

The Primrose



TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Spring 2025



**We Need someone to take over the
newsletter and treasury duties for
The Compassionate Friends of Broome.
Please let Donna or I know.
Contact information on page 2**

Helping hands needed



How Dare It Be Spring

My daughter, Colleen, died on March 29th and was buried April 1st, 1989. I noticed, through my haze, that spring was coming and I got so angry! I saw the first shoots of flowers in my garden, something that I had always tended so carefully, and I didn't care. I never even picked one of those lovely, fragrant lilies of the valley that grew just outside my front door. I don't think that I could even smell them.

It seemed to me an insult to see mothers pushing their children in strollers on those first warm days. How could they do that when I no longer could? How dare kites dance on spring breezes? I remember coming out of the hospital the morning that she died and seeing a jogger at the lake across the street. It seemed so strange that he could continue his routine when the world had just fallen apart. Just seeing the sun shining isolated that spring, seeing everyone else enjoying nature at its most beautiful. It hurt so much! I couldn't make myself do any of the things that had given me so much pleasure in springs of the past, it was just too painful.

The next year I felt a little better, but my heart still wasn't in spring activities, I forced myself to do things for my surviving daughter's sake. Those first walks felt so alien without a stroller to push that I often had to cut walks short. I did pick my flowers but they didn't seem quite as sweet as I remembered them. I no longer hated other moms who walked their children, I just avoided looking at them.

Now, it is my third spring. It still hurts, but it no longer seems like spring was invented just to torment me. I look forward to working in my yard and garden this year. I take walks and my arms don't ache for a stroller to push. I will always love and miss Colleen. I still think about her everyday, but the pain no longer overpowers everything else.

For those of you who are experiencing your first spring without your child, hold on. It really does get better. I remember very well those words at my first several TCF meetings. I listened politely, all the while thinking, "But you don't know how horrible MY pain is. Somehow mine is worse and I'll never get better!" You probably think that too. Even if you don't believe us right now, you've got to hang on, it DOES get better!

by Kathy McCormick TCF, Lower Bucks, PA

Fax Number (630) 990 -0246

Regional Coordinator
Al Visconti (518) 756-9569

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

Third or fourth Saturday 10:00 A.M.
(Check calendar!)

**(Across from BCC, next to the Credit Union.
Parking in the rear, enter through rear door.)**

**For information pertaining to the
The Compassionate Friends of Broome County,
call: Donna Cunningham (607) 725-8574**

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)

Secretary - Barbara Paugh

**Please join our
Steering Committee
We need Volunteers!**

6:00 PM "Love you Dad"

In Need of a Volunteer!

If this newsletter was forwarded through the funeral home, please Contact chapter leader with your correct address so new issues can be mailed directly to you.

The Chapter Letter

Hello Friends,

As we leave February and head into March let us strive to hold a sense of hopefulness for what our future will be. As we awaken each day, we are unsure of what is in store for us, shy of being able to wipe the sleep from our eyes. Because of our past and the tragedies, we have survived, we are very skeptical and rightfully so. It's difficult to be positive as many are still engulfed in the deep throngs of grief. Let us reach out and lift each other up as we walk together.

It seems as though the past few Primroses have had added sadness as several of our members have passed on. In January we lost an avid supporter of our group, Jim Tregaskis. Jim and his late wife Joanne believed in our mission and were constantly advocating for us. Though never having lost a child or grandchild, they did lose siblings later in life. The empathy they felt was real. Jim was an important part of our wheel that made our candle lighting an evening of love and hope. He added to the slide show of our loved ones, originally put together by Brianna Bailey, daughter of Ryan Bailey. He put our music on the screen during the candle lighting and downloaded our service to a flash drive so those unable to attend could view it later. Jim was the tech angel we so needed, he will be sorely missed.

Regardless of the month or time of year we are gently reminded of our children, grandchildren and siblings. Missing them is an understatement, we can't echo that enough to anyone and everyone who will listen. Having that one person you can "tell all" to is very important, a trustworthy confidant. We know some of our thoughts and actions can be a bit off the rails so sharing them with just anyone would definitely get stares from the peanut gallery. I know there were times in my early years of bereavement that I had what many on the outside would call bizarre thoughts, though going to group made me realize others had those same thoughts. That's why group is so good for the soul, it's a safe non-judgmental space to share your story. My advice is to try it and you might want to come back again and again, giving you a community while easing your soul.

Our candle lighting was once again a beautiful evening shared by many. As we sat in the sanctuary and lit candles hearing our loved one's names being read aloud, readings by our members and listening to soothing music you could feel the love and crave the hope for a brighter day. As usual the fellowship, friendship and great food was an added bonus.

One of my favorite meetings that I so miss is Memory night, which is Monday March 3rd. I always loved to see the photos, maybe nosh on your grandchild's favorite cookie or hear the funny sibling stories. It's hard to pick one memory to share. As there are no more memories to be made, we must strive to put down on paper our precious memories as we remember them as to never forget. As we experience grief brain and throw in our aging brain penning memories is of high importance. Many of you may already journal your daily thoughts and for many first-time journaling became a form of healing during the darkest days of grief.

As I was preparing this letter I learned of the horrific plane/ helicopter collision along the Potomac River in Washington DC. As the hours went by and no survivors were found my heart was broken and I'm sure many of yours as well. As we all know that feeling of sadness and despair our thoughts went to the surviving parents, grandparents and siblings. Learning this morning there were young talented skaters on board dug a bit deeper into my heart. Regardless the age of the victims there are several more grieving families around the country and world due to this tragedy. Keep them in your prayers as they join the group that no one ever wants membership to.

In April besides our regular bereavement meetings our steering committee will meet to discuss and report on the ins and outs of our group. We are always looking for people that wish to give back, if you are ready a seat at the table can be yours. In May, Monday the 5th, we shall pay extra special attention to our moms, grandmas, aunts and sisters as Mothers' Day approaches.

Continued ➡

The Chapter Letter Continued...

After our Saturday meeting in May, we will head over to the park for our yearly spring clean-up. This will depend upon any expansion construction at the park. In June our dads, grandpas, uncles and brothers will get an extra hug. Mother and Father's Day can be very difficult for many and extra hard for those who lost their only child. That dreaded question that gets asked at any social gathering, "How many kids do you have?" is so simple yet so hurtful and gets us all a fluster.

As we continue on with our lives through the next weeks and months let us be reminded we need never walk alone in our grief. There is always someone, whether it's your confidant or someone from group who will sit and listen to your story as many times as you need to share it. I can assure you no one will ever tire of your words. Our story, which is really their story; our precious, loved and missed children, grandchildren and siblings. May you all find the hope, love and peace you so deserve in the coming days.

Hugs to all,
Pam Kroft
Sean's Mom

WHEN SORROW WALKED WITH ME

Written by David Haddock in memory of my daughter, Bonnie,
who was killed August 13, 2002 in an automobile accident

Recently I was reading an article in the *House to House/Heart to Heart* publication and I ran across this short poem:

"I walked a mile with Pleasure, she chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser for all she had to say,
I walked a mile with Sorrow, and ne'er a word said she,
But, oh the things I learned from her when Sorrow
walked with me."

What powerful words! When things are "rocking along", we tend to overlook a lot of the really important things in life. We may fill our days with small pleasures and small worries. But when we lose a child, and sorrow walks with us, things begin to change.

It's been 32 months since my 17 year old daughter, Bonnie, was killed in an automobile wreck. And although I've still got a ways to go, sorrow has already taught me some things. One thing we learn is that many of the things we fretted about in the past become insignificant when compared to the death of our child. Whether we fretted about finances, our occupation, or our health, these things begin to pale in comparison to the death of our child. Hence, we will tend to let go of these past "small" worries. And that's a good thing.

Another thing we learn is how valuable human relationships are. We may ponder the fact that we weren't as emotionally close to our deceased child as we could/should have been. And we may decide to appreciate and strengthen our relationships with our remaining family and our friends. And that's a good thing.

And finally, sorrow may cause us to reflect on how we can be a better person. Let's face it, most of us have plenty of room for improvement as a spouse, parent, sibling, son/daughter, neighbor, friend, and employee. We may decide to honor our deceased child by improving in these areas. And that's a good thing.

Yes, sorrow teaches us many things, and they don't all have to be bad.

Renewal

Spring! Not just the warmth
Though that is surely welcome,
Even in this southern state.
Spring! Not just the fresh breeze
Though that is pleasant also,
In contrast to the winter wind.
Spring! Not just the flowers
Though they perk the spirits
After drabness of past months.
Spring! Not just the new growth
After the dormancy of plants,
The death of last year's growth.
Spring! A reminder to me
That even out of death
Comes a rebirth of spirit!

*Robert F. Gloor
TCF, Tuscaloosa, CA*

DARE TO HOPE

She is dead.
How dare I carry on?
How dare I live, continue to exist?
How can I laugh or show
a smile upon my face?
How dare I continue to move on,
at any pace?
I want to stop, forever by her side,
I want to cling on and never let her go.
I must remember all the details of her life.
I must re-live all her suffering, her strife.
What of my needs?
How irrelevant they seem.
What of my life? How'll I live it without her?
How dare I eat.
How can I let go?
Indulge this body, that failed my baby so.
How can I dare to allow myself to wish?
Too long to hold another baby in my arms.
Dare I grasp that glimpse of future hope?
How will it be?
How will I cope?

*By Emma Curry,
TCF Newsletter Spring 1999, UK*

TAKE THIS THREAD

Take this thread Of hope
And let it be A new beginning -
A thread in the new fabric of life
You must now weave.
Choose your colour:
You have known the blues
And sunk deep into them
Yet also known the calming
Of a cloudless sky
You have known the reds
Sublime sunsets
Flashes of anger
Flames of passion
What about green?
You have known the gentle cushion
The balmy restfulness
Of a grassy verge
Known also the green-eyed monster
Jealous of those who still have
What you have lost.
You have seen the sunny yellows
Absent for a while now
Overtaken by the grey
Always the grey.
Choose these threads of hope
Draw them together;
Take the positives
Turn the greys to silver.
Remember how it was
And know you will once again, some time,
Come to that place of harmony.
But first choose your threads Carefully
And much later
Much stitching later
Weaving, working
After much hard work,
Love and care
Your fabric will glow again -
A different fabric
For it can never
Be the same
But it will be beautiful
A new form of beautiful.



Carolyn Salter, TCF Walcha

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** Chenango Forks, NY
03/04 **Kain** son of **Scott Hall & Bee Thongpa** Marathon, NY
03/06 **Justin** son of **Mary Vaninwegen** Chenango Forks, NY
03/08 **John** son of **Margaret Turna** Binghamton, NY
03/09 **Annette** daughter of **James Pratt** Binghamton, NY
03/09 **CJ** son of **Charles & Shelley Levchak** Kirkwood, 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 **Jessica** daughter of **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 **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 Freita** 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
04/19 **Teresa** daughter of **Jim & Lynda Shirlen** Adamstown, MD
04/20 **Jaimie** daughter of **Toni & Larry Sherling** Endicott, NY
04/20 **Jacob** son of **Sharon Gana** Little Meadows, PA

Continued ➡

Our Children Remembered cont.

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
04/22 **Brett** son of **Nanci and Adam Johnson** Hallstead, PA
04/24 **Samantha** daughter of **Carlo & Samantha Carlini** Endicott, NY
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
05/01 **Joshua** son of **Valerie Ambrose** Binghamton, NY
05/02 **Adam** son **Dale & Wendy Finch** Binghamton, NY
05/05 **Nate** son of **Becky Hopper** Binghamton, NY
05/05 **Allan** son of **Samuel & Shelley Allegrino** Endicott, 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 **Dacey** daughter of **Elaine Madigan** Binghamton, NY
05/31 **Teresa** daughter of **Sylvia Behal** Johnson City, NY

WHY ME?—The Unanswerable Question

Most of us have pondered this question at some time in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grievers found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

Polly Moore TCF, Nashville, TN

The Apple Of My Eye

How my life changed, after you arrived,
So many weeks early, the apple of my eye.

Something to believe in, in this often cynical world,
Only a Father knows the love for Daddy's little girl.

From the heartache felt, when you would shed a tear,
To the pride and joy, as you grew from year to year.

From teaching you to ride the bike, that we picked out together,
To the laughter from a tiny sled, that I pulled through snowy weather.



From the leaves we raked together, and jumped into the pile,
To that first day off the school bus with your million dollar smile.

From castles built together, while playing in the sand,
To feeding ducks at the pond, walking hand in hand.

And as you grew, and spread your wings, I knew we'd grow apart,
That was OK, I was fine with that, I had memories from the start.



Then came dances and dating, and movies at the mall,
Daddy tried to scare the boys, but they continued to call.

A Varsity Cheerleader I wonder if you knew,
The pride I felt, the fear I felt, when you and the others flew.

I wanted you to know, that I would always be there,
But there were more important things, like make-up and your hair.

That was OK, I understood, for I knew in my heart,
That was part of growing up, I'd get by with memories, memories from the start.

Then you started to drive, one step more out of my world,
And I was oh so proud of you, Daddy's little girl.

Then heartache and confusion became the order of the day,
So you made your choice, and carried it out, and now you've gone away.

So a cemetery is where I go now to see my little girl.
To ask why. Why? Of this often cynical world.

Please know that when I visit you, and hang my head and cry,
I'm still so proud of my little girl... the apple of my eye.

**In memory of Corrine Craig
written by her dad, David**

The Cracks in Your Heart

Mary Cleckley Atlanta, GA

Recently, I heard a quote from someone, I know not who, that struck a responsive chord in me. The quote said, "The cracks in your heart are where the light shines through." I immediately knew whoever said it was someone who had experienced a great loss or many great losses, had obviously suffered, as many of us have, and yet had finally learned a truism that many of us have also learned.

Surely, in the beginning, when you learn of the death of someone near and dear to you, there are not cracks in your heart, just solid pain that fills every corner. It is like a boulder has come crashing through what was your almost perfect world and left it in shambles. There is definitely no light to be seen from any angle. The truth is, there is no great interest in searching for a light with all the pain that is involved.

Why is it, do you suppose, that some of those who have lost children are able eventually to find something that enables them to go on and have productive lives? I think they survive better because they find something worthwhile to give meaning to their lives.

Strange, isn't it, those same people don't "get over it." When you talk with or observe them you soon realize that though they've been able to find some peace, they still do remember vividly what they've been through and who it was that made their transition necessary and possible.

When you come to a place in your grief where you're weary of the hurt, the time may have come for you to consider using the cracks left in your heart from all the pain you've experienced to let the light shine through the many areas that are still open to you.

It can give meaning and purpose to the life that's left for you and, in the process, your choice may well help others who also suffered the loss of a child. Maybe it's too early in your grief but it can be a goal and a destiny worth striving for. Finding the answer to your search will be the kindest thing you can do to help yourself and others.



Gifts to Give Yourself

The gift of **understanding**... that this is not the time to put unnecessary burdens on yourself. Grieving takes an enormous amount of energy, leaving little left over for non essentials.

The gift of **rest**... to allow you to have time for contemplation and time to re-create yourself into the person you are becoming in the absence of your loved one.

The gift of **trust**... so that you can listen to your inner voice and discover your needs.

The gift of **expression**... so that you may value the many ways of manifesting your loss through writing, music, tears and reminiscing.

The gift of **wisdom**... so that you have the knowledge to conserve your energy while eating and drinking in moderation.

The gift of **balance**... to seek what is right and good for you, in the right quantities.

The gift of **strength**... to help you through the grief while allowing the tears to flow.

Gifts of Love

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

Margaret & James Isaminger in memory of their son Thomas

June Moore in memory of her son Jason

Sam & Shelley Allegrino in memory of their son Allan

Ivy Carroll in memory of her daughter Stacy

Kathy Beers in memory of her son Jason

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

Carlo & Samantha Carlini in memory of their daughter Samantha

Renee Radicchi Spicer & Steve Spicer in memory of their son Joel

Robert & Kim Carroll in memory of their son Christopher

Charles & Shelley Levchak in memory of their son CJ

Kathy & Frank Rumpel Christina in memory of their daughter Marie



Memories

When a child dies our memories are held tightly with lots of pain, just like the tightly folded petals of the rose bud with the many thorns to stick and prick causing pain. As we talk about our child and share memories with others, we begin to open ourselves to healing as the rose petals start to open ever so gradually. Just as a rose becomes more beautiful as it blossoms, so do the memories of our child! Yes, the thorns are still there and will hurt when touched, but, oh how beautiful the rose and oh, how beautiful the memory of our children!

Share the memory of your child so that memory can start to bloom to become as beautiful as a rose.

Julie Timmerman, TCF, Tulsa, OK

Benchmarks

Good bye would be too difficult,
 Although I know you are gone.
 Instead, I keep you in my heart
 And your memory lives on.
 I have redefined my purpose, son,
 Since you are no longer here.
 With your death I faced a choice
 To die, exist or to live free.
 My life has changed forever, child,
 I'm redefined each week,
 You would call these "benchmarks"
 Of goals set and then achieved.
 And so I set my benchmarks,
 Achieving many, reshaping some...
 But everything is different now
 Except your mother's love.

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

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

"The reality is that we don't forget, move on, and have closure, but rather we honor, we remember, and incorporate our deceased children and siblings into our lives in a new way. In fact, keeping memories of your loved one alive in your mind and heart is an important part of your healing journey."

~ Harriet Schiff, author of *The Bereaved Parent*

**** NOTICE ****

There are no monetary dues or fees to receive The Primrose, the TCF Broome County's newsletter. 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...)

Spring Thaws The Wounded Heart

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

- by Alice J. Wisler

I Am Spring

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



The Compassionate Friends

Broome County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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