

October 2005



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS

Upcoming Meetings

October 26, 2005

November 16, 2005

December 21, 2005

January 25, 2006

Check us out on the web @

www.tcfsiouxcity.org

***Meeting Place and Time...**

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

This Newsletter format is not the same that is mailed/emailed out. Some items have been removed to protect the privacy of our compassionate friends...

If you would like to receive the full version, please send an email request to:

newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org

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I Know You By Heart

By Alan Pedersen © 2002 www.everashleymusic.com

There's time and space between where we are and where we've been.

I grieve for what I cannot have or ever hold again.
Just when I think I'm all alone cause you're so far away,
it suddenly occurs to me, I see you everyday.

You're that hint of inspiration urging me to carry on.
A boost of needed energy when all my strength is gone.
You're a single shining ray of hope when faith is hard to find,
and twenty-twenty vision when grief has left me blind.

You're a lonely roads companion when it's hard to find a friend.
A much needed reminder that good-bye is not the end.
You're a calm and reassurance when I scream for answers, why.
A gentle voice that whispers, "Daddy it's okay to cry."

You're part of everything I am and all I'll ever be.
The one who when I'm at my worst, still sees the best in me.
And though you're just outside my reach, we are never far apart,
I recognize you everywhere child, I know you by heart.

*Thank you to **Mercy Medical Center**
for graciously printing our newsletters
and providing us a meeting place.*



Remembering our *October Children...*



*Birth and Heaven dates are
not listed to protect
the privacy of our
Compassionate Friends...*



OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED, AND REMEMBERED

We all know how difficult those "Special Days" can be – birthdays and death anniversary days. Please remember these parents on their special days and let them know that they are not alone; someone cares about their pain and their grief.

It means so much to be remembered.

Dear Parents:

Every effort is made to publish accurate information regarding the birth and remembrance dates. Please let the Newsletter Editor know if there is an error in the listing, in order to correct our records. Dates are not included unless requested due to privacy guidelines. Thank you.

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. There are many jobs that must be done, and volunteers are always needed.**

Sioux City Chapter *Love Gift* Form

Parent(s) Name _____

Child's Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Birthdate(s) _____ Remembrance 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

Thank
You!
for the
love gifts in
remembrance
of your
children...

*Love never
dies...*

*"Your life was a blessing, your memory a treasure...
you are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure..."*

__unknown

The Tattoo

Pardon me if I'm nervous; you see, this is my first one.
I'm not into tattoos. I swore I'd never get one.
She thought they were hip. She said, "Dad they're cool."
I'll bet she's smiling down tonight to see me breaking my rule.

It's been one year today since she's been gone.
No, I don't need to wait. I know just what I want.

Draw me an angel in heavenly flight,
With a dove on the left and her name on the right.
Hair flowing gently in ribbons and bows,
with three stars, two hearts, and one rose.

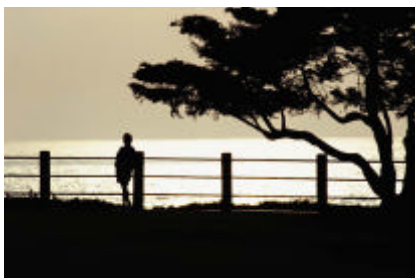
I'll wear it proudly, I'll show it off.
Just because she is gone, my love doesn't stop.

If anyone asks, I'll be glad to explain...
Just how much I miss her, and how the memories remain.
I've thought about it, and I'm sure I want all of these things...
They remind me of her.

Draw me an angel in heavenly flight,
With a dove on the left and her name on the right.
Hair flowing gently in ribbons and bows,
with three stars, two hearts, and one rose.

Never say never. I've learned the hard way.
I never thought I'd be sitting here today.
Talking with you about all the good years.
Now don't get me started and don't mind my tears.

__By Alan Pedersen, www.everashleymusic.com



Death of a Child

Sorry I didn't get to stay,
to laugh and run and play;
to be there by your side.
I'm sorry that I had to die.

God sent me down to be with you,
to make your loving heart anew.
To help you look up and see
both God and little me.

Mommy, I wish I could stay,
just like I heard you pray.
But, all the angels did cry
when they told little me goodbye.

God didn't take me because He's mad.
He didn't send me to make you sad.
But to give us both a chance to be
a love so precious... don't you see?

Up here no trouble do I see
and the pretty angels sing to me.
The streets of gold are where I play.
You'll come here too, mommy, someday.

Until the day you join me here,
I'll love you mommy, dear.
Each breeze you feel and see,
brings love and kisses from me.

__By Sandy Eakle

Musings

Isn't it strange that things we once took for granted, have changed so much? Things like the soft wings of a brilliant colored butterfly, or the radiant colors in the sky at dawn and sunset, or perhaps a song we heard in passing, or a movie we once took for granted. But now, these very same things can bring on tears and leave us feeling a deep sense of longing. Why? Are these not the same as before? What changed? We did. The things we once took for granted are now viewed with much more than human eyes. We now experience these things through the eyes of a broken heart.

I believe grief gives us a very different view on things. A heart bruised and broken by loss has a new tenderness and compassion. Just look inside yourself at how your views have changed. I also believe this is our children speaking to us saying...look at the beauty and know that I am still near.

Sheila Simmons, TCF Atlanta
In Memory of son, Steven Simmons



You Taught Me How to Love You

*You taught me how to love you by
the way that you loved me;
and by your unseen sustenance,
to see what you could see.*

*You gave to me through who you were,
the gift of what I am.
Your pride in me is now my pride;
your faith, my caravan.*

*Your life does not conclude with death,
nor will it end with mine,
for all the lives I touch, you touch,
and so on through all time.*

__By Nicholas Gordon

MY SON ZACHARY, MY SHINING STAR

I had a dream that you were still here,
So vivid it was as I shed each tear.

You sat beside me, while I read each word.
Of that favorite book you always heard.

From beginning to end, you listened excitedly,
Waiting for "Whoop, whoop!" with eyes shining brightly.

How I miss those days when you were full of life,
Your laughter, your smile, and the love in your eyes!

I feel cheated and robbed. You lived only to be seven.
I cherish the memories of you, now in Heaven.

When I hear the song "Mony, Mony" in my head,
I remember when Uncle Tony and Kris were wed.

You danced every dance like there was no tomorrow.
The cancer you had seemed only to borrow.

Moments of life from every breath you took,
As you tread every step, I saw that look.

How I wish you were here to give me one more hug,
One more time to hear you say, "I love you, mom."

I see your face in my dreams at night,
Hoping I'll wake up and find you right beside me once again.

*I dedicate this poem to my daughter Valerie McDougall Kestner,
who lived every moment of her brother's life with us, and my
son Bobby McDougall who was born after Zachary's death,
with whom I have shared his memories.*

—By Jane McDougall



Daily message from Healing After Loss

By Martha Whitmore Hickman

"People in mourning have to come to grips with death before they can live again. Mourning can go on for years and years. It doesn't end after a year; that's a false fantasy. Healing begins when people realize that they can live again. That they can concentrate their energies or their lives as a whole, and not on their hurt, guilt, and pain."

— Elisabeth Kubler Ross

No one is asking us to forget, to turn away from all that we loved and cherished in the one we have lost. We couldn't do that even if we wanted to.

The task before us - and it can take a very long time - is to incorporate this grief and loss into the rest of our lives, so that it doesn't continue to dominate our lives. It's no longer the first thing we think of when we wake up in the morning, or the last thing we relinquish before we sleep.

A child said to his mother, in regard to the outpouring of kindnesses after his father's death, "There are so many good things. There's just one bad thing." The "bad thing" will always be there, but when it begins to take its place among the good things life offers, we're on our way.

Even in my sadness, I will be open to new adventures, all in the timeline that is right for me.

HEAVEN'S VERY SPECIAL CHILD

A meeting was held quite far from earth.

It's time again for another birth,
said the angels to the Lord above.

This special child will need much love.

His progress may be very slow,
accomplishments he may not show.

And he'll require extra care,
from the folks he meets down there.

He may not run or laugh or play,
his thoughts may seem quite far away.

In many ways he won't adapt,
and he'll be known as handicapped.

So let's be careful where he's sent,
we want his life to be content.

Please Lord, find the parents who
will do a special job for you.

They will not realize right away,
the leading role they're asked to play,

But with this child sent from above
comes stronger faith and richer love.

And soon they'll know the privilege given,
in caring for their gift from Heaven.

Their precious charge, so meek and mild,
Is HEAVEN'S VERY SPECIAL CHILD.

—By Edna Massionilla

—Submitted by Steve & Melissa Munsen

The Grieving Stone

A few weeks after Kelly died, her mother was walking and felt compelled to walk down a side street (she'd never been on). She went into an "angel" store. (Kelly used to paint angels on stones and give them away as gifts). She picked up a pink stone and started rubbing it. The owner came over and this is what transpired. "May I ask a personal question? Are you grieving?" The mother replied "Yes". The owner continued. "Sometimes, I see things. I believe it was your daughter, a beautiful dark haired young girl about 18. She guided you into my store. She wants you to know she's okay." The mother looked up, puzzled. "The stone you have in your hand is called a grieving stone. You rub it when you are thinking of your loved one. Your daughter wants you to have it. I don't want your money. Please, just take the stone. And, when you rub it, know your daughter loves you and is OK now."

—Submitted by LuAnn Smith

**God made you special
and He Loves you very much!**

Favorite saying of
"Mighty" Max Munsen



Bob from VeggieTales

My Butterfly Child

I watched you laying there in stillness,
the nothingness of your cocoon ... in death.
I find no beauty in the world at this time.
Was there ever beauty?
It seems not.
Little did I know what beauty was to come,
not only for you...
but the lessons you would teach would bring beauty to my life.
Then you come to me.
You're reborn, you've emerged ... Now my beautiful butterfly.
At times you come playfully,
reminding me of your childhood ... and wonderful memories.
Sometimes you even bring your friends ... darting about as you did in life.
You seem to say "We're here, we're happy ."
Darting about on the wind with mischief,
but also showing the freedom you've gained.
Showing your different colors,
like the many personalities you have.
Pastels for peace ... for compassion ... for serenity ... your
gentleness ... the peace you enjoy,
For love... for fun ... happiness ... sunlight ...
beautiful sunsets ... rainbows.
You come to me, show yourself.
Your beauty ... the beautiful child you were ...
the beautiful spirit you are.
Sometimes you just sit quietly on my window ...
you seem to say ... 'Be still, look around you ...
look at this world of ours ... breathe it all in ... enjoy
and at times, I can enjoy, my beautiful butterfly.
I just wish that you'd not be so elusive.
Stay a while ... let me hold you gently in my hands.
Till then... I must hold you in my heart.

—By Elaine Roebuck



July Meeting Minutes

By Mary Lander

The August 24th meeting followed the third touchstone from the book, *Understanding Your Grief* by Alan Wolfelt. It had been some time since I was able to come to a meeting and, I was, as always, touched by the warmth of the group. Not only toward me but all that were present, some being at their first meeting. In talking about the different topics of the book, I am always at ease in deciding to share, or participate only by listening. Talking about the unique personalities of our loved ones, how different cultural and spiritual backgrounds effect the way we grieve, and how grieving has effected us emotionally and physically is always a good way to learn something about myself, through the experiences of others that have shared a similar path. I don't always realize the emotions that are carefully tucked inside of me and it is then that I am so thankful for the Compassionate Friends. Our evening concluded with wonderful refreshments, fellowship and the song, *Not A Day Goes By*, by Lonestar,

*“I dropped a tear in the ocean.
When they find it; that’s when
I’ll stop remembering you.”*

October Agenda By Peggy Pohlen

On Oct. 26, we will discuss Alan Wolfelt's Fourth Touchstone, "Explore Your Feelings of Loss." Emotions are a true expression of where you are in your grief journey. Acknowledging the feelings are the first steps in dealing with them. Remember that you can't go around your grief. You must go through it. It is our goal to help each other through our grief. Please bring a linking object...something very specific that links you to your child.

“MY TRIBUTE” will be **your** chance to tell us about your child who has died. It can be a short story, an amusing anecdote, or a list of treasured memories.

We will dedicate a page each newsletter and will include as many stories as room allows. They will be printed in the order they are received. The success of this feature will depend entirely upon **YOU**. We need your stories and your memories to make it a success. If you would like a photo to go with the article, please include.

Send email to newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org, please note subject as “TCF TRIBUTE” We need to receive by **November 1st** to be considered for the November newsletter. We look forward to reading and sharing about all of our children. Thank You!



When the Storm Hits

By Joanne Cacciatore, © 1999, 2005

Founder of MISS Foundation, www.missfoundation.org

Black skies and ominous clouds roll in as violent winds of change precede the impending doom. A virulent hurricane can tear apart a city, savagely destroying buildings and homes, businesses and communities. It is a tragedy that will change the 'personality' of the city. Such an imposing catastrophe transforms serenity to chaos, security to instability, normalcy to turmoil.

Once the deluge has passed, there is a deafening silence in the city. Disbelief of the immensity of the loss begins to settle in. Like zombies, people search for their homes, their belongings, perhaps for a loved one: remnants of their former life. Residents roam the streets, sharing the pain of their neighbors.

Far away communities send assistance to survivors of the hurricane. They send food, water, and medical care; all the practical support they can offer. But not experiencing the storm themselves, they can never fully comprehend the horror- the psychological repercussions- of the storm's aftermath. The survivors will find the most comfort and solace in sharing the terror of the storm with their neighbors.

The news will feature footage of the town's renovation. Outsiders will observe the camera's perspective of the apparent revival. Seemingly, if the town looks 'normal' once again, it is presumed that life for the people is once again good.

However, while the "town" will slowly rebuild, the resonant memories of the tragedy remain indelibly blazed in the hearts of the survivors. No one can forget how the storm mercilessly inscribed its presence. Buildings re-emerge, but can never feel or appear exactly as they did before the storm. New homes will be constructed, but in absence of the irreplaceable memories the former houses secretly held precious within its walls.

The death of a child is a tragedy that seems largely unexpected in Western civilization. It brings an unspoken disquietude and life is forever, and irreparably, changed. How can a person - a mother, father, grandparent, or sibling - possibly prepare for a tragedy of this magnitude?

The storm of grief looks much like Mother Nature's wrath. The death of a child wreaks havoc on a family, both individually and collectively. It ruthlessly tears apart our ideals, values, beliefs, innocence, and immunity. It awakens unanswerable, and unthinkable, questions of faith. It requires a person to summon every morsel of strength to survive just one more day in the child's absence. It can savagely destroy our old identity, making us face a new and frightening reality. It is the unthinkable.

It is likely that grief has left parents feeling as if their 'town' has been destroyed, their constitution dismantled. They feel 'rebuilt' (reborn) as a new 'home' (person). The new place is unfamiliar to them. It will take tears, time, work, and patience to reacquire with the new 'home' in which they live.

Eventually, the city's renovation is complete. An occasional moment of joy may be reborn within the lives, homes, and buildings of the new community. Like the bereaved family, communities will never forget the thunderous demon that changed their lives so dramatically. Eventually, with the love and support of others, tranquility and security are recaptured. Hope is discovered. But life will never, ever be the same again.

"In order to experience the rainbow, we must first survive the storm."



To the living, I am gone.
To the sorrowful, I will never return.
To the angry, I was cheated.
But to the happy, I am at peace.
And to the faithful, I have never left.
I cannot speak, but I can listen.
I cannot be seen, but I can be heard.
Remember me in your heart,
In your thoughts,
And in your memories.
The times we loved,
The times we cried,
And the times we laughed,
The times we talked
And the battle I fought.
For if you always think of me,
I will have never gone.

__Author Unknown
submitted by LuAnn Smith

Baby Tears

We cried tears when we learned that a child would be, that you God had allowed you to quicken in me. We cried tears with our loved ones as they shared our joy, and we thought about the names for a girl or a boy. I cried tears as I thought of the things that we would do, all the things that your Daddy would pass on to you. And I cried as I thought of each inch you had grown, as I pondered the day you'd make yourself known. Then, to think of the world you must enter brought fears. Once again, little loved one, your Mother cried tears.

Something's wrong, I can tell – once again there are tears and I'll not get the chance of your love through the years. Oh the ache and the sorrow and all of the pain, and again, yes again, my tears fell like rain. Then His peace comes to me as I think of you there, gently rocking with FATHER in His favorite chair. Your sweet little fingers clenched tight in His palm and His SON softly singing to help you calm. Our FATHER knew your days before they came to be, and He knew, little one, you would not stay with me. So, I cry but I know that when this life is done, I will greet and embrace you my sweet little one. There's a time to be born and a time to die, and the joy and the sorrow both make us cry!

__Conni Johnson

*In memory of
Derek Carl Penning
on his 5th heavenly birthday...*

To our son Derek,

There were many nights we sat and pondered what you would look like. The moment we saw you we felt that you were our "perfect son." Now we can only imagine the sound of your voice. It was not our plan to have you taken from us. We wanted to parent you and watch you do all of those "firsts," children things. Now all we will have is a picture in our minds on how you would have grown into a handsome gentleman.

The loss of your physical body will not hinder us because your soul is in the arms of Jesus, our Savior. We as your parents find comfort knowing that since we cannot care for you here in this life – God will care for you in His heavenly home. There were many hours at the hospital we thought we didn't have the strength to go on. The emptiness inside is deep within our hearts longing to hold you again. We were holding onto the hope that maybe – just – maybe, after you were born you would have taken your first breath. We thought the doctors were all wrong. They told us we had a healthy pregnancy. And now when we hold you – you are not moving. How can this be? You looked so beautiful and so peaceful in our arms. You would have been a healthy baby boy, but there just wasn't a heartbeat.

We know God strengthens the broken hearted, and God is ministering strength to us. We feel it every hour. In Philippians 4:13 it says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." You were with us only "on loan" from God. Some loans last years, but we were blessed to have you with us for 19 ½ hours. Now we look at you, Derek, and know we have a "deposit" in heaven. You will always be our son, and you will live in our hearts forever!

Love always,

Your Mom and Dad

Anita and Talon Penning

Email Friends

Melissa Munsen newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org

Twins- 32 day old daughter, premature
5 ½ year old son, multiple medical conditions

Trudy Klaver leader@tcfsiouxcity.org

23 year old son died from leukemia



**There will come a day
when the tears of sorrow
will softly flow into
tears of remembrance...
and your heart will begin
to heal itself...and grieving
will be interrupted by episodes
of joy...and you will hear
the whisper of hope.
There will come a day
when you will welcome the
tears of remembrance...
as a sun shower of the soul...
a turning of the tide...
a promise of peace.
There will come a day
when you will...
risk loving...
go on believing...
and treasure the
tears of remembering.**

Memories Keep Me Going

The devastation left behind by Hurricane Katrina reminds me that none of us are guaranteed a tomorrow. No one knows the number of days we have here on this earth. And, I guess, that's the way it should be. I know, had I known years in advance, that I would lose Kevin at the age of 21 - I think I'd have worried so much for so long, that I'd have missed all the good stuff! Memories are what keep me going.

__By LuAnn Smith

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.

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