

# The Primrose



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TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Winter 2022



## OUT OF SYNC WITH THE HOLIDAYS

As I steel myself for my third holiday season since losing my son, it occurs to me that one of the challenges – and there are many – is coping with a sense of being out of sync with the world and all the people in it.

The season of good cheer seems compulsory. Yet I can't bear to open the boxes of ornaments and decorations. I can't bear to put candles in the windows. I can't bear to use the Spode Christmas tree china. I can't play Christmas carols. I can't bake the date nut bars that he loved. I avoid shopping malls and keep the radio turned off. It is all I can do to order gifts for my daughter and wrap them.

This season also implores us to believe. Whether it's an appeal to believe in the birth of the Messiah, or to believe that a single day's supply of oil burned for eight days, or to believe that Santa will deliver presents by sled from the North Pole, the message is the same: believe. Yet, I have lost my son. I am consumed by a sense of *disbelief*. Of incredulity. How could this have happened? How could he be gone? How could this have happened to me? How could this possibly be my life?

In Joan Didion's new book *Blue Nights* about the death of her daughter at age 39, she writes, This was never supposed to happen to her. Dennis Apple, a Nazarene minister and now author of *Life After the Death of My Son*, writes, upon discovering his son's lifeless body, —This isn't supposed to happen to me, God!

I assumed I had some sort of contract with the Universe. I voted, I paid my taxes, I worked hard, I recycled, I volunteered. Our children were the cornerstone of our lives. We went to every single parent/teacher conference and never missed a Back to School night. The applications for summer camp were submitted on time. Every single school form was completed. We made sure they went to the beach, to Disneyworld, and to ski slopes. We loved our children with devotion and we loved them unconditionally. We were vigilant in protecting them. We followed the rules. Do you hear me, Universe? I followed the rules.

Since I did, I thought that surely my children would be healthy and happy and safe. Surely they would forge their own identities and find their place in the world. There would be graduations, and jobs, and apartments, and weddings. We would be approached for loans for down payments on first homes. We would negotiate about who came home when for the holidays. I didn't really ask for a Pulitzer-prize-winning kind of outcome. I didn't need for my child to become President (of anything). But I certainly counted on a satisfactory outcome. An outcome I could live with. Never imagined an outcome I cannot agree to.

How does one continue to believe? I don't know yet. In the season of believing, here I am. Not believing. I'm out of sync.

~Peggi Johnson, TCF/Piedmont, VA

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

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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: 607 427-4043
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: Donna Cunningham (607) 725-8574

**Monthly Meetings**

First Monday of each month 6:00 - 8:00 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 -  
Donna Cunningham 607 725-8574  
Assistant Chapter Leader - Shelley Levchak  
Outreach - Luann Ford , Elaine Sahre  
Library - Sherry Bailey  
Hospitality – Jean Scolaro  
Treasurer – Val Ambrose  
Newsletter Editor – Val Ambrose  
Social Media -  
FB - Karen Yeager & Kim Ford  
Website—Jim Pratt  
Secretary - OPEN

**Please consider joining  
Steering Committee Meeting**

Contact Donna for details

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Meetings:**

**First Monday 6:00 PM - 8:00 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.)**

**December 5th, 2022 (Monday)**  
**6:00 PM “Peace During The Holidays”**

**December 11th, 2022 (Sunday)**  
**6:00 PM Candle Light Service**

**December 17th, 2022 (Saturday)**  
**10:00 AM Open Sharing**

**January 2nd, 2023 (Monday)**  
**6:00 PM “New Year Same Grief”**

**January 21st, 2023 (Saturday)**  
**10:00 AM Open Sharing**

**February 6th, 2023 (Monday)**  
**6:00 PM “Bereavement Woes”**

**February 18th, 2023 (Saturday)**  
**10:00 AM Open Sharing**

**March 6th, 2023 (Monday)**  
**6:00 PM “Memory Night”**

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.**

## The Chapter Letter

Hello Friends,

It is an honor for me to take pen to paper and write this winter letter to all of you on this very semi autumn/winter day. Sometimes it takes Mother Nature a bit of time to figure out her direction, much like our very own grief journeys. We can't wait to have time separating us from our sadness but on the other hand we want to run back to the very thing that put us in our overwhelming state of grief. I think we are afraid to forget even the teeniest tiniest detail of why we grieve. Many years ago I wrote about "Joy" and how she stands on the outside of our perimeter and looks in, almost coaxing us to join her. She teases us with snippets of what she has to offer but we just can't see it. One thing is for sure she is patient and will wait until you are ready to once again feel, shedding the numbness you are so accustomed to. There will be a day when the laughter will return, your heart will soften and 'Joy' will welcome you back. Many of you who are newly bereaved are sure to think I have lost my mind, as laughter is the furthest emotion you ever want to experience again. I know, I really do...

Our group is offering T-shirts with our logo over our heart, the words "we need not walk alone" on the back with a butterfly (our symbol) and the word "hope" on the sleeve, they are a beautiful blue color. If you are on Facebook you can view them on our page with info on how to order them from Shelley, if not you can call her directly at 607-759-0852. Many have already ordered and we don't want you to be left out. The t-shirts are \$20 with s/h added for out of state orders. Everyone else can pick them up at the church either before or after a meeting. You can order your t-shirt at the candle lighting on December 11<sup>th</sup>, which will be the last day to order, the shirts need to be prepaid.

Also the time for Monday meetings has been changed to a 6:00 pm start time. It seems to be working for everyone so far, the change is located in this winter newsletter's calendar and if you come to group you will receive a yearly calendar that can be very helpful giving you meeting dates till December of 2023. I know we have several members that are leery traveling on the two roundabouts, near the McDonalds. If you head to the next exit, Upper Front Street and take a left onto Front Street, you can avoid them. It's a few minutes out of the way but worth not having the aggravation. I know nighttime driving; rain and roundabouts are not friendly. Maybe coming to Saturday meetings would be easier on the eyes and then in the spring and summer it stays lighter later, again Mother Nature at work. Roundabouts seem to be the way of the future eliminating traffic lights. I know where we are now they are everywhere.

We are always looking for new steering committee members; we have lost our secretary so that position is available. The steering committee is a good place to use your pain to help others. I know the sadness never goes away completely but just enough for us to live a giving and productive life. Also fresh ideas for our group are always welcome. Its only a couple of times a years for 2 hours, our next meeting will be in April.

Our Candle Light Service will be held December 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Nimmonsburg Methodist Church on Upper Front Street. It's a night filled with love, tears, new and old friends and HOPE. An evening set aside for our children, grandchildren and siblings gone too soon. Sitting in the sanctuary, listening to the music, readings and poems we are immersed in the glow of the candlelight. We patiently wait to hear our loved ones name read aloud. Coming to this event can soothe your soul, giving you an understanding that you truly never have to walk alone during your saddest days. There is always someone to offer you his or her hand to hold or a shoulder to cry on. There is also a potluck dinner following the service, a dish to pass is appreciated. The potluck gives us time for fellowship, seeing old friends and making new ones. We also have a memory table for you to put a photo of your loved one (name cards supplied) and an angel tree to write a message to them. If you cannot attend feel free to reach out to Donna or Shelley (#'s are in this newsletter), leave a message with the name you would like read, say it and then spell it phonetically please, we always want to say the name correctly. We hope to see you there, among your fellow TCFer's..

Continued →

As I close I wish for nothing less than a safe and healthy winter, always remembering and never forgetting the love we have for our children, grandchildren and siblings gone before us. But also the hope, understanding and friendship we have for one another. I have been so blessed since Sean's death to meet so many along my path that have reached out to take my hand and walk alongside me. May all of your sadness lessen as your heart begins to mend as you enter 2023.

Hugs to all,  
Pam Kroft  
Sean's Mom



### Healing and Hope

For a long time after the death of a child, bereaved parents are convinced that healing will never occur, and that the loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, which control life so completely, will never change. This feeling is so strong that when others try to reassure the grieving one, the response is usually, "It's different with me! You don't understand!" This is the "normal" response to what is probably the most severe stress a human will ever face. Fortunately, there are compassionate friends who once felt this same way who have learned that, out of this morass of loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, there finally arises a ray of hope. Though small and fleeting at first, this hope becomes the light which leads the wounded parents through the dark valley and into acceptance of their child's death. And this healing will occur even though there is still no understanding of "Why?"

It is by working through our guilt both real and imagined, facing our anger including anger at God and even at the dead child, crying our way through our despair with carefully chosen professional help if necessary, that the loneliness will lessen, and hope will be seen as surviving when it was thought gone forever. Each one must use one's spiritual beliefs in his or her own way to assist in this process. Full recovery in the sense that the effects of grief will finally disappear never to return do not occur, although the term "recovery" is used. I prefer the term "healing," a process whereby our lives come to a new "normal." Healing implies our accepting the unacceptable the death of our child, and our slowly learning to resume productive relationships with others. This is done all while we continue to love and miss the dead child. Since we still love the children who have died, we will still experience grief, but it will no longer control our lives. Just as we cannot stop the flashbacks which occur so suddenly and unexpectedly during grief, neither can we prevent healing from occurring. We may slow the process by failing to do our grief work, but we cannot stop it!!

One of the greatest hindrances to our healing is the fear that our dead children will be forgotten. We will not forget them, nor will they be forgotten by others, even though we may not realize it at the time! Perhaps the greatest obstacle to healing is the failure to forgive ourselves, the dead child, others involved with the child's death, even God if we hold Him responsible. For only through forgiveness and forgiving are we truly able to handle our guilt and the anger that comes from the guilt we presume in others. We enhance the healing process when we do our grief work, when we have gratitude for the time we had with our child, when we recall the happy times we experienced with our child, or during pregnancy, if that's all we had, and when we pick up the shattered pieces of our existence as our child would want us to do, slowly resuming productive living. No matter where you are in your journey toward healing, bolster the hope that arises within you. Your healing is probably the best memorial you may erect to your dead child!

Robert Gloor, TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

## Lights Of Love

Can you see our candles  
Burning in the night?  
Lights of love we send you  
Rays of purest white

Children we remember  
Though missing from our sight  
In honor and remembrance  
We light candles in the night

All across the big blue marble  
Spinning out in space  
Can you see the candles burning  
From this human place?

Oh, angels gone before us  
Who taught us perfect love  
This night the world lights candles  
That you may see them from above

Tonight the globe is lit by love  
Of those who know great sorrow,  
But as we remember our yesterdays  
Let's light one candle for tomorrow

We will not forget,  
And every year in deep December  
On Earth we will light candles  
As.... we remember



## Winter Dreaming

Winter sun slants down,  
no warmth in its rays  
Warm spring is sleeping,  
under the snow she lays.  
Barren tree branches dance  
in time to the cold winds song  
Nights are dark and oh so long.  
But your memories are my blanket of warmth  
And I pull them close to me,  
waiting for spring to come forth.  
A time of warm breeze,  
to chase away the cold  
But now in the winter,  
warm memories I hold.  
By Sheila Simmons TCF Atlanta

## Call to the Heavens

Let us gather on this eve of remembrance  
To honor our children tonight,  
The loved ones now taken from us,  
As we join by the pale moonlight.

Let the golden flame of a candle  
Light the way for our children above  
To see their families below them  
That we've come with our hearts  
filled with love.

May our children find comfort this evening  
As we stand in the cold night air  
That their family is here to hold them  
In their hearts forever with care.

Let our children know that we see them  
In our minds as they smile from above;  
That God's grace resides there with them  
In the form of a snowy white dove.

May the children feel that we hear them  
With their tender voices true,  
As they speak to our hearts at this moment  
On this candlelight rendezvous.

We call to the heavens for our children  
That the stars be their guide tonight  
Toward the world's radiant candles  
And the sacred warmth of light.

Though we've lost our beloved children  
And shed ten million tears,  
The flame of love lit tonight  
Will last for a thousand years.

Yes, this night we honor our children  
Under a cathedral of stars so bright  
As we light a simple candle  
On this peaceful winter night.

May the gentle souls of our children  
Sail on silver heavenly wings  
Across the universe of our hearts and minds,  
To live forever in our dreams.

By Larry Leonard Fleischer  
From *We Need Not Walk Alone*,  
the national magazine of  
The Compassionate Friends

## *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.*



- 12/02 **David** son of **Amy Snell** Barton, NY  
12/02 **David** brother of **Jacob Snell** Owego, NY  
12/02 **Shelly** daughter of **Roger & Sherry Haskell** Binghamton, NY  
12/06 **Peter** son of **Joel & Robin Vermaat** Port Crane, NY  
12/09 **Matthew** son of **Frank & Joanne Calvey** Whitney Point, NY  
12/11 **Joe** son of **Ron & Michele Summers** Castle Creek, NY  
12/13 **Kyle** son of **Bob Batal** Berkshire, NY  
12/14 **Jacob** son of **Jennifer Whitmarsh** Conklin, NY  
12/16 **Catherine** daughter of **Angela Coyle** Binghamton, NY  
12/19 **Brianna** daughter of **Tom & Megan Lander** Binghamton, NY  
12/19 **James** son of **James & Mary View** Vestal, NY  
12/31 **Tanya** daughter of **Patricia Rushanski** Endicott, NY  
01/02 **Kenneth** son of **Elaine Sahre** Vestal, NY  
01/03 **Jessica** daughter of **Michelle & Jammie Simonds** Milford, PA  
01/11 **Sammy** son of **Mary Ellen Arnold** Johnson City, NY  
01/11 **Thomas** son of **Debbie Sovine** Endicott, NY  
01/11 **Laura** daughter of **M/M Robert McGuigan** Conklin, NY  
01/12 **Abbey** daughter of **M/M Lars Luffman** Owego, NY  
01/15 **Michael** son of **Amy Back-Vangorden** Windsor, NY  
01/16 **David** son of **Patrick & Joyce Crowley** Endicott, NY  
01/17 **Christine** daughter of **Francis Sullivan** Binghamton, NY  
01/19 **William** son of **Jeanne Tokos** Endicott, NY  
01/19 **Aaron** son of **Ralph DeRigo** Binghamton, NY  
01/19 **Timothy** son of **Gordon & Mary Shiner** Vestal, NY  
01/20 **Abel** son of **Jennifer Heggelke** Binghamton, NY  
01/20 **Abel** grandson of **Lisa Koltz** Binghamton, NY  
01/22 **Ryan** son of **Cynthia Szymaniak** Binghamton, NY  
01/24 **Chad** son of **Carl & Sharon Eldridge** Glen Aubrey, NY  
01/24 **Sheri** daughter of **Jackie Ceiri** Johnson, NY  
01/29 **John** son **Corky Clark** Binghamton, NY  
01/31 **Michael** son of **Michael & Jo-Anne Oliver** Johnson City, NY

continued ➡

*Our Children Remembered...* continued

02/05 **Keara** daughter of **Dane & Kaethe Mitchell** Binghamton, NY

02/07 **Caetlin** daughter of **Tomann Rice** Franklin, PA

02/10 **Adam** son of **Lori Petzack** Sidney, NY

02/10 **Joni** daughter of **M/M Robert McGuigan** Conklin, NY

02/14 **Paul** son of **Toni & Maria Fusco** Endicott, NY

02/19 **David** son of **Pamela Callahan** Binghamton, NY

02/20 **Charles** son of **Carl & Sharon Eldridge** Glen Aubrey, NY

02/22 **Cindy** daughter of **Peter & Barbara Metritikas** Vestal, NY

02/25 **Courtney** daughter of **Marilyn Eck** Endwell, NY

02/26 **Scott** son of **Thomas & Marcia Glosick** Apalachin, NY

*Just because they died doesn't mean we hide them away and pretend they didn't exist.  
They are ours, we are theirs, and don't expect anything else.  
That picture on the wall... isn't going anywhere.*

### Winter Memories

The days are getting colder,  
and the first snow's not too far off.  
It used to be so pretty  
gently falling from aloft.  
But the snow won't be as pretty,  
as it gathers on the ground,  
'cause there'll be a snowman missing,  
my son is not around.  
The playing children's laughter,  
used to be a special song,  
but this year will be different,  
without my son to sing along.  
The song has lost its music,  
and it'll be just another day,  
as I gaze down from my window  
and watch the children play.  
But the snow will again be pretty,  
in a far off distant time,  
and we'll build snowmen together  
and we'll never look behind.  
For now, I'll remain with memories,  
and the melting snow will fade,  
but he builds snowmen  
to his heart's content,  
because he now lives where snow is made.

—Jeremiah Sundown TCF Nashville, TN

Last night while I was trying to sleep,  
my son's voice I did hear.  
I opened my eyes and looked around,  
but he did not appear.  
He said, "Mom, you've got to listen,  
you gotta understand;  
He didn't take me from you Mom,  
He only took my hand.  
When I called out in pain that night,  
the instant that I died,  
He reached down and took my hand,  
and pulled me by His side.  
He pulled me up and saved me  
from the misery and pain.  
My body hurt so badly inside  
I could never be the same.  
My search is really over now,  
I've found happiness within.  
All the answers to my empty dreams  
and all that might have been.  
I love you all and miss you so,  
and I'll always be nearby.  
My body's gone forever,  
but my spirit will never die!  
And so you must go on now.  
Don't be mad, just understand,  
He didn't take me from you Mom,  
He only took my hand."

Barb Johnson



## The Journey Through Overdose

I have lived every parent's nightmare. In 2018, twelve days before Christmas, I walked into my son's bedroom at dawn to wake him up. Our agreed upon plan for the day was to check him into a detox facility, however, in the early morning hours, between the time I'd said goodnight to him and the alarm went off, Peter left the house, met up with his drug dealer, crawled back into bed and died in his sleep from a fentanyl overdose. In that moment, when I touched his shoulder and knew he was gone, my life, and the life of our family was forever changed.

No one can prepare you for what it feels like to lose a child, whether it's to addiction, illness, suicide, or to a freak accident. In the midst of my anguish there was an empty peace, because I knew Peter no longer had to struggle in an exhausting and consuming battle. I realized my fight had ended too, and I no longer had to hide the shame of his addiction from others, it was out. I was stripped bare, and all that time and energy that I'd spent hiding the truth from the world was meaningless. I was left having to face the human toll of shock from those who were discovering the truth at the same time they learned of Peter's death.

Peter was an artist—a sensitive soul, and we live in a fast-paced world where you're bombarded with terrible news and social media that can make you feel desperate and lonely, doubting yourself, even though you're surrounded by friends and family telling you the complete opposite: you are loved, you are important, you will make it in this world. Questions plague me as well—could I have stopped him that night? Would he have tried another way to go and get one more hit? Could I have forced him to go to rehab again? Was I a good mother? I know the answers to these questions, and my journey, my uphill battle every day, is to reaffirm to myself that sometimes things happen that are beyond your control, and every day there are tragedies that simply cannot be prevented. But it's how we face adversity and grief that makes the difference between living life well, or just barely living.

It took me more than a year to acknowledge to myself that at 24, Peter was an adult who made his own decisions, and it wasn't my failure as a mother that caused him to do drugs in the first place. And oddly, I never for a second blamed him or felt anger at him for dying—I knew that if he could have stopped, he would have. The anger I felt was towards myself, where I took all those years I'd spent working, desperately trying to hold our family of five together in one perfect piece and never feeling 100% present, and wished I could redo it. I was always frantic, always calculating in my mind what had to be done next, who had to be picked up from which game, what I was going to make for dinner, if I had clean laundry and if I'd paid the babysitter. Hindsight is cruel—I tormented myself with doubts that I had truly done my very best as Peter's mother. However, the more people I share my story with, the more people I open up to and expose the deeply hidden shame I felt about his addiction, the more I am certain that I did everything I could have done. The fight against addiction was Peter's fight, not mine. All I could do was hand him weapons.

In the early days of my journey, I did a lot of mental bargaining to reduce the sense of shame I felt. It was my way of justifying to myself why I was able to move forward.

"Peter was an adult, you know," I would say when describing how we were coping.

"He moved away years ago. We're used to him being gone.

"We'd lost Pete as a child already. "You can't understand because your kids are young and still at home."

"We only saw him three or four times a year."

"It was impossible to force someone his age to do something they didn't want to do."

"Peter made his choices. He thought he could control it."

"He lived his whole life in 24 years. Most people don't do half of the things he did. He knew who he was."

In 2020, 94,000 people died of an overdose in the United States, a 20% increase from the year before. According to the CDC, nearly 850,000 people have died from overdoses since 1999, and that number is climbing, with the percentage of cases involving fentanyl increasing six times. These numbers don't



## A Journey Through Overdose continued

tell us how many overdose fatalities were prevented by Narcan. All of these people who overdosed and died had family who loved them, that tried mightily to stop them, but couldn't. I look at these numbers and now realize that the shame of Peter's addiction doesn't belong to me—it belongs to society and how we treat drug addicts. We don't talk about them the way we should, and people and families struggle silently, too ashamed of what they perceive as failure to shine a light on it and contribute to the larger discussion.

Peter is a statistic, and I hate it. It doesn't tell his story, that he was an original, beautiful person with endless love for friends and family, an artist who touched so many with beauty, and the tragic truth that our time on this earth is brief—sometimes too brief. He tried to become the best version of himself, to live authentically, play, explore, and dream. Those lessons he left me have made a difference—they are helping me shine the light to conquer the shame and doubt so I can move forward. I know Peter is now handing me weapons— and every day I fight to live well, not just live.

by Diane Imus

### Blessings Inside Sorrow

There are blessings inside sorrow, or so I have been told. I am not sure I always agree. At times I can see the gifts I have been given. Love without measure fills my heart when I think of you. But I loved you then too, when you were in my arms, not in my heart. And I miss you now.

The emptiness you left can never be filled, not by any blessings I might receive from sorrow. And yet, still, I wonder. Are there blessings? Would I have known how much I cared for you, for your brothers, for your Dad, were it not for your coming, and so suddenly, softly, leaving, without a good-bye? Would I treasure the life I have remaining if it weren't for your loss? Certainly I loved, and treasured before you left, but hasn't my sorrow caused me to express that love and to treasure more highly those around me? I "know" I can't take for granted that they will always be.

In the aftermath of losing you, when life lay crumbled around me, still was there not a glimmer of hope? That life would go on, and, somehow, we would survive, and build on the ashes of our broken hearts; building somehow in spite of our pain. Mixing the cement of our love with tears, we are bound ourselves together even more tightly than ever before. And our love grows stronger. And we have not forgotten. What a bitter lesson!

And still, the emptiness will never be filled. There yet remains a hole in my heart, and in all our hearts. Dear son, we will never forget you. The blessings inside our sorrow will never fill the hole you left in the fabric of our lives. It remains open, a testament that you mattered, and that you're coming and soft going made a difference. And in that difference lies the blessing inside our sorrow. We were blessed to have held you for a time, even though you could not stay. And even through our tears, we smile at the memories. And we know that you are not completely gone. You shadow our lives, affecting them in big ways and small. And though I would trade these blessings in a minute just to have you back in my arms, I am indeed grateful for the blessings inside sorrow.

Lisa Sculley, TCF Jacksonville/Orange Park Chapter, FL

## 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:**

**Martin & Olivia Curtain** in memory of their daughter **Mary**  
**Robin & Joel Vermaat** in memory of their son **Peter**  
**Donald & Suzanne Carr** in memory of their son **Ryan** and  
Recently deceased member **Richard Kasmarik**  
**Frank & Angela Carro** in memory of their son **Robert**  
**Nancy Rinehuls** in memory of her son **Richard**  
**June Moore** in memory of her son **Jason**  
**Sam & Shelley Allegrino** in memory of their son **Allen**  
**Barbara Lewis & Nancy Arnold** in memory of their son and brother **Michael**  
**Kathy Beers** in memory of her son **Jason**  
**Sandy & Jerry Wilcox** in memory of their son **Kyle**  
**Joanne Brockway** in memory of her daughter **Amber**  
**Joel & Robin Vermaat** in memory of their son **Peter**  
**Christina & Michael McAfee** in memory of their son **Joseph**  
**Charles & Shelley** in memory of their son **CJ**  
**Patricia Rushanski** in memory of her daughter **Tanya**  
**Mary & James View** in memory of their son **James**  
**Carlo & Samantha Carlini** in memory of their daughter **Samantha**



*I hide my tears when I say your name,  
But the pain in my heart is still the same.  
Although I smile and seem carefree,  
There's no one who misses you more than me.*

### Holiday Shopping Reminder: Support TCF with Amazon Smile!

If you are doing any shopping on Amazon, please consider using **AmazonSmile** to benefit our local chapter. This is an easy way for you to support our chapter every time you shop on Amazon — at no cost to you.

Here's how:

- ♥ Go to smile.amazon.com
- ♥ Search for "The Compassionate Friends Broome County Chapter" as your charity.
- ♥ Shop as you normally would, finding the exact same prices and selections as on Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to our Chapter.
- ♥ Remember, you need to start each shopping session at the AmazonSmile URL: **smile.amazon.com**.

**I have been doing this for years and yes we do get a deposit every quarter from Amazon.**

### A Prayer for the New Year

Where there is pain,  
let there be softening;  
where there is bitterness,  
let there be acceptance;  
where there is silence,  
let there be communication;  
where there is loneliness,  
let there be friendships;  
where there is despair,  
let there be hope.

Ruth Eiseman TCF, Louisville, KY

Like a tree in winter  
which has lost its leaves,  
we look ahead to spring  
for new growth and the warmth of the sun  
to heal the pain in our hearts.

Let us make January  
a time to reach out to each other  
and give the warmth from our hearts,  
and in return we will all show new growth.

Pat Dodge, TCF Sacramento Valley, CA

### \*\*\*\* 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.

*Your expiration date is shown in the right hand corner of your mailing label. Please let me know by this date if you wish to continue receiving the Primrose. This is my way of knowing if you want the newsletter.*

Send donations to: Valerie Ambrose 730 River Rd. Binghamton, NY 13901

Make checks payable to: *The Compassionate Friends Broome*



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Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ DoD \_\_\_\_ \ \_\_\_\_ \ \_\_\_\_

Newsletter \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Library \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Generic \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify if there is a specific fund you want the money used for (newsletter, books, supplies, ect...)

**ALL donations are mentioned in the Love gift section of the newsletter.**

## ANOTHER YEAR

This is another year just beginning — afresh with new days, new opportunities, new challenges. It occurs to me, however, that it is a very difficult task to keep from concentrating on past years and the sadness we endure just because it is a new year and the calendar has flipped the page.

Moving on to a brighter tomorrow and letting go of the pain of yesterday is a gradual process. We cross that threshold one step at a time — a small step, at first, faltering and stumbling — but somehow getting there. With patience, effort and persistence, once again we will be able to celebrate life as the year stretches on before us, putting behind us our sadness, our guilt, our failures and our pain.

We will be able to smile again. We will be able to remember our precious children in life rather than death. We will recognize in our days many little blessings and will be able to share our joys with others.

Alice Weening, TCF, Cincinnati, Ohio



### ***The Compassionate Friends***

***Broome County Chapter***  
**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

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