

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

Chapter leaders: Debbie Ferguson
Barbara Spadaccini

P.O. Box 114

Rockland, DE 19732-0114 Phone 302/376-0300

Email: debferg@comcast.net

sisterbeee@aol.com



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

www.compassionatefriends.org

P.O. Box 3696

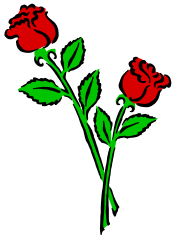
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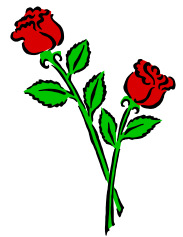
Editors: Othell & Bill Heaney

E-mail: OthellTCF@verizon.net

May 2011



Happy Mother's Day



*"Dear Mother. You don't know it
But I'm watching from above
And although I cannot show it
I am sending you my love
And I know how much you miss me
And you feel that I am gone
but I'm never far away from you
Here in the Great Beyond
I am with you every minute
Every hour every day
I'm with the Lord but with you too
And in your heart I'll stay
So Dear Mother, with your broken
heart
Please smile at thoughts of me
For your smile lights the Heavens
And it warms my heart to see*

submitted by
Joe & Betty Wagner
in memory of
their daughter
Sandi Wagner

I remember vividly the first Mothers Day after my son died. Had there been a vote that year, I would have cast mine for the abolition of Mothers Day. I didn't want there to be such a day and I didn't want anybody to remind me that it did, indeed, exist. My response to those who were left who loved me was to pull away and isolate myself.

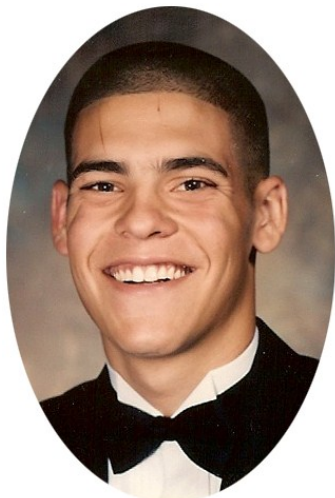
I Made A Mistake!

Between the first and second Mother's Day I made a number of discoveries. Probably the most important one I made was that my surviving child needed to be allowed to show her love for me. She was and is as important as my son who died and has that right. I also learned that my salvation lay in the hands of those people who cared for me, and when I learned to let them help me, I helped myself.

Help yourself this Mothers Day

Mary Cleckley

This newsletter is sponsored by
Bernadette & Stephen Donahue
in memory of our son Stephen, Jr
2/24/1981 - 3/12/2000



To our loving son and brother,
We love you and miss you deeply.
Mom, Dad & Kristie

This newsletter is sponsored by
Karen & Ken Dunn
in memory of our son Kenny Dunn, Jr
5/15/78 - 3/12/2010



Forever in our hearts,
Love Mom, Dad, Family
& your little girls
Madison & Marissa

Did You Know?

You can make a donation to our chapter through your United Way Donation.

We are a “write-in agency” therefore, please write on the pledge card

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. (TCF)

Code number 9016

PO Box 114

Rockland, DE 19732-0114

GIFTS of LOVE

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

Alan Dolan

in memory of his nephew Kyle Dolan

Bruce & Grave Kirk

in memory of their daughter Lisa

Gene & Nancy Taylor

in memory of her son Brian Martin

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.

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: othelITCF@verizon.net

Phone: 656-9288

May Calendar

May 10th

6:30 pm Social Time with **Birthday Cake**
To celebrate May birthdays

7 pm Meeting - General Sharing

May 24th

7 pm General Sharing

July 15 - 17

34th National Conference, Minnesota
Make reservation ASAP!
Contact Othell for details

Local TCF Walk

July 17th
Banning Park Pavilion

Meet & Register 10 am
Walk 10:30 am

Lunch Hotdogs
Hamburgers

We need to order food & balloons etc.
Shirts can also be ordered for \$10
So please,

RSVP Patti Still
8 Alvil Rd.
Wilm, DE 19808
998-6996

Let Patti also know
if you would like to bring a side dish

Enclosed is a
Walk To Remember Sheet
This is a way to let
your friends & neighbors
know about TCF
and
to help the chapter
raise some money.

May Birthday Cake

Donated by Patty Still
in memory of her daughter Erin Giles



Nancy Taylor
(Suicide & Only Child)
234-1654

Mary Mullin
(Suicide)
(610) 497-3447

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

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

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.

SCHEDULED MEETINGS:

Meetings start at 7:00 p.m.
on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month

MEETING PLACE:

Brandywine Valley Baptist Church
7 Mt. Lebanon Road

DIRECTIONS:

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.

We Remember

MAY BIRTHS

SHANTAL CACHO	May 21
DOMINIC FRANCIS CAMPISI	May 19
KENNY DUNN, Jr	May 15
LISA KIRK	May 28
CHRISTOPHER LEFEBVRE	May 18
SHAWN LEWIS	May 12
DICK MAC INTYRE	May 12
DREW OETZEL	May 29
TRAVIS DALEY SAVORY	May 16
DONNA SMITH	May 09
STACY LYNN TESZNER	May 25
ROSEMARIE TOY	May 15
DAVID VASSALOTTI	May 06
BRIAN STEWARD WHITE	May 07

MAY DEATHS

ELLEN ABRAMSON	May 05
MATTHEW BAUMEISTER	May 11
CLARE CHURCH	May 16
ROBERT EDMONDSON	May 03
PATRICIA HALL	May 13
DIANA HECHTER	May 08
RICHARD JAQUET	May 06
JOE KERSWILL	May 23
CAMERON LOGAN	May 06
RODNEY MCBRIDE	May 05
RICHARD MIRABILE, JR	May 04
DAVID MORRIS	May 10
DONNA SMITH	May 23
SUSAN SMITH	May 30
DAVID WICKHAM	May 11

Grief Is Like A River

**My grief is like a river-
I have to let it flow.
But I myself determine
Just where the banks will go.**

**Some days that current takes me
In waves of guilt and pain.
But there are always quiet pools
Where I can rest again. -**

**I crash on rocks of anger-
My faith seems faint indeed.
But there are other swimmers**

**Who know that what I need
Are loving hands to hold me
When the waters are too swift
And someone kind to listen.
When I just seem to drift.**

**Grief's river is a process
Of relinquishing the past.
By swimming in Hope's channels ,
I'll reach the shore at last.**

Cynthia G. Kelly
TCF, Cincinnati, Ohio

What Kind Of Baggage Are You Carrying?

As you travel along the grieving road, you should consider what luggage you are taking with you. Just like tourists, we need to decide those items we need to carry and those we can leave behind. Here are some suggestions to help you with your choices.

Leftover Experiences

Feelings left from the past (fears, anger, guilt, rejections ...). You may decide some are not worth carrying any longer.

Helplessness and Hopelessness

These garments take up much space when you start out, but you may be able to fold them more neatly later on.

The "WHY?" Questions

Why this? Why mine? Why God?

They are part and parcel of this trip, but after traveling a distance, you may want to exchange them for the "WHAT?" question; What am I going to do with my life? - and the "HOW?" question- How am I going to do it? These last are important - hold on to them.

Expectations

Some are helpful, some hurtful, and you may not be able to sort them out until you are under way. If you have a goal or time table set by someone else, remove it early in your journey and proceed in your own way and at your own pace. If you expect others to understand and meet your needs, you risk disappointment and resentment that will delay your travel. Try substituting a resolution to tell those near you what you need and how they can help you. Then let them do it.

Vulnerability

You may be afraid to take this with you, but as you acknowledge and come to understand your feelings, the fear will diminish and lighten your load.

The Shoulds

I should have and the "if onlys" - If only I had, These are heavy to carry, and you will come to find they are disposable

A Stubborn, Positive Attitude

You will find this hard to find at first, but it will come in handy. Grab one as soon as possible.

Tears

Keep them readily available. It really is all right to cry. And, in fact, holding them back can be bad for your recovery.

Courage and Spirit

Summon as much as you can and add more whenever you can.

Hugs

Carry them with you and have them ready several times a day. This is good therapy for the grieving traveler.

Patience and Forgiveness

for Yourself and Others

Like a three piece suit, you won't wear it every day, but it looks good on you, especially when you become more comfortable with who you are Now.

Memories and Mementos

Don't be tempted to leave these behind. Keep them with you always to help even the load.

An Understanding of Your Loss

Keep the understanding of the enormity of your loss with you and put it on daily. Gradually you will become aware of a new feeling, the wonder of living with changed priorities and attitudes. If you exclude this from your baggage, you put your grief on hold and it will surely catch up with you later.

A Sense of Hope

You may think you might as well leave this behind as you won't be using it on this trip, but even Doris Nelson, polio victim who spent 36 years in an iron lung had an expectancy to something more.

A Plan

I hope you left room so you can add a plan for some activity or other which you do not even consider to be in the realm of possibility at this moment.

Lovingly "borrowed"
from Helen Way, TCF,
Abilene, TX
edited by
Brandywine Hundred
Chapter



Bent But Not Broken

To the Mother who has lost her only child, or has no surviving children, the thought of Mother's Day sends a stabbing pain that only the ones of us who are in this situation can understand. We begin to notice Mother's Day cards slipped in right after Valentine's Day along with the Easter cards. Even before Easter the TV advertising starts. We try to blot this all out but our subconscious keeps reminding us, the day is coming closer.

For the first two years we celebrated Mother's Day *for* my mother and sister very quietly. The third year after my daughter Shawna's death, we decided to go to a local restaurant featuring a nice buffet. We arrived early hoping to avoid the crowd. A very flustered hostess greeted us and found a table for us. The tables had been pushed close together to accommodate more people. It was already becoming very crowded. She asked the question, "How many Mothers?" It was then we noticed the flowers she was carrying. Someone man-

aged to stammer out, three- three- Mothers. She handed us each a flower, while glancing around to find a table for the next group of people. She didn't notice the one she handed me was pretty battered.

My sister wanted to give me hers or get another. "No, it's ok," I said. The stem was bent, but not broken completely. A wilted tired flower was hanging from the stem.

I brought it home and propped it up in a glass of water to revive it. You see, I could identify with that flower.

As a Mother without my child, I have felt so bruised and battered. Somehow through all the pain, tears, and loneliness, like the flower, I have been bent but never quite broken.

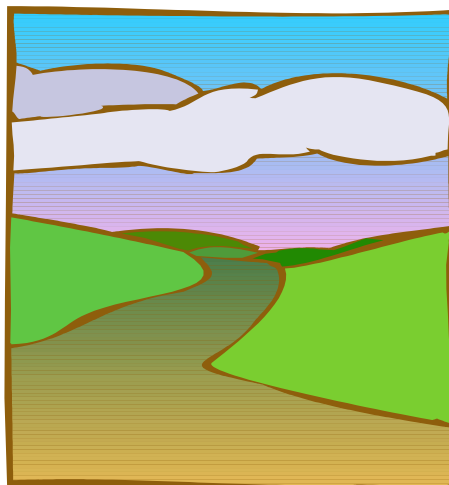
Donna Frechec, TCF
Enid Chapter

Stepping Stones

Come, take my hand, the road is long. We must travel by stepping stones. No, you're not alone. I'll go with you. I know the road well, I've been there. Don't fear the darkness. I'll be with you. We must take one step at a time. But remember we may have to stop awhile. It is a long way to the other side and there are many obstacles.

We have many stones to cross. Some are bigger than others ... shock, denial, and anger to start. Then comes guilt, despair, and loneliness. It's a hard road to travel but it must be done. It's the only way to reach the other side.

Come, slip your hand in mine. What? Oh, yes, it's strong. I've held so many hands like yours. Yes, mine was one time small and weak like yours. Once, you see, I had to take someone's hand in order to take the first step. Oops! you've stumbled. Go ahead and cry. Don't be ashamed, I understand. Let's wait here awhile and get your breath.



When you're stronger we'll go on, one step at a time. There's no need to hurry.

Say, it's nice to hear you laugh. Yes, I agree, the memories you shared are good. Look, we're half-way there now; I can see the other side. It looks so warm and sunny. Oh, have you noticed? We're nearing the last stone and you're standing alone. And look, your hands, you've let go of mine, and we've reached the other side.

But wait. Look back. Someone is standing there. They are alone and want to cross the stepping stones. I better go; they need my help. What? Are you sure? Why, yes; I'll wait. You know the way-- you've been there. Yes, I agree-- it's your turn, my friend-- to help someone else across the stepping stones.

by Barb Williams
Ft. Wayne, IN

A Card For Mother

Choosing cards for Mother's day,
Didn't used to be such a chore,
I look for ones that say
The words, just for my mom's pleasure.

To the left and to the right,
I spy a shocking scene,
Cards from sons to mothers,
Do all but your name scream.

I try to overlook them,
As I try to pick out the best,
I can't help but to see them,
Surely, it must be a test.

To see if I've have stopped grieving,
The memories no longer sad.
I all but start screaming.
My boychild, he is dead!

So I rush and buy a pretty.
Card that will just have to do,
And I leave the store with tears streaming.
As I sadly think of you.

I think of the cards you gave me.
Over the years I have everyone.
I was happy when I got them,
I'd rather have my son.

It should be a sin to leave your mother.
And never say goodbye,
A child without his mother.
Hard to deal with,
But I try.

I try to look at the memories,
And smile and not be sad,
They sometimes overtake me,
I just miss the son I had.
Cry as I cry, sometimes everyday,
Cry as I will cry,
Each and the next mother's day.

Rose W. Thompson
In memory of Evan Spencer Thompson

Spider Webs



Grieving is a process of rebuilding, much like a spider builds a web.

Just as no two spider webs are interlocked, likewise, are we connected to family, friends, acquaintances, co-workers.

As long as the web remains intact, it is a work of art; and a strong, stable home for the spider. Our family units often remain strong and stable as the mesh of human lives which surround and support us go undisturbed. When a loved one is lost, it is a devastating experience. Lives can become a shambles, just like a spider web would be if a section were tom away.

Slowly, the grieving person must re-weave the web of their life, as they learn to live without the physical presence of their loved one.

The web will never look the same as it did before, but in time it can be beautiful and strong again.

The pattern of a new life, the pathways taken, and the proper timing for each of these things, must all be determined by the person who is grieving.

TCF Putnam County, OH



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Brandywine Hundred Chapter
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Questions and Answers

This Healing Journey
an Anthology for Bereaved Siblings

"I can't remember exactly how she looked. Does this mean I'm forgetting her?"

No, even if your sister were alive you wouldn't be able to recall everything about her. It is natural to forget some details, but many gestures and memories will be in your heart forever.

"I'm so tired of trying to make it through every day. I smile on the outside but, inside I scream!"

I'm still not over his death - but everyone expects me to be. Is there something wrong with me?"

No. Your brother was close to you and his dying hurts. Probably no one but another bereaved person can fully understand what you're feeling. You can contact a group of bereaved siblings so that you can express your feelings and be understood and accepted.

"I can't concentrate. I can't think and I can't remember a thing. I think I am losing my mind."

You have not lost your mind, although it may feel that way. Your mind is probably just overloaded. Not only do you have to continue to go through your daily routine, but, your mind is flooded with thoughts and feelings for your brother or sister. This is temporary. Your memory and concentration will return