

JUST FLOW WITH THE SEASON AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

We're well into November and it's almost time to take the "January pill". After Tricia died I decided I'd invent a pill you could take the week before Thanksgiving and when you came to, it would be January! I'm still working on the invention. In the meantime, I know many of you are already dreading the approaching holidays.

The true spirit and meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas are not necessarily exemplified by some of our "traditions". You are re-evaluating many aspects of your life so let this also apply to the coming holidays. You will not always feel as you do now. You will find joy in holiday activities, but maybe not in all the things you once thought so very important.

Flow with the season and with your sadness, knowing strength will come as you work with what you can do without overtaxing yourself. Resolve to be as generous with your energy as you can and as selfish as you have to be to protect the emerging person you will become as a result of your loss. This person can be truly beautiful and loving because of what you have learned through grief.

You will miss your child; no magic potion can wipe the pain away. Enjoy what you can—you deserve some pleasure. And may some measure of peace overtake you before this year ends.

Elizabeth B. Estes TCF, Augusta, GA

Love Gifts for November

Joan and George Carafos in memory of David Carafos

Nolee Feiock in memory of Matthew Gnage

Laura and William Smith in memory of Graham Wilson

Phyllis and Mark Simon in memory of Jeffrey Simon

As we approach the end of 2007 please keep TCF Rochester in your thoughts for a tax deductible contribution.

Welcome New Friends

At nearly every meeting we welcome new members to our group, always with mixed emotions. We are glad you found us, but we are so sorry for the circumstances that bring us together. We understand your pain; we hope our unconditional friendship and understanding will help you through your grief.

Attending a meeting for the first two or three times takes courage, but for many it is the first real step toward healing. It may seem overwhelming, so we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable.

To receive this newsletter via e-mail please contact Steve Haupt at shaupt1@rochester.rr.com

TCF Rochester Donations:

If you would like to contribute to our Compassionate Friends Chapter please forward your Love Gifts and Donations to The Compassionate Friends of Rochester at 18 Latium Drive, Pittsford, NY 14534. Please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends of Rochester, NY. Sincerest Thanks.

Today Is My Birthday

Today is my birthday
Be happy for me
I lived a short but full happy life
I had the pleasure of love
And the joy of the family
Do not be sad
Look up towards the stars
And catch each twinkle in your heart
For I am there with you

Today is my birthday
My legacy is not wealth or mighty belongings
My legacy is you and your life
Spend it wisely and carefully
Guard it always
Do not be sad
Feel the wind on your face
And in your hair
And know that I loved you
For I am there in your laughter
And in your heart

Today is my birthday
Learn to live without me
Take my strength with you
For you are not alone
Do not be sad
Feel the rain on your face
Feel all life's treasures
And know that you are alive!
At each step of the way
I will help you
For I am with you always
Until we meet again
Today Is My Birthday!!

Author Unknown

A Christmas Story

When I was just a little girl
Around the age of three
I remember a Christmas
When Santa came to see me
A doll wrapped up
In a pretty bright red bow
Long golden hair to stroke
Oh my, how my heart glowed
And then came a Christmas
Later on in time
When I shared my first Christmas
With a son that was all mine
A few years later down the road
When he was only five
I didn't know it would be
The last Christmas in my life
Now on Christmas
As many in all these years
I spend my days at a grave
Shedding many tears
The Holidays come every year
That, I cannot change
But through all my memories
My memories I can rearrange
I can remember all the good years
That he and I had shared
I can still here the giggles
When he got that talking teddy bear
I can remember the hugs and squeals of "OH MOM"
As each gift he opened on that day
I can sit back and smile remembering
Before the angels took him away
Now I am older than I once used to be
But my mind drifts back
To what once was on Christmas
When my son was on earth with me
I tuck my head to fight the snow
As I wade through the fenced in graves
I've got my gift to give to him
On this years' Christmas Day

Sharon Bryant *Memory of Andrew Frank Dunbar 1-22-72 - 10-24-77 Reprinted by permission of author*



Upcoming Planned Events— Mark Your Calendars:

Annual Memorial Candle Lighting and Social —**December 11th—7:00 PM** (regular meeting)
Darcie Simms—Special Workshop followed by evening Speaking Engagement - **May 19th 2008**—info. To follow
Annual Garage Sale—**JUNE 5—June 7, 2008**—information to follow—**HOLD YOUR VALUABLES FOR US !!!**
Balloon Release—**June 10th 2008**—more information to follow

stay tuned for more activities and speakers

2008 TCF National

The 31st Compassionate Friends National Conference will be held in Nashville, Tennessee July 18-20, 2008 . The theme this year will be *Volunteers for Healing—Friends for the Future*. Many of us have attended previous conferences and have all found them to be informative, emotional and a way to meet many others who walk in our shoes. This year the TCF Rochester Steering Committee has earmarked some funds from our treasury to assist in defraying some of the expenses for chapter members who elect to attend the conference. How much we can afford to assist will be dependent on the number of folks attending, but is likely to be on the order of 5 to 10 percent. If you are interested in learning more about the conference, associated costs or are interested in attending please contact Mark Simon at 585-586-4721 or via e-mail at mas18@rochester.rr.com. We need to have a complete list of potential attendees by the end of January so that we can finalize expenses and related details and identify any “special” activities or support opportunities that maybe available to us as a group.



Chapter Information:

Meeting Location:

Lifetime Care Care
3111 Winton Road South
(across from Valley Cadillac)

Meeting Days for December 2007:

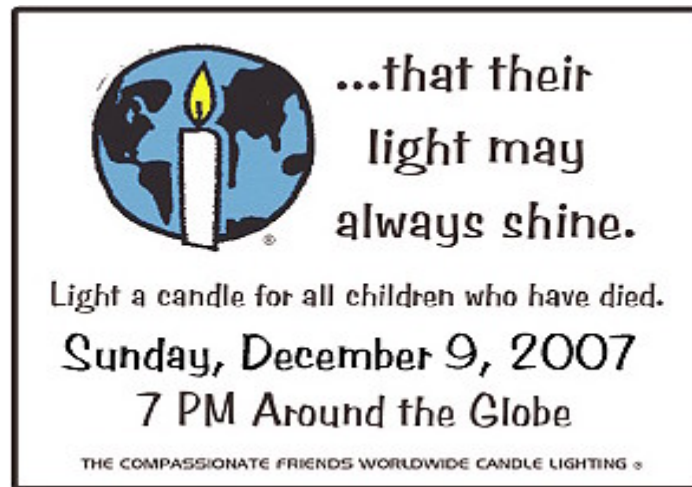
Tuesday the 11th only
7:00 P.M. to 7:15 P.M. - social
7:15 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. - meeting

Contacts:

Phyllis Simon - 585-586-4721
Cathy Spoto - 585-254-6983
TCF Regional Coordinator:
Jacquie Edwards-Mitchell 718-451-0814
TCF National 877-969-0010
or www.compassionatefriends.org

Send news letter inputs or web comments to:
Mark Simon at: mas18@rochester.rr.com

Miscellaneous:



Please bring your old working cell phones to a meeting to support our recycling fund raiser.

Rochester Chapter TCF Mission:

The MISSION of the Rochester Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.



Grief Work is Hard Work

When I first began my journey of grief following the death my only child, Todd, I didn't comprehend that I would have to take an active role in what would come to be defined as “grief work.” All I knew was the pain, the shock, the sorrow, the desire to go to sleep and never awaken. My child was dead, and I had no desire to live.

As the months and then the years passed, I began to realize that I was, albeit unconsciously, doing grief work. Once I realized I could not walk this road alone, I became involved in our Compassionate Friends Chapter. That was the beginning of my “grief work.” A few months later I enrolled in a six week program for bereaved mothers. More grief work. I have since attended seminars, retreats and workshops. From each effort I gained something new, something insightful, something that eased my burden just a bit, something that helped me to cope with this, the worst, of all losses.

I consumed books. Some were about grief; others were about life. I watched movie, some about grief and some about life. I talked with friends.....sometimes about grief and sometimes about life.

Along the way I found that if I reached out to others, I was, once again, doing grief work. You see, I discovered that grief work is healing work. It doesn't dry my tears, nor does it mend my broken heart. Instead, it allows me to accept that I am in this place and living in this moment. That doesn't sound like much.....unless one has lost a child to death. Lost a child to death. What a horrifying thought. Yet now I can say it to others, talk with others who are raw and new in their grief and know that I have come to accept that my son is gone from this plane. My grief work will continue until I die.

When we attend workshops, seminars, special presentations, Compassionate Friends meetings and privately contemplate the depth of our loss and changes in our lives, we are doing grief work. Each of us travels this road differently, but we owe it to ourselves to do our grief work. Not easy work, not fun work, not immediately rewarding work, but this is work, just the same.

Annette Mennen Baldwin In memory of my son, Todd Mennen TCF, Katy, TX

