



**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

June 2009

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 3 NO. 6

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

There is a National conference coming up in August in Portland, Oregon. For information about this upcoming event go to the website www.compassionatefriends.org and get all the details. You can also visit our chapter website at www.rimcountrytcf.org

Marilyn's mom died May 22, so remember to keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

Our meeting this month is on **Tuesday, June 9th.**

Father's Day Favorites

FATHER'S DAY. . .not a big holiday like Christmas or Thanksgiving, but one that holds a lot of meaning for those to whom it applies. For first-time fathers, that Sunday in June brings a feeling of joy and pride. For a long-time dad, it's a reminder of the fulfillment which children may have brought into his life.

For those men who have lost a child, it can be a very painful time. For those who must endure their pain in secret and silence, either through their own desire for that approach, or through society's expectations that they must be strong and controlled, it can become a horror.

But we in TCF wish to acknowledge the day, because we noted in preparations for Mother's Day, the death of a child does not negate the parenthood of the mom and dad who loved him or her. Love for one's offspring does not die when the body dies, and death does not succeed in robbing us of our parental identity.

We wish all bereaved father's a day of peace. In the midst of our grief and loss, may you experience a taste of good memories and remembered love for your child.

TCF- Elgin Area

A Father Returns to Work

After Kathy died, I, of course, went back to work. Some of my coworkers made the stop at my desk to express their sympathy. I know I turned them off as my pain and my denial were so great I could not talk about what had happened and how I felt. I thanked them.

Although nobody ever talked to me about it, that was 'OK' as my pain was such that I thought I could not bear to talk. I threw myself into my work and on occasion was confused because I could not make the kind of decisions I had been making for years. I never made the connection that this inability to concentrate was part of my grief and was normal.

Lunch was the worst time. My habit was to eat with my associates, but often in the middle of the meal I would just have to get up and walk away. Although nobody ever said anything to me about this odd behavior, I do thank them at least for their tolerance.

Slowly, I readjusted (I thought) and in time (a long time) I was able to perform well again. But I never really grieved until I found The Compassionate Friends, and it was here that people helped me to talk. It was almost twelve years before I found TCF as there was no such organization in 1967. My friends let TCF help you. Don't wait 12 years to talk!

Bill Ermatinger
TCF-Baltimore, MD

Men Do Cry

I heard quite often "men don't cry"
Though no one ever told me why,
So when I fell and skinned a knee
No one came to comfort me.

And when some bully boy at school
Would pull a prank so mean and cruel,
I'd quickly learn to turn and quip
"It doesn't hurt," and bit my lip.

So as I grew to reasoned years
I learned to stifle any tears,
Though "Be a big boy" it began
Quite soon I learned to "Be a man."

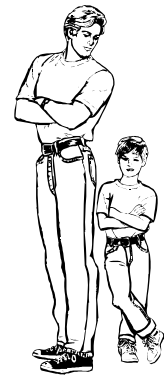
And I could play that stoic role
While storm and tempest wracked my soul,
No pain or setback could there be
Could wrest one single tear from me.

Then one long night I stood nearby
And helplessly watched my son die,
And quickly found to my surprise
That all that tearless talk was lies.

And still I cry and have no shame
I cannot play that 'big boy' game,
And openly without remorse
I let my sorrow take its course.

Those of you who can't abide
A man you've seen whose often cried,
Reach out to him with all your heart
As one whose life's been torn apart.

For men do cry when they can see
Their loss of immortality,
And tears will come in endless streams
When mindless fate destroys their dreams.



Ken Falk,
TCF-Northwestern CT

Father's Day

As this day approaches I wonder how I will react.

Am I still a father?

I will sit quietly never allowing family and friends to see how I feel.

I will miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break".

I must remain strong and always be the "rock".

I wish I could just let someone know how much I miss my little angel.

How much I cry and how much I miss hearing "Dad I love you."

I am a father, but I wonder, will I just pretend, as usual, that it doesn't bother me?

Remember me, for I hurt, too, on this special day.

TCF- Tampa, FL

Dawn

Your birthday is coming honey
It's that time of year
Your birthday is coming
And your not here

The pain of missing you
Is so very intense
That you're gone from us
Just makes no sense



There were so many things
That we planned to do
There were so many dreams
Dreams we had for you

I look at your picture
And I still can't believe
Why oh why my baby
Why did you have to leave?

You should be a young Mother now
Holding your precious little one
You should be calling us with the news
I'm pregnant Mom- can you come?

I miss you so my darling
I feel my heart will break
They say that time will help
Help this terrible ache

Daddy talks about you
And the closeness you shared
You are so special to him
Oh God- how he cared

We love you with all our hearts
And will forever and a day
We send our love to you honey
You can feel it- we pray!

Your birthday is coming honey
You would be 34

Wish You Were Here

When I think about the time we had
I feel overwhelmed by the force of our happiness.
We were blessed with the stress of the day-to-day messes-
but when we had each other, we
somehow made it through the clutter.
When I realized our demise was the surprise of a new tide
I knew I had to be strong
I had to carry on.
I lifted my head & took a stride.
Now you're gone, but I still push on
when I think about it, I am no longer whole,
but I fill that void with the thought of your soul.
When I close my eyes, I can still see you standing there, and
so drops a tear.
I love you Chris-
Wish you were here.

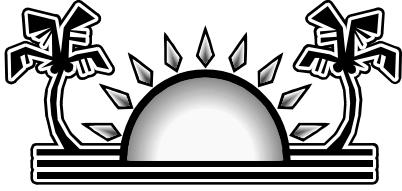
Written by Lorina Hiatt for her friend
Chris Reiter (9/7/1977 - 5/20/2000)
Submitted by Pat Reiter, TCF-Phoenix, Az.

Missing Graduate



Parent's happy faces all around me.
With a glow from within.
Pomp and Circumstance is playing.
Now the program will begin.
The graduates are all lined up.
They are coming down the aisle,
Some have serious faces, yet
Some have a little smile.
I look down the aisle,
Hoping for your face to come into sight.
This is your class,
It was to be your graduation night.
All the graduates pass by
But none of them are you,
A tug of my heart tells me,
You are not here, your death is true.
God called you home...
I wanted you here in such a bad way.
Looking into your classmates faces,
Do they recall you, missing this day?
Memories, sweet memories,
Now fill my mind and heart.
There will be no tassel,
This day for my sweetheart.
The class is oh!, so happy,
This isn't the time to be blue,
No I must go shake a hand,
And get a hug or two.

Emma Valenteen
TCF- Valley Forge, PA



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 on 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. And besides, we need you, too.

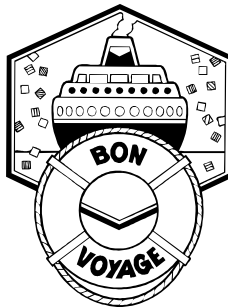
Wide reaching words of advice from
The editors of TCF Newsletter,
Atlanta, GA

Vacations

Vacation time is upon us again. You may be having trouble with that very thought. The following suggestions may be of some assistance to you as you plan your summer vacation.

You might consider going where it is the most comfortable for you. Large places with many people may not be the answer this year. Or, small places with few people may not feel right. Also, family-oriented locations may make you more sensitive to your child’s missing place in the family. Wherever you go, consider these options and plan a vacation that meets your family’s needs insofar as possible.

It may be that you are locked into plans made prior to the tragedy of your child’s death. You may hesitate to change these plans if they involve other people. It is important, however, to be with people who understand your feelings and are accepting of your grief. Warm and caring family and friends, sensitive to your feelings, can be comforting. If, on the other hand, the people involved are not sensitive and understanding, it may place an uncomfortable burden



on you to create a sense of normalcy for their sakes.

Under these circumstances, it’s important to do what’s best for you and your family. Keep your vacation plans simple, with a back door through which you can escape occasionally to be by yourself. Sometimes too much togetherness can be overwhelming. Some time for solitary reflection may be comforting as well.

In the beginning, going away and coming home can be a problem for many bereaved parents. This experience is normal since vacations are a constant reminder of family life. Whatever you do and wherever you go, keep in mind that it won’t always be as painful. Over time, for most of us, vacations become easier. You and your family deserve and need this time away. Putting aside your grief, however temporarily, is good for all of us and doesn’t mean we don’t care to remember.

Mary Cleckley,
TCF- Atlanta, GA

Memories

A chubby, smiling infant
Cooing at me from my lap
Azure blue eyes gazing lovingly
As your nursed at my breast and laughed.

God, he is so beautiful!
Please don't ever take him
Unless you are planning
To take me with him.

Eight weeks old, a hernia
No, it cannot be.
My baby is so perfect.
God, don't take him from me.

Three months or fifteen pounds,
Which ever comes first.
Surgery on one so small.
Thank God, all went well.

Nine months old, crawling stage
Good Friday, cook stove hot as a brand
For baking Easter goodies,
Not for boosting you to stand.

Hospital emergency room
Burns on fingertips and palms.
Another scare, but the only anxiety -
How to crawl with bandaged hands.

Eleven months, German measles
Rare these day, young doc didn't know.
You were scheduled for vaccine in a month.
Old doc: "Don't worry, no worse than a cold."

Twenty months, hernia again?
Waiting, worrying at the O.R. door.
Gowned nurse comes out-"Dr wants to see
you"
Oh, God, no! My baby! Fear to the core.

Sign another consent form?
You scared me to death!
But everything was A-OK.
He healed within a day.

Fifteen years go quickly by.
Cuts, scrapes, appendicitis even.

No more real scares.
No more thoughts of him leaving.

A twinge of concern every now and then
When he would go out with his friends.
You can't stop him from living his life.
He'll always come home safe and sound
In the end.

Children don't die, their parents go first.
Never were we worried
Until that fateful night
And the phone call that hurried...

...Us into the rest of our lives
Without our precious son.
A car crash? How? Why?
To understand, we have not begun.

No answer is forthcoming.
These memories still smart.
I'd stopped thinking it could happen
Never knowing my heart

Would be forever broken,
Your death like a welt.
And these memories of how we lived our lives
Remind me that once I felt

The normal fear of every parent,
But never really believing
That you could be taken from me.
Now all I know is grieving.

But many other fond memories
I have of your sixteen years
Your paper route, our camping trips,
And the love of a son so dear.

Like when you learned to ride your bike,
Six years old, no fear!
Leading scorer on your soccer team,
Seven years old, our hero, "here, here!"
Eight years old, flag football.
Nine, trip to Grand Canyon.
"No, you can't have that tarantula!"
"Yes, mom. Dad said I can!"

Ten. Las Vegas. What a trip!
All night in the arcade.
Eleven, Disneyland and the beach,
Romping through the waves.

And the time you took your uncles
To the top of Lookout Mountain.
I see the mountain every day now.
I weep and smile and wonder how.

The little gifts you gave to me,
I keep around and near me.
Wedding vase, earrings, porcelain doll,
Leather bookmark in my Bible to cheer me.

Your teenage years were sometimes hard.
I did not always put you first.
But I know in my heart the love was
Always there,
Though the guilt still overwhelmingly hurts.

I count myself as lucky, among the bereaved.
Other parents have also suffered the worst,
But a poem of their memories
Would have ended with my first verse.

Thank you, God, for the memories
That keep my son alive.
In my heart of hearts he continues to be
The one for whom my love will never die.

The good and the bad, no matter how painful,
Please let me always remember
The wonderful thing you did for me, God
When you gave me my son, forever.

In loving memory of my son, **Tim Jones**
for his twenty-fourth birthday,
Ruth Gregory
TCF- Phoenix, AZ

We found that our circle of friends
shifted. We were surprised and disappointed that
people we thought were good friends became
distant, uneasy, and seemed unable to help us.
Others, who were casual acquaintances, became

FRAME of LOVE

In conjunction with the 32nd National TCF Conference August 7– 9 the conference committee will be making “Frame of Love” ornaments from 4x6 acrylic picture frames (with a magnet on the back to attach where suitable) that may be hung also. These frames will include: conference city name, wallet sized picture of your child, child’s name, and dates of birth/death (you may choose not to include dates if you so desire). They will be displayed at the conference in various locations for all to see.

The minimum donation for each picture submitted is \$10.00. If you cannot attend the conference and would like the picture frame to be returned to you, then an additional \$5.00 donation is requested. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks after the conference for your “Frame of Love” to be returned to you.

Please enclose a picture of your child, the same size as the template below and include child’s name and dates. **Please mail picture, form, and your check (made Payable to: 2009 TCF Conference) to: TCF National Conference/Picture P.O. Box 18001 Portland, OR 97218-0001**

Enclosed is picture/pictures No. _____ @ \$10.00 ea = \$_____

Shipping/Handling: (If not attending for \$ 5.00 ea = \$_____

frames mailed back to you) Total Amount: \$_____

Name of Child _____

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Name of Child _____

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Real Size of Ornament is 4 x 6 inches. Child’s

picture should be 2 1/2 x 3 1/4 (Wallet Size) Use

separate sheet for additional frames being ordered.

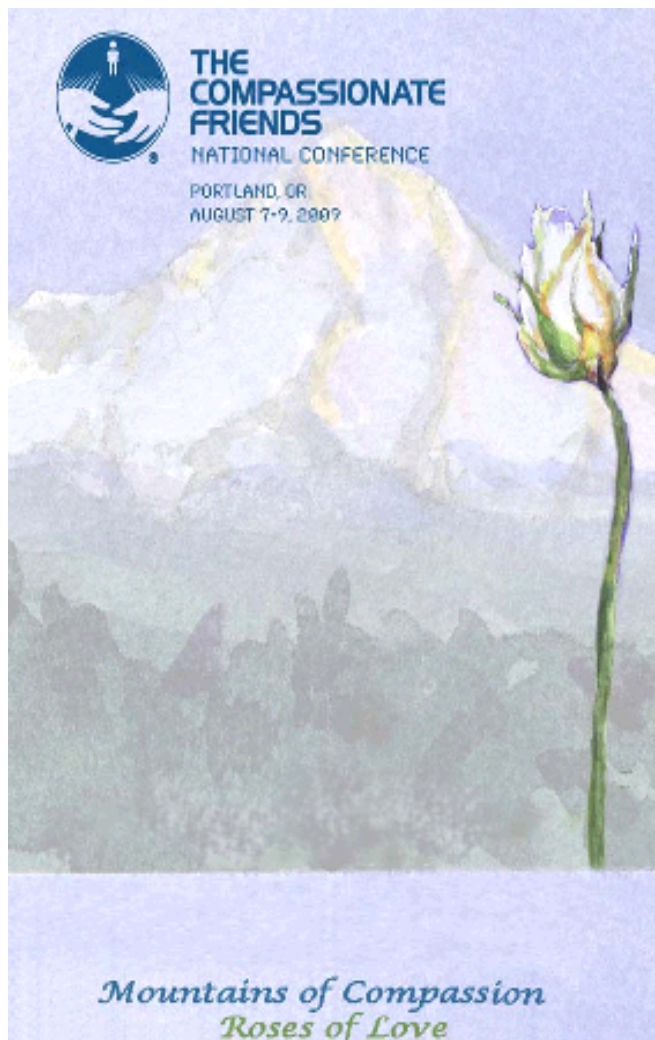
Please do not attach the picture,
just enclose it with this form and
your payment

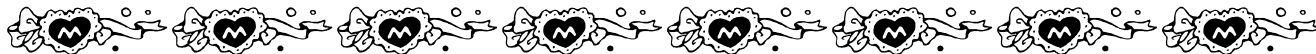
Wallet Picture

Size 2 1/2 x 3 1/4

Deadline for pictures:

June 15, 2009





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 _____

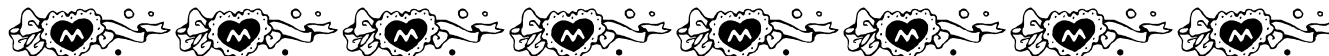
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

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.



JUNE MEMORY PAGE

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

- Kevin John Carnow..** son of Michael and Eileen Carnow
- Monica Rose Casey..** daughter of Tim and Annette Casey
- Corey Scott Gibbons..** son of Charles Gibbons
- Barbara Jean Graham..** daughter of Robert Graham
- Michele Lynn Heath..** daughter of Gale and June Heath
- Mila Casie Phillips..** daughter of Keith Phillips



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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.