



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Rim Country Chapter  
P.O. Box 3482  
Payson, AZ 85547

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies

JANUARY 2009

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 3 NO. 1

### 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  
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### 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

As we start this new year, I want to thank you all for your support, encouragement and participation in our chapters events this past year. Thanks to everyone who braved the cold and participated in the candlelight memorial walk last month. Also thank you to everyone who brought food to our last meeting and shared music, stories and videos of your child.

Our ADOT Adopt-a-Highway sign FINALLY came in... however they made a mistake on it... leaving off "TCF". It is unknown how long it will be before they will correct it.

If you have event ideas for 2009, please let us know. We would like to have a butterfly release once again. We'll just need to plan it when the temperature is warmer. Any and all other suggestions are appreciated.

Our meeting this month is on January 13th. If your child's birthday or angel day falls in January, please feel free to bring a desert or snack.

We hope to see you this year and we hope that The Compassionate Friends has been a help in your grief journey. We wish you all the best in 2009.

### We Bereaved

We bereaved are not alone. We belong to the largest company in all the world - the company of those who have known suffering.

When it seems that our sorrow is too great to be borne, let us think of the great family of the heavy-hearted into which our grief has given us entrance, and inevitably, we will feel about us their arms, their sympathy, their understanding.

Believe, when you are most unhappy, that there is something for you to do in the world. So long as you can sweeten another's pain, life is not in vain.

*Helen Keller*

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting December 14 gave hundreds of thousands of bereaved families around the world the opportunity to remember and honor the memory of children lost. Not only were there many hundreds of services held in the U.S. and beyond, nearly 3,000 messages were posted on TCF's national website. You can read messages left at the on the TCF National Website at [compassionatefriends.org](http://compassionatefriends.org)

A new year brings time to reflect on the children we love, those who remain with us and those for whom we grieve ~

*Wayne Loder*



## New Year's Resolutions For Bereaved Parents

I resolve...

That I will grieve as much, and for as long, as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a time table on my grief.

That 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.

That I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and that I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now."

That 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.

That 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.

That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and that 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, too, will pass.

That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.

That 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 communion to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.

That I will try to eat, sleep, and exercise every day in order to give my body the strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.

To 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

To know that I will heal, even though it may take a long time.

To let myself heal and not to feel guilty about feeling better.

To 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.

To 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 may become a habit

That I will reach out at times, and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.

That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

Nancy A. Mower TCF - Honolulu, HI

### For the New Year...

May the New Year bring healing.  
May the New Year bring peace,  
The warmth of cheerful memories,  
And from pain, sweet release.  
The light of your child's smile  
May it guide you on your way,  
With strength and consolation  
Throughout the year, each day.  
Wherever you may travel  
On this lonely road of grief,  
May you find the way grow easier,  
May the times of sorrow be brief.  
Your child's life continues  
In the life you choose to live.  
In your hands and heart, your child's love -  
To yourself and others, give.

In loving memory of my son, **Tim Jones**  
June 12, 1976 - January 7, 1993

### 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 do each day,  
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 that you think of me,  
Please know I'll miss you, too.

But when tomorrow starts without me,  
please try to understand,  
That an angel came and called my name,  
and took me by the hand.

And said a place was ready,  
in heaven up above;  
And that I'd have to leave behind,  
all those I truly love.

I had so much to live for,  
so much yet to do.  
It seemed almost impossible,  
that I was leaving you.

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.

By: Capuchin Franciscan Friars  
Submitted in memory of **Perri**  
by Marilyn and Anthony Andre', TCF-Phoenix

### The New Year

The New Year comes  
When all the world is ready  
For changes, resolutions -  
Great beginnings.

For us, to whom  
That stroke of midnight means  
A missing child remembered,  
For us, the New Year comes  
More like another darkness.

But let us not forget  
That this may be the year  
When love and hope and courage  
Find each other somewhere  
In the darkness  
To lift their voice and speak:

Let there be light.

Sascha Wagner  
TCF-Aurora, Colorado



## Challenge and Change

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun-loving, but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the old us too, and their comments show it. "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar that shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when a child dies. We wonder, our families wonder-when will we come out of it? Will we make it through the long sleep? What hues will we show when we emerge? If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of the cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy- but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the new us. When our priorities become different and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from the cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge, then we can say proudly: "I have survived against overwhelming odds." Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and the challenges give me hope that I can be happy.

I can feel fulfilled again. I can love again.

Sherry Mutcher  
TCF-Appleton, WI

## A Love Song

The mention of my child's name  
May bring tears to my eyes,  
But it never fails to bring  
Music to my ears.  
If you are really my friend,  
Please, don't keep me  
From hearing the beautiful music.  
It soothes my broken heart  
And fills my soul with love.

Nancy Williams  
TCF- NJ

## God's Special Child

By Edgar Guest

I'll lend for you a little while,  
a child of mine, he said.  
For you to have the while he lives  
and mourn for when he's 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 joys to gladden you,  
And shall his stay be brief,  
You'll have his lovely memories  
As solace for your grief.

I cannot promise you he'll 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 teacher's 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 fancy that I heard them say  
"Dear Lord thy will be done"  
For all the joy thy child shall bring  
The risk of grief will run.

We'll shelter him with tenderness.  
We'll love him while we may  
And for The happiness we've known  
Forever grateful stay.

And shall the angels call for him.  
Much sooner than we planned.  
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes  
And try to understand.

*Understanding what happens  
to us during the grief process  
won't alleviate the **PAIN**, but it  
might help stop the **PANIC**.*

Darcie Sims- *Footsteps Through The Valley*

### Newly Bereaved

There is a wide variation in time for recovery, just as there is a wide variation in our grief experiences. How long it will take each of us to reach this point of being comfortable is impossible to predict, and different for each of us. I think much of the timing has to do with how effectively we have faced and worked through our grief. Because I did not grieve in a healthy way for many years after Arthur was killed, I had to begin to grieve properly six years after to reach a point where I feel no pain at the thought that Arthur is dead. My daughter, also a bereaved parent, had the support of TCF and reached a comfortable point in a much shorter time.

I know that what I have said is hard to believe. For that reason I would suggest that you accept this with blind faith for the time being. Then, when the pain becomes more everlasting than usual, think of what I have said. Think of it as a rope hanging "out there" for you to grab onto. Think of it as a rope of hope. Recovery is the end of this terrible journey.

Margaret Gerner  
TCF-St. Louis, Mo

### Footprints

Some children come into our lives  
and go quickly  
Some children come into our lives  
and stay awhile  
All of our children enter our lives  
and leave footprints. . .  
. . .some, oh so small  
. . .some, a little larger,  
. . .some, larger still. . .  
and we will never be the same again.

In loving memory of **Joshua**, our perfect little son, stillborn.  
By Joshua's mommy, Doreen Sexton  
TCF- Phoenix

### Hugging: Perfect Cure For Whatever Ails You

No movable parts...No batteries to wear out  
No periodic checkups...Low energy consumption  
High energy yield...Inflation proof  
No monthly requirements...Theft-proof  
Non-taxable...Non-polluting  
And, of course, fully returnable.

Hugging is healthy...It relieves tension  
Combats depression...Reduces stress  
Improves blood circulation  
It's invigorating...It's rejuvenating.  
It elevates self-esteem  
It generates good will  
It has no unpleasant side effects.  
It is nothing less than a miracle drug!

Eileen Perry via Dear Abby

### The Grief of Fathers

In the early days of my grief,  
A tear would well up in my eyes.  
A lump would form in my throat,  
But you would not know --  
I would hide it,  
And I am strong.

In the middle days of my grief  
I would look ahead and see that wall,  
that I had attempted to go around  
as an ever-present reminder  
of a wall yet un-scaled.  
Yet I did not attempt to scale it  
For the strong will survive--  
And I am strong.



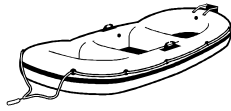
In the later days of my grief  
I learned to climb over that wall--  
Step by step--  
Remembering--  
Crying--  
Grieving.  
And the tears flowed steadily  
As I painstakingly went over.  
The way was long, but I did make it,  
For I am strong.

Near the resolution of my grief,  
A tear will well up in my eyes,  
A lump will form in my throat  
But I will let that tear fall--  
And you will see it.  
Through it you will see  
That I still hurt  
and I care,  
For I am strong.

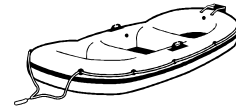
Terry Jago  
TCF-Regina, Canada

Once I wanted total happiness,  
Now I will settle for a little less pain

Ashleigh Brilliant  
TCF- Pittsburgh, PA



## Adrift with my Grief



Among several recurrent images in those first near-unconscious months after Philip's death was that of a small, oarless boat, unmoored, adrift on uncaring seas. Where the boat would come to shore - or if indeed it would come to shore - was unknown. What the boat conveyed was what I felt: A pervasive sense of powerlessness, isolation and fragility. Philip's death had taken away the underpinnings of my life.

In the years since, though I haven't lost the boat image. I've built another life with other images. I have an "old life," the one in which Philip was alive, and I have a "new life," the one I now live. I think the boat image rests between the two, a reminder and also a reality.

It takes a long time to come into our strength again after our child has died. With returning strength comes another reality, that of life as celebration. We who have walked at the darkest nadir of existence come to the surface with a capacity for seeing that we did not possess before the death of our beloved child. That is, to me, one of the great gifts that our children have left us: That through the agony of outliving them, our hearts and our vision have become enlarged. I think of it as "waking up." We know what is important - and what is not. We know that death is a reality, and we aren't afraid of it. We love more freely, more tenderly than we ever knew we could. And, eventually, we laugh, freely and often.

Sure, I'd give it all up to have Philip back, but I don't have that option—nor do you. So what remains to each of us, ultimately, is what we do with what is left to us, with our insights, with the person our shattering experience has created. We are each other's guides for this journey into wholeness. I learn from you, including from your writings in the newsletters. They are gifts of the heart, and they honor our children and siblings in wonderful ways. They tell of our pain, of the great emptiness left by our sons and daughters and sisters and brothers. But they also tell of an opportunity, if we will but take the leap, to move into a richer, wiser participation in life than we could usually attain.

I still get tired. I'm still sometimes at sea in that small, barren, drifting boat. But sometimes now it has sails, and a wind to fill them, and it feels more at home on the vastness of the sea.

With love, Kitty Reeve  
TCF-Marin County, CA

### New Year's Wishes for Bereaved Parents

To the newly bereaved: We wish you patience - patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

To the bereaved sibling: We wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.

To those who are single parents: We wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone with your loss.

To those experiencing marital difficulties after the death of your child:

We wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

To those who have suffered the death of more than one child: We wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.

To those of you who have experienced the death of an only child or of all your children: We offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

To those of you who are plagued with guilt: We wish you the reassurances that you did the very best you could under the circumstances, and that your child knew that.

To those of you who are deeply depressed: We wish you the first steps out of the "Valley of the Shadow".

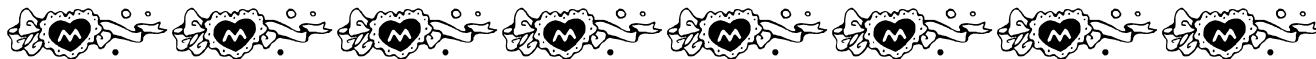
To all fathers and those of you unable to cry: We wish you healing tears and the ability to express your grief.

To those of you who are exhausted from grieving: We wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

To all others with special needs that we have not mentioned: We wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.



From a speech by Former TCF President, Joe Rousseau.  
Taken from the January, 1999, TCF Houston-West chapter newsletter



### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

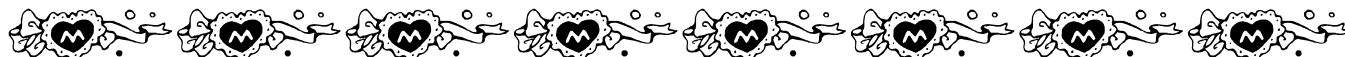
CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ M or F (circle)

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.



### JANUARY MEMORY PAGE

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

**RODNEY WAYLAND LUMADUE**...son of Carol Cavanaugh, born 1/23/55, died 1/2/08

**CORY JAMES CLARK**...Son of Chuck & Robbin Clark, died on 1/13/00

**BARBARA JEAN GRAHAM**...Daughter of Bob Graham, born on 1/31/62

**JAMES GILLEN GRAHAM**...Son of Bob Graham, born on 1/9/58

**DALTON WILLIAM KNAUSS**...son of Bill & Marilyn Knauss, born on 1/20/84

**SARAH ELIZABETH SALWITZ**...daughter of Michael & Georgia Salwitz, died on 1/10/07

**RIM COUNTRY  
CHAPTER  
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***We need not walk alone... We  
are The Compassionate Friends.***

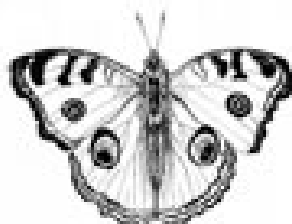
E-mail us at [info@rimcountrytcf.org](mailto:info@rimcountrytcf.org) or call us at 928-978-1492 if you receive this newsletter and do not wish to receive it or to change an address or add an address.

## **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.