



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Rim Country Chapter

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

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

July 2009

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 3 NO. 7

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

www.RimCountryTCF.org
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CHAPTER NEWS

One of the things I recall shortly after Dalton died was visiting a number of on-line support groups including The Compassionate Friends chat rooms. It was a tremendous help to me to be able to talk to other grieving parents in the privacy of my own home. I met a number of very wonderful and caring people, some of whom I had the opportunity to meet in real-life later at a National TCF Conference.

If you are seeking grief support on the web, The Compassionate Friends Online Support Community (OSC) gives you the opportunity to meet with others who are also grieving the death of a child.

There are rooms for: Parents/Grandparents; Siblings; Pregnancy/Infant loss; Bereaved Two Years and Under; Bereaved Two Years and Over; Men Only; No Surviving Children; and Survivors of Suicide.

All rooms have trained moderators. I would encourage anyone to look into this great support resource. You can access the OSC at:
www.compassionatefriends.org



**THE
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FRIENDS**

32nd NATIONAL CONFERENCE
Portland, Oregon
August 7-9, 2009



Also, it's not too late to sign up to attend the 32nd annual conference in Portland, Oregon.

Please give us a call if you would like to attend or if you need any further information.

Our meeting this month is on **Tuesday July 14th.**

Bill Knauss

God, Thank You For...

God, thank you for...
Melissa's beautiful smile so very big
And her zany sense of humor,
Her bright mind
And her soul so sweet and kind.
God, thank you for...
Melissa's love so true,
And her generosity too,
Her strong independence
And her extreme intelligence.
God, thank you for...
Melissa's quick wit
That often caused a laughter fit.
Her complexity
And her strength and tenacity.
God, thank you for...
Melissa's unrelenting stubbornness
And even her room that was often a mess.
Her ability to create a sensation
And her great determination.
God, thank you for...
Melissa's nurturing, mothering soul
And her way of going for the gusto,
Her great creativity
And even her naiveté.
God, thank you for...
Melissa's gift of gab that was such a delight
And her outgoing personality that shone so bright,
And the way she could mesmerize
With words and knowledge so broad and wide,
And when she spoke Italian so fluent
Music to my ears it sent.
God, thank you for...
Melissa's silly teasing ways
That often brought me joyful days,
Her way of bringing me laughter and light
And her flashing eyes so bright.
Thank you, God, for all of that and more.
Even though there are now so many tears,
What a gift it truly was for sure
To have her even for just twenty-seven years.
Thank you, God, for my sweet girl.

Melissa Ann, 27, 9/11/1973 - 11/25/2000
Doreen & Ed Torel-TCF, Phoenix, Az.

Little by Little.....

I once thought that my only link to you
Was my grief,
I couldn't let it go.
I knew if I did I would lose us both.

But, one day,
When I couldn't take the pain anymore,
I decided to try.
So, slowly and carefully
I let go of my deathline to you,
And I was surprised to find myself
Being held by God.

Little by little, step by step,
I learned that I didn't need
To hang onto the death,
To remember the life,
What a joyous discovery !

Kittie Brown McGowin
TCF, Montgomery, AL.

There Are Times

There are times
When I see a fiery sunset
Or the silver glow of the moon,
And I see my brother,
And I feel the peace that he still exists.
But these times are few,
And most of
What I see is ---
What he is missing.

Cry now, my silent tears,
Quietly, so no one hears.
They don't know the pain I
Go through
Day after day,
And through the years.

Alissa Roeder
TCF- Pikes Peak, CO

Here Comes Summer



These words were once very welcome to most of us. They were the triumphant cry of kids dashing out of the doors of school for the last time for *three whole months!* This was the start of a simpler time for the family, less structure, more time for fun, meals outside, staying up late, watching fireworks. According to the kids, it was *the best* time all year.

True most of us had problems to contend with – different child-care arrangements, kids staying home while we were at work, not enough vacation to do the things we wanted to. But, most of the time, we found a routine that worked pretty well and got settled into it for the summer. And it was fun to plan picnics or trips to amusement parks or short trips for a camping weekend. Just seeing the kids enjoy the time was enough to make us enjoy it, too.

So, as we begin what may very well be an extremely painful time, we urge you all to make a special effort to make time for yourself – to do things you want to do, to be alone if you prefer, to reflect on past summers with your child if you find comfort in those memories. Be very good to yourself and very patient with yourself. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to approach this time of year, your choice is your choice – no one else’s.

We hope you will include The Compassionate Friends meetings in your summer. Love and support do not take the summer off. We’ll be here with open arms and open hearts if you need us.

*Every one can master a grief
but he that has it.*

~ William Shakespeare

WHAT THE TCF VETERANS KNOW

Are you new to The Compassionate Friends? We want to welcome you, but somehow that word isn't right-this is not a group anyone wants to join. All of us wish no one ever had to walk through that door or receive this newsletter. So when we say welcome, perhaps what we really mean is we're so sorry-but we are glad you've found us and hope you will find support at TCF.

Many members of TCF were hesitant to attend that first meeting. We didn't know what to expect. Would we be forced to talk about our child? Did TCF members all share the same faith? Did we have to make a donation or commit to anything? The answer to all those questions is no. We'll listen if you wish to talk; we are members of all faiths and none; there is no cost; and you may attend as often as you wish and stay for as long as you wish. Just come.

Our few rules are simple ones and designed to ensure that TCF is a safe and comfortable place for those grieving a child's death. We request that members maintain confidentiality within the group, and we ask you to respect everyone's right to their individual beliefs. We don't tell each other how to grieve; we just walk together along this most painful of journeys.

Having made the difficult decision to attend, some of us old timers remember being surprised or disappointed at what we found there. Perhaps we were hoping our grief would begin to ease but instead we woke the next morning feeling even worse. Already overwhelmed with our own pain, now the grief of others weighed on our mind. The parent who was sadly remembering a daughter's death 10 years ago frightened us: would we still feel so sad after all those years? And what about those folks laughing and drinking coffee? How can they seem so carefree?

Perhaps talking about the death of a child isn't such a good idea after all. But thousands of TCF members round the world would say it was a good idea, just not an easy one. Many forced themselves to attend at first, remembering the leader's recommendation that it takes three meetings before a new member should make a decision about TCF. Others wished there was a meeting every week. Everyone is different.

Those of us who continue to participate, sometimes for a year, sometimes forever, slowly discover what makes TCF work for us. First, it's good to know you're not losing your mind even though it may feel like it. It's strangely comforting to know that others understand your confusion and face similar difficulties. Sharing our own stories and listening to the stories of others eases the isolation that many bereaved families experience.

As the months pass, we learn that while the experience of grief has some universal components, each of us will grieve as individuals with our own timetable. Many of us who thought grieving had a distinct beginning and end, with definable stages along the way, find that our theory doesn't make much sense in the real world. Grief is more like love: loud at times, quiet at others, with a truth that can and will live on forever.

One day we look at the parent who cries for the daughter who died 10 years ago with a new understanding. His everyday life is no longer eclipsed by pain; we visit with him regularly at the coffee table. But TCF is the place he can bring his memories and his grief and talk about the child he will always miss and love. The thought that we, too, may want to be involved with TCF for many years does not seem as frightening as it did those first months we hesitated before walking in the door.

It isn't easy getting here, of course. But we don't hesitate anymore. We unlock the door and stand there, hoping that the newly bereaved family arriving will know that they - and we - need not walk alone.

Mary Clark
TCF Sugar Land-SW Houston Chapter

IF ONLY THEY KNEW...

If only they knew that when I speak of him, I am not being morbid, I am not denying his death, I am proclaiming his life. I am learning to live with his absence. For twenty-six years he was a part of my life, born, nurtured, molded and loved; this cannot be put aside to please those who are uncomfortable with my grief.

If only they knew that when I sit quietly, apparently content with my own company. I am not self indulgently unhappy, dwelling on things which cannot be changed; I am with him, I am seeing his face, hearing his voice, remembering his laughter, recalling his excitement and joy in life. Please allow me this time with him as I do not begrudge you your time with your children.

If only they knew that when I sometimes weep quietly, I do not cry in self pity for what I have lost, I weep for what he has lost, for the life he loved, for the music which filled his very being, and for all he still longed to hear, for the poetry which moved him to tears, for the beauty about him that daily fed his soul, for the exhilaration and excitement of flying the skies, of searching for his God in the vast space of the universe. For all that he loved and lost, I cry.

If only they knew the feeling of deep grief, the emptiness, the dull pain, the endlessness of death, if only they understood the insanity of the platitudes so freely spoken that "time heals," "that you'll get over it," that "it was for the best," that "God takes only the best" and realize that these are more an insult than a comfort, that the warm and compassionate touch of another means so much more.

If only they knew that we will not find true peace and tranquility until we are prepared to try to stand in the shoes of others. We will not be understood until we learn to understand compassionately and we will not be heard until we learn to listen with hearts as well as minds.

Jan McNess
TCF-Victoria, Australia

I KNOW

When you tell me how long it's been since your child's death and you're feeling so bad,

I know.

When you wonder if that pain in your heart will ever stop,

I know.

When an anniversary is coming and you dread thinking about it,

I know.

I know because I've been there, and I also know it will be easier someday -

I know you'll be able to share those happy memories someday -

I know you'll be able to reach out and help someone someday -

And then you'll say, "I know."

Therese Goodrich

TOGETHER WE'LL WALK THE STEPPING STONES

Come, take my hand, the road is long,
We must travel by stepping stones.
No, you're not alone, I'll go with you.
I know the road well, I've been there.
Don't fear the darkness, I'll be with you.

We must take one step at a time
But remember we may have to stop awhile.
It is a long way to the other side
And there are many obstacles.

We have many stones to cross,
Some are bigger than others,
Shock, denial, and anger to start,
Then comes guilt, despair and loneliness.
It's a hard road to travel, but it must be done.
It's the only way to reach the other side.

Come, slip your hand in mine.
What? Oh yes, it's strong.
I've held so many hands like yours.
Yes, mine was one time small and weak, like yours.
Once, you see, I had to take
Someone's hand in order to take the first step.

Oops, you've stumbled, go ahead and cry.
Don't be ashamed, I understand.
Let's wait here awhile and get your breath,
When you're stronger we'll go on, one step at a time.

Say, it's nice to hear you laugh.
Yes, I agree, the memories you shared are good.
Look, we're half way there now,
I can see the other side.
It looks so warm and sunny.

Oh, have you noticed, we're nearing the last stone,
And you're standing alone.
And look, your hand, you've let go of mine,
We've reached the other side.

But wait, look back, someone is standing there,
They are alone and want to cross
The stepping stones,
I'd better go, they need my help.

What? Are you sure? Go ahead, Ill wait,
You know the way, you've been there.
Yes, I agree, it's your turn, my friend—
To help someone else cross the stepping stones.

Barb Williams
TCF-Fort Wayne, IN

To the Newly Bereaved

As the years pass, we see new members come into our chapter, and we try to help them with their grief as we progress in our own. Over and over again I have seen newly bereaved parents come to their first meeting totally devastated and convinced that their lives are over. Through the months (and years) I have seen them struggle and suffer and try to find meaning in their lives again. And they do! Through all the anger, pain and tears, somehow the human spirit is able to survive and flower again in a new life – perhaps a changed life and possibly a sadder one, but a stronger one nevertheless.

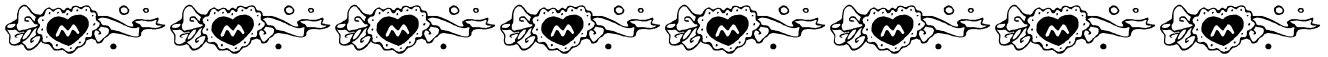
We feel so weak and crushed when our beloved children die, but I know- because I have seen it countless times in the years I've been involved with The Compassionate Friends – that we can make it together. When you walked through the door for the first meeting, you were frightened and nervous; but with that first step you made a statement about your life. With that first step through the door, you said you wanted to try, you wanted to find a reason for living again, that you weren't willing to be swallowed by your grief. You wanted to go forward, and those first steps into The Compassionate Friends began your journey.

The journey will be a long one, for you loved your child with all your heart and soul. When that child died, a part of you was ripped away. It takes time to repair that large hole. The journey will not always be steady or constant; there will be many setbacks. Those of us who have taken the journey before you can assure you that, while there may be no rainbow at the other end, there is indeed "light at the end of the tunnel." We want to help you as we were helped, but in the beginning and in the long run, you must help yourself. You have to want to get better, to talk about your loss, to struggle through the grief. We will listen, suggest, share and laugh and cry with you; and we hope, at this time next year, you'll be several steps along in your personal journey through grief. Then you can begin to help others.

Karen Schendel
TCF- Houston, TX

A Special Message To Our New Compassionate Friends:

If you are newly bereaved and have recently attended your first Compassionate Friends meeting, you may have left the meeting feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heavy load of grief you are carrying, you may feel that you cannot bear to hear about all the pain shared at meetings. Consequently, you may have decided not to return. We would like to let you know that these feelings are common to all our members, many of whom resolved not to expose themselves to such anguish again, but were drawn back by the knowledge that they were among those who "know how you feel." Please give us at least three tries before you decide whether or not the meetings are for you. You will find a network of caring and support which will help you as you travel this journey of grief and assuredly, find hope along the way. We truly care about you.



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 _____

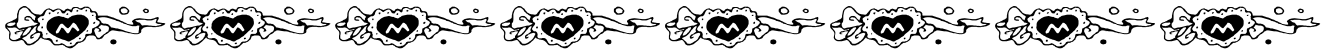
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

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.



JULY MEMORY PAGE

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

KEVIN JOHN CARNOW ... Son of Michael & Eileen Carnow

ROBERT E COTTON... Son of Bonnie Cotton

KAYLA DIANE FLOYD... Daughter of Jerry & Chris Floyd

JORDAN GAAL... Son of Kirby & Karen Gaal

LACEY OLDLAND... Daughter of Mark & Lynn Gardner

RANDY K WOOD... Son of Sue Scovel

JASON VINCENT TAYLOR... Son of Tom & Chris Taylor

JULY LOVE GIFTS

**Michael Carnow in Memory of Son KEVIN JOHN CARNOW
Annette Casey in Memory of Daughter MONICA ROSE CASEY**



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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 submit articles, be added to or removed from this newsletter mail list or to correct information.

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.