



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.

DECEMBER 2008

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 NO. 12

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

2nd 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

This month, we focus on handling the holidays. This is a difficult time of the year for many of us. Hopefully some of the ideas presented here will be helpful.

Our meeting this month on December 9th will be a potluck & evening of music & remembrance. Please bring a special song or two, (cd, cassette or video) that you would like to share.

Also on Sunday evening, December 14th, at 6:45 PM, we will hold our annual candlelight memorial walk at Green Valley Park. Please plan to attend and invite anyone you know to come. We have a limited supply of candles so you may want to bring your own. We'll have plenty of hot coffee. Be sure to dress warm.

Light One Candle

Light one candle, take my hand.
Move closer to each other,
All who want to smile again.
In this blessed time of year,
with your sorrow and your tears,
Come together to remember & to
Light one candle.

The light is for strength to face
The pain welled up inside.
The light reminds us of
shattered dreams,
not to be denied.
The light is for courage
to beckon others to our side
For every tear we cried...
We light one candle.

We all know the reason
That we value the flame.
It's a commitment to each other
To remember every name.
And a promise that in our hearts
Forever they'll remain.
Out of love we came
To light one candle.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all
children who have died

**Worldwide
Candle
Lighting®**

*... that their light
may always shine.*

**Sunday, December 14, 2008
7 PM Around the Globe**

SOME IDEAS I HAVE FOUND USEFUL DURING THE HOLIDAYS

- Realize that no matter what we do the holidays will come, and the anticipation is always worse than the actual day.
- Being in the presence of those who will let us talk freely about our child is best – very often, these are not relatives.
- You and your family come first; what is most comfortable for all is what should be done.
- Discuss with your children how they feel. Remember, this is a time of grief for them too.
- Don't force yourself to take on any more than you can handle.
- Try to use any support outlets you have, such as your spouse, friends, children and The Compassionate Friends.
- Remember those dear people who say dumb things? The holidays are no exception.
- Take time, maybe before dinner, to ask everyone to have a moment of silence to think of your child.
- Have everyone put a special thought about your child in his or her Christmas stocking to be read by anyone at any time.
- Burn a candle all day on special days in memory of your child. I usually burn a candle whenever I want a special closeness to my son.
- Finally, give yourself a special gift this holiday season: Peace. You deserve it. You have to live to survive the loss of a love. Share this peace with those you love. It will make beautiful memories for all of you.

By Eliane Patizzolo

Bereaved Parent Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house,
Only I was stirring, we didn't have a mouse.
The pile of Kleenex beside my chair,
Evidenced the grief for my son, so hard to bear.
This is the first Christmas you won't be here.
The house is quieter and emptier and so many tears.
Pictures cover our walls more than before
But - not the agony we feel because you won't be here, any-
more.

We used to cheerfully fill your Christmas list,
Now we painfully stand by your grave in a frosty mist.
How could it be - we were given this grief?
Life just isn't the same - it's beyond belief.
Your clothes in your closet, your trophies on the wall,
Why do I feel you'll walk down the hall?
Your new dress shoes wait by your closet door
In hopes maybe you'd wear them once more.
My thoughts think of Christmas last year -
At Christmas Dinner, everyone was here.
One of your last pictures we did take
Now a most precious keepsake.

Beyond the presents, food and mistletoe,
Beyond the Christmas lights that twinkle low
The essence of Christmas is simple and neat
Being together, just together, is the treat.
But nevermore for us to be
Together at Christmas, around the tree.
We remember and talk about you through our tears
We all want you to know - we wish you were here.

Richard Lepinsky- TCF/Victoria, BC
In memory of his son, **Nathan**
October 25, 1975 - May 22, 1991

A Pammy Christmas

It was October 1980 when Pammy's family moved to Arizona. Well with the expenses of moving across the country, not surprising that when Christmas time came the budget wasn't going to allow too many presents...(I'll come back to this particular Christmas later).

Here is where I have to tell you that Pam wasn't much different from other children when she was growing up. Pammy counted presents! Yes...but as she got older she always said, "Mother, you don't have to buy expensive presents". After she was married she would come for Christmas bringing bag after bag of presents for everyone.

In those presents there were many useful inexpensive little gifts. She loved to shop and found the most unusual things...she used her imagination and didn't think ordinary everyday items couldn't be fun to get. Sure she bought some expensive things, but loved the challenge.

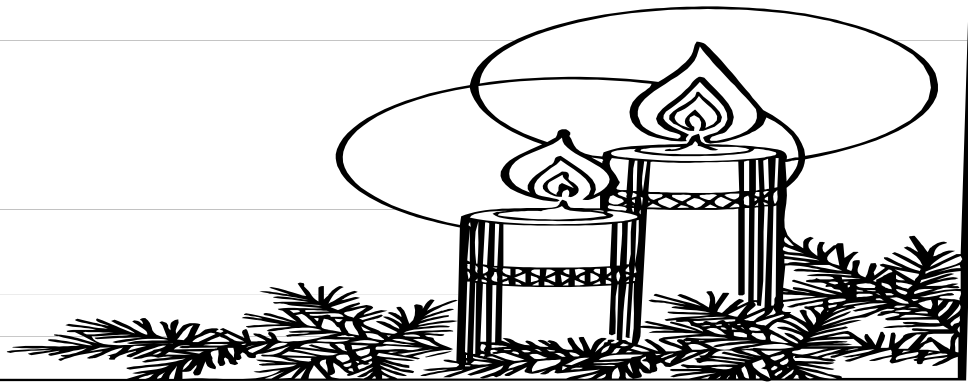
Now back to the Christmas of 1980. It was Christmas morning, the children (Pammy and sister Susan, and brother Darryl) were ready to open presents. This is when Pammy said "lets pass out the presents, then we will take turns opening them...and Christmas will last longer!" there weren't many presents, but that year started a tradition that has been in the family ever since. As the years went by and there were lots of presents to open, Christmas could last three to four hours, we had to take breaks. As each ...So from a Christmas that didn't include lots of expensive gifts, came a tradition of taking the time to enjoy what others received and to acknowledge the family member or friend who gave the gifts. Christ was always in our Christmas—this story is about how Pam added to our family celebration.

Christmas is a difficult time for our family, as it is for all of us. But I feel truly blessed for having Pammy as long as I did. I felt that this year I wanted to share this Christmas story with everyone...

"Merry Christmas Pammy...Mother loves you and misses you!"

By Nancy Soto with love from her family...
TCF- Westside Chapter, Phoenix, Az. 1998

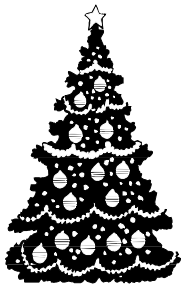
When the time comes for lighting festive candles, let them remind you not only of what you lost but also of what you had. Sascha



A Very Special Christmas Tree

Once upon a time in a big Christmas tree orchard with a lot of big trees, I was a little new sprout just 15 inches tall. The year was 1989.

One day a man, woman and boy came and chopped me down. They took me from my friends. I was sad and lonely. The next day, the boy and woman came home with a coffee can. They put some soil in the bottom with some plant food. They put me into the can; then they filled it with more soil.



Every day they would water me. One day on the morning of the 24th of December, they came into the dining room, took me off the table and brought me into the kitchen. They put me onto the kitchen table and started to decorate me with lights (that were battery-operated), a crocheted star, tinsel and some red and green Christmas balls. I looked like a million dollars.

After a couple of hours, they came back into the kitchen and took me to the car. The boy had put me on the floor so I couldn't see. I went to sleep. It seemed to take hours but in only took a few minutes.

They walked awhile until they came to a gravestone that is blue. The boy sat me down just behind the gravestone. I read the words on the gravestone "**OUR SPECIAL SON AND BROTHER.**" I was here to celebrate Christmas with their son and brother, Michael Lee. Oh my! What a special place, and they picked me to be here with him! Pictures were taken of me and Michael's place. After an hour they left.

Dark came, and I was scared and cold, but then I had this weird feeling. The feeling felt warm and happy. I wasn't scared, either. I couldn't see Michael, but I could tell he was watching me and was happy, too. I couldn't see him but I heard him laugh because he liked me being there.

About three days later they came back and took me away. I waved goodbye, but I made it look like the wind moved my branch. I could feel him laugh and wave goodbye too.

Jeremy D. Hale
TCF- Hutchinson, Kansas

I will be There

Mom, tomorrow I will be there
Though you may not see
I'll smile and remember
The last Christmas, with you and me

Don't be sad mom
I'm never far away
Your heart has hidden sight
My memory will always stay

I watched as you touched the ornaments
Sometimes a tear was shed as you did
I touched you gently on your shoulder
And on tiptoes I proudly stood

I'm only gone for a little while mom
I'm waiting for the day to be
When God calls out your name mom
We'll be together , just you wait and see

But until that time comes
Carry on as you did when I was there
I tell the angels how much I love you
There are angels here everywhere!

I stand behind you some days
When I know that you are sad
I want you to be happy mom
It would make my heart so glad

So on this Christmas Eve, Mom
Think of me as I will be thinking of you
And touch that special ornament
That I once made for you

I love you mom and dad, also
I know you know I do
And I'll be waiting here for you
When your earthly life is through

Love, Your child in heaven

WRITTEN BY Sharon .J. Bryant

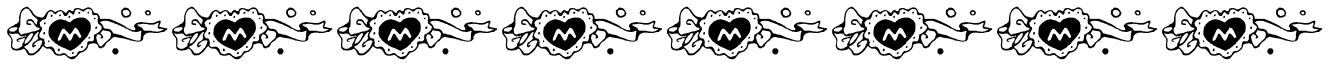


A Bereaved Parents Holiday Wish List

- 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 that 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 two or three years. The first months were 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.**
- 10. I wish you wouldn't expect me "not to think about it" or to "be happy." Neither will happen for a very long time, so don't frustrate yourself.**
- 11. 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.**
- 12. 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 patient with me.**
- 13. When I say "I'm doing okay," I wish you could understand that I don't "feel" okay and that I struggle daily.**
- 14. 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.**
- 15. Your advice to "take one day at a time" is excellent advice. However, a day is sometimes too much and too fast for me. I wish you could understand that often I'm doing good to handle an hour at a time.**
- 16. 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.**
- 17. I wish you understood that grief changes people. When my child died, a big part of me died with him. I am not the same person I was before my child died, and I will never be that person again.**
- 18. I wish very much that you could understand; understand my loss and my grief, my silence and my tears, my void and my pain. BUT I pray daily that you will never understand.**

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.**



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 _____

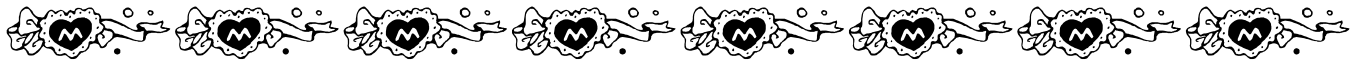
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

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 December. 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.



DECEMBER MEMORY PAGE

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

MALINDA ANN SACKETT...daughter of Mary Ann Brown & Michael Cobo, was born 12/27/66, died 12/18/07

LEON MICHAEL VALENCIA...Grandson of Brad & Kristin Croak, died on 12/27/06

AARON KELLY GARDNER...son of MaryAnn Gardner, died on 12/11/05

JASON VINCENT TAYLOR...son of Tom & Chris Taylor, was born on 12/23/77

**RIM COUNTRY
CHAPTER
P.O. Box 3482
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***We need not walk alone... We
are The Compassionate Friends.***

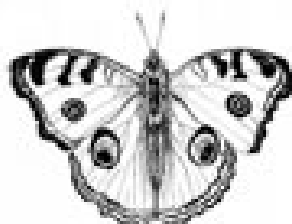
E-mail us at info@rimcountrytcf.org or call us at 928-978-1492 if you receive this newsletter and do not wish to receive it or to change an address or add an address.

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.