



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

MARCH and APRIL 2011



Seattle King County Chapter P.O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166 206-241-1139



The Robin's Song

It's spring once again. Our part of the world is turning back towards the sun; trees are leafing out; wildflowers are blooming. Robins are again singing to one another. And, I believe, also singing to those who are grieving.

Before my daughter Lori died in the summer of 1991, I was under the misperception that only the English robin had a glorious song. That smaller, red-breasted scalawag of a bird delights all who hear it, and I had felt that we in the United States had been short-changed when they'd misnamed its larger, boring, American cousin the same sweet name. All I'd ever heard our robins do was cheep!

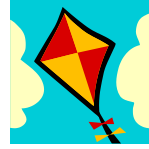
Then one spring day in the year after Lori died, during one of the darkest times of my grief, my ears and heart flew open with surprise at a song I heard outside my window. I distinctly heard, in the midst of my pain, a bird singing loudly and clearly, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio! . . . Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I went outside to see what marvelous bird might have been sent to sing to me. I could barely see the bird at the top of the neighbor's poplar tree, so, while hoping this exotic, magical bird wouldn't fly away while I was gone, I went to find our binoculars.

Rushing back, I could hear the bird from each room in the house. After adjusting the binoculars, I was truly amazed to see one of our "boring" American robins come clearly into view! As he continued singing clear as day, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I marveled at this special message and wondered if my robin was the only one who sang these words. So I looked it up in my *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds* and found that my robin was not an anomaly, but that robins are considered the true harbinger of spring, singing "Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily."

I stood there that day filled with wonder. I wasn't hearing things; there it was in the bird book: "Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily." I thought to myself, "Cheerily . . . No, that isn't what I hear." We had lived in England for a year and our family, especially Lori, who loved to put on an English accent, often said "Cheerio!" to one another when we meant, "Goodbye" or "See you later!" There was no doubt in my mind as I stood there listening. It WAS cheerio. Lori could have found no more perfect way to try to cheer me up AND say "hello"!

Nine springs have passed since then, and although I will always deeply miss Lori's physical presence in my life, those darkest of times are thankfully now mostly in the past. It is spring once again and as I hear the robin singing so hopefully in the highest branches, it takes me back to that first spring song, and I smile, remembering. And I think of all those who are now in the darkest depths of their own grief and pray they too will hear this lovely song.

From *Catching the Light – Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child*
By Genesse Bourdeau Gentry, TCF Marin & San Francisco, CA



Flying A Kite

Daniel Max Rausch, TCF New Haven, Connecticut

I have been a kite flyer for a long time. What joy it brought me when I was a child.

I remember going up on the high, flat roof of my father's machine shop in the city of New Haven and sending my kites aloft from that rooftop. I felt excitement and wonder as I watched my kite dance among the white clouds and the blue, blue sky. Kites are fun.

Later, as I grew to adulthood, I still had fun with kites, but my kite flying became more contemplative, relaxing and therapeutic for me—a peaceful leisure time activity, much like fishing is to the fisherman.

Kites are such curious toys. Often they are flown as symbols of great events or flown as flags of our emotions—and rightly so—because we put so much of ourselves into the flying of our kites.

In Japan, a kite is flown from the house in which there is a newborn, and the child's name is on the kite, flying over the household and announcing the happy birth. In Bermuda, school children fly kites on Good Friday, not only for fun, but as a tradition to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. The sticks of the kites resemble a cross. I believe that kites are also wonderful symbols of resurrection, ascension, and eternal life.

Now I am a bereaved father. My son, Max Benjamin Rausch, died two years ago in May when he was fifteen and one half months old. I never flew kites with Max. Born in January, he was much too young to participate in kite flying during his first spring, and in his second spring he died. Immediately after Max's funeral I fled to Cape Cod with my wife, Katherine. I was in shock and rage, clutched by a deep, numbing sadness. "Why should Max have to get sick and give up life?" I howled at the heavens. I remember trying to fly a kite at that time on the Cape, on the beach at Nauset, but it brought me no peace. In fact, the harsh winds broke my kite and my kite fell into the ocean. I reeled my kite in, its wood and plastic body broken and lifeless at my feet, like Max's body on the hospital bed.

Time passes, and God's grace slowly heals. I have not "gotten over" Max's death. I will grieve for Max for the rest of my own life. I now visit Max at the cemetery, then I go to a beach and fly a kite for him. And I feel a deep satisfaction and a great sense of release and peace now when I fly a kite for Max, for with my kite ascend all my sorrow, all my joy, all my anger, all my prayers, and all my love.

Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of
The Compassionate Friends. Copyright 1997



The Compassionate Friends

Seattle-King County Chapter



The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a *non-profit mutual assistance, self-help* organization offering *friendship, understanding, and hope* to bereaved parents and families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause is welcome. Our meetings provide an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they go through the grieving process. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, but to support bereaved parents, grandparents and adult siblings in the positive resolution of the grief feelings and issues that revolve around the death of their loved one and support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work. Try to attend three times before deciding if TCF is right for you.

TO OUR MEMBERS WHO ARE FURTHER DOWN THE "GRIEF ROAD"

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK – what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF 'veterans' to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

INFORMATION REGARDING OUR MEETINGS

PLEASE come to a meeting. We are here to discuss whatever is on your mind. This is YOUR group and we are here for each other. You do not have to talk at meetings. We welcome your participation in our group, but it is not a requirement. Coming to listen to the other members is okay, too. Our meetings are open to parents, grandparents, adult siblings, or adult family members such as aunts and uncles.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

This group belongs to you and cannot survive without assistance. Areas of help needed are refreshments, setting up before a meeting, being a phone friend for those who may be having a particularly difficult day, help with the newsletter, send thank-you notes, become a facilitator, volunteer to help with Chapter activities or serve on the steering committee.

Part of getting better, sometimes is being there to assist others, too, through this journey.

If you'd like to help, please contact us.

Chapter Co-Leaders: Mike McLeod: 206-369-7366 and Marge Tomlinson: tcfmarge@aol.com



KEEPING IN TOUCH




Seattle-King County Chapter **Phone: 206-241-1139** (TCF Line)

Seattle-King County Chapter **Mailing Address: P. O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166-0896**

Seattle-King County Chapter **Website: www.tcfseattle.org**

Seattle-King County Chapter **Facebook: The Compassionate Friends, Seattle King County Chapter**

 **Phone Support:** Having a rough moment? Need someone to talk to? Call Robyn at 360-259-8006 ♥

Western Washington Regional Coordinator: Jacqueline Russell 360-457-7395

TCF National Office Phone: 877-969-0010

TCF National Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3696 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

TCF National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org (website has link to Facebook)

♥ **TCF Online Support** - Please visit the National website to get the session schedule for the following groups:

♥ Parents / Grandparents

♥ Pregnancy / Infant Loss

♥ Survivors of Suicide

♥ Siblings

♥ No Surviving Children

♥ Men Only

They came ... so briefly and touched our lives with a spark of love. Let us find this spark and warm our lives with the memories of our children's fragile gift.

Remember that life is precious,
love is all that really matters,
and who we are in the end -
and how we've touched the lives of others -
is the legacy we leave behind. - Erika Godwin



Our Chapter's Sharing Group Location:

FEDERAL WAY

~2nd Wednesday evening of each month~

**Mar. 9, Apr. 13, May 11, June 8,
July 13, Aug. 10, Sep. 14,
Oct. 12, Nov. 9, Dec. 14**

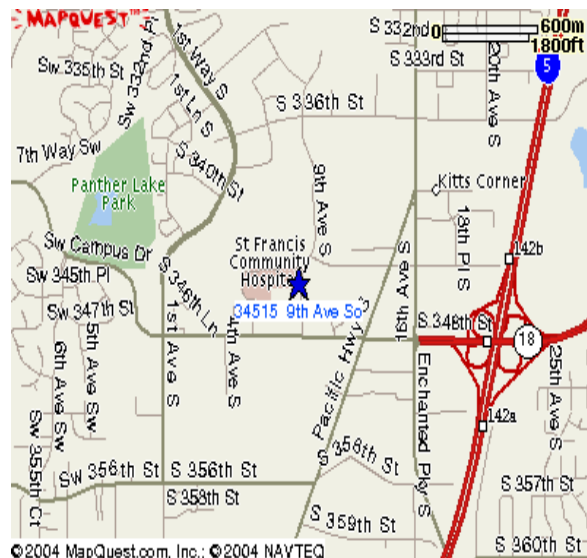
6:30pm – 8:30pm

St. Francis Hospital

34515 9th Ave. So.

Federal Way, WA 98003

Ask at the information desk in the main lobby for
directions to the meeting room.



Books on Grief Available

We have quite a large selection of grief books at our monthly meetings. We invite you to look over the books from our library. We hope you can find something that may help you and your family. If you have a book you would like to donate and share with other bereaved parents, please bring it with you to the meeting.

Birthday Table



In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers – anything you'd like to bring to share. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth and for us to become better acquainted.



What Goes On At A Compassionate Friends Meeting?



A question that is asked frequently by newly bereaved parents who have never attended a meeting is, "What do you do?" or rather, "What will you expect me to do?" In answer to the last question, we expect and require nothing more than your name.

Our meetings are informal. We open the meeting with introductions by mentioning our name and child's name, but if you feel that you can not do this, it is okay also. We have all, at one time or another, choked up on the mention of our child's name or the circumstances of his or her death. Some people attend meetings several times and do not enter any discussion or voice their feelings. They absorb some ideas and discard others that do not meet their immediate needs. But, inevitably, someone around the table will say something that is tuned to the exact way you feel. Then the realization comes that one is among friends, people who really understand and care about them and their sensitive feelings. Some parents are more vocal from the start and they find willing listeners who neither criticize nor pass judgment on them. We most likely have the same feelings of anger, despair, longing, pains, and a multitude of others.

Now a word about crying...PLEASE don't stay away because you are afraid you will cry! We have all cried many times. Perhaps we've attended several months and didn't shed a tear. Then something is said or a memory comes back that brings tears to our eyes. Compassionate Friends can accept the gamut of feelings from tears to laughter. Laughter? Of course! We are, after all, human and our emotions are many and varied. If we can accept each other's feelings, this must include all ranges of emotions.

In the course of discussion, you may hear the answer to a question or problem that has been plaguing you. Several parents may tell you how they handled the question of what to do with their child's possessions - clothes, toys, books, etc., or how they have gotten through holidays, birthdays and other difficult days. Maybe you will pick up something that will be helpful in dealing with your surviving children's problems; how to deal with a seemingly uncaring relative or friends - to hurtful remarks, or how to answer the question "How many children do you have?" Sometimes what has helped one may not have worked for another, but what is important is the open and honest discussion and the chance to decide for yourself.

Please don't let the word *meeting* intimidate you - perhaps we should call it a gathering. Whether our gathering consists of a program featuring a film, a speaker, a tape or general discussion, please don't hesitate to join us! A parent who has "survived" the loss of their child will always be there to greet you and understand. ♡ from Vertuga Hills, CA TCF



The Anticipation of Spring

Pat Loder, TCF Lakes Area Chapter, MI



Spring is a time for growth and renewal. As a child, teen, and then an adult, I always looked forward to spring with anticipation. The thoughts of green grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers of all varieties and colors were a welcome change from the long cold, dreary Michigan winter.

It was a magical time of year. When I was a child, each member of my family watched anxiously to lay claim to being the first to spot the familiar hop-hop of the returning robin, the first sign that spring was actually here. We could finally take off the gloves, shed our heavy winter coats and boots, and roll down the windows on the car to hear the laughter of children playing outside and smell the fresh mown grass as we'd drive down the road.

That's the way it was for me on the first day of spring 12 years ago. I remarked how beautiful the tulips looked as they danced in the wind. The trees were budding, and there was magic in the air. My kids and I shed our heavy winter coats, flinging them in the backseat, rolled down the windows of the car, and started singing in celebration of the beautiful day we were experiencing.

And then . . . **IT** happened.

Suddenly, undeniably, horrifically—my world, my spring, my life changed.

My 5-year-old son, Stephen, died that first spring day. His 8-year-old sister, Stephanie, my firstborn, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on the death certificate. Gone was the laughter, the magic, the beauty of my world.

The springs that followed were no longer filled with anticipation or magic. They were dark and ugly and filled with memories too painful to talk about. I wanted nothing to do with "spring." If H.G. Well's time machine had existed, I would have entered it at the end of winter and fast-forwarded through spring.

As time marched on and one spring followed another, I learned an important lesson in my journey through grief: As much as I wanted to, I couldn't fast-forward through the hard spots. I couldn't go around them. I had to go through them slowly, like a dog paddling through water, so I could get to the other side. Somehow doing this taught me to cope, to endure, to face tomorrow and all the first days of spring that followed. It's much like the transformation that takes place when a butterfly emerges from a dark, cold, seemingly lifeless chrysalis.

A few years ago, as winter was drawing to a close and the first day of spring was quickly approaching, I looked out the kitchen window toward the budding pear tree in the backyard and discovered it was full of chirping robins. I smiled and knew that spring somehow wasn't going to be so bad. It was once again time to enjoy the smells of the season, the beauty of the budding trees, and the magic that the season had to offer.

And I knew Stef and Steve would have wanted that for me.



Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of *The Compassionate Friends*. ©2003



A Letter to My Brother

Robin Holemon, TCF ~ Tuscaloosa, AL



Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer. How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near? Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always. Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness. I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

*I thought of you with love today,
but that is nothing new
I thought of you yesterday,
and days before that too
I think of you in silence,
I often speak your name
All I have are memories and
your picture in a frame
Your memory is my keepsake,
with which I'll never part
God has you in His keeping,
I have you in my heart.*

Author Unknown

When grief is new you need not find a reason however good and brave - to temper your despair.

When grief is new the heart accepts no answer however wise and kind - to ease your mourning.

When grief is new your life can only know disintegration, overwhelming pain...

My friend, try to believe what other grievers learned:

You will not always hurt as you hurt now...

Time will restore the soundness of your mind.

All other words are shadows on the wind when grief is new. - Sascha

You Are Not Alone

We know the heartache that you bear
We've felt the pain,

because we've been there.

We share a bond of infinite sorrow,
A hope for peace,

strength for tomorrow.

A time will come when you'll seek relief,
Solace and comfort

to ease your grief.

We welcome you - we will be there.

We understand; we've much to share.

TCF, Scranton, PA



Parenting Through a Glass Partition: After the Death of a Child

By Alice J. Wisler, TCF Wake County Chapter, North Carolina



Raising children and being bereaved makes me feel like I did when I was six years old. My red tights bagged around my ankles, I often had doggy poop on the bottom of my scuffed patent-leather shoes, and I was constantly running to catch the bus. Now, as a mother of three living children and one who died, I feel overwhelmed, forgetful and, to use a word my Aunt Mollie often said, discombobulated.

At the fast food restaurant, my children laugh in the play area as I sit drinking coffee behind the glass partition that separates the play area from the dining section. While I have hugged them so tightly their tonsils could pop out, I am still, much of the time, finding myself watching them from a distance. They are mine, but so was Daniel, and in the course of a moment I know they could be gone, as he is.

When Rachel, 11, was late coming home from a shopping trip with her grandmother, I thought they had been tied up in traffic, but then my mind leaped off into an insane spin and I was certain she'd been in an accident. My thoughts dove into planning her funeral.

She came home without a scratch, and I gulped my worries away—for the moment.

When my children say, "I love you, Mom," and spontaneously wrap their arms around me, I'm certain this could be the end.

"So you live in fear?" a friend asks.

Well, no. I live in reality.

My reality is hearing my children call "Hi, Daniel" when we drive on Interstate 40 near Exit 270, where there's a view of Daniel's Place, what my children have named the cemetery. Ben, at five, older than his older brother ever got to be, asks which of our toys Daniel liked to play with and with a smile on his face, listens as I share a story about Daniel and the Fisher Price fishing rod. Elizabeth, age four, tells me out of the blue that Daniel isn't dead; he lives with God. Later, she hugs me and says she wishes Daniel was here. She's never been photographed with her oldest brother. She kicked in the womb as Daniel breathed his last. Three months later, this failed-vasectomy child was born. I was certain she'd be severely traumatized. But so far, at age four, she has only been known to tell the neighbor girl she doesn't like her.

My reality is that a part of my heart wanted to be childless when Daniel died so that I could have time to weep and wail without having to meet the demands of exasperated cries, without having to wipe little bottoms and without having to search for tiny shoes and socks. When infant Liz used to wake crying months after Daniel's death, I'd hold her and we'd sob together.

The hole in my heart looms large today. The new school year and Daniel's birthday are just around the corner. I finish my coffee and tell my kids it's time to attend the Open House. While grinning at my children and me, a friend exclaims, "One in middle school, one in kindergarten, and one in preschool! You will be busy." I paste on a phony smile and think, "Not busy enough." I need my fourth grader. But Daniel, my would-be-nine-year-old, died four years ago before completing a year of preschool.

When we arrive home from the Open House, Ben trips onto the pavement while playing ball and I hold him as he cries and his knee bleeds. Whispering, I assure him, "It is going to be okay." What a luxury to be able to tell my children this line of comfort. For Daniel, with the cancer treatments he had to go through, it was not "okay." Although I prayed daily he'd be cured, it was beyond my control. A scraped knee will heal.

How do we do it? How do we continue living the role of the nurturing and loving parent with the enormous responsibilities, when at times, we can barely put one foot in front of the other?

Here are some tips that have worked for fellow bereaved parents and me:

- Take breaks. This is easier said than done, I know. But I believe you need more breaks than before the death of your child. Your energy for living has been depleted. If you're home all day with the demands of little ones as I have been, you need time alone. If your spouse is at home all day with the children, he or she needs a break.
- Let anger out in a constructive way. When you find you're constantly yelling at the kids, it's time to figure out another release for anger. Play basketball, go on a walk or bike ride. Shut yourself in a room and write. Use your pent-up frustration to pull weeds in the garden or sweep the garage.
- Learn to apologize—often. When you do find yourself unreasonably upset with your children, apologize for your reactions. Grief can make you irrational.
- Hug your kids more—even if the older ones whine and don't want you to. They know now as we do how important hugs and showing our affection really are.
- Talk it out. Tell your children why you are feeling sad or discouraged. If you're having a frustrating day, let them know. Even my little ones could understand that "Mommy or Daddy is sad because she/he misses Daniel."
- Spend time with kids—one on one—if possible. Just you and your daughter can go shopping or out for ice cream. Don't force talk of her dead brother or sister. Just be together for the sake of spending time together. We focus a lot on our deceased children; our living children need to feel valued, too.
- Don't stifle your children as they grow and grieve in their own ways.
- Write love letters to your surviving children. Sometimes it is easier to convey feelings on paper. Give the letters to your kids or keep them to reread later.
- Share your child who died. He is a part of the family and his story needs to be told.

Don't fear your "glass partition" view of parenting. As with the other phases and experiences of grief, honor it, and don't fight it.

You are modeling survival. Even as your tears flow and you are overcome with sorrow, your children can learn this is okay. They will also reflect (although it may be years later) that Mom got out of bed, made us breakfast, shopped for school supplies, and went to our soccer games even when she didn't feel like it. They will learn life is tough and even when the storms hit the hardest, it is possible to live through them.

Believe your surviving children will be all right even as they see you suffering and as they face their own monumental pain. In time, they may learn a deeper sensitivity. Perhaps they will become more compassionate because of their experiences. You can guarantee they're more realistic. Your son or daughter might even become a winner of the Noble Peace Prize. (We can still dream, can't we?)

I have to remember that although once laid-back, I was never the perfect parent before Daniel died. I had vices and virtues then, just as I have now. Perhaps grief has helped us become better aware of what we are all about. Listen. There are many negatives, but there is much to smile about now, too. Devotion made us caring and loving parents before, and it can carry us through during this rocky road of bereavement. There is the ability to parent effectively through the glass partition.



With Love, We Remember Them...



In Memory of ...
My mom, TERA MARIE
 August 1974 – October 2006
 “I love and miss you.”
 From Quynten

In Memory of ...
GARRETT
 “Thank you, group!”
 From Penny Felt

In Memory of ...
PRESTON
 “In memory of my son.”
 From Doris Hixon

In Memory of ...
DERRIK
 “I miss you. With love, Grandma.”
 From Grandma Vicky Kantner

In Memory of ...
TIMOTHY
 “Happy 40th Birthday, my precious son.”
 “You are in my heart always.”
 From Patti Lettich

In Memory of ...
MICHAEL
 October 1963 – November 1988
 “Love you and miss you so much. Mom”
 From Patty McKee

In Memory of ...
DERRIK
 “I miss you so much. Love, Mom.”
 From Cindy McLean

In Memory of ...
STUART
 February 1956 – October 2006
 “I miss my boy.”
 From Don Newman

In Memory of ...
ALAN
 “You are always in my heart, my son.”
 From Leslie Segi

In Memory of ...
KYLE
 “Son, as you are smiling down on us, I am smiling in my heart thinking of you!
 Love, Mom, Dad, Shaun & the Ohana”
 “Kyle – Love U!”
 From Shirley, Dwight and Shaun Shiotani

Thank you to the **Perkins** family and “**Living51Percent**” for their fundraising efforts for .Seattle King County TCF.

In Memory of ...
GARRET
 “Happy 17th Birthday. We love you.”
 From Tony, Trish and Trevor Hodges

In Memory of ...
MICHAEL
 “To my angel Michael. Love you and miss you always.
 Justice at last!”
 From Tammy Blankenship

In Memory of ...
MATTHEW (Boo Boo)
 “Miss you, Boo Boo.”
 From Mark Johnson

In Memory of ...
LAURA and ANDREA
 From Anita Mammoser

In Memory of ...
AMBER
 From the Kevin Williams family

In Memory of ...
KYLE
 “Dearest Son – We hold you in our hearts and smile thinking of your zany ways. Watch over us.
 Love, Mom and Dad”
 From Shirley and Dwight Shiotani

In Memory of ...
MATTHEW and MONTEY
 “My dear sons.”
 From Judith Hitchcock

In Memory of ...
CHRIS
 “My beautiful son, Chris. We all miss you so much!! I love you with all my heart. – Mom”
 From Debbie West

In Memory of ...
KEVIN
 From Ken and Jennifer Stoner

Thank you to **Group Health** for selecting Seattle King County TCF to be a recipient of their Volunteer Grant.

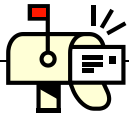
♥ **Thank you to all who make donations to Seattle-King County TCF!**

Love Gifts help bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Your generosity allows us to continue printing and mailing newsletters, purchasing brochures, pay the phone bill, buying postage and to cover the many other expenses to help grieving families in our community.

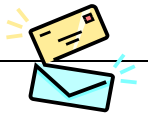
We are grateful to all who make donations through their workplace “Matching Gift” programs. The “Matching Gift” increases the donation by 50-100%.

♥ **TCF asks for donations in memory of our children who have died.** ♥

Our chapter is funded solely through donations; therefore we sincerely appreciate your support.



♥ Please help us help others by making a LOVE GIFT today. ♥
All donations are tax deductible. You and your child's name will be noted in the next newsletter



Love Gift Form

Love gifts are **tax-deductible donations** made to the Seattle-King County Chapter of TCF in memory of your beloved child, sibling, grandchild or loved one.

Send checks and forms to: Seattle- King County TCF
Love Gifts
P.O. Box 66896
Seattle, WA 98166-0896

Your name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (if we have any questions): _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

In memory of (name of child): _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Death: _____

Special Message: _____

Send checks and forms to: Seattle – King County TCF
Love Gifts
P.O. Box 66896
Seattle, WA 98166-0896



PLEASE LET ME MOURN

by Lonnie Forland, TCF, Northwood, IA

I've never lost a child before, and I don't understand all these emotions I am feeling.

Will you try to understand and help me?

PLEASE LET ME MOURN

I may act an appear together, but I am not.

Often it huts so much I can hardly bear it.

PLEASE LET ME MOURN

Don't expect too much from me.

I will try to help you know what I can and cannot handle.

Sometimes I am not always sure.

PLEASE LET ME MOURN

Let me talk about my child. I need to talk, it's part of the healing.

Don't pretend nothing has happened; it hurts terribly when you do.

I love my child very much, and my memories are all I have now. They are very precious to me.

PLEASE LET ME MOURN

Sometimes I cry and act differently, but it's all part of grieving.

My tears are necessary and needed and should not be held back.

It even helps when you cry with me. Please don't fear my tears.

PLEASE LET ME MOURN

What I need most is your friendship, your sympathy, your prayers, your support, and your understanding love.

I am not the same person I was before my child died and I never will be again.

Hopefully we can all grow from this tragedy.

PLEASE LET ME MOURN

God gives me the strength to face each day and the hope that I will survive with His help and yours.

Time will heal some of the pain, but there will always be an empty place in my heart.

PLEASE LET ME MOURN

And thank you for helping me through the most difficult time of my life.

The Compassionate Friends
Seattle-King County Chapter
P.O. Box 66896
Seattle, WA 98166-0896



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March & April
2011

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Compassionate Friends Unveils "Create a Memorial Website" Program

When you ask bereaved parents their greatest fear, you're likely to hear that they're afraid their child will be forgotten. That fear can now be put to rest through The Compassionate Friends new "Create a Memorial Website" program. In partnership with online memorial leader Legacy.com., the new Compassionate Friends program allows you to easily create an online memorial website so that your child, sibling, or grandchild will always be remembered. A portion of the proceeds from the memorial website you create will also go to support The Compassionate Friends and its many national programs designed to aid families going through the natural grieving process following the death of a child. With these unique, easy-to-create memorial tributes, you can: customize the design, yet create a site in five minutes using Legacy.com's four-step process; include photos, videos, stories, and more; add music; invite family and friends to contribute and join in celebrating the life of the child you're remembering; and much more. There is a 14 day free trial period and 25% discount off the first year's sponsorship. To learn more and to take advantage of these offers, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and under "Resources" click on "Create a Memorial Website."

Now On facebook ... Seattle King County Chapter and TCF National

Visit both Facebook pages for support and to help promote The Compassionate Friends:
Our local chapter's Facebook page is at: *The Compassionate Friends, Seattle King County Chapter*.
The national TCF page can be found at: *The Compassionate Friends/USA*
The Facebook pages will provide a forum for free and open conversation. These pages are an informative and supportive place for those of us who are mourning the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild. All are welcome to leave messages and talk about their child and their grief. As in our meetings, we especially appreciate shared insights about anything that has brought you comfort, hope, or some measure of peace. While messages will be reviewed, they will not be screened before they are posted. So we are asking members to be gentle and respectful of one another and to use common sense in their posts - no offensive language, no overt selling of products or services and no religious proselytizing. Also, keep in mind that all opinions expressed are those of the individual poster and do not necessarily reflect those of The Compassionate Friends, Inc. In addition to the social support aspect, these pages will have local chapter information and information about events such as conferences, the Walk to Remember, and the Worldwide Candle Lighting. Please visit often and contribute to the conversation.