



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.

February 2008

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 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.

I am always amazed at the instant empathy we each feel as new members come to their first meeting. We have the strangest welcome for these parents: "We are so sorry you have to be here."



Yes, this is a different kind of welcome. But it is the most deeply sincere welcome we will ever receive. We are kindred souls, you and I. Each of us lives in the "after death" world of losing our child. Each of us has learned gradually that the hope we have attained has made life better, lessened the pain, moderated the isolation, tears, emotional devastation and pure mayhem that had overcome us. Each of us has learned this slowly, in our own time and in our own way.

Each month new parents who have suffered the most horrific loss that a human can endure are welcomed into our group. We reach out, we listen with our hearts and we remember.

Our next meeting is February 12th at 6:30 PM.

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

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TCF NATIONAL OFFICE

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CompassionateFriends.org

Regional Coordinator:
Gene Caligari 480-361-1877

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

THE STORY OF THE SNOWFLAKE



It was 1885, more than a century ago, when Wilson Bentley acquired his fascination with snow. Mr. Bentley photographed snowflakes, so delicate and fine, and he began to realize each was different in design.

But each snowflake served a purpose, in the vast sky above. Just as our precious children did— to us they gave their love. And with their love came happiness and precious memories, for us to cherish and treasure for all eternity!

Although the snowflake fades away, it's memory lives on. Just like our precious children, who from this earth are gone. Each time you see a snowflake, so white that it is blue, open up your heart and smile, your angel is watching you!

We Remember You

From a Hebrew Book of Prayer

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,
We remember you.

in the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,
We remember you.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring,
We remember you.

In the blueness of the sky and the warmth of summer,
We remember you.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn,
We remember you.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends,
We remember you.

When we are weary and in need of strength,
When we are lost and sick at heart,

When we have joys we yearn to share,
We remember you.

So long as we live, you too shall live,
For you are now a part of us,
as we remember you.



MY OLD FRIEND GRIEF

My old friend Grief is back. He comes to visit me once in awhile to remind me that I am still a broken man. Surely there has been much healing since my son died six years ago, and surely I have adjusted to a world without him. But the truth is, we never completely heal, we never totally adjust. Such is the nature of the loss that no matter how much life has been experienced, the heart of the bereaved will never be the same. It's as though a part of us dies with the person we lose through death.

And so my old friend Grief drops in to say "Hello". Sometimes he enter through the door of my memory. I'll hear a song or smell a fragrance. I'll look at a picture and I'll remember how it used to be. Sometimes it brings a smile to my face.... sometimes a tear.

One may say that remembrance is unhealthy... that we shouldn't dwell on thoughts that make us sad. Yet the opposite is true. Grief re-visited is Grief acknowledged and Grief confronted is Grief resolved. But if Grief is resolved, why do we feel a sense of loss when we least expect it? Because healing doesn't mean forgetting and moving on with life doesn't mean that we don't take a part of our lost love with us. Of course the intensity of the pain decreases over time if we allow Grief to visit from time to time.

Sometimes my old friend Grief sneaks up on me. It's as though the one's we have lost are determined not to be forgotten. My old friend Grief doesn't get in the way of living. He just wants to come along and chat sometimes.

Grief has taught me a few things about living I wouldn't have learned on my own. He has taught me that if I try to deny the reality of loss, I end up having to deny life altogether. Old Grief has taught me that I can survive great loss and although my world is different, it's still my world and I must live in it.


My old friend Grief has taught me that the loss of a loved one doesn't mean the permanence of death. My friend will be back again and again to remind me to confront my new reality and to gain through loss and pain.

Adolfo Quesada
TCF— Colorado


FORGIVE UNTIL FOREVER

Don Hackett— TCF— Hingham, MA

Grieving is a fierce and overwhelming expression of love thrust upon us by a deep and hurtful loss. Yet, grieving is frequently such an entanglement of feelings that we often fail to recognize that ultimately forgiveness must be an integral part of our grief and our healing. For what is love if forgiveness is silent within us? We learn to forgive our children for dying, ourselves for not preventing it. We begin to forgive our God or the fate we see ruling our universe. We start to forgive relatives and friends for abandoning us in their own bewilderment over the onslaught of emotions they sense in our words and behavior. I believe we must be open to the balm of forgiveness. Through its expression on our lives, be it through thought, word, or deed, we find small ways to seek life once more. Deep within us, forgiveness is capable of treading the wasteland of our souls to help us feel again the love that has not died. It is the beginning of release from the dominance of pain, not from the continual hurt of missing those we have lost, but from lacking the fullness of the love we shared with our child. That love lives with strength inside ourselves and yet our beings are so entrapped in a whirling vortex of anger, despair, frustration, abandonment and depression that we often feel it only lightly. Let us all heed the quiet message heard so softly in the maelstrom of the spirit. Forgive, forgive and forgive unto forever. Let love enfold our anguish, helping us to grow and strive this hour to a rich tomorrow.



I'm An Angel Now



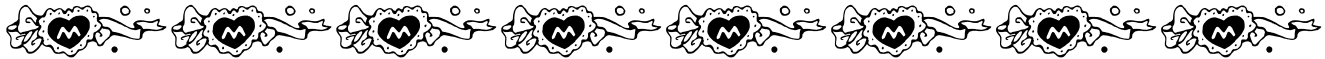
*One night I cried to Jesus
As I sat beneath the tree;
I looked into the open sky
And hoped He'd answer me.
"I'm lost dear Lord...
I've traveled far, but still I seem to roam;
Please light the way and lead me, Lord,
I need to get back home."
I told Him of my burdens
And the sadness in my heart;
That from His gracious love
I'd never felt so far apart.
"Why did you take my child, Lord?
I cannot understand!
No longer can I touch his face
Or hold his tiny hand."
"I'm angry, Lord... I'm missing him,
I'm drowning in my sorrow;
Please help to heal my yesterday
And face each new tomorrow."
It was then I heard his gentle voice
And felt his presence near;
How so I wanted so to hold him
As I cried another tear.
He said, "Mommy, I'm an angel now,
My spirit will be free;
I'm an angel now in heaven,
So please don't cry for me."
"I was chosen by our Lord above
And now I'm in His care;
Whenever you need me,
Just look inside your heart;
I promise to be there."
"No one can ever take away
Our bond with one another;
For I'll always be your precious child,
As you will always be my mother."
"So if you cannot find your way
Or the road to home seems far;
Just look up to the Heavens
And I'll be your guiding star."
He said, "Mommy, I'm an angel now,
My spirit will be free;
I'm an angel now in Heaven...
There's no need to cry for me."*

Janice Grogan

When Tomorrow Starts Without Me

*When tomorrow starts without me, and I'm not there to see;
If the sun should rise and find your eyes all filled with tears for me;
I wish so much you wouldn't cry the way you did today,
while thinking of the many things we didn't get to say.
I know how much you love me, as much as I love you,
and each time you think of me I know you'll miss me too;
But when tomorrow starts without me, try to understand,
that an angel came and called my name and took me by the hand,
and said my place was ready in Heaven far above,
and that I'd have to leave behind all those I dearly love.
But as I turned to walk away, a tear fell from my eye,
for all my life, I'd always thought I didn't want to die.
I had so much to live for and so much yet to do,
it seemed almost impossible that I was leaving you.
I thought of all the yesterdays, the good ones and the bad,
I thought of all the love we shared and all the fun we had.
If I could relive yesterday, I thought, just for a while,
I'd say good-bye and kiss you and maybe see you smile.
But then I fully realized that this could never be,
for emptiness and memories would take the place of me.
And when I thought of worldly things I'd miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you, and when I did, my heart was filled with sorrow.
But when I walked through Heaven's gates, I felt so much at home.
When God looked down and smiled at me, From His great golden throne,
He said, "This is eternity and all I've promised you.
Today for life on earth is past but here it starts anew.
I promise no tomorrow, but today will always last,
and since each day's the same day, there's no longing for the past.
But you have been so faithful, so trusting, and so true.
Though there were times you did some things you knew you shouldn't do.
But you have been forgiven and now at last you're free,
so won't you take my hand and share my life with me?"
So when tomorrow starts without me, don't think we're far apart,
for every time you think of me, I'm right here in your heart*

David M. Romano



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 _____

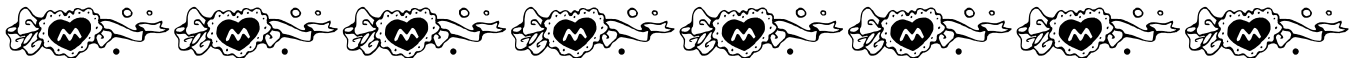
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

DATE OF BIRTH _____ DATE OF DEATH _____

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

FEBRUARY MEMORY PAGE

GRACIE LEE HAUGHT...daughter of Hooter & Bobbie Jo, died 02/06/2004.



Save the Date!

Now is the time to mark July 18-20, 2008 on your calendar so you can attend the 31st national conference of The Compassionate Friends which will be held in Nashville, Tennessee.

Having selected the theme *Volunteers for Healing—Friends for the Future*, the conference committee is hard at work to bring you the best healing experience possible, including special guest speakers, more than 100 workshops covering most aspects of grief following the death of a child, and many additional activities including the ninth annual two-mile Walk to Remember at 8 a.m. Sunday July, 20.

To allow everyone to be a part of this year's conference experience, the conference committee plans to decorate the conference area with real 7" vinyl records that have pictures of our children in the center. The "sponsor a record" program is similar to programs available for previous conferences. For a nominal charge (which helps to defray the cost of the conference), pictures sent in by our membership of our TCF children, will decorate the registration area, and reflection and hospitality rooms. Templates and directions are available for download from The Compassionate Friends website at www.compassionatefriends.org. Whether or not you are able to attend the conference, a child, sibling, grandchild, or loved one can still be remembered.

Those who attend the conference and have a record made with their child's picture will be able to carry them home. After the conference concludes, those unable to attend who would like their child's record can have it mailed to them for a slight additional charge.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Music City Hotel and special room rates will be available for guests attending the conference. Watch TCF's national website at www.compassionatefriends.org for the latest information. More than 1,200 people are expected to attend.



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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.