



Love Gifts for January 2007



Barb and Hugh Outterson in memory of David Henry Outterson

Stephen and Kathleen Haupt in Memory of Christopher Robert Crawford

Elizabeth Barklund in memory of Molly Crye

Ed and Margie Klehr in memory of Pat Helen Klehr

*Another Year Without My Child continued from page 1 ....*

grief lasts for a lifetime. Each stage is different, each sudden, poignant memory is paralyzing and each new day brings an opportunity to evaluate progress.

Much has changed during the past four years. Much will change throughout my life. Each of us experiences the loss of our child at the deepest level of our psyches. Yet each of us comes to this place with a different set of experiences and a unique genetic composition. I cannot compare myself to others. I can only mark my tiny steps forward with a sense of wonder at the resiliency of the human mind and spirit while simultaneously accepting that I am not in control.....at any moment a flash of the past might bring me to my knees. I have learned to go with it.

I have found hope for the future. It certainly isn't the future I had envisioned. There will be no late night talks with my son, no holidays or birthdays shared, no participation in my son's children's lives, no cards, no handmade gifts. That door was closed by a lawsuit waged by unhappy former in-laws who have no standing in my life today. I have crawled through the minefields and dodged the bullets of some pretty mentally unbalanced people and survived. I have faced the abyss of losing my only child while enduring the cruelest of sniping, the worst of intentionally inflicted pain. I did none of this with grace and finesse.....I merely got through it. I survived. I became stronger by letting go of my anger. I found hope by remembering the goodness that is my son and by leaning on friends who had lost their children. These friends were there for me when I so desperately needed the comfort of kindred souls: Compassionate Friends who reached out to me gave me the glimmer of hope when all seemed forever lost and living was almost intolerable.

Now the healing process has completed its circle. I am here for those parents who need me. Strangely this helps me to heal as well. I reach out to others who are new to the process of grief, and I tell them that there is hope. One day the sunrise will again be beautiful and you will find peace within yourself. You will remember your child's life, you will honor your child's life and you will forever be changed by your child's death. But always, always, your child will remain in your heart. This is my truth to all who wish to know. Lean on us, for we have been where you are today. We will walk with you on your journey toward hope, peace and resolution. It is in this place that the healing will begin. This is a new year.

Annette Mennen Baldwin—TCF, Katy, TX In memory of my son, Todd Mennen January, 2007

**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.

The Compassionate Friends is for Sharing

By Jackie Wesley TCF, East Central Indiana

Many people may think that meetings of The Compassionate Friends consist of bereaved people who sit and cry most of the evening, but that is certainly a misconception. It is normal to shed tears as we talk about our child's death, and we would expect a newly bereaved person to cry. We understand that completely. But we don't just sit and cry. Would you believe that most of the time we spend in our sharing group circle we may enjoy hearing others' stories about their children, or even sharing our own? Our meetings are usually about our memories, our questions and also telling what has helped us to cope with it all. We all have ideas that we share with others in the hope that they may reach a point of "good memories" instead of bad memories of the child's death.

A support group should be very comforting and welcoming to those who attend and should always have non-judgmental members. We are less concerned at how the child died (even though we do care) and we are **more** concerned that we be there for the parents, siblings or grandparents who need us. They have a desire to talk and share about their loved one. We want to let them lean on us in their time of pain, just as we had others before us who let us lean on them. It does come full circle.

Lights of Love

Can you see our candles  
Burning in the night?  
Lights of love we send you  
Rays of purest white  
Children we remember  
Though missing from our sight  
In honor and remembrance  
We light candles in the night  
All across the big blue marble  
Spinning out in space  
Can you see the candles burning  
From this human place?  
Oh, angels gone before us  
Who taught us perfect love  
This night the world lights candles  
That you may see them from above  
Tonight the globe is lit by love  
Of those who know great sorrow,  
But as we remember our yesterdays  
Let's light one candle for tomorrow  
We will not forget,  
And every year in deep December  
On Earth we will light candles  
As.....we remember

By Jacqueline Brown  
Peace Valley TCF, New Britain PA

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:

Breakout Session—Men Only—January 23<sup>rd</sup>

Breakout Session—Step Parents Only—March 20<sup>th</sup> (dependent on facilitator availability—date may change)

Building a Worry Tree—May 22<sup>nd</sup> - note date change (outside at Lifetime Care weather permitting)

*Stay tuned for information on some very special speakers and activities.*

*If you would like to receive your Newsletter via e-mail rather than snail mail please forward your e-mail address to [mas18@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mas18@rochester.rr.com). You will need the Adobe Reader to open the electronic newsletter. This application can be downloaded for free from [www.Adobe.com](http://www.Adobe.com).*

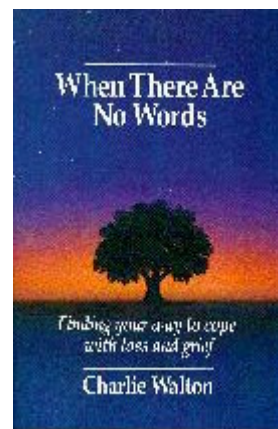
## Book Review:

### [When There are No Words](#)

By: Charlie Walton

This book describes that terrible moment when you desperately want to say something to console a friend or loved one and no words seem appropriate. This book is a conversation between a sensitive, articulate victim of sudden, tragic loss, and any person struggling to endure the numbing first hours and weeks of a life catastrophe.

The book is helpful in families, friends, counselors, and supporters of the persons retrieving their life and purpose. When There Are No Words helps you find the path through grief and understand that loss is part of life.



## Chapter Information:

### Meeting Location:

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

### Meeting Days for February 2007:

Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup>  
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  
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TCF Regional Coordinator:  
Jacquie Edwards-Mitchell 718-451-0814  
TCF National 877-969-0010  
or [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### Send news letter inputs or web comments to:

Mark Simon at:  
e-mail: [mas18@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mas18@rochester.rr.com)

## Miscellaneous:

### The Compassionate Friends-Rochester & [basketsofkindness.com](http://basketsofkindness.com)



are pleased to bring you this wonderful opportunity to help our chapter. We will receive 15% of every gift basket purchased in the name of The Compassionate Friends-Rochester. We do not have many expenses, but this will help us with the few expenses that we do have. If everyone could just send one or two gift baskets it would help us so much. Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, birthdays, thank you gifts for clients, etc. are also wonderful times for sending a basket. Everybody loves a gift basket!



See Phyllis 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.*



## Another Year Without My Child

It's a new year and I am marking it, for the fifth time, without my child. Last month was the fourth anniversary of his death. This is one more milestone in the journey of a bereaved parent. The new year brings the promise of new adventures, happiness and prosperity to others. To bereaved parents it adds another dimension to our loss. It also brings the opportunity to look at where we are and how far we have come.

I remember the first new year's day without my son. What an empty, hollow feeling I had on January 1, 2003. My world had ended, the shock was still systemic in my mind and body, and I counted the days since he last walked, talked and laughed on this earthly plane, dwelling on the passing of days, hours and minutes since the moment of his death. I was frozen.

Looking back at that time, I recall just how the pain felt; unlike other pain, the pain of losing a child is never forgotten. I feel the familiar jolt that rocked my mind and body each time I awoke to remember that my son had died. I remember the misery of slogging through endless, meaningless days. I remember the tears, the second guessing, the anger, the guilt...I remember it all. I still bounce in and out of those emotions; this will never end. It has moderated greatly, but it never ends.

Now I am more focused on my son's life. Details about his life spring into my mind...happy times, maturing times, good times and funny times. I remember it all with the clarity that only a mother can possess. And so, that is how I will begin this new year...remembering the life of my child but never forgetting the loss. I am a different person than I was before my son died. I feel as though a lightning bolt struck me on the day of his death, and now I perceive the world from a different vantage point. I have simplified my life from what it once was. I have many new friends who share the experience of losing a child; I have permanently removed old friends from my life who simply couldn't accept my grief and were fearful of talking about my child. I have a new understanding of the problems that other parents face....problems that a mother of one never has to address. I have become more solidly spiritual. I have gone through Dante's seven circles, walls and gates of hell and emerged as the unique person I should have been all along. People change. Bereaved parents change a great deal.

I no longer dread each new day. I no longer weep silently every night. I no longer ache from head to foot with the pain of losing my child. I read, I write, I stay active in the community. I work in my small business, doing what I want to do and what I must do. I go to museums, to movies, to stage plays. I listen to music, watch television and work in my home and yard.

Amazingly, my word recall and memory are returning. Forgetting names, events, people, destinations and other critical factors of daily life was something I dealt with for over three and half years. I thought I had lost my mind until I started talking to other parents. I have begun doing memorization exercises.....something I probably should have done three years ago. I am learning that the journey through

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