



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

**Rim Country Chapter  
P.O. Box 3482  
Payson, AZ 85547**

**A national non-profit, self-help support organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause.**

**August 2007**

**RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER**

**VOL. 1 NO. 3**

## **MISSION**

**The mission 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.**

## **Payson, Arizona Meeting Info**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month -  
6:30 PM—8:00 PM  
Ponderosa Baptist Church  
1800 N. Beeline Hwy  
(Just South of Home Depot  
& the Roundabout)

### **Chapter Website**

www.RimCountryTCF.org  
E-mail Address  
info@rimcountrytcf.org

### **Chapter Leaders:**

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(877) 969-0010, FAX (630)  
990-0246

CompassionateFriends.org

Regional Coordinator:  
Gene Caligari 480-361-1877

## **CHAPTER NEWS**

We really want to make this OUR chapters' newsletter and your contributions and writing would help tremendously. If you have an item you would like to have appear in our newsletter, or have a suggestion or correction, please feel free to send it to us by mail or e-mail.



We would like to thank the Ponderosa Baptist Church for the use of their facilities and their support of the Compassionate Friends.

We would like to thank Karl and Sue Snapp for their generous donation in memory of their son Dave. The Snapp's are friends from another Compassionate Friends chapter.

We would like to thank Chuck and Robbin Clark for the donation of the newsletters in memory of their son Cory James Clark.

## **What is a Compassionate Friend?**

By Rob Anderson, Sugar Grove, Ill., excerpted from Grief Digest, Vol. 2, Issue 3

### **What is a Compassionate Friend ?**

The dictionary definition is, "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to help alleviate the suffering." Friend is defined as "a supporter or sympathizer." My "heart" definition of a compassionate friend is someone who "gets it" and never, ever forgets it.

The power of a compassionate friend's empathy in the face of the tornado of agony that is the newly bereaved parent's life can be critical to their healing. If we, as healing bereaved parents, are willing to step in to the role of caregiver for the broken soul of another bereaved parent, it's important not to lose touch with our pain. Not to lose touch with that kick in the stomach we felt when we first learned of our own child's death. As

our hearts heal, it can be easy to fall into the role of a teacher where we start to advise or pass judgment on how another bereaved parent grieves. If we want to help others heal, we must continue to relate to that instant that our child died. Love has undeniable power when given with a clear and pure heart, where nothing is expected in return and in a compassionate, caring way. In other words, like a compassionate friend.

## THE REASON FOR TCF MEETINGS

One could ask, "Why go and listen to the woes of other people when it is easier to get wrapped up in our own?" It is not to compare tragedies, nor assess the right or wrong means of grieving, nor to pressure or complicate or confuse a bereaved parent with timetables of grief. This is not the reasoning behind TCF meetings.

When a child of a family dies, the emotional pain can be intense. It is tempting at times to try to run either into solitude or avoidance. A balance is needed to survive and live more than a resigned existence. Finding a way isn't easy when the "rest of the world" rushes by, taking little notice that our life has changed.

The monthly meeting of The Compassionate Friends is a special time we can set aside to gain and maintain our balance. We need a lot of encouragement to endure and experience our emotions and to express ourselves while grieving. Coming to a meeting can help alleviate the feeling of being alone in sorrow. The environment of other bereaved parents offers a means of keeping in touch with reality, in which there can be a sharing and mutual understanding. There is sustained support knowing that others are willing to acknowledge that though a child's song might be over, the melody of memories will remain woven throughout the remainder of our lives.

*N. Hunt*

The whisper of an angel  
Can open Heaven's gate,  
A glimpse of faith and courage  
A love strong enough to wait,

Whisper you are safe  
Whisper softly, angel love,  
My heart is aching so  
Needing comfort from above,

Tell me you are with me  
Whisper gently in my ear,  
"You will always be my mommy"  
In the quiet I will hear,

My heart still aches to hold you  
I close my eyes and see,  
Your face now, four years later  
And who you were to be,

Though dreams I once held close  
In the distance now, so far  
Still you're more than just my  
child  
You're the twinkle in the stars,

So I'll hear your angel whispers  
"You never need let go,  
Hold me, mommy, close within"  
Though the pain and sorrow flow,

One day we shall reunite  
Angels whisper words of grace,  
And I promise I will hold you  
In another time and place.





## Resolutions for Bereaved Parents

I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a timetable on my grief

I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.

I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now."

I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.

I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how it feels.

I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.

I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.

I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and that I won't feel compelled to explain this communication to others or to justify~ or even discuss it with them.

I will try to eat sleep and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief

I will know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.

I know that I will heal; even though it will take a long time I will let myself heal and not feel guilty about feeling better.

I will remind myself that the grief process is circuitous—that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods, too, will pass.

I will try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.

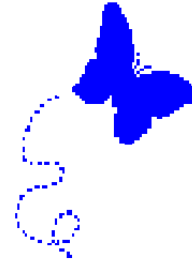
I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.

Even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.



### **Miss Me-But Let Me Go**

When I come to the end of the Road  
And the sun has set for me,  
I want no rites in a gloom filled room!  
Why cry for a soul set free!  
Miss me a little-but not too long  
And not with your head bowed low!  
Remember the love that we once shared,  
***Miss Me – But Let Me Go.***  
For this is a journey we all must take  
And each must go alone;  
It's all a part of the Master's Plan  
A step on the road to home.  
When you are lonely and sick of heart  
Go to the friends we know  
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds,  
***Miss Me – But Let Me Go.***



### **My Dearest Jake**

This August 7<sup>th</sup> is to be your 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. This will be the 8<sup>th</sup> one that you have missed. I am still caught somewhere between the memories of yesterdays and all the broken dreams for the future. Your star continues to shine brightly above the forest floor. I do still miss you so very much.

Love forever,  
Mom

Submitted in loving memory of **Jake Dahlin**  
By Ann Dahlin,  
TCF- Prescott, AZ

### **When No Words Seem Appropriate**

I won't say, "I know how you feel"-because I don't. I've lost parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends, but I've never lost a child. So how can I say I know how you feel?

I won't say, "You'll get over it"-because you won't. Life will have to go on. The washing, cooking, cleaning, the common routine. These chores will take your mind off your loved one, but the hurt will still be there.

I won't say, "Your other children will be a comfort to you"-because they may not be. Many mothers I've talked to say that after they have lost a child, they easily lose their temper with their remaining children. Some even feel resentful that they're alive and healthy when the other child is not.

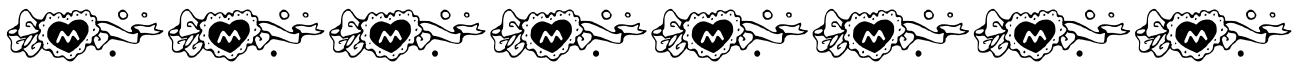
I won't say, "Never mind, you're young enough to have another baby"-because that won't help. A new baby cannot replace the one that you've lost. A new baby will fill your hours, keep you busy, give you sleepless nights. But it will not replace the one you've lost.

You may hear all these platitudes from your friends and relatives. They think they are helping. They don't know what else to say. You will find out who your true friends are at this time. Many will avoid you because they can't face you. Others will talk about the weather, the holidays and the school concert but never about how you're coping.

So what will I say? I will say, "I'm here. I care. Anytime. Anywhere." I will talk about your loved one. We'll laugh about the good memories. I won't mind how long you grieve. I won't tell you to pull yourself together.

No, I don't know how you feel-but with sharing, perhaps I will learn a little of what you are going through. And perhaps you'll feel comfortable with me and find your burden has eased. Try me.

Written by a pediatric nurse, Submitted to Ann Landers from A 5th  
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## "PLEASE SAY THEIR NAMES"

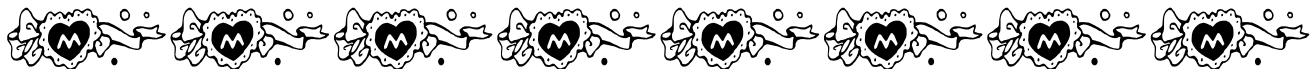
The time of concern is over. No longer are we asked how we're doing. Never are the names of our children mentioned to us. A curtain descends. The moment has passed. Lives slip from frequent recall. There are exceptions: close and compassionate friends, sensitive and loving family. Still look. Still ask. Still listen. Thank God for them. For most, the drama is over. The spotlight is off. Applause is silent. But for us the play will never end. The effects on us are timeless. What can be said, you ask? Please say "their names" to us. Love does not die.

Their names are written on our lives. The sound of their voices replay within our minds. You may feel they are dead. We feel they are of the dead and still they live. They ghost-walk our souls, beckoning in future welcome. You say, "They were our children"; we say, "They are". Please say "their names" to us and say "their names" again.

It hurts to bury their memory in silence. What they were in flesh is no longer with us. What they are in spirit stirs within us always. They were of our past but they are part of our now. They are our hope for the future. Please understand we cannot forget. We would not if we could. We know that you cannot know, yesterday we were like you. Understand that we dwell in both flesh and spirit. We do not ask you to walk this road. The ascent is steep and the burden heavy. We walk it not by choice. We would rather walk it with them in the flesh, looking not to spirit worlds beyond. We are what we have to be. What we have lost, you cannot feel. What we have gained you may not see. Please say "their names" for they are alive.

We will meet them again, although in many ways we've never parted. Their spirits play light songs, appear in sunrises and sunsets. They are real and shadow, they were and they are. Please say "their names" to us and say "their names" again. They are our children and we love them as we always did. More each day.

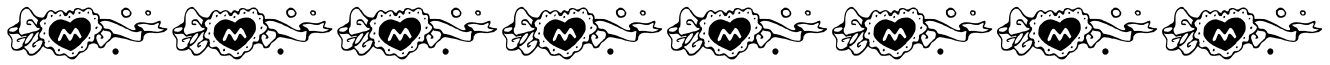
PLEASE, SAY THEIR NAMES



### Far Beyond the Clouds

Far beyond the clouds above  
A special garden grows with love.  
Special flowers of many blends  
Are the children of The Compassionate Friends

Sam Rosenberg  
TCF- Louisville, KY



LOVE GIFTS AND DONATIONS

A love gift is to "REMEMBER THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN." Since TCF has no membership dues, we rely upon tax-deductible donations for funds to pay the three chapters' expenses: printing and mailing of our newsletter, books for our lending libraries, our 24-hour phone message line and information packets sent to newly bereaved families and professionals in the community. Books donated for our libraries and volunteer work for your chapter also qualify as "love gifts." Make your checks payable to The Compassionate Friends and mail to: PO Box 3482 Payson Arizona 85547. Love gifts received prior to the 10th of each month will appear in the following month's newsletter.

MEMORY PAGE

If you wish to have your child remembered on our Memory Page, please complete the form below and Mail to PO Box 3482, Payson Arizona 85547

PARENT(S) NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

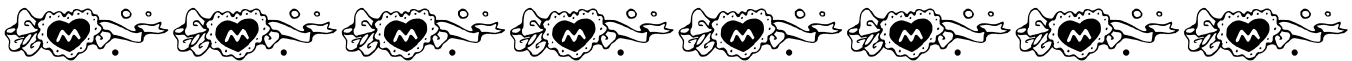
CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ M or F (circle)

DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF DEATH \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a love gift in memory of my child to help deray costs of the Rim Country Chapter:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Other THANKS!!!!

The anniversary of your child's birth and death are often extremely painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents who are observing such days in August. In this newsletter is the memory page update. If you haven't sent one in yet, please take a moment to fill it out and send it in. We would like to share your memory days with you.



AUGUST MEMORY PAGE

Our children ... always loved, missed, remembered ...

- BRENDAN SCOTT CALIGARI .... son of Gene Caligari, was born on 8/16/1988
MICHELE LYNN HEATH ..... daughter of Chuck and June Heath, was born on 8/23/1971
SARAH ELIZABETH SALWITZ ..... daughter of Michael and Georgia Salwitz, was born on 8/14/1976

### Letting Go

“All I want to be able to do is talk about my little boy, but I have nobody to talk to. My family seems to think I ‘should be over it’ and says that I should ‘let him go.’ But how can I let him go? He was my little boy.”

These were the words of a beautiful young mother as she spoke to me recently. And she was right. How could she let him go, indeed, and why should people try to force such a thing on her? For my own part, I can remember a time when I became aware of the fact that I had “let my little boy go,” but this wasn’t until nearly three years after he had died. It is hard to explain to someone who has not experienced this just what I mean, but I shall try. I guess it was really accepting, deep down, that he is really dead and that all my longing, yearning and thinking about him will never bring him back. Strangely, I found that once having “let him go,” I then got him back again in a much more beautiful way. It wasn’t in a tight, hang-on-or-you-will-forget-him sort of way, but in a gentle, peaceful sort of way. I felt relaxed about my whole situation. I might go for days without consciously thinking of him, and then some memory of Chris would come flooding back in a much more realistic way than it had before. I guess, too, I was able to get my life back into perspective.

I hesitated to write about these things because I felt there could be a few dangers associated with it. One was that some of you may not have had this experience and might think there is something wrong with you if you haven’t. Please don’t feel that way. It is very important for each of you to travel the road of grief in your own way and in your own time. If we can learn from another’s experience or another’s writings, that is good; but above all, I feel the most important thing is for each parent to allow himself to feel just the way he wants to feel, not the way others tell him to feel and act, but the way he wants to feel and act. If others can’t or won’t understand it and tell you so, then just tell them very gently. “Look, I’m sorry. I know you think you are doing the right thing by saying that, but please just let me grieve for my child in my own way.”

Perhaps the last thing I should say is that, if there are some of you who are standing on the threshold of letting go and just feel that you can’t, maybe you feel afraid or disloyal to your dead child. Let me assure you that this “letting go” will give you a whole new lease on life, and your dead child will be a very special, but not obsessive, memory. Can’t you almost hear him or her say, “That’s good, Mum,” or “That’s good, Dad — that’s the way it should be.”

Diane and Brian Dunbar  
TCF-Sidney, Australia

### NOT GUILT, REGRET

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? Why didn’t we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error of commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us.

Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm to ever, ever come to our child, the correct name for our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn’t feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt - we feel regret.

Kitty Sanders, Nashville, TN  
Survivors of Suicide Group



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**

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***We need not walk alone... We  
are The Compassionate Friends.***

E-mail us at [info@rimcountrytcf.org](mailto:info@rimcountrytcf.org) or call us at 928-978-1492 if you receive this newsletter and do not wish to receive it or to change an address or add an address.

## **The Compassionate Friends Credo**

**We need not walk alone. We  
are The Compassionate  
Friends.**

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children unites us.

Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.



We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source for strength; some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in a deep depression; others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other grieve as well. as to grow.