



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Rim Country Chapter

Rim Country Chapter
P.O. Box 3482
Payson, AZ 85547
(928) 978-1492

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

April 2010

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 4 NO. 4

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 Information

2nd Tuesday of the month -
Doors open at 6:15PM
Meeting Begins at 6:30 PM

Ponderosa Baptist Church
1800 N. Beeline Hwy
(Just South of Home Depot &
the Roundabout)

Chapter Website

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CHAPTER NEWS

THANK YOU, THANK YOU THANK YOU for all of you that came out to our adopt-a-highway cleanup on March 13th. Nine of us managed to clean an entire 1-mile stretch of highway in about 2 1/2 hours. We filled 26 large trash bags and found many items that were simply too large to fit into bags including a front bumper from a Chevy pick up truck. Everyone enjoyed a nice lunch afterward at the Rye Creek Restaurant. We're planning to clean the southbound side of our highway section sometime this fall. Stay tuned.



Also, we are still looking for a newsletter editor. If you have any interest in helping to produce our monthly newsletter, we would love to have you. I will be happy to assist in showing you how you can help.

Our meeting this month will be on April 13th. If your child's birthday or "Angelversary" occurs in April, you are welcome to bring your child's favorite treat to share. Feel free to also bring a picture or remembrance of your child to display.

Wishing you peace,

Bill

In the Springtime of Your Grief

Spring has fragile beginnings; a tiny shoot of green that emerges from the cold earth, a hint of pastel against the brownish grass, a bud that awakens with the morning sun. Sometimes spring comes so quietly we almost miss it, but once it begins, it is impossible to ignore the daily growth and change. The morning sun brings sounds that were not there before. The breeze carries warmth that invites us to venture outside of ourselves. A promise is released with the budding and blossoming surrounding us. Hope emerges for the beginning of a new season; change is in the air.

What we experience in the springtime of the year is what we can experience in the springtime of our grief. There begins to be a growing radiance. The radiance is not just around us; it is within us. A gradual warming of the heart silences the chill of intense pain. The natural unfolding of the grief process moves gently to remind us that we will survive. Life is changing and growth emerges through the changes. The song of our hearts that seemed off key begins to experience a harmonious blend of the past and the present. The songs of the birds invite us to join them in a celebration of a new life. In the springtime of our grief, there can be a new song for us to sing. It will be a song we composed through the heartache of loss.

Optimism for a better day may awaken us one morning. Hearing laughter and discovering it is coming from within ourselves gives us promise for today. Dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow shine brightly with the morning sun. Surviving the winter of our grief with the openness to embrace change is a decision to embrace loss and integrate its impact into the fabric of our lives. It can be a willingness to explore new possibilities that create a different landscape to behold. We can make a decision that we will begin to appreciate what we still have, not just focus on what is missing.

We will know when we have made that decision. Something buds; something opens. The harshness of winter is softened with new life and new growth. It is not something we can force; it is something that unfolds when the time is right. The springtime of grief arrives with no dramatic entrance, no flashing lights. The stillness of the beauty unfolds and captures our attention. It is happening around us, but it is also happening in us. If spring has already crossed the path of your personal journey of grief, rejoice! But, if the chill of winter remains in your heart, be encouraged; spring is on its way. Look for it, expect it and it will be yours to experience around you and in you!

— Judi Fischer
Cleveland, Ohio
Bereavement Magazine

We are a self-help support organization that is dedicated to assisting parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child. We also aim to provide information and education to extended family, friends and coworkers desirous of being supportive to our Chapter members.

We gather to listen, to care, and to understand the process of grieving as we start our recovery process and attempt to heal. Our greatest strength as bereaved families is the unity we find in shared experiences which can lead us out of isolation, give us a place to “belong”, and offer us hope that together – we can make it.

PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE

HELP US SAVE ON PRINTING & POSTAGE



If you move, please let us know your new address. If you don't want to receive our newsletter any more, please let us know. If you would rather read the newsletter on our website, please let us know, and send us your email address, and we will send you the newsletter via email or send you a reminder each month when the newsletter is put on the website.

You can contact us by mail at our address at PO Box 3482, Payson, AZ 85547 or by sending us an email at: info@rimcountrytcf.org

THOUGHTS FOR SPRINGTIME?

Would it be easier, if spring were not so lovely?

Would it be easier, if robins did not sing?

Would I be stronger, if the trees were barren,
or if a cloak of gray hid everything?

Could I be braver, if the days were faded and
if the sun remained remote and cold?

I hear the whispers of a new beginning.

THE EARTH IS NEW. WHY IS MY GRIEF SO OLD?

Exercise (for next week?)

Try to teach yourself to re-
member

at the end of each day

that something nice

or important

or funny

or interesting

or beautiful

has happened to you...

Even though you may not
be able to enjoy such things
just then,

keep your mind aware.

Sascha

Candles

by Sascha

It is not easy to remember dead chil-
dren.

But, easy or not,
we know that we will not -
and do not want to -
forget them.

Therefore we reach out together again,
to love them and to celebrate their
memory.

Again, we light their special candles
and we say their beloved names.

We remember our children, who died.
They remain forever part of us,
and we are richer for having shared
their lives,
however briefly.

Kaitie's Closet Will Clothe Children



When Jack and Barbara Gooch's beloved granddaughter Kaitie died unexpectedly in October, they found themselves lost in a sea of grief. Searching for a life raft to pull themselves out, they decided to do the most unexpected thing — give back to a community that had always wrapped its arms around Kaitie.

At the beginning of March, the Gooches began distributing collection bins at businesses around town to collect gently used clothing and shoes for children. The donations are collected, laundered and distributed to local school-age children in need.

Jack said they came up with the idea for "Kaitie's Closet" shortly after Kaitie, 13, who had cerebral palsy, died Oct. 3.

"She had so many clothes, two closets full," Jack said, that we did not want to see them go to waste.

Pat Heizer, Payson Elementary School resource teacher, spoke with the Gooches and said the school had a number of children who needed clothes and could benefit from Kaitie's wardrobe. The Gooches decided to part with some of Kaitie's clothes before the holidays, and Heizer set up a "shopping day" for eight girls at the school.

After the holidays had passed, Jack said he was so lonesome he did not know what to do with himself without Kaitie, who he had taken care of for several years.

"Kaitie made a different person out of me," he said. "She was quite the girl."

Jack and Barbara decided the best thing to do was start a non-profit foundation in Kaitie's name, dedicated to collecting and redistributing clothing to children in kindergarten through eight grade.

Jack told Payson Unified School District Superintendent Casey O'Brien about the idea and O'Brien said he would fully support the project, especially since there are some 360 homeless children in PUSD.

Jack said Kaitie's Closet represents more than just clothes, it is a symbol of the community coming together to take care of its children in need.

So far, the community has overwhelmingly embraced the program, donating enough clothes to fill 10 large-sized bags in just a week.

Jack personally collects and launders everything that is donated. So far, he has washed 50 pounds of blue jeans.

The Gooches plan to donate the clothing to a different school each month. That school will lay out the clothes and let in-need children pick what they want. Any extra adult or baby clothes donated will be given to local organizations.

Collection boxes are located at Frontier, Payson and Julia Randall Elementary Schools, Rim Country Middle School, Alltel, Beeline Business Equipment, Payson Physical Therapy, Scoops Ice Cream and Espresso, Tiny's Family Restaurant and at the Gooches' home, 304 W. Corral Drive.

For more information or to donate or volunteer, call (928) 468-1036.

Monetary donations are greatly needed to support laundering costs and additional clothing items, including socks and underwear, Jack said.

Article by Alexis Bechman - Payson Roundup. Printed with Permission

In Memory of Dalton

To me "Spring Break" took on a whole new meaning in 1999! It was "Spring Break" when our son, Dalton, died. We had a nice vacation planned that year. We were headed to Disneyland, even had rooms booked at the Disneyland Hotel. Well, that was all replaced with funeral preparations. And instead of us taking a trip, others were flying in to be with us. Needless to say, "Spring Break" has never held the same meaning ever again. When most people are planning exciting breaks in the hectic school season life, we were planning how we would handle the week without our son.



Every year we try to do something to honor not only our son, but all the children who have died. This year was no exception. We were able to do our highway clean up mile with the help of so many from our group. It made the day so much nicer being with others who knew how we felt. And what great satisfaction there is in doing something that helps others and keeps our sons memory alive.

I will probably always associate "Spring Break" with some sadness, but I find that as each year goes by I am able to look at others as they enjoy their time with families with a little more happiness. This year was no exception. Waiting on families stopping in town on their way to the fun and sun in the valley and then to have them stop by on their way back home. Moms and dads with the kids exhausted from all the fun, but happy to be together, making memories.

I hold on to all the memories of "Spring Break" from the past and remember that it wasn't always a sad time, but a wonderful time of family fun. Glad that our girls kept us going and helped us to remember that they still needed "Spring Break". We did too!

Love Mom
Thank you girls for keeping me going:)



Letter on a rainy day in April,
Letter that does not need
A postage stamp...
Dear Eve, dear Eve: I think of you
In mixed-up fragments,
I miss you with unfamiliar feeling-
Today is different from most other days.
I don't know why.

How old would you be now?
Yes, thirty-four.
(how young!)
And would you be like me?
You would be very bright,
I know for sure.
You would be melancholy-
Is it the weather?
You would be much less sentimental
Than I am.
(Perhaps)

Dear Eve,
We would be such
Good friends.

Dear Eve...

Sasha

With the Spring Comes Hope -- Finding Your Way through Grief

by Julie Fischer, MSE, Licensed Professional Counselor -
[Full Circle Counseling Services](#)

Spring is just around the corner; new life, new color, new hope. But for many who are experiencing a loss of some kind, the promise of spring is difficult to envision and even harder when it arrives. Because while many people feel light, joyful and renewed, those experiencing a loss may be deep in the trenches of grief, and find it difficult to take part in the celebration of new life, in the happiness and hope that usually accompany Spring.

Often times we associate grief only with the death of someone we know and love. But grief can be felt by anyone experiencing the loss of anything of real value about which she or he cares. Grief can be experienced any time there is a significant change or transition in someone's life, because change is most often accompanied by loss of some kind, or giving something up. Moving to a new house, losing one's job, ending a relationship, losing one's health, loss of a pet, loss of a dream, as well as loss of self-control, loss of trust, or loss of freedom. Even the usually celebratory event of welcoming a baby into a family involves some losses and therefore some grief. The old way of being together as a couple or as a family must be given up. Small daily habits must be changed -- sleep patterns, meal times and weekend activities all may need to be altered to help fold this new life into the family.

Whatever changes, transitions or losses are the cause of your grief; know that grief is not a single event or occurrence, but rather a process. Denial, Bargaining, Anger, Depression and Acceptance are well-known stages of grief that a person may go through. Despite the linear sequence of the steps as presented here, know that each person moves through her or his own process in her or his own way and according to her or his own timeline, and that each person may cycle through these steps many times for years to come.

Normal grief reactions can vary across a broad spectrum depending on the individual and her or his circumstances. Some of the more common reactions to loss are listed below, broken down into emotional, physical, mental and behavioral reactions.

Emotionally -- Some feelings that may occur include:

Sadness Anger Guilt Anxiety Loneliness Fatigue Helplessness Shock Yearning Relief Numbness Depression

Physically -- Some sensations that may be experienced include:

Hollowness in stomach, Tightness in chest, throat, Sense of Depersonalization (nothing seems real), Breathlessness, Lack of energy, Weakness

Mentally -- Some thoughts/cognitions may include:

Disbelief, Confusion, Preoccupation, Hallucinations, Sense of presence, Doubting, questioning

Behaviorally -- Some noticeable changes in behavior may include:

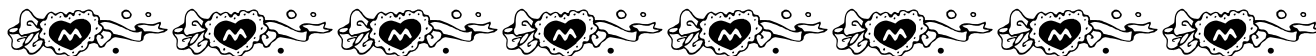
Sleep disturbances, Appetite disturbances, Social withdrawal, Dreams of the deceased, Searching/calling out, Absent-minded behavior, Crying, Avoiding reminders of the deceased

Know that all of these thoughts, feelings and behaviors are a normal part of the grief process. Grieving is a normal process, even though it hurts.

What can you do to get through this process? Some coping mechanisms to help you move through the grief include:

- Share your thoughts and feelings with trusted family members and friends. Having and using your support system is critical.
- Do some journaling or perform a ceremony or ritual to call forth any untapped feelings.
- Take care of yourself. Be gentle with your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self.
- If you feel stuck, unable to express your emotions, or find yourself using unhealthy coping mechanisms (over-eating, smoking, drinking, drugs, etc.), contact a professional counselor.

So, when should you be "over" all the hurt and pain? First remember it's a process, so be gentle with yourself and don't rush yourself (or anyone else). Second, know that a person never completely recovers – an emptiness may remain for years to come, and certain emotional insecurities and issues may remain. Sadness may come back, washing over you in waves on special days or in certain circumstances. But take heart – there will come a time when you feel like the worst is over, like some healing has occurred and you are ready to move forward with your life ... spring is not far off, and with the spring comes hope.



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 chapters expenses: printing and mailing of our newsletter, books for our lending libraries, our 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 23rd 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 _____

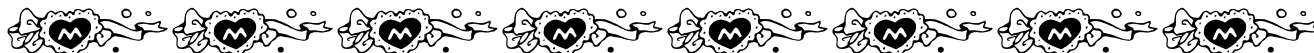
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

DATE OF BIRTH _____ DATE OF DEATH _____

Enclosed is a love gift in memory of my child to help defray 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 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.



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

APRIL 2010 MEMORY PAGE

**DAVID ADAM ZEHNDER... Son of Ricki Aiken
SLADE DAVID GIBSON... Son of Slade & Becky Gibson
SHAWNDRA RAE FREEBURG... Daughter of Kim & Tony Freeburg**



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***We Need not Walk Alone.....
We are The Compassionate Friends.***

E-mail us at info@rimcountrytcf.org or call us at 928-978-1492 if you would like to submit articles, be added to or removed from this newsletter mail list or to correct information.

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**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 circum-



stances.

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.