



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.

May 2008

RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 NO. 5

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 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
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TCF NATIONAL OFFICE

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CompassionateFriends.org

Regional Coordinator:
Gene Caligari 480-361-1877

CHAPTER NEWS

Our next meeting is May 13. Please note that we will be meeting in the building behind the one where we usually meet.



If this month was your child's birthday or was special to him or her and you want to celebrate that in some way, please feel free to bring pictures or snacks or anything that you feel you want to help celebrate your special memory. This month, we celebrate Mother's Day. This may be a difficult day for many of us, but maybe we can try to recall some very happy memories. No one can take away our precious memories.

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 suddenly close, sustainers of life for us. Grief changes the rules, and sometimes rearranges the combinations.

From "Healing After Loss"
By Martha Whitmore Hickman

A GRIEVING MOTHER'S MOTHERS DAY

It doesn't matter what day of the year you lose your child. Mother's Day will come too soon and last too long. But please believe me when I say that you won't always feel as empty and alone as you do on the first one.

I spent my first Mother's Day with my husband, and my anger and my pain. But mostly, I walked through it numb - numbed by the cruelty of a day set aside specifically to celebrate the joys of being a mother and feeling that I had lost my right to partake in that joy. And numbed by the anger at those who forgot to acknowledge that I was, in fact, a mother. I fought the need all day to just walk up to someone and say, "Hey, I know I don't have a child in my arms to prove it, but I really was a mom."

And I was a really good mom. And my little boy was the most beautiful person to grace the Earth. The shattered pieces of my heart and the tears that welled in my eyes kept me from seeing that I still was, and always would be, Justin's mommy.

Ironically, the very words that I couldn't say last year will bring me comfort on this Mother's Day. This year, I will believe them and I will find happiness in them. But most of all, I will celebrate them and my motherhood. I earned the right and it is a gift from Justin I cannot ignore.

If I were so bold as to give a grieving mother advice on how to get through her first, second, third Mother's Day, I would say this: Spend it with a person (or people) you love and trust; someone who will respect your pain. I have laughed the hardest in the company of my husband and cried my most anguished tears in his arms; so for me, he was that person. Do something that you find comforting. Treat yourself as wonderfully as you would treat a person who gives life, who nurtures it, and sees the miracle in it, because that's who you are.

Death's destruction is a powerful thing, but it's no match for our memories. No matter what you do this Mother's Day, take time to remember your baby's sweet smell, the softness of his/her skin and what it felt like against your cheek. Remember that smile that everyone said was just gas, but you knew better. Remember what it felt like to hold a miracle in your arms! Remember, because all these things are your child's Mother's Day gift to you. A gift that you have every right to show off to others.

And you are not alone. God Bless and Happy Mother's Day.

Erica Blake TCF - Johnson County, Iowa City, IO

Our Day A Very Special Day

Our Day. A Very Special Day. A day that is set aside especially to honor all mothers.

Mother; a beautiful word. What other word could you use to best describe giving birth to, nursing, loving and caring for a tiny, helpless human being, a gift of life to treasure? But weren't we taught that once you gave a gift to someone, you should never take it back? What went wrong? Mine was taken from me. Does that mean that I wasn't worthy to be a mother, that I was failing, that I didn't appreciate the gift? The gift was too precious to be given for keeps. It was only loaned to me for a short while. Even in my sorrow, I feel special, for I know the true meaning of the word **mother**. I have reached the ultimate, from the joy of birth to the sorrow of death. I belong to a special group who truly knows the meaning of the word **mother**.

Would I not have accepted the gift if I had known the terrible loss I would feel by having it taken from me? No, I would still hold out my hands and accept such a precious gift, for to love and cherish, even for a short while, is worth every fear.

This year on Mother's Day I'll shed my tears but let them be as a soft summer's rain - a rain that nourished the earth, tears that heal and cleanse my heart.

Vera Babb TCF- St. Louis, MO

Mother's Day Revisited

Many of us in TCF do not look forward to Mother's Day. On this holiday, when the whole nation is celebrating the joys of parenthood, grieving parents often feel a special anguish.

Mother's Day this year looms as particularly difficult milestone for me. Sunday, May 10, 1998 is not only Mother's Day but also the second anniversary of the death of my ten-year-old son, Jacob. Because this day of private sadness also happens to be a day of public celebration, I decided that I should start thinking early about the occasion. I engaged in a little research about the holiday and learned a story that I think is worth sharing.

Mother's Day was the creation of a woman named Anna Jarvis in the early years of this century. Anna, who never married and never had children of her own, devoted herself to establishing a national Mother's Day as a way of honoring her beloved mother, who died on May 9, 1905. In Anna's view, her mother deserved a memorial because she had lived selflessly and endured considerable suffering-*seven of her eleven children had died in early childhood*. According to historians, Anna's mother mourned the deaths of her children throughout her life.

Anna insisted that the holiday always fall on a Sunday so that it would retain its spiritual moorings. Because of her efforts, President Woodrow Wilson finally proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Although Anna couldn't prevent the new holiday from quickly becoming a marketing phenomenon, she did try. Speaking out against "the mire of commercialization" that threatened to engulf Mother's Day, Anna attempted to preserve her creation as a true "holy day," a time for solemn reflection and prayer.

Mother's day, then, was borne of a daughter's grief and love. More importantly, it was intended as a tribute to a bereaved mother-a brave woman who lost multiple children but who managed to live with an abiding kindness and generosity toward others. I like knowing this background, and my attitude towards Mother's Day has been colored by the knowledge. The holiday now makes me think of the common sorrow that links all bereaved parents. I feel a bond with Anna's mother that stretches over time and space. In a broader sense, the woman for whom the holiday was founded reminds me of people I've met at TCF who have continued to live productive, meaningful lives in the face of unthinkable loss. Finally, Mother's Day in its origins symbolizes both the joy and the vulnerability inherent in parenthood. Anna's mother knew all too well that from the moment a child is born, hope and the possibility of tragedy go hand in hand. She understood the fragility of life.

Enriched by its own history, Mother's Day is easier for me to tolerate. The coincidence of dates this year-Mother's Day and the anniversary of my son's death-is not as jarring as it once seemed. Although the commercial images of the modern Mother's Day still make me wince, I can turn off the television and envision the kind of day that Anna Jarvis had in mind: a time for quiet reflection and the sharing of cherished memories.

Barbara Atwood
TCF- Tucson, Arizona

The Significance of Mother's Day

I don't think I really appreciated the significance of Mother's Day until I myself became one. My life would never be the same, and the death of my only child did not alter the fact that I am still a mother. I still have that intense feeling of love for my child, a love greater than any I had known before. So, as Mother's Day approaches, a day on which we recognize the love and pride of motherhood, I, too, want to be remembered as a mother.

Ginny Smith
TCF- Charlottesville, VA



I Remember.

*I remember the toys,
The fun and games,
Playing in the rain.
I remember baseball games,
Calling each other names.
The memories are so vast,
But, always in the past.
The future holds no more,
Time has closed the door.
A part of my past you'll always be,
The future has been taken from me.
One day we'll meet again,
till then-
You're in my heart, my mind, my soul
I'll love you forevermore*

*Becke Adam-Hammack (Sister)
TCF, Louisville, KY*

IF TOMORROW NEVER COMES

If I knew it would be the last time
That I'd see you fall asleep,
I would tuck you in tighter
And pray the Lord, your soul to keep.
If I knew it would be the last time
That I would see you walk out the door,
I would give you a hug and kiss
And call you back for one more.
If I knew it would be the last time
I'd hear your voice lifted up in praise
I would video tape each action and word,
So I could play them back day after day.
If I knew it would be the last time,
I could spare an extra minute or two
To stop and say I Love You,
Instead of assuming you would know I do.
If I knew it would be the last time
I would be there to share your day,
Well I'm sure you'll have so many more
So I can't let just one slip away.
For surely there's always tomorrow
To make up for an oversight,
And we always get a second chance
To make everything right.
There will always be another day
To say our "I love you's",

And certainly there's another chance
To say our "Anything I can do's?"
But just in case I might be wrong,
And today is all I get,
I'd like to say how much I love you
And I hope we never forget.
Tomorrow is not promised to anyone,
Young or old alike,
And today may be the last chance
You get to hold your loved one tight..
So if you're waiting for tomorrow,
Why not do it today?
For if tomorrow never comes,
You'll surely regret the day,
That you didn't take that extra time
For a smile, a hug, or a kiss
And you were too busy to grant someone,
What turned out to be their one last wish.
So hold your loved ones close today,
Whisper in their ear,
Tell them how much you love them
And that you'll always hold them dear.
Take time to say "I'm sorry," "please forgive me,"
"thank you" or "it's okay".
And if tomorrow never comes,
You'll have no regrets about today.
~anonymous~
~

Their Song of Love

Remembering on this Mother's Day
the melody your child etched
in your heart.
The sweet song of love
that only your
child could place there.
As this special day brings
their song to you,
may the warmth of their eternal love
fill your heart once again.
For their song is never ending.

Patty Erdman
TCF- Longview, WA

Seasons of the Heart

Your special days are unchanging
Seasons of the heart I celebrate.
Your birth, forever spring,
Tender memories relate,
New and green, a dream
From which too soon I awake.
The summer of your life was bright
Laughter needed no reason,
Seemingly endless days of sharing.
Sixteen summers. Short in season.
Your death brought winter without warning,
What sense in all this can be found?
Summer dreams replaced with mourning.
Where is hope now?
But the heart knows what
The mind cannot accept,
That when all is lost,
It is love that is left.
Love knows no barriers
Time or distance recognize.
Love does not diminish,
But is constant in our lives.
And like a summer breeze
Uplifts and inspires us
With healing memories.
Peggy Walls
TCF, Alexander City, AL

TCF, Ventura, CA

On Not Saying It

I never got around to saying it.
There was always tomorrow,
When the time would be more appropriate.
Besides, you hated "embarrassment,"
Or was the embarrassed one really me?
Now I say it a lot,
To the sky, to your photo, to a gravestone.
Knowing facts say you cannot hear it,
But believing, inside me, you can.
When a child, a youth, then a young man,
I remember how you watched my face.
First as your god, then as your mentor,
Finally, I hope, as a friend.
But "I love you," as years went by,
Were words we kept bottled inside.
Now that you've left, the bottle overflows.
Until I, too, cross the divide,
I have to believe you knew.
And forgave me for not saying it.
Leonard Ruppert
TCF, Atlanta, GA
Of happy memories that I leave
When my life is done.

Carol Mirkel

You are My Star

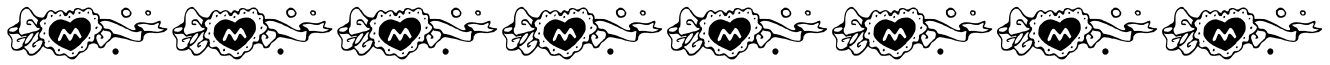
There may be many stars at night
Or there may be a few
But in their soft and silvery light
I always dream of you.
Because you are my special star
In every sky I see
Regardless of how near or far
Your loving smile may be.
Regardless of the heavy clouds
That cover up the sky
Or of the shadows and the shrouds
Before the human eye.
I dream of you in every rain
And in the falling snow
And in the winds that blow in vain
Where love and beauty grow.
Because no matter where you are
My heart belongs to you
The glorious and guiding star
Of everything I do.

James J. Metcalfe

Afterglow

I'd like the memory of me
To be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow
Of smiles when life is done.
I'd like to leave an echo
Whispering softly down the ways,
Of happy times and laughing times,
And bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve,
To dry before the sun,
Of happy memories that I leave
When my life is done.

Carol Mirkel
TCF, Ventura, CA



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.**

PATRICIA IRVIN in memory of her son **"BILLY" FRANK MANNING** 11/07/1969—11/28/1991

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 _____

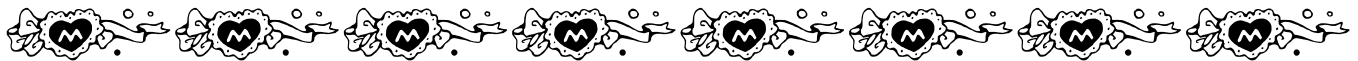
CHILD'S NAME _____ M or F (circle)

DATE OF BIRTH _____ DATE OF DEATH _____

Enclosed is a love gift in memory of my child to help deray 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 August. 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.



MAY MEMORY PAGE

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

Kayla Diane Floyd...daughter of Chris & Jerry Floyd, born 5/06/1988.

JUST A THOUGHT...A CLEAN HOUSE

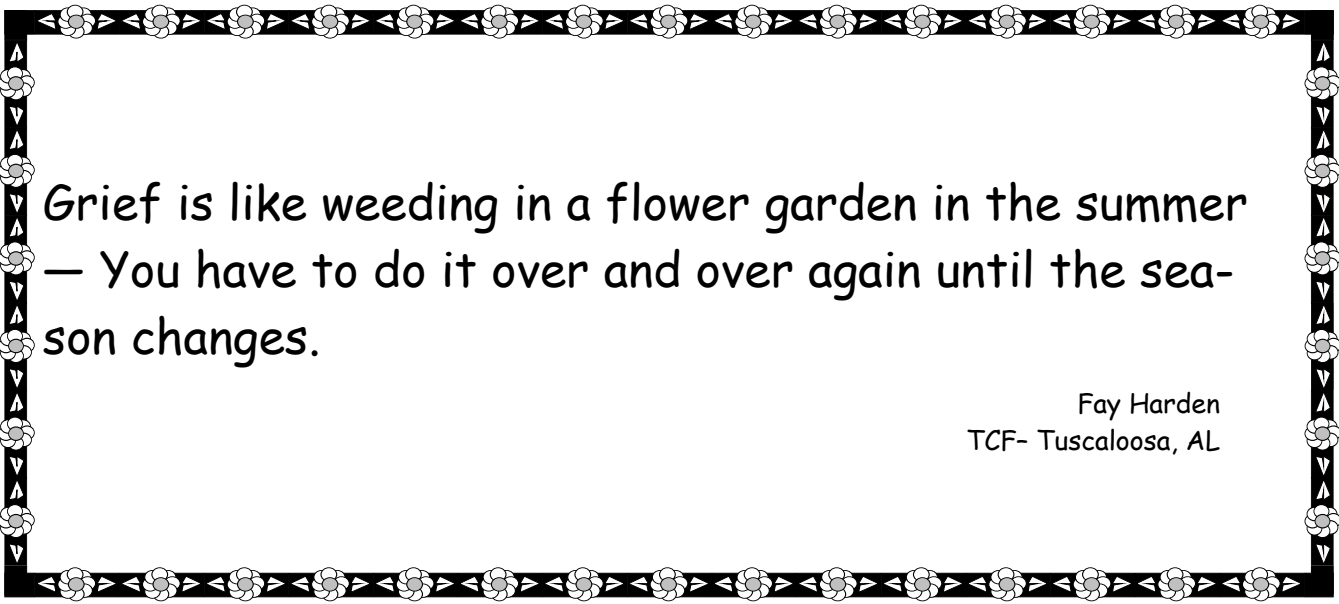
BY; TRACIE COOLEY

BEREAVED MOTHER. TAMPA.FLORIDA

Since my daughter died almost three years ago, my house is not as clean as it once was. I used to clean constantly; even the baseboards were dusted on a regular basis. When Malena died I just did not have the energy to do as much housework, so I did what I could and hoped that no one would notice the baseboards.

I also realized that my surviving children did not care how clean the house was, but they really seemed to enjoy that mommy spent more time with them, reading, talking, snuggling, and playing. Before Malena died I felt a clean house and dinner on the table were what made me a good mom. After she died, I wished for more time to read and play with her. I changed my priorities very quickly, the house will be clean when the children go to college or get married. I will never live in a Maratha Stewart or Better Homes and Gardens house.

A few weeks ago I was cleaning the house because guests were coming that night. I cleaned the common areas of the house, only what the guests would see, the rest would be hidden behind a closed door and a hope that no one would notice that I haven't dusted or mopped for a while. As I cleaned, I realized that this house is now a reflection of my life. My life fell apart when Malena died; I have worked to put it back together. The end result is a life that seems "normal" on the outside to the casual observer but if you look real close the hurt and pain are still there. What the world sees is a person who has triumphed over the death of her child, because they only glance. Those who look closely, in the cracks and crevices where the dust settles, see that there is forever a changed person, who will never be complete again until she is reunited with her child.



Grief is like weeding in a flower garden in the summer
— You have to do it over and over again until the season changes.

Fay Harden
TCF- Tuscaloosa, AL



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***RIM COUNTRY
CHAPTER
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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.