



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

**LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY**

By Darcie D. Sims

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren’t so crushing.” Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous “ouchies” can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so...we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can’t live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable...some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don’t have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don’t measure your progress through grief against anyone else’s. Be your own timekeeper.

Don’t push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments...but don’t expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don’t get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable. . We don’t lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had.

Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn’t lose our child...HE [SHE] DIED. We don’t lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn’t love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I’m very glad I loved. Don’t let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, **LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!**

**The music of you**

a poem by Marcia Overstreet, TCF,  
Medford, OR

My mind begins to wander  
To another place and time  
Where and when I perceived the world  
Through someone else’s eyes.  
Those eyes were bright and inquisitive,  
Rarely missing a beat  
Of the rhythms of life that pass us by  
If we but fail to see.  
Through sparkling blue transcending eyes  
I allowed the rhythms of life  
To enter in and reside awhile  
As I felt their beat in my soul.  
My soul encompasses the music  
I surely would never have known  
Had I not learned to perceive the world  
Through someone else’s eyes.  
My mind begins to wander  
A bit too close to the past  
Where tender melodies I’ve learned  
Begin to change their beat,  
Consistently thumping and rising  
Blending with the pulse of my heart.  
When the music of you beats too intensely,  
I know I must open my eyes  
To the rhythms of life you taught me  
To never let pass me by.  
My mind begins to wander  
To another place and time  
Where and when I perceived the world  
Through someone else’s eyes.



**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 March 4 and April 1. 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.

Chapter Leader/Meeting Facilitator:  
Marie Peeling, (843)903-4466  
Horry County Telephone Contact:  
Ren & Anna Cherven, (843)272-3930  
Georgetown County Telephone Contact:  
Cheryl Isaac, (843)237-5054  
Regional Coordinator:  
Julia Muirhead, (864) 292-9204  
Secretary:  
Jane Alirie, (843) 293-1189  
Email: [angelinmyheartcf@aol.com](mailto:angelinmyheartcf@aol.com)  
Newsletter Editor:  
Vonda Cox, (843)602-5226  
email: [slunkie724@yahoo.com](mailto:slunkie724@yahoo.com)  
Newsletter Reproduction:  
Emergency Services Administration,  
Grand Strand Regional Medical Center  
Webmaster:  
Rebecca Smith  
email: [webmaster@tcfmyrtlebeach.com](mailto:webmaster@tcfmyrtlebeach.com)

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.*

*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.*

**DETAILS FOR SPONSOR A RECORD ARE ON  
LINE AT THE NATIONAL WEB SITE**

The 31st TCF National Conference in July 2008 will be in Nashville, Tennessee, Music City U.S.A. The conference committee plans to decorate the conference area with real 7-inch vinyl records that have pictures of our children in the center. (While the records will be pressed with grooves, there will be no music on them.) You are invited to send a picture of your child that will be mounted on a record and displayed at the conference. A minimum donation of \$10 in U.S. funds (check or money order only) will sponsor a record. For an additional \$5 your child's record will be mailed to you after the conference.



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.

## Waccamaw Chapter News

### A MOMENT WITH MARIE

REMINDER ALL FINAL PAYMENTS FOR THE PAVER'S FOR THE MEMORIAL GARDEN ARE DUE BY APRIL 1 FIRST. YOU CAN MAIL YOUR PAYMENT TO JANE ALIRIE 706 BONNIE DR. M.B. 29588, MAKE CHECK OUT TO COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MEMO MEMORIAL GARDEN. IF YOU NEED TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS PLEASE CONTACT HER AT 293-1189.

ALSO ITS TIME TO CLEAN THE HIGHWAY AGAIN, **PLEASE** WE REALLY NEED FOR YOU TO COME OUT AND HELP. REMEMBER THIS PROJECT WAS TO GET OUR NAME OUT TO PARENTS THAT NEED OUR HELP. IF WE ALL HELP IT WILL NOT TAKE VERY LONG. WE WILL DISCUSS THE DAY AND TIME AT THE NEXT MEETING. IF YOU CAN HELP WITH THIS BUT WILL NOT BE AT THE NEXT MEETING PLEASE CALL JENNY TIER AT 215-2745 FOR THE DETAILS.

SPRING IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER, AND JUST LIKE THE FLOWERS AND TREES ARE COMING BACK INTO BLOOM, MAYBE WE CAN SHED A LITTLE OF OUR GRIEF AND START TO BLOOM AGAIN.

### Update on the Children's Memorial

A deposit has been made on the Children's Memorial and as we go to press the statue part is being sculptured. The memorial should be completed in May.

All pavers need to be **paid in full** by April 1st. If you have not ordered a paver - please do so now. It will cost an additional \$30.00 once the pavers are installed and a minimal of ten pavers must be ordered before the engraver will go onsite.

We love our kids. We miss our kids... deeply. In this group we can freely share our pain and love with those around us because we know they understand how we really feel and we in turn understand how they feel. Our friendships are borne on the shoulders of mutual understanding of the human experience in its truest form. Often, it isn't fair.

It has been several years since my beloved daughter died. After being on this grief journey for some time, I am constantly awed and inspired by the depth of compassion and love that grieving people share. I have witnessed a young mother, who only had a few short hours to share her lifetime of love for her dying newborn, embrace and comfort a woman who had lost her 40 year old son. Compassion has no limits. Love knows no boundaries - it is universal and complete. These emotions are what unite us and help us to continue when we are at our lowest depth of grief and despair. Our children have become our teachers and guides. How we honor them becomes our connection to them when we feel hopeless and disconnected. How our children died and at what age has little meaning. What matters is how much we loved them, how we remember them and how we carry on in their memory.

**That is our journey.**

David Derby - "[Ginger's](#)" dad  
Compassionate Friends member Colorado

### Why Compassionate Friends?

As a Compassionate Friend you can expect to receive and should expect to offer in return... FRIENDSHIP - nothing more, nothing less. At a time when you may feel abandoned by many friends and family members we gather for mutual support and we share. We share our pain, we share our tears, we share our kids' stories, we share our precious memories and most importantly we share ourselves. Isn't that what friends do? We can acknowledge and honor our children without fear of being told to "get over it", "move on" or other such nonsense. We have formed a unique bond with one another. We are not brought together by ideology, belief systems, political agendas, occupation or any other sort of earthly trappings. Our bonds are the most powerful forces of love and grief.

*Cont'd next column*

**Hope is like a bird that senses the dawn and carefully starts to sing  
while it is still dark.**

**--unknown**



## PICTURES FROM THE HEART

Since we have lost our children, part of what remains of them are pictures from the heart, which are those mental images we hold so dear. For some of us these pictures are memories of what had been, and for others these pictures are dreams of what might have been. And for some of us these pictures are a little of both. For us, dreams and memories are really the same. It is the dimension where our children now reside.

In a sense, dreams are nothing more than memories of the future, because we remember our children by the dreams we had for them; and memories are nothing more than dreams of the past, because to remember them is certainly to dream of them.

I believe it is incorrect to think that someone will not hurt as much because they only had their child for a little while or to think that someone will not hurt as much because their child had the chance to grow up. In these dreams and memories, these pictures from the heart, all of our children are infants and all of our children have grown up. The sadness and pain comes from the broken heart, the memories and the dreams from the pieces that remain.

Kenneth Hensley  
TCF, Nashville, TN

### 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. (Sascha's son Nino drowned at age 3; years later,  
her daughter Eve died by suicide at age 21.)

### Preface to the following poem

Poetry has always been a release to me for feelings and thoughts that I could not always express in any other way. I was totally devastated when I first sat down to write shortly after my daughter died and found that nothing would come out. I was afraid I would never be able to get all of those raw emotions out.

For 16 long months now, since the death of my daughter Krissy, That inner voice of mine that always found it so easy to write poetry has been silent. Not one word, until today. I would like to share this poem I wrote.

### *I KNOW YOU*

I know who you are...I see your face reflected in mine.  
Ravaged by tears, distorted by the pain of a lifetime  
You are a parent of a child who now lives on in your  
heart

Joined in spirit, though physically torn apart

To live between two worlds is now our task  
To be recognized by others, we all have a mask  
But in the abyss, in the darkness of the in between  
We often fall to our knees,  
tearing away the pretense and silently scream.

I know who you are, your voice sounds as familiar as  
mine.  
It calls out, vibrating throughout all of eternity, searching.  
Trying to find.  
"Where are you my child? I hear you in my mind,  
but I cannot find the way.  
Somehow I have gotten lost, where are all of my  
yesterdays?"

In the void, a child's voice has fallen silent.  
Deafening silence, echoing cries..  
We are left to follow each other in the darkness,  
always asking Why?

Into the unknown, we stumble along.  
The sun will rise and another day will begin.  
But the only light I can see is in the outstretched hand of  
a kindred soul, another grieving friend.

I know who you are...your heart is shattered,  
your soul is broken, just like mine..  
And though the pieces may fit back together,  
one tiny fragment at a time  
We will never again be whole,  
for there is a gap in our lives where our child should be  
The child that lives in our hearts,  
dances deep in our souls, laughs in our memories.

I know who you are...I can feel your pain  
We will never be the same

I cry the same tears  
We have the same fears  
Alone in a crowd,  
We both cried aloud

As our dreams came to an end.  
I know you, my grieving friend.  
You are not alone, look in the mirror and you will see  
Standing next to you...is a reflection of me.

~Carolyn Bethea, Waccamaw Chapter TCF~

*This world is not conclusion:  
A sequel stands beyond,  
Invisible, as music,  
But positive, as sound.  
Emily Dickinson*

## Suicide: How Do We Say It?

© 1999 by Joyce Andrews, TCF/Sugar Land, Texas

From the moment we learned of our daughter's death, I knew that the word "suicide" had the power to erase her life while emblazoning her death in neon letters in the minds of her friends and colleagues. During the unremitting misery of those early days, I even toyed with the idea of telling no one she was gone, willing her to stay alive in the thoughts of those who knew her, forgetting that I'd already notified our family and closest friends. It was a fairy tale wish I contrived as a way of allowing myself a momentary escape from the unthinkable reality of her death. If her death were never acknowledged, would she still be here?

My fantasy vanished in the cold light of the days that followed. I knew that we could never dishonor Rhonda's memory by concealing her suicide. I wrote a letter to friends and relatives, informing them of the events leading up to her death. I hoped my letter would quell the inevitable whispers by openly acknowledging her depression and her decision to end her own life. I implored them to speak often and openly about her to us; to do otherwise would deny her existence.

I never intended to embark on a campaign to confront, let alone eradicate, the stigma of suicide. What mattered most was that we who loved Rhonda must not let the circumstances of her death diminish her memory or her accomplishments. I explained that she had "taken her own life" or that "she died of suicide." An expression I refused to use then and refuse to use to this day, is the despicable "committed suicide," with its implications of criminality. Historically, that term was an instrument of retaliation against the survivors, and it has no place in today's enlightened society.

Many people prefer to say, "completed suicide," but as a parent who witnessed my child's 20-year struggle against the demons of clinical depression, I don't care much for that, either. "Died of suicide" or "died by suicide" are accurate, emotionally-neutral ways to explain my child's death.

My first encounter with suicide occurred many years ago when my dentist, a gentle family man in his mid 30's, took his own life. Since that time, I have known neighbors, relatives, friends and other hard-working, highly respected individuals who died this way. I've facilitated meetings in which grieving parents declined to speak about their children because they couldn't handle the group's reactions to the dreaded "s" word. I've known parents who never returned to a chapter meeting because of negative comments about the way that their child died.

Rhonda was a gifted scholar, writer and archaeologist who, like my mother, suffered from adult-onset manic depression (also called bipolar disorder). She made a lasting contribution in her field, and a wonderful tribute to her life and her work appeared in *American Antiquity*, Journal of the Society for American Archaeology (October, 1994).

Both my daughter and my mother suffered tremendously in their struggles to conquer and conceal their illness. Neither of them won that battle, but my mother responded to medications that minimized the highs and lows, and she died of cancer at 87. Sadly, doctors never discovered a magic formula that could offer Rhonda the same relief. She ended her own life at age 36, after a year of severe depression that was triggered by life stresses beyond her control. I saw her battle firsthand, and I witnessed her valiant struggle to survive. She wanted desperately to live; she died because she thought she had no alternative.

In his revealing book, *Telling Secrets*, the great theologian Frederick Buechner describes his father's suicide, which occurred when Buechner was just a boy. The conspiracy of silence that was imposed on Buechner and his brother had a profound effect on their development and their relationships with other family members. "We are as sick as our secrets," he concludes.

We whose children have taken their own lives must do all that we can to help eradicate the secrecy and stigma that surround their deaths. If we allow these to persist, we allow their lives to be diminished. We owe our children more than that

May Love Be What You Remember  
Most

**OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED**

**March — April 2008**  
**Page 7**

| <u>CHILD'SNAME</u>       | <u>NAME</u>                           | <u>BIRTHDATE</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Robert Quaranto          | son of Louise Maiorino                | 03/04/52         |
| Sandra Lee Thatcher      | daughter of Sharon Thatcher           | 03/05/55         |
| Benjamin Alfred Clark    | son of Lynn A Brazell                 | 03/08/86         |
| Sarah Jayne Otte         | daughter of Earl & Doris Otte         | 03/15/75         |
| Lynne Friedman           | daughter of Annette & Richard Krapf   | 04/04/65         |
| Matthew Steven Isel      | son of Michael & Beth Isel            | 04/12/82         |
| Joey Tindall             | son of Joseph & Bobbie Tindall        | 04/23/53         |
| Jennifer Marie Highsmith | daughter of Barry & Frankie Highsmith | 04/24/80         |

**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> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Jennifer Marie Highsmith | daughter of Barry & Frankie Highsmith | 03/15/04            |
| Jacqueline Denise Simoes | daughter of Linda Montgomery          | 03/16/06            |
| Benjamin Alfred Clark    | son of Lynn A Brazell                 | 03/19/05            |
| Tracy Lee Connelly       | daughter of David & Linda Connelly    | 03/22/07            |
| Keith Shapiro            | son of Marie Peeling                  | 03/24/97            |
| Robert Cowan             | son of Ronald & Katheryn Cowan        | 03/25/99            |
| Keith Horton             | son of Patricia Skipper               | 04/12/07            |
| Lynne Friedman           | daughter of Annette & Richard Krapf   | 04/15/06            |
| Joey Tindall             | son of Joseph & Bobbie Tindall        | 04/21/06            |

**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](http://www.tcfmyrtlebeach.com)

Bobby Cowan, Ron, Kathy & Jeremy Cowan  
 Matthew Steven Isel, Michael & Beth Isel  
 Kayla Marie Bennett, Connie & Greg Bennett  
 Thomas A. Chase, Debbie & Tom Chase  
 Cory Robert Snyder, Phyllis & Rob Snyder

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



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

March — April 2008

Page 8

P.O. Box 2893

Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

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## Finally someone understands...the Afterloss Credo

by Lindy McClean, *TCF, Medford, OR*

I need to talk about my loss. I may often feel the need to tell you what happened—or to ask you why it happened.

I may frequently need for you to listen while I explain what this loss means to me. Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself face the reality of the death of my child.

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—and in my own time.

Please don't judge me now—or think that I'm behaving strangely. Remember, I'm grieving. I may even be in shock. I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage. I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt. I am experiencing a pain unlike any I've ever felt before.

Don't be concerned if you think I'm getting better and then suddenly I seem to slip backward again. 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. I want to get on with my life—but I know that first I must walk through the dark shadows of my grief. And, although it is almost impossible for me to believe this now, I know that one day my grief will end.

Most of all, thank you for being my friend. Thank you for caring, for helping, for understanding.

Thank you for praying for me. And remember, in the days or years ahead—after your loss—when you need me as I have needed you, I will understand, and then I will come and be with you.

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