

The Primrose



Vol. 29, Issue 4

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Winter 2009

Holiday Package Special Handling Please

Mary J. Pinkava, TCF Atlanta GA

I was handed a package the other day.
It was wrapped securely to be mailed away.
Attached to the outside, as plain as could be,
Was a note for all to see.

Please rush through the holiday season;
Too painful to open for any reason.
Contained within, find one broken heart,
Fragile, broken, falling apart.

Tried to go shopping the other day,
The hype of the season blew me away.
Sat down to write cards. That was insane.
Couldn't find the list, or think of my name.

People say, "Come over, and be of good cheer."
"Celebrate the holidays, prepare a New Year."
But my grief overwhelms me.
Like waves in the sea.

Can they cope with me crying, an unsettled me?
I don't have any holiday cheer.
Decorations, traditions, big family meal.
I can't do this year. Do you know how I feel?

Guilty and frustrated! I've let everyone down!
Our holiday celebrations used to be the best in town.
So just ship me away. Address unknown.
When my grief is better, I might fly home.

A Little Farther Down the Road By Alan Pedersen in memory of his daughter, Ashley Marie Pedersen

I know those tears you're crying.
I've been in your shoes.
You feel like there's no use in trying.
Like there's nothing left to lose.
You take one step forward,
Move two steps back.
You may not see it now
But it won't always be like that.

A little farther down the road,
You'll see the sun again.
A little farther down the road,
You'll look back at where you've been.
You'll see how far you've come
And you'll find the strength to go
A little farther down the road.

This journey is not easy.
It's a winding road
Filled with twists and turns.
You can make it, believe me.
In time you'll learn
Your greatest love comes
From your deepest pain.
And there's power in that love
To help you rise again.

A little farther down the road,
You'll see the sun again.
A little farther down the road,
You'll look back at where you've been.
You'll see how far you've come
And you'll find the strength to go
A little farther down the road.

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 - Michelle Simonds

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

**Next steering committee meeting
Thursday January 21st
Call Pam Kroft for information**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Meetings:

First Monday 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Unless otherwise indicated

Third or fourth Saturday 10:00 A.M.

(Check calendar!)

NIMMONSBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

918 Front Street, Binghamton

(Across from BCC, next to the Credit Union.

Parking in the rear, enter through rear door.)

December 7th, 2009 (Monday)

7:00 “What is Best for Me?”

December 13th, 2009 (Sunday)

6:00 “Candle Light Service”

December 19th, 2009 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

January 4th, 2010 (Monday)

7:00 “Channeling our Sorrow”

January 16th, 2010 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

January 21st, 2010 (Thursday)

6:00 Steering Committee Meeting

February 1st, 2010 (Monday)

7:00 “What’s the Emotion of the Hour?”

February 20th, 2010 (Saturday)

10:00 OPEN FORUM

March 1st, 2010 (Monday)

7:00 “Share our Memories”

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,

Here it is already the holiday season, the carols are being played at the mall, the lights are strung on the houses, kitchens are full of delicious aromas, people are hustling and bustling buying just the perfect gift for a loved one. For many of the moms and dads reading this the 35 days between Thanksgiving and New Years will be a bit more challenging and difficult. The normal anticipation of this time of year is already full of stress and expectations, but when you have lost a child [whatever the age], fear and sadness join the mix. Our past and present collide, while everyone else is asking what your favorite color is for that scarf they are knitting you or what shall we have for holiday dinner, our questions are something like these, " Will this holiday be awful? ", "Will I ever be happy again? ", "What do I really have to be thankful for? ".

We are fortunate this very month to have our annual candle lighting, a night that brings us all together to meld the past and present. This special evening is our way to remember and honor our children and to be with other moms, dads, family members and friends as we all embark on the holiday season. The service will be held in the church sanctuary, if you have difficulty climbing stairs please park at the front of the church located on Front Street. Our service begins at 6:00 p.m., an evening filled with love and hope for a peaceful season. A dish to pass for the fellowship following is appreciated, but only if you feel up to it. There is also a memory table to display photos and mementoes of your child. Located near the memory table will be a box for bereavement books either to be returned or donated to our TCF library. I know we all have one or two books that have been sitting on a shelf collecting dust that may greatly help a newly bereaved parent. I find if while reading this I go and retrieve the books then I will remember them for December 13th. One of the profound senses that we lose immediately after our child has died is memory, I am not sure if that ever fully returns. If you are unable to attend but would like a candle lit and have your child's name read during the service please give me a call @ 239-4222 and I will make sure that your child is remembered and honored. If for some reason the weather is a factor there will be updates on our website as to cancellation.

The year 2010 will be here in a flash challenging us to find new paths of survival and ways of coping with our grief. Our meetings in the new year will focus on just that, helping us to find the coping skills and tapping into the 'veteran parents' to aide in our survival, finding that glimpse of hope that does exist in our futures. Whether it's from reading the newsletter or from coming to a meeting I hope all of you know that you are never alone, we are just a phone call away. Don't hesitate if you are having a bad day and just need for someone to listen. Our January and February meetings will cover channeling our sorrow and the emotion of the hour. Our March meeting will once again bring our memory night which encourages parents to share a special memory, a photo, or favorite food; however you wish to share your child with the group.

One of the questions posed earlier for bereaved parents during the holiday season was, 'What do I have to be thankful for?' I can answer that for myself, I am thankful that 15 years ago I had a friend who found this TCF group for me, for the love, hope and understanding I have received over the years from the group, and for the dedicated steering committee that gives their time and energy so that other moms and dads can find their way during their early years after their child dies. I feel extremely blessed to be a part of this organization and to be able to continue the mission of walking with other bereaved parents as they too shall never walk alone.

Hugs to all,
Pam
(Sean's Mom)



Love knows not its own depth

Until the hour of separation

~ Kahlil Gibran



THIS I CAN SHARE WITH YOU

By Marilyn W. Heavlin

I have not experienced the death of my only child,
But some of us have.
I have not experienced a child dying by suicide,
But some of us have.
I have not watched my child fight a terminal illness,
But some of us have.
None of us would dare say,
"I know just how you feel".
Even if our experiences are similar,
No two situations are exactly alike.
But I can say
I remember the pain when my child died.
I remember the feelings of insanity.
I remember the feelings of aloneness.
I remember wishing I could die.
I remember wanting to share something with my Child,
but he wasn't there.
So, my friend, our experiences have parts in Common,
and parts that are different!
So, why should we listen to each other?
Do we have anything to share?
Do you know what heartbreak feels like?
All of us do.
Do you know the numbness of grief?
All of us do.
Do you know what it's like to have empty arms?
All of us do.
So, let's learn what we can of our commonalities.
We loved a child, but our child left too soon.
THIS WE CAN SHARE WITH YOU

Candles in December

by Sally Migliaccio

My sadness seems reflected
in the music that I hear..
Every young one's glowing face
reminds me you're not here.
Shoppers crowd the festive stores;
emotions all run high
This world I was a part of once,
before that sad July.
This season's meant for happy times;
for love, warm hearts, and cheer.
But grieving families 'round the world
remember those not here.
We struggle through the season,
lighting candles to proclaim
Our children aren't forgotten,
'round the world our candles flame.
I slowly pass through gates
thrown wide one clear,
cold Christmas Day.
No toys or playthings do I bring -
those gifts of yesterday.
I carry with me just a polished heart
of granite made
And walk with grief to where she lies
in a silent, silvered glade.
"Merry Christmas, love," I whisper —
the quiet words seem so forlorn.
"I've brought my heart for you to keep,
my gift this Christmas morn.
It is filled with all my love,
though this one's carved of stone..
I'll place it here — it will be near —
you'll never be alone."
We parents don't forget, my love;
this month we will unite
To honor all we'll
light a wall of candles through the night.
The world will know our memories
glow with love that's deep and true
We'll stand as one, and 'fore it's done
the Heavens will know, too.
Please keep my gift, beloved child,
close to where you lie,
And know my love surrounds you
'til the day I too shall die.
On the tenth of December
my candle's flame will light
I pray you'll see the love
we'll free into the starry night.

WISHING YOU

Peace

Thinking of Joseph today

Linda L. Terry - MHASt Binghamton, NY

I decided to write this account of the brief yet profoundly meaningful life of my youngest son, Joseph. He was born twenty four years ago. I am hoping that it will in some way help someone who has gone through or is going through the loss of a precious and beloved child. Having been through this experience so many years ago, I hope to offer some hope and solace to grieving parents and loved ones. Today I cry as if it were yesterday. It is so sad even still. But, I have precious and living memories of the significance of Joseph's brief yet beautiful life. He still lives on in my heart and I believe he is waiting for me and his brother and his dad to join him in the Blessed afterlife. I have kept him close to me all these years. There is a yearning that feels like my heart wants to leave my chest when I think of him sometimes.

Joseph was born at 9:41 on May 19, 1985 and passed away at 9:41 the next day. He taught me the meaning of how important a day can be. I didn't sleep a wink, I just held him for all the time I was allowed. He labored for every breath of those 24 hours, having been born with a neural tube defect that was the most serious of its' kind. Anencephaly if you know the term. No one would have considered him beautiful, but I did. I was able to be with him the whole time he lived. I do believe that he still lives, both in my heart and in heaven above. I was still a young woman of only 29 years when he was born. I remember seeing the beautiful spring sunshiny blue sky and observing the new leaves on the trees on my way home from Lourdes Hospital on May 20th of that year. It was strikingly beautiful in contrast to the abject pain that I was in. There are no words for it as you know. I still to this day try to drive down Riverside Drive every spring to see the new spring leaves and to remember those poignant moments of leaving the hospital without my beloved baby. The tears well as I remember all of this. I am with you in your suffering and share this monumental burden. I don't want you to think that it is always as painful as it is right now for some of you. Life goes on though it doesn't feel like it should. Time helps as many well-wishers will tell you. Life consumes much of our time and attention. But the scar is there for us to suffer.

There is more to it though. There is a vast amount of love and affection that Joseph has brought into my life and the life of his brother who was only four years old at the time. The experience has shaped him as it has me. Joseph has become so meaningful in my life and all the heartache has just served to make me love him more. I am blessed by all the love that he brought into my life. We have carried Joseph with us throughout our lives since he came to be with us. Enshrined in our hearts, he lives on and has built a foundation of love which without him never would have existed. I remember how precious my time with him was, yet he also has been with me all these years in memory and in all the hopes and desires I have about what Heaven will be like when I see him again. Joseph has held a place in my heart that has been made richer and more loving than I otherwise would have ever known. There is a gift with these precious ones. That gift is LOVE and more than you could ever have imagined.

Holiday Thoughts

Dennis Klass TCF - St. Louis, MO

For those who think that Christmas and Chanukah are just nice days to give and get presents, bereaved parents have another message. Mixed with the joy is the knowledge of sadness. With the hope of birth comes the threat of death. We should not try to cover up our sadness in front of people, for we have a lesson to teach them.

But the holidays have a lesson for us, too. Yes, there is death. Yes, there is great bitterness in life. There is darkness. But there is hope. There is birth. There is light. In a society which works so hard to deny death, perhaps only bereaved parents and a few others can truly understand the depths of these holidays.



When the time comes
for lighting festive candles,
let them remind you
not only of what you lost
but also of what you had.

Sascha



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*

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Memorial Candles

-Robert F. Gloor

These candles burning each December,
Symbols of those we remember,
Bring forth tears which freely flow
And mingle with the candles' glow.
But thoughts of each dear girl and boy,
Those who no more may bring us joy,
Now cause our hearts to fill with pain
As we assemble here again.
Though tears still come in times ahead,
To gratitude we must be led
That for a while we held our child
And sometimes cried, but often smiled.
May every candle lit tonight
Bring back into the memory's sight
The joys we knew, mixed with the tears,
From our dear children through the years.



Date & Time: December 13, 2009 6:00 PM

Location: Nimmonsburg United Methodist Church,
918 Upper Front St, Binghamton, NY

Highlights: Readings, special music, and readings of children's names with candle light ceremony. Candles will be provided.

Bring: Picture or remembrance of your child(ren) and a dish to pass.

Special Events (after): Potluck dinner with a memory table for our children's pictures or remembrances.

Contact: Michelle Simonds

Phone: 607-821-8330 **Email:** micsim66@yahoo.com

Ways to thaw, Survive and Find Hope

By Darcie D. Sims, P. D.

- * Brush your teeth, every morning. No matter what else happens, do that and you are on your way. Just keeping a routine is a way to counteract the craziness. It is a “responsible, adult” thing to do and is a start. Just do it. Your dentist, mother and everyone you encounter will be glad you did.
- * Take out the trash. Just get it out of the house. Someday you can try getting it out on the right day.
- * Be realistic. It will hurt, but don’t try to block bad moments. Be ready for them. Let those hurting moments come, deal with them and let them go.
- * Take care of yourself physically. Eat right. Exercise (or at least watch someone else). If nothing else, jog your memory.
- * Leave the word “ought” out of this holiday season. Work at lifting depression. Take responsibility for yourself. We cannot wait for someone else to wrap up some joy and give it to us. We have to do that for ourselves. Think of things you enjoy and give yourself a treat occasionally.
- * Buy a gift. Buy a gift for yourself. Wrap it, but don’t hide it! Just when you think you are going “off the deep end”, open it up and enjoy. While you are buying a gift for yourself, buy one for your loved one as well. Wrap it up and give it away to someone who might not otherwise have a gift. Pass on the love you shared together and it can never die.
- * Breathe. In and out, in and out. It’s that simple and that hard. Some days just breathing is all you can manage. Other days it’s a bit easier, so relax and enjoy those moments when you can remember your loved one’s life instead of focusing only on the death.
- * Hang the stockings; place a wreath on the grave. Do whatever feels right for you and your family.
- * Make a snow angel. Get outside. Catch snowflakes. Build a sand castle. Take a memory walk.
- * Put something that reminds you of your loved one in your pocket and every time you need a hug, just pat your pocket and recall the loving connection between you. I carry a rock with me always, to remind me of the steadiness, security and sturdiness of his love. I’ve carved the word *HOPE* on that rock so I won’t forget what hope is all about. Hope isn’t a place or a thing. Hope isn’t the absence of pain, or sadness or sorrow. Hope is possibility. Hope is the memory of love given and received.

Surviving really isn’t too hard. Living can be. No matter how crazy the world or out of “snyc” you feel, don’t lose the treasure of your loved one’s presence in your life. You don’t have to say good-bye. You don’t stop loving someone just because he died

Claim your grief and your unique way of surviving. Do whatever it takes to remember the life of your loved one, not just the death.

Each footprint is unique, each hurt is different, and each snowflake the only one ever created. Your love is real, just as is your pain. But leave the regrets behind in the slush. Bring the joy of loving with you into this holiday season. Let its memory light your world. Our loved ones died, but we did not lose them.

Time and space become meaningless for us. The bonds between us are too strong to let death sever the ties. So light a candle and whisper a *thank you* for the moments you traveled together. Our arms may be empty, but the heart is full. And every time you see a snowflake or just imagine one, remember to cherish its unique design and pattern... and to cherish your unique footprint through grief.



Newly Bereaved...

Margaret Gerner TCF, St. Louis, MO

There is a wide variation in time for recovery, just as there is a wide variation in our grief experiences. How long it will take each of us to reach this point of being comfortable is impossible to predict, and different for each of us. I think much of the timing has to do with how effectively we have faced and worked through our grief. Because I did not grieve in a healthy way for many years after Arthur was killed, I had to begin to grieve properly six years after to reach a point where I feel no pain at the thought that Arthur is dead. My daughter, also a bereaved parent, had the support of TCF and reached a comfortable point in a much shorter time.

I know that what I have said is hard to believe. For that reason I would suggest that you accept this with blind faith for the time being. Then, when the pain becomes more devastating than usual, think of what I have said. Think of it as a rope hanging "out there" for you to grab on to. Think of it as a rope of hope. Recovery is the end of this terrible journey.

Five Years Later What I Have Learned

By Tamie Dodge, Atlanta Chapter, TCF

January 14 will be my daughter, Jessica's, fifth angel date. She passed away on Jan. 14, 2004, only 16 years old. I remember shortly after her death wondering if I would feel the same depth of sadness after five years. I am not sure why I focused on five years. I suppose that – back then – it seemed impossible that she was gone five seconds and could not imagine life still moving forward into years.

I remember my sister asking me shortly after her death, "What have you learned from this?" I remember thinking that that was a very odd question. At that time, all I had learned was what the horrible depth of true grief was like and how little control I really had over the most important things in my life, the well being of my children.

In a way her question upset me, even though I did not tell her that. It upset me as I felt she was trying to analyze my grief the same way she analyzed her divorce. She has a Masters Degree in Psychology and she has a tendency to over analyze many things to the point that I feel she loses touch with people's true emotions.

I now look back and ask myself that same question. What have I learned from the experience of losing a child?

- I will still say that I learned that we can try to control the things that are most important to us, but only to a point.
- I learned that we have little control over the things that we cannot predict.
- I have learned how to be much more compassionate toward all people as we just don't know what their experiences have been.
- I have learned how not to take anything for granted.
- I have learned to tell the people I love how I feel on a regular basis as you just never know what the future will hold.
- I have learned what is truly precious in life and it is not summed up in things, but people.
- I have also learned that I have much more to learn and my search for all of the answers will last a lifetime.

Jessica has taught me so many things, both in life and in her death. I miss her with all of my heart, mind and soul. I can still see her so clearly in my mind. In my mind I can still hear her belly laughs and smell her fragrance. For this I am eternally grateful. I just pray that if I am still here on this earth 20 years from now I can say the same thing.

Jessica, I love you, miss you, want you back more then I can say. I hope you are dancing with the angels.

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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Challenge and Change

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun-loving, but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the old us too, and their comments show it. "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar that shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when a child dies. We wonder, our families wonder-when will we come out of it? Will we make it through the long sleep? What hues will we show when we emerge? If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of the cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy- but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the new us. When our priorities become different and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from the cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge, then we can say proudly: "I have survived against overwhelming odds." Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and the challenges give me hope that I can be happy. I can feel fulfilled again. I can love again.

Sherry Mutcher TCF-Appleton, WI

*** 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.

A Christmas Rose
By Jane Bateman

What is the holiday without your smile..
the sound your laughter makes with sparkling eyes.
And joy that once had filled your every room
now wilted like a rose that blooms and dies
The house so strangely quiet shouts, you are not there
While others take things that once were yours
and memories bring tears too great to bear
I wish I could hear your voice again..
and sing the songs that filled our last brief hours
When arms wrapped around my neck spoke of your love
and strong oak shrank in time to gentle flower
I've longed for those late nights and things we shared
thoughts of your childhood silly pranks you tried
The day you jumped off your Grandma's roof
and found that Mary Poppins too, had lied
No, longing for your face won't make it come
your voice is quiet, still no laugh remains
And no one can fill your place, my own sweet child
My Christmas rose, can never bloom again
But in the highest Heaven, songs are heard
The voices of the Kingdom blend
A tiny babe that was born this day
And now my Christmas rose blooms just for Him

The Day After Christmas
by Lyndie Sorenson

The day after Christmas and all through the house
The packages sit opened...books candles and blouse
The stockings all flat now... laying down on the floor
My heart that keeps beating hurts down to it's core

Another long holiday season has gone
Children had waited for Santa so long
But all that I wanted for Christmas this year
Was again my sweet child that did not appear

No lights on the tree as I sit in the dark
The fireplace not burning... not even a spark
The memories of past Christmases are now bittersweet
For without you for Christmas... life is not complete

I look all around for signs you were here
When out of my eyes come the sprinkling of tears
I miss you so much.... words cannot express
And unfortunately with time... others just don't care less

I will pack all the ornaments take down the tree
And again I will ask myself... how can this be
That each holiday that comes causes terrible grief
Each year that does pass...has brought little relief

*Your expiration date is shown in the lower right hand corner of your mailing label.
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Bereaved Parents Group

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