



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bi-monthly newsletter of the Waccamaw SC Chapter
Serving Georgetown, Horry & Brunswick Counties
January — February 2008
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A Self-Help Non-Profit Organization for Families Who Are Grieving the Death of a Child

...that their light may always shine

There are no presents under the tree this year for those of days gone by. There is only an empty seat at those once revered holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's.

When we are ready, perhaps, we will be able to cook those traditional foods that once we all gathered round to partake. And perhaps, just maybe, tears will not become a constant companion to those traditions and comfort meals we hold so dear. And we each pray that the constant ache that lies just beneath the surface of our psyche will turn to sweet memories that are graven on the tablets of our hearts. We entreat our minds that this year the flood-gates of our souls will not come spilling forth into the present. Our constant yearning is that the beautiful memories will not once again turn into bittersweet rememberings.

It helped. At least it helped some of us. It helped to speak into the air the name of the child(ren) we hold so dear as we lit the candle that some have come to light each year – that touchstone, that validation that makes our child(ren) real if only for a millisecond. The candle, that speaks of broken dreams and unfulfilled imaginings that each parent or sibling bears in their innermost soul, glows quietly, silently flickering in the beauty of the night in the room where wounded souls have gathered.

And so it was on Sunday, December 9, 2007 at the Grand Strand Seniors Center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and the second Sunday in December all over the world each year for those of us who unwillingly have become a member of this "club". Many with broken hearts and shattered dreams entered the room, which if not for the occasion, looked like a fairy land glittering with white lights, shimmering candles and glowing angels.

Words spoken to me:

From a child: "We have known so much loss and sorrow in our family."

From a mother: "I can't believe this is the third one of these that I've been to."

From a father: "Here we are again."

For some of those who came, they did not realize the thought, effort and love that had gone into the planning and execution of such an event. Some of those who helped were "seasoned" veterans – whatever that means – perhaps that they are a little further along in their grief. For each that served, whether planning the program, cutting cheese, dust mopping the floor, hauling and storing all of the necessary stuff, helping break down the set up, whatever your "job", a heartfelt thanks goes out to you.

We are thankful for the opportunity to once again speak our child's name into the air because we will always remember...that their light may always shine.

~Vonda Cox~



**A Self-help Non-Profit Support Organization for Families Who
Are Grieving the Death of a Child**

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help international organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings. We meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:45 P.M. at the Grand Strand Senior Center. The next meetings will be January 8 and February 5. If you are reading this newsletter for the first time you may find it very difficult to come and share your grief. Please know that there will be others present who are ready to listen and understand what you are going through. Try it. It may help. **You need not walk alone.**

The chapter newsletter is normally published every other month and mailed to those in their first year of grief. We hope that it brings comfort to those who read it. If you wish to remain on the mailing list after that period you may do so by attending a meeting or sending a love donation. The distribution of the chapter newsletter is solely dependent upon love gifts.

SIBLING CREDO

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.
We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.
Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.
Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.
At other times we need our families to be there.
Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be.
We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.
When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.
We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.
Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as

Surviving Siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

OUR CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children unites us. Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope....But whatever hope we bring to this gathering of the Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share just as we will share with each other our love for our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and share the pain as well as the joy, the anger as well as the peace, the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.
We are the Compassionate Friends.

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National Office Announcements

Grief Support After the Death of a Child

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.

The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal. *The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.*

Nashville, Tennessee, known as the home of country music, will be the host city for the 31st national conference of The Compassionate Friends July 18-20, 2008.

The conference committee selected the theme *Volunteers for Healing—Friends for the Future*, a name that is very appropriate as TCF national conferences are always regarded as great healing experiences and a great place to find friends for life. The 2008 conference will have special guest speakers and entertainers, more than 100 workshops covering most aspects of grief following the death of a child, and many additional activities including the ninth annual two-mile Walk to Remember at 8 a.m. Sunday July, 20. A pre-conference day for professionals will be Thursday, July 17.

Among the keynote speakers will be Joe and Iris Lawley, founding parents of The Compassionate Friends, who will fly all the way from England for what may be one of their final TCF speaking engagements outside of their home country.

To allow everyone to be a part of the 2008 conference committee experience, the conference committee plans to decorate the conference area with real 7" vinyl records that have pictures of our TCF children remembered in the center. The "sponsor a record" program is similar to programs available for previous conferences. For a nominal charge (to help defray the cost of the conference), pictures sent in of our TCF children will be placed on the records (which are pressed with real grooves, but will not have music) and will decorate the registration area, and reflection and hospitality rooms. To participate, download the [sponsor a record](#) order form and follow the easy instructions. Whether or not you are able to attend the conference, a child, sibling, grandchild, or loved one can still be remembered.

Those who attend the conference and have a record made will be able to carry them home. After the conference concludes, those unable to attend who would like their child's record can have it mailed to them.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Music City Hotel and special room rates will be available for guests attending the conference. Watch TCF's national website for the latest information as it becomes available. More than 1,200 people are expected to attend.

Please

*If you would like your child(ren)'s name
Acknowledged in the newsletter,
Make sure that you have filled out the form on Page 7
We regret that we are unable to publish
His/her name without written permission.*

A MOMENT WITH MARIE

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YOU NEED NOT WALK ALONE.

Waccamaw Chapter News

Bereavement guidelines for loss of a child:

If you think you are going insane, THAT'S NORMAL
If all you can do is cry, THAT'S NORMAL

If you have trouble with the most minor decisions,
THAT'S NORMAL
If you can't taste your food or have any semblance of an
appetite, THAT'S NORMAL

If you have feelings of rage, denial and depression,
THAT'S NORMAL
If you find yourself enjoying a funny moment and immedi-
ately feeling guilty, THAT'S NORMAL

If your friends dwindle away and you feel like you have
the plague, THAT'S NORMAL
If your blood boils and the hair in your nose curls when
someone tells you "It was God's will, THAT'S NORMAL

If you can't talk about it, but can smash dishes, shred old
phone books or kick the garbage can (preferably empty)
down the lane, THAT'S NORMAL

If you can share your story, your feelings with an under-
standing listener???
...another bereaved parent, THAT'S A BEGINNING

If you can get a glimmer of your child's life rather than his/
her death, THAT'S WONDERFUL
If you can remember your child with a smile, THAT'S
HEALING

If you find your mirrors have become windows and you
are able to reach out to other bereaved parents, THAT'S
GROWING

~ from **CRUISE - bereavement Counselors in the UK**

Butterfly

A butterfly came to me today
and landed upon my knee
His wings were heavy from the rain
I knew you had sent him to me
Only an Angel such as yourself
would care about these things
so I dried him with my breath
and sat him on some leaves
As I sat there watching him
soaking in the Sun
I thought how great it must be
to fly it looks like so much fun
My Angel now you have your wings
Don't let my tears weigh them down
I know someday I will see you again
Until then keep sending the butterflies around.



by Mary Woody

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta June/July/August 2003 News-
letter

How Long Will The Pain Last?

Author Unknown

How long will the pain last?" a broken hearted mourner asked me. "All the rest of your Life." I have to answer truthfully. We never quite forget. No matter how many years pass, we remember. The loss of a loved one is like a major operation. Part of us is removed, and we have a scar for the rest of our lives.

As years go by, we manage. There are things to do, people to care for, tasks that call for full attention. But the pain is still there, not far below the surface. We see a face that looks familiar, hear a voice that echoes, see a photograph in someone's album, see a landscape that once we saw together, and it seems as though a knife were in the wound again. But not so painfully. And mixed with joy, too. Because remembering a happy time is not all sorrow, it brings back happiness with it.

How long will the pain last?

All the rest of your life. But the things to remember is that not only the pain will last, but the blessed memories as well. Tears are proof of life. The more love, the more tears. If this be true, then how could we ever ask that the pain cease altogether. For then the memory of love would go with it.

The pain of grief is the price we pay for love.

~There is no grief like the grief that does not speak~
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

What is a memory?

It is the faculty of beholding the golden rays of the sunset after the night has fallen.
It is the ability to bear in mind the sweet melody after the instruments have ceased playing.
It is a conversation with someone who can no longer speak and seeing a smile on a face no longer here.

By Karen Russell
National Grief Support Services
help@griefsupportservices.org and
www.griefsupportservices.org

~He that conceals his grief finds no remedy for it ~
Turkish Proverb

Can We Hold Back the Night?

I read with interest Mitch Carmody's response to Linda (Ryan's mom) in the August 12, 2007 (Atlanta) on-line newsletter. I especially like the last two sentences in Mitch's writing. He said: "The world is very harsh and the moment our child is born they are vulnerable to attack from all fronts. We love them unconditionally and do the best we can, but we cannot hold back the night."

Guilt is a powerful emotion, and it seems to be a common feeling for a newly bereaved parent. We "what if" ourselves to death. "What if" I had noticed the symptoms sooner and taken my child to the hospital. "What if" I hadn't bought that new car for my child? "What if" I had paid more attention and noticed that my child was severely depressed and gotten help for him/her? "What if" I had been more watchful and noticed that my child was getting in with the wrong crowd, etc., etc., and.....etc.. It seems normal and right to feel guilt. But, one of the problems with guilt is that it is a somewhat useless and debilitating emotion "after the fact" (after the fact of our child's death). It is true that sometimes guilt will prompt us to change a bad habit, stop doing something we shouldn't do and begin to do something we should do. When guilt is correctly tied to our conscience it can cause us to take a better action, go down a better path, make a change we need to make, become a better person. In these cases, guilt prompts actions which are better and right. But, when our child is dead and we cannot take an action to bring the child back, guilt may lay like a heavy rock on our heart, since there's no way to correct what went wrong.

The specific cause of my daughter, Bonnie's, death was an automobile accident. Bonnie was an inexperienced driver and she made a driving mistake. A terrible series of random occurrences played out, and it happened that a larger vehicle traveling the legal speed on the highway came over the rise in the road and slammed directly into her side (the driver's side) of the vehicle. No, I didn't tell her to drive this other person's vehicle, and I certainly wish she hadn't. But, "What if" I had exercised more parental control over her? "What if" I had been a stricter father and demanded that she be at home at a certain reasonable time each night? "What if" I had broken up her friendship with the guy who owned the vehicle she was driving (then she wouldn't have been out with him that night, all night)? "What if" I had taken her on many driving sessions myself and helped her be a better driver? "What if" I had impressed on her firmly that she was never, ever to drive someone else's car? "What if", "what if", "what if".....
if".....

Cont'd next column

As a bereaved parent, I was troubled by my part in the chain of events that led to what happened. Simply by not doing something (being strict, etc.) had I allowed/caused this to happen? In fairness, Bonnie on her own, had corrected some things in her life a few months prior to her accident. She had pulled away from most of the bad influences in her life, had gotten a part time job, and was going down a better path. And maybe I can say this on behalf of bereaved fathers (and mothers), we are pulled in many different directions as parents. For fathers, there's bills to pay, grass to cut, cars to repair, toilets to unstop, etc.. For mothers there's meals to fix, housework to do, children to take to the doctor, teachers to talk to, etc.. And I think I can safely say that we are all imperfect parents. All human beings are imperfect, and since parents are human, well.....you see the point.

So then, how should we see our "part" in what happened to our child? As mature adults usually 20 to 35 years older than our child, we are obligated to set a good example for our children using our values, morals, and experience. And of course, we should share verbally with our child what she/he needs to hear. And our children have certain basic needs which we must satisfy. But can we hold back all the "night"-the bad influences, the dangerous deeds, the random occurrences, genetic bad health, etc.? Maybe we need to "cut ourselves some slack" as bereaved parents.

We are imperfect just like our children. Maybe now is the time to look at the man in the mirror and say, "I tried, I tried. I made some mistakes, in fact, I may have made a lot of mistakes, but in my own way, I did try." We loved our children and we didn't want this to happen to them, but maybe they understood our frailties better than we know. And maybe we can come out of our own "night" of sadness and move into the sunlight.

In memory of Bonnie Catherine Haddock
(02/06/85—08/13/02)

Written by David Haddock Clinton, Mississippi
David.Haddock@mid.state.ms.us

~To spare oneself from grief at all cost can be achieved only at the price of total detachment, which excludes the ability to experience happiness~

Erich Fromm

OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED

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<u>CHILD'SNAME</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>BIRTHDATE</u>
Light Kinney	son of Mr. & Mrs. William Kinney Jr.	01/04/69
Wesley Devone Powell	son of Paige Whaley	01/09/82
Ralph Charles Ielfied	son of Reed & Margorie Ielfield	01/20/60
Jodi Anne Conte	daughter of Theresa Adinolph	01/21/61
Robert Cowan	son of Ronald & Katheryn Cowan	01/25/76
Philip M. Cherven	son of Ren & Anna Cherven	01/30/67
Wesley Josiah Tier	son of Jenny & Eric Tier	02/24/02

LOVE GIFTS
A Love Gift is a gift of money to Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but can also be from individuals to honor a relative or close friend., a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well—or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of The Compassionate Friends.
The distribution of the chapter newsletter is solely dependent upon love gifts.
If you would like to have your child's name added to our list, we request that you complete & return the form below. A love gift is not required, but please consider one as a memorial to your child.

<u>CHILD'SNAME</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE OF LOSS</u>
Amy Marie Olszowka	daughter of Patti La Verna	01/02/07
Jeffrey Robert Bird	son of Robert & Jean Bird	01/02/06
James Michael Lee	son of James & LeAnne Lee	01/04/07
Kayla Jane Wenrich	daughter of Jack & Susan Wenrich	01/09/04
Paul Schabot	son of Edward & Barbara Schabot	01/24/07
Christine Anne McJury	daughter of Paul & Kate Hourigan	01/29/06
John "Chris" Williams	son of Diane Williams	02/01/05
John Scott Melahn	son of Sandy & John Melahn	02/04/06
Chance Allen Caffery	son of Tina & Gary Cuevas	02/18/06
Wesley Josiah Tier	son of Jenny & Eric Tier	02/25/02

Memorial Love Gifts

The following gifts have been received since the last newsletter
A brick has been added in loving memory to The Wall of Love on our website: www.tcfmyrtlebeach.com

Joshua Stephen Walters, son of Steve & Robbin Walters	James Michael Lee, son of James & LeAnne Lee
Amanda Mae Moore, daughter of Carolyn & Gardiner Moore	Ralph Ielfield, son of Marjorie & Reed Ielfield
Chance Allen Caffery, son of Tina & Gary Cuevas	Jeffrey Robert Bird, son of Jean & Robert Bird
Thomas A. Chase, son of Debbie & Tom Chase	Quentin Mitchell Stacey, son of Barbara & Tim Stacy
Sandra Lee Thatcher, daughter of Sharon Thatcher	Philip M. Chevren, son of Ren & Anna Chevren
John "Chris" Williams, son of Diane Williams	

As stated before if you have previously donated a love gift, you do not need to complete the form. We will continue your child's name in our active file. Please accept our apologies if we include or omit a name in error. Let us know so that we may make the necessary correction.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

LOVE GIFT ENCLOSED: \$ _____ **IN MEMORY OF:**

CHILD'S NAME _____

BIRTHDATE: _____ **DATE OF LOSS:** _____



Please include my child(ren) as listed above in "Our Children Remembered" list as published in the newsletter. **YES** **NO**
Return this form to Jane Alirie, Secretary/Treasurer, 706 Bonnie Drive, Myrtle Beach, SC 29588



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P.O. Box 2893
Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE!!!

January's meeting will be January 8 instead of the first Tuesday, as January 1 falls on the first Tuesday of the month.

Grieving Process

Grief is a normal response to loss. But because most of us experience it deeply only a few times in our lives, it can be frightening and confusing.

Grief is a powerful and sometimes overwhelming experience. It has both emotional and physical effects on us.

Because grief is such a personal process, there is no "right way" to grieve. The important thing is to allow our feelings to flow and to talk - talk with someone who can really listen and allow us the time we need to talk or cry. "Being strong" will only make matters more difficult.

To grieve is like suddenly being pushed into a cold and swiftly flowing river in which there are rapids and rocks and logs and other submerged objects. As we are carried along in the current, we bump into things in the river. Some of them hurt a lot and some are just annoying. Just as not two persons floating in a river will bump into the exact same things, no two people who grieve will experience exactly the same things. If we do the work of grief, we will be able to swim to the bank and climb out of the river.

Written by TCF (Lorene Wright) Monday, 23 January 2006