



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TUCSON CHAPTER
P.O. BOX 30733
TUCSON, AZ 85751-0733
(520) 721-8042

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
P.O. BOX 3696
OAK BROOK IL 60522
Toll-free (877) 969-0010

Websites: *Chapter:* www.tucsontcf.org

National: www.compassionatefriends.org

OCTOBER 2009

WALKING THIS VALLEY—Tucson Chapter VOL. 25, NO. 010

TUCSON CHAPTER MEETINGS

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

October 14

October 28: Annual Family Candle-lighting
Service in the Church Fellowship Hall
NOTE MEETING CHANGE FOR NOVEMBER!

TUESDAY November 10

TUESDAY November 24

TCF YARD SALE HAPPENS

October 17!

A special thanks to

U-STORE-IT

7070 E. Speedway Boulevard

for the donation of a storage unit for
The Compassionate Friends

For access to the unit, call Sam Turner at
798-6088 (voice mail)

or

Carl Luikart 749-3361 to arrange a time to
deliver your items.

ABOUT HELPING US

We need clean clothing (no undergarments or unwashed clothing), radios, TVs, appliances & electronics in working order, furniture (indoor & outdoor), rugs, bed-frames, sports equipment, jewelry, tools, pots & pans, kitchen utensils, lamps, toys & games, books & CDs (no encyclopedias or magazines), artwork, bric-a-brac, barbecues, shoes, luggage, knick knacks, craft materials, bedding, towels, new and

nearly new BOUTIQUE items.

Friday October 16th. Volunteers sort donations.

October 17 SATURDAY 6:00 A.M. Help for a few hours, the entire day, or the wrap up at about 12:30.

Sign up for both days at the October 14th meeting or call Maureen at 749-3361.

Get ready for an amazingly uplifting experience of working alongside others in our Chapter, fellow-bereaved parents/siblings for a common goal. You'll be glad you did.

(Workers get first choice of merchandise!)

To get to Carl and Maureen Luikart's home:

(See YARD SALE Continued on page 4)

OCTOBER 28: Our Annual Family candle lighting service will be held in the Church Fellowship Hall (instead of Room H-232). Bring a picture or some special memento to place on the Sharing Table. You will have an opportunity to tell members about your child or sibling. There will be music and poems.

As Kathie Davis says: "You may not have a good time, but you can expect to have a meaningful, healing, heartfelt experience."

Bring cookies or finger foods to share. Sal tells us that, on this evening, all finger foods will be calorie free!

APOLOGIES for September's Walking This Valley goof up! (my fault) The margins got off! (my fault) We lost parts of the headings (my fault) I should have caught the overlaps! (my fault).

- Ed -

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:
Sal Cataudella & Kathie Davis

- Editors*.....Sam & Phyllis Turner
- Contributing Editors*.....Sara Moore & Caroline Dodge
- Outreach*.....Karen Bailey & Leslie Maier
- Corresponding Secretary*.....Pam Zarte
- Database Coordinator*.....Noelle Rohen
- New Attendee Coordinator* Maureen Luikart
- Library*..... Pam Zarte
- Treasurer*Carl and Maureen Luikart

Facilitators: Noelle Rohen, Scott & Kathy Parfrey; Leslie Maier, Kevin Trapp, 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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Thanks to Amanda, 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

And to...

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

TO OUR "COOKIE & TREAT PROVIDERS"

Or bring fruit or veggies:

(Two volunteers per meeting, please!)

Remember to sign the COOKIE SHEET.

October 14: Cindy W. Kathleen Mapelson

October 28: Candle light Service. **EVERYONE bring finger foods to share!**

November 10: **Tricia C. HELP!**

November 24: **HELP!**

December 09 Cindy W.

Allie Matthews

December 23 HELP

HELP

Love Gifts

Love Gifts are a way of remembering your child on Easter, Mother's Day, their birthday, angel date or just because...

Thank you to all who contribute and support our local chapter. 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 want the money used.)**

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

Vicki & Alan MacClyment in memory of their brother's son **John Mercer Johnson III**
The members of **ECAP** for all of our children!

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THIS MIGHT HELP

By
Phyllis and Sam Turner

GUILT vs. REGRET

Guilt: **1**, The fact of having violated law or right. **2**, a sense of having committed a wrong.

Regret: **1**, look back at with sorrow; lament. **2**, be distressed on account of; n. **1**, grief; a painful sense of loss. **2**, an oral or written message note declining an invitation

“I feel so guilty that I couldn't be with my daughter to say good-bye.”

“I should never have bought him that motorcycle. I feel so guilty.”

What I had to do was be aware of my sense of responsibility. If I was responsible for his death, then I can feel guilt. My regret was that Rob died in his sleep.

Whether I'm filled with guilt or regret certainly doesn't help the fact that our son is dead. But knowing the difference is a little less stressful.

You know: There's something magical about our small circles. At the endings, we all breath a little easier. Leaving just a tiny bit of our guilt

(See Regret-Continued on page 4)

IT'S OKAY TO GRIEVE**It's Okay to Grieve**

The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned. Such hurt?

It's okay to grieve

It's Okay to Cry

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to level off and continue our cruise along the stream of life. It's okay to cry.

It's Okay to Heal

We do not need to prove we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel guilty, for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death. It's a healthy sign of healing. It's okay to heal.

It's Okay to Laugh

Laughter is not a sign of less grief. Laughter is not a sign of less love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh. It's okay to laugh.

Patricia Luffy Nevitt, TCF, Austin, TX

COMFORT

What inspiring words! The Greek word here rendered “comfort” is linked to “a calling to one's side.” Therefore, “it is the standing beside a person to encourage him when he is undergoing severe testing.”

One scholar wrote: “the word...always means far more than soothing sympathy...(It is) a comfort which brings courage, the comfort which enables a man to cope with all that live can do to him.”

From Ventura County Chapter of TCF, Oxnard, CA

(Regret—Continued from page 3)

- our regret - our grief — on the floor in the center of that circle helps us step out into the larger circle feeling just a little lighter. From that larger circle, we can move into the world, maybe even with a smile. We can survive until the next meeting. And that's enough.

Come! Join us.

It just might help!

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

Lao Tzu

(YARD SALE -Continued from page 1)

From Houghton go East on Tanque Verde to Conestoga.

Turn left (North) Turn left on the fourth street
(SUNDANCE)

We are the second house on the right (north) 11315 East Sundance. Still lost? Maureen's Phone: 749-3361

We will need the following on

October 16th 2009:

Truck (two trucks would be best) for transport from storage unit to Luikart's. Meet at Sam's house at 0900.

We need Workers, TABLES! Hangers, Plastic bags, Shade, Ice and ice Coolers!

October 17, 2009

Workers! Coolers Ice Water

Bring funny hats to wear, so people can identify who is a worker.

Thanks for everyone's help!

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 forwards,
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.

For those who write in a journal:

Spend some time writing out your feelings, thoughts, and memories. If you are on a vacation, being away can give you a gift of time to think and write.

Dinah Tichy, BPUSA, Louisville, KY

Have you visited the **MEMORIAL PAGE?** We now have over thirty names listed. See Page 7 to find out how to add your child/sibling's name.

"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 a check to:

The Compassionate Friends,
TUCSON CHAPTER
P.O. 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.

A LOVE LETTER TO MY CHILDREN

You are great kids. You have always been great kids, although I haven't always been a great mom. After your brother died, I was hardly any kind of mom at all. I was so lost in my own grief, I wasn't there for you. You were bewildered, scared and hurt, but I couldn't seem to reach out to you beyond my own pain. I was like a day-old helium balloon drifting along, not sure whether my place was with you or with your brother.

I didn't drift for long. You grabbed my string and yanked me back! The yowls and shrieks still ring in my ears: Mom, all my underwear is dirty!" or "Mom, I'm starved!" or "Mom, he punched me!" Your brother was being cared for by his heavenly Father, but you needed your earthly mother. It was your need for me that saved my life.

I'm sorry that your brother's death robbed you of your childhood. While other kids fretted about what to wear or which movie to see, you wondered when the tears and sadness would ever end and if we would be a family again. If I could have shielded you from such great sorrow, I would have: but I couldn't.

Your lives were changed forever, and the future was uncertain, but you kept going. You supported and inspired me as we traveled that rocky road of grief together. You talked about your brother when no one else would say his name. You kept his picture in your rooms and proudly pointed out to friends, "This is my brother." You used his things, but gently. You reminded me of the cute, funny things he said and did. You included him in your bedtime prayers. You still do. Some day I believe you will tell your own children about your brother. Thank you for keeping his memory alive.

Because of the tragedy you experienced, you are more mature than other kids your age. You possess strength and courage beyond your years. You are resilient; little things don't get you down. Best of all, you are kind, sensitive, and compassionate to others. I adore you. You are my life!

Pat Dyson—TCF, Beaumont, TX

Sibling Page

Early Grief

I feel a lightless void inside
 It has no name.
 I know that others
 Say I am in grief.
 But for me,
 It is without a name,
 A mortal distress
 Beyond words.

~ Sascha Wagner ~

Ask Dr. Paulson - August 2009

Q. My life, like so many others, is a tragic tale. My oldest son, Jimmer (21), was killed in a construction related accident in February 2005. He fell 50 feet from a machine that broke while his younger brother Jacob (20) watched helplessly. What hurts even more than the death of a child is watching Jacob live everyday with the memory of his brother's accident and he also feels responsible. Jacob was the foreman on the job and had told his brother to go onto this machine and go get the materials they needed. Jacob feels if he hadn't told his brother to do this task, he would still be alive. He just can't get past this. Counseling hasn't helped/ maybe it wasn't the right counselor, but he isn't willing to try another. What can I do for my child to tell him he had nothing to do with his brother's death? I lost one child and part of another and would greatly appreciate some advice.

A. Parents often tell me that one of the worst parts of experiencing the death of a child is watching the pain of the surviving siblings. Unfortunately, "survivor's guilt" is far too common among surviving siblings! This is even worse in your case because Jacob was there at the time of his brother's death, and he was in a supervisory role at the time.

I think you hit the nail on the head as far as what the reality is when you said that "Jacob watched helplessly."

It is helpful to talk about the origins or purpose of the feeling called "guilt"—especially when it is spelled GUILT. Guilt is related to what we commonly refer to as a conscience. Guilt is triggered to alert us to the fact that we have harmed a relationship that is meaningful to us. That intentionally or unintentionally we have hurt someone, and the felling of guilt alerts us to that fact to give us an opportunity to repair the relationship. Guilt is a very important emotion! Individuals incapable of experiencing this emotion go far afield and are associated with unbelievably inhumane acts. Guilt is associated with responsibility, culpability, and usually intentionality. This is the part that is so important in survivor's guilt, and for Jacob—there was no intentionality, culpability, or responsibility in the death of this brother! Siblings naturally feel "responsible" for each other—especially in emotionally close and loving relationships. The part that surviving siblings have a very hard time with is the "helplessness" of what they are feeling—the helplessness of not having been able to protect them—the helplessness they feel watching the pain in the rest of the family. Usually the more capable and strong the individual, the more acute the feelings of survivor's guilt—because helplessness is an unfamiliar and unwanted feeling. It is important for surviving siblings to see this guilt in terms of the absence of intention and recognize that survivor's guilt is the horrible sense of helplessness created by the death of a sibling. No one likes to feel helpless! This helplessness is even worse because it brings us face-to-face with our own vulnerability, our own mortality, and the mortality of those we love. Once we can see what survivor's guilt is made of, we can begin to address the real issues that are keeping us in the dark hole of irreparable grief.

Mary A. Paulson, PhD, *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends. Copyright 1999

Please join the members who have requested to have their child/sibling's name placed on the permanent Memorial Page. Once it is set on our Memorial Page, it is easily accessed and you may view all the names just like you would at the Children's Memorial Park (except our names will be alphabetical).

We can *only list your child's name if you request it*, either on the registration sheet at the meeting or by accessing the following site:

<http://www.tucsontcf.org/memorial/memorial.html>

Then, click on **ADD A NAME**

Many families have designed a memorial site for their child. By clicking on their highlighted site, you will be taken to that special site for more information. Examples would be:

<http://www.korvlaos.com/> or <http://www.benjaminsbugs.com/> Don't be intimidated by the intricate, technicalities of setting up your website. Find a sixth grader to help you!

BUTTON LADY & NAME-TAG MAN

Here's how to get your **FREE** picture buttons and name tags (with your child's picture on the tag): Make a copy (on regular computer paper) of your child's picture. Give it to Shirley Beene - **The Button Lady** - and she will mount it for you. See her for the details about size and quantity, etc. **Or call her 520-885-8398** Pick up a template and directions at the next meeting. Email her at: sbeene6@q.com

For your name tag, you need a similar, but smaller copy of your child's picture including the birth date and death date (and your name, of course!). Kevin Trapp - **The Name-Tag Man** - will produce the tag for you - FREE. Email your picture and information to him at: 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. Your child is the important connection with the faces. What a comfortable way to remember.

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

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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