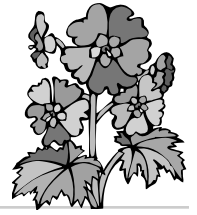


The Primrose



Vol. 33, Issue 2

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Summer 2013



The Greatest Grief

A sudden accident killed your child. That terrible phone call change your life with no warning, you didn't get to say goodbye. This has to be the most terrible loss of all.

Your child died by suicide. You feel you should have been able to prevent it. Your guilt is devastating. How can you live with such an uncomprehendable tragedy?

You only had one child and now you have none. The focus of your life is gone. What's the point of living? What could be more devastating?

You've experienced the deaths of more than one of your children. Will it happen again? How does one survive this pain?

When your baby died, your dreams died. You have few memories and are too young to be suffering like this. This loss is most unfair.

Someone murdered your child, an unbelievable violation. You're angry and your frustration with the legal system feeds your anger. This must be the very worst.

You're a single parent, your child has died, and you have no one to lean on - no one to share your grief. Surely your suffering is the most painful.

The unbelievable has happened, your adult child died. You had invested so much in that child. Now who is going to take care of you in your old age?

You had to watch your child suffer bravely through a long illness. You were helpless to ease his pain and prevent his death. How do you erase those horrible images? Yours must be the greatest grief.

The truth is that the death of any child is the greatest loss, regardless of the cause, regardless of the age. Our own experience is far more painful than we have ever previously envisioned, so how could we possibly comprehend what others have undergone? To make comparisons between our own suffering and the pain of others is an exercise in futility. It accomplishes nothing and sometimes is more hurtful to others.

To say one type of death produces a greater or deeper grief than another tends to place different values on the children who have died. Each child is worthy of 100% of our grief, each person's sorrow is 100% and each loss is 100% because we love each child, those still living and those who have died, with 100% of our being. I can't imagine wanting to walk in the shoes of any other bereaved parent, can you?

By Peggy Gibson, TCF, Nashville, TN



The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

National Office Information

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

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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

Assistant Chapter Leader - Donna Cunningham

Outreach - Luann Ford & Elaine Sahre

Library - Sherry Bailey

Hospitality – Jean Scolaro

Treasurer – Val Ambrose

Newsletter Editor – Val Ambrose

Website Master - Marv Conover

Secretary - Angela Carro

Programs/Events - OPEN

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

**Please consider joining our steering
committee**

**Next steering committee meeting
June 20th, 5:30PM
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.)

June 3rd, 2013 (Monday)

7:00 PM “Grandpas and Dads You Have the Floor”

June 15th, 2013 (Saturday)

10:00AM OPEN sharing

June 20th, 2013 (Thursday)

**5:30 PM Steering Committee Meeting
Call for location**

July 1st, 2013 (Monday)

7:00 PM “Help me Rid my Anger”

July 15th, 2013 (Monday)

6:00 PM “Balloons to Heaven”

August 5th 2013 (Monday)

7:00 PM “I Just Feel Lost”

September 9th, 2013 (Monday)

7:00 PM “Journaling My Story”

**Please note that there are NO Saturday
Meetings July or August**

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.**

Father's Day Revisited

Now I can look back upon that first Father's Day, the first after the death of our son Jeff I was a mess. A man without hope, with little or no reason to continue living, deep in my own depressive grief, I could not share any joy with others. I look back wondering how I could have treated my wife and children as I did while they were trying to celebrate in my honor. Inside, I was crying out, what are these useless gifts? Don't you know the only gift I want is to have my son back?" But it was through the love, caring, understanding and nurturing of those loved ones which has brought me solace from that first Father's Day. Now I can enjoy the joy of others, I can laugh once again, and once again, there is a love worth living.

For all those fathers for whom this is the first Father's Day, have the best day that you can.

P.O.K, TCF Louisville, KY

*Many commented on how "strong" I was.
Little did they know
what was going on inside me.*

*James R. White
Grieving: Our Path Back to Peace.*

11:11

At night before I fall asleep
I lay in bed and pray.
Thankful to have made it through another day
but there's an ache that will not go away.

It's a feeling of both loss and pain
there are still times when I sit and stare.
My happiness seems to have been misplaced,
I can't find it anywhere

For most of your life, those numbers were there
what was the meaning of those elevens?
Since you are gone, I've found the answer.
It's your way of saying "hello" from heaven.

It continues to be sad and incredibly unfair
to have buried a son of twenty seven.
But what more could we want as parents
than to know our child has gone to heaven.

For some time after you died,
those numbers brought pain.
Now I can't wait to see them again.
When I'm lucky enough to see those elevens
I place my hand to my heart,
my eyes to the heavens.

For Brennan
8/11/**-11/05/**
By Tom Murphy

Not Guilt, Regret

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? Why didn't we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error of commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us.

Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm to ever, ever come to our child, the correct name for our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn't feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt—we feel regret.

Kitty Sanders, Nashville, TN, Survivors of Suicide Group

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAPTER LEADER:

Hello Friends,

This past weekend I spent a fair amount of time admiring the colors of spring; yellows, reds, whites, purples, oranges all belonging to the daffodils the tulips and the crocuses. The flowers are splattered everywhere, tucked along highways, placed in raised beds, randomly on hillsides and bordering many yards. All the flowering trees and bushes line the streets, each color out doing the next. They no doubt will be gone by this reading but other spectacular flowers will have taken their place. I am so grateful to actually see those colors and to be able to enjoy their beauty. There was a time after Sean's death that my entire world was in black and white. If you were born in the fifties or before, all TV was black and white. When color TV came and the peacock lit up our screens how exciting was that? That is how I felt when finally after several years my brain allowed my eyes to embrace color again. During the early grief years I did not realize what was happening. Grief does that to us; the power of that emotion takes out our legs from underneath and flattens us without a word. We are traumatized, each day looking for the strength to go on. The club we belong to, the one that no one wants to join, the one that we would all like to revoke our membership to, that same club brings us together uniting us during our grief, allowing us to realize that we know each other better than we think. Let us each help the other to see the color again.....

A few weeks ago the angel of hope committee held a meeting and it was decided that our goal is to find a person, a couple or a family to continue on the maintenance {planting flowers, watering, sweeping} of the surrounding area of the angel. The core committee has been together for almost 13 years and it's time to pass the torch, so to speak. If you are serious and would like more information please contact Claudia @ 648-6715 or you can touch base with me at a meeting or @ 239-4222. The angel has become a place of hope and serenity for so many families following the death of a child, if you have the passion to help to keep the angel in her pristine state then please call. The angel belongs to all of us....visit...sit on a bench...REMEMBER...

The National TCF Conference is quickly approaching, it will be held July 5-7 in Boston, Massachusetts. This conference promises to be one of the largest gatherings of bereaved families ever, uniting parents, grandparents and siblings from across our nation. I believe everyone has received a brochure informing them of the event so if you are interested and you have a question feel free to call or email National TCF, they are very helpful, their information is located on the second page of this newsletter. Maybe I will see you there...

Let me remind you that during July and August Mondays is our only meeting day. Our Balloons to Heaven, our family picnic and balloon launch will be held July 15th at the John and Jeanne Wilfey Park in Port Dickinson on Chenango Street, a postcard will be sent as the date nears. We ask you bring a dish to pass, family and friends. Balloons will be lifted off to our child with loving notes attached. It's rain or shine!!!!

Each day several newly bereaved parents get their membership into our club; the club that separates us from the rest; dues payable only in grief and sadness, but as years pass the TCF veterans such as I try to give hope, love, friendship and an understanding that life will continue and happiness will return with all the brilliant colors; the reds, the oranges, the yellows, the purples as the black and white fades...and fades...and fades. We will never forget our children that I can promise you but their memory becomes a place we long to visit and it makes us smile, sometimes joined by a tear or two. We are united you and I, take my hand or a hand of someone close; never feel you must walk alone. May your summer be safe....and colorful....

Hugs,
Pam Kroft
(Sean's Mom)



*Memories will bring you
love from the past
courage in the present
hope for the future*
By Sascha



*Grief walks with you today,
your constant companion.
But in the morning, tomorrow,
the sunrise of hope waits for you.*
by Sascha

*I found the answer in my heart
for we are not apart
as long as memory
is within my reach
I still can see him
running on the beach.*

By Judi Hinchliffe Sturge

*I came to grieve, but found comfort
here in this garden of memory.
Perhaps our spirits live in perfect
peace in the wonder of each flower
and bird and tree.*

~ Nan Witcomb

Flying a Kite

I have been a kite flyer for a long time. What joy it brought me when I was a child. I remember going up on the high, flat roof of my father's machine shop in the city of New Haven and sending my kites aloft from that rooftop. I felt excitement and wonder as I watched my kite dance among the white clouds and the blue, blue sky. Kites are fun.

Later, as I grew to adulthood, I still had fun with kites, but my kite flying became more contemplative, relaxing and therapeutic for me—a peaceful leisure time activity, much like fishing is to the fisherman.

Kites are such curious toys. Often they are flown as symbols of great events or flown as flags of our emotions—and rightly so—because we put so much of ourselves into the flying of our kites.

In Japan, a kite is flown from the house in which there is a newborn, and the child's name is on the kite, flying over the household and announcing the happy birth. In Bermuda, school children fly kites on Good Friday, not only for fun, but as a tradition to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. The sticks of the kites resemble a cross. I believe that kites are also wonderful symbols of resurrection, ascension, and eternal life.

Now I am a bereaved father. My son, Max Benjamin Rausch, died two years ago in May when he was fifteen and one half months old. I never flew kites with Max. Born in January, he was much too young to participate in kite flying during his first spring, and in his second spring he died. Immediately after Max's funeral I fled to Cape Cod with my wife, Katherine. I was in shock and rage, clutched by a deep, numbing sadness. "Why should Max have to get sick and give up life?" I howled at the heavens. I remember trying to fly a kite at that time on the Cape, on the beach at Nauset, but it brought me no peace. In fact, the harsh winds broke my kite and my kite fell into the ocean. I reeled my kite in, its wood and plastic body broken and lifeless at my feet, like Max's body on the hospital bed.

Time passes, and God's grace slowly heals. I have not "gotten over" Max's death. I will grieve for Max for the rest of my own life. I now visit Max at the cemetery, then I go to a beach and fly a kite for him. And I feel a deep satisfaction and a great sense of release and peace now when I fly a kite for Max, for with my kite ascend all my sorrow, all my joy, all my anger, all my prayers, and all my love.

*Daniel Max Rausch New Haven, CT
In Memory of my son, Max Benjamin Rausch*

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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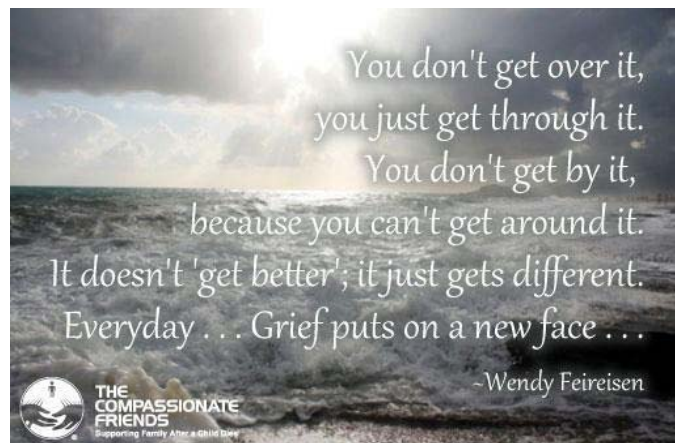
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Grieving is as natural as
crying when you are hurt,
sleeping when you are tired,
eating when you are hungry, or
sneezing when your nose itches!

It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.

Rabbi Earl Grollman
(Calhoun, Michigan TCF Newsletter)



Living Life Is Still An Effort

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when it came time to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year.

I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted.... such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic". What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see the sorrow in each parent. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF, Katy, TX In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

When We Cannot Change

When we cannot change the parts we wish were different, the unfairness and cruelty of life, we've only one choice. To live or die. Yet, to surrender our existence would be to abandon all that is beautiful about our children who died. Indeed, living after a traumatic death is both an act of will and an act of surrender. How does one exist in a world where children die? I think, perhaps, through that for which we are willing to risk everything—love.

*Mr. Livingstone, a father who lost two children.
His eldest son succeeded at suicide, and his youngest, only 13, died of leukemia.*

You're Just a Thought Away

Distance takes us far apart
And darkens my today,
I have to keep remembering-
You're just a thought away.
When the world is too confusing,
And times are hard to bear,
I pull your precious meaning,
Your bright spirit, from the air.
And if I sometimes drift into
a lonely state of mind,
I gather up the memories
Of the days now left behind.
And though you're not beside me,
I can tap into my heart
And draw upon the warmth and love
That now lives while we're apart.
And with these fond reflections
On the times when you were near,
I sense a little bit of what
it's like to have you here...

Bruce B. Wilmer TCF, Brisbane, Australia

Promises of Rainbows

I promise not to offer
Rainbows after storms
Or silver linings beyond the clouds,
But if you have tears of sorrow,
I will share them.
If you have words of anger,
I will hear them.
If you have moments of confusion,
I will help you through them.

Perhaps
Your tears of sorrow today
Will water the seeds
Of tomorrow's garden
Of spiritual growth, of worthy priorities,
Of loving relationships and genuine
Understanding and compassion.
My sad friend, your weeping is not fruit-
less.

Nancy Williams TCF Marlbor, NJ

Re-Entry Into Life

May of brilliant greens, harbinger of summer, mother of daffodils and tulips, warm my soul in your sun glow!
I am in need of that warmth, ready again to feel alive. For so long I have shut out life, unwilling to see beauty in a world without my child, unable to feel joy or love or laughter, longing only for him. I cared for naught for life would have welcomed death.

It has been a long climb, my re-entry into life. In that climb I did not lose the pain of separation, but rather learned to assimilate it into my soul as a part of my life. I here...he there. And so I chance life again, mindful of its brevity, welcoming its brilliant colors, the song of birds, the grace of love.

L. Dolan ~ TCF, Greenland, NH

A Message to My Daughter

Although I never combed your hair- For 9 short months I felt you there.
Although I never heard your cries- A kiss I gave hello—goodbyes.
Although a diaper I never did change- My love for you knew no range.
Although I never pushed you on a swing- A song to you I did sing.
Although your brothers you did not meet- They knew you by your dancing feet.
There will not be a childhood voice- In your destiny I had no choice.
There will not be any Barbie doll clothes- Or pink, yellow, green fancy bows.
There will not be a young woman's face- Just a tear on my heart
No one can erase.

Love and miss you, Mom

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 cont.



The Dream

You came to me this morning in a dream just before I woke. I recognized you as you turned the corner. I looked at you; waiting for the transience of dream forms and saw it was not to be. You stayed together, the same age, with the same smile.

We both knew this was just a visit. You and I both knew this was special. We both knew that my dream was where our two worlds could meet.

I looked at you waiting for the transition, waiting for the change but it did not come. This dream was not of my own making but was shared by you and inhabited by you.

I kissed your cheek and felt your skin and felt my arm around your neck. But that's where it ended. I closed my eyes and felt the distance grow as I rose to awareness and you retreated to longing.

June O'Connor ~ TCF, Central Connecticut Chapter

***** NOTICE *****

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

Please Don't Tell Me

Don't:

Please don't tell me I'm richer for having had him. I am too busy being the poorer for having lost him.

Please don't tell me there is a light at the end of the tunnel. What tunnel is that? My only tunnel vision is consumed with blackness right now.

Please don't tell me I'll understand it all one day. PROMISES. PROMISES. There's nothing like here and now explanations.

Please don't remind me he is in a better place. My maternal instincts have been grossly abused so that he can be there.

Please don't tell me spring will come and birds will sing again. Right now, I only hear they're out of tune, and they jar my no longer musical ears.

Please don't bother to remind me I'll be reunited with him one day. My life is here and now and his face is conspicuously absent.

Please don't tell me things could be worse. I am saturated with the present bleak winter of my grief, and if there's worse than this, then STOP THE WORLD, I WANT TO GET OFF!

Do:

Remind me that if I can do but one small act of kindness, give one dot of comfort, be of value to just one other on this strife torn earth, then I can give no greater gift to my lost child.

TCF, Greene Co. Chapter, Paragould, AR

Bereaved Parents Group

**Broome County Chapter
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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
BROOME COUNTY CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies