

The Primrose



Vol. 43, Issue 4

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Winter 2023



Reflections On A New Year

We begin a new year, one that many of us enter with reluctance. After all, it means another year away from our child and another year to be lived without the physical presence of the one we have lost. Apprehensive about any new challenges that we may be called upon to face in our broken condition, we call out, "Wait, I'm not ready yet!"

The death of our child changed the course of our life; nothing will be the same again. But it also has shaped us into who we are today. And it will continue to do so as we learn to incorporate this loss into who we are to become.

Have you found that you have already begun to live differently? Compassion toward others is more profound. Trivial things are no longer important. Appreciation for life, and those in our lives, is paramount.

We're living the same life—differently. Tragedies, disappointments, and heartaches combine with beauty, love, and joy to fashion our life. These are all a part of life, and our challenge is to incorporate them into our world. The difference that our child's life has had upon the world continues through us.

So, rather than being fearful of the challenges that lie ahead, perhaps a better question to consider at this time might be: What opportunities will present themselves in the coming year to honor this loss that is already a part of our life? Our child has become more integrally entwined into our being than ever before. We bring him or her to every situation that we encounter. How can we make that situation better because of this bond?

The start of a new calendar year is a good time to remember that we are in the midst of life. It is not perfect. Nor is it one that we might have chosen. But, our struggles do not put life "on hold." Rather they are a part of life itself! Our life is ours to make the most of, with many gifts that we can share with others. There is no better time than the present to gather up the pieces and recognize the uniqueness that we each call "me"— a uniqueness made more wonderful because of our child's presence in the life we choose to live.

--Paula Staiunas Schultz, South Suburban TCF Chapter newsletter.
In Memory of Melissa and Jeff

We were put on the earth to love them for as long as We live...
Not for as long as They lived. --Alan Pederson

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
National Office Information

Phone Number (toll free) (877) 969-0010
Fax Number (630) 990 -0246

Mailing address: P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
E-mail: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
Web address: www.compassionatefriends.org

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 - 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 - Jody Pangburn
Library - Liz & Brian Leonard
Hospitality – Jean Scolaro
Treasurer – Val Ambrose
Newsletter Editor – Val Ambrose
Social Media -
FB - Pam Kroft, Karen Yeager
Website—Jim Pratt
Secretary - OPEN

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 4th, 2023 (Monday)
6:00 PM “Holiday Hope”

December 10th, 2023 (Sunday)
6:00 PM Candle Light Service

December 16th, 2023 (Saturday)
10:00 AM Sharing Circle

January 8th, 2024 (Monday)
6:00 PM “Love Keeps Us Connected ”

January 20st 2024 (Saturday)
10:00 AM Sharing Circle

February 5th, 2024 (Monday)
6:00 PM “My Life = Groundhog's Day”

February 17th, 2024 (Saturday)
10:00 AM Sharing Circle

March 4th, 2024 (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

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,

You and I, more than most are fully aware that some days are harder than others. When we find ourselves in a terrible dark way that's when we should allow ourselves to feel whatever it is that our body asks us to feel and we must respect the time needed for one step forward, two steps back and possibly tripping along the way. There are days we feel so overwhelmed we will just sit and rest. We will remember days when our hearts were beating out of our chests, forcing us to scream out, with a voice unrecognizable, that it scared us. Then other days the exhaustion sets in and we can barely get out of bed. Then one-day you wake up with a smile on your face because of a thought or maybe a dream you had about your child, grandchild or sibling, those are the moments we look forward to and will in time be very grateful for. Grief becomes a part of us, taking our broken hearts to a new place; a place most would not want to visit. We keep going day after day, night after night, doing what we can to survive.

On a good, heart-warming note, Megan Walsh with her partner Michael once again took our messages (on seeded butterfly paper) written to our children, grand's and siblings high into the clouds. As they both skydived Megan released the butterflies from her hand, while Michael videoed the flight, our butterfly messages floated over the landscapes of Montana, landing back to the earth. Hopefully next spring the butterflies will seed and beautiful flowers will grow in memory of our loved ones. A special thank you to Megan and Michael for brightening our day. If you have Facebook the video of their flight is available.

Our annual candle lighting will be held Sunday December 10th at 6:00 p.m., in conjunction with National Children's Memorial Day, a day to remember all children, young or old, whom have gone too soon. One of our very important missions here on earth is to keep their memory alive and this night will fill your heart with much love, compassion and friendship. Sure there will be many tears and boxes of tissues to wipe them away. As you sit in a pew and someone you have never met reaches out to give you a tissue or to hold your hand, you are instantly given a sense of hope that you too will make it. As the names of our loved ones are read and the candles are lit we will sit in silence to remember and reflect on what was, but being reminded their love never fades. After the service please join others in the fellowship hall for a potluck dinner, bring a dish if you are up to it, put a message on the angel tree, meet new friends and embrace "old" ones. This is their night to shine. If you can't attend but would like your child, grandchild or sibling's name read please contact Donna @ 725-8574 or Shelly @ 759-0852. I know the service will be as beautiful as ever, so if you have never attended take the leap and go, bring family and friends.

As December edges along the New Year will be strolling in without warning. 2024 seems like such an overwhelming number, we also are surviving yet another year without our loved ones. Actually each New Year can put us in a funk. This year before the changing of the calendar let's put our worries, sadness and challenges to the side and focus on our well being, growth and our TCF mission to always be there for someone who needs us to walk beside them in their time of worries, sadness and challenges. For several years we had First Night in Binghamton on New Year's Eve to celebrate the upcoming year. In the traffic circle next to the Arena was a huge bonfire where we could write down our woes and disappointments from the previous year, throw them in the fire and watch them burn as the ash was carried up and away. Gathering around the bonfire you could feel a sign of healing as people hugged and cried together, letting go of the past and bringing in the future. We shall never "let go" of our memories but in due time our hearts will be mended and one way to do that is to reach out to others who need that hug...

As I close let us remember our child, grandchild and sibling whom we would do anything to have back here on earth. Instead of them here, let's think of them in a special place filled with love and peace allowing us a way to find the hope needed to go on. Join and walk with me as we seek hope.

Sending hugs,
Pam Kroft
Sean's Mom

**'Twas the Night Before Christmas
~ FOR BEREAVED PARENTS ~**

'Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days
that I knew I was facing — the holiday craze.
The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
in hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.

As others were making their holiday plans,
My heart was breaking — I couldn't understand.
I had lost my dear child a few years before,
And I knew what my holiday had in store.

When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound
I sprang to my feet and was looking around,
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The sight that I saw took my breath away,
And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.
With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,
That my child was still near me and that I was loved.
The message they brought was my holiday gift,
And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself

As I knelt closer to get a better view,
One allowed me to pet it — as if it knew —
That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,
To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed I carried the thought,
Of the message the butterflies left in my heart —
That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,
Our children are with us — they're not really dead.

Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,
A message of hope — a message so dear.
And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,
"To all bereaved parents — We love you tonight!"

~by Faye McCord, TCF Jackson, MS

Time does restore to us our quiet joy in the spiritual
presence of those we love, so that we learn to remem-
ber without pain, and to speak without choking up with
tears. But all our lives we will be subject to sudden sell
reminders which will bring all the old loss back
overwhelmingly.
~ Elizabeth Watson

Pictures on a Mantle

As I wake each morning, the first thing that I see
Your picture on our mantle smiling down at me.
I whisper good morning, I Love You Forever,
Make a wish that can never be.

Here's your picture as an infant,
sitting on my knee
Now you're a toddler, how daring you could be
First trip on the bus, your first day of school
All the new friends you met.
Your first dog, first trip to the beach
How much better could it get?

There's your soccer team, your baseball team
Oh the pride you made me feel
A bases clearing triple to end the game
Could this be for real?

Out of grade school, on to high school
Your innocence almost gone
Your first car, your first prom
A young man you've become

A bumpy road in high school
Trouble we couldn't see
Lots of jobs, two years of college
An Associate's Degree.
At last, you were close to being
The person you wanted to be.

When you left that fateful night
You said, "Dad, I'll see you then."
How could I have ever known
That I would never see you again?

I know you're out there somewhere
In a place we cannot see
Your picture on God's mantle now
Smiling down at me.

Tom Murphy
Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH

Hope

My heart has been broken.
My soul has been crushed.
My mind has gone to depths
I never knew existed.
Places where only God,
In His most infinite Love, could understand.
And even He could not console me at times.
But I am here on earth,
For whatever reason I still do not know:
And I have hope that, in time,
God will show me the way
And give rhyme to my reason.
So I wait in hope for a future
And a new beginning.

Kathleen Leeper

Frost

On a cold winter's day,
Frost etches a beautiful artistry
On everything it touches, every blade of grass
It glitters and sparkles, and for moments
Before the sun comes out
and the master piece evaporates
before our eyes, we stand memorized
cherishing the wondrous sight.

Like frost,
our children were only here for a brief moment
But, while they were here
Whether it was moments in the womb
Days, months or many years
They etched their beautiful artistry of love
On our hearts and lives
and all of those they touched.
Unlike frost, what they etched is forever,

It is something that we can cherish
and hold onto always.

We stand here tonight
lighting a candle to remember children
we will never forget.

Their light, their spirits, their artistry lives on
and like the flame of the candle
gives warmth on a cold winter's night
And light in the darkness
The love our children gave us still remains.

It keeps us warm
when the cold winds of grief blow.
It lights our way through the darkness
and loneliness
That we feel, And it gives us hope!

Julie Short
In Memory of Kyra
2007 Southeastern TCF
Candle Lighting Ceremony

Those we love remain with us,
For love itself lives on,
And cherished memories never fade
Because a loved one's gone ...
Those we love can never be
More than a thought apart,
For as long as there is memory
They'll live on in the heart.

Penn-Wynne Chapter TCF Newsletter

Valentine Message

I send this message to my child
Who no longer walks this plane,
A message filled with love
Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to skip a beat
When I ponder your early death
As I think of times we'll never share
I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love
And for those who receive love, too
For a parent the perfect love in life
Is the love I've given you.

I'm thinking of you this day, my child,
With a sadness that is unspoken
As I mark another Valentine's Day
With a heart that is forever broken.

Annette Mennen Baldwin TCF Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen



Today,
I visited a memory.
Something I couldn't yet do
In the early days of grief,
I let my heart wander
Let my mind roam free
In a way that it used to be,
To feel your presence,
So persistent, so steady
To reflect, to remember
And see you're still with me.
I knew that those moments
Would be waiting
When I was ready
So today,
I visited you in a memory.

Liz Newman

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** brother of **Jacob Snell** Owego, NY
- 12/02 **David** son of **Amy Snell** Barton, 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** Binghamton, 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
- 01/01 **Anthony** brother of **John & Shelly O'Neill** Vestal, 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
- 01/15 **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 **Aaron** son of **Ralph DeRigo** Binghamton, NY
- 01/19 **William** son of **Jeanne Tokos** Endicott, 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
- 01/24 **Sheri** daughter of **Jackie Ceiri** Johnson City, NY
- 01/24 **Chad** son of **Carl & Sharon Eldridge** Glen Aubrey, NY
- 01/29 **John** son of **Corky Clark** Binghamton, NY
- 01/31 **Michael** son of **Michael & Jo-Anne Oliver** Johnson City, NY

Our Children Remembered cont.

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

02/20 **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 TELL ME HOW

The pain is overwhelming at times. It comes crashing in like a wave, and knocks me off my feet. As I sit there and ponder, the tears well up and start pouring down my face like a raging waterfall. Every passing thought going straight to you. Great memories of you. Thought about that horrible day and the days that followed, and I can't help but wonder what you're doing today. People say "don't let it become who you are," "you have to get over it," and the best one of all, "you have to let it go." Please could someone, anyone just tell me how I could accomplish any one of those things? He is part of me, so therefore he is part of who I am. Get over it, it's not like he had just spilled the milk and I was having a fit. Let it go, how? He is my child

Gina Turek Fox Valley TCF Chapter, IL

"SIGNS"

Do any of you believe in signs or messages from your deceased child? I do, and it helps me with the grieving process and to overcome tough days, like her birthday.

Every time I see a penny that shouldn't be there or wasn't there the last time I looked, I think of it as the presence of Samantha. I could be having any type of day – good, bad, indifferent – and when I see a misplaced penny, I instantly sense a presence of her and say to myself "Samantha is thinking of me". I know this might sound crazy, but it makes me feel happy to believe that she's thinking of her dad and wants to let me know that.

The most impactful penny sighting happened on Samantha's birthday – April 25, 2018. My birthday is on April 27th. Samantha would have been 14 in 2019. (She died in 2006 at the age of 17 months.) I was walking into work, and feeling absolutely horrible. Her birthday and death day are terrible triggers for me, and I was depressed and feeling a very heavy sense of grief that day. As I approached my desk, I saw a penny on my chair. In my 17 years of working at my company, I've never seen a penny on my chair, so this sighting was completely unexpected and a total shock. It wasn't there last night when I left work for the day. I asked around and nobody claimed putting the penny there.

I immediately called my wife and said "You're not going to believe what's on my chair! A penny and it wasn't there when I left work last night." She said "What date is on the penny?" I picked it up, looked closely at the date, and couldn't believe my eyes that the date was 2006, the year she died.

I knew Samantha was thinking of me and telling me that she was OK and that I should not be sad. I instantly went from deep longing and sadness to euphoric. It was the best birthday present I've received in the 13 years since Samantha has passed away.

We all know that the grieving process is unique and personal. Some might believe in signs. Others may not. The bottom line is that if it's signs or looking at photos or visiting the grave site that gives you moments of happiness, then embrace it. I did and it's turned some pretty painful days into a positive.

Jonathan Baer

7 Things I Have Learned Since the Loss of My Child

Child loss is a loss like no other. One often misunderstood by many. If you love a bereaved parent or know someone who does, remember that even his or her “good” days are harder than you could ever imagine. Compassion and love, not advice, are needed. If you’d like an inside look into why the loss of a child is a grief that lasts a lifetime, here is what I’ve learned in my seven years of trekking through the unimaginable.

1) Love never dies. There will never come a day, hour, minute or second I stop loving or thinking about my son. Just as parents of living children unconditionally love their children always and forever, so do bereaved parents. I want to say and hear his name just the same as non-bereaved parents do. I want to speak about my deceased children as normally and naturally as you speak of your living ones.

I love my child just as much as you love yours— the only difference is mine lives in heaven and talking about him is unfortunately quite taboo in our culture. I hope to change that. Our culture isn’t so great about hearing about children gone too soon, but that doesn’t stop me from saying my son’s name and sharing his love and light everywhere I go. Just because it might make you uncomfortable, doesn’t make him matter any less. My son’s life was cut irreversibly short, but his love lives on forever. And ever.

2) Bereaved parents share an unspeakable bond. In my seven years navigating the world as a bereaved parent, I am continually struck by the power of the bond between bereaved parents. Strangers become kindreds in mere seconds—a look, a glance, a knowing of the heart connects us, even if we’ve never met before. No matter our circumstances, who we are, or how different we are, there is no greater bond than the connection between parents who understand the agony of enduring the death of a child. It’s a pain we suffer for a lifetime, and unfortunately only those who have walked the path of child loss understand the depth and breadth of both the pain and the love we carry

3) I will grieve for a lifetime. Period. The end. There is no “moving on,” or “getting over it.” There is no bow, no fix, no solution to my heartache. There is no end to the ways I will grieve and for how long I will grieve. There is no glue for my broken heart, no elixir for my pain, no going back in time. For as long as I breathe, I will grieve and ache and love my son with all my heart and soul. There will never come a time where I won’t think about who my son would be, what he would look like, and how he would be woven perfectly into the tapestry of my family. I wish people could understand that grief lasts forever because love lasts forever; that the loss of a child is not one finite event, it is a continuous loss that unfolds minute by minute over the course of a lifetime. Every missed birthday, holiday, milestone—should-be back-to-school school years and graduations; weddings that will never be; grandchildren that should have been but will never be born—an entire generation of people are irrevocably altered forever. This is why grief lasts forever. The ripple effect lasts forever. The bleeding never stops.

4) It’s a club I can never leave, but is filled with the most shining souls I’ve ever known. This crappy club called child loss is a club I never wanted to join, and one I can never leave, yet is filled with some of the best people I’ve ever known. And yet we all wish we could jump ship— that we could have met another way—any other way but this. Alas, these shining souls are the most beautiful, compassionate, grounded, loving, movers, shakers and healers I have ever had the honor of knowing. They are life-changers, game-changers, relentless survivors and thrivers. Warrior moms and dads who redefine the word brave lasts forever. The ripple effect lasts forever. The bleeding never stops.

Every day loss parents move mountains in honor of their children gone too soon. They start movements, change laws, spearhead crusades of tireless activism. Why? In the hope that even just



one parent could be spared from joining the club.

If you've ever wondered who some of the greatest world changers are, hang out with a few bereaved parents and watch how they live, see what they do in a day, a week, a lifetime. Watch how they alchemize their grief into a force to be reckoned with, watch how they turn tragedy into transformation, loss into legacy.

Love is the most powerful force on earth, and the love between a bereaved parent and his/her child is a life-force to behold. Get to know a bereaved parent. You'll be thankful you did.

5) The empty chair/room/space never becomes less empty. Empty chair, empty room, empty space in every family picture. Empty, vacant, forever gone for this lifetime. Empty spaces that should be full, everywhere we go. There is and will always be a missspace in our lives, our families, a forever hole-in-our-hearts. Time does not make the space less empty. Neither do platitudes, clichés or well wishes for us to “move on,” or “stop dwelling,” from well-intentioned friends or family. Nothing does. No matter how you look at it, empty is still empty. Missing is still missing. Gone is still gone. The problem is nothing can fill it. Minute after minute, hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after heartbreaking year the empty space remains. The empty space of our missing child(ren) lasts a lifetime. And so we rightfully miss them forever. Help us by holding the space of that truth for us.

6) No matter how long it's been, holidays never become easier without my son. Never, ever. Have you ever wondered why every holiday season is like torture for a bereaved parent? Even if it's been 5, 10, or 25 years later? It's because they really, truly are. Imagine if you had to live every holiday without one or more of your precious children. Imagine how that might feel for you. It would be easier to lose an arm, a leg or two— anything— than to live without your flesh and blood, without the beat of your heart. Almost anything would be easier than living without one of more of your precious children. That is why holidays are always and forever hard for bereaved parents. Don't wonder why or even try to understand. Know you don't have to understand in order to be a supportive presence. Consider supporting and loving some bereaved parents this holiday season. It will be the best gift you could ever give them.

7) Because I know deep sorrow, I also know unspeakable joy. Though I will grieve the death of my son forever and then some, it does not mean my life is lacking happiness and joy. Quite the contrary, in fact, though it took awhile to get there. It is not either/ or, it's both/and. My life is more rich now. I live from a deeper place. I love deeper still. Because I grieve I also know a joy like no other. The joy I experience now is far deeper and more intense than the joy I experienced before my loss. Such is the alchemy of grief.

Because I've clawed my way from the depth of unimaginable pain, suffering and sorrow, again and again—when the joy comes, however and whenever it does—it is a joy that reverberates through every pore of my skin and every bone in my body. I feel all of it, deeply: the love, the grief, the joy, the pain. I embrace and thank every morsel of it. My life now is more rich and vibrant and full, not despite my loss, but because of it. In grief there are gifts, sometimes many. These gifts don't in any way make it all “worth” it, but I am grateful beyond words for each and every gift that comes my way. I bow my head to each one and say thank you, thank you, thank you. Because there is nothing—and I mean absolutely nothing—I take for granted. Living life in this way gives me greater joy than I've ever known possible.

I have my son to thank for that. Being his mom is the best gift I've ever been given. Even death can't take that away.

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:

Janice & Rodney Black in memory of their son **David**

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

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

Fred & Sandra Weitsman in memory of their daughter **Rebecca**

Sandra & Jerry Wilcox in memory of their son **Kyle**

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

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

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

Marilyn Eck in memory of her daughters **Cynthia & Courtney**

Kathy Jones in memory of her sons **Christopher & Thomas**

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

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

Joel & Robin Vermaat in memory of their son **Peter**



On Picking Up the Pieces

A few months after my son died someone said to me she was glad to see I was "picking up the pieces and going on". Well, I was picking up the pieces all right, but what she didn't know was they were almost a whole set of new pieces. I haven't been able to go on as though nothing about me has changed since my child died. I'm a different me now and I am still learning how the new me reacts to old situations. I have found the new pieces don't exactly fit together all nice and neat like a jigsaw puzzle because some of the old pieces are hanging in there and they don't quite mesh with the newer ones. I am and have been in the process of grinding off the edges, hoping for a better fit, one I could live with more comfortably. Time, patience and hard work are helping me accomplish this. How are the rough edges on your new pieces coming along?

-Mary Cleckley

Candles in December

My sadness seems reflected in the music that I hear....
Every young one's glowing face reminds me you're not here.
Shoppers crowd the festive stores; emotions all run high
This world I was a part of once, before that sad July.

This season's meant for happy times: for love, warm hearts, and cheer.
But grieving families 'round the world remember those not here.
We struggle through the season, lighting candles to proclaim
Our children aren't forgotten, 'round the world our candles flame

I slowly pass through gates thrown wide one clear, cold Christmas Day.
No toys or playthings do I bring — those gifts of yesterday.
I carry with me just a polished heart of granite made
And walk with grief to where she lies in a silent, silvered glade.

"Merry Christmas, love," I whisper — the quiet words seem so forlorn.
"I've brought my heart for you to keep, my gift this Christmas morn.
It is filled with all my love, though this one's carved of stone....
I'll place it here — it will be near — you'll never be alone."

We parents don't forget, my love; this month we will unite
To honor all we'll light a wall of candles through the night.
The world will know our memories glow with love that's deep and true.
We'll stand as one, and 'fore it's done the Heavens will know, too.

Please keep my gift, beloved child, close to where you lie,
And know my love surrounds you 'til the day I too shall die.
On the tenth of December my candle's flame will light
I pray you'll see the love we'll free into the starry night.

Sally Migliaccio

The Mended Heart

The heart is oh so fragile;
although the muscle's strong.
It goes on beating even though
continued life seems wrong.
When devastation makes its mark
and chisels in the pain.
It seems as though the heart
will not ever know joy again.

Good News!

The heart will mend itself,
but not just like before.
Remember, like a broken bone,
the original is no more.
There is a tender spot in both
where once the gap was wide.
The beating heart that gives us life
has courage on its side.

And as the broken bone may ache
because of rain or cold,
The heart may ache with longing
for the one whose bell has toll.
There is no guarantee
that life will ever be the same,
But when you do find joy in life,
the heart should feel no shame.

Lovingly created by Karan Longbrake
TCF, Hardin County, Ada, Ohio

**** 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

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LOVE AND HOPE

On a cold winter day, the sun went out,
Grief walked in to stay.
I turned away from the unwanted guest
And bid him be on his way.
Grief was merciless, he brought his friends,
Loneliness, Fear and Despair.
They walk these rooms, unceasingly,
In the somber cloaks they wear.
Every so often now, Love pays a call
She always has Hope by her side.
I welcome Love as well as Hope,
For I thought surely they had died.
Love counsels Grief in a most gentle way,
Bids him be still for awhile.
Then Love walks with me through memory's hall,
And for a time I can smile.

In loving memory of her son Michael Kerry Marston

In The Silence

In the silence Mom you hear me,
In the silence I am here.
In the silence you can feel me,
In the silence it is clear.....
That my spirit hasn't left you,
I am just a thought away,
You can see me in the shadows,
Anytime you look my way.
Look for me in the sunshine,
And the stars at night.
In the wind, trees and flowers,
Everything that is in sight.
Know that I'm still here,
In my death I have a new life,
And one day it will be clear.
So talk to me and look for me
In everything you do,
For I haven't gone so far away,
I'm really right next to you.
Joy Curnutt

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