

# The Primrose



Vol. 42, Issue 1

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Spring 2022



## The Gift of Guilt

**Sometimes the hardest part of grief is guilt.** We obsess over what we did or didn't do, the missed opportunities to say I love you, the times we lashed out in anger or impatience.

A young woman doesn't forget telling her brother she hated him a week before he died in a boating accident. A mother is immobilized by guilt because of an argument she had with her son the day before he died.

Guilt complicates and prolongs the grieving process by preventing the emotional and spiritual growth necessary for recovery. Self-condemnation and regret can all too often lead to depression or suicide.

So how can we escape the destructive forces of guilt when it's so much a part of our grief? We can start by acknowledging that guilt stems from goodness. Guilt is the conscience protecting the violation of an inner moral code. Instead of beating ourselves up over real or imagined offences, we can recognize the goodness that makes us wish we had done things differently or better, and work towards expressing our guilt in more productive and positive ways.

Write down the things you wish you had done differently. Underline the goodness that can be found at the source of your guilt.

**If you wish...**

**You had been kinder**, be kind to someone who least expects it

**For another chance to say I love you**, resolve to never let a day go by without telling people in your life how much you care.

**You had been more understanding or patient**, listen to a troubled adolescent or elderly person

**You hadn't taken your loved one for granted**, say a prayer of gratitude for all the people in your life today

**You could take back every unloving word you ever said**, say something nice to everyone you meet

**You had spent more time with your loved one**, spend time with a shut-in, a lonely relative or a child.

**You could resolve the misunderstandings at the time of your loved one's death**, work on improving your relationships.

**For your loved one's forgiveness**, resolve to forgive yourself

Guilt can tear us apart or inspire us to do great things. It can distance us from God or bring us closer to Him. It can imprison us in darkness or fill our world with light. It can be a lasting curse - or a lasting gift.

by Margaret Brownley Simi Valley, CA

**The Compassionate Friends, Inc.**  
**National Office Information**

Phone Number (toll free) (877) 969-0010  
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Regional Coordinator  
Al Visconti (518) 756-9569

**PARENTS RESOURCE CORNER**

Please feel free to call the following people if you wish to speak to someone whose child's death was caused in a manner similar to your child's.

Accidental – Pam Kroft	Ph: 607 239-4222
Illness - Shirley Mehal	607 785-5710
Adult child - Kim Ford	607 244-0267
Karen Yeager	607 757-1852
Suicide - Sherry Bailey	607 797-8990
Substance - Shelley Levchak	607 759-0852

**The Compassionate Friends of Broome County**

1250 Front Street, # 147 Binghamton, NY 13901  
Web Address:

<https://www.stny.info/tcfbroome/>

**For information pertaining to the  
The Compassionate Friends of Broome County,  
call: Pam Kroft (607) 239-4222**

**Monthly Meetings**

First Monday of each month 7:00 - 9:00 PM  
Third or fourth Saturday 10 AM – 12 PM  
Nimmonsburg United Methodist Church  
918 Upper Front Street Binghamton, NY 13901  
(across from BCC)

**Steering Committee**

Chapter Leader & Delegate - Pam Kroft  
Assistant Chapter Leader - Donna Cunningham  
Outreach - Luann Ford , Elaine Sahre,  
Shelley Levchak  
Library - Sherry Bailey  
Hospitality – Jean Scolaro  
Treasurer – Val Ambrose  
Newsletter Editor – Val Ambrose  
Social Media -  
FB - Karen Yeager & Kim Ford  
Website—Jim Pratt  
Secretary - Angela Carro

**Please consider joining  
Steering Committee Meeting  
Thursday May 19th  
Contact Pam for details**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Meetings:**

**First Monday 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Unless otherwise indicated  
Third or fourth Saturday 10:00 A.M.  
(Check calendar!)**

**NIMMONSBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
918 Front Street, Binghamton  
(Across from BCC, next to the Credit Union.  
Parking in the rear, enter through rear door.)**

**March 7th, 2022 (Monday)  
7:00 PM “Memory Night”**

**March 19th, 2022 (Saturday)  
10:00 AM Open Sharing**

**April 4th 2022 (Monday)  
7:00 PM “How do we Spring Forward?”**

**April 16th 2022 (Saturday)  
10:00 AM Open Sharing**

**May 2nd, 2022 (Monday)  
7:00 PM “Moms, Grandmas, Aunts and Sisters”**

**May 19th, 2022 (Thursday)  
5:30 Steering Committee Meeting**

**May 21st, 2022 (Saturday)  
10:00 AM Open Sharing  
1:00 PM “Clean up at Angel”**

**May 28th 2022 (Saturday)  
10:00 AM “Rain Date for Clean up at Angel”**

**June 6th, 2022 (Monday)  
7:00 PM “Dads, Grandpas, Uncles and Brothers”**

The Primrose is published quarterly  
Deadline for newsletter materials:  
**February 1st: May 1st: August 1st: November 1st**

Send Information to: Val Ambrose 730 River Rd.  
Binghamton, NY 13901  
Or email [JTL7899@yahoo.com](mailto:JTL7899@yahoo.com)

**NOTICE: If you receive this newsletter,  
forwarded through the funeral home, please call  
Val Ambrose at (607 648-8598) with your correct  
address so new issues can be mailed directly to you.**

## Semper Parente

There is no name for my situation in this world. Both my sons died and I am a parent without children. There is no name for a parent without children.

The name for a child whose parents have died is orphan. The name for a spouse whose husband or wife has died is widow or widower. Is it because it is so painful and unimaginable that no one could bear to name them?

J.K. Rowling writes in her series of Harry Potter novels that the villain Voldemort, considered to have been the most powerful and dangerous dark wizard of all time, is so terrifying that he is called "**He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.**" Albus Dumbledore, Harry Potter's headmaster, says "call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself." Identifying and naming your fear is the first step towards understanding your fear.

There is power in naming your fear. An unnamed fear remains vague and nebulous and grows larger in size due to the fact that it cannot be defined and contained in a name. When you can clearly name your fear, it can connect you to new ways of thinking that will open doors for you.

I want to call myself and other parents who have lost a child, "semper parente." It is Latin and when translated into English means "always parent." It is an understanding of the infinite nature of being a parent. It changes the paradigm of parenthood, and expands the timeline beyond this world. The fact that I was a parent and had children changes eternity. Nothing can change that fact. Semper parente, always a parent. This name binds me and my children in eternity.

It is fitting that a novel about an orphan helps me understand the need for a name for myself. Harry's parents were killed by Voldemort when he was a baby and the love from his parents provided protection for Harry to survive Voldemort's attack. With the help of magic, Harry's parents provide courage and support for Harry in his ongoing battles with Voldemort. Using reverse logic, Harry's parents are "semper parentibus" or "always parents" in eternity. They are bound to Harry in his world and into eternity.

It is also fitting that semper parente is Latin. Latin is considered a dead language because it is no longer a spoken language. But it was transformed into Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian. Latin is used today in technical fields when clarification is important, such as in medical terminology. Clarification is important in choosing a name for a parent whose child has died. Semper parente defines me and it transforms the meaning of my parenthood into the infinite.

Karen Quandt

## Promise of Spring

When February comes there is finally an end in sight to the long winter. Sometimes, melting snow reveals the green tips of an early crocus or even the exquisite blossom itself, a soft flower of hope invading a harsh landscape of graying snow and biting wind and ominous sky. A small promise of new life to come. My heart, grieving for my son who died, was like that image of winter. For somehow, even during the darkest, coldest moments, an unexpected sign of hope would intrude. And as the hours and days and months dragged on, my heart finally learned, once again, to be open to the promise of new life. Painful memories melted into loving ones. Life that seemed forever dormant once again sprang forth from my heart. In living hopefully and lovingly, the seasons of the heart can change. The loving memories of your special child, like the flower in the snow, can be the beginning of the end of winter.

Maryann Kramer, TCF, Arlington Heights

## **A NOTE FROM OUR CHAPTER LEADER:**

Hello Friends,

As I write this we have survived a very cold winter and I am sure we are all looking forward to an early spring and better yet a warmer summer. We have endured so much these last two years, sacrificing all along the way. In the midst of it all is our daily grief, which as we know doesn't stop, nor take a back seat to any of life's issues at hand. I absolutely wish for new hope in our very crazy world.

Our candle lighting in December was beautiful and it was so heartwarming to be able to have a sanctuary full of our TCF family. We so sorely missed our in person service in 2020 so this was a joyous evening. Anytime we can gather together and embrace the love for our children, grandchildren and siblings we do it with great pride and a mending heart. As family and friends we lit candles, listened to music, readings and sat patiently to hear the name of our precious loved one being read aloud. It was a disappointment not being able to have fellowship after our service but hopefully this coming December will be different. One big special thank you to all who came out for this wonderful evening and an even larger thank you to those who participated in our service to make it a night of hope, love and light.

In January we once again paused our bi-monthly meetings, but February we were back together. We all need the camaraderie; to share, to cry, to laugh and to hug. I know our hugs have been limited but as we put each month of this year in our rear view mirror I hope our hugs will return full force. We have many new parents and siblings that have reached out and several who have come to a meeting in the past several months. Because of our restrictions it's been difficult to offer all that we have to give. Talking on the phone is a good avenue to give comfort to someone new to the grief road and sharing our daily message is another way to reach out. Meeting face to face at our intimate safe place is so much more comforting and hopeful for newly hurting souls and for every member regardless of time in our group. We do so much better when we can meet in person and look someone in the eye and share our children, grandchildren and siblings. We all have different family dynamics; we have questions about our grief that can be asked without judgment, you never receive a question as an answer to your question. No one has all the answers but each one around our table has been there. Just knowing you are not alone is the most comforting tool in our box. What works for me may not work for you but as more and more tools are pulled from the box there might be that one you can take home and find some comfort in. We will always reiterate there are no right or wrong approaches to our grief, other than doing something to hurt ourselves. To keep our child's, grandchild's and siblings memories alive we must take care of ourselves first.

Spring can be a fragile time for many as the earth is waking up and rebirthing. Signs of new life are everywhere, reminding us of our beloved ones gone too soon. But spring can also give us a renewed sense of life, offering an end to winter's darkness and the shadows of sadness. It may not happen on the first day of spring, which generally is still winter like in our part of the country. But ever so slowly and without warning the sun will shine and the buds will open giving us a chance at capturing some warmth and comfort in our hearts, maybe even a tiny laugh from within us. Our steps are baby steps in this life we have so any path that allows us hope, take it, embrace it and keep going forward as long as you can. Sit and rest to remember along the way all the good that our children, grandchildren and siblings added to our lives, regardless of how long they were here with us. You and I have been given this task to make sure they are remembered and loved forever.

Our upcoming meeting on Monday March 7<sup>th</sup> will be memory night, always a favorite among members. Bring a photo, a favorite memento, a funny story to share, favorite cookies or cake, or anything near and dear to your heart. As we share memories around our table others are more apt to think of that treasure they have buried and share it as well.

As the spring unfolds before our very eyes may we put our sadness aside if only for a moment enabling us to find renewed hope. I know it's hard to see anything in the early years of bereavement but give yourself a chance.

Just remember there is always a hand willing to take yours as you walk this journey called grief. Our group has an abundance of understanding, love, hope and friendship to give just for the asking.

Hugs to all,  
Pam Kroft  
Sean's Mom



### Buried Heart

My heart stopped the day you died  
I put it away in a heavy, metal box  
Away from laughter and sunlight.

I buried the box  
Beneath guilt, regrets and the pain  
of not saying goodbye  
Deeply buried under the pain of missing you

I went searching for you  
In forests, mountains and jungles  
In deserts, meadows and beaches  
Searching for a look, a trace, a glimpse of you

But you came looking for me  
In strange, unexpected places  
You'd show up  
for a brief moment when least expected  
Bringing me a bird, a song, a sign  
Unmistakably you

To show your love for me  
To comfort me  
To sustain me until we embrace again

Karen Howe, for Claire

### Surviving With a Smile

All alone in a room full of people,  
Trying to make it through another day.  
Feigning interest in the conversation,  
They don't know we don't care what they say.

Time stands still for those who are mourning.  
Our lost child is constantly on our mind.  
Though we desperately want to live normal lives,  
Your absence is excruciatingly unkind.

Days, weeks and months continue to pass by  
And people don't really understand  
So we keep our smiling masks at the ready  
And our "that's so interesting" faces at hand.

What we truly want is to talk about you  
For you are forever in our heads.  
The first thing we think about in the morning  
And the last thought at night as we go to our beds.

But, here we are in a world that knows not  
How we can hide our pain for a while.  
Though we are grieving and miss you fiercely,  
We courageously present with a cordial smile.

by Paula Grossman,  
mother of Mitch TCF Inner Loop Chapter, Houston, TX

### Dancing with Angels

Looking out the window, seeing the rays of sun  
Shining down on the Earth,  
Warming us with its love,  
Causing new growth, changes of season.

With each raindrop that falls  
The Earth is nourished  
Drinking the water of life,  
Becoming stronger, growing with love.

Listen to the wind soaring through the trees,  
It has the strength to move mountains.  
Leaves dance down to the Earth  
Each a different color, a different beauty.

Soon it becomes cold, and the rain turns to snow.  
Snowflakes dance down to the Earth  
Blanketing each seed, protecting the Earth  
From nature's harsh cold.

At night, when all seems dark,  
The moon's light will guide us.  
The Earth is watched from far above,  
Stars glimmering, dancing with light.

Like changes in season the tides turn over.  
It's the love of angels, reaching down upon the Earth,  
Dancing for us, if we just stop for a moment  
And look out the window of life. Elizabeth Anne Gannon,

### I Am Spring

I am the beginning.  
I am budding promise.  
I spill cleansing tears of life  
from cloudy vessels  
creating muddy puddles  
where single cell creatures abide  
and splashing children play.  
I am new green growth.  
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.  
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.  
With compassion, we feather nests  
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.  
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream  
I whisper truth – life is change.  
I am spring.  
I bless long, dark wintry days.  
I crown mankind's pain  
with starry skies  
in deepest night  
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy  
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.

Carol Clum



## *Our Children Remembered*

*As long as we live, our children too shall live,  
for they are part of us in our memories.  
We lovingly remember the following children on  
Their Anniversary.*



- 03/08 **John** son of **Margaret Turna** Binghamton, NY  
03/09 **Annette** daughter of **M/M James Pratt** Binghamton, NY  
03/09 **CJ** son of **Charles & Shelley Levchak** Kirkwood, NY  
03/14 **Andrew** son of **Ray & Lori Benjamin** Binghamton, NY  
03/15 **Mary** daughter of **Martin & Olivia Curtin** Endicott, NY  
03/16 **Jessica** daughter of **William & Darlene Cady** Binghamton, NY  
03/16 **Dylan** son of **Kelly Buckland** Binghamton, NY  
03/16 **Krystal** daughter of **Stephen Rinker** Johnson City, NY  
03/17 **Michael** son of **Paul & Jean Scolaro** Endicott, NY  
03/22 **Christina** daughter of **Frank & Kathy Rumpel** Binghamton, NY  
03/25 **Dillion** grandson of **Toni & Larry Sherling** Endicott, NY  
03/25 **Stavros** son of **Peter & Barbara Metritikas** Vestal, NY  
03/26 **Sarah** daughter of **Kate Chambers** Nichols, NY  
03/28 **Melissa** daughter of **Cindy Freita** Endicott, NY  
04/02 **Michael** son of **Barbara Lewis & Nancy Arnold** Sandstone VA  
04/02 **Michael** son of **Howell Larnerd** Binghamton, NY  
04/03 **Jeremy** son of **Robert & Patricia Walberg** Afton, NY  
04/04 **John** son of **Carol Gabriel** Binghamton, NY  
04/09 **Christopher** son of **Kathleen Jones** Vestal, NY  
04/12 **Joseph** son of **Michael & Christina McAfee** Binghamton, NY  
04/13 **Michael** son of **Mike & Cathy Magee** Endicott, NY  
04/15 **Ryan** son of **Ron & Sherry Bailey** Johnson City, NY  
04/18 **Philomena** daughter of **Frances Liparulo** Binghamton, NY  
04/20 **Jacob** son of **Sharon Gana** Little Meadows, PA

continued ➡

*Our Children Remembered...* continued

- 04/21 **Aurora Rose** granddaughter of **Patty Boorum** Binghamton, NY  
04/21 **Aurora Rose** daughter of **Jason & Stephanie Blaisure** Binghamton, NY  
04/22 **Kelli** daughter of **M/M George Ford** Newark Valley, NY  
04/24 **Samantha** daughter of **Carlo & Samantha Carlini** Endicott, NY  
04/27 **Daniel** son of **Trina Caputo** Glendale, NY  
04/29 **Christopher** son of **Robert & Kim Carroll** Binghamton, NY  
05/01 **Joshua** son of **Valerie Ambrose** Binghamton, NY  
05/05 **Anthony** son of **James Vazquez** Binghamton, NY  
05/05 **Allan** son of **Samuel & Shelley Allegrino** Binghamton, NY  
05/06 **Cody** son of **Debbie Hetherly** Binghamton, NY  
05/06 **Ashley** daughter of **Jacqueline Anderson** Binghamton, NY  
05/08 **Anatolio** son of **Dora Mancini** Endicott, NY  
05/22 **Matthew Stacey** son of **Charles & Susan Taft** Byron, MI  
05/30 **Philip** son of **William & Kate Stacy** Greene, NY  
05/31 **Teresa** daughter of **Sylvia Behal** Johnson City, NY

**When I Must Leave You**

by Helen Steiner Rice

When I must leave you  
For a little while—  
Please do not grieve  
And shed wild tears  
And hug your sorrow to you  
Through the years,  
But start out bravely  
With a gallant smile;  
And for my sake  
And for my name  
Live on and do  
All things the same,  
Feed not your loneliness  
On empty days,  
But fill each waking hour  
In useful ways,  
Reach out your hand  
In comfort and in cheer  
And I in turn will comfort you  
And hold you near;  
And never, never  
Be afraid to die  
For I am waiting for you in the sky!

**Spring Thaws The Wounded Heart**

Alice J. Wisler  
Inspired by the life of  
Daniel Paul Wisler 8-25-92 ~ 2-2-97

That first spring  
came too soon  
why did daffodils  
show sunny faces  
around the grave stone  
why did warm breezes blow  
clouds away  
my world, a gray dismal  
had no room for this season.  
Now years later  
the blossoms of love,  
hope and healing  
have broken through  
grounds of utter despair  
warmed by memories of you  
I join the daffodils  
bringing my own smile.

### **Tears Are The Proof of Life:**

"How long will the pain last?", a broken-hearted mourner asked me. "All the rest of your life," I had 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. This does not mean that the pain continues at the same intensity. There is a short while, at first, when we hardly believe it; it is rather like when we cut our hand. We see the blood flowing, but the pain has not set in yet.

So when we are bereaved, there is a short while before the pain hits us. But when it does, it is massive in its effect. Grief is shattering. Then the wound begins to heal. It is like going through a dark tunnel.

Occasionally we glimpse a bit of light up ahead, then we lose sight of it awhile, and then see it again, and one day we merge into the light.

We are able to laugh, to care, to live. The wound is healed so to speak. The stitches are taken out, and we are whole again. But not quite. The scar is still there, and the scar tissue, too. As the years go by, we manage. There are things to do, people to care for, and 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 has echoes, see a photograph in someone's album, see a landscape that once we saw together, and it is as though the 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. As a matter of fact, we even seek such moments in bittersweet remembrance. We have our religious memories and our memorial days, and our visits to the cemetery. And though these bring back the pain, they bring back memories of joy as well.

How long will the pain last? All the rest of your life. But the thing to remember is that not only the pain will last, but the blessed memories as well. Tears are the proof of life. The more love, the more tears. If this is 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.

**Sometimes love is for a moment,  
Sometimes love is for a lifetime,  
Sometimes a moment is a lifetime.**

Pamela S. Adams, TCF Winnipeg, Canada

We were so afraid to attend our first TCF meeting but the fear of not going frightened us even more. Before the meeting we heard laughter from parents enjoying each other's company. That sound was foreign to our ears since Scott had died only three months before. Truth be told it hurt to hear, even though I longed to find my way there "someday".

At the first meeting another couple shared their story and it was almost exactly like ours. Through my tears I saw the kindness, love and purpose in their faces and knew I would be back. Seven years later we are still there, we're on the steering committee and the planning committee for the 2015 Dallas conference, hoping we can give comfort, compassion and even laughter to another parent walking in those doors for the first time.

Bobby and Denise Orsak, Parents of Scott Kendal Orsak Texas, SW Houston  
Sugar Land Chapter of The Compassionate Friends



**The Definition of Compassion is: “to Suffer With”  
We are The Compassionate Friends—We are survivors**

The saving grace of our loss is that hardships are an opportunity for growth. We must be strong to handle grief, and in the end, grief brings out strengths we never knew we had. To experience and embrace the pain of loss is just as much a part of life as to experience the joy of love. This is not the end—merely the ending of things as they were. All changes involve loss, just as all losses require change. Being exposed to this pain brings us to a new level of sophistication, and from that point on we can never return to our original innocence. Peace lies at the center of our pain.

**Denial** is a safe place where we might find ourselves after the death of our child. This denial gives you moments away from your pain. It is nature's way of letting in only as much as we can handle. This serves as a bandage. Survivors create a healthy and timely defense system which they shed by bits and pieces. As you become stronger you begin to face feelings you were denying.

**Anger** is another indication of the intensity of your love. Anger can be healthy as it affirms you can feel, that you did love and that you have lost. This anger is proof that you are moving because it will surface once you feel safe enough to know you will probably survive. It can also be used as an anchor, giving temporary structure to the nothingness of loss.

**Depression** during grief is a way for nature to keep us protected by shutting down the nervous system so that we can adapt to something we feel we cannot handle. As difficult as it is to endure, depression has elements that can be helpful in grief. It slows us down and allows us to take real stock of the loss. It makes us rebuild ourselves from the ground up. It clears our mind for growth. It takes us to a deeper place in our soul that we would not normally explore.

**Acceptance** is where we find ourselves when instead of denying our feelings, we begin to listen to our needs; we move, we change, we grow, we evolve. We may start to reach out to others and become involved in their lives. We begin to re-invest in friendships and in our relationship with ourselves. We slowly begin to live again, but we cannot do so until we have given grief its time. In a strange way, as we move through grief, healing brings us closer to the child we lost. A new relationship begins.

Healthy grief has a flow, a natural continuing process, although that flow can include stopping to rest, re-energize, or take stock. This emotional rest gives us the opportunity to touch the pain directly for only so long until we have to back away. This is when distractions are needed. If we did not go back and forth emotionally, we could never have the strength to find peace in our loss.

It is our hope that the intense darkness of grief will give way to light as hundreds of thousands of candles spread their flickering flames to light the night as our children are remembered.

Dana Rogers, Mother of Rick Rogers, TCF Galveston Co. Chapter

## **EASTER THOUGHTS**

One more winter overcome,

One more darkness turned to light and promise.

Winter is the price for spring. Struggle is the price for life.

Even in sorrow, remember to prepare your heart for celebration...

Next spring perhaps... Or the spring after that...

Sascha Wagner, TCF Des Moines IA

## Love Gifts

*Our chapter is a self-help group with no required dues. We rely solely on contributions. Your donations help us pay for the cost of this newsletter, the postage, all the books in our library, meeting and event supplies which are a great help to bereaved parents.*

Your contributions are tax deductible and very sincerely appreciated. The following donations were received since the last Primrose deadline:

**Ivy Carroll** in memory of her daughter **Stacy**

**Shelley & Chuck Levchak** in memory of their son **CJ**

**Frank & Jeannine Wells** in memory of their daughter **Kathleen**

**Patrick & Joyce Crowley** in memory of their son **David**

**Shirley Rigo** in memory of her son **David**

**Joyce & Charles Ritzler & Charles** in memory of their son **Rodney**

**Rita & Michele Kelley** in memory of their grandson **James**

**Samuel & Shelley Allegrino** in memory of their son **Allan**

**Barbara Lewis, Nancy Arnold & Howell Larnerd** in memory of **Michael**

**June Moore** in memory of their son **Jason**

**Kathy Jones** in memory of her sons **Tommy** and **Chris**

**James & Mary View** in memory of their son **James Jr.**

**Bonnie Blair** in memory of her daughters **Julie** and **Cindy**

**Diane Dobish** in memory of her grandson **Alexander**

**Nancy Rinehuls** in memory of her son **Richard**

**Kathy Beers** in memory of her son **Jason**

**Carlo & Samantha Carlini** in memory of their daughter **Samantha**

**Michael & Jo-Anne Oliver** in memory of their son **Michael**

**Joseph & Arlene Bigart** in memory of their son **John** and also

In memory of **The Sullivan Family**

**A very special thank you to Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home**



## The Child Who Wasn't Perfect

I cannot say, as I have heard other parents say, "My child has always been a joy and pleasure; never gave me a minute's trouble," I cannot say that. I had a son who was always trouble.

He was born cross and irritable, real trials from the word go. He seemed to be in protest at having been born, from his very first breath and outcry, through the rest of his life. His thirty-seven years of life were one long outcry of protest, misery and unhappiness. He expressed his tormented spirit through music, poetry and a beautiful American Indian spirituality. But in spite of the pain that was in his heart, he had a wide smile and a hearty big laugh for everyone that belied the torment that raged inside him. He had a strange, mysterious wild charm, to which all who met him fell victim. He seemed to be born in the wrong time, wrong culture, with a crippled spirit, and a body that carried a fatal flaw; the fatal flaw of addiction. He put himself and his family through the agony of the damned. Step by step, he destroyed himself, as we watched with grieving hearts. He rejected every effort to save him.

Then came that fateful week; some mystery reached out for him; his body, his spirit defied every weapon at science's disposal to diagnose and save him. One by one his vital functions failed and he was gone. The word "forever" suddenly had a new and terrible meaning.

So, he was hard to love; but we loved him every step of the way. We had him because we wanted him and we loved him every minute of his life. Our grief has been no less because he was not a perfect child. It has just been an extension of the agony that we were helpless against the monster called addiction that destroyed him.

Yesterday, was his birthday, I longed for the sight and sound of him, and that wild melancholy charm that vanished a year and a half ago. My heart stays full of tears; they are always just beneath the surface. I struggle daily to keep them out of sight and my fellow man, who does not want to share my pain. So, I come home and sit on my porch in the dark; listen to the night sounds; stare into space and I cry for my child who wasn't perfect.

Jane Miller ~ TCF, Atlanta, GA

### \*\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\*\*

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Our largest expense is the printing and mailing of newsletters to our members. Your tax deductible Love Gift donation enables the chapter to continue our mission of reaching out to the newly bereaved and providing ongoing support to all our members.

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## NEW SONGS IN A STRANGE LAND

In olden days some people asked, in plaintive words we understand:  
"How can we sing the songs of old while captives in a foreign land?"  
Their hearts were heavy, filled with care, as they were taunted by the foe  
To sing as in the former days, their former joys again to know.

We, too, are captives, not by choice, in land determined by the deaths  
Of our dear children, young and older, who have drawn their final breaths.  
And we are taunted as we're told that we to normal must return.  
Oh how we'd love to have them back and for those happier times still yearn!

Yet normal ne'er can be the same; we travel as a captive band.  
But from the sadness that we know, we'll somehow come to understand  
That though our children can't come back, we can't to those glad days return,  
Through this sojourn in foreign land we can triumphant new songs learn!

It's hard for now; with heavy hearts our tears so quickly start to flow!  
In truthful bitterness we cry, "Give back our children, now missed so!"  
But we are learning through the tears; our harps again we'll choose to play  
And gratitude will be the theme, when joy, not sadness, rules the day!

Revised slightly from A Journey Toward Healing

### "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



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