



**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

May 2010

*RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER*

VOL. 4 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 Information**

2<sup>nd</sup> 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**

[www.RimCountryTCF.org](http://www.RimCountryTCF.org)  
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### **CHAPTER NEWS**

This month we focus on all the moms who will be going through this holiday without their precious child or children. I hope one or more of the articles here is meaningful to you.



I mentioned in the last issue that we were trying to reduce the cost of our newsletter printing. Barbara Gooch who works with Beeline Business Equipment stepped forward with a quote for about half of what had been paying before. What a blessing. So going forward they will be providing our printing needs. Thank you.

Our meeting this month will be on **May 11th.** If your child's birthday or "Angelversary" occurs in May, 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*

**Mother's Day--Am I A Mother?**  
Written by Clara Hinton

Holidays following child loss can become dreaded events. Stores and shopping malls are filled with darling stuffed teddy bears, flowers, candies, balloons, and colorful decorations to serve as reminders of the coming holiday event. But, when a child has died, one's perspective changes dramatically. One of the worst holidays to face following child loss is Mother's Day.

A woman struggles with a very basic question when early loss occurs such as miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, or stillbirth. Women who have given their child up for adoption struggle with this same question. Am I a mother?

Am I a mother? When there is no child to hold, no child visible to others, this question is one that pains the innermost depths of the heart. Mother's Day is especially difficult because there are such things as new baby dedications done in churches, mother-daughter banquets planned, and flowers designed just for mothers. A woman who does not have her physical child with her often agonizes over what to do and what to say to others.

Even if your baby lived one day inside of you, you are still a mother! Your body was "with child"; therefore, in a very real sense you are a genuine mother. That is special, and worthy of recognition. It is extremely important to give validity to the fact that you wear the cherished name "mother". Am I a mother? Yes!

Sadly, many of our churches do not recognize mothers of miscarriage and other early child loss. I don't believe this is an intentional oversight. I believe it stems from a lack of understanding and a general feeling of not knowing what to say or do in an uncomfortable situation.

Card companies also are lacking in the careful wording of cards for mothers who have experienced miscarriage and early child loss. Often, even those closest to you will overlook you in the celebration of Mother's Day. In fact, there may be some who would think you are not accepting the loss if you want to celebrate Mother's Day in some way.

What are you to do? Follow your heart. If you feel it is important for you to be recognized as a mother, then let others know of your wishes. Tell your pastor that you would like mention made of your baby, too, on dedication Sunday. Perhaps this would be a wonderful time for you to name your baby, if you have not done so already. Giving a baby a name is very healing.

Tell others that you would enjoy flowers, or that you would love a donation made to your favorite charity in honor of your baby for Mother's Day. Wear a flower on Mother's Day, or choose something that has special significance to you such as a bracelet to wear in honor of your baby. This will give you a connection to your baby, and allow you to feel like you are a mother.

Yes. You are a mother, and that means that Mother's Day is for you, too. Hold that day close to your heart by honoring your child's birth and death. Grieve the loss, but remember your baby. And, by all means, allow yourself the privilege of being called mother.

When you validate the fact that you indeed are a mother, you are moving one more step forward in your journey of grief towards healing.

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.

"I know I'll see the sun shine bright  
upon my baby's face....  
When I finally get to heaven,  
all my pain will be erased.  
  
We'll soar the skies together,  
as angels two by two.  
We'll have a sweet reunion,  
this mother's dream come true!"

Unknown

### **Ten things grieving mothers want most for Mother's Day:**

1. **Recognize that they are a Mother:** Offer a hug and a "Happy Mother's Day". Send a simple Mother's Day card to let them know you remember that they are a mother even though their child is not with them physically.
2. **Acknowledge that they have had a loss:** Express the message, "I know this might be a difficult day for you. I want you to know that I am thinking about you today." Removing the wall of silence gives a grieving mother permission to talk about her child.
3. **Use their child's name in conversation:** Saying the name of a child who has died is like music to a grieving mother's ears. One mother suggested, "Say his name and ask me my fondest memory of him from past Mother's Days".
4. **Plant a living memorial:** This is a wonderful day to plant a tree or flower bulbs in memory of the child. This is something that will live on as a beautiful reminder in the years to come.
5. **Visit the Gravesite:** Many mothers felt that it was "extremely thoughtful" when others visited their child's gravesite and left flowers or a small pebble near the headstone.
6. **Light a Candle:** Let the mother know you will light a candle in memory of their child on Mother's Day.
7. **Share a Memory or Pictures of the Child:** Give the precious gift of a memory. One mother wrote that the "greatest gift you can give is a heart felt letter about my child and your most lovely moments with them".
8. **Send a Gift of Remembrance:** Many mothers suggested appropriate gifts of remembrance that would bring them comfort. These items included: an angel statue, a piece of jewelry, a memory box, a memorial candle, a picture frame, a library book donation, an ornament, memorial poetry, anything personalized with the child's name or a date, books on grief, a garden stone or a toy donation in the child's name.
9. **Don't try to minimize their loss:** Avoid using any cliches that attempt to explain the death of a child. ("God needed another angel.") Secondly, don't try to find anything positive about the loss ("You still have two healthy children" or "She's in a better place").
10. **Encourage Self-Care:** Self-care is an important aspect of the "healing the mind and spirit effort" according to several mothers. Encourage a grieving mother to take care of herself. Give her a gift certificate to a day spa or any place where she can be pampered and take her mind off of her grief for an hour or two.

### **Getting Through Mother's Day** Written by Clara Hinton

One of the most difficult days to get through following the loss of a child is Mother's Day. Reminders of this special occasion are everywhere. Stores, magazines, and flower shops all have advertisements and brilliant displays showing ways to honor mothers. For a mother that has gone through the pain of child loss, these reminders continue to add to the pain already felt by a mother's heart that has been left aching for the child she loves so much.

There is no way to completely avoid Mother's Day, but there are things that can be done in preparation for this difficult day that can help to lessen the pain. Often, the most important thing a mother can do is to communicate her feelings to those who are part of her support system. Don't be afraid to be honest. Come up with a plan that best suits you, and share that plan with others so that they know how to best help you get through Mother's Day. Remember that every mother grieves the loss of her child in a uniquely different way, so there is no right or wrong way to face Mother's Day.

It is vitally important for a mother to take care of herself physically by eating nutritious meals and by keeping herself well hydrated in the days leading up to Mother's Day. Also, it is important to get as much rest as possible. Grief work is very real and requires lots of attention. Grief is a drain physically and emotionally, so extra care is needed during the stress of facing Mother's Day without your child.

Try to find a way to validate your child that is so very special to your heart. By validating the memory of your child, you also validate the fact that you are a mother. Many mothers have found that journaling their thoughts is healing for Mother's Day. Others have found that it helps to plant a special flower in memory of their child. Some mothers want to be acknowledged in church on Mother's Day even though their child is not here with them. Others choose to avoid all social gatherings on Mother's Day, and instead choose to take a quiet, reflective walk. Do whatever is best for you.

Remind yourself often that you can make it through Mother's Day. Do all that you can to get through the day gently and in a way that is healing to you. Remember that tears are cleansing and are not a sign of failure.

By preparing for Mother's Day, you are doing a lot of your grief work before the actual day arrives. You will find that when Mother's Day comes and you have a plan in mind, you will experience less grief and those around you will be able to support you through the day that has been so heavy on your heart. Most times, the anticipation is far worse than the actual day. With some thought and careful planning, you will make it through Mother's Day, and you will be one step closer to finding healing in this difficult journey called grief.

### **A Mother's Prayer**

If I could give my life for you, I might try  
How could someone so full of life have died?

So young and strong, your future was so bright.  
Now my prayer is just to see you in my dreams tonight.

I try to hide the rush of tears each day.  
Sometimes I fail, so for more strength now I pray.

I try to remind myself that you are better off.  
But to live without you, My God, what a cost.

How can I go forward now that you're gone?  
Are we just supposed to forget you and move on?

Have I gone crazy to say these things I say?  
I thank God for those who love me anyway.

I guess for my family it must be hard too.  
Day to day, not sure what to do.

Try to make me laugh or just let me cry?  
Get me out of the house or just let me hide?

Remind me of funny things that you used to do?  
Or sit and cry with me because they miss you too?

I know that somehow that God must have a plan.  
I just can't see it. I just don't understand.

You were a fish in the water, a dolphin by choice;  
A confident young lady with a sassy voice.

You were my angel on earth with your freckled little face.  
I guess angels do belong in heaven, so you had to take your place.

So vibrant, that even in death, you gave others life.  
Still to bury my child in just not right.

So young and strong, your future is so bright.  
I pray to see you again in my dreams tonight.

**Written by Edwin Simpson for Chris Floyd  
in loving memory of Kayla Diane Floyd**

### Mother's Day: A Father's View

In our house, as in other bereaved parents' households, Mother's Day comes with mixed emotions. Setting aside a day to honor motherhood is only right: mothers do tend to be taken for granted. I remember the childhood joy of getting my mother a special gift, even if the gift was nothing more than a crayon drawing. As an adult, buying gifts for your mother and the mother of your children still brings back those happy memories. But this all changed after Erin died.

Looking through all the cards at the gift shop only reminds me of the irony. Cute, humorous, and sweetly sentimental cards await the bereaved father shopping for his bereaved wife. I can't find the card that will comfort my wife on this day, and even worse, I'm afraid that I'll buy a card that will bring back only painful memories of the child she lost.

I realize this day, perhaps because it is so widely celebrated, can even, years later, take my wife back to grieving she thought she was "through with." I can never do enough on Mother's Day; maybe I try to do too much. I know, of course, that all the cards, gifts, flowers, and messy breakfasts in the world, can't make up for the loss of our child. But I still do all these things; she deserves them.

The unfairness of our daughter's death will always be there. I know I can't change that with a card. But I can remind her she is a great mother, a loving mother, and most importantly, she is still the mother of the child we lost. If she's happy on Mother's Day, I will try my best to keep her there. If she's depressed, I try to cheer her up as best I can, even though I feel I'm not very good at it. This, then, is the wish I have for all other bereaved mothers today:

Please be as happy (and proud) as every other mother today; no one can dispute the fact you brought your child into the world. Although that child is no longer with you, the love you had for her or him remains and can never be taken away from you. If you should be depressed, may there be family and friends there to remind you of this and comfort you.

To all of you: HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY.  
--Al Bots, TCF, Cleveland, OH, SW Suburbs

## Graduation Day

A day cherished by grads and parents...one of those long-awaited "rites of passage" to the new status of adulthood. Awards are given...gifts are received...parties are planned...future plans are discussed...new goals are dreamed.

We won't have prom night at my house this year...there won't be awards ceremonies to attend...there'll be no graduation gift to buy...there's no college to choose...there's no future to plan. Vanessa doesn't live here anymore.

Tears are a way of life now, and my spare time is filled with emptiness. There is sorrow for a wonderful young woman who will soon be forgotten by all but a few. Broken dreams. Unanswered prayers. Disbelief. Loss of faith.

I've spent the last three years enduring a situation that is unacceptable and intolerable, and I stifle the scream from my inner depths, "WHY?"

~Adapted from Harold S. Kushman  
When Bad Things Happen to Good People



*I am not an optimist, because I am not sure that everything ends well. Nor am I a pessimist, because I am not sure that everything ends badly.*

*I just carry hope in my heart. Hope is a feeling that life and work have a meaning. You either have it or you don't, regardless of the state of the world that surrounds you.*

*Life without hope is an empty, boring and useless life. I cannot imagine that I could strive for something if I did not carry hope in me.*

*I am thankful to God for this gift. It is as big a gift as life itself.*

*Vaclav Havel*

## 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.

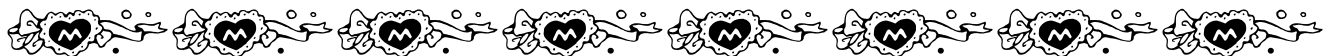
A national conference of The Compassionate Friends is unlike any other conference you may ever attend. It is a place where you can go and know that you truly are not alone as you travel your grief journey. Every person comes for the same reason—a child has died. It is a place where “friendship, understanding, 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](http://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 \_\_\_\_\_

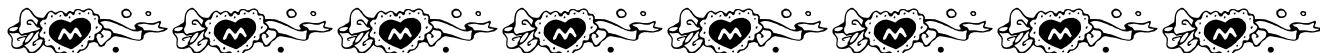
CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ M or F (circle)

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 ...**

**MAY 2010 MEMORY PAGE**

- DAVID ADAM ZEHNDER... Son of Ricki Aiken**
- KAYLA DIANE FLOYD... Daughter of Jerry & Chris Floyd**
- RUSSELL BRANDEN WEAVER... Son of Gaye Stidham**
- VICTOR ZAMORANO... Son of Claudio & Karen Zamorano**

**MAY 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](mailto: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.