

The Primrose



Vol. 29, Issue 1

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Spring 2009

It's the Music That Bonds the Soul

Stacey Gilliam TCF, N. Oklahoma City, OK

The room you once lived in
Doesn't look the same.
The people who used to call you
Never mention your name

The car you used to drive
They may not make anymore;
And all the things you treasured
Are boxed behind closed doors.

The clothes you set the trends by
Are surely out of date.
The people you owed money to
Have wiped away the slate.

Things have changed and changed
Since you went away.
But some things remain the same
Each and every day.

Like the aching in my heart-
A scar that just won't heal.
Or the way a special song
Can change the way I feel.

Brother, you must know that the music
Bonds us and will keep us close;
Because secretly I know in my heart
It's the music you miss the most.

So let the world keep turning,
Time can take its toll.
As long as the music is playing
You'll be dancing in my soul.



Your Compassionate Friend

Steven L. Channing TCF Winnipeg, Canada

I can tell by that look friend,
that we need to talk
So come take my hand
and let's go for a walk
See, I'm not like the others -
I won't shy away
Because I want to hear what you've got to say



You child has died and you need to be heard
But they don't want to hear a single word
They say your child's with God, so be strong
They say all the "right" things that
Somehow seem wrong

I'll walk in your shoes for more than a mile
I'll wait while you cry and be glad if you smile
I won't criticize you or judge you or scorn
I'll just stay and listen 'til night turns to morn

Yes, the journey is hard and unbearably long
And I know that you think that you're
Not quite that strong
So just take my hand 'cause I've got time to spare
And I know how it hurts friend,
for I have been there

See, I owe a debt you can help me repay
For not long ago, I was helped the same way
And I stumbled and fell through a world so unreal
So believe when I say that I know how you feel

I don't look for praise or financial gain
And I'm sure not the kind who gets joy out of pain
I'm just a strong shoulder
who'll be here 'til the end
I'll be your Compassionate Friend

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

Jacque Edwards-Mitchell (718) 451-0814

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 - Michelle Simonds

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

**Next steering committee meeting
Thursday April 23rd
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.)

March 2, 2009 (Monday)

7:00 “Memory Night ”

March 21, 2009 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

April 6th, 2009 (Monday)

7:00 “ Let Us Grow”

April 18, 2009 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

April 23, 2009 (Thursday)

6:00 Steering Committee Meeting

May 4, 2009 (Monday)

7:00 “ Mom’s and Gramma’s Gather”

May 16 2009 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

June 1, 2009 (Monday)

7:00 “ Calling all Dad’s and Grandpas”

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:

Hi Everyone,

Bravo, we have just gotten through one of the coldest winters experienced in years, as I write this it is -5 with the winds kicking up stirring our wind chimes to make the sound of 100 musicians. This tends to keep us inside trying to warm the chill away, allowing more thinking time which lends us to our families and friends, in turn our children who have died. A few months ago my uncle had brought me several photo albums that belonged to my grand parents; both he and my grandpa took so many pictures. On one of those cold winter nights, wrapped up in a blanket I started to look through the albums. As I flipped through page after page so many wonderful memories were captured on those 3 by 5 photos. There were many with Sean as a young boy, I thought after he died my grandma had gone through their albums and given me all the photos with Sean. I am so glad she didn't because I had a night filled with laughter and tears, a night filled with memories of good times. Each photo had a story all its own and I went back to those very days when life was safe and my son was still living, a time when the biggest worry was getting him to soccer practice on time and whether the Yankees were to make the play-offs. As I closed the last album, I was jolted back to reality where life is not always so safe and Sean is now a memory just like each of the 3 by 5's.

Our candle lighting in December was so beautiful, a service worthy of our children who have gone too soon. It is always so special to be together and to start the holiday season with our TCF family. I often say the second Sunday in December is my night with Sean, a special time for me and all of you to feel the love and hope and understanding that TCF has to offer. A warm thank you to Ken and Elaine who pain-staking worked to duplicate 142 cd's in memory of Kenny and all our children. Thank you George for filling the church with your voice in memory of Kelli. From my heart to yours a special thank you for everyone who came early and stayed late to make this night so meaningful. This service is the work of many, but the reward of being a part of it outweighs all. Some shall call it a labor of love, we loved them, we lost them, and we miss them and still love them. We are so fortunate to have Nimmonsburg Church as our "home", this year Pastor Rob had a part in the service and we hope he will join us for years to come.

Each March the topic for our meeting is "memories". It gives all of us a little extra time to share a precious memory of our child either in words, or a photograph, a favorite toy, a scrape book, just to name a few. Because our children died at all different ages the memories will vary but I have always felt blessed to be able to share my Sean with all of you. One of the ways I keep his memory alive is by coming to TCF and sharing him with you and in turn I hope you will share your child with me. We shall laugh and we shall cry because we loved.....

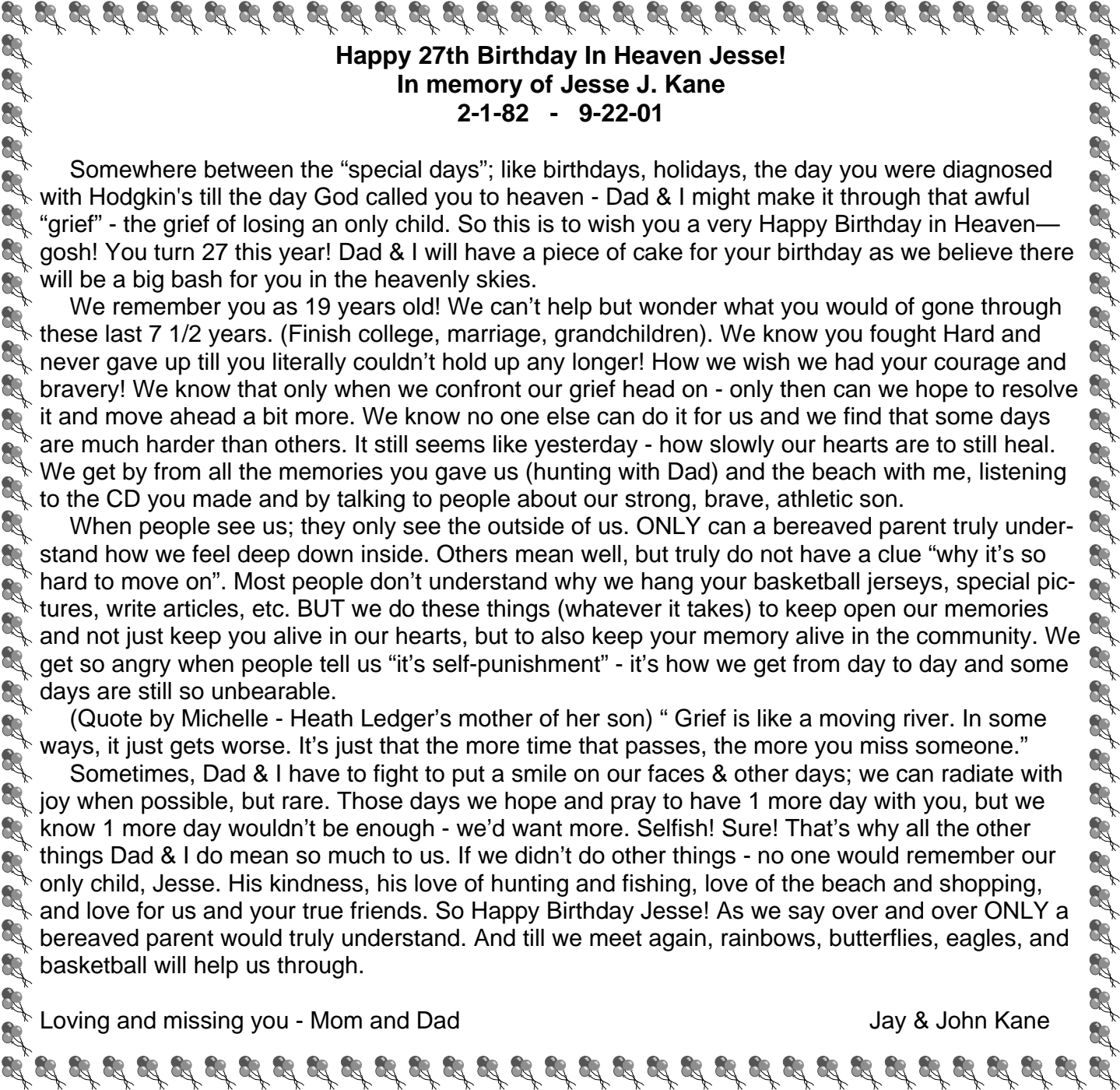
As always I am encouraging you to return borrowed books to the library and if you have books you would like to donate they will be greatly appreciated. When we are newly bereaved, books seem to be a comfort if only in knowing there are others like us out there. I have said before we could all write our own book, our story. On our website there is a list of our books to borrow. A few years ago one of our dads had suggested adding music as well. I know for many of you music was a comfort. If you have copies of music that was helpful along your journey and would be willing to donate, please do. Our mission is to help the newly bereaved moms and dads as they are struggling to figure it all out.

I would like to invite a mom or dad or both to share their story at an upcoming TCF meeting. When we attend meetings sometimes our story does not get told in full, we try to hurry through the circle not wanting to take too much time. At our steering committee meeting in January it was brought up that giving ten minutes to share each night by different parents would open the floor and possibly lead the discussion to where it needs to be. As we all know in the beginning we NEED to tell our story over and over again to anyone who will listen, I am not sure whether it's because we need to convince them or ourselves of the loss of our child. If you would like to share in the near future touch base with me. As we travel along our journey our stories sometimes get lost, we don't want to burden the same people all the time but here at TCF we can feel comfortable in telling it again and again. Being that March is memory night April may be the best time to start.

Continued -

As I close my wish for you is that you never have to walk alone for very long on your grief journey, may there always be someone beside you helping you to find the hope, the love and the understanding needed to continue without your precious child. I have been where you are and I was fortunate enough to have others to help me along my journey. Let us at TCF be your guide along your journey whether it be encouraging you to attend a meeting, or taking that phone call from you, or just by sending you the Primrose and you finding strength within its pages. We are here for you, let us help.

Until next time,
Pam
Sean's Mom



Happy 27th Birthday In Heaven Jesse!
In memory of Jesse J. Kane
2-1-82 - 9-22-01

Somewhere between the “special days”; like birthdays, holidays, the day you were diagnosed with Hodgkin's till the day God called you to heaven - Dad & I might make it through that awful “grief” - the grief of losing an only child. So this is to wish you a very Happy Birthday in Heaven—gosh! You turn 27 this year! Dad & I will have a piece of cake for your birthday as we believe there will be a big bash for you in the heavenly skies.

We remember you as 19 years old! We can't help but wonder what you would of gone through these last 7 1/2 years. (Finish college, marriage, grandchildren). We know you fought Hard and never gave up till you literally couldn't hold up any longer! How we wish we had your courage and bravery! We know that only when we confront our grief head on - only then can we hope to resolve it and move ahead a bit more. We know no one else can do it for us and we find that some days are much harder than others. It still seems like yesterday - how slowly our hearts are to still heal. We get by from all the memories you gave us (hunting with Dad) and the beach with me, listening to the CD you made and by talking to people about our strong, brave, athletic son.

When people see us; they only see the outside of us. ONLY can a bereaved parent truly understand how we feel deep down inside. Others mean well, but truly do not have a clue “why it's so hard to move on”. Most people don't understand why we hang your basketball jerseys, special pictures, write articles, etc. BUT we do these things (whatever it takes) to keep open our memories and not just keep you alive in our hearts, but to also keep your memory alive in the community. We get so angry when people tell us “it's self-punishment” - it's how we get from day to day and some days are still so unbearable.

(Quote by Michelle - Heath Ledger's mother of her son) “ Grief is like a moving river. In some ways, it just gets worse. It's just that the more time that passes, the more you miss someone.”

Sometimes, Dad & I have to fight to put a smile on our faces & other days; we can radiate with joy when possible, but rare. Those days we hope and pray to have 1 more day with you, but we know 1 more day wouldn't be enough - we'd want more. Selfish! Sure! That's why all the other things Dad & I do mean so much to us. If we didn't do other things - no one would remember our only child, Jesse. His kindness, his love of hunting and fishing, love of the beach and shopping, and love for us and your true friends. So Happy Birthday Jesse! As we say over and over ONLY a bereaved parent would truly understand. And till we meet again, rainbows, butterflies, eagles, and basketball will help us through.

Loving and missing you - Mom and Dad

Jay & John Kane

In Loving Memory of Anthony Joseph Survilla

12-22-1984 - 4-28-2006

This is the third year without you physically here with us. You turned 24 on Dec. 22nd. It just seems unreal to us.

Sometimes I tell myself that you're not really gone.
It's hard for me to accept...
that your life on earth is through
There are so many dreams you had not yet fulfilled.
How can my heart be mended
when it has been broken in two?
Part of my heart is still on earth.
The other part left with you!
It is hard to see tomorrow
when I can't accept today.
Time will not erase the pain.
All the raw emotions of losing you.
Words will never explain.
In your 21 years of life you brought so much to my life.
Since you left, I have learned so much about life.
Ironic how we change, trying to survive each day,
not seeing you, touching you,
sharing little things that we use to.
Someday we will be rejoined in Heaven up above.
I cherish every memory of you,
they will have to carry me through until
I get there!

Talking about someone may not bring them back,
but silence does not change the fact that they are gone!

To honor you, I get up every day & take a breath and start another day
without you in it.
To honor you, I laugh & love with those who knew your smile & the way
your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge.
To honor you, I take the time to appreciate everyone that I love. I now
know there is no guarantee of days or hours spent in their presence.
To honor you, I listen to music you liked and sing at the top of my lungs.
To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back.
You were my light, a huge part of my heart,
my gift from the highest source.
So every day I vow to make a difference,
share a smile, live, laugh & love.
Now I live for both of us
So what I do, I honor you.

I love you my dear son
Forever and always, your mom

By Pat Holden, Binghamton TCF



AT FIRST

By Sascha
From WINTERSUN

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.



I've changed forever,
And so have you.
We're not the same.

Darcie Simms
FOOTSTEPS THROUGH
THE VALLEY

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*



The Cracks in Your Heart

Mary Cleckley Atlanta, GA

Recently, I heard a quote from someone, I know not who, that struck a responsive chord in me. The quote said, "The cracks in your heart are where the light shines through." I immediately knew whoever said it was someone who had experienced a great loss or many great losses, had obviously suffered, as many of us have, and yet had finally learned a truism that many of us have also learned.

Surely, in the beginning, when you learn of the death of someone near and dear to you, there are not cracks in your heart, just solid pain that fills every corner. It is like a boulder has come crashing through what was your almost perfect world and left it in shambles. There is definitely no light to be seen from any angle. The truth is, there is no great interest in searching for a light with all the pain that is involved.

Why is it, do you suppose, that some of those who have lost children are able eventually to find something that enables them to go on and have productive lives? I think they survive better because they find something worthwhile to give meaning to their lives.

Strange, isn't it, those same people don't "get over it." When you talk with or observe them you soon realize that though they've been able to find some peace, they still do remember vividly what they've been through and who it was that made their transition necessary and possible.

When you come to a place in your grief where you're weary of the hurt, the time may have come for you to consider using the cracks left in your heart from all the pain you've experienced to let the light shine through the many areas that are still open to you.

It can give meaning and purpose to the life that's left for you and, in the process, your choice may well help others who also suffered the loss of a child. Maybe it's too early in your grief but it can be a goal and a destiny worth striving for. Finding the answer to your search will be the kindest thing you can do to help yourself and others.



A MOTHER'S DAY GIFT TO GOD

Lord today is Mother's Day,
but our hearts are split in two
Half is with the child still here,
The other with the child that is there with you.
All the lovely presents are a nice surprise
But the one thing we want most is missing,
and tears fill our eyes.
We know when you sent them Lord,
you didn't promise how
long they would stay
All you said was to Love them
And treasure each and every day,
But Lord it crushed our hearts,
When you called for their return
We feel like half a Mom,
as we ache weep and yearn.
But Lord tell them we Love them
Just as much as we did before
And could you please make a window,
So they can see through heaven's floor.
Let them see that they are missed
And thought of with each breath
And that a Mother's Love begins before life,
And does not end with death.

Sending warm embraces and thoughts to all the
Mother's
And wishing you a warm and peace filled day.



Sheila Simmons, TCF Atlanta,

SEARCHING..

Joyce Andrews . TCF, Sugar Land TX

Once again, my list has vanished,
it was here, but now it's missing.
Keys and glasses disappearing,
books and letters... overdue.
I'm forever searching, searching ...

They must be here, and I need them!
Could it be that what is missing,
what I want this very minute -
Could it be that what I'm really searching for,
My child,
Is you?
~~~~~

## A FABLE

There once lived a family who felt that they had been specially blessed by God. They had health, they felt secure in their love of God and their love for each other.

On the mantel of their fireplace stood a vase. It was a strong, sturdy vase – attractive but not extravagant. It had been a wedding gift and, to them, it symbolized their family. It had withstood the bumps of moving and toddlers' antics as the family had withstood the buffets and ordeals of life. The scars and chips could be detected only on very close scrutiny.

The day the oldest son in the family died, the vase was found on the mantel, shattered into many pieces. No one bothered to gather up the pieces. It was left for some time in its broken condition on the mantel.

After some time had passed, thought was given to putting the vase back together. Little enthusiasm was generated, but, eventually, the task was begun. The family worked together, each adding a piece or a suggestion about getting it mended. Each one of the family members got discouraged and, more than once, some one of them was heard to say, "It can't be done."

Finally, after many months, the vase was back in its normal place on the mantel. To the casual observer, it looked strong and sturdy and no one would guess it was less than perfect. But, on closer examination, it obviously had been shattered and put back together, and, on turning it around, one could see that one large piece was permanently missing. It had never been found and served to remind the family that, although their hearts could mend and heal, their lives would never be the same.

Jeanette Isley





## Remembering Joshua ...

One of the things I realized about my son Joshua, but not until after he died, was that his life was what made me who I was. As a teenager I found out I was pregnant and my mother thought I should have an abortion. My grandmother thought I should go live with my out-of-town aunt and put the baby up for adoption. I instead married the father and had a beautiful baby boy. Joshua was my life, my reason, my everything.

At the age of six I received a call from the school nurse asking me if my son had seizures. I said no, but she believed differently. In class that day he had slumped over in the chair onto the girl sitting next to him. I took him immediately to his doctors and we set him up for testing, which proved he was indeed having seizures.

As a young child he learned to be strong and not fear anything. We exhausted different medications different doctors, and different hospitals seeking a treatment that might alleviate his seizures. There were points in his young life when we would keep track of the many types as well as quantities of seizures he had a day. He went through brain surgery four times to try and remove the area in his brain that was causing the seizures. He was required to stay awake during three of the surgeries because of the area in his brain that was affected could cause loss of speech and/or motor functions. To say he was a very brave child is an understatement.

Unfortunately, Joshua didn't want to live the rest of his life having seizures and the doctors had no answers. So he lived his teenage days a bit recklessly, didn't always remember his medication and sometimes mixed them with alcohol. One night a seizure took his life, and gave me the worst day of my life.

His life had given me strength and my life meaning. He had needed me like no one else ever had, and without him I didn't know who I was anymore. Fighting for his life had made me a strong person, but without him I had lost that strength.

Now as a seasoned bereaved parent, I understand that my life will never be like it was before his death. I know that I will always have that hole in my heart, but the pain is managed better now than it was in the early years of my grief. I have my ways of remembering Joshua, and he will always live on inside of me and in the things I do.

In loving memory of my son Joshua, who resides somewhere over the rainbow!

Val Ambrose, TCF Binghamton



## TEARS

Dedicated to my daughter Molly  
2/18/96 – 4/5/00

Maya Cearo St. Petersburg, FL

I find them hidden everywhere.  
In forgotten places, they are there.  
In the laundry where your shirts should be  
In the darkness where my eyes can't see,  
In the store with popsicles, you won't eat,  
In your shoes that no longer hold your feet,  
In the scent of the teddy you'll never hold,  
On the jacket you wore when it got cold.  
I find them and they break my heart  
And tear my grieving soul apart.

On the cups that used to touch your lips,  
On the tutu that once hugged your hips,  
Inside the plastic crayon box  
You played with when you had chicken pox.  
On the tissues I used on your runny noses,  
Out in the garden in the bed of roses.  
They fill my lungs till I have to scream.  
They fall from my eyes even when I dream.  
So I weep, and the worst thing that I fear  
Is without you there'll be no end to the tears.

*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 ...



**NEW MEMBERS**

It is always hard to “Welcome” parents contacting us or coming to our meetings for the first time because we are so very sorry for the reason you have found The Compassionate Friends. However, we are glad you found the courage to reach out for help. We hope you find new friends who truly understand your grief.

A warm welcome to all our new members. Even if it was sad or painful to attend one of our meetings, please come again. It will get easier.

**\*\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\*\***

*The Primrose Newsletter, published quarterly, is available for a year with a suggested subscription of \$7.00 - \$8.00. 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.

## The Sharing Of Grief

I cannot carry this burden alone,  
the road is too steep  
and the pain too great.  
I shall only get to the top of the hill  
if I am able to lean on a firm shoulder  
whose strength lies  
in the reality of the feet  
which bear its weight.  
The sharing of grief  
is the only solution  
to the crisis that surrounds  
bereavement in our age.

To share a person's sorrow  
is to accept their reality  
and to acknowledge the fact  
that none of us is immune from death.

Rev Dr Simon Stephens,  
Founder of The Compassionate Friends

## A Name For My Pain

I have given a name to my pain.  
it's called "Longing."  
I long for what was,  
and what might have been  
I long for his touch  
and smell of sweat;  
I long to hold him one more time.  
I long to look on his beautiful face  
and impress it upon my memories  
and heart.  
I long to return to the day before  
and protect him from his death.  
I long to take his place,  
so he may live and have sons too.  
I long for time to pass much faster,  
so my longing and pain will lessen.  
Will they?

*By June Williams-Muecke  
TCF, Houston West Chapter*

## *Bereaved Parents Group*

Broome County Chapter  
1250 Front St., PMB 147  
Binghamton, NY 13901-1043  
(Address Service requested)

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