



**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 2010

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 4 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 -
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)

Chapter Website

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FATHER'S DAY

As this day approached I wondered how I would react. Am I still a father? I would 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 boy. 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.

Our meeting this month will be on **June 8th**. If your child's birthday or "Anniversary" occurs in June, you are welcome to 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, *Bill*

Fathers -- The Forgotten Grievors

"When is it my turn to cry? I'm not sure society or my upbringing will allow me a time to really cry, unafraid of the reaction and repercussion that might follow. I must be strong. I must support my wife because I am a man. I must be the cornerstone of our family because society says so, my family says so, and, until I can reverse my learned nature, I say so."

A father in DeFrain

A Father's Grief

Written by Eileen Knight Hagemeister

It must be very difficult
To be a man in grief,
Since "men don't cry"
and "men are strong".
No tears can bring relief.
It must be very difficult
To stand up to the test
And field the calls and visitors
So she can get some rest.
They always ask if she's all right
And what she's going through.
But seldom take his hand and ask,
"My friend, but how are you?"
He hears her crying in the night
And thinks his heart will break.
He dries her tears and comforts her,
But "stays strong" for her sake .
It must be very difficult
To start each day a new .
And try to be so very brave-
He lost his baby too.

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.

Men Do Cry by Ken Falk

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 by 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 bite 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 takes its course.

So those of you who can't abide
a man you've seen who's 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 has been a member of the
Northwest Connecticut Chapter of
The Compassionate Friends*

I was a little nervous when my wife mentioned to me about writing a column for the newsletter from a father's perspective regarding infant loss. What could I tell you guys that you don't already know? I even asked my four year old son for help and got more than I bargained for. So, if you think these comments are kind of elementary, I can put part of the blame on my son.

My daughter Sarah was stillborn on June 22, 1995, just a few days before her due date. My wife, Lori, was so strong through the whole ordeal. She will never really understand how much I hurt for her during that time. Not that I wasn't hurting for our baby, but, at that time, my hurt was for her. I guess people feel differently about these types of situations, but as a father and a man, I felt helpless.

The morning of June 22nd, Lori woke up and felt no movement from the baby. She rushed to the doctor while I began to get my then two year old son dressed and ready for the day. About 30 minutes after she left, the phone rang and it was the doctor's nurse. She told me that the doctor needed to talk with me. At that time, he got on the phone and, in a very nice but professional way, explained to me that he thought the baby had died and to come as quickly as I could to take Lori to the hospital.

I rushed my son, Brooks, to a friend's house and sped frantically to the doctor's office praying to God the whole way that this was a mistake. Then began the hardest and most emotional days of our lives as we had to deal with losing our baby. As certainly expected, Lori was in no shape physically or mentally to start dealing with certain things that had to be done. I made the burial arrangements, met with the funeral director, and made plans for the funeral service. We had a family plot that my mother provided located in the town where I grew up which is a little over an hour from Dallas. I made several trips back and forth trying to get everything just right and had a lot of time to think. I can tell you everything I did those days even down to what I had on.

Because little Sarah was so far along, we had a viewing at the funeral home for family and close friends. Lori was still bedridden at this time and was unable to attend. Family and friends attended the viewing and it was quite a sullen occasion as you can imagine. I remember after everyone left, I took a lot of pictures of Sarah. I so desperately wanted to give her something at that time so I took a photograph of Lori, Brooks, and myself out of my wallet, tucked it in her little hand, and closed the lid of the casket.

I think of Sarah every day and I still grieve for her. I am not a person that pours out my emotions on my wife or on anyone else for that matter, but I do have a dull ache in my stomach that I don't think will ever really go away. I think women are much better expressing their emotions and talking about things than men are. So, to the mothers out there, don't short change your husband if you don't think he is reacting appropriately to your baby's death. I think it's harder for some men to express themselves, but they still hurt.

Two years and seven months after Sarah's death, I have a wonderful wife, a bouncing-off-the-walls four year old son, and a gorgeous 15 month old daughter. Our family loves each other with all of our hearts and loves the little baby girl we will not be able to see for awhile. If you recently lost your baby, please know that you will make it through and survive this. You will always remember, but try to think about how excited you will be when you finally do get to meet your little one in heaven.

God bless your family!

David King
Daddy to Sarah Ann

It's OK to ask for help

Men are often times forgotten or ignored when it comes to emotional support after the loss of a child. As a grieving dad myself, I didn't receive support until I, as a man/father, decided to reach out for help. The pain, anxiety and depression had reached a point where fear and panic attacks started to occur more frequently. I couldn't hold the pain in for much longer and I needed to find a way to let it out. I finally came to the point where I knew I couldn't do this on my own and needed help.

Once I made the conscious decision to not let myself be defined by the losses of my children, I began to open up and the law of attraction allowed compassionate people to enter my life. I met with counselors, pastors and other angels God put in my life to help me pull out of the despair. I found strangers who had the courage to reach out and help with no agenda.

Women typically have this type of support from the beginning where men are often times forgotten. Men need support as much as women, regardless of how tough and strong they look on the outside. I considered myself pretty tough, but I couldn't fight it alone. As men we are always taught to be the strong one. However, on the inside we know we are living a lie because the pain is festering. A lot of guys find "alone time" to cry. The pain impacts the ability to function in life, the ability to go to work and focus on your job. Men try to push through it and try to go back to the person they were before, but that is not possible.

My mission is to let them know that it's okay that you are not the same man as before. You have to find a way to embrace the person you are now and become the best person you can become **now**.

As a result of my losses, I have become a much more tolerable, compassionate and loving guy than I was ever before. I see the pain in others eyes and reach out to them where before I would run away because I didn't know what to say. I have learned that you don't have to say anything, just give others the permission to grieve and talk.

The death of a child is the most traumatic and devastating experience a couple can face. Although both mothers and fathers grieve deeply when such a tragedy occurs, they grieve differently, and it is most important that each partner give the other permission to grieve as he/she needs. This may be the greatest gift each can give the other.

Parental grief is strongly influenced by the nature of the bond between child and parent. Bereavement specialists actually speak of "incongruent grieving" patterns in mothers and fathers and of differences in the timing and intensity of the parental bond for mothers and fathers.

For the mother, the bond is usually more immediate and demonstrable, more intense at the beginning of life, more emotionally and physically intimate. The mother's bond with the baby is usually tightly forged from the moment of conception and continues through the pregnancy, the birth, and the nursing process. The maternal bond involves the present and the baby's immediate needs, while the father's bond with the baby more often concerns the future and dreams and expectations for the child.

Today, however, many fathers are forging earlier and more intense prenatal bonds with their babies. Fathers also are often present in the delivery room for the birth. Some fathers become direct caregivers of the newborn, developing early and close bonds with their infants. Yet, still in many cases, "the father's emotional investment in parenting tends to occur later and less intensely than the mother's. This has implications for the way parents grieve" (Cordell and Thomas 1990, 75).

In spite of the trend towards earlier bonding between fathers and babies, the influence of cultural expectations about men and grief persists and is powerful. Typically, the societal view of parental loss is not the same for the father as the mother. Most of the literature on parental bereavement still tends to focus on the mother's grief. Often, men are not acknowledged as experiencing grief; or more importantly, men are not taught that it's necessary to grieve and are discouraged from demonstrating signs of grief openly. Bereaved fathers frequently feel that they are the forgotten mourners and are often referred to as "second class grievers" (Horchler and Morris 1994, 72).

Fathers are expected to be strong for their partners, to be the "rock" in the family. All too often fathers are considered to be the ones who should attend to the practical but not the emotional aspects surrounding the death; they are expected to be the ones who should not let emotions show or tears fall outwardly, the ones who will not and should not fall apart. Men are often asked how their wives are doing, but not asked how they are doing.

Such expectations place an unmanageable burden on men and deprive them of their rightful and urgent need to grieve. This need will surface eventually if it is not expressed. It is not unusual for grieving fathers to feel overwhelmed, ignored, isolated, and abandoned as they try to continue to be caregivers and breadwinners for their families while their hearts are breaking. "Fathers' feelings (often) stay hidden under layers of responsibility and grim determination" (Staudacher 1991, 124). Bereaved fathers often say that such strong emotions are very difficult to contain after their child's death. Fathers often fear that they will erupt like volcanoes if they allow themselves to release these feelings and so, too often, fathers try to bury their pain with the child who died.

It is most important that a father's grief be verbalized and understood by his partner, other family members, professionals, coworkers, friends, and by anyone who will listen. Fathers need to try to free themselves of stereotypes and societal expectations about men and grief; they must be able to tell others that their grief is all they have from their child's brief life. Fathers repeatedly say that for their own peace of mind, they (and those who care about them) need to move away from this mind set and allow them to grieve as they are entitled.

"In too many instances, fathers' responses to infant loss tend to coincide with how they believe they should act as men, rather than how they need to act to confront and resolve (their own) grief." (Cordell and Thomas 1990, 75)

Printed with permission from the booklet "The Death of a Child" - "The Grief of the Parents: A Lifetime Journey" produced by the National SIDS Resource Center, Vienna, VA.

August Storm

*The sun burns hot above
melting dreams like golden love
Try your best to sing and laugh,
to make a perfect photograph*

*Soak up life and live the dream
Who cares what tomorrow brings
A brand new moon and its time to play
Drum circles on so jump in the fray*

*Then an August storm blew you away
You couldn't face another day
Once seeking friends so dear
And now you're no where near*

*You needed to be outside,
open up your eyes so wide
Beg for laughter, kill the pain,
let tomorrow vanish rain*

*Dark clouds, looming gray,
made it hard to see your way
A simple knot, not a hangmans noose
But we still cant seem to cut you loose*

*An August storm, a wake up call
Seems surreal but its not at all
A rolling thunder before the fall
A fit of rage that stunned us all*

*We lost you in an August storm
A love so bold, forever torn
Ripped away, left you hanging there
Feeling lost, thinking no one cared*

*Choices ancient, decisions bold
A leap of faith into the great unknown
Erased a love you'll never know
had you decided not to go*

*An August storm I can't forget
Love lost and full of regret
An August storm is raining down
Buckets of tears falling all around*

*Now your skies so dark have cleared
But where do we go from here?
No good-byes for all to hear
Just memories held so dear*

Ed Mann. Ed is a grieving dad that lost his son to suicide.

July 2-4, 2010 in Arlington, Virginia



33RD National Conference
Arlington, Virginia
JULY 2-4, 2010

“Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope” is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference which will be held in Arlington Virginia July 2-4, 2010. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City promising a beautiful venue for the 33rd TCF National Conference. Independence Day will not only feature our Walk to Remember, but will include a world-class display of fireworks over the National Mall, visible from Arlington.

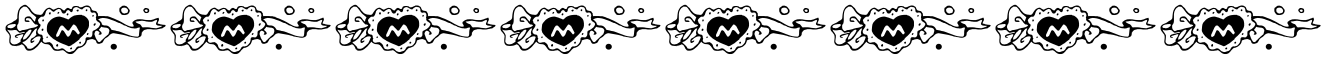
A national conference of The Compassionate Friends is unlike any other conference you may ever attend. It is a place where you can go and know that you truly are not alone as you travel your grief journey. Every person comes for the same reason—a child has died. It is a place where “friendship, understanding, and hope” are more than just words.

For over three decades The Compassionate Friends has held national conferences. They’ve been held all over the country. Today it’s normal to have 1100-1400 bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents attend. Of that number, it usually is the first conference for nearly 40 percent. Those new to TCF conferences wear a special butterfly sticker so that others may notice and give them special hugs. Everyone feels welcome. We often say that these are friends you simply have not yet met.

At each conference, there are many activities, but you decide what is right for you. There are more than 100 workshops (but don’t think these are work—they’re really a time for learning and sharing). Many areas of grief are covered by the workshops. There are workshops for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. And there will be many workshops for those who have no surviving children. You’ll find a hospital-ity room, a reflection room, the Butterfly Boutique, and a complete bookstore. There are very interesting and well-known speakers who address the Opening Session, the Friday afternoon banquet, the Saturday evening banquet, and the Sunday closing. You’ll marvel at the quality of entertainment geared for those attending. There’s also a special candle lighting ceremony to conclude the Saturday evening banquet. If you like a more intimate time with others, join in the evening sharing sessions of your choice.

For more information visit The Compassionate Friends national website:

www.compassionatefriends.org



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 _____

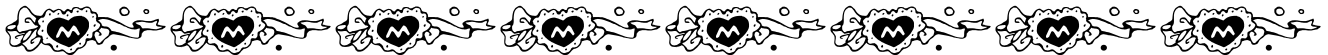
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

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 ...

JUNE 2010 MEMORY PAGE

- KEVIN JOHN CARNOW... Son of Michael & Eileen Carnow**
- MONICA ROSE CASEY... Daughter of Tim & Annette Casey**
- COREY SCOTT GIBBONS... Son of Charles Gibbons**
- BARBARA JEAN GRAHAM... Daughter of Bob Graham**
- MICHELE LYNN HEATH... Daughter of Chuck & June Heath**
- MILA CASIE PHILLIPS... Daughter of Keith Phillips & Granddaughter of Jason & Tamara Phillips**

JUNE 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.