



# 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 2008

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 NO. 8

## **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:**

Bill Knauss (928) 978-1492  
Robbin Clark (928) 468-7797

## **TCF NATIONAL OFFICE**

P.O. BOX 3696,  
OAKBROOK, IL 60522-3696  
(877) 969-0010, FAX (630)  
990-0246

CompassionateFriends.org

Regional Coordinator:  
Gene Caligari 480-361-1877

**CHAPTER NEWS:** Thank you to all who attended last months meeting. There were quite a few anniversaries and birthdays which we recognized with pictures and some delicious goodies.

If you have an article, story or poem that you would like to see included in the newsletter please feel free to send it to the address (or email) on the back page.

## **Our next meeting is Tuesday, August**

**12.** I know there are several in our group whose children's birthdays or anniversaries are this month. You are in our thoughts and prayers. If you plan to attend this month, please bring pictures of your child and perhaps one of their favorite snacks.



Blessings, Bill

## **To All Parents**

*by Edgar Guest*

"I'll lend you for a little time a child of mine," He said.  
"For you to love the while he lives and mourn when he is dead,  
"It may be six or seven years, or twenty-two or three,  
"But will you, till I call him back, take care of him for me?  
"He'll bring his charms to gladden you, but should his stay be brief,  
"You'll have his lovely memories, as solace for your grief,  
"I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return,  
"But there are lessons taught down there I want this child to learn.  
"I've looked the wide world over in my search for teachers true,  
"And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes I have selected you.  
"Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labor vain,  
"Nor hate me when I come to call to take him back again?  
I fancied that I heard them say: "Dear Lord, Thy will be done!  
"For all the joy Thy child shall bring, the risk of grief we'll run.  
We'll shelter him with tenderness; we'll love him while we may,  
And for happiness we've known forever grateful stay.  
"But should the angels call for him much sooner than we'd planned,  
"We'll brave the bitter grief that comes and try to understand."

Last month our friend Lon lost his grandson Nick in a skateboard accident. This is a letter read at his service that Nick might have written had he been given the chance... Bill

Sorry I never got a chance to say goodbye to any of you. It would have been nice to have said my goodbyes and given all my loved ones hugs.

I know that all of you would question why my life was shortened like it was when there were still so many things I had to do, promises to keep, road trips to make, parties to go to, adventures to explore and mountains to climb. I know this. It all had to do with God's purpose for me. His plans are bigger and better than mine. Things are so clear and God's truths are above all.

I am in a better place right now. I didn't know it but I was ready for this and have no regrets. My last ride down that hill was the best ride of my life. I feel like a great athlete who was able to retire at the top of my game. When I passed over it was incredible. I was covered by so many beautiful white wings...and there was one huge set of wings to cover all.

My spirit is going to be with all of you for a long time. For many of you this dying is not the end of my experience with you but more like the beginning. I still have many things to do.

Anyway, I have some messages and things I would like to pass along.

To all the friends of my family.....Yesterday was awesome...thank you for the love and support you have shown my family over the last two weeks. My parents and I have been blessed by the best most loving circle of friends one could hope for. You are all the measure and quality of the life I lived. Those closest to my mom and dad...you know who you are...I ask and offer special blessings for you. And all of you...hug your children no matter how old they are. And never forget to tell them that you love them.

To my buddy Mikey who tried so hard to save my life. My life was a great ride thanks to friends like you. You should never feel any guilt or sorrow. This passing on is not about that. Learn from all of this and stay focused on the path you have chosen for yourself. I will be with you. Count on it.

To all of my other buddies. Thanks for being here. Thanks for carrying me this one last time. You honor me just I am honored to have been your friend. Thanks for the memories...

To my cousin Mark. Thank you for the memories too. We stayed out of trouble or at least didn't get caught. Good times man. I told you that I would help you raise that little boy of yours. I meant it and I will.....whatever it takes. I made you a promise....You have it in you to get it done and with me helping we will get it done right.....I have your back.

To my grandparents.....Grandma Nat.....sorry I can't help you around the house anymore but I am sure my dad will help you get those chores done. Grandpa Al was waiting here for me. He loves you and is keeping a couple of decks of cards in his pocket ready for when he sees you again. Grandpa Lon and grandma Dotty.....decorate the house this Christmas like you never have before. I will be there. Get me a bigger stocking this year and fill it with toys for the poor children in Peru. Keep the fountain running too....I will miss guys so much.

To my sister Lori.....this is tough. You are incredible. You are going to do wonderful things. When you go to Egypt in October take my blue hat and a feather. Leave the feather....bring the hat back. It will be a great trip and I will be with you at all times and in all things.

To my mom and dad.....I have a lot I need to say to you. Thank you for a wonderful life. Thank you for making every effort to keep me alive....it was not God's plan. This crazy accident, I know you don't see any good from it but I promise you there will be so many wonderful things that can come out of it....and I have not left you for a second and I won't. Even though I have passed on to the other side my spirit will be with you both and Lori for a long time to come.

When you feel the tears coming and you feel the pain of sorrow building up between your eyes just above your brow, that is me...my spirit. Whenever you see a feather fall from the sky or a hummingbird stop for a moment to pause in front of you...that is me... whenever you see a young kid wearing a stupid blue hat...that is me....

Dad...this probably is why I never wanted to be a carpenter....God had a better job waiting for me. You know how you always had my back when I was in over my head.....now I can cover your back in a big way. Dad....take the whole group fishing to Alaska this year or next.....I'll be there. And don't overdo it with the tattoos.

Mom....sorry about all the grief I gave you and thanks for not punishing me the way I deserved. I think I had been getting it right at the end....and always I wanted both of you to be proud of me.

To both of you...take good care of each other....I love you so much and will be with you in all things.

Nick.

## Silence, Silent but Never Silence

by Kimberly V. Dunn

Many said I camouflaged it well  
Only after discovering  
my silent suffering  
Silent but never silenced enough  
The silent suffering I endured  
Alone, leaving what appeared  
Silent to be well known within me  
Silent and hidden  
Silent but not silent enough  
The pain exists deep down within me  
Silent, never silent I think not  
A heart that weeps  
Silently weeping in the dark  
Hoping no one sees me  
Silent, Never



Stomped on, used as a sponge, broken, tugged on, and jerked at  
A heart, I do have  
And treated as if I have none  
A heart that's far beyond repair  
Silent, this is the hearts only way  
To cry out  
Silent, I think not  
Silent, they said I camouflaged it well  
My suffering well hidden but  
Silent never,  
It cries out  
Help  
But no one seems to hear or see  
Only the ones that some how saw  
The silent suffering  
Silent but never within me  
Silent, can't you see  
This is my heart speaking  
Help me  
Silent, never silence  
Silent, I'm suffering

## **“The Thorns In Our Life”**

**(Thanks Bob Graham for sending this)**

Sandra felt as low as the heels of her shoes when she pulled open the florist shop door, against a November gust of wind. Her life had been as sweet as a spring breeze and then, in the fourth month of her second pregnancy, a "minor" automobile accident stole her joy. This was Thanksgiving week and the time she should have delivered their infant son. She grieved over their loss.

Troubles had multiplied. Her husband's company "threatened" to transfer his job to a new location. Her sister had called to say that she could not come for her long awaited holiday visit. What's worse, Sandra's friend suggested that Sandra's grief was a God-given path to maturity that would allow her to empathize with others who suffer. "She has no idea what I'm feeling," thought Sandra with a shudder. "Thanksgiving? Thankful for what?" she wondered. "For a careless driver whose truck was hardly scratched when he rear-ended her? For an airbag that saved her life, but took her child's?"

"Good afternoon, can I help you?"

Sandra was startled by the approach of the shop clerk. "I ... I need an arrangement," stammered Sandra.

"For Thanksgiving? I'm convinced that flowers tell stories," she continued. "Are you looking for something that conveys 'gratitude' this Thanksgiving?"

"Not exactly!" Sandra blurted out. "In the last five months, everything that could go wrong has gone wrong."

Sandra regretted her outburst, and was surprised when the clerk said, "I have the perfect arrangement for you."

Then the bell on the door rang, and the clerk greeted the new customer, "Hi, Barbara, let me get your order." She excused herself and walked back to a small workroom, then quickly reappeared, carrying an arrangement of greenery, bows, and what appeared to be long-stemmed thorny roses. Except the ends of the rose stems were neatly snipped: there were no flowers.

"Do you want these in a box?" asked the clerk. Sandra watched - was this a joke? Who would want rose stems with no flowers! She waited for laughter, but neither woman laughed.

"Yes, please," Barbara replied with an appreciative smile. "You'd think after three years of getting the special, I wouldn't be so moved by its significance, but I can feel it right here, all over again," she said, as she gently tapped her chest.

Sandra stammered, "Ah, that lady just left with .. uh ... she left with no flowers!"

"That's right," said the clerk. "I cut off the flowers. That's the 'Special'. I call it the Thanksgiving Thorns Bouquet. Barbara came into the shop three years ago, feeling much as you do today," explained the clerk. "She thought she had very little to be thankful for. She had just lost her father to cancer; the family business was failing; her son had gotten into drugs; and she was facing major surgery. That same year I had lost my husband," continued the clerk. "For the first time in my life, I had to spend the holidays alone. I had no children, no husband, no family nearby, and too much debt to allow any travel."

"So what did you do?" asked Sandra.

"I learned to be thankful for thorns," answered the clerk quietly. "I've always thanked God for the good things in my life and I never questioned Him why those good things happened to me, but when the bad stuff hit, I cried out,

"Why? Why me?!" It took time for me to learn that the dark times are important to our faith! I have always enjoyed the 'flowers' of my life, but it took the thorns to show me the beauty of God's comfort! You know, the Bible says that God comforts us when we're afflicted, and from His consolation we learn to comfort others."

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Sandra sucked in her breath, as she thought about what her friend had tried to tell her. "I guess the truth is I don't want comfort. I've lost a baby and I'm angry with God."

Just then someone else walked in the shop. "Hey, Phil!" the clerk greeted the balding, rotund man.

"My wife sent me in to get our usual Thanksgiving arrangement ... twelve thorny, long-stemmed stems!" laughed Phil as the clerk handed him a tissue wrapped arrangement from the refrigerator.

"Those are for your wife?" asked Sandra incredulously. "Do you mind telling me why she wants a bouquet that looks like that?"

"Four years ago, my wife and I nearly divorced," Phil replied. "After forty years, we were in a real mess, but with the Lord's grace and guidance, we trudged through problem after problem, the Lord rescued our marriage. Jenny here (the clerk) told me she kept a vase of rose stems to remind her of what she had learned from "thorny" times. That was good enough for me. I took home some of those stems. My wife and I decided to label each one for a specific "problem" and give thanks for what that problem taught us."

As Phil paid the clerk, he said to Sandra, "I highly recommend the Special!"

"I don't know if I can be thankful for the thorns in my life" Sandra said to the clerk. "It's all too .... fresh."

"Well," the clerk replied carefully, "my experience has shown me that the thorns make the roses more precious. We treasure God's providential care more during trouble than at any other time. Remember that it was a crown of thorns that Jesus wore so we might know His love. Don't resent the thorns."

Tears rolled down Sandra's cheeks. For the first time since the accident, she loosened her grip on her resentment.

"I'll take those twelve long-stemmed thorns, please," she managed to choke out.

"I hoped you would," said the clerk gently. "I'll have them ready in a minute."

"Thank you. What do I owe you?"

"Nothing. Nothing but a promise to allow God to heal your heart. The first year's arrangement is always on me."

The clerk smiled and handed a card to Sandra. "I'll attach this card to your arrangement, but maybe you would like to read it first."

It read:

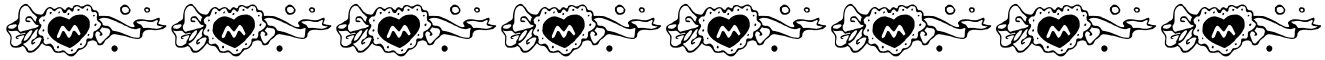
"My God, I have never thanked You for my thorns. I have thanked You a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my thorns. Teach me the glory of the cross I bear; teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed closer to You along the path of pain. Show me that, through my tears, the colors of Your rainbow look much more brilliant."

Praise Him for the roses; thank Him for the thorns.

God Bless all of you. Be thankful for all that the Lord does for you.

"Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and leave the rest to God."

We often try to fix problems with WD-40 and Duct tape. God did it with nails.



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 dedicated phone 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 24th 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 \_\_\_\_\_

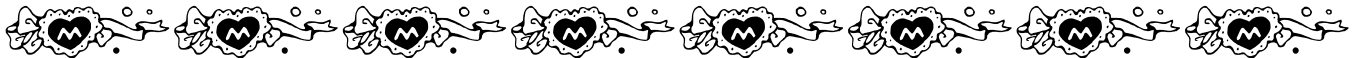
CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ M or F (circle)

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 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... always missed... always remembered

MICHELE LYNN HEATH...daughter of Chuck & June Heath, born 8/23/1971

MILA CASIE PHILLIPS...daughter of Keith Phillips, born 8/17/2004

MILA CASIE PHILLIPS...granddaughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jason Phillips, born 8/17/2004

LACEY A OLDLAND...daughter of Mark & Lynn Gardner, born 8/3/1980

SARAH ELIZABETH SALWITZ...daughter of Michael & Georgia Salwitz , born 8/14/1976

RANDY K WOOD ...son of Sue Scovel, died 8/30/1980



## Are you There?

by Diane Robertson

Misty breeze wraps about my shoulders, thinly clad.  
I shiver not, despite the coolness on my skin.  
Comfort, I now feel.  
Is it you my precious Angel?  
Are you there? I cannot hear your quiet voice,  
But bird song fills the air  
From high treetops to grassy marsh.  
I wonder – is it you, Dear? Are you there?  
The roses in your garden bloom large,  
And varied in hue from crimson deep, to barely pink.  
I cup the velvet bud, its fragrance soothes a troubled mind.  
This must be you, my little girl. Are you there?  
Are you the fiery autumn maples,  
Or the star-like flakes of snow?  
Are you the sparkle in the water of the lake that we both loved,  
Or, perhaps, the warmth I feel in the sand beneath my toes?  
Though your quiet voice I cannot hear,  
Nor can I see again your sparkling eyes,  
Or feel your dainty hand laid gently on my own,  
You are here.  
For memory's book will never close –  
Each lovely sound, or sight, or scent,  
Another page from special times that we have shared.  
Oh, yes! You are here child – everywhere!



## GRIEF IS LIKE A RIVER

By Cinthia G. Kelley

My grief is like a river,  
I have to let it flow,  
but I myself determine  
just where the banks will go.  
Some days the current takes me  
in waves of guilt and pain,  
but there are always quiet pools  
where I can rest again.  
I crash on rocks of anger;  
my faith seems faint indeed,  
but there are other swimmers  
who know that what I need  
Are loving hands to hold me  
when the waters are too swift,  
and someone kind to listen  
when I just seem to drift.  
Grief's river is a process  
of relinquishing the past.  
By swimming in hope's channels,  
I'll reach the shore at last.



**THE  
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***We need not walk alone... We  
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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.