

The Primrose



Vol. 44, Issue 1

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Spring 2024



A Dream Deferred

Christine died on November 6, 1992. She was six years old and in kindergarten, but at 35 pounds and in size 4 clothes, she looked much younger. Brain-damaged before birth by hydrocephalus, she needed hours of occupational and physical therapy to learn to crawl, brush her teeth, ride her tricycle, zip her coat. I massaged her, coaxed her, pleaded with her, praised her—and watched her grow.

I never knew what skill might confuse Christine. She walked at thirteen months but did not crawl until fifteen months. She fed herself at eighteen months but could not hug herself until she was four. When she was two and a half, she was given a complete battery of tests. Her motor skills ranged from less than one year to average.

But Christine passed the speech test at a six-year-old level. At four she composed music and created lyrics to go with her melodies. She was a natural in math and, in true brat fashion, lorded it over her older brother who was not. “It’s OK that you’re not good in math,” she would tell Bobby. “Boys can’t do math.” Or she would walk up to him as he struggled over multiplication, point at a problem with her tiny hand, say, “That’s wrong. You’ll just have to do it again,” and run before he gave her a well-deserved slap.

Christine had so much potential. Her therapists, her teachers, her pediatrician, her neurosurgeon marveled at what she could do. She was humming nursery rhymes at thirteen months, humming Tchaikovsky at three. There were days when I had visions of Christine as an adult, leading an orchestra as they played her Seventh Symphony or on stage singing her latest Country and Western hit.

And then at six it was all over. Her music—her songs—turned off. My dreams muted. And I found myself asking a question another poet in very different circumstances asked himself. “What happens to a dream deferred? Does it merely fester? Or does it explode?” (Langston Hughes, “Harlem,” 1953) Two seasons later I have a partial and paradoxical answer. It does both. It does neither.

These have been moments of intense anguish, when I marveled that my body could hold my mood and live. There have been times when sadness has softly sifted through my daily routines, shadowing my cooking and my speaking. But under both, deeper than the explosion of Christine’s unexpected death or the long sadness of her empty room, lies a certainty that Christine still exists, that we will one day be reunited. A part of me crossed with her into death, still walks in love with her. Yet it is not a budding musician I walk with—or a brat—or a handicapped child. She was all of these. She is none of these. I walk with her. Her soul’s whole now, bathed in light.

Relationships fade and change. Love lasts. --Sandra Ball TCF, Salem NJ

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
National Office Information

Phone Number (toll free) (877) 969-0010
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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,
Website—Jim Pratt
Secretary - Barbara Paugh

**Steering Committee Meeting
April 25th @ 5:30**

All are Welcome

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 4th, 2024 (Monday)
6:00 PM “Memory Night”

March 16th, 2024 (Saturday)
10:00 AM Open Sharing

April 1st, 2024 (Monday)
6:00 PM “No April Fools”

April 20th 2024 (Saturday)
10:00 AM Open Sharing

April 25th, 2024 (Thursday)
5:30 PM Steering Committee Meeting

May 6th, 2024 (Monday)
6:00 PM “Come Hug our Mom’s & Grandmas”

May 18th, 2024 (Saturday)
10:00 AM Open Sharing
1:00 PM Clean up at Angel of Hope

May 25th 10:00 AM Rain date for Angel Cleanup

June 3rd, 2024 (Monday)
6:00 PM “Come Hug 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 Everyone,

Last December I was extremely fortunate to attend our candle light service, it was a blessing for me. Getting to hug so many and to be a part of the beautiful evening for our children, grandchildren and siblings gone too soon. It was a night for them, those we have lost. The candles, the readings, the music, all for them. A special thank you to all that helped make it a wonderful, yet tearful evening, you are the best. As I reiterate year after year it takes a village and we certainly had one. Thanks to Donna and Shelly who created a beautiful program along with Jim, Cheryl, Pastor Harold, George, Corky, Kim, Andrea, Val, Mark, Liz and Brian. The program readers were flawless and a special thank you to Lucy who joined us to share her angelic voice and piano playing.

I sat at group many, many years ago thinking I would never survive one day more. Sean, my first-born, taken from this earth, gone in an instant. Left with the pieces of a broken heart, spending hours rationalizing his death, trying to make “deals” to switch places with him and just plain deflated in spirit and being. The once loving life Pam was now so absorbed with death. I literally had to claw myself back to life, ever so slowly. People tried to console me and be there but I felt so alone. Going to my first TCF meeting was the best thing I did for my grief. Sitting with other bereaved families that understood with no judgment sharing words of encouragement and tons of empathy. I wasn't totally convinced of all the sincerity; it took me a few meetings to realize they were just like me, aching with great sorrow. At first I felt like no one in that room could possibly feel the pain and sadness that I was feeling. Everyone was walking, talking and even smiling. I then became aware of the masks we wear to harbor our grief from the outside world, basically protecting others from our extreme pain. Even in our earliest days of grief we become the guardians and caretakers, comforting others. Our group is what gave me the “claws” to dig myself back to life and to allow my grief to subside with each memory allowed back into my heart.

This past December we were saddened to hear our sweet member Connie Pratt had passed on to join her beloved son Jonathan and precious baby girl, Annette. Connie and her husband Jim attended TCF meetings for many years. Jim is the keeper of our website. Several years ago Connie and Jim were picked from NYS to join the Donate for Life float at the Rose Bowl parade, in memory of their Jonathan, as he was a donor. I remember it being such an honor for both of them. This year as I watched the parade I purposely sat to catch a glimpse of the Donate for Life float, thinking of Connie. As the float approached it was absolutely beautiful, made by the HOPI tribe of the southwest area of the US. It was full of colorful butterflies, our symbol for TCF. Also several participants doing the HOPI butterfly dance. Connie would have loved it.

If we can believe our infamous groundhog Phil, we shall see spring sooner than later. We will be recruiting for a quick clean up at the angel sometime this spring, before Mothers Day. Our full clean up and plantings will happen closer to Memorial Day, never want to plant too soon. There will be a message on Facebook and for those not connected I will send a text or email. Those Saturdays are always a fun day working and chatting alongside our TCF family, giving us a chance to be outside and absorb as much vitamin D as possible. Once we do the initial cleaning it will be easier for Delores and John to maintain going forward. D & J also will gladly accept any helper bees. My suggestion has always been to carry a broom in your trunk (not you Ralph) and when walking in the park or visiting the angel, sweep a bit. The angel is there for all of us to reflect on what was. Go sit on a bench, glance out to the river and as you look to the angel, remember them.

This month our Monday meeting will be memory night, a night that is special as we bring a favorite food or memory or photo to share with others around our table. This particular meeting gives us a chance to get to know our children, grandchildren and siblings in a happier light. Food, memories and photos were always good times that need to be shared and remembered. I always love the stories that are shared, just heartwarming.

Continued ➡

The Chapter Letter Continued...

We all know suffering and loss and because of that we have acquired an abundance of understanding, love and compassion for those who find themselves experiencing the very same. That's why our group works. It worked for me all those years ago and will continue to be the "claws" for others whether you are one week, one month, 6 months, 5, 10 or almost 30 years. Grief is love lost. May the spring bring you the hope to continue to find all the peace you deserve.

Hugs,
Pam Kroft
Sean's Mom

When I grieve...

Cortney Davis, Nurse Practitioner

When I grieve, when I stand by others as they grieve, even in the midst of seemingly unbearable sorrow, grief becomes a way to honor life – a way to cling to every fleeting, precious moment of joy.

Some People Say . . .

"I wouldn't go to one of those grief meetings. It's morbid - people sitting around talking about the dead." How wrong those people are! In so many ways, those who attend are saying, "I am hurting now, but I want to go on with my life." They are saying, "I am crying now, but I want to laugh again." They are saying, "I am sick in body and soul; help me get well." I see these things as healthy, not morbid.

It is not easy to walk into a meeting of any kind alone, especially one where the subject is very emotional; but once there, it takes only a few minutes to find out we are not alone; that there are those who care about us and want to help us. We see others hurting and suddenly we want to help them. I don't see that as morbid.

A grieving parent wants to talk about his beloved child who is no longer physically part of his life. That child has died with a tragic suddenness or as a result of an illness that usually takes older people. We want to know why or find a reason or some meaning in our child's death. I don't see any morbidity in trying to understand.

Memories of our child are all we have left. We have a driving need to hang on to those memories lest we lose that small bit of our child. It is not morbid to want to keep that small part alive forever, at least in our hearts and minds.

To walk into a bereaved parents' meeting is a loud shout - "I want to live and be happy again." It is a cry that "My child is dead, but I know he would want me to go on and be a better person for the suffering." It is a confirmation that "Even though part of my life is gone, there is a reason to go on." There is nothing morbid about doing what is necessary in order to re-enter the mainstream of life.

Margaret Gerner ~ TCF, St. Louis, MO

Adjusted

"It's been several years since your son died,"
They say,
"Surely, you must have adjusted by now."
Yes, I am adjusted -
Adjusted to feeling pain
And sadness and grief and guilt and loss.
Adjusted to hurting and unexpected tears.
Adjusted to seeing people made uncomfortable
upon hearing me say "My son died."
Adjusted to losing my best friend
Because I'm not always "up."
Adjusted to people acting as if grief is contagious.
And TCF meetings are "morbid."
Adjusted? Oh, yes, to many things.
Knowing I won't hear his voice,
but listening for it still.
Knowing I won't see him drive his Toronado,
But staring at every one I see.
Adjusted to feeling empty on his birthday
And wishing for just one more time with him.
Adjusted: As life goes on -
To realizing I cannot expect everyone I meet
To wear a bandage -
just because I am still bleeding.

Shirley Blakely Curle ~ TCF, Central AR

Where Are You Now?

where are you now
but in my heart
your voice clear in my mind
I know we're never far apart
mind to mind
heart to heart
and, maybe, if I'm fortunate,
soul to soul
we connect
you, watching over me
me, so unaware
but, oh, to actually see you
how you've grown
and changed still,
oh, to embrace you
feeling your strength and youth
breathing in your life
now held only within mind's eye
heart of hearts
and lonely soul

Victor Montemurro TCF
Brookhaven in Medford, NY

A Name for My Pain

I have given a name to my pain -
it's called "Longing."
I long for what was,
and what might have been
I long for his touch and smell of sweat;
I long to hold him one more time.
I long to look on his beautiful face
and impress it upon my memories and heart.
I long to return to the day before
and protect him from his death.
I long to take his place,
so he may live and have sons too.
I long for time to pass much faster,
so my longing and pain will lessen.
Will they?

June Williams-Muecke ~
TCF, Houston West Chapter

Last Moments

Last moments
Snatches of conversation
That echo across all decades...
Priceless words
Indelibly etched on the heart.
Sometimes
Thoughts were never spoken
But unexpected sentiment -
A quick embrace, a silly smirk,
Or joyous laughter -
Reaches through the pain
And warms the heart.
We came too soon to understand
The folly of harsh words
Or neglected touch,
For who can know which
Taken-for-granted event
Will become
A last moment.

Diane Fields ~ TCF, Westmoreland, PA

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.*



03/02 **Edward** son of **Mary Vaninwegen** Greene, NY
03/04 **Kain** son of **Scott Hall & Bee Thongpa** Marathon, NY
03/06 **Justin** son of **Mary Vaninwegen** Greene, NY
03/08 **John** son of **Margaret Turna** Binghamton, NY
03/09 **CJ** son of **Charles & Shelley Levchak** Kirkwood, NY
03/09 **Annette** daughter of **James Pratt** Binghamton, NY
03/13 **Brian** son of **John & Shelly O'Neill** Vestal, 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
03/25 **Dillion** grandson of **Toni & Larry Sherling** Endicott, NY
03/25 **Stavros** son of **Peter & Barbara Metritikas** Vestal, NY
03/26 **Sarah** daughter of **Kate Chambers** Nichols, NY
03/28 **Melissa** daughter of **Cindy Freitas** Endicott, NY
03/29 **Christopher** son of **Robert & Kim Carroll** Binghamton, NY
04/02 **Michael** son of **Barbara Lewis** Binghamton, 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
04/16 **Destiney** daughter of **Sherry Klenotiz** Owego, NY
04/20 **Jaimie** daughter of **Toni & Larry Sherling** Endicott, 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 **Brett** son of **Nanci and Adam Johnson** Hallstead, PA
04/22 **Kelli** daughter of **M/M George Ford** Newark Valley, NY
04/24 **Samantha** daughter of **Carlo & Samantha Carlini** Endicott, NY

continued ➡

Our Children Remembered cont.

04/27 **Daniel** son of **Trina Caputo** Glendale, NY
04/29 **Ben** son of **Dave Schmidt & Martine Barnaby** Glen Aubrey, NY
04/29 **Ben** son of **Melanie Schmidt** 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 **Anthony** son of **James Vazquez** Binghamton, NY
05/05 **Allan** son of **Samuel & Shelley Allegrino** Endicott, NY
05/05 **Nate** son of **Becky Hopper** Binghamton, NY
05/06 **Ashley** daughter of **Jacqueline Anderson** Binghamton, NY
05/08 **Anatolio** son of **Dora Mancini** Endicott, NY
05/17 **Tiffany of** daughter **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



Daffodil Time

Sometimes in our grief we become workaholics. We rush, rush, and rush, never stopping to "smell the roses." We are afraid that if we stop, or even slow down just a little, all those memories and thoughts of our dead child will come flying back, and we'll drop down to that black hole of grief again-so we don't stop or even slow down a little.

When I was in the fifth grade we had to memorize some poetry. I still remember lines from the poem:

Daffodils

When oft upon my couch I lie,
in vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye,
Which is the bliss of solitude.

For a couple of years after my daughter's death I could not, I would not allow myself to get into a vacant or pensive mood, because it wasn't daffodils that flashed upon my inward eye, it was always my daughter who was there-and there was no bliss.

Things change. Time helped to heal the raw open wound. Now, after four years, I can allow myself to have those vacant or pensive moods, and I can see the daffodils along with my daughter. My bliss is bittersweet, sometimes more bitter than sweet, usually more sweet than bitter, but it is bliss as those memories flash upon my inward eye. I have accepted that which cannot be changed. I do NOT like it; I have accepted that she is dead.

As I lie there, in vacant or in pensive mood, I am careful that those memories that I allow to flash upon my inward eye are the happy ones, not the sad or unhappy ones. They are more like roses than daffodils, though. They do have thorns that hide just below the beauty. But I can do it now. I can take time to "smell the roses." And so can you. Try it. In small doses at first, then larger ones. You owe it to yourself - and to your family - and to your child.

Tom Crouthamel, TCF Sarasota, FL;

What Does May Bring?

First May brings MOTHER'S DAY- another painful holiday. Commercials are everywhere. I can't check my e-mail without being bombarded with ads for gifts and cards for Mother's Day.

Some churches honor the oldest mother, the youngest mother, and the mother with the most children present. Then there are the flowers - wear a red flower if your mother is living and a white one if your mother has died (I keep hearing carnations, but it was always roses when I was a child). Some years ago some bereaved mothers started wearing a yellow flower, either alone or with the traditional color honoring their mother.

It helped me to know the origin of Mother's Day. After Anna Jarvis' mother died, May 9, 1905, Anna decided a Sunday in May should be set aside to honor her mother and all mothers. Anna felt her mother deserved recognition because, although her life was filled with sorrow, she lived selflessly and showed kindness and generosity towards others.

Anna was one of four surviving siblings; seven others died in early childhood and Anna's mother mourned those seven children throughout her life.

Anna never married (and never had a child of her own). Her work to establish a day to honor her mother persuaded President Woodrow Wilson to proclaim the second Sunday in May as a national holiday honoring all mothers.

Finally, newly bereaved mothers commonly have some questions that are acute on this day. For those who have no surviving children, so far as I am concerned, you are still a mother. For the rest of you, each one has to decide how to answer the question of "How many children do you have?" I am still the mother of three children, although one is no longer on earth with me

I hope each of you find some peace on this Mother's Day and that knowing it specifically honored a bereaved mother will make each succeeding one a little easier.

May 28th is MEMORIAL DAY, established to honor those who died in the military defending our nation, but has become a time of general remembrance. I pass one small cemetery in southwest Arkansas fairly frequently and always see that fresh white stones have been spread before Memorial Day. Every grave appears to have a new flower arrangement. As a child, my parents would take me with them but I had never known any of the relatives whose graves we visited. Perhaps as we get older, we think that someday we will do this for our parents or grandparents, but never our children.

My son was cremated and I don't have a grave to visit, but this holiday has far more impact on me now.

May also brings GRADUATIONS. Whether from kindergarten, grade school, high school or college, this is a rite of passage that some of our children never reached. If your child was close to the graduation, the school may recognize him or her in some way. Or another child (sibling, cousin, friend) may be graduating, and receiving their announcement may bring a special ache.

We hope you all plan ahead and discuss what you're feeling with family members and caring friends so that you can get through these events with a minimum of pain.

--Tracy Rhein, Bereaved Parents of the USA, North Little Rock, AR

Journey

This journey of the bereaved, especially the bereaved parent, is unlike other battles we face. It is both an outward battle, as well as an internal battle.

Pain and challenges come from external sources, places, rooms, pictures, comments, etc. as well as from within. To say we do battle mentally is a huge understatement. The years of collected memories, moments, sounds and laughter are stored in countless files in our mind. To close our eyes is to turn on the recordings. Eyes open is to see the tangible and physical reminders that our child once lived. Eyes closed is to experience the view from an anguished heart. Both are brutal.

One of the most difficult aspects of grief, for me, is that the path truly must be walked alone. Others can and do support us, in part, but no one looks through the unique lens we do. Actions taken in an attempt to “help” us often hurt us. Words given, well meaning, often isolate us further.

There is no blame, for how can one possibly know the endless and varied nuances of grief we now live with, except for those who’ve walked this path. Yes, people may say we have shut ourselves off, or have become “too private”, but often we didn’t start out that way. We are quickly advised how to feel, what to do, and when to do it! Shame sets in, guilt sets in, and we withdraw. Though it is a lonely place, it truly is the place where we must find our inner strength and begin to rebuild.

Rebuild our broken heart and soul. No one knows, including us, the exact stones needed to form the path on which we use to go forward. It is also a place of discovery. It is in those times where the tears fall, the heart rages against the injustice and the anguish pours out that we begin to find ourselves. Yes, the night feels horrific, but the morning comes, and we realize we are still breathing. It is this very battle we do alone, and in the darkest night, that allows for a new dawn.

Grief is work. Hard work. We must face it, feel it, let it break us and then we must get up and put ourselves back together again. Oh there will be more nights and darkness, but we’ll come to trust that the sun will rise again. In time, and with the backing of Compassionate Friends, we can not only survive, but thrive. Your life may just be the inspiration that saves another.

Michelle Thomason, In loving memory of her son, Michael Thomason

Thoughts from a Parent Who Lost an Older Child

Perhaps I had my child longer than you had yours, but thirty-eight years does not seem long. Perhaps there are more memories to hold in my heart, but I know yours are just as dear to you as mine are to me, even if your memories are memories of only one or two days. Your dreams for your child are gone. So are mine. Never did I imagine that I would have to deal with my child’s death instead of him having to deal with mine. In thirty-eight years there was time to give me a legacy of three grandchildren. This is a very special blessing and one that I do not take for granted. My mission is to sustain the relationship with my three granddaughters who now live three thousand miles away from me.

My child died from a terminal illness that is not one of the “acceptable” diseases. My child died of alcohol and drug addiction. The tools for remission of this disease are placed in the hands of the person who has the disease. Even with the help of four treatment centers, the recovery was not to be. One day at a time, my recovery is taking place. The pain, after two and one half years, has gone to a place where it can be tolerated.

My story and my age may be different from yours, but the bottom line is the same: my child has gone to a place where I cannot go, and I miss him so much. The pain of grief is still there, but I am living life one-day-at-a-time, enriched because my son came through my body into my life.

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:

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

Carl & Sharon Eldridge in memory of their son's **Chad & Charles**

Maureen & Joe Johnson in memory of their daughter **Maura**

Barbara Lewis in memory of her son **Michael**

Nancy & Gary Arnold in memory of their brother **Michael**

John & Michelle O'Neill in memory of their son **Brian**, and brother **Anthony**

Thomas & Marcia Glosick in memory of their son **Scott**

Thomas & Diane Ellis in memory of their son **Matthew**

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

George & Luann Ford in memory of their daughter **Kelli**

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

Sharon Gana son in memory of her son **Jacob**

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

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

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

Amy Snell in memory of her son **David**

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

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



A special thank you to:

Hopler & Exchbach Funeral Home for their donation in memory of all the children gone too soon

To Cope and to Move Forward

As a newly bereaved parent, I had a need to tell my story, to talk about my son, Tom, and to describe my grief journey over and over again, to anyone who would listen. I was fortunate at that time to have people in my life who were willing to listen to me. However, I also found myself sometimes opening up to perfect strangers. For whatever reason, there were times when I could not contain myself, almost as if I had to prove to the whole world that Tom existed. Sometimes those conversations would lead to a story about Christopher, my twin son who died at three days old, three years before Tom died, and to the two miscarriages I experienced.

I learned through The Compassionate Friends meetings that not everyone feels comfortable in talking about their situations. Some bereaved parents are concerned about stopping conversations or about making others feel awkward if they share their story about their child who died, and I suppose there is that risk. However, what I found was that if I took the initiative and talked about my child and my situation, then it somehow gave others permission to talk about Tom, too, and that was comforting to me. It also seemed to increase the awareness and the understanding of those around me as to what I was experiencing as a bereaved parent.

This July will mark the tenth anniversary of Tom's death. I recognize now that I don't have that same urgent need to tell my story as I did in the early years. However, there are occasions when I am in social situations with unfamiliar people when the conversation turns to children, including the "How many?" and "How old?" questions, and just like in the early years, I cannot contain myself. I find myself opening up about Tom and Christopher and my journey since their deaths. Sometimes when I hear myself describe that part of my life, I wonder how I ever survived. However, what I have primarily discovered is that more people welcome my story and my openness than are offended by it. I have learned that by sharing that part of my life, others in turn begin to share their pain and their hardships, or arrive at a better understanding about someone they know who is suffering because of the loss of a child or a sibling. It has become obvious to me that hardly anyone goes through life unscathed, and that for most people, life is not fair. However, by sharing our burdens, we do learn to cope and to move forward.

Carmen, Chapter Leader, TCF North Shore, Boston, MA

**** 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 \$ _____ Supplies \$ _____ Postage \$ _____ Other (specify) \$ _____

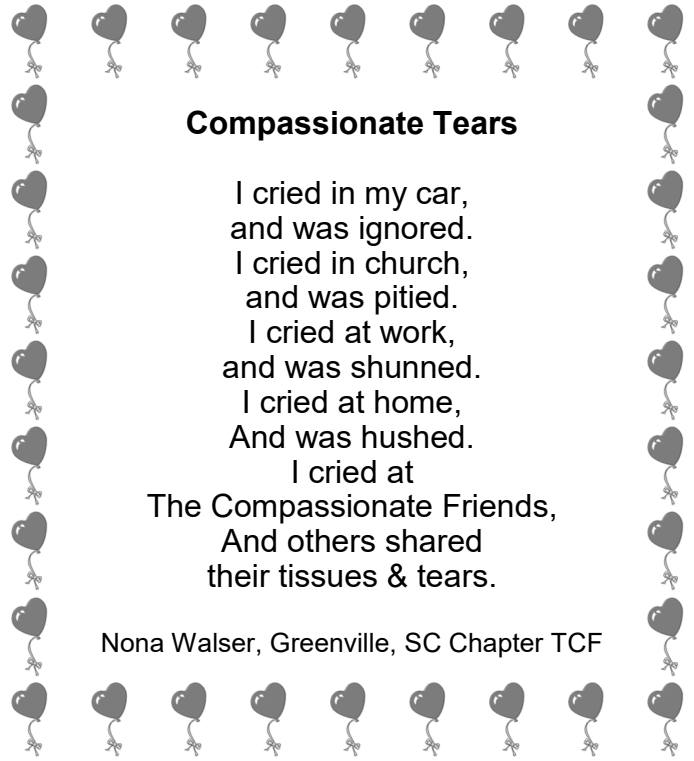
Please specify if there is a specific fund you want the money used for (newsletter, postage, supplies, ect...)

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

The Storms of Grief

When I grieve in your presence,
Open the window to my soul
The turbulence,
The thrashing,
The tears,
The bitterness will not destroy me...
unless they are forced inside.
Help me get the pain out by listening,
by showing me with your eyes...
that you'll weather the storm.
Please do not say too much.
Just let me be.
I'll show you the way,
Then, please feel important
when I can laugh and play again,
For you are a catalyst
in my learning to live again.

Elizabeth Farnsworth, Lynchburg, VA



Compassionate Tears

I cried in my car,
and was ignored.
I cried in church,
and was pitied.
I cried at work,
and was shunned.
I cried at home,
And was hushed.
I cried at
The Compassionate Friends,
And others shared
their tissues & tears.

Nona Walser, Greenville, SC Chapter TCF

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The Compassionate Friends
Broome County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies
1250 Front St., PMB 147
Binghamton, NY 13901-1043
(Address Service requested)

