



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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MARCH 2010

WALKING THIS VALLEY—Tucson Chapter VOL. 27, NO. 03

TUCSON CHAPTER MEETINGS

Catalina United Methodist Church
2700 E. Speedway Room H-232
7:00 —9:00 PM

March 10

March 24

April 14

April 28

BULLETIN!!!

**We're back in our original digs in
March!**

**The church assures us that the ceiling has
been fixed and we can move back to our
regular H-232 room!**

And, mark your calendars...

**April 10th: TCF annual picnic and
balloon release at CHILDREN'S
MEMORIAL PARK!**

WITH APOLOGIES & THANKS!

We had a change of leaders that should have been noted in our February issue. No excuses!

Thanks to **Sal Cataudella** for his two years as co-leader. He was responsible for reserving the Children's Memorial Park for our balloon lift-offs and our World Wide Candle-lighting. He handled the insurance acquisition for these events. He also represented TCF with Outreach for several community events. Welcome to **Carl Luikart** for volunteering as the new co-leader with **Kathie Davis**.

Thanks to **Carl and Maureen Luikart** for serving as our most capable treasurers, and their leadership in the World Wide Candle lighting program and providing space for our yard sale! And welcome to **Audrey Russell-Kibble** who takes over the treasurer's duties.

Thanks to **Karen Bailey (outreach)** for keeping us supplied with brochures and to **Kathy Parfrey** who takes over that responsibility. To **Scott Parfrey** for assisting in fund raising.

To our new **volunteers, Cindy and Guy Walters**, who will be responsible for the library and the new attendee coordinator and donates the water for our meetings.

And to our on-going **volunteers: Pam Zarte, Noelle Rohen**, for their continuing support. We thank the rotating members who answer the phone for TCF (most often, **Don Matthews!**)

Let us not forget the providers of **cookies** and treats. Last but not least: **Sara Moore & Caroline Dodge** for their monthly contributions to *Walking This Valley*.

There are many others of you who step up on a moment's notice to help with outreach presentations at hospitals or for organizations who want information. You make our meetings work smoothly.

These are all **volunteers**, folks.

We thank you!

Footsteps in My Heart

**2nd Annual 5K Memorial Walk
Sunday, March 21, 2010**

Reid Park at DeMeester Bandshell

7:00 a.m. Registration Sign In

8:00 a.m. Walk

Information: contact Terri Gastelum at

tmgastel@aol.com

Welcome

All bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are welcome at our support group meetings. You will find a place of comfort, caring people, and most of all - HOPE. Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and much to gain. We urge you to give it a try. For many it is the first real step toward healing. Although it may seem overwhelming, we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable. We are not professional counselors. We are bereaved families who want to help each other. Please join us as we heal together.

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Feel free to call (520) 721-8042. A member will contact you. We can put you in contact with members who have experienced similar losses: auto accidents, infant death, suicide, murder, unknown, etc.

Visit our WEBSITE at:
www.tucsontcf.org

Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Co-Leaders:
Kathie Davis & Carl Luikart

Editors.....Sam & Phyllis Turner
Contributing Editors.....Sara Moore & Caroline Dodge
Outreach.....Kathy Parfrey
Corresponding Secretary.....Pam Zarte
Database Coordinator.....Noelle Rohen
New Attendee Coordinator Cindy Walter
Library..... Guy Walter
TreasurerAudrey Russell-Kibble
Fund Raising..... Scott Parfrey
Facilitators: Noelle Rohen, Scott & Kathy Parfrey, Kevin Trapp, Maureen & Carl Luikart, Kathie Davis, Carol & Larry Tilton, Sam & Phyllis Turner, Audrey Kibble, Sal Cataudella

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Barb & Gene Caligari
Chandler, AZ

If you would like someone to receive a copy of this newsletter, call (520) 721-8042.

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Robert W. Studinger, CPA, 7407 E. Tanque Verde Road, Tucson, AZ 85715

Dakotacom.net for our web service hosting services, 5055 E. Broadway, Suite A-110, Tucson, AZ. 85711.

Bring Funeral Homes, 236 S. Scott Avenue Tucson, Arizona 85701 For partial underwriting our World Wide Candle Lighting Service.

TO OUR "COOKIE & TREAT PROVIDERS"

Or fruit or veggies:

(Two volunteers per meeting, please!)

Remember to sign the COOKIE SHEET.

March 10: Dan Pierce HELP!
March 24: Dolores Bain Phyllis Turner

Love Gifts are a way of remembering your child and supporting your local Chapter.

Thank you to all who contribute and support. Checks should be made payable to The Compassionate Friends, Tucson Chapter, and mailed to **TCF, P.O. Box 30733, Tucson, AZ 85751. (Please designate: RENT, PHONE, or PRINTING.)**

Check with your employer how you can donate to The Compassionate Friends through non-profit payroll deduction.
Mercer Johnson in memory of his son, **Mercer Johnson III** to start a **microphone fund.**
Robert and Carol Brey in memory of son,
Christopher Brey

**What the caterpillar
calls the end,
the rest of the world
calls a butterfly.**

Lao Tzu

THIS MIGHT HELP

by

Sam & Phyllis Turner

YOU might help this month! We will be mailing a hard-copy survey with a return envelope that we would truly like you to complete and return.

Still on the subject of coping:

Read the **Letter to Shawn** (page 4). Six years! Many of you ask how long it takes to get your head back together. Here's one answer: Six years later, Sara could write this.

You don't have to write a letter. It could be journal entries. In **LIFE AFTER SCOTT**: a grieving journal for parents, Cheryl Kimpel of Amherst, Wisconsin kept a year's journal after the loss of her son who died December 1, 1985. (Her journal was published in 1999 **fourteen years** later!)

March 15: Several years after Scott was killed, besides working in the school system, I decided to go back to the university I graduated from and work on a master's degree. One night while on break I started to talk to a young man about losing a child. He told me he had just lost a brother to cancer. He said his brother was 24 and really suffered for many years fighting cancer. I told him I felt better off not having to watch my son suffer before he died.

March 16: I ponder this question over and over, but always end up feeling it was best he did not suffer. The young man in my college class said it gave him a chance to do everything he could for his brother. He said he was able to tell him how much he loved him and be there when it was time to say good-bye. I hardly knew this person and I did not want to say, "but if you had a choice for your brother..." None of us have much choice and it is hard to tell when people are just trying to be nice. I wanted to talk to him again sometime but felt I would let him introduce the subject if he wanted to speak of it, but he never came to class again. I really have no answers.

March 17: I guess there was no closure. Suddenly he was gone. There were many things left I wanted to tell him, and many decisions to be made. Everything is suspended in time, just where it is today. There isn't a time when you stop being a parent, but at seventeen you are really at full stride hoping to help them with that big step into their future. I never, ever, expected him to be killed at seventeen.

March 19: Every death of a child is as different as the child. About a year after Scott died we finally joined several groups of parents who lost children. It was amazing

to see how each individual had their own set of circumstances at death. Each person in the family was affected differently.

March 20: It is the first day of Spring. When I think back on the two groups we joined, I remember most how exhausted I felt after a meeting was over. Compassionate Friends consisted mostly of parents who lost children to an illness or an accident. These meetings were filled with sadness. The other group I joined was Family and Friends of Homicide Victims. This group consisted of parents who lost children to drunken drivers and murderers. The sadness in these people was most often overridden by anger and rage. Their stories were overwhelming. I think they needed to turn to anger to save their sanity. I don't think I could bear to think of my child tortured and murdered. The way a child dies is greatly significant to those left behind.

March 27: Easter is early this year. I have a tendency to stand back now and just look at other families. I wonder if they are doing things for the last time, or if they will look back and wonder what their children thought of all the rituals and preparation they did for the holidays. I think some of these thoughts come from just getting older, from having an "empty nest." I used to look for moments of quiet; now they are numbing. I must remind myself not to lose perspective, to follow traditions. I'll dye some eggs tonight, but skip writing names on them.

Cheryl Kimpel

*River Crossing Press, 10076 County Rd. D, Amherst, WI
54406*

By Permission

Can you relate to Cheryl's feelings after so many years?

You can keep a journal. It's easy if you are using a computer, but a note pad will do, also. Start with something simple:

- What did you see today?
- What did you do today?

Try that for a few days. Just that. **It just might help!** **AND** that's not all: You just might be willing to share an entry with us. That way, you may help others. Send your journal entries to Sam: clearskys@cox.net We'll put them in the newsletter. We appreciate your letters. In light and love,
Sam and Phyllis
Rob's Parents

A 6th Year Anniversary Letter

Dear Shawn,

When you first left us, *no one* in the family mentioned your name and on the anniversary of your passing *no one* wanted to “remind” me that today marked the day that you died. I anticipated each anniversary with dread and prepared myself to “go it alone.” But over time, that has changed. I have continued to encourage everyone to talk about you, share stories with me, allow my eyes to tear up without feeling that they have caused it. Today I am thankful because:

- Your sister, a grown young lady of 17 now, came to me this morning in her wrinkled pj’s and disheveled hair and asked for a lighter. She still didn’t say anything but held a candle in her hand and said it was for you. After carefully holding the flame to the wick, she placed the candle by your picture and left to get ready for work.
- Shortly after, the phone rang. It was your two Aunts asking me to brunch. As we sat down in the nearby restaurant, I wondered if they remembered the significance of this day. As the waiter left, your Aunts raised their glasses and toasted, “Here’s to you, Shawn-a-mo!” they said, and they clinked my glass and smiled teary smiles.
- When I returned home the message machine was beeping. Grampa and Gramma were wondering how I was doing today and wanted me to know they were thinking of me. There was an added warmth in their voice and, although they still didn’t mention your name, I knew the thought behind the phone call.

I have always known that *you are remembered*, but it’s so nice to do that remembering *with others*.

I love you, Shawn, EVERY DAY.

Mama

Sara Moore, TCF, Tucson, AZ
2.14.2010

THE GRIEF OF FATHERS

In the early days of my grief,
A tear would well up in my eyes,
A lump would form in my throat,
But you would not know-
I would hide it,
And I am strong.

In the middle days of my grief,
I would look ahead and see that wall
That I had attempted to go around
As an ever-present reminder
Of a wall yet un-scaled.
I did not attempt to scale it
For the strong will survive -
And I am strong.

In the later days of my grief,
I learned to climb over that wall -
Step by step -
Remembering, crying, grieving.
And the tears flowed steadily
As I painstakingly went over.
The way was long, but I did make it,
For I am strong.

Near the resolution of my grief,
A tear will well up in my eyes,
A lump will form in my throat,
But I will let that tear fall -
And you will see it.
Through it you will see
That I still hurt and I care,
For I am strong.

Terry Jago, TCF, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

*What do we live for
If it is not
To make life
Less difficult
For each other.*

George Eliot

Have you visited the on-line **MEMORIAL PAGE?** We now have over thirty-seven names listed.

An excerpt from the TCF brochure: Understanding Grief When Your Child Dies

How Can I Face the Future?

Parents may feel they have nothing to live for and thus think about a release from the intense pain. Many parents do feel this way, but be assured that a sense of purpose and meaning does return. The pain does lessen.

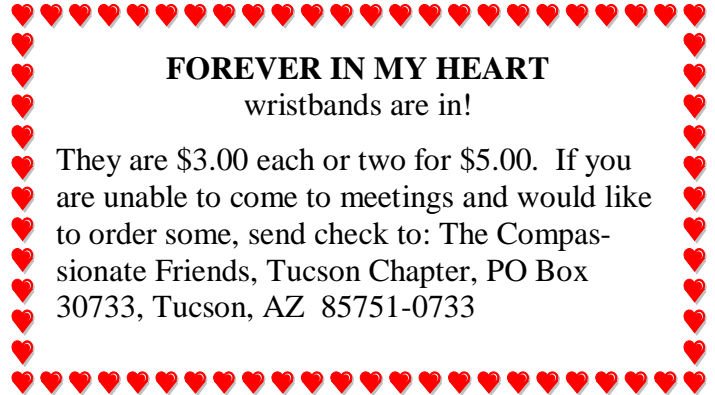
Support is necessary to work through this time while you are finding the new "you" and while the family dynamics change. Let others cook the meals, take the children to school, help around the house. Give yourself space to do the hard work of grieving.

Reexamining priorities and even questioning belief structures is not abnormal. See what you can do about arranging additional time off from work. Plan ahead how you will handle special days such as anniversary dates and holidays. Often the day is easier than the dread that leads up to it.

While professional help may be needed, many parents do turn to The Compassionate Friends for support, finding hope and comfort through sharing their story with others, and being able to speak the child's name without fear of others turning away when the tears do come. Sharing eases loneliness and allows expression of grief in an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding.

Every parent will have to find his or her own road through grief. But you will survive. *You Need Not Walk Alone.*

A variety of TCF brochures may be found on the library books table or by visiting the TCF's national website under the "resources" tab at: www.compassionatefriends.org



FOREVER IN MY HEART

wristbands are in!

They are \$3.00 each or two for \$5.00. If you are unable to come to meetings and would like to order some, send check to: The Compassionate Friends, Tucson Chapter, PO Box 30733, Tucson, AZ 85751-0733

TCF Now on Facebook! The Compassionate Friends national organization now has a Facebook page. You can find us by going to TCF's national website home page at:

www.compassionatefriends.org

and clicking on the Facebook link on the left side. Or, you can go to Facebook and do a search for "The Compassionate Friends/USA." The new Facebook page will provide an additional means of communication with not only our members, but also others who may not be aware of The Compassionate Friends. It is designed to be informative and supportive. We hope all members will join in and contribute to the conversations.

NAME TAGS

For your name tag, submit a copy of your child's picture, birth date and death date (and your name, of course!) to Kevin Trapp - Name-Tag Man - will produce the tag for you - FREE. See one of the leaders for more details, or just email info to: kjtrapp2001@yahoo.com

Why the name tag? As you continue your journey through this valley, you will get to know many of the members and, often times, you recognize them by their child's name, first. Your child is the important connection with the faces. What a comfortable way to remember.

Sibling Page

Ask Dr. Paulson-

Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*.

Q. It is coming up to my sister's first death anniversary. My family and a few friends would like to do something special in remembrance of her. On the date, we would like to honor who she was in her life here on earth. We are unsure of what we can do. I'd greatly appreciate any suggestions you might have.

A. The first anniversary is usually very difficult. I think it is terrific that you and your family and friends are wanting to do something special to celebrate your sister. Some families have taken vacations on the anniversary to step away from the hubbub of daily life to remember their loved one, celebrate their life, and acknowledge their loss. Others have held candle light vigils or a fund-raising event for a local charity. I would encourage you to talk with your family and friends and discuss what would bring you comfort on that day. It could be a quiet evening of looking at photographs and videos, or it could be completing a project that was important to your sister. Whatever you decide, being with a group of people who all love your sister, who are sharing her loss, and who celebrate her life will be wonderful way to remember her on that day.

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TO HONOR YOU

To honor you, I get up everyday and take a breath.

And start another day without you in it.

To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew your smile.

And the way your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge.

To honor you, I take the time to appreciate everyone I love.

I know now there is no guarantee of days or hours spent in their presence.

To honor you, I listen to music you would have liked.

And sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows rolled down.

To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back.

Risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance.

You were my light, my heart, my gift of love, from the very highest source.

So everyday, I vow to make a difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you.

Connie F. Kiefer Byrd

In Loving Memory of Jordan Alexander Kiefer

As Long As I Can

As long as I can, I will look at the world for both of us. As long as I can, I will laugh with the bird, I will sing with flowers, I will play to the stars, for both of us.

As long as I can, I will remember how many things on this earth were your joy. And I will live as well as you would want me to live, as long as I can.

.. by Sascha.

BEREAVED PARENTS' WISH LIST

1. I wish my child hadn't died. I wish I had him/her back.
2. I wish you wouldn't be afraid to speak my child's name. My child lived and was very important to me. I need to hear that he was important to you also.
3. If I cry and get emotional when you talk about my child, I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me. My child's death is the cause of my tears. You have talked about my child, and you have allowed me to share my grief. I thank you for both.
4. I wish you wouldn't "kill" my child again by removing his pictures, art work, or other remembrances from your home.
5. Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me. I need you now more than ever.
6. I need diversions, so I do want to hear about you; but, I also want you to hear about me. I might be sad and I might cry, but I wish you would let me talk about my child, my favorite topic of the day.
7. I know that you think of and pray for me often. I also know that my child's death pains you, too. I wish you would let me know those things through a phone call, a card or note, or a real big hug.
8. I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in six months. These first months are traumatic for me, but I wish you could understand that my grief will never be over. I will suffer the death of my child until the day I die.
9. I am working very hard in my recovery, but I wish you could understand that I will never fully recover. I will always miss my child, and I will always grieve that he/she is dead.
10. I wish you wouldn't expect me "not to think about it" or to "be happy." Neither will happen for a very long time so don't frustrate yourself.
11. I don't want to have a "pity-party," but I do wish you would let me grieve. I must hurt before I can heal.
12. I wish you understood how my life has shattered. I know it is hard for you to be around me when I'm feeling miserable. Please be as patient with me as I am with you.
13. When I say "I'm doing okay," I wish you could understand that I don't "feel" okay and that I struggle daily.
14. I wish you knew that all the grief reactions I'm having are very normal. Depression, anger, hopelessness and overwhelming sadness are all to be expected. So, please excuse me when I'm quiet and withdrawn or irritable and cranky.
15. Your advice to "take it one day at a time" is excellent advice. However, a day is too much and too fast for me right now. I wish you could understand that I'm doing good to handle an hour at a time.
16. Please excuse me if I seem rude, certainly not my intent. Sometimes the world around me goes too fast and I need to get off. When I walk away, I wish you could let me find a quiet place to spend time alone.
17. I wish you understood that grief changes people. When my child died, a big part of me died with him/her. I am not the same person I was before my child died, and I will never be that person again.
18. I wish very much that you could understand—understand my loss and my grief, my silence and my tears, my void and my pain, BUT, I pray daily *that you will never have to understand.*

Compiled by Diane Collins, TCF, Bay Area Chapter, Houston, TX

Everyone can master a grief but he that has it.

William Shakespeare

THE TCF CREDO: We Need Not Walk Alone

We are *The Compassionate Friends*. We reach out to each other with love, understanding and hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds and relationships. We are young; we are old. Some of us are far along in our a grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of *The Compassionate Friends*, it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other grieve as well as to grow. **WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS!**

TCF MISSION

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

OTHER TUCSON SUPPORT GROUPS

Listed are some local support groups besides *The Compassionate Friends*. In addition to these organizations, Tucson has a number of general grief support groups.

Information & Referral Services.....325-2111

Arizona SIDS Alliance.....800-597-SIDS

Survivors Of Suicide.....323-9373

Homicide Survivors, Inc740-5729

FOOTPRINTS - Pregnancy and Infant loss 873-6590

AGAST (Alliance of Grandparents,),888-774-7437

Tu Nidito/Children to Children322-9155

Alive Alone for (now) childless parents,

www.alivealone.org

MISS FOUNDATION www.missfoundation.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tucson, AZ 85751-0733

PO Box 30733

THE TUCSON CHAPTER



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

A national self-help, non-profit organization for families who have experienced the death of a child.

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