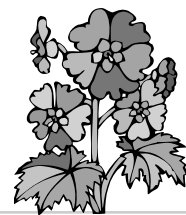


The Primrose



Vol. 31, Issue 3

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Fall 2011



Butterflies Make Me Happy

Sometimes in our grief we truly believe we are going crazy. We hurt so bad we don't think we can manage to go on living without our precious child here with us. Part of the grieving process is learning how to do just that. Some parents need the reassurance that their child is okay. I think the human mind can only take so much pain and jumps at the chance to see signs from their children, reassuring them that they are okay.

The way I look at it, if you get comfort from a dream or a sign...enjoy it. You've suffered enough, and believing in signs, butterflies, dreams or what ever else gives you comfort and hurts no one else, is your right as a bereaved person. Are these signs real, or just in my imagination? Can I prove they are messages from my son? Does it even need to be proven? No, I can't scientifically prove it. But I know that dreams, butterflies, signs and enjoyment in nature makes me feel closer to Eric and therefore I will continue to enjoy them. It hurts no one, I'm not obsessive about it and anyone who chooses to think I'm nuts for believing in such things, can think I'm nuts.

We've all heard how the butterfly is a symbol of rebirth. Whether its our child moving from this world onto a higher plane, or a bereaved parent emerging from the cocoon of grief into a world without our child here. With us, butterflies are a comfort for many. When I'm missing my son and see a butterfly flittering from flower to flower, I smile and feel better. When I'm in a happy mood and see a butterfly, I enjoy the beauty of such a delicate creature. Taking the time to slow down and watch such a fragile creature going about its business is calming and I don't think anyone should discount the benefits from having a calming moment.

About four months after Eric died, I had a dream about him. I woke myself up from tears of joy running down my face, I knew he was okay...what a relief that was. I still hurt terribly and missed him more than I thought I could endure, but I felt comforted by the dream. Some could say it was my subconscious trying to sort things out, but I choose to believe it was his way of trying to comfort me. Either way, it made me feel better.

Maybe it's because bereaved parents walk around in such a fog and function on automatic pilot that we are moving slow enough to notice the signs that are around us. Maybe dreams are one way for us to accept messages we need to hear and take into our hearts without logically trying to interpret them. Maybe faith is what we rely on when nothing else makes sense and we instinctively know we need something to hold on to. Whatever it is, just give me a second helping;
I like feeling closer to my son!

Lynn Vines ~ TCF, South Bay/L.A., CA



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 & Elaine Sahre

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

***** We Need Help *****

**Please consider joining our steering
committee**

**Next steering committee meeting
Wednesday September 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 12th, 2011 (Monday)

7:00 “ I am Stuck, How About You? ”

September 21st, 2011 (Wednesday)

6:00 Steering Committee Meeting @

Dunkin Donuts, by the Oakdale Mall

September 24th, 2011 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

October 3rd, 2011 (Monday)

7:00 “ Change in Family Dynamics ”

October 15th, 2011 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

November 7th, 2011 (Monday)

7:00 “Time of Year = Holiday Help ”

November 19th, 2011 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

December 5th, 2011 (Monday)

7:00 “ Embrace the Season Again ”

December 11th, 2011 (Sunday)

6:00 PM “Candlelight Service”

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 Friends,

On July 18th during the hottest summer ever at approximately 7:30 pm, 140 balloons were released and traveled west in an array of pastels; pinks, purples, blues, whites, greens and oranges with personal notes attached to our missed children, grandchildren, siblings and other loved ones that have gone too soon. What a beautiful sight as we strained to watch our own balloon with a personal note attached go higher and higher trying not to lose sight, watching until the balloon was a speck in the sky. The Balloons to Heaven was a wonderful evening, great food, a lot of catching up with parents we don't see all year, and a loving memorial to our children. Many of us add to our note our phone number so if our balloon lands somewhere we ask to be contacted. One of our moms got a call from someone in Narrowsburg NY; her son Michael's balloon had traveled 88 miles and then was lovingly lifted near the Delaware River. For those who came early to help set up and fill balloons thank you, thank you, thank you. It's so good to see those early birds walking across the park grass to help. Sally, the cake was not only beautiful but delicious, thank you. Our next event will be the candle light service in December, if you feel this might be your year to help please give me a call; it takes several helping hands to make the service a beautiful night for our children, a night of remembering.

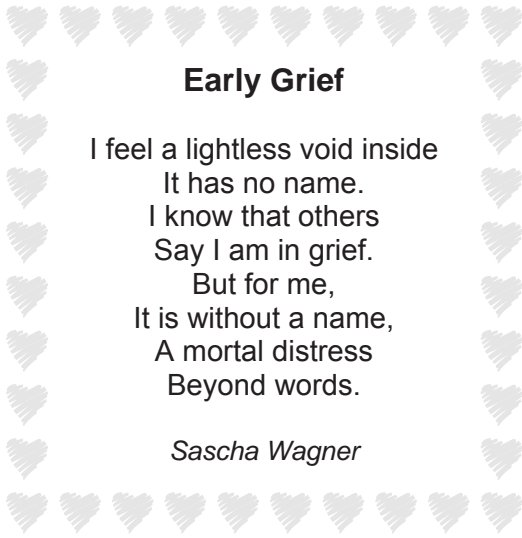
While I have events on your minds, there are families who during the year may have fund raisers for scholarships or other events to benefit their child's memory. I thought it would be nice to include these events on our calendar so we all can have the option of attending and supporting our fellow TCFer's. So check this newsletter for cut off dates for items to be submitted, email or call me with the info and I will gladly add them to the calendar.

We do have an Angel of Hope update. We are gearing toward a final brick dedication sometime next year, so we are asking if anyone is interested to please contact Claudia @ 648-6715 and she will send you the information, or email me at pkroft23@yahoo.com and I will email you the form. Our date for final orders will be January 1st but we have very few spots left and once we have that total [65] we will be finished as there will be no more room...I want to reiterate that there is a brick placed in memory of all our children at the base of our angel. The angel belongs to all of us and is a constant reminder of the hope we share for our future and the love we still share with our children.

In the middle of July I attended my annual family reunion, as many do during the summer months. What a great way to catch up with the cousins we only see once a year. Gives us a chance to talk, eat, play and remember all the good times of our youth all the while making new memories to share later on. As I was standing at the food table my cousin came up to me and we were talking and then she said, "I think of Sean quite often, he was such a good boy". My Sean and her son, Scott were a day apart in age and as I looked over at Scott I felt that tinge of envy, an envy of not having Sean there and he not having the chance to become an adult, to marry, to have children, so on and so on. But what was so touching was that she had mentioned Sean, she allowed me to share my thoughts and it was she who brought up his name. Karen you will never read this but I thank you today as I thanked you that very hot day in July, on the shore of Otsego Lake. It is so special when someone mentions his name.....What has happened to us has changed our lives forever, we will never see life in the same way, and we will never be the same people. As we attempt to move forward, we realize we are survivors and we have endured life's hardest blow, the death of our child. As we learn to address our grief and learn to cope with our loss it becomes a part of our personal history, a part of our life's story, a part of our being, so when someone reaches out and mentions our child grab the opportunity to share them.....I wish you all a safe and peaceful fall season, remembering to reach out if you need to take the hand of someone so you shall never walk alone.

Hugs to all,
Pam
(Sean's Mom)

p.s. Just a reminder our September meeting is the second Monday, the 12th due to Labor Day which pushes our Saturday meeting to the 24th.



Early Grief

I feel a lightless void inside
 It has no name.
 I know that others
 Say I am in grief.
 But for me,
 It is without a name,
 A mortal distress
 Beyond words.

Sascha Wagner

Little Farther Down the Road

I know those tears you're crying.
 I've been in your shoes.
 You feel like there's no use in trying,
 Like there's nothing left to lose.
 You take one step forwards,
 Move two steps back.
 You may not see it now
 But it won't always be like that.
 A little farther down the road,
 You'll see the sun again.
 A little farther down the road,
 You'll look back at where you've been.
 You'll see how far you've come
 And you'll find the strength to go
 A little farther down the road.
 This journey is not easy.
 It's a winding road
 Filled with twists and turns.
 You can make it, believe me.
 In time you'll learn
 Your greatest love comes
 From your deepest pain.
 And there's power in that love
 To help you rise again.
 A little farther down the road,
 You'll see the sun again.
 A little farther down the road,
 You'll look back at where you've been.
 You'll see how far you've come
 And you'll find the strength to go
 A little farther down the road.

*By Alan Pedersen in memory of his daughter,
 Ashley Marie Pedersen*

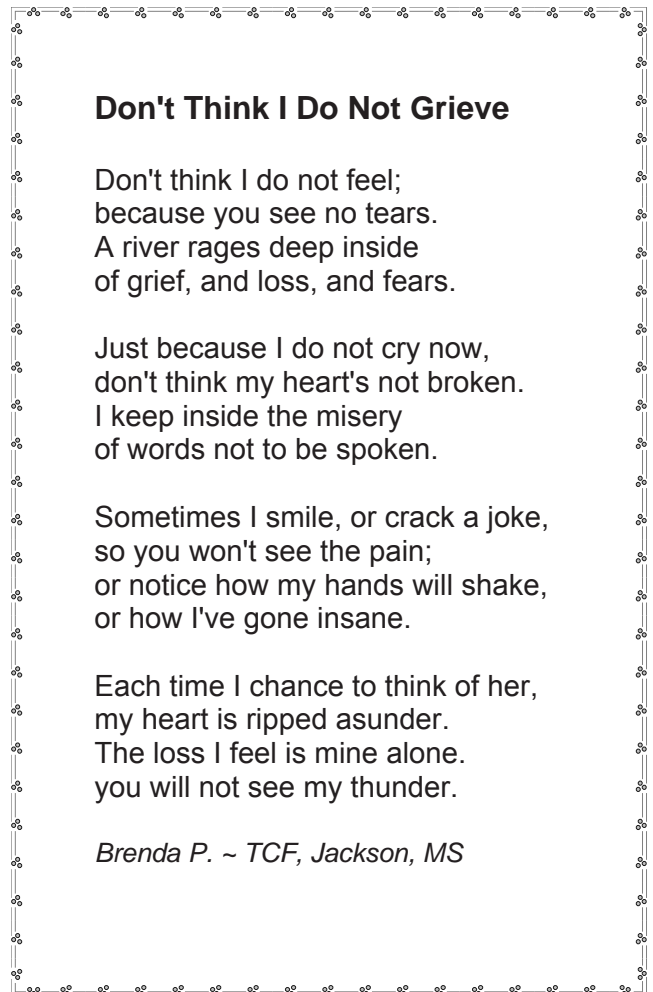
At First

At first
 my very name was grief.
 My eyes saw only grief,
 my thoughts were grief...
 And everything I touched
 was turned to grief.

But now
 I own the light of memories.
 My eyes can see you,
 and my thoughts can know you
 for what you really are:
 more than a young life lost,
 more than a radiance
 gone into night.

Today you have become
 a gift beyond my grief,
 a treasure to my world—
 though you have left my world
 and me behind.

Sascha



Don't Think I Do Not Grieve

Don't think I do not feel;
 because you see no tears.
 A river rages deep inside
 of grief, and loss, and fears.

Just because I do not cry now,
 don't think my heart's not broken.
 I keep inside the misery
 of words not to be spoken.

Sometimes I smile, or crack a joke,
 so you won't see the pain;
 or notice how my hands will shake,
 or how I've gone insane.

Each time I chance to think of her,
 my heart is ripped asunder.
 The loss I feel is mine alone.
 you will not see my thunder.

Brenda P. ~ TCF, Jackson, MS

A Chapter Members Submission

This poem was submitted by Robin McKittrick
In memory of her son Sean

The Mud On The Floor

Spring is Here
The mud is too
And like everything else
Brings memories of you

Don't track in the mud
Put on some old clothes
How many times you heard that
Heaven only knows

To see the mud on the kitchen floor
To smell engine fumes, gas, oil and more
Never would of thought they'd be things of the past
Never thinking your life would be so fast

I miss you our son
The pain is so deep
Your Papa does too
We thought you were ours to keep

Our life with out you
IS an empty shell
Since you went home
Ours lives have been hell

We thank God for you
And The Mud on the floor

Loving and missing you Buddy
MaMa



The Passage of Grief

Pain in my heart,
Longing in my soul,
Shattered in pieces
And it's taken its toll.

In the palm of your hand,
You took my life,
Ripped out my heart
And drove in the knife.

You chose to take him;
Though you could take anyone
Taking our sweet precious boy,
My Aunt's only son.

I wouldn't have fought back,
So why not take me?
I would have gone quietly
And fully paid his fee.

The longings that I have,
I try my best to hide.
To hear him, touch him,
And have him by my side.

I miss him every day,
And it hurts so bad.
My Boy being gone,
Makes my heart so sad.

I know it's all up to you, God
I know it's all in your will,
But why couldn't you warn us
And prepare our hearts to feel.

Love, Longing,
Anger, and Regret;
So many emotions swirling
And some not even explored yet.

Time heals all wounds,
At least that's what they say,
But when a loved one dies,
Your life seems to lose its way.

I don't know what's up;
I don't know what's down;
Nobody knows where I am
And who knows where I'm bound.

God, I need you to take the helm;
Remove the clouds from my eyes;
Calm the waters with one touch
And show me where forever lies.

*By Holly Howell, In loving memory of her cousin,
Jake Schoonover.*

Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf,
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day
Nothing gold can stay.

—Robert Frost

A Walk With Sorrow

I walked a mile with Pleasure,
She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And not a word said she,
But, oh, the things I learned
When Sorrow walked with me.

—Robert B. Hamilton

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*



To Bereaved Grandparents

I am powerlessness. I am helplessness. I am frustration. I sit here with her and cry with her. She cries for her daughter and I cry for mine. I can't help her. I can't reach inside and take her broken heart. I must watch her suffer day after day and see her desolate. I listen to her tell me over and over how she misses Emily, how she wants her back.

I can't bring Emily back for her. I can't even buy her an even better Emily than she had, like I could buy her an even better toy when she was a child. I can't kiss the hurt and make it go away. I can't even kiss a small part of it away. There's no Band-Aid large enough to cover her bleeding heart. There was a time I could listen to her talk about a fickle boyfriend and tell her it would be okay, and know in my heart that in two weeks she wouldn't even think of him.

Can I tell her it'll be okay in two years when I know it will never be okay, that she will carry this pain of "what might have been" in her deepest heart for the rest of her life? I see this young woman, my child, who was once carefree and fun-loving and bubbling with life, slumped in a chair with her eyes full of agony. Where is my power now? Where is my mother's bag of tricks that will make it all better? Why can't I join in the aloneness of her grief? As tight as my arms wrap around her, I can't reach that aloneness. Where are the magic words that will give her comfort? What chapter in Dr. Spock tells me how to do this? He has told me everything else I've needed to know.

Where are the answers? I should have them. I'm her mother. What can I give her to make her better? A cold wet wash cloth will ease that swelling of her crying eyes, but it won't stop the reason for her tears. What treat will bring joy back to her? What prize will bring that "happy child" smile back again? I know that someday she'll find happiness again, that her life will have meaning again. I can hold out hope for her someday, but what about now? this hour? this day? I can give her my love and prayers and my care and my concern. I could give her my life. But even that won't help.

Margaret Gerner , St. Louis, Missouri

Volunteer Opportunities

At some point along our grief journey, we begin to regain some energy, and desire to reach out and help other bereaved families. If, and when, that time comes for you, please know that there are unlimited ways in which you can help.

Come to our next Steering Committee Meeting or contact a steering member to find out more about volunteering.

THE SCREAM

The smile you see is not all of me,
For I'm not what I seem.
I laugh and smile but all the while,
My smile holds in a scream.

For when I see a little girl,
So innocent and free,
I think about my little girl,
Who died at seventeen.

And then the scream comes welling up,
From in my soul so black,
And so my smile must block it in,
And laughter hold it back.

I saw her born and watched her grow,
from child to blooming lass,
But through the years I couldn't know,
I'd have to see her pass.

The suffering within my heart,
I hide from all the world.
I do my job, I play the part,
And miss my little girl.

A song about a father's love,
So sweet with tenderness,
Awakes in me the horror of,
My loss and loneliness.

So, if they say "He takes it well,
He'll be OK we all can tell.
How well his life continues on,
It's almost if she wasn't gone."

Remember that I'm not so sane,
Playacting, keeping up the game,
My nightmare life trapped in a dream,
You see, my smile holds in a scream.

*Steve Tutt ~ TCF, Tyler, TX
Remembering our daughter, Lisa ~ 1987-2004*

Falling for You

Falling for you... while leaves fall, the river drifts by and friends sit, speaking of love ones lost to suicide. Like the river conversation drifts. Some smile at memories shared. Other cry tears of regret, anger, guilt, despair; tears for what could have been, but is no more. Through the years, this group of friends has learned that words fall short of describing sorrow. And so we sit silently, watching the....
....falling leaves...falling tears....
....falling for you....

....until the time comes to fall in line and drift toward a table adorned with recently fired clay shapes. At an earlier gathering, I molded soft gray clay, then impressed it with words and symbols of your life. Although I don't speak of it, I know that yours is not the only life interrupted. My life is also damaged, diminished, in danger of falling apart in so many ways. This small group shares space with those we miss and love, both living and dead, in this, my child's birth and death season. How I long to see you float free with the...

....falling leaves...falling tears....

....falling for you.....

....and I long to connect again with you, but my pleas fall on deaf ears. I'm left with the task of creating your wind chime.

A year ago, on your birthday, leaves fell as I stamped the soft clay heart with musical notes, falling stars, hovering doves and the words "treasured memories." Now the clay has cured and along the holes in the edge of the stamped heart, I tie other clay shapes with lengths of string□□□my heart strings. I add an anchor, a porcelain leaf inscribed with the words "falling in love." The pieces fall in place like....

.....falling leaves....falling tears.....

.....falling for you....

.....and then I playfully brush my fingers through your wind chime, fingers that long to run through your hair. The chime whispers your name, but its music can never fill my heart like the sound of your voice. Fall—a time for friends to make wind chimes and memories. A time for...

....falling leaves.....falling tears...

....falling eternally for you.

Carol Clum, TCF Medford, OR

New Traditions

New traditions are now permanently woven into the fabric of our lives. The catalyst for these traditions is not a happy addition to our lives; indeed, the catalyst marks a traumatic loss in our lives. That subtraction comes in the form of the death of our child.

The finality is crushing. This overwhelming loss has redefined each of us, changed our perspective forever and brought us close to the abyss of insanity. The new traditions gradually pull us back from the abyss and may eventually provide a sense of comfort, serenity and peace. And so in June we remember our children. We communicate with them, via a note from our hearts, written on a butterfly shaped paper and tied to balloon. We, the parents of the dead, gather and listen to a poem about our collective and individual loss. We the parents of the dead experience the haunting bagpipe as it fills our senses with the sound and the meaning of Amazing Grace. We, the parents of the dead, once again stand together and remember our children. We speak to them. Our butterfly messages become kisses on the wind as our balloons ascend into the sky, floating southward, floating higher and higher until, we imagine, our children can reach out and grab each message and read it and know that we love them deeply and miss them every day and every night. This is our tradition. Each of us views it from the depth of our souls; our love of our children is demonstrated openly as we weep without shame for the loss we have experienced.

A significant part of each parent died when our children died. Yet, a crucial part of each child lives in the hearts of every mother and father. Neither time nor death will erase that bond. It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.

We hope that one day we will each make some sort of peace with this monster, this nightmare, this void, this pain. We hope one day to heal our open wound but know we will always carry an invisible yet deep scar. The worst loss a person can ever experience has been thrust upon us. The only change will come from within each of us. We may one day feel a serenity that comes only through pure love, pure kindness and pure understanding. We will learn to remember yesterday, live today and anticipate tomorrow. And we will always have our new traditions—traditions that are now part of who we are, where we have been and where we are going in this life. Our traditions remind us that our children lived, laughed and loved. We linger in the moment for that is all we have.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

A Season of Many Feelings

Fall is a season of many feelings; autumn is here once again as it comes every year, and with the leaves, my falling tears. This time of year is the hardest of all. My heart is still breaking, once again it is fall. Memories once so vivid are seeming to fade. My time spent with you seems of another age. This season reminds me of grief and of pain. But yet teaches hope and joy once again. For the trees are still living beneath their gray bark, and you my sweet child, are alive in my heart.

Cinda S. ~ TCF, Butler, PA

"We have many relationships in our lives, but the unique nature of the parent child relationship is so special, so deep, so life changing, that we endure and even embrace the pain because we had, for that time in our lives, a relationship of pure love and pure joy with our child."

—Annette Mennen Baldwin

I had a Dream

I had a dream the other night
it was a miracle, you see.
I rocked you in my favorite chair
and held you close to me.
I sang to you a lullaby
so sweet and clear and fair;
but then awoke, I called your name,
And knew you were not there.
As darkness then engulfed me,
I started to softly cry,
I love you so, my baby,
why did you have to die?
I pray for sleep to come again,
and hope that I will see
another dream just like before,
with my son held next to me.
Author unknown

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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The Meaning of the Leaf and Tear Drop

You might have seen this on cards, framed prints, jewelry. The leaf and teardrop symbolize the love and grief that families and loved ones feel when someone dies.

They reflect both the intense suffering of loss and hope for the future. The leaf, though fallen, is green with upturned edges, symbolizing hope. It floats in a pool of moving water, symbolizing there is movement in grief and hope for the future.

Colors range from a very deep purple, which represents intense sadness, to a much lighter and pale shade, symbolizing light and hope for the future. The drop on the leaf may be either a dew drop or a tear drop—meant to be whatever the person looking at the picture wants it to be.

The overall theme is that grief, as in nature, there are cycles and movement. As seasons change, so do feelings. There is water and there are tears, there is winter and there is spring, there is sadness—and then is hope.

TCF, Greater Omaha Chapter



Important


Note!

We had to make a bank change

Please make checks out to **The Compassionate Friends Broome**
We appreciate your tax deductible contributions.

Thank you

**** 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: **The Compassionate Friends Broome**



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.

Simple Steps Towards Healing

Acknowledge the loss; embrace and own the experience and the loss whatever you are feeling; allow yourself to experience all the emotions of grief; find ways to express your anger and pain in non-destructive ways; find support; build a support system of compassionate listeners; skip the self-judgment; let the judgment of others pass through you without damage; forgive yourself for whatever you believe you have done or not done; release the hurt, the anger and the guilt; be careful what you release; once released those things are gone forever; work towards healing; practice forgiving yourself for living; concentrate on your loved one's life, not the death; discover the person you are now; begin to release the hurt in search of hope; never, ever, ever forget your loved one lived.

Making Progress Through Grief

You know you're making progress through grief when; you don't always choke when you say your loved one's name; tears don't always well up in your eyes when you think of your loved one; the cause of death isn't the emphasis anymore; memories, for the most part, bring comfort not pain; you realize your plans don't include your loved one any more; you realize you are someone different; you can forgive yourself for living, when your loved one did not; your identity is no longer highlighted by the word Bereaved; you know that even though your loved one died, the love between you can never be destroyed; may love be what you remember most.

Darcie Sims

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.

Bereaved Parents Group

Broome County Chapter
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