

The Primrose



Vol. 43, Issue 1

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Spring 2023



Persephone's Home

Today we visited Dwight
In a pouring rain
Spring was everywhere about
And flowers filled each lane
Thoughts of February's mourning
A few years now gone past
Persephone's left her misery
But summer never lasts



Peace comes to this resting
Paid at a heavy price
Sometimes all of this makes sense
Others one must think twice
So we live in deep reflection
Different yet still the same
Going to a sacred place
Each time we call your name

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Losing a child leaves us with so many emotions. The deep sense of loss is sometimes visited by a welcomed memory of long ago. This might come from recalling a birthday party, a ball game, or a simple conversation. Smiles don't always last, but the times that produce them will endure a lifetime.

The story of Persephone, and her mother Demeter, illustrates both happiness and grief. Ancient Greeks used this myth to describe the seasons. They also used it to describe a mother's loss and the ensuing pain. Each year Persephone returns from the underworld, and Hades, to reunite with a place of light. These powerful extremes often reside in the hearts of those who grieve.

Elaine and I wish to thank you all for your compassion and friendship. While the poem, Persephone's Home, mentions Dwight it was written in the hope that somewhere there would be commonality with you. We are all better people for loving our children. This can never be taken away. Please enjoy the spring and summer.

By Bob Haughtaling, TCF Greater Providence

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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: 607 427-4043
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 our
Steering Committee Meeting
April 20th at 5:30
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.)**

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

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

**April 3rd, 2023 (Monday)
6:00 PM “Survivors are We! ”**

**April 15th, 2023 (Saturday)
10:00 AM Open Sharing**

**April 20th, 2023 (Thursday)
5:30 PM Steering Committee Meeting**

**May 1st, 2023 (Monday)
6:00 PM “Come and Share, Moms & Grandmas”**

**May 20th, 2023 (Saturday)
10:00 AM Open Sharing
1:00 PM Clean Up at Angel**

**May 27th, 2023 (Saturday)
10:00 Rain Date for Clean Up at Angel**

**June 5th, 2023 (Monday)
6:00 PM “Come Support our Dads & Grandpas”**

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

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 family ,

As March comes we crave to say goodbye to winter, though as we know March storms might surprise us. Today we are reminded of spring, a time of rebirth and renewal. As the earth begins to wake from the long winter, hopefully our hearts will warm with hope and a sense of peace.

December brought our candle lighting in memory of our children, grandchildren and siblings gone too soon. An evening filled with family, friends and fellowship. This was the first year in 28 years that I was not in attendance in person (except for cancellation because of mother nature), but definitely in spirit. If you haven't watched the video on our Facebook page please do, just have your tissues near. A special thank you to our co-leaders Donna Cunningham and Shelley Levchak for their unconditional hard work in creating such a beautiful evening. Jim Tregaskis for his technical expertise, Cheryl Weeks for videoing our event, George Ford for his beautiful music, all the cast members, kitchen workers and someone rarely mentioned Val Ambrose for the programs she does each year. And never forgetting all the others that stepped in to help at the last minute, the list goes on and on, it definitely takes a village. Our village/group is one of a kind, always willing to lend a hand. The camaraderie is a 20 on any 1-10 scale.

Last year we were saddened to learn of three TCF members passing. Richard Kachmarik, father of Susan; Claudia Simonis, mother of Mark and Rick Noyes, father of Arik.

Dick passed away in late summer; his wife Helen Jane was a very active member of our group for years. Dick was a gentle man who worked behind the scenes and lovingly supported HJ in her TCF endeavors. Actually Helen Jane and I attended our very first meeting together in 1994, her Susan and my Sean dying within two weeks of one another.

Claudia was at group when I walked through the door all those years ago. She was the librarian and took the books home after each meeting, as we didn't have any space to keep them where we met, a committed steering committee member, a worker bee to the core, also leading the mission with Helen Jane, myself and a few others to bring the Angel of Hope to Broome County. Claudia worked tirelessly not only for TCF but other community organizations. She was a warrior for the underprivileged. Her kitchen table was a sanctuary for anyone needing friendship and a place where ideas were born and executed. We shall never forget her reuben sandwiches.

Rick came to group shortly after I did. He quickly joined our steering committee and had a very creative mind, helping to take us to the next level. He saved us when he was able to secure Nimmonsburg Church as our new home many, many years ago. Rick was very helpful to anyone who needed a shoulder; especially our dads where he helped guide them through their own unique grief, teaching them it was ok to cry and to feel true emotion. Rick also wrote some beautiful poems on death and dying. I was fortunate to know all three of these beautiful souls; all sorely missed.

March brings us memory night, so if you attend the Monday meeting bring something to share with group; photos, your child's favorite food, wear a piece of their clothing or a special memory. Thursday April 20th 5:30 at the church brings our bi-yearly steering committee meeting. Please consider joining this dedicated group of moms and dads (we need dads). This is the best way for you to give back to this organization that has provided a safe sanctuary as you navigate through your grief. It's only twice a year, think about it. We are always looking for fresh new ideas and I know many of you would be great. Many of our current members have been on this committee for many years. You can contact Donna or Shelly if interested.

On May 20th after our Saturday morning meeting we hope to meet at the Angel of Hope for a much needed fall/winter big cleanup. Bring brooms, shovels, weed eaters, buckets, cloths, gloves, spray bottles filled with water, diggers and anything you think we need to spruce up our garden. We will provide flowers to be planted and mulch to spread. This is a labor of love indeed. Last year was a really lovely time, everyone working tirelessly but also having a few laughs and what better place to feel hope than at our angel placed in memory of all our children, grandchildren and siblings. We are at the mercy of mother nature so if needed May 27th will be the rain date.

Continued →

With the death of your child or grandchild your world has been turned upside down. Your grief is unique to just you. Even though we collectively grieve we must do it our own way, in our own time as it fills us with emotions we never knew we were capable of experiencing. That's the very first reason to join a meeting of TCF. We are there to listen and never judge.

As I close this letter I am reminded of how much I miss everyone at group. I miss catching up with you and hearing all your stories and memories. Please know you are never far from my thoughts. I keep each one of your children, grandchildren and siblings close to my heart and you all have a piece of my heart.

Hugs to all,
Pam Kroft
Sean's Mom

What Goes On At A Compassionate Friends Meeting?

A question that is asked frequently by newly bereaved parents who have never attended a meeting is, "What do you do?" or rather, "What will you expect me to do?" In answer to the last question, we expect and require nothing more than your name. Our meetings are informal. We open the meeting with introductions by mentioning our name and child's name, but if you feel that you can not do this, it is okay, also. We have all, at one time or another, choked up on the mention of our child's name or the circumstances of his or her death.

Some people attend meetings several times and do not enter any discussion or voice their feelings. They absorb some ideas and discard others that do not meet their immediate needs. But, inevitably, someone around the table will say something that is tuned to the exact way you feel. Then the realization comes that one is among friends, people who really understand and care about them and their sensitive feelings. Some parents are more vocal from the start, and they find willing listeners who neither criticize or pass judgment on them. We most likely have the same feelings of anger, despair, longing, pains, and a multitude of others.

Now a word about crying. PLEASE don't stay away because you are afraid you will cry! We have all cried many times. Perhaps we've attended several months and didn't shed a tear. Then something is said or a memory comes back that brings tears to our eyes. Compassionate Friends can accept the gamut of feelings from tears to laughter. Laughter? Of course! We are, after all, human and our emotions are many and varied. If we can accept each other's feelings, this must include all ranges of emotions.

In the course of discussion, you may hear the answer to a question or problem that has been plaguing you. Several parents may tell you how they handled the question of what to do with their child's possessions - clothes, toys, books, etc., or how they have gotten through holidays, birthdays, and other difficult days. Maybe you will pick up something that will be helpful in dealing with your surviving children's problems; how to deal with a seemingly uncaring relative or friends— to hurtful remarks, or how to answer the question "How many children do you have?" Sometimes what has helped one may not have worked for another, but what is important is the open and honest discussion and the chance to decide for yourself.

Please don't let the word meeting intimidate you. Perhaps we should call it a gathering. Whether our gathering consists of a program featuring a film, a speaker, a tape, or general discussion, please don't hesitate to join us! A parent who has "survived" the loss of their child will always be there to greet you and understand.

--Verdugo Hills, CA newsletter

The Solitude of Grief

There are wounds one can't assuage
For the cut is deep and bleeding
Some wounds show no outward trace
For it's the heart that's sore and needing

How does one cope with a broken heart
A heart that's cold and lonely
From where the strength to carry on
From a grief that's shared . . . but yours only

Still in dreams we see them yet
So young, so fair, so alive
I don't know how we cope with death
But somehow—somehow we do survive

Always a part of this heart of mine
Now tossed like a windblown leaf
And I imprisoned in a world not mine
In the solitude of grief

—Harvey Hockstein
TCF Morris Area, NJ
In Memory of my daughter, Marilyn

Remembrance

What do we do when we love someone
But they have gone away
When all our days of bright sunlight
Have turned to shades of gray?
What do we say when no comfort comes
From words of love and hope
When efforts made seem pointless
As we fight each day to cope?
How do we act when we hear their name
And we cannot help but cry
This isn't fair, they were barely here
It's not time to say goodbye!
We promise them that they have made
A place within our hearts
Where they will live forever
Though we are far apart
We call upon the memories
As time allowed and then
Tuck them safely in our minds
To visit now and again
We cherish them as best we can
Each smile, each word, each look
We write the story they want told
On the pages of life's book
For most important is the vow
We honor when they're gone
Of sharing all they've given us
From that moment on

~Donna Gerrior TCF Pasco County, FL
In Memory of Rob

It Will Be Another Birthday Without You

The sun will shine
roses bloom, geese fly
throughout the sky
stocks will trade,
the weatherman predict
politicians debate
It'll seem like another day
just a day, same 24 hours
not a special holiday
But to this mother
who will stand at the grave
lifting balloons into the sky
serving angel food cupcakes
with rainbow icing
coated with tears
fluctuating between emotions:
the grief over death
the celebration over birth
For this mother
It will be yet
Another birthday without you.

Alice J. Wisler
In loving memory of son, Daniel

The Song Is the Same

Different are the circumstances
of our child's death,
Different are their names,
Different was their life and the length of it,
But their song was the same.
They lived for one brief moment in history,
Much too soon they were gone,
They left us here,
parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters,
To remember the gift of their life
and somehow go on.
Whatever the time that has passed for us,
Whatever the pain and grief that we claim,
We are all here together to remember our kids,
So your song becomes my song
and our song is the same.

Barb Seth TCF Madison, WI

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 **CJ** son of **Charles & Shelley Levchak** Kirkwood, NY
03/09 **Annette** daughter of **M/M James Pratt** Binghamton, NY
03/14 **Andrew** son of **Ray & Lori Benjamin** Binghamton, NY
03/15 **Mary** daughter of **Martin & Olivia Curtin** Endicott, NY
03/16 **Dylan** son of **Kelly Buckland** Binghamton, NY
03/16 **Jessica** daughter of **William & Darlene Cady** Binghamton, NY
03/17 **Michael** son of **Paul & Jean Scolaro** Endicott, NY
03/22 **Christina** daughter of **Frank & Kathy Rumpel** Binghamton, NY
03/22 **Brian** son of **John & Shelly O'Neill** Vestal, NY
03/25 **Stavros** son of **Peter & Barbara Metritikas** Vestal, NY
03/25 **Dillion** grandson of **Toni & Larry Sherling** Endicott, NY
03/26 **Sarah** daughter of **Kate Chambers** Nichols, NY
03/28 **Melissa** daughter of **Cindy Freitas** Endicott, NY
04/02 **Michael** son and brother 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
04/09 **Frank** son of **Monica Heren** Apalachin, NY
04/12 **Joseph** son of **Michael & Christina McAfee** Binghamton, NY
04/15 **Ryan** son of **Ron & Sherry Bailey** Johnson City, NY
04/20 **Jacob** son of **Sharon Gana** Little Meadows, PA
04/21 **Aurora Rose** daughter of **Jason & Stephanie Blaisure** Binghamton, NY
04/21 **Aurora Rose** granddaughter of **Patty Boorum** 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 **Ben** son of **Melanie Schmidt** Binghamton, NY

continued ➡

Our Children Remembered... continued

04/29 **Ben** son of **Martine Barnaby & Dave Schmidt** Glen Aubrey, NY
04/29 **Christopher** of **Robert & Kim Carroll** Binghamton, NY
04/30 **Brianna** daughter of **Amy Sheppard** Binghamton, NY
05/01 **Joshua** son of **Valerie Ambrose** Binghamton, NY
05/02 **Adam** son of **Dale & Wendy Finch** Binghamton, NY
05/05 **Allan** son of **Samuel & Shelley Allegrino** Endicott, NY
05/05 **Nate** son of **Becky Hopper** Binghamton, NY
05/05 **Anthony** son of **James Vazquez** Binghamton, NY
05/06 **Ashley** daughter of **Jacqueline Anderson** Binghamton, NY
05/08 **Anatolio** son of **Dora Mancini** Endicott, NY
05/17 **Tiffany** daughter of **Kathy and Jeffrey Stark** Binghamton, 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

As Time Goes By... Twenty-Five Years Later

Somehow it never occurred to me twenty-five years ago on August 11 that I would see myself in the far distant future writing about this long journey without our Kenneth. I couldn't see surviving more than one day at a time. In the beginning when I saw other Compassionate Friends who were five-year survivors it was incomprehensible that they had even been able to go on living at all.

But here we are; twenty-five visits for every occasion and anniversary to the lake where we took his ashes. Death day, Birthday, Father's Day, Mother's Day, any day at all. Scatter our roses, release our balloons, drink in the beauty of nature while silently contemplating and communing with his presence. We never say much, we don't have to, we know each other too well.

There have been lots of changes since that terrible day; joys of new grandchildren, a great grandchild. Other sorrows and leave-takings of precious family members and friends. Life having its way. We go on, we live, we laugh, we cry. But never for a moment do we forget to bring Kenneth's precious memory forward with us in all of our celebrations, sorrows and everyday situations that make us recall his laughter and funny sense of humor. We look at his pictures, hear certain songs, see a reflection of him in a smile, eyes, hair, eyebrows, lips, DNA all over the place!

As August 11 is the anniversary of Kenneth's death, so October 30 is the celebration of his birth. Kenneth would have turned 49 this year. It seems impossible to equate that age with the fun-loving, happy 23 year old he will forever be.

And so we go on twenty-five years later. Some things have changed; the acute pain of new grief softens into the rosy scar of an old battle wound. Sometimes it unexpectedly screams like the phantom pain from a severed limb, but only some times. Most times that dull ache is overcome by the joy and thanksgiving of having this loveable, quirky, all too human among us. The circle is unbroken. Thanks be.

Arleen Simmonds, TCF Kamloops B.C. In loving memory of Kenneth Bruce Simmonds

“Time” or “Change”?

As the seasons change and time passes, I think to myself, “how have I survived 10- plus years?” Well, my answer is simple: “I don’t Know.” Is it “time” that has passed or have I “changed”? I think it is probably a little of both.

Time is individual to each of us. When my husband and I realized our son was not going to survive a terrible illness he asked me, “how will we do this?” and I said then what I will say now, “ I don’t know.” Has the passing of time helped ease the pain of Donald not coming home? Depending on when I’m asked, I may say time has helped. But for me it has not lessened the pain... it’s just not so raw.

Many who have lost a child will say that they have changed from who they were before their child’s passing, and I agree. But that’s not necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes we need to remind ourselves that it’s alright to change, because every day we wake up and our child is gone. He will never graduate college, never marry, and never experience the joys of being a parent.

At many of our meetings the question of survival often comes up. New members will say they don’t think they will survive and seasoned grievers know they will. We know this because many have come for some time and have built this unspoken bond that only those who have lost a child know. We know this because we get up every day, get dressed, and participate in life not always wanting too, but knowing we have to.

So, I ask myself again, has it been “time” or “change” that has allowed me to survive? And I will say a little of both. When people say to me they don’t know how I “do it,” I tell them I don’t know. Sometimes I feel that time has lessened the intensity of the pain. But I also know that the intense, raw pain can sneak back in at any moment. Or maybe I have changed and I know how to deal with the pain and sometimes it’s not so bad.

What I can tell you after 10-plus years is that the people who welcomed me to my first Compassionate Friends meeting and the bonds that I have built since then have allowed me to survive. Sharing the pain of loss with other people who know what it’s like has helped me to survive.

So has it been “time” or “change” that has helped me survive? I’ll say again it was a little of both. But most of all it has been the bonds and the strength of other parents that have helped me survive. And for that I would like to say, Thank You! Thank you for sharing your stories, thank you for listening to mine, and thank you for always having “time” to listen and not caring if I have “changed.”

Sheila

Yours to Keep

Memories- tender, loving, bittersweet. They can never be taken from you. Nothing can detract from the joy and the beauty you and your loved one shared. Your love for the person and his or her love for you cannot be altered by time or circumstance. The memories are yours to keep. Yesterday has ended, though you store it in the treasure house of the past. And tomorrow? How can you face its awesome problems and challenges? It is as far beyond your mastery as your ability to control yesterday. Journey one date at a time. Don’t try to solve all the problems of your life at once. Each day’s survival is a triumph.

From *Living When a Loved One Has Died*
By Rabbi Earl A. Grollman

Reflections of March

March is a month of renewal. The dormant trees begin to stir; the birds optimistically sing of spring; the winds, sometimes violent, wake us up; perhaps we need a "shake" out of our winter lethargy; an awakening.

There is that urge to plant, to nourish, to grow a tree or a flower. There is the primordial urge to feel your hands digging in the warming earth. Perhaps we plant because we know that someone will see the results, as we have enjoyed the results of others' work. It could be called a debt of renewal, a repayment for that which we have enjoyed. As we nourish small seedlings, we visualize the end results.

That tree may die, as our children did. That tree may flourish beautifully, or it may meet ultimate disaster, but if that tree does well; it could be a source of great pleasure and of beauty for many coming years. We can believe that a seedling will be a glorious tree enjoyed by many. It's a nice dream. "To all things there is a season" and as life goes by, we simply cannot afford to miss the seasons, the renewals, the changes for new growth. Regardless of our griefs and regrets, life goes on, and we must try not to miss a season. Life simply will be, whether we participate or not. Someone will benefit from constructive growth, if we can find the energy to make the effort.

Severe grief, for a time, reduces our interest and our ability to participate fully in life. With a low energy level and little initiative and with our hopes for the future severely damaged, it requires great effort for the bereaved to learn to again enjoy the small things that make up most of our lives. Our hopes for the future are so damaged that there is little incentive to work today for the future. The things that exist today comprise the basics of our future. We run a risk and a danger of missing the good things that are to be, because we do not have the wish to participate in the things that are today.

Although we need a time of some withdrawal, some time to ponder the unanswered questions, some time to heal, we also need to be aware of the lives that are passing. Regardless of our grief, life simply goes on, and there is much good that we risk losing if we stay too long in a state of suspense of the present and a sad review of the past. A part of learning to "accept the unacceptable" is to learn to make the effort to sort out the good memories and take them with us into a future that will be happy again.

There comes a time when the harsh winter of our damaging grief will give way to some awakening; a time when we, like nature, can shake off some of the lethargy and see and feel the renewals life offers.

Our choice is to remember that we could not control the advent of disaster. We can only control our response. Our choice is now only in the way in which we respond to the necessity to pick up the threads of our lives and go on. We owe it to ourselves to make a positive effort. We can hope that those buffeting winds of March can help us awaken to the renewals of spring and put the "winter of our disaster" in its place, now a part of our ongoing lives.

Dayton Robinson, TCF Tuscaloosa, Alabama

"The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again." —Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends

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:

Charles & Shelley in memory of their son **CJ**

Donald & Suzanne Carr in memory of their son **Ryan** and

Recently deceased member **Claudia Simonis**

Harold and Sandra Weitsman in memory of their daughter **Rebecca**

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

Francis Sullivan in memory of his daughter **Christine** & son **Robert**

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

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

Jackie Ceiri in memory of her daughter **Sheri**

Jennine Wells in memory of her daughter **Kathleen**

William & Kate Stacy in memory of their son **Philip**

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

Amy Snell in memory of her daughter **Melissa**

Valerie & Mark Ambrose in memory of her son **Joshua**



“As we got further into springtime, I found the right analogy for me is when the caterpillar left his cocoon to become a beautiful butterfly. This had to be the perfect analogy. I feel our children and siblings do not die, they have gone to a higher stage of development which is more than earth can offer. This is paramount in easing my pain about death.” —*Marie Hofmockel*

The Gap

The gap between those who have lost children and those who have not is profoundly difficult to bridge. No one whose children are well and intact can be expected to understand what parents who have lost children have absorbed, what they bear. Our children now come to us through every blade of grass, every crack in the sidewalk, every bowl of breakfast cereal, every kid on the scooter. We seek contact with their atoms — their hairbrushes, toothbrushes, their clothing. We reach out for what was integrally woven into the fabric of our lives, now torn and shredded. A black hole has been blown through our world and, indeed, it often does not allow the light to escape. It is a difficult place. For us to enter there is to be cut deeply and torn anew, each time we go there, by the jagged edges of our loss. Yet we return, again and again, for that is where our children now reside. This will be so for years to come and it will change us, profoundly. At some point, in the distant future, the edges of that hole will have tempered and softened, but the empty space will remain — a life sentence.

Our friends will change through this. There is no avoiding it. We grieve for our children in part, through talking about them, and our feelings for having lost them. Some go there with us; others cannot and, through their denial, add a further measure, however unwittingly, to an already heavy. Our friends will change through this. There is no avoiding it. We grieve for our children in part, through talking about them, and our feelings for having lost them. Some go there with us; others cannot and, through their denial, add a further measure, however unwittingly, to an already heavy

We recognize that we have moved to an emotional place where it is often very difficult to reach us. Our attempts to be normal are painful and the day to day activities carry a silent, screaming anguish that accompanies us, sometimes from moment to moment. Were we to give it its own voice, we fear we would become truly unreachable and so we remain "strong" for a host of reasons even as the strength saps our energy and drains our will. Were we to act out our true feelings, we would be impossible to be with. We resent having to act normal, yet we dare not do otherwise. People who understand this dynamic are our gold standard. Working our way through this over the years will change us as does every experience — and extreme experience changes one extremely. We know we will have actually managed to survive when, as we have read, it is no longer so painful to be normal. We do not know who we will be at that point nor who will still be with us.

We have read that the gap is so difficult that, often, bereaved parents must attempt to reach out to friends and relatives or risk losing them. This is our attempt. For those untarnished by such events, who wish to know in some way what they, thankfully, do not know, read this. It may provide a window that is helpful for both sides of the gap.

Gail Schroeder, Boca Raton Chapter

**** 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.

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

Make checks payable to: *The Compassionate Friends Broome*



Name _____

Please check if new
Address

Address _____
(if new)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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 Mother's Day

Another Mother's Day!
But a different one this year.
For, you see, I am a mother
but my child isn't here.
I am a mother who is hurting
For this child who was so dear,
as I face this and other occasions
each and every year.
I am a mother who feels
an emptiness over and over again
because I miss THIS child
and all that could have been.
I am a mother who cared
as I watched my child grow
and truly loved her
more than anyone will ever know.
I am a mother who has memories
and many tears to cry over.

by Judy A.Sittner

Hurting on Father's Day

As the day approaches,
I wonder how I will react –
am I still a father?
I will sit quietly
never allowing friends and family
to see how I feel.
I miss my child,
but I can't allow myself to "break."
I must remain strong
and always be the "rock."
I wish I could just let someone
know how much I miss my little Angel.
How much I cry
and how much I miss hearing "Dad, I love you."
I am a father
but I wonder will I just pretend
as usual that "It doesn't bother me."
Remember me.
For I hurt too on this special day!



The Compassionate Friends

Broome County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

1250 Front St., PMB 147
Binghamton, NY 13901-1043
(Address Service requested)

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