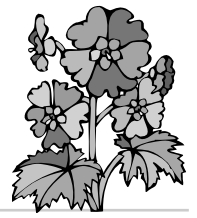


The Primrose



Vol. 30, Issue 3

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Fall 2010



TAKE THE TIME . . . TO HURT, TO CRY

**Wordless and worldless—Endless and forever, grief goes on—
It takes the best—And leaves the rest an empty shell—Life is Hell.**

David was dead four months when I wrote that in my journal. Time is my enemy. As I envisioned the future of my life, I saw only a vast expanse of desert — dry, parched, and empty. It is now a year and a half since David's death, and I recognize that time has become my friend. Now, when I look to the future, I see hills and valleys — struggles, to be sure — but also moments spent at the summit. What has happened? Time is healing.

Take the time . . .

To hurt . . . the pain is great and the temptation to run away is great. But there is no avoiding , no escaping the hard feelings. If you cover them over, they only resurface later in a potentially more destructive way.

To cry . . . it may feel like once you started, you can never stop. But you have every reason to cry, and when you have cried enough, you will stop.

To “fall apart” . . . if you have a broken leg, you would not expect yourself to function at full capacity right away. Your wound is much greater—you have a broken heart. Confusion, inability to concentrate, lethargy, imagined glimpses of your dead child are a normal part of the grieving process and do not mean that you are going crazy.

To be “selfish” . . . mourning is an egocentric time, a time for turning inward and introspection.

To “identify” . . . and seek our resources in your environment that can help: friends, clergy, Compassionate Friends, a counselor. Talk to them.

Having done all that—having lingered in the valley of the shadow—it is time to begin the climb out.

Take the time . . .

To engage again . . . in activities that were once pleasurable. They may hold no joy the first few times; someday they will and that will be all right.

To laugh without guilt . . . savor the good moments in the day, brief though they may be. Through your child, you can rediscover the beauty of a sunset.

To care for your health . . . grieving is a physic-, as well as psycho-logical stress. Your body needs protection.

To be patient . . . wanting to live again and learning to live again takes time. The path out of the other side of the Valley is steep, and we all often stumble. But with —time spent doing the work of grief—you can find the path to a world made richer by your love.

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

National Office Information

Phone Number (toll free) (877) 969-0010

Fax Number (630) 990 -0246

Mailing address: P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

E-mail: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Web address: www.compassionatefriends.org

Regional Coordinator

Al Visconti (518) 756-9569

PARENTS RESOURCE CORNER

Please feel free to call the following people if you wish to speak to someone whose child's death was caused in a manner similar to your child's.

Accidental – Pam Kroft	Ph: 239-4222
Illness - Shirley Mehal	785-5710
Adult child - Claudia Simonis	648-6715
Suicide - Cindy Hutchinson	757-9465

The Compassionate Friends of Broome County

1250 Front Street, # 147 Binghamton, NY 13901

Web Address:

<http://tcfbc.homestead.com/Home.html>

**For information pertaining to the
The Compassionate Friends of Broome County, call:
Pam Kroft (607) 239-4222**

Monthly Meetings

First Monday of each month 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Third or fourth Saturday 10 AM – 12 PM

Nimmonsburg United Methodist Church

918 Upper Front Street Binghamton, NY 13901

(across from BCC)

Steering Committee

Chapter Leader & Delegate - Pam Kroft

Outreach - Luann Ford

Library - Sherry Bailey

Hospitality – Jean Scolaro

Treasurer – Val Ambrose

Newsletter Editor – Val Ambrose

Website Master - Marv Conover

Community Awareness Coordinator - Claudia Simonis

Secretary - Angela Carro

Programs/Events - OPEN

***** Please consider joining our steering
committee as additional help is always
welcome.**

**Next steering committee meeting
Thursday October 21st
Call Pam Kroft for information**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Meetings:

First Monday 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Unless otherwise indicated

Third or fourth Saturday 10:00 A.M.

(Check calendar!)

NIMMONSBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

918 Front Street, Binghamton

(Across from BCC, next to the Credit Union.

Parking in the rear, enter through rear door.)

September 13th, 2010 (Monday)

7:00 “ Grandparents Sorrow”

September 18th, 2010 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

October 4th, 2010 (Monday)

7:00 “ Cherish the Name of our Child ”

October 16th, 2010 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

October 21st, 2010 (Thursday)

6:00 Steering Committee Meeting

November 1st, 2010 (Monday)

7:00 “ Holiday Help”

November 20th, 2010 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

December 6th, 2010 (Monday)

7:00 “ Just Tell Me the Rules ”

The Primrose is published quarterly
Deadline for newsletter materials:
February 1st: May 1st: August 1st: November 1st

Send Information to: Val Ambrose 730 River Rd.
Binghamton, NY 13901
Or email JTL7899@yahoo.com

**NOTICE: If you receive this newsletter, forwarded
through the funeral home, please call Val Ambrose at
(607 648-8598) with your correct address so new issues
can be mailed directly to you.**

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAPTER LEADER:

Hello Everyone,

Several weeks ago I attended our annual family reunion held at Glimmerglass State Park, near Cooperstown, on the shores of Otsego Lake. What a beautiful day, the sun was warm with a constant breeze, giving way to a really enjoyable time. Catching up with cousins we only see once a year and having the annual softball game is so much fun. That side of our family is relatively small. My grandma had one brother and we are all offspring from the two of them, plus spouses {of course}. I am not the only bereaved parent in our small family unit, looking at my cousin and remembering the day of his dad's funeral, I was reminded of the grieving of my great aunt and uncle, both now passed, on the death of their son. At the time I put all my sympathies to my aunt and my cousin. How sad for them to lose a husband and a father....A few years later after the death of my Sean that same great aunt and uncle lost a second son and at that time all my sympathies went to them and then forwarded to his wife, children and grandchildren. How different I am today in my thoughts when a child dies regardless the age, my thoughts first fall to the parents. Probably many of us were like that we just didn't know.. We are so fortunate to have our local TCF, a place to come and meet newly bereaved parents, parents just like us that are struggling after the death of their child. I wish way back then I had been a bit more compassionate to the needs of my great aunt and uncle. We lost one of the founding members of our local TCF, Anne Sloma, mother of Steven John. Because of Anne and others like her we are here today, our prayers to the Sloma family. In the past several months we have had many new families join our group bringing with them the sadness and grief following the death of their child. Welcome to all, our place is a safe haven, a place to laugh and a place to cry and a place filled with HOPE.

In July the balloons went high into the sky with messages for our children, a few stuck in the trees [a change in the wind direction], with families and friends coming together for a night of food, a delicious cake with TCF logo, and friendship. Our Balloons to Heaven yearly picnic is a time for us, a family reunion of sorts, a time to catch up with old friends and to make new ones. To all the parents that called me to send messages to their children, your balloons traveled higher than I could see. For others that did not attend there are always extra balloons sent in memory of all our children, no one shall ever be left out. The Angel of Hope was visited by many and even a fire truck attended our event, in memory of precious Hayden. Hayden and Gavin's families all gathered round the angel for photos with the truck. Thanks to all that participated in the preparation of the event, you are the cog behind the wheel, without all of you our 30th year of community presence would not be.

A short update on our Angel of Hope we are once again taking names and phone numbers for anyone interested in a paver brick at the base of the angel. There are no promises as to when the final paver installation will happen it could be one to two years out. The angel looks great, the bricks have been cleaned and sealed, take a trip up Chenango Street to John and Jeanne Wilfey park and visit, the angel has been placed in memory of all children gone to soon.. What a tribute to our children...

December will be here before we know it and our annual candle lighting at the church will be held. It takes many people to make our event so beautiful, if you would like to lend a hand the night of, or help to plan the event let me know. There will be a variety of tasks....

As the summer has ended and life settles in for the autumn months let us all be reminded of our children and the joy they gave us if only for a brief moment. We shall never forget our children or the dreams we had for their future, but most of all let us never forget the love we shared. In the weeks and months to come I hope you will find that little glimmer of Hope, sometimes it comes in the smallest packages.

Hugs to all,
Pam
(Sean's Mom)



THANKSGIVING

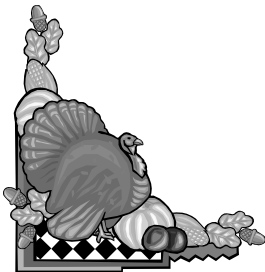
Edie Kaplan TCF Fort Lauderdale, FL

You may ask, "What do I have to be thankful for now that my child is dead?" After the death of a child, where is the joy in a day off from work? What pleasure can we derive from sitting around a table when someone is missing, and an uttered prayer of thanksgiving echoes hollow in our hearts?

Maybe we have been concentrating on the loss which has brought the overwhelming sorrow of death, and have forgotten the complete joy of life. When I remember laughing brown eyes, a mischievous grin, and a scraped knee that Mommy could fix, a new word learned, even the memory of the realization that I had a baby boy, I have a great deal to be thankful for. I had one and a half years of a dream come true, and I'm truly thankful I had my child. Sure, the agony of grief, the anguish of losing my precious child to death, the torture of wanting to see that child grow and mature, and the pain of never knowing, rips me up.

There is no Thanksgiving in entertaining these thoughts, so this month I am going to concentrate on the Living of my child. The Life that brought me so much joy. In this I am thankful that Evan was born, thankful that he lived, thankful that even for those short thirty months, I lived them too. Even so, as he lived once, I live now and want a productive life.

I am thankful I have come that far in my grief work to know I want to live and remember the good times without sorrow. And, I am thankful for my husband, who stood by me during the rough times. The husband who is the father of the child of our love. In him I have found my child, in our marriage I have found love, and that love taught us how to love that child.



I am also thankful for you,
my real friends—Compassionate Friends.



"HOPE FOR THE DAY"

from SilentGrief.com

Grief carries its own set of burdens, and among all of them, we don't need to deal with the burden of when it is okay to shed tears. It's okay to cry - anywhere, at any time, and any amount. Allow the tears to flow, and think of them as "healing rain from heaven", for our tears bring cleansing and comfort. We were designed to cry when we are in pain!!!

Little by little, as we work through some of the most difficult days of pain, our tears will begin to lessen, and the tears that have fallen will now be the life support for the new joy that will begin to sprout from the innermost being of our hearts.

If you are struggling with grief and pain today, remember that your sadness will not last forever. Deep within your being is a seed of HOPE that is being watered daily by your tears!

– Clara Hinton

CORNER

Peanuts, the cartoon character, is walking blissfully along when, all of a sudden he takes a somersault. In the next box of the strip he says, "...and suddenly, you're reminded of a lost love." It is like that for many of us. I was having my hair cut at the beauty shop one morning when I heard a little boy behind me telling a tall tale about fighting Indians. Suddenly, I was jolted with the memory of how my six year-old son, Arthur, used to tell about the Indians he killed in the back yard.

Twenty six years have passed since Arthur was killed, but that memory was like a knife through my heart. Every time I hear the song "Betty Davis Eyes" the same thing happens. My granddaughter, Emily, has been dead for 15 years but, when I hear it, in my mind's eye I can see her dancing to that song. It hurts. I call these experienced "potholes of grief." We can be years beyond our painful grief when, suddenly, something will remind us of him or her. A song on the radio, a place we hadn't been in years or something someone says will bring our loved one back so vividly to us. Occasionally,, there are pleasant memories that bring us a feeling of warmth, but many times they hurt.

Fortunately the pain doesn't last long, although, for a time, it can seem like we're back to square one in our grief. The best way I've found to deal with potholes of grief is just to let them happen and try not to fight them. They are a sign that your loved one is still in your heart and, no matter how much time passes, you will always miss him or her. Potholes are bumpy but shallow places in a normally smooth road. So it is with potholes of grief. They are bumpy painful places in our lives that come after we're resolved our grief.

By Margaret Gerner
St. Louis, MO BP/USA Chapter

SILENT FLIGHT

By Chris Roe, Norfolk, UK

"In Search of Silence"

In the silence
The clarity of your voice,
Climbs high
Upon the eagle's wings
The chains of doubt
That imprison my soul,
Fall beneath my feet.
In the freedom and majesty
Of the sentinels gaze,
Faith is strengthened
And hope returned
To a weary heart,
Upon the silent flight
Of eagle's wings.

From A Sibling

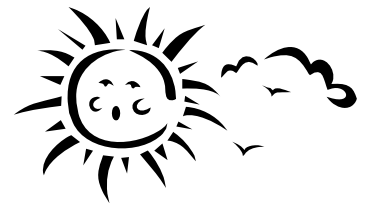
Conny Luciano Bryceland

A sister gone, a brother too,
Just three years apart
My family grieves for Julie, nearing a fragile peace,
It vanishes with this second blow to the heart.

Where is Julie, where is Dan?
How can we bear this dual loss-
We suffered, despaired and tried to pray,
To have them back at any cost.

And then calming dream one night
Sister and brother floating above
Hand in hand, amid the clouds
A trace of sun, a brief breathtaking circle of light.

Now I summon up this vision
As I fall a sleep
My muscles relax, my fists unclench,
At last, a welcome image, mine to keep.



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

In each issue, we reach out with our arms and hearts to the parents who will be facing difficult days during the next three months. Please remember them on the anniversary of the death of their child. The children's names listed are those of parents who have made a love gift and are subscribing to the Primrose.

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OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED *continued*



Death of a Child

The pain I feel now I would not have felt
If you had never been.
The ache in my heart is a heavy load,
Carried but never seen.
In quiet moments or busy times,
Alone, or in a crowd,
The hurt creeps in and fills my soul
Till I feel I must cry aloud.
If I could turn the time clocks back
To the day when you were born,
Still gladly I'd bear the pains again,
And, oh! how I'd treasure that morn;
For then I'd know how short the days
Of your stay with us would be...
I'd show you love in a thousand ways
And keep you ever close to me.
Yet I know you were part of His plan...
You will never really be lost,
For the love you were given and the love you gave
Far outweigh the pain you cost.

Julie Wilkie TCF, Brisbane, Australia

JUST ONCE MORE

From the moment I awake
until the moment I close my eyes
from a weary day,
Thomas is there.
I wish to hold him, just once more,
to hear his voice, just once more,
to smell his smell, just once more,
to tell him I love him, just once more,
And to say good-bye...just once,
because I never got to.
Then I tell myself...
who are you kidding,
once more would never be enough.

Joyce E. Hostetler Helena, MO

When you are sorrowful look again in your
heart, and you shall see that in truth you
are weeping for that which has been your
delight.

~Kahlil Gibran

Comparisons

It is useless to wonder
what grief is larger
or what grief is smaller.
The death of children
fills to ultimate endurance
every human dimension for pain.

There is no need
to give rank to death.
We only have to recognize
that grief has filled
a whole life
to its ultimate boundaries.

Grief is the ceremony
of lost treasure.
Grief is the homage
you pay to the love
you were once blessed to share.
Grief is not an enemy.

By Sascha Wagner

The Fall of Fall

What is it about the season that takes me back in time?
Everything I do, I find you are on my mind.
Haunting dreams find me at night when I try to sleep
And every little detail is replayed
And the sadness falls so deep.
Something about the close of summer
Seems to bring it back
Making it so hard to move onward and stay on track.
Something about the dying and fading of the trees
Brings my heart to sorrow with the falling of the leaves.
How I long to stop it, to keep the fall away
But times marches on and summer just won't stay.
I know with the fall, winter's not far behind,
Another lonely season and the memories flood my mind.
I cry my tears of sorrow, and pray for spring to come
A rebirth of the earth and the warmth of the sun
It makes the memories soften and gentler to recall
But now my life is saddened
with the nearing of the fall.

Sheila Siffimons TCF Dallas, GA



Nostalgia

~ Author Unknown

The school bell rings, young voices sing
And small ones shout with glee
The autumn air beacons school to start,
Left alone is me.

What makes me feel so down and blue
And bogged down with thoughts of you?
I see the school bus passing by,
And find myself with a tear in my eye.
Is it the clothes we can't buy?
While others grab the jeans to try?

Or is it autumn in the air
That pulls at heartstrings already bare?
Maybe it's falling leaves and dying grass.
Bringing reflections like a looking glass.
Whatever the reason that stirs my heart
Every year when school must start,
Reminds me how much I miss you.

I want to be normal again.

What's normal?

Normal is not outliving my child.
Normal is dancing at my daughter's wedding,
not crying at her grave.
Normal is being able to smile and say "I'm fine"
and mean it.
Normal is not having a hole in my heart (that will
never heal) from sadness and grief.
Normal is going a whole day with pleasant
memories and not memories of sickness, dying
and death.

~Shan Kihlman, Kentucky

*Daughter Brenna
died 3-7-02 at age 26
after a 10 year battle with cancer*

Letting Go of Guilt

Quite often, the first feelings that overtake a mother or father following the death of a child are feelings of extreme guilt. Thoughts of “if only” seem to relentlessly keep returning. “If only” I had taken her to the doctor sooner. “If only” I had not given him the car keys when I knew the roads were icy. “If only” I had not turned my back to answer the phone. “If only” I had not left him playing alone in the bathtub. Guilt is such a heavy burden of grief to carry around!

How does a parent move beyond the guilt of losing a child? How can a parent shed the painful feelings of inadequacy? How does a parent ever find a way to let go of the guilt?

The most difficult step in releasing the tight clutch that guilt holds on a parents’ heart is dealing with the reality of the loss. “My child died” are often the most difficult three words that will ever come from the mouth of a parent. Those words are hard words, yet they are words that are necessary to say and to understand before being able to rid oneself of guilt.

When we live in an “if only” emotional environment, we have not yet come to the full realization that child loss has actually occurred. We are still working through the mental “if only” reasoning which continues to wreak havoc on a parent’s heart. When a parent lives in an “if only” state, the reality of the child’s death can never be completely accepted. As painful as it is, a parent must—at some point—make the hard choice to accept the reality that the child has died.

Because a parent’s primary role is to nurture and care for the child, a parent often has a feeling of deserving punishment when a child dies. That is simply another way of expressing the heaviness of guilt. A parent often wrestles with the thought that “because my child died, I do not deserve to ever smile again.” Guilt continues to prevent many parents from moving forward in this difficult journey we call grief.

It takes a lot of concentrated effort, hard work, and support from others to be able to forgive oneself and finally let go of the gnawing feeling of guilt following the death of a child. Until a parent makes the decision to leave the heavy weight of guilt behind, joy can never return to a heart that has been so deeply wounded by the loss of a child.

Letting go of guilt is a decision that must be made. There is no timetable for making that decision, and others cannot force that decision on any parent. Eventually, a parent will come to the realization that the child’s death is real, and there is a hard choice to be made—to continue to live in the guilt of the loss, or to let go of that heaviness of guilt and begin to experience a bit of peace and joy once again.

Letting go of guilt requires a real effort to put an end to the “if only” questions. Letting go of guilt means that a parent no longer blames himself for the death of the child. Letting go of guilt means forgiving oneself and accepting oneself. Letting go of guilt means being gentle with oneself and allowing time for healing to take place.

Letting go of guilt is one of the most difficult parts of grief work. It takes a lot of energy, understanding, and patience. But, when guilt is finally set free, a parent’s heart can begin to walk the journey of healing through child loss.

Love Gifts

Our chapter is a self-help group with no required dues. We rely solely on contributions. Your donations help us pay for the cost of this newsletter, the postage, all the books in our library, meeting and event supplies which are a great help to bereaved parents.

Your contributions are tax deductible and very sincerely appreciated. The following donations were received since the last Primrose deadline:

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Love Gifts Continued ...



If you make donations to the **United Way** you can specify that the monies go to our local TCF chapter. All you have to do is complete a Donor Choice Card and indicate that you want your donations to go to **The Compassionate Friends of Broome County** 1250 Front Street, # 147 Binghamton, NY 13901.

This is great way to help defray the cost associated with publishing our monthly newsletter, special programs, books, events and other resources needed to help our chapter help other bereaved parents and grandparents.

If you do contribute this way, please let me know so I can acknowledge the gift in the Love gifts. The United Way does not send me the contributors names.

*** NOTICE ***

The Primrose Newsletter, published quarterly, is available for a year with a suggested subscription of \$8.00 - \$10.00. You may pay as little or as much as you like towards our newsletter printing and mailing fund. Your expiration date is shown in the lower right hand corner of your mailing label. Please let me know by this date if you wish to continue receiving the Primrose. This is my way of knowing if you want the newsletter.

Send your Tax deductible donations to: **Mrs. Valerie Ambrose 730 River Rd. Binghamton, NY 13901**
Make checks payable to: *Bereaved Parents.*



Name _____

Please check if new Address

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Child's Name _____ DoD ____________

Newsletter \$ _____ Library \$ _____ Other (specify) \$ _____ Generic \$ _____

Please specify if there is a specific fund you want the money used for (newsletter, books, supplies, ect...)
ALL donations will be mentioned in the Love gift section of the newsletter.

HALLOWEEN

By Sascha—"Wintersun"

It is here, this day of merriment
and children's pleasure.
gremlins and goblins
and ghosties at the door
of your house.

And the other children
come to the door of your mind.
Faces out of the past,
small ghosts with sweet, painted
faces.

They do not shout.
Those children
who no longer march laughing
on cold Halloween night,
they stand at the door
of your mind—
and you will let them in,
so that you can give them
the small gifts of your Halloween --
a smile and a tear.

AT THANKSGIVING

Though you're filled with sorrow and pain
over the loss of your child,
you can be thankful for—

–The memories you hold close
–The time you shared with your child, no
matter how short it was
–The things your child taught you
–The friends that are there when you need
them

And you can be thankful also for—

–The strength you have that makes you a
survivor
–The smiles of other children. They are
not our children, but they still smile.

TCF Portland OR

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Bereaved Parents Group

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