



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

*Rim Country Chapter
P.O. Box 3482
Payson, AZ 85547*

A national non-profit, self-help support organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause.

March 2008

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 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.

Our Newsletter Editor, Robbin Clark, lost her mom on Monday morning, February 18th. If you would like to send her a note, I'm sure that she and Chuck would appreciate it. Thank you for your thoughts, prayers and support for their family during this time.



Doing the newsletter this month sure makes me appreciate Robbin's efforts that much more. I now understand how she labors for articles that are perfectly matched for each month and that touch each of our hearts. There is something in every issue that speaks to me deeply.

If any of you have written something about your child that you would like to share with your TCF family, please feel free to send it so that we can include it in our newsletter. Thanks.

Blessings,
Bill (Dalton's Dad)

Our next meeting is **Tuesday, March 11th at 6:30 PM.**

Payson, Arizona Meeting Info

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

E-mail Address

info@rimcountrytcf.org

Chapter Leaders:

Bill Knauss (928) 978-1492

Robbin Clark (928) 468-7797

TCF NATIONAL OFFICE

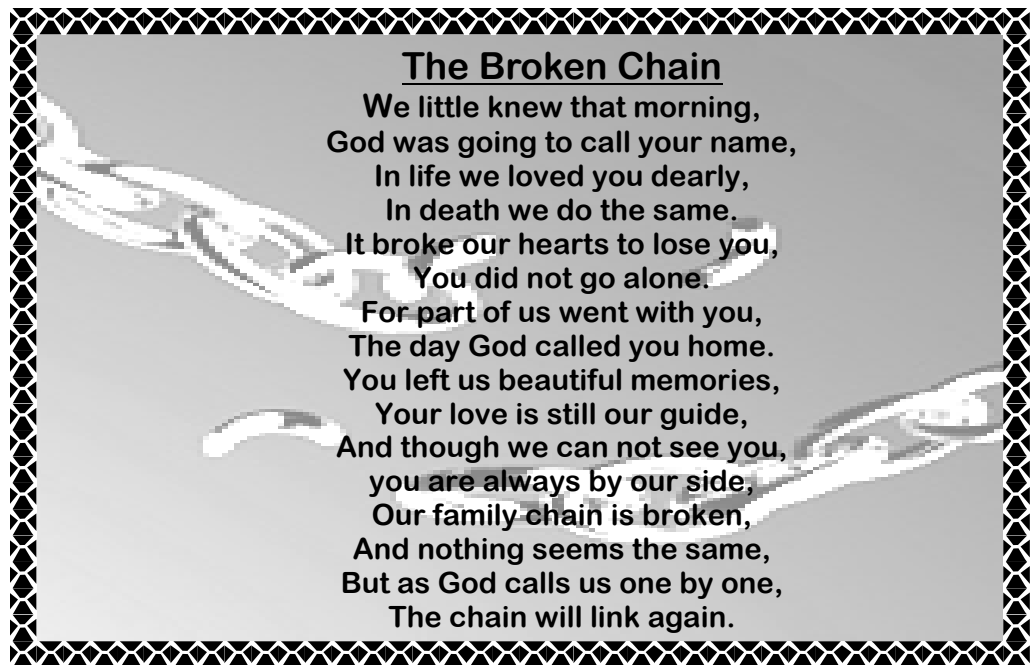
P.O. BOX 3696,
OAKBROOK, IL 60522-3696
(877) 969-0010, FAX (630) 990-0246

CompassionateFriends.org

Regional Coordinator:
Gene Caligari 480-361-1877

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.



The Unwanted Family

I was embraced by a new family that I did not want to be a part of. They offered me love, compassion, understanding, support, hugs, and most importantly they listened when no one else would. I still did not want to be a part of this family called “The Compassionate Friends” for the simple fact that I would have to admit to myself that my son had died and that I would never see him again on this earth.



My son Danny Vasquez died at the young age of seventeen in a car accident. He was coming back home on July 4, 2004 from a friend’s house. He was very tired and fell asleep at the wheel. His brand new car hit and wrapped around a tree and as we were told by the police, he died on impact.

Danny was just a month and a half away from his eighteenth birthday. We had made so many plans for his future, a future that we would never see! Those first months after his death were just so unbearable. The excruciating pain was not just emotional but physical as well. All I remember was just wanting to die! This was not supposed to have happened to my son, to me, to my family, to his friends, to his girlfriend! It was not supposed to have happened! These tragedies only happen to other people; **THOSE PEOPLE** we see on the nightly news or read about in the daily newspapers. But to my surprise and very unexpectedly I became one of **THOSE PEOPLE!**

After a few weeks of my son’s death, someone who was also walking this journey sent me a pamphlet about The Compassionate Friends. I was in such pain that I was willing to do anything to make it go away so I decided to go to my first meeting. I remember sitting there next to my husband with a picture of my son in my hands next to my heart. My husband was so choked up that I don’t even remember him saying one word. I shared with the group my story and at the same time thinking to myself that I was not the one in that room, sitting in that chair, admitting that my son had died. It was so surreal!

The people there were very honest with me. You see, I thought that this would just go away and I would get rid of my pain totally. In a very caring and loving way I was told that everyone grieves differently and that I had a journey to travel through. This would not be an easy journey and I would be facing all types of different emotions. There would be no easy way out of this painful and tragic event in my life. I was offered a place where I could grieve and not be judged. I was offered unconditional support and for that I am so grateful!

I know that not everyone can bring themselves to these meetings for whatever reasons they may have but in my case, “My Compassionate Friends Chapter” saved me! I miss my son tremendously and I don’t think that the pain will ever go away but I now have a new found hope. I am so grateful to the family that once I did not want to be a part of because they have held my hand through this journey called grief.



Peacefully,

Aida M. Vasquez My Forever Love – Danny Vasquez
8/27/86 – 7/4/04





The Mourner's Bill of Rights

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.




Though you should reach out to others as you do the work of mourning, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain "rights" no one should try to take away from you.




The following list is intended both to empower you to heal and to decide how others can and cannot help. This is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.




1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief.



No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell what you should or should not be feeling.




2. You have the right to talk about your grief.




Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief. If at times you don't feel like talking, you also have the right to be silent.




3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions.




Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.




4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits.



Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.




5. You have the right to experience "griefbursts."




Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.




6. You have the right to make use of ritual.



The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. More importantly, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you the funeral or other healing rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, don't listen.




7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality.




If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry at God, find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.




8. You have the right to search for meaning.




You may find yourself asking, "Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?" Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the clichéd responses some people may give you. Comments like, "It was God's will" or "Think of what you have to be thankful for" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.




9. You have the right to treasure your memories.




Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.



10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal.



Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.





"Who You'd Be Today"

Kenny Chesney

Sunny days seem to hurt the most.
I wear the pain like a heavy coat.
I feel you everywhere I go.
I see your smile, I see your face,
I hear you laughin' in the rain.
I still can't believe you're gone.

It ain't fair: you died too young,
Like the story that had just begun,
But death tore the pages all away.
God knows how I miss you,
All the hell that I've been through,
Just knowin' no-one could take your place.
An' sometimes I wonder,
Who'd you be today?

Would you see the world? Would you chase your dreams?
Settle down with a family,
I wonder what would you name your babies?
Some days the sky's so blue,
I feel like I can talk to you,
An' I know it might sound crazy.

It ain't fair: you died too young,
Like the story that had just begun,
But death tore the pages all away.
God knows how I miss you,
All the hell that I've been through,
Just knowin' no-one could take your place.
An' sometimes I wonder,
Who you'd be today?

Today, today, today.
Today, today, today.

Sunny days seem to hurt the most.
I wear the pain like a heavy coat.
The only thing that gives me hope,
Is I know I'll see you again some day.

Some day, some day, some day.

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.

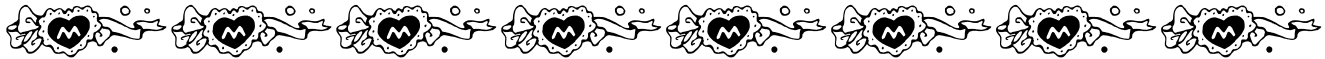


Gradually, I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking

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



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 three chapters' expenses: printing and mailing of our newsletter, books for our lending libraries, our 24-hour 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 10th 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 _____

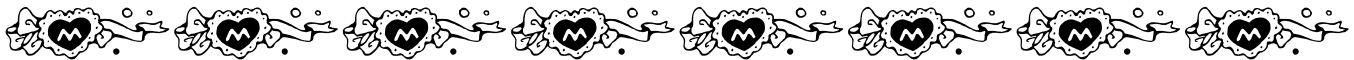
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

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 ...

MARCH MEMORY PAGE

- KENNETH CHARLES HARTNELL... Son of Ben & Laura, Born March 10, 1993**
- DALTON WILLIAM KNAUSS... Son of Bill & Marilyn, Died March 13, 1999**
- COREY JAMES CLARK... Son of Chuck and Robbin, Born March 22, 1979**

MARCH LOVE GIFTS

- Sue Scovel in memory of her Son... RANDY K WOOD**
- The DEK Foundation in memory of DALTON WILLIAM KNAUSS**



Save the Date!

Now is the time to mark July 18-20, 2008 on your calendar so you can attend the 31st national conference of The Compassionate Friends which will be held in Nashville, Tennessee.

Having selected the theme *Volunteers for Healing—Friends for the Future*, the conference committee is hard at work to bring you the best healing experience possible, including special guest speakers, more than 100 workshops covering most aspects of grief following the death of a child, and many additional activities including the ninth annual two-mile Walk to Remember at 8 a.m. Sunday July, 20.

To allow everyone to be a part of this year's conference experience, the conference committee plans to decorate the conference area with real 7" vinyl records that have pictures of our children in the center. The "sponsor a record" program is similar to programs available for previous conferences. For a nominal charge (which helps to defray the cost of the conference), pictures sent in by our membership of our TCF children, will decorate the registration area, and reflection and hospitality rooms. Templates and directions are available for download from The Compassionate Friends website at www.compassionatefriends.org. Whether or not you are able to attend the conference, a child, sibling, grandchild, or loved one can still be remembered.

Those who attend the conference and have a record made with their child's picture will be able to carry them home. After the conference concludes, those unable to attend who would like their child's record can have it mailed to them for a slight additional charge.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Music City Hotel and special room rates will be available for guests attending the conference. Watch TCF's national website at www.compassionatefriends.org for the latest information. More than 1,200 people are expected to attend.



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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 receive this newsletter and do not wish to receive it or to change an address or add an address.

The Compassionate Friends Credo

**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.