



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TUCSON CHAPTER
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Websites: *Chapter:* www.tucsontcf.org

National: www.compassionatefriends.org

MAY 2010

WALKING THIS VALLEY—Tucson Chapter VOL. 27, NO. 05

TUCSON CHAPTER MEETINGS

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

May 12

May 26

June 9

June 23

Save the Date!

TCF's National Conference will be held

July 2-4, 2010 Arlington, VA

For more information, check the TCF website.

COMING THIS FALL:

TCF YARD SALE

A special thanks to U-STORE-IT 7070 E. Speedway Blvd. for the donation of a larger storage unit for The Compassionate Friends. Call Sam Turner at 798-6088 (voice mail) OR Carl Luikart 749-3361 OR Larry Tilton 298-9708 to drop off donations.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

And when we have
remembered everything,
we grow afraid
of what we may forget.
A face, a voice, a smile?
A birthday? Anniversary?
No need to fear forgetting,
because the
HEART REMEMBERS
ALWAYS

Sascha Wagner

MOTHER'S DAY

A grieving mother considers Mother's Day

I may frequently need you to listen while I explain what this loss means to me. Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself.

1. Recognize that I am a mother:

Offer a hug and a "Happy Mother's Day". Send a card to let me know you remember that I am still a mother even though my child is not with me physically. I must face the reality of the death of my loved one. I need to know that you care about me. I need to feel your touch, your hugs. I need you just "to be" with me. And I need to be with you. I need for you to believe in me and in my ability to get through this grief in my own way; in my own time.

2. Acknowledge that I have had a loss: Express the message, "I know this might be a difficult day for you. I want you to know that I am thinking about you. Please don't judge me now-or think that I'm behaving strangely."

3. Use my child's name in conversation: One mother responded, "People rarely speak his name anymore, but when they do it's like music to my ears".

4. Plant a living memorial: A tree or rose bush, like memories, will grow in beauty as the years pass. Remember I'm grieving. I may be in shock. I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage.

5. Visit the grave site: Many mothers felt that it was "extremely thoughtful" when others visited their child's grave site and left flowers or a small token near the headstone. I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt. I am experiencing a pain unlike any I've ever felt before.

6. Light a candle: Let me know you will light a candle in memory of my child on Mother's Day. Don't be concerned if you think I'm getting better and then suddenly I seem to slip backward again.

7. Share a memory or pictures of my child: Give the gift of

(Continued on page 4)

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*.....Allie Mathews
- Database Coordinator*.....Noelle Rohen
- New Attendee Coordinator* Cindy Walter
- Library*..... Guy Walter
- Treasurer*Audrey Russell-Kibble
- Fund Raising*..... Scott Parfrey

Facilitators: Noelle Rohen, Scott & Kathy Parfrey, 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**.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| May 12 Kathie Davis | Karen Cruce |
| May 26 Shirley Beene | Maureen & Carl Luikart |
| June 09 Don & Allie | HELP! |
| June 23 Shirley Beene | HELP! |

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 how you would like your donation to be used—room rent, public address system, etc.)**

Check with your employer how you can donate to The Compassionate Friends through non-profit payroll deduction.

Pima County ECAP Mark Bustamante, Karina Carrasco, Paul Dietzel, Karla Reeve-Wise in

Memory of**all of our children**

Our friends from Raytheon in memory of **all of our children**

Joylene Taber in memory of her son...

Matthias Enlow

Sheryl Clark in memory of her daughter ...

Katie Clark

From United Way: Ms. Kathy Robinson, Mr. Terril Velazquez, Ms. Karina Carrasco, Mr. Paul Dietzel, Ms. Janet Harris, Laura Aldecoa, Danya Gamez, **in memory of all of our children**

Mercer Johnson in memory of **Mercer Johnson, III**
If you would like to help underwrite the cost of our new public address system, a donation of \$50.00 will sponsor a memorial plate in your child's name to be placed on the side of the speakers.

THIS MIGHT HELP

by

Phyllis and Sam Turner

Each month we have new members attending our meetings (unfortunately!). While we have an introduction package for new attendees, we also like to have information in *Walking This Valley* that will be pertinent to the newly bereaved, folks who are a year or two down the trail, and those who have stepped out of the valley into a new life.

Looking back to our first month (July 1997), we might have been helped with a letter encouraging us to attend a TCF meeting. As it was, we had friends who told us about the monthly meetings. We attended our first meeting in August of 1997. The monthly gatherings became our lifeline. We seldom missed. At first we were anxious about going. After a few months, we realized that, no matter how we felt driving *to* the meetings, we always felt better driving home *from* the meeting. Here's what we learned during those first months:

- **Don't rush!** Take your time changing your child's room. Take your time deciding what clothes to keep and what to give away. If your child was cremated, you might want to hold back some of the ashes-

(Some members wear a tiny vial of ashes on a pendant.) We spread some of Rob's ashes at his gravesite but kept some in small containers to leave at other memorable places. At first we traded some ashes for a sea shell and took a picture. Later we just took pictures of the location. (See *April issue of Walking This Valley*)

- **Be wary** of well-meaning friends (or relatives) who start their sentence with "At least..." "At least he didn't suffer; at least she is in a better place; at least you have other children; at least you can still adopt."
- **You never** get over the loss. (People who haven't experienced the death of a child-or sibling-don't understand this.) You live *through* the loss and gradually experience a new and different life at your own pace, in your own time. Having friends who understand helps. Compassionate Friends may not be for everyone but it certainly helped us through this terrible valley.

Hopefully, this newsletter helps in some small way.

Forever walking ...

Sam and Phyllis,

Rob's parents



October Yard Sale Off to a Great Start!

Here it is the beginning of May and our storage unit is a quarter full!. Maureen & Carl Luikart and Sam and Phyllis Turner spent a few hours one morning sorting items and compacting the room. The Yard Sale is in October! If this keeps up, we may have to ask U-STORE-IT to donate another unit! That's good!

How, you may ask, does this help? The money collected helps support our Chapter expenses-renting three rooms twice a month; paying for brochures that we provide for the University Medical College and various other agencies. (We printed 1,000 yellow brochures this month for distribution.) Equally as important is the *comradship that comes from so many friends* helping with the collection, sorting and displaying for the October event.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for a wonderful afternoon filled with camaraderie, spiritual rejuvenation, and emotional support that helped me make it through my third CF picnic. For most of the day I was upbeat and positive, helping with the picnic and visiting with friends. However, when we gathered for the balloon release, and the music started, I could feel myself slipping back into my reality of grief. The balloons were beautiful as they filled the sky with a rainbow of color, but sadness and a deep sense of loss came rushing in. It was like the "flood gates" opened and I had no control over my feelings. It's been almost four years, and I miss my Drew more than ever!

So . . . I had my moment. I hugged my husband, we cried as we remembered our boy, and watched our balloons rise to heaven hoping somehow Drew could feel our love, and then we went back to dealing with life. What else can we do?

Thank you to everyone who helped make the day so perfect - to Sal for getting the park permit and insurance, to Cindy and Guy for the Costco run, to Kevin for the lovely balloons, to Sam for staking out our Ramada at 7:00 am and bringing the water, to Phyllis and Dolores for slicing and dicing our veggies, to Noelle for lugging her tables, to Maureen and Carl for lugging the soda and providing more shade, to my sweetie for grilling the hot dogs and to Dick and Mercer for cooking up the hamburgers, and to everyone who brought coolers (thank you Kathy and Scott) and food - THANK YOU!

Most of all, thank you my Compassionate Friends, for providing a safe place where we can openly share the love for our children and our grief.

See you Wednesday night,
Kathie

(Thanks to TRADER JOE'S for supplying three cases of water, chips, dips and fresh strawberries! And a special thanks to Kathie for organizing the whole event! - Ed.)

(MOTHER'S DAY *Continued from page 1*)

a memory. One mother wrote that the "greatest gift you can give is a heartfelt letter about my child and a favorite memory with them". Grief makes me behave this way at times. And please don't tell me you know just how I feel or that it's time for me to get on with my life. I am probably already saying this to myself. I just need for you to be patient now and to try to understand. Finally, allow me the time I need to grieve and to recover.

8. Send a gift of remembrance: Many mothers felt a small gift would be comforting. Suggestions included: an angel statue, jewelry, a picture frame, a library book or toy donation in the child's name or anything personalized.

9. Don't try to minimize the loss: Avoid using any clichés that attempt to explain the death of a child. ("God needed another angel.") Secondly, don't try to find anything positive about the loss ("You still have two healthy children".) I want to get on with my life - but I know that first I must walk through the dark shadows of my grief. Although it is almost impossible for me to believe this now, I know that one day my grief will end.

10. Encourage Self-Care: Self-care is an important aspect of "healing the mind and spirit effort" according to several mothers. Encourage a grieving mother to take care of herself. Give her a gift certificate to a day spa or any place where she can be pampered.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF THE PEE DEE AREA

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.





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January - December 2010

On behalf of **The Tucson Chapter of The Compassionate Friends**, we would like to request that you include us in your charitable donations budget.

The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support group offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child or sibling of any age, from any cause. There are no religious affiliations, no membership fees, and no dues. All bereaved family members are welcome to attend. Our local chapter of The Compassionate Friends exists solely on donations.

Our yearly expenses are as follows:

- Meeting rooms rentals: \$1,500 (Catalina United Methodist Church)
- Printing and mailing: \$1200
- Telephone: \$500.
- Program expenses: \$900.
- Library: \$500.
- **Three special community events: Balloon Lift-off, Local and World Wide Candle Lighting all in memory of children who have died.**

Unfortunately, our Chapter has grown from one meeting to two meetings per month. Of the average thirty-five member attendance, three to five will be first time, newly bereaved. Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Steering Committee Member

EIN (Employee Identification Number): #95-3497925

WHO DO YOU KNOW?

Are you on speaking terms with a bank manager? A restaurant owner? A business owner? A retail store? Someone who would be willing to donate money (or services) to TCF?

Make extra copies of this page and present this to these managers or owners of stores and businesses where you frequent.

Place **your** name above "Steering Committee Member" and the name of your child below EXAMPLE::

Sam Turner
Rob's father

Sibling Page

GRIEF IS LONELY: A SIBLING'S PERSPECTIVE

Grief is lonely. When my sister died two years ago, everyone knew about it and talked about it. Everyone was in shock. But now, two years later, the anniversary of her death came and went without even a card in the mail. No one at work remembered the day. No one called to say, "I am thinking of you." No one asked, "How are you feeling?"

My family has stayed in close contact and we talk about Susan all the time. But when it comes to grieving over Susan, everyone grieves alone. No one knows how I feel about my little sister and how it hurts me so deeply to know she is not here.

Everything else in life can be shared with someone else, but not grieving. No one can fully understand the pain because everyone's pain is different. When the pain is the greatest, the loneliness is the greatest, too.

I never thought I could feel this much pain and still survive. I am alone in my grief. There is no one else here with me. Susan was born when I was almost 11. She died by suicide when she was 16. the baby of the family, the youngest of four kids; our hearts are broken forever.

- Cherie Bagadiong, sibling
TCF, St. Mary's County, MD

***May the stars carry
your sadness away,
May the flowers fill
your heart with beauty,
May hope forever
Wipe away your tears,
And above all,
May silence make you strong.
~Chief Dan George***

Ask Dr. Paulson

Q. My mom is very sad and so am I. She was pregnant and a couple months ago something went wrong and she miscarried the baby at 6 months. She wanted another girl like me (I'm 13) and I wanted a little sister to feed, change diapers, baby sit, and just pass along the love my mom and dad have given me (I have no brothers or sisters). I feel really blue but I've been trying to spend more time with mom so she won't miss the baby so much. It doesn't seem to be working. I know she's been crying a lot. Dad is no help. All he's said is that something wasn't right with the baby and this was nature's way. Mom's pretty upset that he doesn't understand but keeps it inside. What more can I do?

A. It sounds like you were really excited about having a new brother or sister! Sometimes, as kids we get so caught up in trying to help our parents and our brothers and sisters that we forget to stop to take time to take care of ourselves. You could do that by finding someone you can talk to about your feelings about your mother's miscarriage, by taking time to think about things yourself; by keeping a diary; and by keeping in contact with your family and friends who care so very much about you.

What you can do for your parents would be to obey the rules that are absolutes, compromise on the others, and do **your** chores without having to be reminded. But remember your parents will have to settle the things between them by themselves--they are the adults--it's their job to look after and care for **you**. During times of crisis it may feel like you need to help them do their "job" too--not just housework, but emotional or relationship work too. But you have to remember that's not your job--you have your own job--to be their kid, learn from them, and learn and practice the skills you'll need to be successful when you're the adult.

We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The
Compassionate Friends.
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WHO WOULD UNDERSTAND?

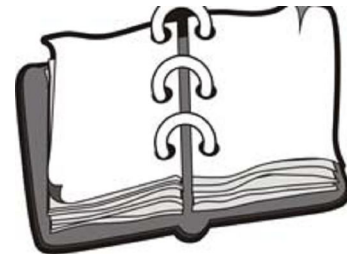
For many of us, there are few people with whom we can share our innermost feelings: yet, these very feelings may be nearly exploding to get out. Perhaps for the first time in your life you are really angry —angry at God? - angry at your dead child? - just angry? Are any of you bereaved parents going about your daily routines, appearing to those around you to be “doing well”? Yet in your “alone moments” you hurt so badly you think you may never feel better again? Or perhaps you’re not even resuming a routine, lack motivation, are barely functioning. Many bereaved parents have shared these feelings with each other.

Who would understand if you told them you started sobbing when you passed your dead child’s favorite food in the grocery store? ...or that you had an urge to yell at the crowds nonchalantly walking in the shopping center. “Don’t you know my child has died?” Another bereaved parent would probably not think this unusual.

How fortunate you are if you can share these and other feelings with your spouse, family members, your minister, or good friends. However, many times, these people from whom you would expect the most support aren’t equipped or can’t handle your normal feelings of grief. One of the most often mentioned benefits of the Compassionate Friends, whether that be by attending meetings, using the available listeners by phone, internet, or through the newsletter, is hearing that your feelings are not that unusual after all. It is also most comforting to hear from bereaved parents for whom it has been 4, 6, or 7 years since their child died that they experienced many of these same feelings, worked their way through their grief and can now say, “I don’t feel that way any more. I can really laugh and not feel guilty. I’m leading a productive life again. I think of my child every day and still miss him/her, but I no longer review details of the crash or illness, or circumstances surrounding their death. I’m no longer angry or feel guilty. Most memories are pleasant memories.”

This is why we “old-timers” continue to attend meetings, remain available by telephone and try to meet people’s needs through the newsletter.

Carolyn Reicke, TCF, Fort Wayne, IN



Our lending library expands every month, and we welcome your favorite book donations, as well as your favorite book reviews. Feel free to check out the books and DVD’s, but as a courtesy to others, kindly return them within 60 days.

About Being Strong

Many people are convinced that being strong and brave means trying to think and talk about “something else.”

But we know that being strong and brave means thinking and talking about your dead loved one, until your grief begins to be bearable.

That is strength.

That is courage.

And only thus can “being strong and brave: help you heal.

By Sascha The Sorrow and the Light

**In this world
We cannot do great things.
We can only do small things
With great love.**

Mother Teresa

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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