

ST. PAUL CHAPTER INFORMATION

- **Chapter Coordinators/Steering Committee:** Cathy Seehuetter, Jan Navarro, Lyle Lindberg, Dave Esberg, Denise Bjerke, Cori Clagherty, Kim ZumMallen, Cliff & Sandy Romberg
- **Newsletter Editor:** Cathy Seehuetter
- **Chapter Webmaster:** Dave Esberg (tcfstpaul.org)
- **Treasurer:** Lyle Lindberg
- **Librarian:** Jan Navarro
- **Remembrance Cards:** Kathy Lesnau
- **1st Contact:** Linda Bergan
- **Outreach:** Karen Gorz
- **Hospitality:** Kim ZumMallen
- National Board of Directors: Cathy Seehuetter

TCF St. Paul Chapter Web Site: www.tcfstpaul.org



TELEPHONE FRIENDS: Please call the following phone friends if you need someone to talk with:

ACCIDENTAL/SUDDEN DEATH:

Kim.....507-351-4042
Cori.....651-402-9482
Cathy.....651-459-9341

ILLNESS

Jeanne.....651-253-8634

SUICIDE

Dave (cell phone) 612-747-8225

ONLY CHILD

Kathy.....651-426-2446

INFANT LOSS

Lori.....952-229-4630

CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Lois.....651-777-2342

SIBLING ISSUES

Alyssa.....763-228-1389
Alyssa's e-mail for siblings is jessesbabysis@aol.com

OTHER AREA TCF CHAPTERS

MINNEAPOLIS: Meets the 3rd Monday of every month at Calvary Lutheran Church, 7520 Golden Valley Road in Golden Valley. Contact Carol at 763-542-8528.

RICHFIELD: Meets the 2nd Monday of every month at Hope Presbyterian Church, 7132 Portland Ave. So. For directions or more information, call Chris or Bob at 612-825-6500.

ST. CROIX VALLEY: Meets the 1st Thursday of every month at United Methodist Church, 1401 Laurel Avenue, Hudson, WI. For more information, call Ron or Kathy at 651-439-3290.

APPLE VALLEY: For meeting times and location, please call Shirley at 952-432-5955

SUPPORT GROUPS AND NEWSLETTERS

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NATIONAL OFFICE

TCF.....toll free: 877-969-0010
E-mail: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

SUICIDE

Survivors of Suicide612-922-5830
Suicide Awareness.....952-946-7998
or 1-800-511-SAVE
Crisis Hotline.....1-800-784-2433

PARENTS OF MURDERED CHILDREN

St. Paul Chapter.....651-484-0336
E-mail: pomcmn@isd.net
National number.....(toll free)(888) 818-POMC

OTHER NEWSLETTERS

Alive Alone: Loss of an only child. There may be a minimal charge.

Kay Bevington
11115 Dull Robinson Road
Van Wert, OH 45891

The Compassionate Friends. National newsletter published four times per year. This publication is for siblings and grandparents also.

The Compassionate Friends
PO Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522

Parents of Murdered Children. POMC helps survivors deal with their grief and the justice system. Write to :

Parents of Murdered Children
MN HOPE Chapter
PO Box 516
Circle Pines, MN 55014

Suicide Awareness/Voices of Education - SA/VE

9001 E. Bloomington Freeway
Suite 150
Minneapolis, MN 55420
888-511-SAVE - www.SAVE.org



Steering Committee Meeting

Please call 651-459-9341 if you are interested in helping with the work of the chapter and need further info and meeting date, as well as time and place of our next meeting. Anyone who would like to work with us is more than welcome!

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and their families...

LOVED...MISSED...REMEMBERED IN THE MONTH OF THEIR BIRTHDAYS AND ALWAYS:

AUGUST

Amber Rose, daughter of Tom & Lisa Kimlinger
Brett, son of Mark & Lonnie Bohnen
Sam, son of Rick & Linda Peterson

Carley Jean Bruening, daughter of Brenda Bauman
Levi, son of Sue Ward
Nicole, daughter of Joe & Denise Kirby

SEPTEMBER

Kellie Kaye, daughter of Joannie Kemling
Loren Tyner Lamb, son of Johanna Lester
Bill Achterling, stepson of Steve Wertz
Jim, son of Pat Harp
Karissa, daughter of Steve & Lou Neumann, sister of
Heather, daughter of Kim & Linda Sanborn
Maria, daughter of Kathleen Bartholomay

Kristina (Nina) Westmoreland, daughter of Cathy & Greg
Seehuetter, sister of Lisa, Amy & Dan, granddaughter of
Harlan & Ellie Plumb
Jessica Swanson, granddaughter of Ruth Krause
Mike, son of Mary & Jack McGuire
John, son of Joe & Marlene Keyser, brother of Maureen Johnson
Timothy, son of Diane & Ken Olinger

OCTOBER

Mitchell John, son of Joannie Kemling
Larry, son of Russ & Marsha Williams
Felicity, daughter of Rachel Schwendinger
Cynthia, daughter of Lois & Warren Johnson
Carlos Rivera, son of Jannette Cruz
Michael, son of Bonnie Boyum
Jim, son of Diane & Bill Wolter
Caitlin, daughter of Kathy Higgins, stepdaughter of Joan

Erin, daughter of Colleen & David Hines
Michael, son of Merrilee Town
Kelly, daughter of Bob & Jeanne Walz, sister of Tina Thompson
Danette Payne, daughter of Diane Nelson
Jaden, son of Teresa & Jason Karsten
Cody, son of Don and Deb Nelson
Maren, daughter of Jeff & Jen Kissell
Ray, brother of Leigh Ann Ahmad



**OUR BELOVED CHILDREN...IN OUR HEARTS ALWAYS...
THOUGHT OF IN THE MONTH OF THEIR REMEMBRANCE DAY**

AUGUST

Adam, son of Mark & Linda Triplett, brother of Katrina
Cindy, daughter of Lois & Warren Johnson
Danny, son of Mona Morrissey, brother of Rob
Erin, daughter of Colleen Como

Ryan, son of Cori Clagherty
Larry, son of Lois Nyman
Karissa, daughter of Lou & Steve Neumann, sister of
Kaylen, daughter of Scott & Cheryl Baker
Kerri Braun, daughter of Barb & Dave Deters

SEPTEMBER

Ian, son of Nancy and John Price
Micah, son of Tommy & Michele Thompson
David, son of Bev & Jim Franzen
Robert, son of Janice & Mark Baird
Maria, daughter of Kathleen Bartholomay

Zachary Jon, son of Patty Gaffney
Jason, son of Jim & Ann Reisdorf
Derek Beauclaire, grandson of Ralph & Carol Bauman
Michael, Jr., son of Mike & Carol Morgan

OCTOBER

Bobby, son of Donna & Greg Land
Jody Rosenberg, son of Ruth Krause
Felicity, daughter of Rachel Schwendinger
Nicole, daughter of Denise & Joe Kirby
Mitchell John, son of Joannie Kemling
Tommy, son of Tom & Carol Nace
Michael, son of David & Marcia Preller

Hannah, daughter of Kim & Carl ZumMallen,
Michael, son of Bonnie Boyum
Levi, son of Sue Ward
Tammy Marie Malcolm, daughter of Mary Lou O'Connor
Jim, son of Pat Harp
Jacob, son of Laura & David Tussey

"LOVE GIFTS" are tax-deductible donations given in memory of our children or other loved ones by family, friends, or other caring people who wish to help with the work of the St. Paul Chapter. These donations fund our chapter activities, such as meeting supplies, featured speakers, our Candle Lighting and Balloon Release, books/pamphlets/outreach materials for the newly bereaved families, postage and printing for newsletters and flyers, special events, and more.

'Love Gifts' were given in loving memory of the following:

- Derek Beauclaire, grandson of Carol & Ralph Bauman
- Karissa, daughter of LouAnn Neumann
- Charlie, son of Kathy & Allen Lesnau
- Kristina (Nina) Westmoreland, daughter of Cathy & Greg Seehuetter
- John, son of Mary Ann Pojar
- Hannah, daughter of Kim ZumMallen
- Cody, son of Don & Deb Nelson
- John, son of Marlene Keyser



Thank you so much for your generous support!

GIVING THROUGH THE UNITED WAY

If you are able to donate funds to the United Way through your place of employment, you also are able to designate where that donation goes. Therefore, you are able to designate that your United Way donations be specifically given to the St. Paul Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. You must specifically state that the donation to The St. Paul Chapter or they will send it elsewhere. As our chapter is self-supporting, your tax-deductible donations are greatly appreciated!

NEWSLETTER REMEMBRANCE PAGE

Due to the recent policy of The Compassionate Friends, we will no longer print the actual dates of our children's birthdays and death day. Unfortunately, identity theft is running rampant, and there are unsavory people out there who have sadly taken advantage of innocent others through the Internet. We are doing this to protect our members from being hurt any further. Thank you for your understanding of this necessary change. TCF only has the best interest of our members at heart.

2009 TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE - PORTLAND, OREGON

Note from Editor: By the time you receive this newsletter, I will be at the National Conference in Portland, as well as Cliff and Sandy Romberg, and our sibling representative Alyssa Frank. We will be participating in the annual Walk to Remember on Sunday, August 9th. We will be walking not only in memory of Nina and Jesse, but in memory of all the children of the St. Paul Chapter. **Of note, in 2011, the TCF National Conference will be held in Bloomington!!!** Minnesota chapters will be working together to make this a standout national conference (practically in our own back yard!) We will need lots of volunteers to help make this a memorable conference, and will begin plans this fall. Stay tuned...

A SECOND GRIEVING MOM'S CLUB" GETAWAY

This is an invitation for any grieving mom for a weekend away with other moms in the same "club". We had such a wonderful weekend last May, we are planning our **SECOND** getaway weekend this fall - October 16-18, 2009 - at the retreat, **Pine City Scrapbooking Company**. You can stay Friday night, Saturday night or both nights. Remember, Crafting is **NOT** a prerequisite to come for this weekend. Come just to talk, relax, commiserate, watch a "chick flick", etc. with others in the same club. E-mail Kim with any questions and/or to express an interest in coming: kimz1959@charter.net.

The cost is \$50 per night. A deposit for the one night stay is \$21.30, final payment of \$37.28 is due 30 days prior to your stay. Check-in time is 10 a.m., checkout time 5 p.m.

Scrapbooking In The Pines
415 2nd Ave SE
Pine City MN 55063
Phone number - 320.629.9960

Pine City Scrapbooking Company, for further info:
<http://www.thepinecityscrapbookingco.com/home.html>

SATURDAY, SEPT 12 - ALL-DAY WORKSHOP:

We have the great privilege to have our special and multitalented friends, **Alan Pederson**, singer/songwriter/speaker, and **Mitch Carmody**, speaker/author/artist (both Mitch and Alan were here at our last two balloon releases) who will present "**A Day with Mitch Carmody and Alan Pedersen**" - a full-day workshop featuring music, art and dialogue for proactive grieving. See the enclosed flyer for further info on this not-to-be missed event!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13 - BALLOON RELEASE/MEETING

This year, our annual balloon release will be held on the evening of our regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, Aug. 13th. See enclosed flyer for information, but please put this on your calendars and plan to attend this special gathering, an event that our members always look forward to.

WEDNESDAY MEETINGS TO RETURN!!!!

During the months of October, November and December 2009/January 2010, we will have a meeting the 4th Wednesday of the above months for a little extra help and support over the holidays. We hope to see you there!

BIRTHDAY TABLE



Every month at our meeting, we have a birthday table. In the month of your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthday, please bring pictures and small mementos of your child to place on the table. You may also bring their favorite cake, cookies or other snack for the table in memory of your child.

Thoughts from the Editor...

From Cathy: *As I was cleaning through some files, I found two articles that I wrote a few years ago for the Atlanta Sharing Line. The article below seems especially appropriate now after the recent death of pop music icon, Michael Jackson...*



WHAT ABOUT ELVIS?

With all the hoopla over the anniversary of Elvis Presley's death, I wonder if anyone else feels like I do. Society seems to think it is okay for the general population to mourn and honor and weep and wail over dead celebrities such as Elvis, John Lennon, Princess Di (*an aside: and now Michael Jackson...*), etc. for years, even decades after their deaths. The majority of us only knew them through their music, movies or fame of some sort. No one tells them that they should get "over it", "move on with your life", "stop going to the cemetery so much - it's morbid", or that it is "weird to take the day off work on the anniversary of your daughter's death off - after all, it has been seven years!" These are just a sample of what I have heard over the years, and I know that each of you could add many more. Yet, those of us whose child, sibling or grandchild has died, someone we loved deeply from the moment we learned of their very existence; someone we gave our hearts and souls with every fiber of our being to completely; who, if we were fortunate enough, got to hold them in our arms and watch even a few - though never enough - of the milestones of their lives take place. We spent every waking hour investing in caring for them and giving them the best we could offer...yet...we are supposed to stop remembering and honoring those same children on their birth day, their death day, holidays, or any other day for that matter? It makes absolutely no sense to me and I don't understand...can someone explain this to me???

*Cathy Seehuetter
TCF/St. Paul, MN*

HOW TCF HELPS

At our TCF meeting last night our topic was on the clichés of grief and the things that people say that hurt us. One of the moms in our group spoke of someone saying to her, "You must have done something terrible in your life to deserve to have your son die!" Can you believe it? Well, of course you can. We all have had these kinds of things said to us, either in ignorance or they thought they were the right things to say, but nonetheless they hurt just the same. We have so much guilt anyway; we are plagued by the "what ifs" and the "if onlys" and are most often our own worst enemy. Because we are parents we feel that we had failed our precious children as protectors...we were suppose to keep them out of harms way. Only when something like this happens - our child dies - do we come to realize that we have absolutely no control over anything. And that lack of control is very frightening indeed.

We learn life lessons that we never wanted to learn. Because we are in TCF and are acquainted with those who have lost more than one child or multiple family members (I am especially thinking of Norma, a friend from Arizona, whose four children died), we know that lightning not only can strike twice, but three or more times. If we have surviving children and they are out for an evening, we watch the clock and count the minutes that they are late and torment ourselves. It is almost as if we wait for the other shoe to drop.

The "why's" we may never know; at least while we dwell on this planet. When we join our lost children maybe we will find the answer to our questions. Until then, we have our family and friends and TCF and this wonderful Sharing Line to remind each other that we are truly not alone. We can pour out what is in our minds and hearts to each other and know that others will be there with just the right words or how-to-survive-the-worst-loss suggestions to help pull us through. And that we will be there for them as well. There is a saying that goes, "Grief can't be hurried; but grief can be shared." Thank you all for continuing to be there. Where would be without each other?

*Cathy Seehuetter
TCF, St. Paul, MN*

Note from Cathy: *If you are reading this newsletter and have never attended one of our meetings, won't you give us a try? Most of us have found the support and understanding we desperately need. I have made friends who I know will be lifelong relationships. You can come and listen; you are never forced to talk - only if you want to. I have learned so much from listening to how others have coped with different situations. And I have talked about things on my mind and felt so much better when I discovered that I was not alone in the way I felt.*

*Our meetings are the second Thursday of every month at 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Beaver Lake Lutheran Church. And beginning in October, 2009, through January 2010, we will have **TWO** meetings a month, which will be the fourth Wednesday of October, November, December and January. With Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukah, Christmas, and New Year's, we feel we can all use the extra assistance getting through this difficult holiday season. If you have any questions regarding our meetings, or for any reason, please feel free to call anyone on page 2 of the newsletter. I hope we will see you very soon.*

BITTERSWEET

Bittersweet parents we are,
loving and giving still.
We render what tears



grief demands -
Until, out of grieving darkness,
we come to celebrate
our children's life and our own.

- *Sascha Wagner from Wintersun*

Balloon Release at our meeting on August 13, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at Beaver Lake Lutheran Church:

As we are having the day-long workshop with Alan Pederson and Mitch Carmody in September, our balloon release will be a bit more low key, but still very meaningful nonetheless with recorded music and readings, and most importantly, a chance to come together to release balloons and send a message to our precious ones.

We will have light refreshments to follow. If anyone would like to bring a treat of some kind to share (nothing that needs heating, please), we would welcome it.

Please also bring a picture of your child/sibling/grandchild to share with us also.

Saturday, September 12 - "A Day with Mitch and Alan":

- This is a not-to-be missed event! There will be grief workshops and music with our special friends: Author/speaker/artist, Mitch Carmody, and singer/songwriter/speaker, Alan Pederson (they were with us for our last two balloon releases)
- Time will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Beaver Lutheran Church, site of all of our meetings and special events.
- See the back page for a syllabus of what is planned for this fabulous opportunity for our chapter members.
- Our chapter is very fortunate as we are only one of approximately 10 cities in the US where Mitch and Alan will be presenting this event. We hope that many will take the opportunity to come to such a meaningful way to spend a Saturday with Mitch, Alan and our Compassionate Friends.
- As a light lunch will be served, please RSVP that you will be coming so that we can plan accordingly. Either email to cseehuetter@pccaonline.com or peachy3536@comcast.net, or mail this sheet back saying you will be coming to: Cathy Seehuetter; 7884 Irish Ave So; Cottage Grove, MN 55016

Yes, I will be attending: _____

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU - PLEASE JOIN US!

A DAY WITH MITCH AND ALAN WORKSHOP SYLLABUS:

8:30 - 9:00 Get acquainted coffee and registration.

9:00 - 9:45 What is Proactive Grieving? Opening with music, song, and sign.

9:45 - 10:00 -Morning break

10:00 - 11:30 - Growing Through Grief... Moving from Loss to Legacy

Alan will identify the five H's of the grief journey. Together the group will discuss creative choices and options we have on the journey which is the rest of our lives. This part of the workshop will focus on turning our emotions about grief into powerful creative projects that can help us to heal, and help us to communicate the depths of our loss to others. When we find a way to honor those who we grieve for we create a legacy in their name. To recognize the transformational power of grief empowers us to become not only a triumphant survivor but a productive one.

11:30 -12:15 Lunch & CD/Book signing

12:15- 1:30 - The 20 Faces of Grief:

Through the use of Mitch's provocative pencil drawings of faces in grief, the components of grief are broken down into 20 archetypal images to engage the viewer into identifying the faces of their individual journey. A chance to look into the mirror each participant will view the many faces of grief and write a brief first impression. The group together will then discuss the various faces and the emotions that each person had associated with the images.

1:30 - 1:45 afternoon break

1:45 to 3:00 - Whispers of Love, the language of soul speak

This workshop is designed to inform, educate and discuss the phenomenon of signs from our loved ones who have died. At the dinner table, in the rest room, elevator, on a bus or on the street the bereaved person's conversation with other bereaved eventually turns to the stories of getting a sign. Finding pennies, the butterfly that lingers, the dove on the sill, the eagle overhead, the song on the radio, lights going on and off, orbs on a photo, their embrace in a dream and so many more examples of this phenomenon will be shared and viewed with some extraordinary evidential photograph and anecdotal.

3:00 to 4:00 PM - Q&A , sharing stories, sharing hearts... closing song and farewell.



THE DIRTY GREEN VAN (written by Alice Wisler, Daniel's mom)

It wasn't always littered with chocolate snack pudding tops, Barbie doll clothes and colorful Skittles. Once it sat in the car dealership — new, shiny and green. The sticker price appealed to us even though owning a van, to me, did not. But Baby Number Three was on the way and a larger vehicle made sense. We drove this 1995 Dodge Caravan home to our crowded garage. From there it took us on countless trips to the grocery store, the beach, the mountains and home from the hospital after Benjamin's birth.

Daniel liked riding in his car seat next to Baby Ben. He could not only make his brother laugh, but watch the traffic below. Once, in a particularly tiresome intersection I noted that there was a lot of traffic and as though on cue, both Daniel and his older sister Rachel flawlessly recited a poem from a book. The first lines spoke of being in a situation with noise and cars and the last line said, "...But way up high a balloon floats by, quiet as a breeze." Daniel was only three, and when he said "breeze" it sounded like "bwweeze."

The green van was not without scratches, for shortly after owning it I caught Daniel etching on one of the doors with the tip of a green dart. I reprimanded him. I didn't know that one day I would hold those markings — his artwork — priceless.

The green van is where I first noticed the bump on Daniel's neck. The green van took us to the hospital. It drove us to the beach after Daniel's first round of chemo. The middle seat was where clumps of his hair fell out as Rachel whispered, "Oh, Mommy, it is so sad."

And then one day in February, the green van had one less passenger. Every time I got in it, I would wonder where Daniel would be sitting, what he'd be wearing, and how he'd be interacting with his siblings, especially his newest sister, born three months after his death. I purchased a bumper sticker that reads "Loved and Remembered, Our Son, Daniel Paul Wisler" and placed it on the right rear bumper. This way, I thought, the little boy who laughed and recited poems will always have his name on the dirty green family van. Once a stranger kindly asked me about Daniel after studying the sticker at a parking lot. One afternoon after we'd placed a new floral arrangement on the marker and added a candle, Ben asked, "Does Daniel know that we do all of these things?" And it was then that from the van we watched a rainbow bending over the cemetery.

Although the van has had its share of mechanical work and I am sure that the local Tire King has gotten enough from my credit card to send at least two children to college, the vehicle still runs well. It sounds like a tank and does have nearly 110,000 miles. There was a time my husband asked if I'd like to trade it in for the newest Dodge Caravan model with double-sliding-side-doors but when I stroked our van's door with the etchings, he quit asking.

The van drives our family of five to the cemetery, known to us as Daniel's Place, as we place picnic blankets, a Frisbee and a pinwheel on the seat where Daniel used to sit. From his grave we send balloons with attached messages into the summer sky every August 25 — the day Daniel was born.

Up until two weeks ago, this faithful family tank had never been in an accident. But due to all the local highway construction, it was rear-ended by a small truck whose driver was probably wondering how he was going to get onto Interstate 40 by merging into quickly-moving traffic after adhering to a stop sign placed on the entrance ramp. All on a rainy afternoon.

"I always said this stopping and merging on this highway was an accident waiting to happen!" I cried to both the driver of the truck and the policeman. How could I fault the truck driver when even the policeman agreed that the Department of Transportation should not allow for such dangerous roadways. But it was the best kind of accident, one where everyone involved gets to drive away, no one is hurt (my three — Rachel, Ben and Liz — were with me), and the damage is mild. "At least Daniel's bumper sticker wasn't harmed," I said noting the dented trunk. "I just hope that when the shop fixes it they take good care of that sticker, too."

I don't know how much longer the old Dodge is going to run. I know that a wise shopper and investor would have traded it in years ago — before the 100,000 miles, before the accident, and during a season when we were more financially equipped to handle a new car payment. But these days, I've seldom let wisdom take over sentiment

Sometimes, when all is calm, which is rare, I can hear a whisper from somewhere in a seat behind me. "...But way up high a balloon floats by, quiet as a bwweeze." Who would have known the comfort of a dirty green van?

GRANDPARENTS' DAY - SEPTEMBER 13th

How can a grandparent celebrate a day set aside for them? If you have surviving grandchildren make a point of contacting them. Shouldn't they be contacting you? That depends on when their sibling/cousin died. Maybe their mom and dad are not aware of what day it is and even if they were they are just not able to focus on any kind of celebration. Your child (the parent of the grandchild that died) may need your support and maybe so do your surviving grandchildren.

If you have no surviving grandchildren does that mean you are no longer a grandparent? No, you will always be a grandparent. If your only child/children died before they had children you might consider the option of becoming an "adoptive grandparent" to a child who has no living grandparents. That way you each win for there is nothing more fulfilling than a hug and "I love you" from a child. I wish you happy memories, many healing hugs - I love you.

- *HUGS, Betty Farrel, Sarah Louise's Nana,
Arlington, VA Chapter of TCF*



YOU KNOW YOU'RE MAKING PROGRESS WHEN...

You can remember your child with a smile.
You recognize the painful comments other make are made in ignorance.
You can reach out to someone else.
You stop dreading holidays.
You can concentrate on something besides your child.
You find something to thank God for.
You can be alone in your house without it bothering you.
You can talk about what happened to your child without falling apart.
You no longer feel you have to go to the cemetery every day or every week.
You can tolerate the sound of a baby crying.
You don't have to turn off the radio when his or her favorite music comes on.
You can find something to laugh about.
You can drive by the hospital or that intersection without screaming.
You no longer feel exhausted all the time.
You can appreciate a sunset, the smell of newly-mowed grass, the pattern on a butterfly's wings.

- *Judy Osgood
TCF, Carmel/Indianapolis, IN*

WAKE ME UP WHEN SEPTEMBER ENDS

*Summer has come and passed
The innocent can never last
Wake me up when September ends.*

Even without looking at the calendar, my body and soul takes note. I know the time of year by heart. It is the beginning of the school year. For nearly my whole life this time of year has signaled a fresh start, anticipation of things to come. A time for new shoes, fresh notebooks, sharp, un-chewed pencils. All these things beckon of hopes and dreams, plans and goals for success and achievement.

Our son, Jake, died two months short of his high school graduation. We received his college acceptance letter the day of his funeral. Last fall, we watched his friends and classmates head off to college. Many of them came to say good bye to us; after all, we had "adopted" them as our sons and daughters now. Of course, we wished them well with a smile and a hug. Our hearts were aching to be lugging things into a dorm room, too.

So, September is here once more and I think about what Jake would be doing now. I think about all the parents for whom this time of year is difficult, also. I think of those parents who would be putting crayons into a cute little back pack, those who would be watching that first ball game of the season, and those who would maybe be encouraging a college grad to find that first job and begin paying off student loans. Our sons and daughters have gone straight to the "Head of the Class," but we wish we were able to give them a hug as they achieve glorious dreams beyond our imagination!

*As my memory rests
But never forgets what I lost...
Wake me up when September ends*

- *written by Laurie Dreier*

Remembering our Babies - October 15th PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS REMEMBRANCE DAY



How does one measure how long it had been? By the number of sunsets or by the tears that have fallen? The sweet solitude of slumber gives way to morning-teared memories of all that used to be when I had you safe inside of me. Our time together is no more. Only God knows why you went away. Sometimes I forget you are no longer here as I lovingly whisper your name. And then I remember... and life is not the same.

- *By Debbie Dickinson*

Act On Your Grief

Joann is an actress. She is also a bereaved parent. She shared with me that when the emotions of her grief welled up inside of her she would act them out. She would become the voice of her anger or guilt. She created monologues of her emotions. She thought she was going a little crazy.

However, Joann was far from crazy. For some, she could actually be a model for handling grief. By literally acting out her emotions, she found a way to act on them - to vent, express and explore her grief. She used her creativity as a tool to help her grieve.

Not everyone can act or not everyone feels comfortable on a stage. But each of us possesses our own creative impulses. We can use this creativity to give expression to our grief.

When rock singer Eric Clapton's young son died in a tragic accident, Clapton expressed his grief in a poignant song, *Tears in Heaven*. Many singers and songwriters have created their own music as an expression of their grief or a tribute to a person who has died. Sometimes even listening to these songs can offer a sense of expression or even release.

Music and acting are just a couple of types of creative arts. Photography actually helped Tom. It had been a lifelong hobby and so it felt natural to use photos to express his journey of grief. Different black and white photographs captured emotions and characterized his mood. Bleak shots of winter showed despair. Anger reflected in his shots of waves beating against a ragged shore. Hope emerged in pictures of budding plants. Rhea also used photography. She created a photomontage for her father's funeral. She found it therapeutic and later decided to create an entire album that would serve as a tribute to his life.

Poetry, painting, dance, storytelling, sculpture or any of the various creative arts can be effective outlets. Less formal outlets may also be helpful. Marcie, a therapist, shared the value of creating collages for survivors of violent and traumatic loss, noting that the random placement of newspaper clippings and photographs somehow seems to bring a sense of order into the chaos survivors experience.

Using these creative outlets has much value. First, they give expression to our deepest experiences. Sometimes we may not be able to find words for the grief. Sometimes there are no words.

More than that, creative arts are suited for every individual. Each of us has unique talents or abilities, our own interests, levels, and our own preferences. Some may use the creative arts to express feelings while others will use it to share fond memories or thoughts. Still, for others, the very act of doing something is therapeutic.

There is one last value. Producing or experiencing the productions of others gives a visual reminder that sometimes the worst experiences of life can be transformed into a tragic beauty. In its own way, that offers continued hope.

** By Kenneth J. Doka*

This article was published in the May, 2001 issue of Journeys.Hospice Foundation of America.

Now that your life
Knows every darkness and sorrow,
Now that your time
Trembles with mourning and pain,
Now that your eyes
See only empty horizons,
Now that your hand
Touches the center of grief:

Leave yourself open
To comfort and caring,
Leave yourself open
To softness and friendship,
Leave yourself open
To kindness and blessing,
And try to listen
For the still music of hope.
- *Sascha Wagner*



"The melody of the child who played upon the piano of my life will never be played quite that way again, but I must not close the keyboard and allow the instrument to gather dust. I must seek out other artists of the spirit, new friends who will help me find the music of life again, creating a new tune and harmonies to enhance the melody, which will always sing in my heart."

-*Carol Cavin, TCF/MO-KAN Region*

When autumn lingers in the
gleaming trees with painful
beauty,
When we recall the wealth of
bygone harvest and wait
the haunting of a lifeless winter-
hope is so far away,
spring is so far away,
But spring will come!
- *Sascha Wagner*

HIDING BEHIND THE MASK

I think we as bereaved parents wear masks 12 months out of the year, not just on Halloween...perhaps on Halloween we should just wear our own grief-stricken face and not be noticed.

How many masks do you wear - even in a week...or a day?

Do you wake up in the morning feeling the pain, with the knowledge that your child is no longer here? Do you "mask" that face with your old normal face to say good morning to your spouse? You can take the mask off and cry in the shower...it somehow feels so good to release some of those tears. Time to wake the children for school, put on the cheerful, positive mom/dad mask. After dropping the children off at school you can once again remove the mask and feel. Soon you will be pulling into the parking lot at work...get the next mask out...the mask of competent professional. WOW! That is a lot of mask changing in a short time!

Strange, isn't it, how the MONSTER pain of grief makes us put on masks to cover the pain often to those who really care and who perhaps are putting on their masks to cover their pain when they see us. Maybe we could all be so much better off if we removed our masks and let the monster pain out.

- *Lovingly lifted from Bereaved Parents USA*



BUTTERFLY

A butterfly came to me today
and landed upon my knee.
His wings were heavy from the rain
I knew you had sent him to me.
Only an Angel such as yourself
would care about these things,
So I dried him with my breath
and sat him on some leaves.
As I sat there watching him
soaking in the sun,
I thought how great it must be to fly,
It looks like so much fun.
My Angel, you have your wings,
don't let my tears weigh then down.
I know someday I will see you again
Until then...
Keep sending the butterflies around.
- *by Mary Woody*



SCHOOL DAYS

The summer is mellowing as the days grow shorter.
The green on the trees seem to droop, and look a little duller.
The lazy days of summer take on a busy hustle
As families shop for school, each gets a new book satchel.
Soon the quiet streets will be filled
As children gather waiting for the yellow busy to pick them up.
OH! The anticipation!
Another teacher's face greet them upon their arrival,
But the same old lessons to be learned to them seems so trivial.
New friends to make, and old ones too
Make their days fly past so soon.
But back at home a mother weeps
For the child that his year misses.
No new clothes to buy,
No more good-bye hugs and kisses.
For her, this joyful time just brings on more heartache
Another school year starts,
Another milestone the child cannot make.
So she dries her eyes and tries to go on
For the children that remain.
But each new start, breaks her heart, it's hard to see the gain.
So if the yellow school bus brings on tears for you this year,
Don't forget your Compassionate Friends,
We are always standing near.
- *Sheila Simmons, TCF/Atlanta*

PLEASE BE GENTLE: AN AFTERLOSS CREED

by Jill Englar ~ Westminster, Maryland

Please be gentle with me, for I am grieving. The sea I swim in is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day. My heart is heavy with sorrow. I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path. Please, will you walk beside me?

-*Reprinted with permission from Bereavement Magazine*

THE END OF SUMMER

On the beach, cool breezes blow across the water, but the sun's rays feel warm upon my face. The ocean laps gently at the shore. I see one golden haired lad with shovel and pail filling the moat around his carefully constructed sandcastle.

I remember another golden haired boy of years long past, wearing his bright red swimsuit, busy at his task and oblivious to all around him. Carefully, patiently, he fills and empties his pail again and again, molding and shaping the sand until he has it just right, until his perfect castle is completed.

He runs to me, eyes aglow with pride, his dimpled smile stretched from ear to ear. He dances around me. "Mommy, come see! It's finished! It's perfect!" We stand and admire it together. One bucket of sand turned upside down, a tiny trench encircling it. To us, it's a perfect sandcastle. But then it happens. A wave, much bigger than the rest, washes away his labor of love. His green eyes fill, his lip quivers momentarily and then he squares his shoulders and announces, "Oh, well, I'll begin again tomorrow."

And now, recalling that other sunny summer day, my own eyes fill with tears, my own lip quivers, until I remember that I, too, can square my shoulders and begin again tomorrow.

- Betty Stevens TCF Baltimore, MD



AUTUMN FEELINGS

During the next couple of months, we will see many changes taking place in the world around us. The amount of daylight is decreasing; nights are becoming chilly; we'll often need some sweaters or jackets as we venture forth each day. However, the most dramatic change we notice here in New England during September and October is that of the trees trading their green summer outfits for the brilliant reds, oranges and golds of autumn.

Many of us who are bereaved parents find ourselves feeling tense and depressed when the earth awakens in the spring; we may also experience these feelings when the dramatic changes of autumn occur. A wise lady once said to me, "our bodies respond to the changing seasons." She was right. They do! And they respond by FEELING. It seems to me that all of the grief feelings that I have - emptiness, sadness, anger, loneliness, guilt and depression - are all intensified as the world of nature around me changes.

Sometimes, however, we can draw strength from situations that see, on the surface, to be negative. A few weeks after Linda's death, I heard from two friends within a few days of each other. One said, "you know, when I am troubled, I get out and walk until I find something in nature that I've never seen before. I look at it and think about it, and I am renewed." The other friend, who had some physical disabilities, wrote me a note in which she said, "Whenever I feel discouraged, I

find something in nature to study, and I am renewed." I think hearing from these two friends within just a few days of each other had to be more than just a coincidence. I feel that there was an important message there for me, and I've tried to act on it. I can draw strength from an early morning walk, from frost patterns on our windows, from a raging blizzard, from birds at our feeder, from a rainbow, a ladybug or a whale - if I slow down, think about those things, observe their intricacy and beauty, and attempt to let some of their energy into myself.

We have to slow down, try to realize what is happening to us and be receptive to the energy that is in the natural world for us. When I'm down because it's a sparkling, clear, colorful autumn day and Linda isn't here to experience it with me, I have to feel that pain, then let it go so that the natural beauty and energy around me can strengthen and renew me. Let yourself experience autumn - the emptiness and aching that you feel. Then try to let go of those feelings, just enough to let the wonder and the beauty of the season into yourself - one day at a time.

- Evelyn Billings Springfield, Mass TCF



THE COLOR OF THIS SEASON

Today, I took the time to look
at all the colors in the trees.
I watched as their colors changed,
With each breath of November breeze.

It hurt me to see this season...
The reds, greens, yellows & gold...
For in the empty space within my heart
there's a memory too painful to unfold.

Last year, you were here with me.
We shared laughter tears & fun.
I will treasure those memories forever.
I will hold them dear to my heart.

And as this season rolls around again,
I can't let those memories depart.
The colors of the season can be seen.
And what a beauty they are to behold.

But the wings you wear on this very day....
Are the wings of an angel in gold.
Though the colors of this season are many,
The main one I see is blue.

It remains a stain within my heart,
As long as I am here ... without you.

-Kaye Des'Ormeaux

MEMORIES

Tonight I saw your silhouette
Against the Harvest moon...
Tonight I heard a sweet refrain
Of some long-remembered tune.

Could it be you know somehow
How many hearts remember you?
In Harvest moons and heart tunes,
The memories ever true.

Where do they go
When the moon fades away
And the music can no longer be?

Far, far away
To a wandering star
That only the heart can see...

-Kelly Marsten, TCF/Grand Junction



DO YOU KNOW?

Do you know what I've learned, that
the deepest, truest healing offered by
The Compassionate Friends comes not in
the first few years, but later?

Do you know that just when you think
there is no more to gain by coming to
meetings, something you will say or do will
help another and another ... and
exponentially, through your opened heart,
there can flow riches, gifts beyond
imagining?

Do you know that TCF's truest alchemy
lies not in what we can get but what we
can give? That by turning grief's dark
energy and inner absorption outwards
towards the Hope of helping other we can
regain a sense of purpose, honor our
beloved children, and take them with us
as we do?

All this ... if only you stay on - or come
back - to help those more newly bereaved,
sharing your own unique path through
grief and learning, along with others, what
you did not know you know.

*- Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
TCF/Marin Cty, CA*



IT'S HALLOWEEN

It's Halloween again
And fall is in the air
I stopped by the store today
I saw costumes everywhere

I saw fairies and goblins
Frogs and toads alike
And then there was the little ghost
I closed my eyes real tight

I felt the tightening in my chest
Remembering that Halloween long ago
When you picked out the little ghost
The eyes had to be just so

I touched the fabric with my hand
Memories came flooding through
Of that last Halloween we had planned
When I was going to be a Goblin for you

I felt the tears start to sting
And knew I had to leave
Halloween always brings back
Memories from grief unseen

You left me a week before Halloween
Your ghost suit is still in the box
Sometimes I try and open it up
But something always makes me stop

Each year as I watch the children come
by

I always look for a little ghost
Thinking of how happy you'd been
Wearing the costume you loved most

Maybe I'll just take a peek
If I'm up to it this year
And touch the fabric one more time
From that Halloween from yesteryear.

- Sharon Bryant

*In memory of my son, Andy Dunbar Jan. 22,
1972 - October 24, 1977*

MISSING CHILDREN

"My daughter started kindergarten",
A neighbor said to me.
This makes me sad because I cannot see
her constantly."

"My son will go to camp this year,"
Another said to me.
"This makes me sad because I know I'll
miss him terribly."

"My kid is moving to the dorms,"
A third friend said to me.
"I wish he'd go to school in town
And hang out with me instead."

"Since my son has wed," a neighbor said,
"I don't see him at all.
He never writes or sends a card,
He doesn't even call."

Their words feel sharp and strange to me
For since Sherry is gone.
I see and sense her every day
She's never far away.
- Earl Warman, November 12, 200



GOOD-BYE

It's August again, different than last.
a hot blanket covers the earth,
Blood red roses droop over your casket.
With weak limbs I stand,
misty eyes gaze at you,
my only brother,
lying prepared for the earth.
Today we were going to go biking,
explore the vast countryside,
just you and I.
Tomorrow we would try golf
or maybe just talk.
You told me yesterday of your pride in me
that I might strive for more.
"But it is you I follow," I say,
And we broke through the barrier
declaring us true friends.
To say goodbye is to remember this,
And I smile...
And if I look, I will find them -
Memories that smother the goodbye
and let me cling to life.
*-Laura Wilborn, TCF/Champaign, IL
Bereaved Sibling*

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS/ST PAUL CHAPTER
7884 IRISH AVENUE SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016-2072

PLEASE FORWARD



*In the fall, when amber leaves are shed,
Softly, silently, like tears that wait to flow,
I watch and grieve.
My heart beats sadly in the fall,
'Tis then I miss you most of all...*

Please circle the appropriate relationship:

Parent Sibling Grandparent Relative Friend Professional

Parent (s) name: _____

Child/Children's Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Birth Date(s) _____

City: _____

Death Date(s): _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

() Permission is given to include my child (ren), sibling or grandchild on the Remembrance page in the St. Paul Chapter newsletter and Chapter Website.

() I wish to enclose a donation to the St. Paul Chapter of The Compassionate Friends in memory of _____

Please fill out the form above to update information or to renew your newsletter subscription. The expiration date of the newsletter can be found on the mailing label.