



Frost

On a cold winter's day
Frost etches a beautiful artistry
On every thing it touches every blade of grass
It glitters and sparkles and for moments
Before the sun comes out and the master piece evaporates
before our eyes we stand memorized cherishing the wondrous sight
Like frost our children were only here for a brief moment
But while they were here
Whether it was moments in the womb
Days, months or many years
They etched their beautiful artistry of love
On our hearts and lives and all of those
They touched.
Unlike frost what they etched is forever
It is something that we can cherish and hold onto always
We stand here tonight lighting a candle to remember children
we will never forget
Their light their sprits their artistry lives on
And like the flame of the candle gives warmth on a cold
winter's night
And light in the darkness
The love our children gave us still remains
It keeps us warm when the cold winds of grief blow
It lights our way through the darkness and loneliness
That we feel
And it gives us hope

Julie Short In Loving Memory of Kyrá 2007 Southeastern TCF Candle Lighting Ceremony



PATHS OF GOLD

For Sixth Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting

December 8th, 2002

Little candle, twinkling bright,
On this ebon winter night,
Send aloft your loving light,
Gravity ignore!

Deliver gleams a' glowing high,
Thru the clear nocturnal sky,
O'er moonbeams dancing nigh,
To that Open Door!

Ne'er forgot, beloved ones,
Precious daughters; siblings; sons,
Far too soon their races run,
Let them hear once more!

Of our prayers and memories,
'Way beyond Earth's wind-swept trees,
O'er ten billion galaxies,
Now, 'tis time to soar!

All the love our hearts can hold,
Race along these paths of gold,
Courtesy of candles, bold,
Shine forever more!

Vicki Douglas-Otto
The Compassionate Friends Tucson, Arizona



First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas
without her being here.
Yet the world is singing round me,
joyful tidings and good cheer.

Though I try to put on armor
and brave the sights and sounds,
a few moments worth of shopping,
and the tears are spilling down.

I pray for strength to do it,
find a path through holidays,
look for shortcuts, good ideas,
some directions through the maze.

Then I find at last the answer:
I'll include her symbolically.
And the giving becomes perfect;
her love's flowing down, through me.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
From *Stars in the Deepest Night –*
After the Death of a Child

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 130 Portview Circle, Rochester, NY 14617. Please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends of Rochester, NY. Sincerest Thanks.

Thoughts About the Holidays

Many are wondering how they will manage to endure the holiday season after the loss of their child. It seems an impossible feat, but each of us will survive—and continue to move through this journey called grief. Below are a mix of ideas and thoughts gathered to help as you move through this season.

First, do not expect the usual holiday. Think about what you want to do, what would mean the most for you and your family and do those things. This may mean continuing some of the traditions from the past or creating a new traditions that feel right this year.

It is helpful to plan ahead as best you can. Then let others know what you will or will not be doing this year. It is okay to do what feels right for you and your family as you are the only ones that know where you are in your grief. This maybe the year to simplify things.

Try to take care of yourself—which is not always easy in the best of times. Trying to rest or find some quiet time can be a very good thing. Be patient with yourself and others as they grieve. Don't fight your grief as it may "come out" anyway.

Simple ideas to remember your child include:

- Lighting a candle to burn all day in their memory
- Toasting your child
- Reading a poem or other writing that has special meaning
- Include a religious service or prayer in your holidays
- Honor your child by giving gifts in their memory—pictures, favorite books or music
- Include other family members or children in planning something special.

As we go through this time of grief, we do not work to forget, but to remember the happy times.

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.



Upcoming Planned Events— Mark Your Calendars:

December 12, 2010—TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting—see below

December 14, 2010— Annual Candle Lighting at Lifetime Care—see below

January 11, 2011—Break-out session: Yoga-Plus (Barb Silverstein)

January 22, 2011—A Saturday Evening Dinner Out— watch for more details on location (Pittsford)

TCF Rochester

Annual Candle Lighting

“That Their Light May Always Shine”

Tuesday, December 14th

(a regular meeting night)

7—9pm

At Lifetime Care on Winton Rd.

Please come and light a candle in memory of your child.

We invite everyone (parents, family, & friends) to Come and share in this beautiful memorial during this special time of year.

Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share. Thank you!



Chapter Information:

Meeting Location:

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

Meeting Days for December 2010:

Tuesday the 14th and Tuesday the 28th
7:00 P.M. to 7:15 P.M. - social
7:15 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. - meeting

Contacts:

Brenda Schmidt— 585-370-6095
Becky Price—585-346-2441
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TCF Regional Coordinator:
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TCF National 877-969-0010
or www.compassionatefriends.org

Send news letter inputs or web comments to:
colleenkohl@hotmail.com

Worldwide Candle Lighting December 12, 2010

Candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause.

November Donations and Love Gifts

Linnea & Dewey Hammond in memory of Sabrina I. Joy

See Linda for TCF Bracelets (\$2.00) and Memorial
votive candle holders (\$5.00)

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.

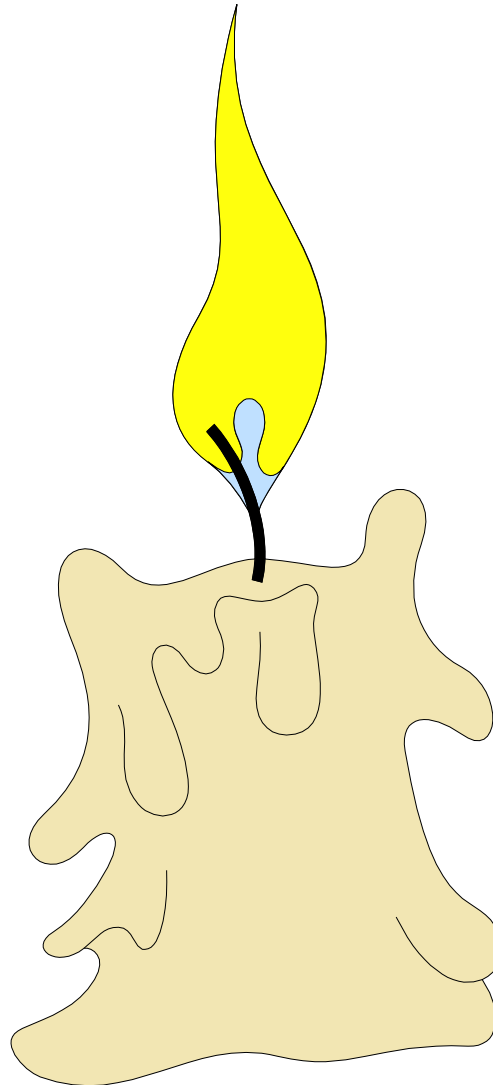


Our Children Remembered
December, 2010
Birthdays and Remembrance Days



Birthdays

Brian Charles Oster
Erich Lee Anderson
Douglas Outterson
Michael David Mueller
Christopher Czerw
Tina Rheinwald
Abigail Leigh Buzard
David Henry Outterson
Curtis Aaron Seibert
Shawn P. Viola



Remembrance Days

Scott Martin Johnson
Ryan P. Todisco
Steven L. Britt
Tristan Folley Hanna
Andrew Urquhart
David Henry Outterson
Nora E. McMahon
Matthew Gabe Fogarassy
Jessica Lyndsey Frey
Jennifer Lyn Quackenbush
Jason S. Grizzanto



Christmas Without My Child

Last night we held our Compassionate Friends chapter meeting for November: the topic was Holidays and Grief. We met in small groups to discuss how we are going to get through this most difficult of times. While we found no single answer, we did make some discoveries about ourselves. We also found some basic ways to take control of our lives.

In our group of eleven were several newly bereaved parents. Deep sorrow and anxiety were apparent in each face as we opened the dialogue – a discussion of the holiday season without their children. This anxiety and deep sorrow immediately became mine; I am that parent, I am still on the first leg of what may be a long journey without my child. Their tears were mine as we talked.

As the discussion progressed, I could see a bit of each parent's tension slowly release. I felt as if I could read their minds: give me some answers, tell me I will survive this, tell me how you did it. The answers were all different; the reassurances of parents who had lost their child and survived that first heartbreaking holiday were there. Some of the answers came from the newly bereaved as they explored their inner feelings.

We found consensus on one important factor: we must give ourselves permission to do what makes us most comfortable. We are not the caretakers to the world right now; we must take care of ourselves. If established traditions bother us, then we must turn to something else. What is the point of pouring salt into this open wound? Perhaps next year or the year after, when the wound is not so fresh, we will want to return to former traditions. Perhaps not.

Through tears and some light laughter, we realized that we are not invincible. We are not responsible for the happiness of friends and extended family. We do not have to meet the expectations of others. We must accept our emotional limitations and the psychological and physical toll that grief takes on us. We must slow down and change our perspective. We must do what is right for us, especially during the holidays.

Most of those who had been through at least one holiday season without their child felt that making changes for the first year or two was a positive step forward. We found that talking honestly with our family about our feelings might make them feel temporarily uncomfortable but it did clear the air about expectations. We agreed that limiting our casual social relationships negated the need to make explanations regarding our lack of interest in holiday celebrations. By "dropping out" we also eliminated obligations in many areas. This gives us the freedom to choose simplicity over stress, essentials over hassles and flexibility over anxiety. This gives us the opportunity to live in the moment, go where our emotions take us and listen to our hearts.

While we all agreed that the holidays are overwhelming for parents whose children have died, we also agreed that we are each individuals and we each perceive the world

differently. Some of us want and need the old traditions during the holiday season. Some of us need to be with people who are not part of our grieving process. Others among us felt that solitude and simplicity were the answer.

The answer to the question of how we get through the holidays is found within each one of us. We each have our own truth. The challenge, we decided, is to honor that truth and hold the line against external pressures. A few of our newly bereaved parents could barely choke out a word or two. Others were more vocal. While grief consumes some of us for many, many years, others appear to "go with the flow" of life very early in their grief. What feels right for one of us may be abhorrent to someone else.

One universal truth did emerge from our conversations: we miss our beautiful children and love them as deeply as when they walked beside us. We live in this purgatory each day of the year, but during the holidays it seems most oppressive. Our children have been torn from our lives forever. Daily life and special traditions will always reflect the deep void that has become our reality.

We need our Compassionate Friends at the holiday season. We need to know that others have walked this road, have lived this nightmare and have managed to survive. We each continue to rediscover hope through our Compassionate Friends. And in finding that hope we have given and received the purest gift of the season: the possibility of peace.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX
November 9, 2005*