



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

March 2009

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 3 NO. 3

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

If you have never attended a meeting or have not attended in a while, you are absolutely welcome to attend at ANY time. We all know how difficult it is to walk through those doors.

Please know that you will find a safe place to talk about your children with people who all understand the pain of losing a child. You can just sit and listen or feel free to tell your story. Talking is never required. You will be welcome no matter how your child died, how long it has been or at whatever age they died.

If you would like to know more about us or what we do at our meetings, please feel free to call our TCF phone line at 928-978-1492, email us at info@rimcountrytcf.org or visit our website at www.rimcountrytcf.org.

Our meeting this month is on **Tuesday March 10th.**

The Broken Chain

We little knew that morning,
God was going to call your name,
In life we loved you dearly,
In death we do the same.
It broke our hearts to lose you,
You did not go alone.
For part of us went with you,
The day God called you home.
You left us beautiful memories,
Your love is still our guide,
And though we can not see you,
you are always by our side,
Our family chain is broken,
And nothing seems the same,
But as God calls us one by one,
The chain will link again.

Thoughts At A Parent's First TCF Meeting

What am I doing here? Who are all those people? They can't all have lost children. Well, maybe I'm not the only one after all.

I'm Sure they aren't all bereaved parents. Some of them are actually laughing and smiling. If they have lost a child, they didn't love theirs as much as I loved mine or they would never laugh again.

Uh-Oh, they want me to go into another room, one with a smaller group – and they say I'll have the opportunity to talk about what has happened and my feelings. No Way!

What if I should cry? In front of all these strangers? I'd be the only one, I'm sure I won't say anything. And why should I listen to all these other parents? They can't help me. I'll never come back. I definitely won't say anything.

Wait a minute! That mother is crying- and she's saying the very things I've been feeling and thinking. There's another one. I feel as though they've been the old proverbial fly on the wall and have observed what I've been through. They're saying what I've been feeling and some of them are crying and nobody thinks there is anything wrong with it. They are simply offering them a box of Kleenex.

Well at least no one has said, "It was God's will," and they haven't offered me any foolish advice. We were advised by the "old timers" not to take anything home that we didn't bring with us since we've got all we can handle right now. I'll try to be glad there is an understanding place where we can bring our pain and people will listen.

It's strange. I don't want to be eligible to come to this place, but these parents seem to be the only ones who understand.

Well, maybe I'll give it another try.....

Mary Cleckly
TCF- Atlanta, GA

Beatitudes

Blessed are those who do not use tears to measure the true feelings of the bereaved.

Blessed are those who stifle the urge to say, "I understand," when they don't.

Blessed are those who do not always have a quick "comforting" answer.

Blessed are those who hear with their hearts and not with their minds.

Blessed are those who allow the bereaved enough time to heal.

Blessed are those who admit their uncomfortableness and put it aside to help the bereaved.

Blessed are those who do not give unwanted advice.

Blessed are those who continue to call, visit, and reach out when the crowd has dwindled
and the wounded are left standing alone.

Blessed are those who realize the fragility of bereavement and handle it with an
understanding shoulder and a loving heart.

Jackie Deems

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

Yours to Keep

Memories- tender, loving, bittersweet. They can never be taken from you. Nothing can detract from the joy and the beauty you and your loved one shared. Your love for the person and his or her love for you cannot be altered by time or circumstance. The memories are yours to keep. Yesterday has ended, though you store it in the treasure house of the past.

And tomorrow? How can you face its awesome problems and challenges? It is as far beyond your mastery as your ability to control yesterday. Journey one date at a time. Don't try to solve all the problems of your life at once. Each day's survival is a triumph.

From *Living When a Loved One Has Died*
By Rabbi Earl A. Grollman

Thoughts About Progress

One thing that is frequently discussed at our meetings is the despair of thinking you are on the road to “recovery”, when all of a sudden you seem to be back at square one. But are you really?

Let’s keep in mind most of us have had no previous experience “recovering” from the loss of a child. Therefore, we have no point of reference—It’s all new to us. Actually, the “roller coaster” of emotions is perfectly normal. In the very beginning most of us seem to vacillate between dead numbness and excruciating pain. Constant crying, to not a tear left—just dried up and limp. We actually are living minute-to-minute.

After a couple of months we might actually have a few hours that we have not cried or felt that deep overwhelming despair. Then, WHAM—back to where we started. We tend to panic and think something is wrong with us. Let’s be realistic!! There is something wrong—terribly wrong: we have each lost a child.

Let’s be fair to ourselves. We started to play a role to the outside world. Like the old song says, “laughing on the outside—crying on the inside.” We want to be acceptable to society. “You are doing so well,” we hear. If only they knew! We may feel we have to fool others, but let us really be honest about our feelings. To deny our feelings, particularly to ourselves, is to block the road to recovery. Remember that recovery in this case does not mean “getting over it,” it means to gain control of our lives again.

So, let’s not worry about what other people think, say, or expect. Our friends (well meaning as they are), sometimes members of our family, even someone who has lost a child, should not sit in judgment. Each person grieves differently, due to a person’s general make-up and the relationship with the dead child. Unless someone has totally withdrawn from everything and everybody over a lengthy period of time, the chances are all is in the realm of normalcy.

Only after we have walked down the long road of grief and can look back, remembering those early days and weeks, can we see we really are not on square one again. We have just slipped backwards for a time. That is all. Allow yourself that, and then strive forward again. It takes time, a lot of time! We tend to expect too much from others, others expect too much from us and therefore, we tend to expect too much from ourselves.

Mary Ehrmann
TCF- Valley Forge, PA

To Bereaved Fathers:

Who ache but feel they must carry on.
Who are frightened but cannot show their fear.
Who are angry but cannot strike out.
Who are lonely but have to smile.
Who grieve but must be strong.
Who love but are afraid to show their love.
Whose tears cannot fall.

Bereaved fathers are often desperately tragic people caught in the trap of society’s expectations. Our co-workers, friends and family expect that we will, indeed, be strong—that we do all in our power to ensure that life carries on. They expect that our behavior and temperament will remain consistent and that through our attitudes and actions others will be able to observe our will to survive despite the enormity of our loss.

Unfortunately the world does not always work the way we want.

Bereaved fathers do ache. They are afraid and angry. They are lonely and they cry in silent places. They question their sanity and their will to survive. They want to run and hide from their sorrow. And they carry a heavy burden of guilt for not “living up” to society’s expectations.

As difficult as it may be, take risks and develop the courage to express the way you feel.

Trevor and Audrey Roadhouse
TCF- Regina, SK

In memory of Robert Tristan Roadhouse

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*

A Grandparent's Point of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives -- family, friends and even strangers.

I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the special love we have for our grandchildren and the loss we feel when the child dies. For grandparents, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day.

The smile that was always on my daughter's face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep and there are so many questions. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss the hurt away as you did when they were a child. You have no answers for their questions, for you can barely understand your own feelings.

Each day I hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on my daughter's face. I search for a little something to say or do that will comfort her. It seems that there is no end to the suffering.

As time has slowly gone by, I have seen the healing process begin. In time a ray of hope will shine on my daughter's face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to me for what little comfort I can give her. There will always be a part of me that is gone, but in time I will learn to live with the part that is still there.

Ruth Eaton
TCF- Savannah, GA

March

The Month of In Between
In Between Winter
And in Between Spring
Your death has left me
feeling in between
In between this world
and in between the next
Since you died
Nothing's the same
I no longer feel like I belong
Yet I haven't wings for heaven
Though I have no heart for Earth
So I'm somewhere with March
I'm somewhere in between

Naomi Holzman
TCF-Volusia/Flager, FL

A Tear Fell

I rode by your school by chance today
And I just happened to look that way.
The boys all had their ball caps on;
Then I remembered my son was gone.
Just when I thought I was doing so well,
Before I knew it - a tear fell.
Then on Sunday as I sat in church
I looked around and missed you so much
I saw other boys in their Sunday suits
And I remembered you were just as cute.
People all think I'm doing so well;
They don't know today a tear fell.
When I'm reminded of what might have
been
It gets too hard to hold it in,
When life will catch me off my guard,
That's when I seem to be hit so hard.
It seems all roads lead back to you
As I take each day and try to get through.
They say time makes it better, but I cannot
tell;
I only know today - a tear fell.

By Carolyn Bryan-
submitted by Melanie Romero
in loving memory of her son,
Matthew Ryan Romero
6/13/86 - 3/21/97

WHERE ARE YOU?

*I missed you yesterday
and looked for you
among the artifacts of your life -
your room with pictures,
the clothes that still carried your scent,
your favorite tools and books,
the tapes you loved to hear.*

*The very walls echoed your vitality
and carried faint memories of riotous laughter.
And so I sat there, comforted for a while,
but forced at last to confess
that although beautiful memories lingered
you were not there,
not then and not ever again.*

*If I could not find you yesterday
where, then, can I look today?
Who can I talk to, implore, beg
to show me the way?
Where are the hidden doorways
to the signs and wonders
others claim to see?*

*My musings bring no answers
so I take a walk to clear my mind.
Ahead, I see children playing,
and their laughter floating on the wind
reminds me of your own carefree approach to life.
Their running mirrors your own abandon
and the way you always found joy in simple things.*

*Can this be the answer
to the riddle of finding you again?
Can it be that I will hear you
in every moment of laughter?
That I will see you
in the actions of a mischievous friend,
that I will feel you in every touch of compassion?*

*I've always heard
that if you seek, you will find.
Perhaps the corollary to that
is that you must seek in the right places.
I've been looking in the scrapbook
of all that used to be
and found only momentary solace.*

*So let me look for you anew
in all the wonders and blessings of life.
I believe you are reflected there
with every expression of happiness and joy,
in every Instance of fearless exploration
and with every act of unconditional love.*

In loving memory of **Lance Porter Hopkins**

Spring is Coming

If you are newly bereaved and looking toward your "first" spring, you may be surprised by some of the feelings you may experience during the next few weeks. We hear so much about the beauty of spring - the new life and the feelings of renewal that are supposed to accompany this lovely time of year.

During my "first" year, I expected that spring would cheer me up, and make me feel lots better. How surprised and frustrated I was when, on one of those truly magnificent spring days as life seems to burst forth everywhere, I was "in the pits." When a friend said to me, "Doesn't a day like this really lift your spirits and make you feel better?" I had to reply honestly that I was having a really bad day --that the sense of loss and emptiness was greatly intensified.

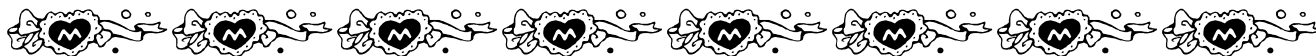
Gradually, I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking for something to take away the pain and make our lives all right again. Unfortunately, there is no magical event or moment when this takes place. It does happen, but only with time and the grief work which we all must do before we can be healed.

The coming of spring cannot make everything okay again. What it can do, however, is remind us that regardless of what happens in our lives, nature's process will continue, and that can offer us hope. I am looking forward to spring this year. I welcome the sun's warmth, the return of the birds from their winter in the south, and forsythia, the daffodils and the greening of the world. Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don't expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.

-Evelyn Billings
TCF Springfield, MA

*Once we can learn to let go of
The moment of death and
Embrace the LIFE we did share,
We can begin to know peace and
A return to inner joy.*

Darce Sims- Footsteps Through The Valley



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 _____

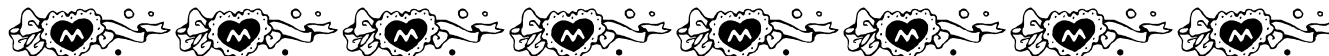
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

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.



MARCH MEMORY PAGE

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

CORY JAMES CLARK... Son of Chuck & Robbin Clark, born 03/22/1979

COREY SCOTT GIBBONS... Son of Charles Gibbons died 03/09/2007

KENNETH CHARLES HARTNELL... Son of Ben & Laura Hartnell, born 03/10/1993

DALTON WILLIAM KNAUSS... Son of Bill & Marilyn Knauss, died 03/13/1999

RUSSELL BRANDON WEAVER... Son of Gaye Stidham, born 03/02/1975

MARCH LOVE GIFT

DEK Family Foundation In Memory of Dalton William Knauss



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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 be added to or removed from this newsletter mail list or to correct an address.

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.