

# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

December, 2008 Newsletter

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

## Chapter Leader

## Notes

## From

## Jenny & Rick



Here it is, the holiday season, upon us again. This year, Jenny and I will escape the Midwest and visit my daughter and ex-son-in-law and two grandsons in Florida. We are fortunate to be able to do this. It isn't the same as holiday seasons were in the past, and it sure isn't Norman Rockwell, but it's wonderful, and we're very grateful.

Last week we were visiting Jenny's sister and nieces. Again, we are fortunate. I think of Lila so much as I watch 12 year old Michelle "zoning out" on the floor in front of the TV, or not being able to sit still for more than 5 seconds, always moving part of her long, lanky, young body. We gave her Lila's old skateboard, and this felt "right" since some of Lila's best experiences were on the hills of that little Iowa town. And I watched Dana, feeling under the weather, covered with a blanket on the couch, thinking of things college freshmen think about when they are back home. Oh, the memories...

Back in September I heard a speaker at a conference we attended say "I hope I never have too many years, and not enough days." I thought about that for a long time. For me, that was really profound. It IS the little things.

I cherish the little events of today...the little moments where I can be alert and attentive enough to notice the gifts that I have, and to be aware of the gifts I can give to others. Love, memories, caring and sharing are the gifts I wish to all of you this season. We hope to see you at the candle lighting on Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the church, and if you are not able to attend, light a candle and say your child's name at 7 PM "...that their light may always shine."

## Christmas Eve

By Richard Dew

### Silent night, holy night...

"It's about time," he says quietly.  
Deliberately, wordlessly,  
They gather the materials  
Carefully put away last year,  
The matches, candle, candle jar  
To fend off the harsh winter wind.

### Tis the season to be jolly...

Slowly they drive toward the town's edge,  
Past homes with bright, blinking bulbs.  
Cars of faraway relatives  
Fill their drives. Happy, laughing  
Families, children home from school,  
Pass by on the way to midnight Mass.

### It's the most wonderful time of the year...

At last, town lights left far behind,  
They sit mute, each wrapped in private  
Cocoons of memories of Christmas past,  
Excited whispers from their room,  
Silly giggles, fervent good-night  
Kisses, anticipation of morning.

### On a cold winter's night that was so deep...

Through the gate, down the drive, engine killed.  
Frozen grass crunching underfoot  
Hand-in-hand they walk up the hill  
To the familiar moonlit stone.  
With practiced hands they brush it clean,  
Then prepare their votive Noel.

### The world in solemn stillness lay...

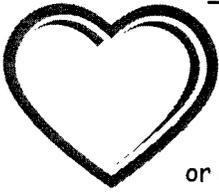
Lump in throat, arm-in-arm,  
Candle lit, they stand and weep,  
But not so bitter as in years past.  
The pain's as deep but not so long,  
As once again they dream of things  
That should have been but never were.

### The stars in the sky look down where he lay...

"Let's go," he says. She nods assent.  
They leave, though turn back once to see  
The lonely flame of their lost child  
Gleaming peacefully through the dark.  
He whispers softly, his visit done,  
"Merry Christmas and good-night, my child."

Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.





## 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.

### Loving Gifts for the December Newsletter

Thanks to William & Joyce Hui for sponsoring the December newsletter in memory of their daughter, Jammi Shonlie Hui.

Thanks to Kathy Stolarick for sponsoring the December newsletter in memory of her son, David Stolarick.

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

### Loving Gifts for 2009

#### For the Newsletter

Robert and Mary Ann Grazier  
In memory of their son  
Barry J Grazier

Leslie & Shirley Heise  
In memory of their daughter  
Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth

Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn  
In memory of their Children  
Kelly & Donette Klawonn

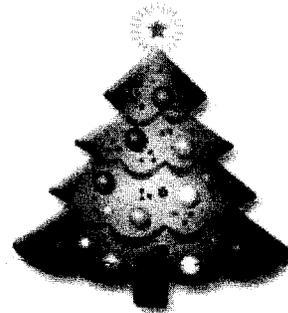
Judith Ruff  
In memory of her son  
Geoffrey Ruff

### For the needs of the Chapter

Terry & Jeanette Powell  
In memory of their daughter  
Renee' Powell

Reuben & Joanne Segebarth  
In memory of their son  
Roger Alan Segebarth

"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 to all who contribute.



### Have You Decorated Your Tree?

My tree is clothed in dark and light  
And I sit before it in the night.  
Remembering how, with loving care,  
A child once hung those trinkets there.

And though the tree seems fully dressed,  
Alone, I now must hang the rest.  
Then the tree with greater love will shine  
With memories of that son of mine.

I hang the sparkle from his eyes  
That shone each day with sweet surprise.  
I hang a gentle heart-shaped kiss,  
And a glowing ball of childlike bliss.

I hang a bow of loving charms,  
and a hug he once held in his arms.  
Now every light will hold a part  
Of all the memories of my heart.

For though my grief will never sleep,  
His heart would break, and he would weep.  
If we never again felt the Christmas joy  
That was so much a part of my angel boy.  
~Lynette Siler, Chris's Mom

## OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

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

#### **Mark Yates**

**December 20, 1979** - November 24, 1996  
Son of Linda Hegg

#### **Barry J Grazier**

**December 22, 1965** - August 13, 1993  
Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier

#### **Anna Smith Miller**

**January 3, 1977** - July 6, 2005  
Daughter of Carol Smith

#### **Michael Goszczycki**

**January 10, 2000** - September 23, 2005  
Son of Andrew Goszczycki

#### **Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick**

**January 13, 2000** - August 25, 2002  
Son of Jan Frederick & Michael Hamilton  
Grandson of Sharon Frederick

### *Remember*

*When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you: that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are.*

*It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that when we meet again, you will know me.*

*It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.*

*by Frederick Buechner,  
Whistling in the Dark*

### ANNIVERSARIES

#### **Mike Reardon**

**April 10, 1982 - December 6, 2001**  
Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon

#### **Matthew David Stolarick**

**October 13, 1977 - December 6, 2005**  
Son of Kathy Stolarick

#### **Jonathan Castro**

**March 13, 1971 - December 9, 2005**  
Son of Mario Castro

#### **Michael Furman**

**July 25, 1978 - December 13, 2006**  
Son of Mary-Jo & Gerald Dempsey

#### **Gina Ross**

**December 8, 2007**  
Daughter of June & Nick Ross

#### **Rachel Elizabeth Szech**

**May 9, 1975 - January 2, 1992**  
Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech

#### **Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth**

**April 2, 1977 - January 16, 1999**  
Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise

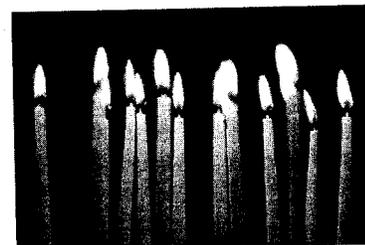
#### **Adam Roach**

**January 26, 2006**  
Son of Michael & Nancy Roach

#### **Renee' Rochelle Powell**

**July 7, 1971 - January 30, 1981**  
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](mailto:vszech@comcast.net) - 847-573-1055



## DEALING WITH HOLIDAY HEARTACHE IN A SEASON OF JOY

~ Alice J. Wisler



Christmas decorations in September and holiday music in October were not what my friend Alexandra needed. Alexandra's 6-year-old died four months ago, and her heart is still raw. She's been wondering how she'll cope without her daughter over the holidays -- just last year a time of joy and celebration.

Years ago, I anticipated the holidays would be tough. I'd wake on those cold mornings after Daniel died in February 1997 and be grateful it was still months until his August birthday and even more months until Christmas. I dreaded living both days without my son. As those who had lost loved ones let me know, you have to live through it.

Christmas came. I did live through it. It continues to happen, as do the other significant days of the year. Here are 11 tips I've used and continue to use to survive the holidays. Some are my own suggestions and some are borrowed from the many who walk the path of grief.

1. Know you will survive. It will not be easy, but others have done it and you will, too.
2. Find someone you can talk to or meet with during the holiday season. Perhaps this person can give you helpful ideas that have worked for her.
3. Don't think you have to do the "traditional" activities of years past. Your energy level is low. If no one in your household minds, skip putting up the tree or spending hours making holiday cookies.
4. Spend the holidays with those who will let you talk about your loved one. You will need to recall memories, if you choose to do so. Your stories about your loved one are wonderful legacies. Tell them boldly again and again.
5. If going into the mall or stores brings too much pain, shop for gifts online or through mail-order catalogs. Thinking everyone is happily shopping

at the malls while your heart is crushed is terribly tough.

6. Getting away from the house worked for my family. The first Christmas without Daniel we went to a nearby town and lived in the Embassy Suites. The kids enjoyed the indoor pool and breakfast buffets.
7. Create something to give to those who have helped you throughout the year. I made some very simple tree ornaments with "In Memory of Daniel" stamped on them and gave them to friends that first Christmas.
8. Decorate the grave. Sometimes being busy with decorating the grave gives a feeling of doing something for a child we can no longer hold.
9. Do something in memory of your loved one. Donate to a charity. Volunteer. My oldest daughter Rachel and I volunteered at the Hospice Tree of Remembrance and shared memories of Daniel as we spent this time together.
10. If your bereavement support group has a special candle-lighting service, attend it. Doing something in memory of your loved one with others who understand the pain can be therapeutic.
11. Spend time reflecting on what the season is about. Everyone around you may be frantic with attending parties, services, shopping and visiting relatives. Give yourself permission to excuse yourself from them. Light a candle in your favorite scent. Record some thoughts in a journal. One day you will wake up and it will be January 2. The holidays will have ended. You will have made it.

If you are like me, you will find that surviving the tinsel has made you stronger, and although you may cry, somewhere within you, you will feel that core of new steel.

(Alice J. Wisler is the author of the new novel, "Rain Song." Visit her Web site for more articles: <http://www.alicewisler.com>)

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Alice J. Wisler  
[wisler@mindspring.com](mailto:wisler@mindspring.com)

Rain Song, the new novel, with a past  
How Sweet It Is, arriving May 2009

You are invited: <http://www.alicewisler.com>

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""SEASONED GRIEF""

"Seasoned Grief," bereaved parents soon learn  
will silently arrive, we each take our turn

Newly bereaved parents are completely at a loss  
Unknown their path, what roads must they cross

We hold our child closely even though he/she is now gone  
"Seasoned" we are on this journey, for which we do belong

"Flavored Seasonings," we often sprinkle and we pour  
as we share our loving memories with so much more

We "Season" our home with sacred photos of the past  
as though we may forget the memories that must last.

As we walk our own journey, we often fall to our knees  
begging over and over, "My God, My God, Please!"

Each hill we will climb, yet, only to slip and slide  
We are truly masters at masking hidden pain inside.

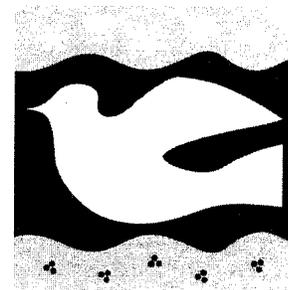
Unbelievably, the first anniversary will soon come around  
when we least expect it, one year, with not even a sound.

Our "Seasoned" thoughts do wonder what the next year may bring  
There is no map for grief and the unknown, this future to be seen

We walk through the valley of time in each and every "Season"  
marking the long distance, now accepting for "WHAT" the reason.

Grieving has greatly "Seasoned" the body, soul and mind  
Forever "Seasoned" the reason, we know we can't decline

Almost five years since our child left this place  
"Seasoned Grief," we surely must accept with Grace



"SEASONED GRIEF"

As I near the fifth anniversary of my daughter's death, I have given much thought to how I grieve, "NOW," compared to the very beginning and each year that followed. When I found my daughter drowned in her bath tub Tuesday, the evening of April 13, 2004, I naturally went into shock. (Continued on page 6)

(Seasoned Grief continued from page 5)

To this day, I don't know how I held myself together and actually did everything that should have been done. I know for sure, at the very moment I realized what had happened to her, I did go temporarily insane.

As bereaved parents, we know our grief is unique only to each of us. I also believe, in our own time, we eventually become somewhat "SEASONED." I have used a unique package of "SEASONED FLAVORING" to ease my pain: by praying to the Lord for strength, maintaining my daughter's Memorial Website, a scholarship, attending The Compassionate Friends' Walk to Remember this past July in Nashville, Tennessee, wearing embroidered Memorial clothing often and driving my car stenciled with A Loving Memorial, in my daughter's memory, on each back window.

I have also used this special "SEASONED FLAVORING" by attending our local bereavement group, within only a month of my daughter's death, also utilizing individual and psychiatric counseling, including medication, all with the hope of soothing excruciating pain and finding some kind of solitude, an inner peace as I attempt to move on in an unfamiliar life. Yet I don't believe I will ever truly know an inner peace as long as I live on this earth because my family will never be as it once was, a complete family again.

"SEASONED GRIEF," lately I have thought often about those two words. I will be 60 years old in a few months and I think of myself as also "SEASONED" in age, pondering where all the years, along with the agonizing past 4 1/2 years, have gone. I seem to live in the past more, remembering the good times, especially when my husband and I were raising our two children. If only to go back in time, to be that young again, have those Blessed Gifts, both my daughter and son in my life. I know I would hug them more often and small problems, such as a messy bedroom, would not be worth mentioning. Of course, if I could go back, I would have the one Precious Gift I no longer have in my life, my beautiful daughter.

When I ponder on these two words, "SEASONED GRIEF," I think how far I have traveled since the tragedy of April 13, 2004, the tragedy that took my daughter's life. I even notice how others are also very affected by my "SEASONED GRIEF," many I may see at work, while shopping, at the doctor's office. I sometimes feel as though others may think my pain is over and I have moved on, living life fully without my daughter. Life does go on, right? Only bereaved parents know that we never

get over our child's death. We never again live life as we once did before we were given absolutely no choice in becoming bereaved parents.

I am also "SEASONED" mentally and physically which, I realize, is part of being a "SEASONED BEREAVED PARENT." I have asked myself the question as to when I actually knew I was "SEASONED" in my grief, but I can't remember. I have sprinkled and poured "FLAVORED SEASONING" in every direction during my horrific pain attempting to ease my anxiety, my fears, knowing I am the only person who can give myself what I need to go on with my life. I struggled to help myself, exploring every option available in support of bereaved parents and will probably continue doing so. I believe that recovery from our child's death is an ongoing battle, a battle we must face, as we travel every "SEASON" of time, of life, of our own unique grieving for many long years to come. We are always "RECOVERING BEREAVED PARENTS."

At least, after almost five years now, others do not avoid me as though I have a disease because they actually believe I am perfectly fine, won't break down crying and won't mention my daughter's name. I am treated more normally than a few years ago. Maybe that is good in a way because unless we are bereaved parents, there is absolutely no way to understand the magnitude of this kind of grief and until we actually BECAME bereaved parents, we too were the others I mention now, the others who stammered for the right words, avoided uncomfortable situations with those who had lost a child, those "THEN RECOVERY BEREAVED PARENTS."

I still cry, still hurt, still wonder why, still feel confused, still become angry, still feel cheated, still want the impossible, still blame God at times, but I also have Faith and ask for the Lord's help. I will always carry my daughter in my heart, am "SEASONED" in dealing with the loss of my daughter which brings me to my own conclusion, I am most assuredly ""SEASONED IN MY GRIEF.""

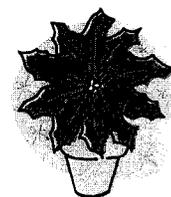
written by Dianna (November 08)

[mykanda@yahoo.com](mailto:mykanda@yahoo.com)

In Memory of My Daughter

Kanda Michelle Jacobs

5/24/73 - 4/13/04



<http://www.kandamjacobs.com/seasonedgrief08.htm>

(webpage for "SEASONED GRIEF")

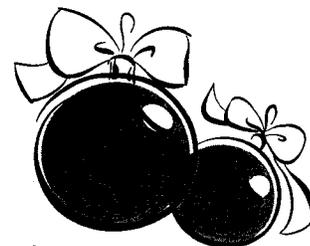
<http://www.kandamjacobs.com/capril132004.htm>

(Kanda's life and death)

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## Handling the Holidays

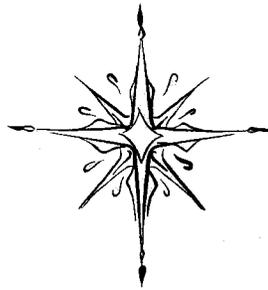
The holidays are among the most difficult times for bereaved families grieving the death of a child. Below are some helpful suggestions that may aid you in surviving the holidays.



- 1) Call a family meeting and discuss your plans for the holiday season, understanding that it would be unusual for you not to feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically drained. Don't set your expectations too high or you may find yourself disappointed.
- 2) Well intending friends and family may want to include you in their plans, believing it best for you to "get away" from grieving your loss. They do not understand that you cannot escape the grief that you feel. There is no obligation to say "yes." Only participate if you truly want to.
- 3) Try to take care of your health. It's important that you eat and drink properly, exercise, and get plenty of rest.
- 4) Take time to do the things you as a person want to do. You may want time alone to reflect or to write your thoughts.
- 5) Consider eliminating such things as the festive decorations, cooking, and baking that you may normally enjoy. People will understand if you're not in a merry or joyous mood or simply don't have the energy. You may try placing an electric candle in your window in memory of your child. Don't feel obligated to send out holiday cards.
- 6) If it is necessary for you to buy gifts, consider ordering them over the Internet or by phone. Most who are bereaved find it draining to go out and fight through crowded stores bustling with holiday cheer.
- 7) Many families that are in mourning may use the money they would have spent on gifts for their child to buy gifts for a child who would not be able to celebrate the holidays otherwise.
- 8) It is not unusual for you to want to include your child during the season. You may want to do something like: Ask friends and relatives who knew your child to send you a story about your child that you may not have known; Ask friends and relatives to create an ornament or remembrance of some type that reminds them of your child so that you can place it around the house or on a holiday tree. If it was your tradition, include placing a stocking with those of other children in your house, even if you do not fill it like the others—this is a symbolic gesture in memory of your child.
- 9) If you have other children who normally celebrate the holidays, you may consider continuing to do so to create some sense of normalcy in the house and so they will not feel forgotten.
- 10) Consider attending a Compassionate Friends meeting or a memorial event such as The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting. Most families find some comfort by being with others who have experienced a similar loss.
- 11) Remember that the anticipation of a holiday is often worse than the holiday itself.
- 12) Be kind to yourself.
- 13) It is okay to cry.

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. is a national self-help bereavement organization that supports families emotionally during the difficult grieving process following the death of a child. Call 877-969-0010 for more information or visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). ©2008 The Compassionate Friends/USA

Borrowed from the Greater Kankakee IL Area TCF Newsletter © 2008



Brian  
Abrahamson  
Rusty Anderson  
Jarrett Howard Covington  
Elizabeth Mary Foresta  
Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick  
Michael Furman – Michael Goszczycki – Jeremy M Govekar  
Megan Candice Grace  
Barry J Grazier – Jill Grider – Jonathon E Grymkoski  
Jammi Shonlei Hui – Donette Klawonn  
Kelly Klawonn – Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth  
Heather LaMarche  
Robert Joseph Landers – Brian Scott Ludlow  
Presslley McHugh – Anna Smith Miller  
Scott Harris Miller – Mary Margaret “Maggie” Miles  
Andrew Muno  
J Daniel ( Danny) O'Connor – Jim O'Connor  
Andrew C Perkins – Rob Petit  
Renee´ Rochelle Powell – Douglas Ramsay  
Mike Reardon – Sven Christian Reinhard  
Adam Roach – Gina Ross – Geoffrey Ruff – Lila Ruffolo  
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David Spannraft – Jane Sprouse – Michael Stice –  
Renaldo Curtis St. James – Matthew David Stolarick -- Rachel Elizabeth Szech  
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Kyle David Zbyinski