



**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 2010

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 4 NO. 7

MISSION

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families to ward 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 -
Doors open at 6:15PM
Meeting Begins at 6:30 PM

Ponderosa Baptist Church
1800 N. Beeline Hwy
(Just South of Home Depot &
the Roundabout)

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I have been thinking about how quickly the summer seems to be going by. It is already July! We have made it through Mother's Day, Father's Day, 4th of July will come and go and next thing it will be Labor Day. All the children will be back in school by the end of the month. Did it really go by that fast?

For some of us, all of those days go by all too slowly. Waiting in anticipation for that holiday to be over seems to take forever. And then we look at the calendar and see that there is another "angelversary" approaching oh too soon. How can it be that it is almost a year, 5 years, 10 years? Does everyone remember my child? We just want them to be remembered!

That is where the Compassionate Friends comes into our lives. For those few hours each month, we can talk about our children and not worry about anyone telling us to stop, or look at us funny because we still want to remember. We need to remember. So when you see a child that makes you think of your daughter or son, just tell yourself that it is okay to remember them and wonder "what if?" We have all experienced loss, and our children died at all different ages. So the things that each child never got to experience always make me think and wonder how it would have been. And that's okay! But we also continue to make new memories for the rest of our families. They deserve those too. And I think they help with some of the healing. So enjoy the rest of the summer and hope to see you this month so we can talk about our kids.

Our meeting this month will be on July 13th. If your child's birthday or "Angelversary" occurs in July, please bring your child's favorite treat to share. Feel free to also bring a picture or remembrance of your child to display.

Wishing you peace, *Marilyn*

For the Newly Bereaved.....

There is no detour around bereavement. There is no short cut in the mourning process. It must be worked through. As you are empty, so is the world around you. You are living a nightmare. You think, "I have touched the bottom of despair. I can't go any farther".

You do go farther.....you may cry hysterically, or you may remain outwardly controlled, showing little emotion. Reactions are varied and contradictory. Not all questions have answers. Unanswered whys are parts of life. You reject the overtures of your friends. How dare they talk of your future when you know life holds nothing for you? Your heart is breaking ---- and they offer you clichés. Accept their companionship, but you need not take their advice. Do what is best for you.

Grief is universal. At the same time it is extremely personal. Heal in your own way. Of course, your weeping will not bring back your loved one, but that's why you cry --- because you cannot bring your beloved one back to life.

Mental health is the recognition of pain and the attempt to live with it. This depression is not weakness; it is part of the mournful work of saying "good-bye" to your beloved. You are more aware than before of what is significant and what is trivial.

From *Living When a Loved One Has Died*, by Rabbi Earl Grollman

We are a self-help support organization that is dedicated to assisting parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child. We also aim to provide information and education to extended family, friends and coworkers desirous of being supportive to our Chapter members.

We gather to listen, to care, and to understand the process of grieving as we start our recovery process and attempt to heal. Our greatest strength as bereaved families is the unity we find in shared experiences which can lead us out of isolation, give us a place to "belong", and offer us hope that together – we can make it.

KAYLA

God reached down and picked a flower
To add to His bouquet.
We all cried, "No Lord, too soon--"
Please don't take her away".
But God said "You must understand,
I need this flower more",
And so with tender loving hands,
She went through heaven's door.
And now that blossom we so loved
Is brightening heaven's rooms,
The fragrance makes the angels glad,
Brought by our precious bloom.
Her light is shining even more
Than it shone while down here –
Her scent more precious, sweeter still –
Her voice more pure and clear.
And if we close our eyes and dream,
We'll see that bloom so bright –
Sweeter, purer, better now,
She shines with heaven's light.
We saw in her the light of Christ,
The light of Jesus' love,
And now we feel it fall on us,
Descending as a dove.
So when you smell a fragrant flower
Or see its beautiful bloom,
Just pause, and think of Kayla,
And know – she's thinking of you.

Submitted by Chris Floyd in loving memory of her daughter Kayla Diane

IF WE COULD HAVE YOU BACK.....

If we could have you back for just one day
There would be so many things we would like to say
If we could just be with you for one whole day
To have you close and know that you really are Okay.

If we had known that you would be gone forever
If we had known all those ties were going to be severed
If we had known the pain, the loss, and the ache
If we had known the difference without you would make.

In the darkness you slipped away from us all,
Now it's just your memories that we have to recall,
They say that parting is such sweet sorrow, But it's the
longing, the wondering, and how to cope with tomorrow

They say that grieving a child is the very worst
Cause life's plan is that the parents should go first.
Now all we have are memories, the good times that we had,
We spend so much time in tears, and pain and feeling sad,

So if we could have you back for just one day,
You could let us know, how to cope until that judgment day,
When we'll be together as a family once again,
When we'll all be happy and free from all this pain.

Oh! It's so hard to live when your child has to die,
Then we spend our lifetime trying to say Goodbye!

Ann M.King
Coquitlam. BC Canada

Memory

There is a place called memory,
Where we sometimes like to roam.
Through hills of love and laughter,
A place we know as home.

A place that's free from all this pain,
Where our hearts are light once more.
A place that lives forever where life is,
As it was before.

Our children live in memory
They laugh and dance and sing.
Their lives are filled with magic
That only heaven can bring.

They feel no hurt or anger,
Their spirits are free as air.
And God's love will always protect them
In times when we aren't there.

Cherish this place called memory
Feel the love that lives there.
Remember the joys, the warmth of the sun,
And the bond you will always share.

Smile at happy moments
Laugh at times gone by,
Let the tears you cry be happy ones
Know love will never die.

Have no fear of visiting
The joy will outweigh the pain.
Learn to treasure memory
There is much that you will gain.

For though life is not, as it was before,
And never will be again.
Our memories are much richer
Than if love had never been.

You Will

You will live. Although you feel like you are dying. You will laugh once again. Although you feel that emotion is lost forever. You will think clearly again. Although you feel very confused most of the time.

You will celebrate your child's life. Although now you are enveloped in the whys and if onlys of your child's death. You will somehow work your way through this rough work called grieving.

Although today you feel you are slipping backwards. You will find love, understanding and caring with **The Compassionate Friends**.

Although today you are lonely, isolated and withdrawn.

Choose the **You Will**. I did, and it is helping with that large hole in my heart.

~Carol Joyce, TCF, Fort Lauderdale, FL~

How do people deal with grief?

People handle their grief in different ways.

Some ways people can use to deal with grief:

- find the right type of support for you
- read books about grief
- talk with a counselor
- watch videos about grief
- join a grief support group
- go to a grief information session or workshop
- do things that have helped them in the past to work through a tough situation.

What do people need to help them deal with grief?

This will be different for everyone. Most people find they need to:

- grieve in their own way and in their own time.
- hear the advice of others, but choose what they need or what feels right for them.
- take care of themselves.
- rest, relax and exercise.
- have time alone.
- spend time with someone they trust.
- understand what has happened and make sense of the changes that are happening in their lives.

Be with someone who:

- has patience
- is willing to listen
- respects feelings
- is not upset by tears
- will keep the persons story private.
- Make as few changes as possible until they feel they are ready, usually about a year.

How long does grief last?

Many people find that:

- grief comes and goes in waves for a long time
- the intense feelings may begin to ease a little after the first year
- coping gets easier over time and confidence begins to return
- they slowly begin to develop new interests and find that life starts to have some meaning again
- it may take a long time to go back to some places or do the things they used to do before the person died
- although they can manage to have a new and full life, it may take years before they feel they can be fully themselves without the person who died
- even when they thought they were over their grief, feelings may be triggered by memories of such things as places, songs, movies, poems, even smells.
- they never forget the person
- they never stop loving the person.
- they carry the memory of the person with them throughout their lives.

How can people help themselves while grieving?

Some ideas that may be helpful are to:

- learn what is normal about grief from books, people who understand, or by going to a workshop or support group
- be creative, by making something or trying a new hobby
- reduce some of the stress in life by occasionally saying "no"
- be alone for a while
- do things at a slower pace and take one day at a time
- work through thoughts and feelings and admit what you do and don't miss about the person who died
- sing, listen to music, pray, write letters, keep a journal
- do a sport, exercise, dig dirt or chop wood
- remember the good times
- make a lasting memory in a photo album or scrapbook
- be with people they enjoy
- take hot baths, long walks, naps and vacations
- ask for hugs
- have fun once in a while and know that it is ok to laugh
- Face guilty feelings by looking at what they did do, rather than what they did not do, for the person who died.

How to help others who are grieving

It is not easy to help others with their grief. It is even harder to help someone when you are dealing with your own grief. Ways to help may include to:

- listen as they repeat their story over and over and the story of the life of the person who died (the good and not so good)
- accept what they are saying without denying it or making their grief seem less than what they say it is
- talk with them about what has happened. Do not lessen the importance of their grief with comments such as "it was God's will" or "it was for the best"
- try to understand their fear and what the loss means to them
- find out what is helpful to them, what they need and if they need you to help them get it
- give help like cooking a meal or babysitting.

When is grief most difficult?

Important dates, celebrations and anniversaries are hard to deal with. Family gatherings remind those who are grieving of who is missing. Sometimes grief is most difficult when doing routine activities that are no longer able to be shared.

How do people handle these difficult times?

People often manage the same way they do with other difficult situations.

Some ideas:

- only be as involved in the celebrations as much as they want to be
- choose ahead of time how to spend the day and let others know their plans well before the event
- only keep up the traditions that mean something to them and let others go
- create new ways to remember the person who died
- Relive past celebrations by looking at photographs or home movies
- celebrate the life of the person who died as well as grieving their loss.

Vacations After Loss

Vacations bring to mind time spent together as a family. After losing a child or children, vacations -- especially the first ones after loss -- remind us of their absence.

Some bereaved parents place a higher expectation on the vacation than can be fulfilled. Maybe Mom may assume that getting away from home and the stress of work will enable dad and other family members to talk about their loss, reliving memories together and resolving issues of their grief. Dad might be thinking "If we can just get away from all these memories and stress, we can relax and forget our pain." Someone else in the family might think the vacation will give some relief from the grief work. Because each person has definite goals with high expectations, they may discover their spouse and/or children's goals to be painfully opposite their own. It's not uncommon to discover one spouse may not be ready to talk yet.

If vacations usually include trips to relatives or family camps, seeing everyone after your loss can be bittersweet. Memories as well as remembrances of what you'd planned for your child to do with others flood your mind. Some people will want to talk about your child. If your trip occurs shortly after the funeral, you may find that talking about your child is like dragging the funeral out for days. When several months have elapsed, others often feel uncomfortable and will not mention your child's name until you do. If you want to talk about your child, don't wait for others to bring up his/her name they're uncertain if you're comfortable talking about them so are waiting for you to make the first move.

Many find the enthusiasm to plan vacations and the concentration to make detailed arrangements are gone the first year, especially.

Others feel too stressed out to go anywhere or fear coming home would be too painful. In that case, day outings might be more suited to your energy and enthusiasm levels. Try to choose a variety of things so that each member of the family can do something they enjoy

Some bereaved parents experience fear of getting too far from home or fear of being too far away from the mementos that remind them of their precious child. Various fears, some irrational may make thoughts of a vacation too painful to consider. In such a case, it would be good to try to define these fears. Just realizing what the fear pertains to helps you deal with it. If fear seems to be a problem with any member of the family, it would be good to make a list of what things they are fearful of happening, then calmly discuss these fears with someone. If it's too stressful to discuss them within the immediate family, as a trusted friend or pastor to discuss them with you. Just getting them out in the open and identified will help immeasurably.

Many recently bereaved people find that too much free time allows more time for painful remembrances than they welcome, so it's important to be flexible and willing to change plans midway through the vacation if it's agreeable with the majority of the family.

Discuss the pros and cons of visiting a familiar place or new experience to decide what each family member feels most comfortable with.

Remember grief depletes your energy levels so you'll tire more quickly. Take this into consideration when planning reasonable distances to be driven daily. Bereaved people need exercise but if you're planning to hike or do other strenuous exercise, don't forget your energy levels are not the same as they were before your child's death. Exhaustion and disappointment with your capabilities (thus frustration) will come much sooner than it previously did.

Whether you leave town or stay home, remember working through grief is the hardest work you'll ever do. Be kind to yourself as it's physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting. Allow time to re-energize your own depleted reserves.

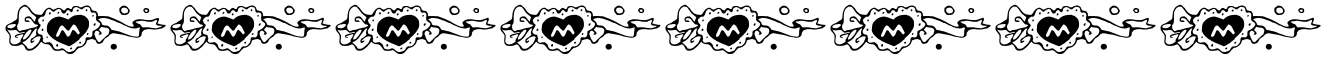
It would be good to sit down as individuals or as a family to jot down your expectations or goals for your vacation, your fears and other factors so that as parents you can have an idea of what others are expecting before you take off. If dad and the teenagers know Mom is expecting everyone to want to spend some time reminiscing and working through grief it will be less frustrating for everyone if they know the time will not ALL be devoted to one person's expectations. Knowing that some time may be set aside for grief work, but also some for total relaxation for dad and mom, and some for other individual family members' enjoyment will make it less stressful for everyone.

As in other family matters, communication is Very Important. No one else can read your mind and be able to fulfill your unexpressed expectations. For a vacation to be refreshing for everyone, good communication will be one of the most important factors.

You may have been planning a very special vacation and are wondering if you should take it so soon after your loss. You might want to consider waiting another year so you can enjoy it more than with the excess "grief baggage" you'll be carrying along this year. Or you may feel that since you have been anticipating it for so *long*, to put it off would just be another loss added to your child's death. **Only you can decide.** If you can't decide peaceably, that's an indication you won't enjoy it as much now as you most likely would a year from now.

As with everything else after loss, the first vacation will be the most challenging. It's all new with that huge absence ever present. It would be nice if a vacation were an opportunity for you to escape your pain or leave it behind at home, but the fact *is*, everywhere that love goes, grief goes too! We grieve because we love. As time passes, vacations won't be edged with as much pain. Someday you'll find one enjoyable.

-- by Carol Ruth Blackman



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 _____

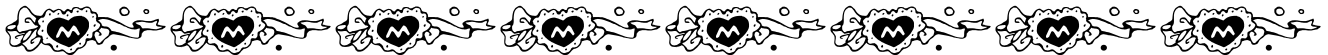
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

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.



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

JULY 2010 MEMORY PAGE

- KEVIN JOHN CARNOW... Son of Michael & Eileen Carnow**
- ROBERT E COTTON... Son of Bonnie Cotton**
- JORDAN GAAL... Son of Karen & Kirby Gaal**
- LACEY OLDLAND... Daughter of Mark & Lynn Gardner**
- KAYLA DIANE FLOYD... Daughter of Chris & Jerry Floyd**
- RANDY K WOOD... Son of Sue Scovel**
- JASON VINCENT TAYLOR... Son of Tom & Chris Taylor**

JULY 2010 LOVE GIFTS

Jack & Barbara Gooch in memory of KAITIE GOOCH



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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.

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 circum-



stances.

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.