

April 2005



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS

Upcoming Meetings

April 27, 2005

May 25, 2005

June 22, 2005

July 27, 2005

National Headquarters

P.O. Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

(877) 969-0010 toll free

www.compassionatefriends.org

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national non-profit, self-help support organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause. There is no religious affiliation. No individual membership fees or dues are charged, and all bereaved family members are welcome.

Meeting Place and Time...

The Sioux City Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the 4th Wednesday, Jan-Oct, 3rd Wednesday, Nov & Dec at **Mercy Medical Center** in the Leiter room (by gift shop) on 1st floor off of the parking ramp on 5th street at **7:00 p.m.**

Many thanks to...

Mercy Medical Center

for graciously printing our newsletters and providing us a meeting place.

Thank You!

Sioux City Chapter

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April Meeting Agenda by Trudy Klaver, Co-leader

We are privileged to have **Brenda Zahnley** speak to our group for the April meeting. She is the Director of Bereavement Services at Christy-Smith Funeral Homes. She has been with the funeral home 9 years and worked in the bereavement department at Hospice for 19 years before that. Brenda provides individual and group counseling at the funeral home as well as does many educational workshops on grief for the local schools, churches, and the community at large. She has a Masters degree from Wayne State College in Nebraska specializing in agency counseling. Brenda facilitates four support groups at Christy-Smith Funeral Homes: A Step Beyond, Broken Silence Suicide Support Group, Grief Relief in Merville, IA and Picking Up the Pieces Support Group for Young Widows. Brenda understands grief as she has experienced the death of her brother, both her parents and several friends. She lives in Correctionville, Iowa with her husband, Jim.

Our guest speaker will focus on "The Lessons of Grief" and will elaborate on the differences in men's and women's grieving patterns. Whether you are a regular attendee, newly bereaved, or have experienced the death of a child many years ago, we encourage you to attend and be strengthened in your grief journey.

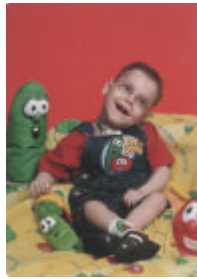
If time allows, we will break up into small groups and discuss the differences between men/women's grief.

The meeting will begin promptly at 7 pm, April 27 at Mercy Medical Center in the Leiter Room, first floor off the parking ramp on 5th street.



Child's Photo

We now have a permanent bulletin board set up in our meeting room. Please feel free to bring a wallet size photo of your child.



Book Review by Trudy Klaver

Confessions of a Grieving Christian by Zig Ziglar

Zig Ziglar is a talented author and motivational speaker who, since 1970, has traveled over five million miles and has written 17 celebrated books. He is known for his optimism and his deep faith. Ziglar's oldest daughter died in 1995 after a prolonged illness. He openly shares his personal journey through the grief he has experienced since the death of his daughter.

In *Confessions of a Grieving Christian*, Ziglar is very honest, and shares his struggles not only as a believing Christian, but also as a hurting father. This is an excellent, encouraging book and perfectly fitted for anyone who has experienced the death of a child, however, would also be exceptionally helpful for anyone facing grief. I would also recommend it for those ministering to the grieving.

MY LITTLE ANGEL

My little Angel, I'll have to wait to hold you.
I'll have to wait to watch you run and play.
I'll have to wait to give you tender kisses
Cuz heaven's angels called you home today.

I can't understand why you left us.
I can't understand this broken heart
I have so many things I want to share with you.
But for now we'll have to be apart.

So I had a little talk with Jesus
And He promised He would take you by the hand.
He promised He would show you all of heaven
And He would let you hear the angel band.

He promised that you'd always be happy
And that you'd never cry a single tear.
He promised that He'd always keep you safe from harm
Until the day that I can meet you there.

So until I can see my little Angel
Please know that you are always in my heart.
Someday I know I'll meet you up in heaven
And then my Angel, we'll never be apart.

*Author Unknown
Submitted by a Sioux City resident*



Lending Library Update...

We are **so** pleased to be able to announce our Lending Library is now up and running! A huge thank-you to Kathy Sieger and Denice Christoffel for volunteering to be our new librarians. We have a great variety of books and authors represented.

We are ready to start lending out books!

*Friends are
needed both
for joy and
for sorrow.*

Samuel Paterson



**"The friend who can be silent with us
in a moment of despair or confusion,
who can stay with us in an hour of grief
and bereavement, who can tolerate not
knowing... not healing, not curing...
that is a friend who cares."**

[Henri Nouwen](#)

Dutch Christian writer 1932 - 1996

*And A
Child Will
Lead Us*



Love Gifts

A Love Gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends for the purpose of running the Sioux City Chapter. It is usually given in memory of a child who died, however may also be from individuals who want to honor a friend or relative. It may be in thanksgiving that their children are alive and well, or simply a gift of support for the work of TCF. Others in the community make contributions because they want to help us with the newsletter, meeting costs, or maintaining a good lending library. The simple truth is that without your support, there would be little possibility for this group to exist. All gifts are welcome and truly appreciated. **Time is also a wonderful gift, and there are many jobs that must be done, and volunteers are always needed.**



*for the love
gifts in
memory and
celebration
of our
children...*

Sioux City Chapter Love Gift Form

Parent(s) Name _____

Child's Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Birthdate(s) _____ Heaven date(s) _____

Tax-deductible donations that pay for the newsletter costs and other chapter expenses are greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged in the newsletter unless you request that the gift not be published. You may make your donation in memory of your loved one and include a message.

Love Gift \$ _____ (Any Donation Amount) Please make check to The Compassionate Friends

In Memory of _____

On the occasion of _____

Message _____

To receive mailing address to send love gift, please contact:

newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org

“So which individual is truly the strong and courageous one? It must be the one who faces the pain full force- the one who has the courage to tell others the truth about their sorrow- the one who, instead of running, stands and faces the inconceivable challenges of grief- grief with others, to encourage understanding and compassion- the one who will reach out to others in grief and help carry another. Those are the defining attributes of true and indisputable courage and strength.”

___Joanne Cacciatore, founder of M.I.S.S. Foundation

Introducing Mary Lander, Secretary

Hi! I'm Mary Lander. I grew up on a farm outside of Salix, IA. I am the fourth daughter of the best parents that have ever existed. I became a Registered Nurse, married my high school sweetheart, Joe Lander, and moved to the Lander farm outside of Sloan. Our lives were soon filled with the joys of our 3 children, Josh, (1977), Amy, (1978), and Jake (1981). We had so much fun as we grew up together. We loved water, sports, cards, laughing and having fun. I worked part time while the kids were young and for the last 15 years have been Director of Nursing at Pleasant View Care Center in Whiting. I am a nurse, but my love has always been being a Mom. Joe and I were very involved with the kids' activities, loving every stage of their lives. Josh married a wonderful gal, Mandy, and is pursuing his Masters degree in Physical Therapy. In 2000, we celebrated Jake's high school graduation, our 25th Wedding Anniversary and Amy began studying Dental Hygiene at Kirkwood in Cedar Rapids. Jake, our youngest began his first year at UNI.

We thought we had prepared for the empty nest, but there was no preparation for the phone call we received on October 23rd. Amy had been in a car accident resulting in her death. Our hearts were broken. We were devastated with the loss of the link that connected our family circle. It was the love from our families, friends and community that helped us through each day. We tried to resume our lives as best we could, to focus on the wonderful life we had with Amy instead of the pain from not holding her in our arms. Joe has always had family as a priority in life and knowing that life can be short, we took time to grieve, but we didn't forget to live and love the family we had. We were blessed with the birth of our first grandchild, Alexis Amy Lander on October 30th, a year after Amy's death. Lexi is an angel sent from heaven.

The summer of 2003, Josh and his family had moved back to this area. Jake was home for the summer helping Joe on the farm and picking up odd jobs. On July 18th we received the news that our Jake had been killed in a car accident. Jake was funny, a hard worker, always on the go, full of life, and now he's gone. The pain seemed too familiar, sometimes too painful to face again. Survival came through the love of my family and friends, walking with Joe on this journey, the birth of our second grandchild, Joshua Jacob "JJ", and faith that our Lord would carry us through each and every day. The Compassionate Friends has been a safe haven where we can talk about the things that we face daily, and things that are too painful to face. I give thanks for the blessings I have...through all that have touched my life.

An Unfinished Mother Written by Clara Hinton



When child loss occurs, a mother goes through a difficult time of emotional turmoil and questioning. "Am I still a mother?" "Does my child still have a birthday each year, or does time stand still?" "Can the mother/child relationship continue to grow, or am I now an 'unfinished mother'?"

Losing a child places a mother on a road that begins a lonelier journey than ever expected—one that can never really be explained. There was a beginning, but with the death of the child, there is no middle and no end. Everything seems so unfinished. Hopes and dreams were stopped far too soon. Joy was snatched away so suddenly. A mother is left with empty arms and an empty heart. Nothing can ever be complete when a child's life ends.

When the death of a child occurs, a mother is stopped in her tracks, and she suddenly feels inadequate and incomplete. She wears a new name. She is an "unfinished mother", never being able to see the rest of the picture. She will never be able to watch her child mature into a young adult. She will never be able to see all the pieces fit together. The picture will always have part of the scenery missing. It is so painful to be an unfinished mother! Child loss makes everything seem so empty and incomplete.

The reality of child loss is devastating to a mother. There are overwhelming feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and most often feelings of failure. These feelings can overwhelm a mother for several months following the death of a child, and it can be quite difficult to build a support system to carry a mother through this roller coaster of emotions. Very few people will understand a mother's explanation of feeling like she is an unfinished mother.

There will come a critical point in this journey of grief when a mother must reach deep inside her inner resources and make a conscious decision to accept herself just as she is—a mother whose heart has been touched by the pain and grief of child loss. Only then can she start to put together some of the broken pieces and begin to feel like there will be a day when she will feel more like a complete mother than an unfinished mother.

When a child dies, life is suddenly thrown completely off balance. A mother is left feeling like her identity has been taken away. It is often a long difficult journey to find that place of identity as a mother again. It's hard to understand that there is unfinished living that will never be completed. Peace can finally come to a mother's heart when she realizes that there is a big difference between having unfinished business and being left feeling like an unfinished mother.

A mother is never "unfinished." No matter how brief her time was with her child, the bond of love between mother and child was complete. A mother's love for her child is unending. Dreams may shatter and circumstances may change, but a mother's love remains strong. As a mother travels the path to healing, it is important for her to remind herself often that she is a mother forever. Her motherhood did not stop when her child died. This understanding of motherhood releases the feelings of guilt and failure and allows a mother to begin to see herself as a whole person again—a complete mother.

A mother is never an "unfinished mother." A mother's love runs far too deep to ever be called unfinished!



The Jelly Bean Poem
Author Unknown

**RED is for my love for you that will never sever....
For love is not measured by the time we had together...
but what is in our hearts forever.**

**GREEN is for memories that I always will treasure...
Although time may pass...our memories will last
...forever and ever and ever.**

**YELLOW is for Sunshine that you gave to me....
You brightened up my life and made my world shine
And will continue to shine brilliantly for the rest of time.**

**ORANGE is for the candles flame I light in memory of you...
Flame that glows so bright as I speak your name in prayer...
Asking God to hold you close...until I join you there.**

**BLACK is for my grief from my broken shattered heart
Taking each day one at a time...as I keep your memory alive....
Life is different...I am different...but I CAN and WILL survive.**

**PURPLE is for tears I shed as I remember you....
Precious memories you left behind....preserved deep inside...
You will always live on through our family...forever by our side**

**Lighting my path wherever I go...and whatever I may do...
My precious child...I will always love...and always remember you.
PINK if for the signs you send from Heaven up above...**

Newly Bereaved ... Burden of Grief

As I struggle with words to find answers
Reading and writing my pain
The pages grow blurred before eyes that are tired
From this crushing emotional drain.
The relief that comes from the writing
Parallels what I feel when I read—
To open myself to the torture of loss
Seems to soothe this unbearable need.
There's no pleasure in life at this moment
It's an effort to get through the day
And I labor to stay above water...
But the shoreline is so far away.
So I pick up a pen or a book about grief
And it serves as a raft for a while.
And I hope, as my tears fall on pages of pain
That I'll learn once again how to smile.
As I swim toward the shore of acceptance
I pray for the peace of belief
That heaven's your home and you're waiting for me
Then I'll finally be free of this grief.

By Sally Migliaccio, TCF Babylon, NY
From *Tracey, An Extraordinary Child*



LISA

*What do I do I ask myself,
As I look at her picture standing on the shelf.*

*She was always laughing and so pretty,
why must it happen to her, why not me?*

*I am going to miss her oh so much,
that kind, gentle, loving touch.*

*God has now called Lisa to come,
up high into his beautiful kingdom.*

*I know that I will see her again,
in God's beautiful home known as heaven.*

By: Michael Oetken
In honor of my sister
Lisa Renae Oetken 5/8/84 – 9/27/02

February 23, 2005 Meeting Minutes
by Mary Lander, Secretary

The Compassionate Friends met February 23rd. Over 20 friends united at 7 pm to share, listen, understand, and support each other as we journey through grief together. Our co-leaders, Peggy Pohlan and Trudy Klaver began the meeting with a warm welcome to all. They introduced Rhonda Johnson, one of the facilitators, who read "The Mourner's Creed" by Alan Wolfelt. Kathy Sieger, our new librarian, talked about the books our library has available to check out and the donations that will add to that list. Multiple pamphlets are available to anyone interested. Introductions were exchanged as we got to know each other better and meet others for the first time.

Our hearts filled with empathy as our new friends shared their story about the death of their child. After this time of sharing we listened to a song by John Mandeville and Steve Siler, "Dancing With Angels". This song so beautifully expressed how are children are free, dancing with the angels. Songs, like our new friends, help us feel that we aren't alone.

I Will Cry Forever, But Not Always

By Trudy Klaver

The sky is gray, the day is dark,
the wind is cold, the winter lingers on.
I cannot stop thinking of you,
and how much I miss your presence.

I will cry forever, but not always.

I yearn for your embrace, your dimpled smile,
your love and laughter, your enthusiasm and your spirit.
I miss your stories and hearing your dreams,
your eyes shining with excitement and at times, mischief.

I will cry forever, but not always.

Every morning when I wake, my thoughts are of you...
of birth, life, music and laughter, sickness, and death.
My eyes tear and then I cry...
wishing so desperately you would come home again.

I will cry forever, but not always.

You left a year ago, almost two.
Yet it seems as if it were only yesterday
that you and I spent our days together...
loving, laughing, crying, praying, and hoping.

I will cry forever, but not always.

Oh, James...I cry... most often in private, sometimes in view.
I miss you more than words could ever say.
Did I love you too much? Of course, "no."
I loved you as Christ asked me to, with no regret.

I will cry forever, but not always.

I know you are Home...free. I believe. I trust.
I can see you laughing and dancing with the angels.
I anticipate running into your outstretched arms,
waiting with the Savior for us to appear...but, needless to say, "In His time."

I will cry forever, but not always.

Our tears are for us, of that I am sure...
for you are in the presence of God, and in your heavenly home.
You are eternally free...happy, healthy, and truly living
in a Land abounding with joy and singing.

I will cry forever, but not always.

As we close our eyes at the end of each day,
we hold hands to pray, saying to our Father,
"Give James a hug, and tell him we love him..."
as the all-too-familiar tears trickle down our cheeks.

I will cry forever, but not always.

In loving memory of our son, James
April 26, 1980-July 9, 2003



James Albert Klaver
April 26, 1980 - July 9, 2003

*If Love could
have saved
you, you
would have
lived
forever...*

Dancing In the Flame

Though I am tired and weary,
My eyes continue to weep,
And my heart denies me the comfort,
That I find only in my sleep.

So I sit alone in the darkness,
Before the firelight,
And stare into the flames,
On this dark and moonless night.

As the flames leap and dance,
I am surrounded by an eerie sight,
That evokes haunting memories,
Brought to life by the fire's light.
My thoughts take me back,

To a time when you were here,
To times when laughter filled my heart,
Times lost forever, I fear.

In the flames, I see your face,
Your sweet and loving smile.
And I know that we will meet again,
But I must wait a while.

These quiet moments of reverie,
Bring comfort to my aching heart,
And tell me that you and I,
Are never far apart.
Now my heart begins to lighten,

As sleep arrives to claim,
The pain I felt just moments ago,
Before I saw you dancing in the flame.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
Copyright 2001
Reprinted by permission of author

**'Begin to let the joy of your loved ones life take the place of the hurt
and pain of the death.' __Darcie Sims & Alicia S. Franklin**

Following excerpts taken from *Will our Tears Forever Flow*

By Ted L. Wampler

“I look forward to the day when society will embrace the grieving person and will say, “Tell me about your child. Cry if you wish, pour out your hurts, all your heartache. I will not be judgmental.” No message of comfort can be spoken that is greater than the touch of the human hand. A hug or handshake says someone cares. As long as Job’s comforters surrounded him with love and concern, they eased his burdens. Only when they began to try to explain his misfortune did they become a part of his burden.”

“We’ve all had people tell us God will not put more on us than we can bear up under. Yet, we all know people who have crashed or broken down from having more tragedies and burdens than they can endure. The Bible does not tell us that God will not put more on us than we can stand. The Bible does say, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be **tempted beyond what you can bear**. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (I Cor. 10:13 NIV) I think it’s significant that the quote includes the word temptation. I feel Paul deals here with the subject of temptation and sin, not the burdens of life.”



A Name for My Pain

By June Williams-Muecke
TCF, Houston West Chapter

I have given a name to my pain—
it's called "Longing."

I long for what was,
and what might have been

I long for his touch and smell of sweat;
I long to hold him one more time.

I long to look on his beautiful face
and impress it upon my memories and heart.

I long to return to the day before
and protect him from his death.

I long to take his place,
so he may live and have sons too.

I long for time to pass much faster,
so my longing and pain will lessen.

Will they?

Help Needed

Sincere thanks to all those who are volunteering their time and talents to TCF.
The following areas still need your help. There are many different positions that need to be filled. Please consider doing so when you feel you can. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact one of the co-leaders.



- * **Outreach person**
- * **Write Articles/poems for Newsletters**
- * **Tape/Fold/Label Newsletters...**
- * **Marketing/Advertising Media Contact**

Please complete and email to Newsletter editor at newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org

Name(s) _____ Email Address: _____

Address: _____ City, State & Zip _____

I would like to receive the newsletter by _____ Mail _____ Email

If you would like the birth and heaven dates included in the newsletter, please include your child’s name and dates.

Comments: _____

