



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

FEBRUARY 2009

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 3 NO. 2

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 -
6:30 PM—8:00 PM
Ponderosa Baptist Church
1800 N. Beeline Hwy
(Just South of Home Depot
& the Roundabout)

Chapter Website

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CHAPTER NEWS

Our meeting this month is on February 10th. If you have never attended a meeting or have not attended in a while, you are absolutely welcome to attend at ANY time. We all know how difficult it is to walk through those doors.

Please know that you will find a safe place to talk about your children with people who all understand the pain of losing a child. You can just sit and listen or feel free to tell your story. Talking is never required.

You will be welcome no matter how your child died, how long it has been or at whatever age they died.

If you would like to know more about us or what we do at our meetings, please feel free to call our TCF phone line at 928-978-1492, email us at info@rimcountrytcf.org or visit our website at www.rimcountrytcf.org.



If Roses Grow in Heaven

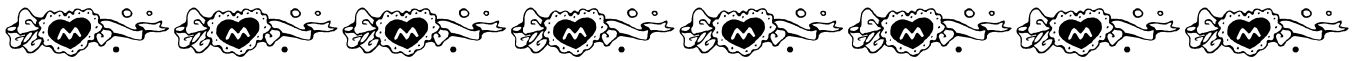
If roses grow in Heaven,
Lord please pick a bunch for me,
Place them in my daughter's arms
And tell her they are from me.
Tell her I love and I miss her,
And when she turns to smile,
Place a kiss upon her cheek.
And hold her for awhile.
Because remembering her is easy,
I do it every day.
But there's an ache in my heart
That will never go away

Unknown

PLEASE DON'T CRY

Please don't sit round my grave and cry,
I am not there, I did not die.
What makes you think that I would leave?
I'm with you Mom, so please don't grieve.
Our bond on earth was much too strong,
Our love will carry on and on...
I'm with you as you go to bed,
I plant sweet kisses on your head.
I'm in the wind, the rain, the snow,
I'm with you everywhere you go.
Please don't cry mommy, can't you see?
I'm safe my spirit soars, I'm free.

Dawn Glenton



Remembering our Loved Ones on Valentine's Day

We've barely made it through the holidays of December and January, and now the stores are filled with hearts and flowers and candy, all of it in celebration of the gift of love. But February 14 can be a difficult day for those of us who are grieving, and for some it will be the first Valentine's Day since our precious Valentine died. For us there is no celebration; there is only grief

Sometimes, for fear of "letting go," we may find ourselves "holding on" to our pain as a way of remembering those we love. Letting go of what used to be is not an act of disloyalty, and it does not mean forgetting our loved ones who have died. Letting go means leaving behind the sorrow and pain of grief and choosing to go on, taking with us only those memories and experiences that enhance our ability to grow and expand our capacity for happiness.

If our memories are painful and unpleasant, they can be hurtful and destructive. If they create longing and hold us to the past, they can interfere with our willingness to move forward in our grief journey. But it doesn't have to be that way. We can choose which parts of life we shared that we wish to keep and which parts we wish to leave behind. We can soothe our pain by thinking of happy as well as sad memories. The happiness we experienced with our loved ones belongs to us forever.

If we decide to do so, we can choose to embrace Valentine's Day as a special day on which to commemorate our loved ones and to celebrate our love for them. Death ends a life, but it does not end the relationship we have with our loved ones who have died. The bonds of love are never severed by death, and the love we shared will never die either. For Valentine's Day this year, we can find a way to honor our loved ones, to remember them and to show them that our love is eternal.

We can build a piece of "memory time" into that particular day, or we can pack the entire day with meaning. Think of it this way: It's much easier to cope with memories we've chosen than to have them take us by surprise. Whether we are facing Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, an anniversary or birthday, or any other special day of our own choosing, we can immerse ourselves in the healing power of remembrance. We can go to a special place, read aloud, or listen to a favorite song. We can celebrate what once was and is no more.

Personal grief rituals are those loving activities that help us remember our loved ones, and give us a sense of connectedness, healing and peace. Creating and practicing personal grief rituals can also help us release painful situations and unpleasant memories, freeing us to make our memories a positive influence in our lives.

Bereavement Counselor Marty Tousley is the creator and instructor of the online courses [The First Year of Grief: Help for the Journey](#) and [A Different Grief: Coping with Pet Loss](#) exclusively available through [www.SelfHealingExpressions.com](#). Her award-winning Web site, [www.GriefHealing.com](#), offers information, comfort and support to anyone who is anticipating or mourning the loss of a loved one, whether human or animal.

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10 strategies for coping with grief

Grief is a personal experience, unique to each mourner and unique to each loss. Grief comes in waves, as times of peace and calm are suddenly shattered by overpowering emotion. The following strategies provide a few suggestions to help you ride out the waves as you cope with your grief.

Take time out. In many ways, the experience of grief is similar to recovery from a serious illness; some days will be darker, and some will be brighter. Recognize your limits, and separate the things that must be done from those that can wait. Don't worry about keeping up with your usual schedule. If you have to cancel or reschedule commitments, people will understand.

Avoid making major decisions. Grief can cloud your judgment and make it difficult to see beyond the pain you're feeling at the moment. Impulsive decisions – to move or change jobs, for example – can have far-reaching implications for which you may be unprepared. If you must make an important decision, discuss your options with someone you trust, such as a friend or financial advisor.

Talk. Painful feelings held inside are like an infection festering in a wound – they need to come out in order for you to heal. When friends ask how they can help, ask them to just be with you and listen. Tell them how important it is for you to be able to express what you're thinking and feeling. If you think you need more than the support of your friends, consider talking with a professional counselor.

Express yourself creatively. Writing is another excellent way to express yourself. Try keeping a journal or writing letters, whether you send them or not. When words won't come, artistic outlets like painting or sculpting can help you to communicate what's in your heart and soul. Creative expression can bring clarity to the turmoil you feel and insight into feelings you weren't aware of.

Honor your loved one's memory. Preserve your memories in ways that are comforting and meaningful. Enlarge and frame a favorite photo of your loved one, or compile a scrapbook of letters and mementoes from the good times you shared. Make a quilt from his clothing, or plant a tree or a bed of his favorite flowers to create a lasting tribute. Contributing time or money to your loved one's favorite cause or charity is also a noble way to honor her memory.

Take care of your physical health. Grief takes a physical toll as well as an emotional toll. Rest, exercise, and proper nutrition are essential to healing. Counteract a poor appetite by eating small amounts of healthy foods rather than large meals. If you have difficulty sleeping, try taking brief naps or just putting your feet up and relaxing whenever you can. And while you may not be motivated to exercise, just taking a brief walk now and then can lift your spirits and help you to sleep at night.

Avoid using chemicals to numb your feelings. A glass of wine can be good for the soul and help to settle jangled nerves, but overdoing it can bring a host of new problems. Attempting to numb your feelings with alcohol, illicit drugs, or prescription medications will only prolong the pain. Eventually, one way or the other, you must come to terms with your grief. Have fun. Grieving is difficult, but it doesn't mean you have to feel bad all the time; in fact, it's important to take a break from focusing on your grief. Have fun when you can, whether it's reading a good book, watching a movie, playing cards, or resuming other activities you enjoyed before your loss. Don't feel guilty about it.

Plan ahead for special occasions. Anniversaries and holidays can be stressful times when you've lost someone you love, and especially so in the first year or two. Talk with family members about your concerns; this may be a good time to introduce new traditions to mark special occasions.

Reach out. In the beginning, grief may be so intense that you just want to withdraw or isolate. Soon, though, you'll be ready to ease back into social contact. Make a date with an old friend, or invite a neighbor to lunch. Or try volunteering with your church or favorite charity – you'll make new social contacts while you help others, and you'll feel good about yourself.

Source: The Light Beyond

THE CHERRY TREE

Dad cut down the old cherry tree today
"It needs to come down," I had to say
So he would notice it was true,
Diseased and riddled with bugs too.

Later that night, I started to cry...
I didn't quite understand why.
Tears spun like a tornado to my core
Leaving me crying an hour, two, then more.

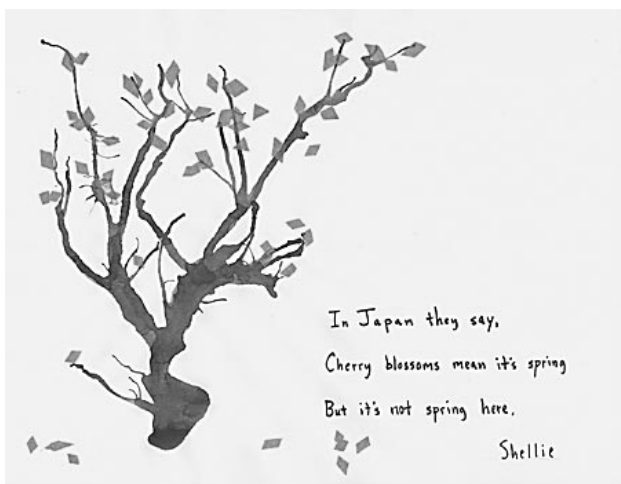
Now there's an empty place in our yard
Where the cherry tree once stood guard.
But if I close my eyes I can still see
The four of you picking cherries from that tree.

Those were happier days...they went by so fast.
I always knew they couldn't last...
For the four of you grew much like the tree.
So beautiful...you mean the world to me.

Now, my lovely son, four years dead—
Thoughts of you always fill my head.
Your short lifetime...only eighteen years.
Not long enough say my endless tears.

You are so deeply mourned by your sisters and
brother,
But I can't know their grief...only that of a mother.
A grief so unrelenting I can't move on—
So instead, I cry when a cherry tree's gone.

Diane Royer July 2005
In memory of Aaron S. Royer
December 21, 1982– July 5, 2001
BPUSA/Anne Arundel County Chapter
Annapolis, Maryland



TAKING STOCK

By: Margaret Gerner

Bereaved Mother & Grandmother

St. Louis, Mo.

Happy new Year!!! "How can it ever be again?" "How will I ever make it through another year of this torment?"
When we are hurting and so terribly depressed it is hard to see any good in our New Year, but we must try.

First, we must hold on tightly to the idea that we will not always be this miserable. That we will someday feel good again. This is almost impossible to believe but even when we don't believe it, we must tell ourselves over and over again that it is true, BECAUSE IT IS! Many parents whose children have died some years in the past will attest to this. Remember also, no one can suffer indefinitely as you are suffering right now.

Second, we must face the New Year with knowledge that this year offers us a CHOICE. Whether we will be on our way to healing by this time next year, or still be in the pit of intense grief. We must remind ourselves that if we choose to be on the way to healing ourselves to go through our grief, to cry, to be angry, to talk about our feelings of guilt, and do whatever is necessary to move toward healing.

Third, we must look for good in our lives and find reasons to go on, and accept the fact that our continued suffering will not bring our child back. Many of us have other children and a spouse for whom we must go on. More importantly, we have our own lives that must be lived. Most of us know that our dead children would want us to go on!
No, this coming year may not be a happy one, but it can be a constructive one. Through our grief we can grow and become more understanding, loving, compassionate and aware of the real values in life.

LET US NOT WASTE THIS NEW YEAR!

WHEN I MUST LEAVE YOU

When I must leave you for a little while
Please do not grieve and shed wild tears
And hug your sorrow to you through the years
But start out bravely with a gallant smile:
And for my sake and in my name live on
And do all the things the same
Feed not your loneliness on empty days,
But fill each waking hour in useful ways,
Reach out your hand in comfort and in cheer,
And I in turn will comfort you and hold you near:
And never, never be afraid to die,
For I am waiting for you in the sky!

UNKNOWN

A NEW NORMAL

I wanted my life to return to normal.
Then I realized what I wanted
Was for my life to return to what it once was.
A year ago I found hope one night
When I heard my wife and my youngest son
Laughing in our bedroom.
I thought my life was returning to normal.
I played cards with our youngest son after supper,
With much fun and laughter.
After a few cartoons,
He and my wife were off to bed.
It was then that I realized
My life was not returning
to the normal that it was
When Greg was alive,
but changing to a new normal.
I cannot return to what I once was,
Because all of the parts are
No longer there.
I have the choice, consciously,
And subconsciously
To carry on with my life,
Thus creating a new normal.
Hope lies in accepting what
You now have—
Looking with joy, not sorrow,
Looking ahead with optimism
Not pessimism.

Daryl Hutson

A COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

A compassionate friend will take your hand,
They will sit, and listen, and understand.
You don't have to hold back and pretend;
They know your thoughts and can comprehend.
A compassionate friend lets you open your heart;
With them you don't have to play a part.
You can talk, or cry, or even complain,
But, with them, you never have to explain.
A compassionate friend will help you to live;
Whatever you say, or do, they will forgive.
They, too, know your hurt will never go away,
So they will listen and let you have your say.
They have been down this endless path,
So, somehow, they can help your wrath.
If anyone can help your heart to mend,
It has to be a compassionate friend.

Kathryn A. Pelky TCF, Traverse City, MI

Some Quiet Valentines

While watching an evening sunset
Fade in the western skies,
We know that when tomorrow dawns,
From the east the sun will rise.
Although it may be hidden
By veils hanging low,
We're sure it will appear again
And we'll feel its warming glow.

And so it is with life,
When seen through misty eyes,
When our world is suddenly dimmed
And we plead and ask those whys.
It is then we learn, 'no man is an island,'
As someone wisely said,
As we travel life's uncharted course
And by an unknown hand seem led.

To walk that path of sorrow,
Enduring life's great loss,
But by chance or fate that someone's
Path we are guided to cross.
That someone through kindness
In his or her way does impart,
A warmth and a tenderness
That so lifts a sad heart.

For it's the depth of their smile
That lifts this sorrow of mine,
And by far they are best suited
To be our Valentine.

We may be someone's Valentine
And never be aware,
In these caring, still-grieving hearts,
Our children's love is there.
We've no choice but to continue
On life's uncharted way,
And be thankful for those quiet friends
Who brighten up each day.

From TCF Newsletter Cleveland, OH
Printed in Atlanta TCF Newsletter Feb 98

Personal Grief Rituals

What follows are just a few examples of personal grief rituals. The ideas are as unique and as varied as the people who invented them; think of ways that you can adapt them and make them your own. You are limited only by your own imagination.

- * If you're a writer, write. It could be an article, an anecdote, a story, a poem, a song, a letter, an obituary or a eulogy. If you don't want to write for someone else, keep a private journal and write about your feelings as you journey through your grief.
- * Buy a very special candle, decorate it and light it in honor of your loved one.
- * Purchase a book - perhaps a children's book - on coping with the loss of a loved one, and donate it to your local library or school. Ask the librarian to place a label inside the front cover inscribed "In memory of [your loved one's name]."
- * Plant a tree, bush, shrub, garden or flower bed as a permanent growing memorial to your beloved. Mark the site with a memorial plaque, marker, bench or statue.
- * Memorialize your beloved in cyberspace by lighting a virtual candle online.
- * Write a special note, letter, poem, wish or prayer to your beloved, go outside, attach the paper to a balloon and let it go - or place it in a vessel and burn it, and watch the smoke rise heavenward.
- * If you are harboring bad feelings or regrets, gather symbols to represent those hurtful or painful situations, events, or feelings from your past, place them in a container and hold a private burial or burning ceremony, saying goodbye and releasing them as you do so.
- * Ask relatives, friends, co-workers and neighbors to gather their contributions, and put together a scrapbook or box of memories containing mementoes, letters and photographs of your loved one.
- * Celebrate the life of your loved one by continuing favorite traditions or eating favorite foods.
- * Select a Valentine card that you wish your beloved would have picked for you, and mail it to yourself.
- * Give yourself a gift from your loved one that you always wished he or she would have given you, and think of your beloved whenever you use it or wear it.

The Season of the Heart

This is the Season of the Heart! Yet many of us will be asking how to live during this season with a heart that is broken. Just what is it that our hearts are knowing during these days? What are the feelings that pulsate and ebb and flow? Is it-

- the Heart that catches its breath on a memory and is overwhelmed?
- the Heart that feels it absolutely cannot hold one more ounce of pain?
- the Heart that knows the fleeting smile of a loved one?
- the Heart that catches a fragment of joy and is warmed?
- the Heart that knows pain, and keeps on loving?
- the Heart that is tempted to lie still and lonely?
- the Heart that searches for the acceptance of a friend?
- the Heart that is one day, suddenly surprisingly single?

Questions arise! Why is a heart red, and why does it have two lobes?

A response might be-

- A Heart is so vulnerable; so easily bloodied.
- A Heart consists of opposites; changed by sorrow and by joy.
- A Heart, when whole, includes all emotions.
- A Heart can lie cold and sad and broken...
- A Heart can grow and heal and love...

We each have our choices to make!

TO HONOR YOU

To honor you, I get up everyday and take a breath.
And start another day without you in it.

To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew your smile.
And the way your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge.

To honor you, I take the time to appreciate everyone I love.
I know now there is no guarantee of days or hours spent in their presence.

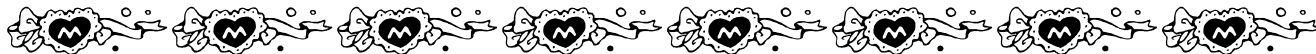
To honor you, I listen to music you would have liked.
And sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows rolled down.

To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back.
Risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance.

You were my light, my heart, my gift of love, from the very highest source.
So everyday, I vow to make a difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you.

Connie F. Kiefer Byrd
In Loving Memory of Jordan Alexander Kiefer
8/24/88 - 12/13/05



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 _____

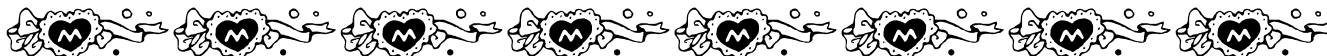
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

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.



FEBRUARY MEMORY PAGE

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

GRACIE LEE HAUGHT... daughter of Hooter & Bobbie Jo, died 2/06/2004

FEBRUARY LOVE GIFTS

Paul & Connie Vallone

In Memory of their son **Charles (Chuck) Edwin Vallone**
11/21/1962—10/25/2008



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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 be added to or removed from this newsletter mail list or to correct an address.

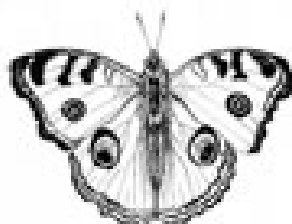
Newsletter printing & mailing donated by Able Steel Fabricators in memory of Cory James Clark

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 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.