each newly bereaved parent and sibling to better cope with the difficult task of their loss. By supporting one another in our grief, we find the comfort and understanding we so sorely need.



Mary Senbertrand
TCF, Cape May NJ

My Spirit
Will Live on Forever,
There Within Your Heart



The Paths to Peace

As bereaved parents, we look to others for answers about our grief journey. For eight years I have listened as so many parents spoke about the combination of factors which brought peace to their hearts and allowed them to move forward into a different, less painful, life. I have read books, watched movies, attended seminars and retreats. I have gone to 93 Compassionate Friends meetings. And I have discovered one key factor in finding peace and resolution on this terrible grief journey: there is no single element or singular combination of elements that answers the needs of more than one parent. Each parent must patiently seek those elements that will enhance the individual and a unique personal journey: there is no magic map to finding the path to peace. There is one common denominator in this quest for the peace on our long journey, and that is patience. Patience with ourselves is mandatory, because the grief journey after the death of our precious child is so horrible, so painful, and so isolating that our psyches and our bodies take so very much time to begin the healing process. There are setbacks. There is progress. Each of these comes in spurts. Each is partially reversed and the process begins anew. Friends and family do not thoroughly understand our perspective on our unique journey. We must make allowances for them. But we must ask that allowances be made for us. For we are finding ourselves while on a path that we did not choose. We are lost. We are weakened. We are heartbroken. Each of us in our own way is seeking the formula that is uniquely our own. Some parents find a kind of peace in their religion. Some parents are angry with their God. Many parents seek private counseling. Other parents read prolifically about the grief journey, seeking some element which resonates with them. Many parents come to Compassionate Friends meetings and actively participate. Others attend meetings and say little. Some parents slip into denial and proceed on the old path of their lives. We each make choices. We are different people with different experiences, backgrounds, cultures, genetic hard wiring, education and combination of abilities. The path to peace is found by searching, by reaching out to every resource available. We will reject much of what we find; but if we search, we will find what we need. For many of us, finding other bereaved parents presents an opportunity to listen to the stories of their child and their journey and, within those stories, we find many threads that fit our unique journey. Many stories, many journeys, many new threads are shared in group discussion and in private discussions. We find "seasoned" grievers who provide perspective on our feelings, and listen to our story. We find newly bereaved parents who touch our hearts and remind us how we have built our path to peace brick by brick. Their pain brings reflection and new revelations about our own grief journey. I found kindred souls at Compassionate Friends. These kindred souls have allowed me to explore the various aspects of my being and gradually create a path of peace for myself. But the journey does not suddenly end. We walk this path for the rest of our lives. And if we do the hard work and face our demons early on, we accept the unacceptable and face life on our own terms. And that is as it should be.

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



I've Wondered

I've wondered why you had to go
 and why your car had left the road.
 Why your Mom and I, we had to stay
 and your great smile has gone away.
 Our hearts so ache, our tears do flow,
 the pain we feel too many know.
 One year has passed
 since that terrible night.
 We have survived but it's not right.
 Our lives have changed,
 they are not the same,
 but somehow we endure the pain.
 I've wondered why you had to go,
 our only son
 we love and miss you so.

Larry Oshel
TCF, Galveston County TX
In Memory of my son, Brian Oshel

Memories

The certain special memories
 That follow me each day,
 Cast your shadow in my life
 In a certain way.

Sometimes the blowing wind
 Or the lyrics of a song
 Make me stop and think of you
 Sometimes all day long

Memories are good to have
 To share and keep in my heart,
 Just knowing that you're still inside
 Makes sure we'll never part.

Collette Covington
TCF, Lake Charles LA

**COME SIT WITH ME**

Come sit with me awhile and let me
 Hold your hand, I understand your
 Sorrow and know you need a friend.

I understand the pain that lies within your heart,
 I have felt the silent screams that tear you all apart.

I know about the sleepless nights that last so very long,
 I understand the emptiness when you hear that special song.

Come share with me your memories and let me be
 Your friend, you can cry, laugh or say nothing at all,
 And I will understand.

Come sit with me my friend, I'll try to help you through.
 I understand my friend, for I have been there too.

Judy Peckinpaugh
TCF, Inland Empire CA



Heavenly Snow

I thought you might like to know
And I have it on good authority,
That in heaven there is snow.
God, Himself, ordered it to be.

Snow swept by gentle winds,
That drifts by the stirring,
Of gossamer angels' wings,
That sound like kittens purring.

Snow forever crystal clean,
Just waiting to be molded
By little angel hands unseen
By those whose arms they once enfolded.

Snow angels are a common sight
And snowmen of every size...
They're all there beyond the light,
Where nothing ever dies.

Where our angels play,
There is no pain or tears.
Only joy fills their days,
Only laughter fills their ears.

High above the azure skies
A glorious wonderland gleams.
This beautiful Heavenly spot...
Created to fulfill our angels' dreams.

**Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
In Memory of My Angels...
Michelle, Jerry & Danny**

Copyright 2001 Reprinted by permission of author

All I Need to Know

I'm beginning to know your children
From the things I've heard you tell,
From the pictures that you've brought here
I think I know them well
Our hurt and sorrow are immense
I'm not sure where to start.
Compassion after all is
Your pain in my heart.
My thanks to you for listening
To words wrung from my soul.
We are The Compassionate Friends
That's all I need to know.

**Jack Brown
TCF, Louisville**

SEARCHING ...

Once again, my list has vanished;
it was here, but now it's missing.
Keys and glasses disappearing;
books and letters--overdue.
I'm forever searching, searching,
they must be here, and I need them!
Could it be that what is missing,
what I want this very minute--
could it be that what I'm *REALLY*
searching for,
my child,
is you?

**Joyce Andrews
TCF, Sugar Land TX**

*A new year brings time to reflect
On the children we love,
those who remain with us
and those for whom we grieve*

Wayne Loder, TCF National



SEASONED GRIEF

There used to be a point to summing up a year just past
not as a personal accomplishment but as a reflection.
Leaving previous hurts behind was welcomed and the sensible thing to do.
I thought I was getting wiser as I was getting older.

With new years clean and full of possibilities,
becoming another person seemed simple,
another chance at getting it right,
like a redemption, being forgiven for
having blundered or been found wanting.

But death changed everything, without permission.
Resolutions, made sincerely and broken quickly,
offended my need to hold on to the past,
to rewind life, fast backwards,
so I could capture what I had lost.
Still, time went on, regardless of my pleas.
And when exhaustion set in, as eventually it must,
I understood there would be another future,
not the one I thought I had the right to expect
but one where I dared carry hope in my heart again.

Eva Lager
TCF, Perth Western Australia
From *We Need Not Walk Alone*, Spring 1999 Issue

© 1999

Forgive Me Friend

Forgive me, Friend
If I don't seem there—
If I seem a little distant
Or you think I don't care.
My child has died

It's hard to explain
My down-an-out days
When I don't respond
Or I seem in a daze
My child has died.

I seem to be happy
When I suddenly cry—
The emotion overpowers me,
Hard as I try.
My child has died

So forgive me, My Friend,
When I can't seem to give.
I'm doing all I can
Just to get up and live.
My child has died.

Gretchen Warren
TCF, Solano County CA



Treasured

What I love most is
Waking to the dew of
The grass upon my boots

What I love most is
Smelling the end of
The day upon
My shirt, holding
My child

What I love most is
Something I don't see
Everyday or smell or
Touch

What I do love most is
The memories of those
Moments if only buried in
My dreams

Scott Newport
TCF, Royal Oak MI
Permission to reprint granted

Valentine's In Heaven

Are there Valentines in Heaven?
Are there Red Hearts everywhere?
Do they line the golden streets,
Or is that very rare?
I wish that I could send you one,
Right through Heaven's Gate,
To say how much we miss you,
On this special date.
I'd like to send a Candy Heart,
That is printed, "I Luv U,"
And maybe you would whisper back,
"I know, I Luv U too".

Marilyn Rollins
TCF, Lake-Porter IN
For All Our Children

**February**

Let this cool and
gentle
month of the heart
remind you
not only of lost
treasure,
but also of riches
(past and present)
in your life.

**The Poems of
Sascha Wagner**



We want to share these websites:

We want to share this support group information:

Face 2 Face Friendship Group, Rochester NY. face2facerochester.com Providing support & hope to families coping with miscarriage, stillbirth, & infant loss.

Bereaved Parents. Bereavedparentsusa.org A national non-profit self-help group that offers support, understanding, compassion, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents, & siblings. Shared by Pat Loomis.

Alive Alone. Alivealone.org. Support for now childless parents. Shared by National TCF.

“Healing the Grieving Heart” Web Radio Show. Compassionatefriends.org (left side of the home page, link to “Healing the Grieving Heart”). Live shows are at 11:00 am on Thursdays. The archived shows are available 24 hours per day.



Our annual Candlelighting Ceremony was held on December 12, 2017

A special thanks to

Jan Boyle, Myra & Phil DeFranco, Christine & Jason Price, Maureen & Joe Stuhler

The front walk way revealed luminaries. Our meeting space was transformed into a candlelight dream with a table and room filled with angels, candles, a beautiful wooden butterfly & flowers. The program was beautiful from beginning to end with many special reflections and songs, ending with a Billy Joel video ... many tears were shared for the love of all our children.

And many thanks to all our families who braved the snow & filled our potluck table with delicious dishes.

It was truly a special night in remembrance of all our children, grandchildren, & siblings.

Love Gifts

Nicholas & Cynthia Oliva, in loving memory of daughter Stephanie Anne Oliva

***Support for the meeting on November 28th was donated by
Pat & John Loomis, in loving memory of son Matt Loomis***



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

Meeting Days :
Tuesday the 9th & Tuesday the 23rd (January)
Tuesday the 13h & Tuesday the 27th (February)

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

Contacts:
Christine Price graycl1@gmail.com

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



Effective January 1, 2018 ...

Christine Price will assume the co-leadership position currently held by Mary Ann Dobbins.

Christine ~ You bring new energy and ideas to our group. You are a young bereaved mom bringing your compassion & caring to our Chapter. We all look forward to having you as co-leader.

Mary Ann ~ You have contributed endless hours of your time, talents, and compassion to our Chapter. As a grandmother, you have added another perspective of loving & caring after loss and have guided all of us on this journey. Thank you from all of us!

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

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



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

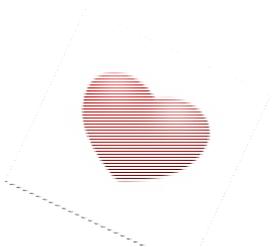
Coping with Grief: Winter Blues

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 2018 Birthdays and Remembrance



Birthday

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|----|
| Joseph P. Maggerine III | January | 3 |
| Nyzere D. Stanton | January | 4 |
| Alexander K. Ketchek | January | 8 |
| Alex Robert VanFleet | January | 8 |
| Christopher "Chris" D. Fitzgerald | January | 9 |
| Benjamin L. Assenato | January | 17 |
| Daniel P. Martel | January | 21 |
| Cameron Dylan Boyd | January | 22 |
| 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 |

Remembrance

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------|----|
| Shawn Patrick Viola | January | 1 |
| Justin A. McLaren | January | 8 |
| Aaron Y. Wallace | January | 10 |
| Joseph P. Maggerine III | January | 11 |
| Thomas William Costello | January | 11 |
| Adam V. Marano | January | 18 |
| Brayden Robert Salvaterra | January | 23 |
| Christopher Brian Budwey | January | 23 |
| Laura Catherine Mix | January | 25 |
| Samara C. Szczesny | January | 30 |
| Donni Witherell | January | 31 |



Our Children Remembered February 2018 Birthdays and Remembrance



Birthday

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Brayden Robert Salvaterra | February 3 |
| Christopher Bedford | February 5 |
| Greg Paul Crawford | February 10 |
| Colin Vincent Montesano | February 11 |
| 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 |
| Nick S. Tochelli | February 17 |
| Timothy J. Rumsey | February 19 |
| Amy Marie Iwasko | February 19 |
| Nicholas Jay Kovaleski | February 27 |
| Katie L. Piccone | February 27 |

Remembrance

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Karen Jill. D'Amico | February 4 |
| Ricardo Bernabeu, Jr. | February 6 |
| Jennifer N. Arvan | February 9 |
| 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 |
| Sean Eric Goeke Jaggard | February 24 |
| Daniel Michael Roach | February 25 |
| Michael Ruiz V | February 27 |
| Benjamin L. Assenato | February 27 |

