



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TUCSON CHAPTER
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National: www.compassionatefriends.org

JULY 2010

WALKING THIS VALLEY—Tucson Chapter VOL. 27, NO. 07

Helping families who have experienced the death of a child or sibling

TUCSON CHAPTER MEETINGS

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

JULY 14

JULY 28

August 11

August 25

As a member of The Compassionate Friends we give you:

Permission to own your very own feelings! That means you can feel sad, confused, angry, anxious, guilty, helpless, isolated, empty, alone, exhausted, lost or fearful for as long as you have to. (You don't have to listen to someone tell you how you *should* feel!)

Permission to grieve as long as you need. (You are human and everyone grieves differently.)

Permission to grieve "too much" (whatever too much means!)

Permission to never completely heal.

Permission to never let your love die.

Permission to never "get over" it.

Permission to feel your grief (so you can, eventually, feel again).

Permission to talk with fellow members who will listen and not judge you.

Permission to live your life, despite all the changes you are going through, despite all the pain.

Permission to talk about your loved one and to say his or her name.

Permission to carry your love always in your heart.

*Paraphrased from:
Leigh MCLG, bereaved mum. Sourced from website
<http://www.mychildlossgrief.org/>.*

TELL + LISTEN = HEALING

The fastest way through grief is to *tell* your story many times and *listen* to many others tell their story. Do these two things and you will begin to **heal**. Ah, but you say, "People don't want to hear my story again. They look away when they see me coming."

What do you think our Compassionate Friends meetings are for? Come tell your story over and over. We will listen.

A PROMISE

The colors of life change as we go through grief. We begin black and white; then gray settles over us, seeping into our pores, surrounding us, smothering us for a long period of time; then slowly the colors change.

We may not even be aware of their changing 'til one day we see a rainbow, and know it was meant for us.

*Fay Harden
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL
From Songs From the Edge: Memoirs and Poetry*

**URGENT!!!!
PLEASE READ PAGE 7 AND
RESPOND ASAP!**

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.

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 Matthews
*Database Coordinator.....*Noelle Rohe
New Attendee Coordinator Cindy Walter
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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.

Walking This Valley is published monthly by the Tucson, Arizona, Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Circulation: 300 (electronically)

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NOT GETTING YOUR NEWSLETTER?

It's possible that you are not accessing it through our website:

www.tucsontcf.org

Thanks to Nora & Donna Switzer of *Digipost* 3434 E Kleindale Rd. #F, Tucson, AZ. 85716

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

Dakotac.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 partially 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.

JULY 14: Phyllis Turner HELP!

JULY 28: Kathy Parfrey Paul/Jill Bosseler

AUG 11: Allie Matthews Maureen Metzger

AUG 25: Maria Cline Kathie Davis

Sept 08: Mercer Johnson Fae Pierce

Sept 22: Dolores Bain **HELP!**

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

Thank you to all who contribute. 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.

Guy and Cindy Walter in memory of their son:

Kenny

Dr. & Mrs. Stephen Cohen, Cohen Family Medicine in memory of son: **Noah Warren Cohen**

Mrs. Lorraine Richardson in memory of

Nikki S. Packard

Phyllis & Sam Turner in memory of their son:

Robert Eric Turner

Don & Allie Matthews in memory of their son:

Damian

Mercer Johnson in memory of his son:

Mercer Johnson III

This Might Help
MEMORIES

Memories... ricochet through my mind
like stones skipping across the quiet pool
disturbing the mirror surface
with ever widening ripples.
I try to grab them – capture them
freeze them
store them in the deep recesses of my mind
submerged in solitude to rise to the surface at
my choosing

but I can't

Instead, they come skimming along the sur-
face
unannounced, surprising, unnerving
tiny plinks of pictures
scenes of you scrunching along a sandy
beach

pinching wet sand between your toes
watching footprints fill with glistening water
squinting at the breakers, crashing, rolling
exploding foam under the wobbling
bottoms of sandpipers
racing ahead like dancers all in line.

like those birds, I search for the
morsels of my memories
but before I close my grasp,
the waves roll again
the scene changes.
the picture is washed away
and I stand alone watching the ripples dis-
solve

into a glassy calm
still
quiet
waiting...
waiting...

Sam Turner, Rob's Father
©1999 -Tucson TCF Chapter

You may have seen this poem in *We Need Not Walk Alone* (the official magazine of The Compassionate Friends) a few years ago. I know you'll understand why I would reprint it this particular month when I tell you that Rob died July 2, 1997.

We experience not *just* another anniversary! The anniversaries are never "*just*". We've all experienced them. One of the members said, "I've forgotten our wedding anniversary, but certainly not our daughter's death date!"

I wish I could say they get easier, but nothing about this anniversary gets easier. They get "*different*". You understand, don't you? There's a new level of importance that surrounds the date. For the first few years the anxiety level is high. For us it is because July 4th is about to happen and that was such a fun time for Rob, his siblings and us. How *did* we cope then? How *do* we cope now? How do *you* cope?

We did one thing that helped us: we attended the meetings, although sometimes one or the other of us avoided it until the last minute. We *had* to believe that the meetings would help us. There was nowhere else (that we knew of) to turn. We struggled with our grief once a month *every* month and life was terrible! But it was all we had. A year or so later, our chapter doubled the meetings to twice a month. Now we could openly grieve with our friends two times a month. The rest of the time, we put on a straight face and tried to make it from day to day without breaking down in front of people. We weren't afraid to face our grief; we just weren't sure what we could do to make this terrible transition. We knew that we had to keep living.

Reverend William A. Ritter says: "*The best way to honor the dead is to love the living...for if our lives stop when their life stops, death has killed twice.*"

Therefore, we knew that if attending the meetings would eventually help us, then we would attend meetings no matter how difficult it was to face other members of the Chapter. And we cried in the meetings and out of the meetings. Eventually, the tears were not as often.

(Continued on page 4)

(This Might Help-Continued from page 3)

“There is sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than 10,000 tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.” - Washington Irving.

But what if you are unable to attend meetings? Many who receive *Walking This Valley* are hundreds of miles from a TCF Chapter. *Walking This Valley* is their only connection.

Books can help. *“But I don’t feel like reading.”* Of course you don’t. Just like you don’t feel like coming to a meeting. Just like you don’t feel like doing anything.

Our chapter library is available with a wide range of books related to grief and bereavement. Books may be borrowed for a month or longer if you feel the need. It is helpful to explore any of the issues that concern you: For example, how other people have survived the death of a child; specific coping mechanisms that have helped bereaved parents whose child’s death was similar to your child’s; how to deal with the behavior of family members and friends. You may discover which of your feelings are “normal”; how to take the first steps out of this valley.

We felt better when we said Rob’s name out loud. We missed saying his name in conversations. While it might shock others, it gave us a degree of comfort. When some of our non-member friends began saying his name, we felt better. Therefore, if you don’t have a meeting to attend, find a friend who is willing to listen and tell stories about your child. We were fortunate to have several friends who would listen to us. At first there were tears-rivers of tears! But gradually, the tears subsided and we were able to smile about some of the stories.

Is this painful? Of course! Is it worth it? Of course!

It just might help.

In Love and Light,

Sam and Phyllis Turner, Rob’s parents

WE GET LETTERS

Hi Sam and Phyllis,

I thought June's CF newsletter was one of the best so far!! Every article you chose was heart-felt and thought provoking.

It was great to read the ones written by dads and to see that their grief is as deep and complicated as a mother's grief.

I also thought the article written by the bereaved dad of an infant was interesting. It was very sad that someone in his chapter group did not validate his grief because his son was only 3 months old at his death. His piece was very powerful and serves as an educational piece for people who don't understand that grief is devastating no matter how the loved one died or at what age.

Thank you Sam and Phyllis for creating the newsletter each month and for all you do!

Kathie

Sam,

What a beautiful article and a beautiful newsletter. I have a friend in North Carolina who lost her son a few years ago, and as she still grieves, I'm going to pass this newsletter on to her. Thanks for sharing it,
Roz

Sam:

Interesting that your TCF publication came to us on a day that our friend needed that info. My good Barbershop buddy, Bruce, has a son who was about to be married to a mother of three. One of the three, a 10 year old, had severe cerebral palsy and suddenly died last week. Chris, the son of my friend, had become the care-giver for the boy for about the last 9 months. Chris was not a very caring person before offering to be the care giver. He was a typical kid (about 23) who was self centered, had no goals and kind of floated from job to job. However, for some

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(Continued from page 4)

reason, he took on the task of caring for the 10 year old. He did everything: feeding him, bathing him, toilet care, etc. Unbelievable! So, when the boy suddenly died, Chris fell apart. Here he was with an important job taking care of the boy and bingo, it was all over. Later, my friend Bruce told me that the 10 year old came into Chris's life, not the other way around. Giving so much of himself changed Chris into a wonderful, caring individual who had matured into a young man with goals, unselfish attitude and a different outlook. I don't know if the tragedy has gently faded or not. I presume that they are still going to get married. I was a bit shy about asking any more questions. Because of all this, I copied your article which referred to a book (*Catching the Light: Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child by Genesse Bourdeau Gentry*) you read and sent it to Chris's Dad. Hopefully, he will send it to Chris.

Thanks! Good timing!

Howard

WHAT DO I DO WITH THESE PEOPLE?

From the moment our child died, we have all interacted with two kinds of people: Those with whom we have had positive experiences, and others with whom the experience was negative -

We cherish those people who give us comfort, who *really* want to know how we are doing, and who let us speak about our child (even as tears roll down our faces) without running the other way.

Then there are those *other* people-the ones who say and do things that are hurtful, who avoid us, or who disappear from our lives completely.

Linda Cressner, TCF of Los Angeles

We'd like to know: How do you cope with this? Drop us a line.

Have you visited your on-line **MEMORIAL PAGE?** We now have over **sixty** names listed.

We appreciate your help in preparing for our meetings. From setting up the Remembrance table, the sign-in table, the library and the cookie table, you consistently get everything completed so that we can start on time. You know who you are and we **THANK YOU!**

Check under your beds! Look in the garage! Pile that stuff in the car and we'll help you store it for the **YARD SALE!!!**. You'll feel so much better with the clutter cleaned out.

NOW THAT WE HAVE TWO U-STORE-IT UNITS

We are "open for business"! Contact Carl Luikart, Larry Tilton or Sam Turner for storage.
Let's fill another unit!

Call 721-8042 for pickup

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



NAME TAGS

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

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

Lao Tzu

Sibling Page

The Promise

Your birth brought me star-shine,
the moon and the sun;
my wishes, dreams gathered
'round my little one.

My life became sacred,
full of promise and light,
all wrapped in the child
who brought love at first sight.

The years of your living
filled with laughter and tears,
excitement, adventure,
some boredom, some fears,

but ended too quickly,
ahead of its time.
The loss so horrendous,
such heartbreak was mine.

But from the beginning,
one thought rose so clear;
never would your death erase
the years that you were here.

I would not be defeated
or diminished by your death;
I would hang on, learn to conquer,
if it took my every breath.

For if your death destroyed my life,
made both our lives a waste,
it would deny your life's meaning
and all the love you gave.

I vowed that years of sadness
would change, with work and grace,
to years of happiness, even joy,
in which you'd have a place.

Memories of you, like shining stars
in the patterns of my soul,
are beacons flashing light and love,
and with them I am whole.

In your honor, I live my life,
now living it for two.
Through all my life, you too will live.
You lived. You live. You do.

- Genesse Bourdeau Gentry—

From: *Catching the Light-
Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child*

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“YOU ARE SO STRONG”

Empty words
That don't touch the reality
That my life has become.
Walking through fog
Incredible pain
Searching for the beloved face
I crave to see
The voice that I strain to hear over the
noises
Of people who have no idea
Of what the world has lost
Charisse Smith, TCF ~ Tyler, TX
(Lovingly lifted from TCF, St. Paul)

**When your mind
Cannot find
An answer,
Open your heart
And ask
For peace.**

S a s c h a

URGENT #1

URGENT! URGENT! URGENT!
EMAIL YOUR PHOTOS
for the **October 27th**
Candle Lighting Slideshow Tribute

Have your loved one remembered and shared in the slideshow at this year's Tucson TCF Candle Lighting in October, please email (as .jpg attachments) a photo or two of your child or sibling to TCF contributing editor **Sara Moore** at **Sara_Therese_Photography@yahoo.com** by **September 30th**. Please include your loved one's name as well as DOB-DOD (if you would like this information included with the photo(s) in the slideshow).

NOTE: For those of you who have donated \$50.00 or more toward the purchase of a new **Public Address System**: We will soon be ready to inscribe the names of your child on the dedication plaque.

Please **PRINT** the name of your child below and email it to Sam at clearskys@cox.net OR fill out this form and give it to Sam or Audrey at the next meeting:

URGENT #2

First and last name of child:

PLEASE PRINT FIRST AND LAST NAME OF YOUR CHILD

Ordered by _____
Mailing address _____
City, State, and Zip Code: _____
Area Code and phone number _____
Email address _____

Deadline for donations of \$50.00: August 30, 2010

A special **THANKS** to **BIG LOTS** for their generous discount on storage bins. We use them to sort donations and better utilize the space in the storage units.

YARD SALE BULLETIN: Our first **U-STORE-IT** unit is full! We now have a second **U-STORE-IT** unit at Golf Links and Pantano. **U-STORE-IT** has donated both units to our Chapter. All we have to pay is the insurance. Our October Yard Sale is going to be terrific! Keep those donations coming. For more info, ask at the next meeting or call the TCF Hot Line: **(520) 721.8042**

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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