

The Primrose



Vol. 34, Issue 2

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Summer 2014



Who Was *That* Person?

Rich Edler, TCF, South Bay/LA Chapter

An eight year retrospective...

Who was that person? He looked like me. But I don't think I know him anymore.

Who was that person? He had so many friends. He was popular at cocktail parties and told good jokes. Today, he seeks out one person he can really talk to and that is enough. His telephone rolodex is a lot smaller, but so much more important.

Who was that person? He had such different priorities. He skated over life, like an ice skater on a frozen pond. He never thought about how cold the water was. Now he has a totally new perspective on the world. He reaches out to people who hurt because he knows how they feel. He has been there. He has felt the ice water.

Who was that person? He had an orderly chronological sense of time. Now the world is divided forever into simply "before" and "after."

Who was that person? He used to rush through dinner or cut the family vacation short to get back to the office. Now he thinks back to the family times as the most wonderful times of his life. He knows what is irreplaceable.

Who was that person? He used to worry about so many imaginary troubles, most of which never happened anyway. Now he spends most of his time in the present. He appreciates today's sunset, daisies, simple things and good friends. He knows how precious each moment is.

Who was that person? He used to think about what he wanted to get out of life. Now he thinks about how grateful he is for the gifts he has had.

Who was that person? He used to measure his goals in terms of where he is going. Now he focuses more on what his life will have been about. He asks less and less why his child died, and more often, "Why did he live?"

Who was that person? He had never heard of The Compassionate Friends. Now they are his best friends. And he knows that by helping someone else through TCF, he also helps himself. *Who was that person?* I don't think I know him anymore.

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

Assistant Chapter Leader - Donna Cunningham

Assistant Chapter Leader - Kim Tholen

Outreach - Luann Ford, Elaine Sahre

Carol Selby & Hank Nanni

Library - Sherry Bailey

Hospitality – Jean Scolaro

Treasurer – Val Ambrose

Newsletter Editor – Val Ambrose

Website Master - Marv Conover

Secretary - Angela Carro

Programs/Events - Cindy Hutchinson

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

**Please consider joining our steering
committee**

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 2nd, 2014 (Monday)

7:00 PM “Welcome Dads and Grandpas”

June 21st, 2014 (Saturday)

10:00AM OPEN Sharing

July 7th, 2014 (Monday)

7:00 PM “Everyone is LOL, Help Me!”

July 14th, 2014 (Monday)

6:00 PM Balloons to Heaven @

Jeanne and John Wilfley Park in Port Dickinson

August 4th, 2014 (Monday)

7:00 PM “Will The Sadness End”

September 8th, 2014 (Monday)

7:00 PM “Men-Right Women-Left”

Please Note:

**There are No Saturday meetings in
July and 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.**

BALLOON LAUNCH

Karen Nelson
Box Elder County Chapter, UT

I took some words
 from my heart today
I let the ink fill out
 the letters on my card
I love you it read
and simply added
 I miss you.



I had pondered how to
fill that blank space with
words of you.
I wondered whether to speak of laughter
or of tears
to speak of hopes or of dreams
and came to this...
I love you
I miss you

Through all the emotional gamut
that death can bring...
these two thoughts remain
most constant

Through anger, pain, guilt,
and that questioning ache...
they will remain
Etched forever on my heart
a human memorial.
I love you
I miss you.

And now I send them skyward
attached to my balloon,
That seems to effortlessly lift
to meet the clouds
and I think of you.
I love you
I miss you.



Submitted by Bertie Sullivan
A poem from Molly's House

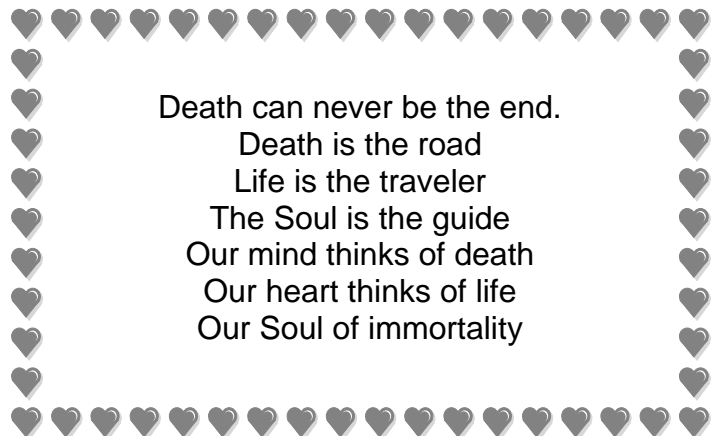
As I sit in heaven
And watch you everyday
I try to let you know with signs
I never went away

I hear you when you're laughing
And watch you as you sleep
I even place my arms around you
To calm you as you weep

I see you wish the days away
Begging to have me home
So I try to send you signs
So you know you are not alone

Don't feel guilty that you have
Life that was denied to me
Heaven is truly beautiful
Just you wait and see

So live your life, laugh again
Enjoy yourself, be free
Then I know with every breath you take
You'll be taking one for me



Death can never be the end.
Death is the road
Life is the traveler
The Soul is the guide
Our mind thinks of death
Our heart thinks of life
Our Soul of immortality

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAPTER LEADER:

Hello my friends,

By this time we have hopefully all shaken away the winter blues and settled into a warm and sunny late spring and summer. The death of our child does not play favorites to the seasons or the weather. We grieve in winter, spring, summer and fall. We grieve in snow, rain, sunshine and overcast days. No magic pill, no antidote, no time table for our sadness and pain. We push through it and through it and eventually will have days not filled with just grief but days slowly filling again with life.

This month please be reminded we have two TCF meetings, one on Monday and one on Saturday. Starting in July and continuing into August we only meet on Mondays resuming back to "normal" in September. I always say there is no hiatus for our grief so if you want to get together let me know and we can meet for coffee, maybe at the angel park. I love to walk the park and it gives me a great reason to visit our angel, to sit, to remember and reflect on life as it is today, right at this minute. We are a unique group; different ages, professions, genders, political parties and religion. All that is gone when we walk through the door of a TCF meeting or open our Primrose, we are then parents whose children have died. That's what truly unites us and makes us unique. No one in the whole universe can understand [nor do we want them to] how our lives, our future have been changed. When you walk in the shoes of a bereaved parent, a grandparent or sibling then you begin to understand. You and I know how quickly life can be altered, one day life is good then poof! Changed forever!

July 14th at 6:00 p.m. we shall enter the Jeanne and John Wilfley Park in Port Dickinson on Chenango Street for our "Balloons to Heaven"; a potluck supper followed by a balloon lift-off with messages to our children. It's an evening that brings us and our families together, a time where our sadness can be put in our safe place, to watch the balloons travel upward is like no other sight, as we try to track our child through the color of balloon we have chosen for their message. It's also an opportunity to visit our angel located in the park, a short walk from the picnic pavilion. A postcard will be sent as the event nears.

We have several new members that have found the strength and courage to join us for a meeting, a task that we sometimes want to avoid as it makes our tragedy so real. I would like to thank you, I remember when I made that first meeting, how nervous I was not knowing what to expect. I was convinced that after that first meeting I would be given a remedy for my grief: what I did find was parents just like you and I sitting in a room comforting each other and giving each other the hope for a future that would someday contain life worth living, not necessarily as I knew it before Sean died; but a different life.

I do have a task for you, one of our daughters has offered to put together a collage of photos of our children for the candlelight service held the second Sunday of December. Brianna Bailey will put the photos on a CD and we will display it during our fellowship following our service. This project will take some time so I encourage you to either email Brianna at Briannabailey6@aol.com or hard copy her a photo in the mail at 34 Sturtevant Street, Johnson City, New York, 13790, always remembering to make a copy of the precious photo as it may not be returned. We will try to have the hard copies at the event if you wish to have the photo back. Also I think you should include your child's name, I am not sure if she can add the name to the photo but if she can it will be available to her. For me I must do this soon or it shall leave my memory and then Sean's photo will not be scrolled with the rest of our children. Our steering committee loved the idea that Brianna presented to us. She is doing this in memory of her Dad, Ryan Bailey.

Let me remind you that there is never a day you must walk alone during this difficult time of your life. Call one of the numbers in this newsletter, the voice on the other end will bring comfort to a sad day. Let myself and the others be your listening ear, sometimes that's all we need. We can offer hope, understanding and friendship for as long as it takes to once again have life fill in your days.

Hugs to all,
Pam Kroft
(Sean's Mom)



I'll Never Know

By LisaMarie Emerle from

How do I say goodbye ...
when I didn't get to say hello?
I want so bad to keep you ...
how do I let you go?

I have so many dreams,
so much love I want to share
There's nothing I can do ...
why is life unfair?

You're my perfect angel...
I dreamed you long ago
I never got to hold you but
it breaks my heart to let you go

God will rock you in your cradle
and watch you as you sleep
I will love you in my heart ...
it's all I get to keep

you are blessed my child ...
you're in heaven up above
You'll never be alone. ...
you have Mommy & Daddy's love

Hush my little baby...
you need not ever cry
You were always wanted!
I wish you didn't die
You'll be my sunshine in the day
and brightest star at night
Reach for God's hand and go to the light

I would rather endure the pain
of losing you right now
Then the thought of you suffering thru life...
we'll get thru somehow

I was blessed to have you briefly...even
though I have to let you go
I wish I knew the reason but
I guess I'll never know

A Name for My Pain

By June Williams-Muecke TCF Houston West, TX

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?

The Wedding Dance

A gorgeous wedding, a beautiful bride,
The families complete and filled with pride.
The first dance for only the bride and groom,
Watched by all lovingly throughout the room.
Then daddy and daughter take their special turn,
Remembering what each from the other did learn.
Next mother and son, as they whirl 'round the floor,
Remember the love that their hearts did outpour.
As the groom seats his mom and reclaims his bride,
His mother remembers and holds tears inside.
A gorgeous wedding, a beautiful bride,
The groom is not my son, my son has died.



Sondra Wright, TCF Atlanta GA

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.

Removed for online version

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED continued

Removed for online version

They whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before.
They are now ...wherever we are.
St John Chryspstom

What About Vacations?

Elaine Stillwell

When your heart is hurting after the loss of a loved one, you wonder if you will ever be able to "take a vacation" from grief. There are many answers to this question. The secret is to find the right one for you.

Vacations for my family were spent mostly at home. Our work schedules rarely permitted us time to go away and with three children we found traveling to be expensive. I have always lived on Long Island (NY), and my parents brainwashed us to think that living on Long Island was a permanent vacation. Do you think they worked for the tourist board?

After my 19 year old daughter, Peggy, and my 21 year old son, Denis, died in the same automobile accident, I never planned a vacation to "get away" from my surroundings. My home was my "nest" and the source of great comfort to me. Not everybody feels this way. Staying with the familiar made me feel comfortable. Having my support circle nearby was important to me. Enjoying the pleasures that I had shared with Peggy and Denis kept them close to my heart. Even though tears could accompany these pleasures, the tears were healing. Whether it was simply walking along the beach where we had many family outings, or sitting by the pool where we had spent so many hours with swim team, or watching a soccer game which took so much of our time with three teens in the family, or noticing their favorite colors, flowers, TV programs, or foods. These things helped reinforce their presence forever in my mind, never to be erased.

Some families agonize whether to go away for a vacation after losing a loved one and some families can't get away fast enough! So you see how different we all are. It's tough for husbands and wives who disagree about vacation plans to find a reasonable "compromise" to give relief to their individual styles of grieving. The rule of thumb is: Do what helps you. If taking a cruise, or flying to a distant sunny haven, or visiting a mountain or seaside retreat, or just relaxing at a nearby resort helps you gain a moment of peace, do it. But one thing I must caution you about, don't go alone. There is time to reflect or quietly meditate wherever you are, but when you are hurting so terribly, it is not wise to be alone for long periods of time. However, it is good to have someone to share your thoughts with, releasing some of those feelings that are haunting you. Having a good listener with you is wonderful medicine for you. It's also good to have someone to hug. Remember, you need 4 hugs a day for survival, 8 hugs a day for maintenance, and 12 hugs a day for growth. Therefore, make sure you vacation with the right person!

Many grieving families that I have met have found solace in a trip "away" from their home base. Sometimes, just the change is what they need. Other times, it's leaving work or that "empty chair" behind. A little sunshine can warm our souls, so the warmer climates appeal to us and seem to bring an inner cheer. I know I am a "sunshine" person and can accomplish ten times as much on a sunny day, so I'm sure a sunny vacation would be productive for me.

In my early days of bereavement, I found that taking a little photo album like a "grandma's brag book" with me, filled with my favorite pictures of my Peggy and Denis, made it feel as if they were with me. Packing that album in every pocketbook I used, whether the large everyday variety or the tiny evening bag, it was like a pacifier to me. When a friend of mine told me that she dreaded going on vacation "without her daughter along," I suggested she take a little picture album, crammed full of her daughter's snapshots, with her on the trip and she did. When she returned, she called me and happily announced that it had made a difference to her, releasing some of that emptiness she had felt. So take a chance and try something different to help your heart. You might surprise yourself!

Other bereaved friends could not bear to stay home for major holidays and off they flew to far-away vacation spots. That worked for them, getting away from the hoopla of the holidays and the family gatherings that they did not feel strong enough yet to attend. Some of these bereaved families said they found a respite from their grief while "on vacation" but that coming home was the hardest, causing feelings of depression when they returned. So, we all have to find the balance that fits our lives.

It doesn't happen overnight. It's something that requires "trial and error" by us to find the blend that lifts our spirits. Vacations can be a time of "renewal" for us. We all know that we need a vacation "from grief." We just have to figure out what kind of vacation our own heart needs. Good luck!



GRATITUDE ... THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

Richard Edler, TCF South Bay/LA, CA

In Memory of my son Mark Edler

I am convinced that the real key to happiness is gratitude. I did not come upon this insight. I learned it from Dennis Prager, a wonderful and gifted man who is both author and talk show host for KNBC radio in Los Angeles. I give him all the credit. But I have thought a lot about this idea after my son, Mark, died five years ago tomorrow.

At first I was offended by people who smiled or even laughed during The Compassionate Friends meetings. These were the people who seemed to have somehow re-entered the land of the living. How dare they greet each other with hugs. How dare they laugh. How dare they appear normal when their children have died. But over the last seven years I have learned three valuable lessons:

- Life goes on and we must too. Gradually the pain eases and the warm memories replace the sadness. Gradually we return to life. One day we find that is 11:00 in the morning and we have not thought about our child yet. At first we feel guilt. But then we also realize we are going forward. We will never forget. But we decide that the loss of our child will not be the all-consuming factor in our life. We choose to enjoy friends again. We choose to go out to dinner again. We choose to laugh again. I am convinced that this is what our children would want for us. The pain does not bring our child back. It only makes us miserable without end.

- Become grateful for what we have, not focused on what we have lost. I see people in our chapter meetings who have gone through "every parent's nightmare" and want no part of life again. But, I ask that these compassionate friends also think about the ways they have been blessed, as well as hurt. In my experience, most people have more to be thankful for than they realize: health, other children, a loving family, a career they enjoy, financial security, life in a free country, a faith that works for them, a true best friend, a spouse who they love. Nobody has it all. But compared to most of the world, we have a lot.

- The life we now lead will be better than it would have been. That does not make our child's death a good thing. It just means that our child's life mattered, and it has changed us forever. It means that in some small way the world will be better because our child lived, and we are the ones who can make it so. We have a new sense of priorities. We don't "sweat the small stuff." We know what matters because we know what is irreplaceable. And we know how deeply other people hurt because we, too, have been there. We "know how they feel."

And when our life is different and better because our child lived, then that child is never forgotten. Each of us would do anything in the world to go back in time, but we can't. It is up to us now to go forward, and we can.

Beautiful Dream

Eyes open wide
I awake from a beautiful dream
Within seconds the painful reality of my life sets in
I find myself wanting to scream
Grief so strong
Impossible to explain
Living with a broken heart
Struggling with the pain
Eyes closed tight
I pray for that beautiful dream
A short escape from the painful reality
That makes me want to scream
Robert Willis ~ TCF, Frederick, MD

Sometimes

Sometimes, something clicks, and with a tear, remembrance of the pain and the loneliness floods the heart.

Sometimes, something clicks, and with a smile, remembrance of the love and the laughter floods the senses.

And there are times when nothing clicks at all and a voice echoes through the emptiness and numbness, never finding the person who used to fill that space.

And sometimes the most special times of all a feeling ripples through your body, heart, and soul that tells you that person never left you, and he's right with you through it all.

Kristen Hansen ~ TCF, Kenifield, CA

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:

Removed for online version

LOVE Gifts Contined ...

Removed for online version

To Sink Or Swim

To sink or swim are not the only alternatives in life. Many survive just by **floating**. There were many times after my son died that I did feel as though I was sinking below the waves of grief and I was just too exhausted to try and swim to the other side of that lake of pain. It was at those times that I just floated. By floating, it may have taken me longer to reach the shore than it would have if I had tried to swim, but the shore seemed just so far away that I wouldn't have made it by swimming anyway. But by just floating along with the current, I did not sink, and the other side is getting closer all the time.



**** 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 _____

(if new)

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 are mentioned in the Love gift section of the newsletter.

THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

Those of us who have travelled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile,
That first mile of no relief.
It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us of ways to deal.
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.
Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs.
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.
We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.

Nancy Myerholtz, TCF Waterville/Toledo, OH

One Step

Take one step, just one step,
That's all you need to do today.
Take one step, just one little step,
By reaching out your hand to someone else.
Some of us have walked this path before you.
It's a rough path,
But we can make it.
Hang on to me and I'll hang on to you.
We may stumble, we may even fall,
But we'll get up again,
And we'll start with just one step.
Your hands linked with mine,
We'll make it. Yes, we can make it,
All of us together,
Just one step at a time.

Marilyn Willett Heavilin



*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.*



The Compassionate Friends

Broome County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PERMIT # 52
ENDICOTT NY