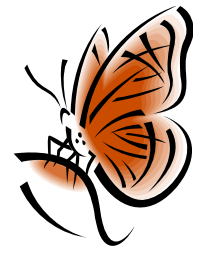


The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

December, 2013 Newsletter



A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents



Chapter Leader Notes from Toni

SURVIVING . . . THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays are here and we, as grieving parents, must face the many triggers that can cause a downward spiral of emotions and outlook. There is no perfect solution for how to spend the holidays. There are only 3 difficult choices available to you: celebrate the holidays as usual, avoid the holiday altogether or do something new that you've never done before on the holiday. Every choice is a good one if it works for you and your family.

There are a few hints you can try to follow in order to cope with one of the most difficult times of the year:

Be Kind to Yourself - Respect yourself, your needs and your feelings. Handling your emotions may be the only thing that you can manage right now.

Express Your Feelings - Don't suppress your feelings. Don't deny your grief. Cry if you feel like it and be angry if you feel like it. Feelings that are expressed are more likely to soften.

Ask for What You Need - Speak up and tell people what you need, whether it is help with shopping or decorating or just time alone or time with people. People will help if you let them.

Don't Compare Your Life with Other People's - Embrace what you have and try not to be jealous or resentful of intact families. As normal as these feelings are, they are not helpful to you and your healing.

Help Another Person in Need - Helping to meet the needs of someone else can be very healing as it directs some of the emotional burden that you carry into a positive act. Consider volunteering at an animal shelter or food shelf to help create a new routine.

It's OK to Not Have A Good Time & It's OK to Have A Good Time - If you are hurting and cannot face a party or special event that is fine. Sometimes social situations can create an unnecessary emotional burden. At the same time, it is OK to have a good time and enjoy being with people or doing something different. Your child would not want you to be paralyzed by grief and give up on living.

"Perhaps the best testimonial we can give to our missing loved ones in how we live our lives. Don't deny yourself life because someone has died. If you can do so, enjoy the holidays and every, for death touches us, more than anything, that every day of life is precious and worth living to the fullest. The best gift we can give ourselves and others for the holidays and every day is to live our lives wholeheartedly."

MERRY CHRISTMAS-HAPPY HANUKKA-HAPPY
NEW YEAR

Excerpts from "Surviving The Holidays When Someone You Love Has Died"
by Judy Tatelbaum, M.S.W.
Bereavement Magazine 1991





GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but donations can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of your chapters. Love gifts are acknowledged each month in the newsletter.

**Thanks to Joanne Segebarth
for her donation in
loving memory of her husband,
Ruben Segebarth**

**Thanks to Rebecca Wolf
for her donation in
loving memory of her son,
Anthony Clemente**

**Thanks to Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
for sponsoring the December newsletter
in loving memory of their son
Barry J Grazier**

"Gifts of Love" in remembering our children and siblings help to pay for Newsletters, Postage, Books for our Lending Libraries and Resources, Memorial Services, Candle Lightings, Telephone and Outreach, and Dues to the National TCF Office. Thank you.

Meetings

December 19, 2013 – 7:30 p.m.
Millburn Congregational Church
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL
Open discussion

**Waukegan meeting
January 2, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.**
Holy Family Church
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL
Open discussion

River Reflections



I just got back from a river rafting trip, where I found myself thinking about my brother a lot. He died 16 months ago of an overdose of morphine. I don't know why it happened; it happened.

I didn't see the beginning of his life—he was three years older, but I saw the end. I can look at it now and see it in its entirety—his 33 years of living that I so much counted on and expected to last another 70 or 80 years. I thought I would always have him to talk to—about life, about family, and about ourselves.

The river was a meditative place for me. The rhythm of the oars, the gentle motion of the raft, the shore gliding by, the gurgle of the water as it seeped into and back out of our raft—all of this provided just enough stimulation and was hypnotic enough that I didn't want to do anything but sit and think.

For a few days on the river, I floated without any of my day-to-day concerns, without the usual level of tension standing behind me. What rose to the surface, visible in the clear water of my mind after the silt of all my worries sank to the bottom, were thoughts of my brother.

Nat would have liked this trip. The rough beauty of the terrain and the quiet power of the water would not have been lost on him. He would have noticed the beauty of the full moon and the light on the canyon walls as the sun rose and set.

I have felt a lot of anger at him for dying, for taking his own life, for engaging in an activity so dangerous, for playing Russian roulette, for committing suicide. He left no note, he didn't say good-bye; he left a wife and two sons whom he loved very much but who, like me, were not enough to keep him alive.

It wasn't the anger, though, that I felt on the river. I just remembered him. Grief is at its sharpest when, after a death, he all of a sudden flashes

(Continued on page 4)

OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN DECEMBER & JANUARY



Each month we remember the children who are sadly missed. Please take a few moments, place them in your thoughts, and remember them on their day together with their parents. None of us ever forget our special days and messages that say "I care" help us to get through them. Our children's lives will go on, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.

BIRTHDAYS

<i>Hugh Andrew Mathis</i>	December 7	Son of Richard & Helen Mathis
<i>Alexander Rettinger</i>	December 9	Son of Kathleen Rettinger
<i>Joey Frase</i>	December 11	Son of Cathy Frase
<i>Anthony Clemente</i>	December 12	Son of Becky Wolf
<i>Ryan James Nichols</i>	December 12	Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
<i>Rasheed Mariano</i>	December 15	Son of Joan Mariano
<i>Zack A Maslanich</i>	December 18	Son of Karen Zimmerman
<i>Mark Yates</i>	December 20	Son of Linda Hegg
<i>Barry J Grazier</i>	December 22	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
<i>Raphael E Vidal</i>	December 24	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal
<i>Mitchell Carlson</i>	January 1	Son of Tina Carlson Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstron
<i>Anna Smith Miler</i>	January 3	Daughter of Carol Semple
<i>Michael Lee Brandon Frederick</i>	January 13	Son of Jan Frederick Grandson of Sharon Frederick
<i>Brain Scott Engle</i>	January 19	Son of Louise Engle
<i>Justin Ortega</i>	January 20	Son of Susie Meggs
<i>Marissa Pederson</i>	January 30	Daughter of Debbie & John Pederson
<i>Sandra Elena Varela</i>	January 31	Daughter of Sandra Prez

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Mike Reardon</i>	December 6	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<i>Andrew Muno</i>	December 15	Son of Darlene Muno
<i>Scott Ewing</i>	December 16	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
<i>David Quade</i>	December 23	Son of Pat & Dave Quade
<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	January 2	Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech
<i>Roberto Gonzalez</i>	January 4	Son of Celia and Javier Gonzalez
<i>Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth</i>	January 16	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
<i>Joey Frase</i>	January 20	Son of Cathy Frase
<i>Miguel Gonzalez</i>	January 22	Son of Julia Llanos
<i>Hugh Andrew Mathis</i>	January 26	Son of Richard & Helen Mathis
<i>Adam Roach</i>	January 26	Son of Michael & Nancy Roach
<i>Renee Rochelle Powell</i>	January 30	Daughter of Terry & Jeanette Powell

Please let me know if I have omitted a child, misspelled a name or have published an incorrect date. I know how important it is to bereaved families to have their children remembered. vszech@comcast.net - 847-573-1055

"Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. Love still stands when all else has fallen."

—Author unknown



The Night The Christmas Tree Fell

by Alice Wisler



This evening the Christmas tree fell down. We think the dog may have been a culprit.

"Never before in all of my 43 years has this happened to me," I tell my three children, hopeful one of them will confess with,

"Sorry, Mom, it was my fault."

I mean, trees don't just fall across the living room floor. They don't suddenly have a will of their own and decide no more looking festive and then topple over.

My children are eager to help me lift the tree back up to its corner of the living room, wipe the spilled water that was in the tree pot, sweep up the broken ornaments and massive pine needles and even tear off the wet paper from presents they carefully wrapped yesterday. They wonder who could have done this.

For our peace of mind, and since no one is saying he or she did it, we think it is the beagle. Perhaps she got too close to sniff an ornament. Perhaps.
"Trees don't just fall down on their own, do they, Mom?"

I am so grateful that none of the Daniel ornaments broke. As I wipe up the puddle of water that is slowly being absorbed by the carpet, I wonder. I ask myself what is the meaning? All I can come up with, for some reason, strange to me, is of my own envy.

I used to be envious. At support groups, others told me of all done for them when their child died. It was like a contest of outdoing one another.

"My friends donated a statue at the Civic Center in memory of my son."

"Oh, yeah? Well, my friends donated the Civic Center. Competition?"

We had this done for us. And that. Parents want to feel their child was so loved and is missed by others. In their intense pain, they want to believe that enough was done in her memory.

But what it all boils down to years later is that when the tree falls, we are all hopeful that the ornaments in memory of our child and especially the ones that he made, stay intact, regardless of how much was con-

tributed to his scholarship fund or raised for cancer research or said over the death of our child by others.

My three kids hear me say loud and clear, "It is good that none of Daniel's ornaments in his memory or made by him were damaged." In a smaller voice they hear me add, "And it is good that none of the ornaments you all made were broken."

My eldest understands. "Who cares about what we made?"

She holds a point. She is alive. She can create another ornament.

Daniel cannot.

http://howtomakeafamily.com/coless/wisler/christmas_tree.htm

Borrowed from Atlanta Online Sharing - December 16, 2007
3:46:48 PM CST

First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas
without her being here.

Yet the world is singing 'round me,
joyful tidings and good cheer.

Though I try to put on armor and brave
the sights and sounds,

a few moments worth of shopping,
and the tears are spilling down.

I pray for strength to do it,
find a path through holidays,

look for shortcuts, good ideas,
some directions through the maze.

Then I find at last the answer:
I'll include her symbolically.

And the giving becomes perfect;
her love's flowing down through me.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry - From Stars in the Deepest Night—After the Death of a Child



Christmas Thoughts

Beyond the twinkling lights, the red and green candles, the poignant aroma of evergreen...Beyond the Christmas trees, the angels and stars and beloved carols...Beyond the presents, the shopping, the baking and cooking...Beyond all of these sights and sounds of Christmas...Beyond all of these...there is hope.

Hope...It is hope that sustains us through the days of grief and anger and frustration and loneliness. The hope is that someday the pain of the deaths of our children will be eased.

The hope is that someday our smiles will be real. The hope is that once again we will laugh and love and cry completely without fear and hollowness.

It is the hope that someday we can remember our children with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelmed with it.

So it is that for each of you I would wish hope, peace, compassion, love, sympathy, understanding, sharing, and listening.

In the sharing of our grief with one another and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and learn all of these gifts.

©TCF, Wabash Valley Chapter
Borrowed from Tyler, Texas TCF Newsletter - December 2005



Candles in the Night

A heart broken by the death of a child can never be healed. As parents we try every way that can be thought of to cope with the loss, but the void will always be there. At first that emptiness seems to take your breath away and most times we wish it would.

This becomes different with the passage of time. It never goes away, but at some point we learn to live with it, and in fact this horrible feeling becomes a life-line of sorts. One of our biggest fears is to forget our children. Forget how they looked or how their voices sounded. The smiles and tears that blur together to make a child. This emptiness in effect becomes a constant yearning to remember our children.

Our hearts force us to find ways to fill that void to maintain our role as parents. Some are as simple as visiting the cemetery and some are as complex as changing our entire lives, dedicated to the memory of our child. In between are the many rituals we create or borrow from others to honor the memories and to keep our child's name alive.

Lighting a candle and saying a child's name keeps their memory burning bright. It means we are struggling to cope with this unwanted role of bereaved parent in the only positive manner we can.

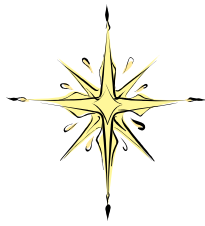
(River Reflections continued from page 2)

into focus so real and so present that I can hear his voice as if he has just spoken to me. I can imagine the scent of his hair, remember the texture of his face as I touch it, and I can see him walking and talking as if he were only there a moment ago.

At these times, the grief flares up; the wound feels fresh and sharp with memories of the love, the charm, and the grace. I realize both with gratitude and with anguish for the wound this reality carries, that he is not someone I can let go. These memories will come to me for the rest of my life. He is truly a part of me. He is mixed up in my blood and my bones and the electrical impulses of my brain. And in whatever way all of these things go together to form a soul, he is a part of that too. There is no escaping him. This is the gift and the price of love—it doesn't end.

My brother was there in the river's sand and mud, in the full moon, the constantly flowing cold water, the clear dry air, the red canyon walls, and the blue sky. And he was there in me. And I was there, alive and more appreciative than I would have been before he died. I was more aware of my connection to my surroundings—that one day my body will be river mud, water, and bones like driftwood. What form my love will take then, I don't know. Maybe if there is a river and desert light offering delight to someone's senses that will be enough. I don't know.

Emily Moore ~ TCF, Los Angeles, California
Borrowed from TCF Newsletter Tyler, Texas, December, 2005



Kylie Rayne Albeck
Rusty Anderson - Aaron Barrera
Liam Budill - Roman Gabriel Cano
Bryan Cantafio - Mike Cantafio - Carlos Cantu
Mitchell Carlson - Charles Clark - Anthony Clemente
Edward G Davis III -
Brian Scott Engel - Ryder Erickson
Scott Ewing - Elizabeth Mary Foresta
Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick
Eric Friedle - Amy Fry-Pitzen - Johnny Garcia - Daniel Garza
Marleea Gerfen - Miguel Gonzales - Roberto Gonzalez -
Jeremy M Govekar - Megan Candice Grace - Barry J Grazier
Maria Guadalupe - Jammi Shonlei Hui - Christopher Jackson - Brian Keough
Donette Klawonn - Kelly Klawonn - Michael Klopp - Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth
Adam Michael Laufer - Rogelio Lopez Jr - Brian Scott Ludlow
Rasheed Mariano - Bryan Casaca Martinez
Selene Martinez - Zach Maslanich - Hugh Mathis
Shannon McCarty - Pressley Suzanne McHugh
Mary Margaret "Maggie" Miles - Anna Smith Miller
Aaron R. Moore - Melinda Lynn Morell - Andrew Muno
Ryan James Nichols - J Daniel (Danny) O'Connor -
Jim O'Connor - Justin Cody Ortega - Nicole Parfill - Eric Pederson -
Marissa Pederson - Andrew C Perkins - Rob Petit - Kevin Pomianek -
Renee' Rochelle Powell - David Quade - Douglas Ramsay - Mike Reardon
Sven Christian Reinhard - Alexander Rettinger - Lisa Roseman - Lila Ruffolo
Rachel Salomonson - Noah-Dean Saunders - Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro
Ashley Seay - Roger Alan Segebarth - Carrie Seger - David Sloop - Steven Sostre -
David Spannraft - Michael Stice - Josh Summers - Rachel Elizabeth Szech - Zachary Taylor
Anne Thomson
Sandra Elena Varela
Raphael Vidal
Edgar O Villareal
Karli Brooke Weidenhagen
Mark Yates

Recently, a couple in our church lost a 19-year-old daughter to an accident where a drunk driver crossed the median and hit Sarah's car. Sarah died instantly. When I visited the couple in their home, I felt their heavy heartache. I knew what they were going through for the early days of Daniel's death-manifested themselves. I saw the potted plants and flowers from florists and remembered our house after Daniel died. Dozens of vases of flowers sent by family and friends crowded the dusty dining room table. Meals brought over by friends were wedged into the refrigerator. And my heart was breaking, more and more each moment. For what I really wanted to appear at my front door was not a potted plant or a casserole, but my son. How would I live now?

Alice J. Wisler ~ Daniel's House Publications

NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS - RENEWALS - CHANGE FORM - DONATIONS

The newsletter is sent without charge to any person interested in receiving it. Each year, in order to be sure we are sending it only to those who truly want to be on our mailing list, we ask that everyone who wants the newsletter to return the form on page 8 to Vicki Szech, 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Green Oaks, IL 60048 or call 847-573-1055 or send an email to vszech@comcast.net. There is a date at the bottom of your mailing label with the date you last subscribed.

(Candles in the Night continued from page 5)

We will most certainly shed tears every time and we will still miss our child, but we are doing something that allows the world to hear our child's name and for that one moment the candle means so much more than anyone else could ever understand.

For a fleeting second that is our universe and every memory we have comes flooding back to us as we see the flame through tears, distorting it into something magical. It's the only gift we can give our children. This is as close as we can get to our child now. A tiny, flickering flame that can warm the heart and it's nice to think that perhaps they can see it also. It's a beacon, our light in the window, our shining star in the dark-

ness. It's an opening of our hearts and a way to share our grief.

We gather to honor the memories of our children and to share this bond of lighting a candle for the children all over the world. We miss them so much.

Jim Lowery ~ TCF, Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter

Borrowed from TCF Newsletter Tyler, Texas, December, 2005



Walking with Grief

A Celtic Prayer

Do not hurry as you walk with grief
It does not help the journey
Walk slowly, pausing often
Do not hurry as you walk with grief
Be not disturbed by memories
that come unbidden
Swiftly forgive and let
Christ speak for you
Unspoken words, unfinished
conversations will be resolved in Christ
Be not disturbed
Be gentle with the one who walks with grief
If it is you, be gentle with yourself
Swiftly forgive, walk slowly,
Pause often,
Take time
Be gentle as you walk with grief

Amen

We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always welcome. Please include author of any written works. Send your items for the newsletter to Vicki Szech at vszech@comcast.net or 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Libertyville, IL 60048.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families. Its' mission is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others to be supportive

TCF National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 3696 - PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246

Regional Coordinator, Mary Seibert PH: 815-468-6443 nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

There are seven TCF Internet chat sessions weekly. To participate, visit the TCF home page and select the "Chat" button.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Toni Nesheim 847-223-7353 tonin@sbcglobal.net Rachel Salomonson Age 18 – Auto accident

TREASURER Forest Anderson 847-838-0567 forest.anderson@att.net Rusty Anderson Age 15 – Osteosarcoma

SECRETARY Jenny & Rick Selle 847-249-4776 jennyselle@yahoo.com Lila Ruffolo Age 24 – Auto Accident

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Thelma Perkins 262-279-6178 Andrew C Perkins Age 17 – Auto Accident

LIBRARIAN Kathleen Rettinger 847-922-7456 Alexander Rettinger Age 18 – Of suicide

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Vicki Szech 847-573-1055 vszech@comcast.net Rachel Szech Age 16 – Horseback-riding Accident

NEWSLETTER PRINTING & MAILING Mary Foresta 847-986-4133 Elizabeth Foresta Age 11 – Septic Shock, Heart/Lung failure

PUBLICITY Kari McHugh 262-862-6880 ksmchugh@hotmail.com Pressley McHugh Age 46 days Hypoplastic left heart syndrome

STEERING COMMITTEE Marilyn Grace 847-395-8597 grace.marilyn@gmail.com Megan Grace Age 15 – Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Mary Ann Grazier 847-336-0539 Barry Grazier Age 27 – Auto Accident

Maggie McGaughey 224-406-6644 maggieg00@hotmail.com Jeremy Govekar Age 22 – Hit by train

Charon Sloop 847-623-2264 charronsloop@AOL.com David Sloop Age 33 – Motor Cycles accident

LOVE GIFTS

Enclosed in a check in the amount of _____ to be used as follows (check all that apply):

In loving memory of _____

In honor of _____

Sponsor the newsletter for _____ (month) (\$25 pays ½ monthly cost)

Pay for a book for the chapter's Lending Library _____

Check here to keep receiving the newsletter _____

It is important for our children to be remembered. Please understand that in order for your child to be included in the "special days" list each month in the newsletter, you must fill out this form that gives us permission to list this information. If you are making a donation please make the check payable to **The Compassionate Friends**. Return to Vicki Szech, 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Green Oaks, IL 60048 or call 847-573-1055 or send an email to vszech@comcast.net.