

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families who have experienced the death of a child.

BRANDYWINE HUNDRED CHAPTER

www.BrandywineTCF.org

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February 2011

February = Broken Heart + Mended Heart

Valentine's Day marks the first day of the second month of the death of my daughter, Cathie. Isn't it funny how, when after you have lost a child, you note the holidays?

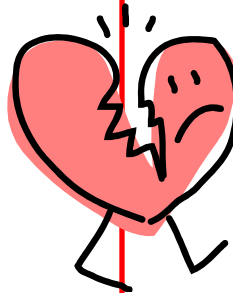
The first year I still had not really realized that she was "dead." In fact I could not even say the word ... "dead." I was just numb. I can remember wondering if I was going crazy and then I thought I must have not been a good mother ... just because I had not - could not - cry. I was a totally empty vessel, devoid of any and all feelings.

The second year I think I made up for all the crying I did not do that first Valentine's Day as I bought only one set of those cute little Valentine's Day cards for my only living daughter, Carie, to give to her little schoolmates. I knew I was not going crazy. I knew I had been as good a mother as I could have been. I knew I had loved them both very much. I knew I STILL loved BOTH of them.

The tenth year I found TCF. I found a name for all the feelings I had been going through in these past years. I found out that I was a

BEREAVED PARENT. I discovered that I was not alone on this the roller coaster ride of emotions ... I was not alone anymore. I learned to smile with warm memories as I watched other small children buy their packs of Valentine Day cards.

This is my seventeenth year as a Bereaved Parent. I don't cry much anymore ... just once in awhile ... and not for Cathie; I cry for me and the loneliness for her. Instead, I smile a lot with all the happy memories I have of the Valentine Days I was able to have with her.



Now, when I cry on Valentine's Day, it is for the newly bereaved parents who must suffer this day, this month without their children. Yet I also find comfort in knowing that they **NEED NOT WALK ALONE** either, for TCF and I are here for them. In fact, I think I will go out and buy a pack of those small Valentine Day cards and send them to all my Compassionate Friends. Cathie would like that...yes she would.

Cherie Gordon

TCF, North Dade/South Broward. FL

GIFTS of LOVE

This month we thank the following
for their continued support of our local chapter

Edward & Lynda Bergeron
in memory of their son Ted
Kenneth & Karen Dunn
in memory of their son Kenny Jr.
Phil & Shirley McShane
in memory of their son Brian
Curtis Reedy
in memory of his sons Bruce & Mark
& his wife Janet
Jim & Linda Russell
In memory of their daughter Jill Russell Eddy

If you would like to send a donation please send it to:
TCF
PO Box 114
Rockland, DE 19732
make check payable to
The Compassionate Friends.

UNITED WAY CONTRIBUTIONS

Michael Fitzpatrick
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in memory of their daughter Allison
Stephen & Bernadeete Donohue
in memory of their son Stephen
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in memory of her daughter
Nicole Elizabeth Kerr
Ed & Jane Marston
In memory of their daughter Kelly
Roger & Mary Clare Matsumoto
in memory of their son Michael
Richard & Judy Pantalino
in memory of their son Jimmy
Jim & Linda Russell
in memory of their daughter Jill Russell Eddy
Andy & Allyn Sopirak
in memory of their son Drew

If you would like to make a UW donation
use Code Number 9016 (TCF)
PO Box 114
Rockland, DE 19732

This newsletter is sponsored by
Barbara & Anthony Spadaccini
In memory of our son.



Louis Spadaccini
June 1, 1962 - February 5, 2004
Beloved Son, Sorely Missed

This newsletter is sponsored by
Mary Mullin
in memory of
Mark Mullin
7/13/1970 - 6/14/2001



Our hearts are filled
with memories of you.
We love you!

Mom, Dave, Rob, & Mary Beth

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Feb. 8th

6:30 pm Social Time with **Birthday Cake**
To celebrate February birthdays
7 pm Meeting - General Sharing

Feb. 22nd

6 pm **Fried Chicken will be served**
Let Barbara Spadaccini
(736-1961) know if you want to
bring something:
salad, chips, dessert, rolls etc.
7 pm Meeting - General Sharing



Where Do We Meet?

Brandywine Valley Baptist Church
7 Mt. Lebanon Road

From I 95
go north on US 202 (Concord Pike)
Turn left onto Mt. Lebanon Rd.
Church is on right side of road
next to the YMCA.
Parking lot and entrance
in the back of the church.

Pictures & Other Mementos

Your child's pictures can be displayed any-
time on our "Birthday Table".

If your child's birthday is in February;
February 8th meeting would be a great day to
bring them in.

Newsletter Sponsorship Criteria:

We are now accepting 2 sponsors/month.
\$100 Donation to BHCTCF Newsletter
(this still only covers part of cost)
Email a jpeg photo of your child
or send a photo.
Include a short note to go with the photo.
Please submit by the 1st of the month
preceding the newsletter (i.e. May 1st
for the June Newsletter).
Or earlier if you want a specific month.
E-mail: othellITCF@verizon.net
Phone: 656-9288



Need someone to talk with?
Having a bad day?
Give us a call.
We also suffered
the loss of a child.
So we know you are in pain.
We care about you
and want to help

Othell & Bill Heaney
(Sudden Death & Suicide)
(302) 656-9288

Mary Mullin
(Suicide)
(610) 497-3447

Mary Welch
(Long Term Illness)
(302)475-7050

Nancy Taylor
(Suicide & Only Child)
234-1654

**Anniversaries and Birthdays
are difficult times for bereaved parents
But as long as we live, they too shall live,
for they are part of us in our memories.
In the days ahead,
we lovingly remember these children
And we send our love and support
to their parents.**

February Births	
CHRIS ABLEMAN	February 21
JOZLYN FAYE BROWN	February 16
JOHN BUONOCORE, III	February 16
KATHRYN LOUISE BURG	February 07
ADRIENNE BURGER	February 06
LEIDDA CALEB	February 07
HAMPTON COLEMAN, III	February 25
STACY MARIE CONNELL	February 21
STEPHEN DONAHUE, JR	February 24
ROBERT EDMONDSON	February 11
DANIEL HALL	February 29
KEVIN HEANEY	February 14
BUDDY HOESCH	February 16
TIFFANY HUTCHINSON	February 18
JOE PINI	February 03
DERRICK SALVATO	February 03
JACKIE SEEMAN	February 07
JAMES ANDREW SINCLAIR	February 11
ASHLEY THARP	February 01
SEAN TIDWELL	February 24
SANDI WAGNER	February 17
PETER WESTRA	February 03

February Deaths	
WARREN BATCHELDER	February 26
JOZLYN FAYE BROWN	February 17
CHRIS CLINE	February 06
MICHAEL JAYE COLDIRON	February 05
STACY MARIE CONNELL	February 12
MINDY CURLEY	February 18
ALLISON DeMAIO	February 07
STEVEN GERACIMOS	February 02
EDWARD GIBSON	February 16
ERIN GILES	February 20
DONNA KELLY	February 16
NATHAN KILLEBREW	February 09
ELYCE ROBIN MARSH	February 05
LARRY PACELLI	February 19
BRUCE REEDY	February 19
LAURA SAMUEL	February 06
MICHAEL SEERY, JR	February 19
LOUIS ANTHONY SPADACCINI	February 05
CATHI SWANSON	February 25
BRIAN STEWARD WHITE	February 14
CHIP WICKS	February 27

A Valentine for You

There's a valentine waiting for you
That's different from all the others.
It's there every month at our meetings
For fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers.

Its envelope is made of caring.
The glue of understanding seals it tight.

This non-judgmental group who've been there
Help to take away your fear and fright.

So come join with us together.
Read your loving message printed clear,
In not only this month's Valentine
But all those throughout the year.
Mary Cleckley, TCF, Atlanta, GA

It Is Time for Love

February has fewer days than most months, and that may be of special significance to us, as our children had fewer days than most. When we think of this month, the most outstanding day, perhaps, is St. Valentine's Day. It is a time for love.

When we were school age we had a special chance to give and receive cards in those decorated boxes in our primary classrooms. Perhaps it is the one holiday when children can really do something for everyone. Addressing a card to each and every classmate made you think of how you felt about each one and wonder about how they felt about you.

Love is found in every day of every year, but February and Valentine's day are very special. I

wish I could remember just how it felt to get a "nicer" Valentine from someone I sent a "nicer" one to. It is so long ago, and there have been so many, much more significant happening in my life. But sometimes, I'd like to remember just how it felt. **I am sending along this Valentine Love Note to each of you right now and hope that you know it is one of the "nicer" ones**, because each of you is very special to me. Somehow I don't wonder how you feel - I know.

As we grieve the loss of our children and one another's, we begin to find a different kind of love than we ever expected to experience.

Rosalie Baker
TCF, Rochester, NY

Feelings

Her clothing is folded in tidy array
How it was left is how it will stay.
Her desolate dresser silently weeps
In the still of the night, when everyone sleeps.
The closet continues to guard and protect
Items hanging on hangers, forlorn with neglect
The bed she adored, where she bounced high with glee
Cries invisible tears when no one can see.
The bathtub she splashed in will not again see
Someone who will love it as fiercely as she.
It sits idle now, no longer a "star"
And asks (in its way) if I know where you are.
The house that she lived in, the yard where she played

Are missing the landscape of love that she laid.
Her numerous playthings, her once favorite toy
Languish mournfully now without any joy.
This dwelling called "home" has relinquished its heart,
That gift from the one who was forced to depart.
Now it withers from grief it's spirit extinct
and we watch through our tears
as the walls seem to shrink.
Our angel was gone in the blink of an eye
She took the light with her that day in July.
Yet now there are times when my heart feels her near
Then I know she's not left me ... her love is still here.

Sally Migliaccio- TeF, West Islip, N.Y.

The Legend of the Valentine

*The Legend says St. Valentine
Was in a prison cell
Thinking of his little flock
He had always loved so well
Of his friendship and his love
He picked a bunch of violets
And sent them by a dove.
And on the violets' velvet leaves
He pieced these lines divine
That simply said, "I Love You"
And "I'm your Valentine"
So through the years that followed,*

*From that day unto this,
Folks still send messages of love
And seal them with a kiss
Because a Saint in prison
Reached through prison bars one day
And picked a bunch of violets
And sent them out to say
That faith and love can triumph,
No matter where you are,
For faith and love are greater
Than the strongest prison bar.*

Helen Steiner Rice

Valentine Love

New Meaning for Bereaved Parents

Though winter's delicate, lacy snowflakes may remind us of the lace-trimmed hearts of February's valentines, the mourning heart seems frozen in time. The bitter winds of loneliness blow mournfully through our souls. Death has tapped us on the shoulder, introducing his brother, Grief: who has moved into our hearts to take up unwelcome residence. Wearied and exhausted by our pain, we have little energy to evict the intruder. It is hard for us to remember that the sun still faithfully shines behind the clouds that have obscured our vision.

"Love" is apparently the thought of the season, and we are reminded of its tenderness at every turn, But a piece of the fiber of our lives has been torn away, and love seems a vague and unfulfilled promise that belongs only to others. Hearts and flowers, lace and love, romantic verse and melody seem to have abandoned us as we grope in the darkness of our beloved's absence. Will the pain ever end? Will the hope and joy and renewal once again warm the frozen places in our hearts? Gradually, as the hurt begins to soften, the thawing relief of healing slowly begins to melt the icy grip of our pain, and hope does begin to spring eternal. Roses, traditional in February's favorite holiday, remind us that summer will return. It's unlikely that we will ever again per-

ceive the usual symbols of love in quite the same way as before, but in many ways, our concepts of genuine love will be stronger, richer and less assailable. Frivolous and shallow affection are absent from our thoughts. Deeper commitments and more demonstrative attention have become our new marching orders. In costly lessons, we've learned firsthand how fragile and fleeting life can be, and we are now resolute in our determination to announce to our remaining dear ones the importance of our bonds with them. We abandon the intimidation of "limits" such as the archaic notions that men mustn't cry or say "I love you" or that we're too busy to pay attention to someone's needs. As little by little, our pain softens and recedes, and we learn that suffering is but for a season, we also learn that LOVE doesn't die. In our emotional lives, valentines can now take on a new significance as precious reminders of the love that still exists on both sides of life. Love lives within our hearts, and even Grief cannot steal it away. Love is our bridge over the rainbow.

Andrea Gambrill,

Bereavement Publishing Inc.

4765 No. Carefree Circle" Colorado Springs, CO

Slipping Up the Slide

Did you ever try to climb up a slide
when you were a child?
Skip the stairs -
once you've mastered the slide that way.
It seems impossible to pass up the challenge
of climbing up the slide itself.
Up an inch or two, then back,
and on it goes until you finally reach the top.
The more bereaved parents I talk to,
the more I know that
life after a child's death
is like that venture up the slide.

Daily decisions and trials
push us backwards on that slide.
Faith and courage
shove us up toward the top.
Set a goal to live and work with spirit
even though you lose your footing
and slide backwards now and then ...
we will reach the top - TOGETHER

Mary Pauley TCF LaGrange, GA

Stages of Grief

A Normal life Process

Five Stages Of Grief

1. Denial and Isolation,
2. Anger,
3. Bargaining,
4. Depression,
5. Acceptance.

Grief And Stress

Recovering from Grief

A Normal Life Process

At some point in our lives, each of us faces the loss of someone or something dear to us. The grief that follows such a loss can seem unbearable, but grief is actually a healing process. Grief is the emotional suffering we feel after a loss of some kind. The death of a loved one, loss of a limb, even intense disappointment can cause grief. Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross has named five stages of grief people go through following a serious loss. Sometimes people get stuck in one of the first four stages. Their lives can be painful until they move to the fifth stage - acceptance.

Five Stages Of Grief

1. Denial and Isolation.

At first, we tend to deny the loss has taken place, and may withdraw from our usual social contacts. This stage may last a few moments, or much longer.

2. Anger.

The grieving person may then be furious: at the person who inflicted the hurt (even if dead), or at the world, for letting it happen. He may be angry with himself or at God for letting the event take place, even if, realistically, nothing could have stopped it. Not uncommonly, we get angry at some "scapegoat", such as our spouse.

3. Bargaining.

Now the grieving person may make bargains with God, asking, "If I do this, will you take away the loss?"

4. Depression.

The person feels numb, although anger and sadness may remain underneath.

5. Acceptance.

This is when the anger, sadness and mourning have tapered off. The person simply accepts or acknowledges the reality of the loss. None of us really "accept" the death of our child.

Grief And Stress

During grief, it is common to have many conflicting feelings. Sorrow, anger, loneliness, sadness, shame, anxiety, and guilt often accompany serious losses. Having so many strong feelings can be very stressful.

Yet denying the feelings, and failing to work through the five stages of grief, is harder on the body and mind than going through them. When people suggest "looking on the bright side," or other ways of cutting off difficult feelings, the grieving person may feel pressured to hide or deny these emotions. Then it will take longer for healing to take place.

Recovering From Grief

Recovery is not the best word; we recover from the mumps but not from the death of a child. We get through it, but healing is always a "work in progress". Grieving and its stresses pass more quickly, with good self-care habits. It helps to have a close circle of family or friends. It also helps to eat a balanced diet, drink enough non-alcoholic fluids, get exercise and rest.

Most people are unprepared for grief, Since so often, tragedy strikes suddenly, without warning. If good self-care habits are always practiced, it helps the person to deal with the pain and shock of loss until acceptance or acknowledgement is reached

based on the research of
Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross



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TO OUR SURVIVING CHILDREN

AND YOU WERE WITH US
when the darkness came
you stood and grieved
and kept yourself alive
WE THANK YOU NOW

WE HAVE NOT ALWAYS
honored who you are
and often did not tend
your hidden sorrows
FORGIVE US NOW

BECAUSE YOU LOVED US
well enough to wait
until we could
return to you and know
with joy and hope and love
you are tomorrow
WE CELEBRATE YOUR LIFE

Sascha Wagner

