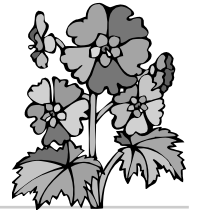


The Primrose



Vol. 30, Issue 4

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Winter 2010



When We Remember

When the snow falls, and silence drifts in white across the earth, we remember their joy, the glad cries that broke the hush of fresh winter.

When the family gathers, caught in wonderment around the Thanksgiving table or the holiday tree, we remember their excitement, the anticipation that was impossible to contain.

When the sun sets and Christmas lights sparkle and shine to challenge the night, we remember their tired but glowing faces, alight in a thrill of happiness that made our day.

When we remember, we feel afresh that brightness, that energy, and we smile . . . and we cry.

For what was, for what can never be.

In our remembering, we are the vessels of yesterday, the bearers of the light, the victims of the dark.



And in our remembering, we are parents, hurting, healing, gathering our strength and our passion to live once more, to destroy an endless night with the sun and starlit joys of the past, forging our memories into the promise of a new and different dawn, a re-investment in life itself, even without our child.

For we have loved, love still, and have been loved in turn.

Our memories tell us; our intellect compels us, ultimately, to answer our child's love with our own unending love, showing through the quality and commitment of our own lives that both loves have enriched us beyond measure.

May the holidays, for all their sorrow and all their pain, help each of us to build anew our lives, using our joys from the past to create a new day, where sorrow, though never gone, no longer governs our every waking hour.

It Takes Courage

It takes courage to smile when the world is dark and the sun just refuses to shine.
When you've lost your way and your heart is sad and the path is an upward climb.
It takes courage to hope when your hope is going and nothing just seems to be right.
Today just an echo of yesterday's going with naught but the darkness of night.
It takes courage to dream when your mind is adrift and a weariness enters your soul...
When you long for contentment and peace in your heart but can't seem to conquer your goal.
It takes courage to smile; it takes courage to hope... A courage when all else is gone.
When the clouds overshadow the sun in your sky, it takes courage to smile and go on.

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 January 20th
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.)

December 6th, 2010 (Monday)

7:00 “ Just Tell Me the Rules ”

December 12th, 2010 (Sunday)

6:00 PM “Candle Light Service”

December 18th, 2010 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

January 3rd, 2011 (Monday)

7:00 “ New Year, New Hope ”

January 15th, 2011 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

January 20th, 2011 (Thursday)

6:00 Steering Committee Meeting

February 7th, 2011 (Monday)

7:00 “ Our Faces of Grief ”

February 19th, 2011 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

March 7th, 2011 (Monday)

7:00 “ Memory Night ”

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 Dear Friends,

It seems impossible that this year 2010, is almost over. We have survived [not always wanting to] and we will continue to grow [sometimes very slowly] after the death of our child. This past year we have welcomed several new families who have joined our "club", the "club" that has the highest dues possible, the sorrowful death of a child. We are so thankful that you found your way to us and hopefully you have found some peace and hope within our walls. This holiday season and for the coming year my gift to you would be the gift of hope, four small letters that come together to form a powerful word, a word not always reachable especially for the newly bereaved. When we are so fresh in our sorrow hope seems a lifetime away but as time separates us from our sorrow the hope will begin to shine through, trust me on this.

In August of this year Luann [George] Ford and Shirley Houston lost a very important person in their lives. Luann's dad and Shirley's husband, Nelson suddenly left this earth to join his three granddaughters, Joy, Kelli and Samantha. Luann, her husband George and Shirley are loving members of our TCF family. Our thoughts continue to be with them.

A quick angel of hope update, we are still taking names and phone numbers for anyone interested in having a paver brick at the angel. No date has been set, possibly 2011 or 2012. Our goal is to have one last paver dedication, please be patient as we strive to achieve that goal. Any questions, call Claudia @ 648-6715 or myself @ 239-4222. In the meantime head over to the park in Port Dickinson to feel the love and hope that surrounds the angel, she is placed in memory of all our children.

In a few short weeks, Sunday, December 12th at 6:00 p.m. we shall gather at the church to celebrate the lives of our children through song, poems and readings. The highlight of the evening for me begins with the lights dimming and the candles being lit and each and every name being read with reverence and love. I shall never get tired of hearing Sean's name and after 16 years without him I have found peace and continue to embrace the hope that I give to you this holiday season. The night will end with friends and family gathering in the fellowship hall for a potluck dinner. We ask that you bring a dish to pass if it's a good day...A photo or memento also as there will be a special table for them to share with our TCF family. If by chance the weather is not good our website will have any cancellation. As we near the date a reminder postcard will arrive in your mailbox.

The third week of January will be the first steering committee meeting of the year. We are always looking for new members, parents who are a little further along on their journey who feel they could give back. Without the dedication of our steering committee our local TCF could not continue to help the many new families that come through our door each year. I am grateful to work with so many moms and dads who have stayed longer just to walk with the newly bereaved as they try to go on, engulfed in their sorrow and sadness after their child's death. Each job no matter how small is important. A special thank you to those steering committee members, you are the best! I know it's not always easy to travel to a meeting in the next few months but March will be our annual memory night where we encourage you to bring a special photo, memory or story to share about your precious child.

As I say goodbye and before you move on to the next page close your eyes and think of a small package neatly wrapped in butterfly paper and as you remove the pretty bow and open the box let the contents fall gently to your lap, as they land the letters H.O.P.E. will form. That is my gift to you and using myself as the example let me show you there is hope and peace to come, maybe not today or tomorrow but someday. May you continue to reach out and take the hand of someone close so you will never walk alone.

Hope in the New Year,
Pam
(Sean's Mom)



TONIGHT I HOLD THIS CANDLE

Written and sung by Alan Pedersen to honor the death of his daughter,
Ashley, and used at many Candlelight Memorials

Tonight I hold this candle
In memory of you.
Hoping someday, somehow, my love will shine through.
I close my eyes, lost in the glow.
There are so many things I want you to know.

This candle says I love you, this candle says I miss you.
This candle is saying I remember you.
When I'm holding it toward heaven,
It feels like you are near.
If you're looking down tonight and see this candle burning bright,
It says I'm wishing you were here.

In the glow of this candle, I can almost see your smile
And it carries me away for a little while
To another time, another place
When all it took to light up my world was your beautiful face.

This candle says I love you, this candle says I miss you.
This candle is saying I remember you.
When I'm holding it toward heaven,
It feels like you are near.
If you're looking down tonight and see this candle burning bright,
It says I'm wishing you were here.

Someday, someday I'll see you again.
I'll hold you in my heart until then.

This candle says I love you, this candle says I miss you.
This candle is saying I remember you.
When I'm holding it toward heaven,
It feels like you are near.
If you're looking down tonight and see this candle burning bright,
It says I'm wishing you were here.



I will light a candle for you...

Shattering the Darkness with Light

To shatter all the darkness
And bless the time we know.
Like a beacon in the night
The flame will burn bright
And guide us on our way.
Today I light a candle for you

Magnolia Jazz



Children we remember
Though missing from our sight
In honor and remembrance
We light candles in the night...

We will not forget
And every year in deep December
On Earth we will light candles
As we remember

Jacqueline Brown

To Live is To Die

I look around at the world and what do I see,
People hurrying, scurrying, running past me.
For I'm just a spectator in this game called life,
With all of its heartache, disappointments,
and strife.

A light went out in my heart that day –
And many times since I've lost my way,
Because my son, Joe, will never return –
But my love for him continues to bum.

He was a senior in high school and only seven-
teen,
Going to Syracuse University was his big dream.
Joe also loved pizza, music, and girls –
To his Mom and Dad, he was more precious
than pearls.

What do you do when your son is gone –
You live like music without a song.
The sadness softens but never goes away.
Like a musician on stage, you continue to play.

Friends and family try to help you through,
But life without meaning is terribly cruel.
So to Joe I say when each day is done,
To live is to die, when we all become one.

Carolyn Pitarra, Binghamton TFC

In memory of Peter R. Vermaat April 2, 1986 - December 6, 2009

Hurry now
the water has receded for a moment
quickly scoop and pile the wet sand
dig a moat to protect the castle
sculpt a tower
walls and courtyards begin to take shape.
Hurry now
the chaos has receded for a moment
artistic creations, music, chatter and smiles
fortify with forgiveness, love and encouragement
tenuous stability
lucid moments, plans and renewed hope.
Hurry now
the waves return undaunted
ebb and flow
lapping at the outer walls
new defenses melt away
consumed by water around and underneath
swallowed within itself
only a faint remnant.
Hurry now
the water has receded for a moment
start again.

I wrote this soon after Peter's death. It speaks to the tor-
ment of Bipolar Disorder that tortured him and eventually
took him from us.
Joel Vermaat

Remember Christopher

After reading the current issue of "The Primrose" I just had to remember my son, Chris. He was thirty years old when he was killed on March 31, 2004 doing what he loved best - being a Deputy Sheriff and protecting the public.

Chris grew up wanting to be a police officer and had a compassionate, caring nature toward everyone. He was a family man and left behind a wife, Kim and a son Christian, as well as other family members.

On March 31, 2004 my grief was so painful I thought I would not live through it and wondered how I would get through the rest of my life without Chris. It was so unbearable.

To those of you who have just lost a child, I say bless you and just hold on minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day.

Thanks to prayers, therapy, family, friends and God above and lots of crying, anger and why's, we have come out of the clouds 6 1/2 years later.

We were not able to say goodbye to Chris and there is a deep hole in our hearts but we are in a "new normal" now.

I will always have his memories and love in my heart and I think of him every single day.

To anyone that has lost a child - don't give up!

Happy 37th birthday in Heaven Christopher - December 11, 2010.

Chris' Mom Margo Davidson Sayre, PA

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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What is New About the New Year?

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hurrahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try.

But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love yous" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

Dory Rooker ~ TCF, Upper Valley, VT

Butterfly Wings, Bricks and Lead

When I saw her load of grief, it looked to me to be merely a light load of butterfly wings, as compared to my full load of heavy bricks. Then I saw another man, and he seemed to be carrying a small load of lead. But as I watched her step on the scales bearing her load of butterfly wings, the scales read "one ton." When he stepped on the scales with his load of lead, the scales also read "one ton." I knew my grief-load of bricks would weigh more, but those scales read for me, "one ton." Our loads of butterfly wings, lead and bricks weighed exactly the same to the one carrying that particular load of grief.

We bereaved parents often feel resentment when a non-bereaved person speaks about our child's death. HOW can THAT PERSON know or even dream of how I feel or what I am going through? These feelings may be justified. But when we begin to feel resentment toward another bereaved parent—"That child's death was easy compared to my child's death," "I have suffered more than she/he ever did"—we should remember that each of our grief-loads weighs two thousand pounds to the one under it. Compared to Rose Kennedy, who had one child in a mental institution, and lost one daughter and three sons in violent deaths, my grief-load begins to look as if it were made of gossamer soap bubbles, but when I again step on that scale, it still reads, "one ton."

Our grief-loads may appear to weigh less because we who are under them have grown stronger through time and grief process maturation. The load actually weighs no less; it is we who have grown stronger and can carry it more easily. Sometimes we can even completely ignore the weight that is still there. Always be careful in judging another's grief-load. Remember the lead, butterfly wings and those bricks, and how they all weigh the same to the one under that load of grief.

Tom Crouthamel ~ TCF, Sarasota, FL

HANDLING THE HOLIDAYS

Those who have been through one or more holiday seasons following the death of our child offer these suggestions:

KNOW WHEN YOUR HOLIDAYS ARE:

- * Holidays are not just at Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas or New Year's. Holidays are those times when family and friends get together for fun. It may or may not be associated with the traditional days of celebration.
- * Mark on your calendar the months during which your family's holidays occur.
- * Begin early to plan your coping strategies.

BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT HOW YOU PLAN YOUR HOLIDAY:

- * Together, as a family, examine the events and tasks of the celebration and ask the following questions:
- * Do we really enjoy doing this? Is it done out of habit, free choice, or obligation?
- * Is this a task that can be shared?
- * Would the holiday be the same without it?

DECIDE WHAT YOU CAN HANDLE COMFORTABLY:

- * Whether we are open to talk about our child.
- * Whether we feel able to send holiday cards this year.
- * Whether we can handle the responsibility of the family dinner, holiday parties, etc., or if we wish someone else would take over some of these traditions this year.
- * Whether we choose to stay at home for the holidays or choose a different environment.
- * Shopping is definitely easier if you make the entire list out ahead of time. Then when one of the "good days" come along, you can get your shopping done quickly and with less confusion. Shopping by phone or from catalogs also helps.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE CHANGES. IT CAN REALLY MAKE THINGS LESS PAINFUL:

- * Let the children take over decorating the tree, or invite friends in to help.
- * Open presents the night before the holiday instead of in the morning.
- * Have dinner at a different time. Change the seating arrangement.
- * Burn a special candle to quietly include your absent son or daughter.

OUR GREATEST COMFORT MAY COME IN DOING SOMETHING FOR OTHERS:

- * Giving a gift in memory of our child to a meaningful charity.
- * Adopting a needy family for the holidays.
- * Inviting a guest (a foreign student, senior citizen, someone who would otherwise be alone) to share the festivities.

Continued →

HANDLING THE HOLIDAYS continued

EVALUATE YOUR COPING PLANS:

- * Do your plans isolate you from those who love and support you best?
- * Do your plans allow for meaningful expression and celebration of what the particular holiday means to you?

LET YOUR PLANS AND LIMITS BE KNOWN:

- * Write or phone family and friends to let them know of any intended changes.
- * Share with friends and family how you plan to approach the holiday and how they can best help you.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO HAVE FUN:

- * Enjoyment, laughter, and pleasure are not experiences in which you abandon your lost child. You have not forgotten him/her. Your child would not want you to be forever sad; you need not feel guilty over any enjoyment you may experience.
- * Give your self and members of your family permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holiday.

Finally, as you seek to make sensible plans, remember to make them firm enough to support you but flexible enough to leave you some freedom. Most important, take time to love and let yourself be loved – for this is the real gift of the holiday season.

Lovingly lifted from TCF, Birmingham, AL

**PLEASE BE GENTLE
An After loss Creed**

Please be gentle with me, for I am grieving. The sea I swim in is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day. My heart is heavy with sorrow. I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable.

A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path.

Please, will you walk beside me?

Jill Englar Westminster, Maryland
Reprinted with permission from Bereavement Magazine, Phone (888 604-4673),
Web address is www.bereavementmag.com.



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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THANKS

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say: "There is a group in town who might help you."
Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."
Thanks to the mother who went to that first meeting knowing it would really hurt to talk – and talked.
Thanks to the dad who said, after the first meeting, he could never come back – but did.
Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was able to bake cookies for her "compassionate friends."
Thanks to the homemaker who never could talk in front of people – who became a facilitator.
Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men – and didn't say he was sorry.
Because of you, we will be able to help someone who we don't even know – next month.

~John DeBoer, TCF, Greater Omaha Chapter, NE



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 and change your subscription date. 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.

LIGHT A CANDLE

And I will light a candle for you.
To shatter all the darkness
and bless the times we knew.
Like a beacon in the night.
The flame will burn bright
and guide us on our way.
Oh, today I light a candle for you.
The seasons come and go,
And I'm weary of the change.
I keep moving on,
you know it's not the same.
And when I'm walking all alone,
Do you hear me call your name?
Do you hear me sing the songs we used to sing?
You filled my life with wonder,
Touched me with surprise,
I always saw that something special
deep within your eyes.
And through the good times and the bad,
We carried on with pride.
I hold onto the love and life we knew.
~Paul Alexander



Our Candlelight Ceremony will take place on Sunday, December 12th at 6:00 PM at the Nimmansburg United Methodist Church 918 Upper Front Street Binghamton, NY

This is a special evening of compassion and remembrance of our children for you and your family offering friendship, memories, and music while providing support and understanding

*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

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