

Balloon Release

And yet another Balloon Release has come and gone.. It was touch and go there for awhile but in the end our children cleared the heavens and brought bright sunshine where only minutes before there had been severe thunderstorms.

Approximately 50 people joined us last night (June 10th) for what turned out to be a beautiful summer evening. So far a perfect score as we have never been rained out !!

Steve and Kathleen Haupt and George and Joan Carafos put together a wonderful event and handled all the details with precision and lots of love. Our sincerest thanks for all the time and effort that went into the planning and execution of the event.

As usual the event was quite emotional as the poetry and other readings as well as the musical selections brought tears to everyone's eyes. Great choices !!!

Mark Simon

This

This dreaded day
Before highly anticipated, **Day**
wake up cataloging the others
Wearing your first cake,
Cookie cakes and steak dinners,
Dalmatian cakes, skating, pancake breakfasts.
Carloads of boys going to the park
The last...family, and best friends, celebrating a milestone.
"18"
The world holds promise, the golden age of independence,
future, and choice. We are so proud.
A year later, we are in another world, one without you.
Now, what do we do? We grieve the
lost hope and possibilities.
We ask why?
We make bouquets of festive flowers, and take
green balloons to where you lay.
Your precious sister and I sit on the ground
arranging flowers and talking.
Your friends join us. You are remembered. You are loved.
We scream silently, wanting you back, and wondering how,
and even why we are standing here, why you are gone.
The world keeps turning, and we keep
looking back, wishing.
Daily, we miss you our darling boy.
Happy Birthday my baby.
Charisse Smith
TCF, Tyler, TX

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.

When Will The Pain End?

When I look back over my grief journey, I marvel at how far I have come and yet at how poignant and permanent the loss of my son will always be for me. How can this dichotomy exist within one person's mind?

The horror of the news of my son's death, the shock that slammed my mind into numbness, the unremembered conversations, the platitudes that followed the memorial service and the first two months of living in a complete fog of disbelief are very vivid in my mind. The horror is too real to forget. The next six months of melancholy, miserable mourning are forever locked in my mind. The pure physical pain, the piercing jolts when I momentarily thought of something beyond my child's death and was mercilessly slammed back into the finality of death's amputation of my son's smile, laughter and physical presence on this earth are etched for eternity in my soul. My mind simply couldn't accept that Todd was gone from this planet.

The first anniversary of his death was a horrifying day worsened by a very bleak and foreshadowing conversation with my son's widow. Life would be much different for my husband and me from this point forward. There were no bridges to the past. She made that clear. I was inconsolable from the impact of her wicked words.

But I made it through the first and second years with help from my Compassionate Friends Chapter. I could cry and scream about the injustice of my loss and all that followed, and each parent understood. Eventually I had told my story enough times to enough people that I subconsciously accepted Todd's death and all the changes in my life that followed.

At some point in my second year of grief I began reaching out to others. Helping others, seeing their pain, hearing their tearful words, had become cathartic for me. The more I helped, the more I was helped.

Yes, my son is still with me in my heart and in my memories. The movies of his life play in my mind almost daily. I have made new friends. I have walked away from old acquaintances. I have learned to separate the meaningful from the meaningless. And I have learned that I will always feel the pain of my son's death, yet I must always move forward into hope. Each day brings more hope as I accomplish another piece of my lifelong grief work.

So the dichotomy exists within me. In my heart, mind and soul my child will live forever. The memories of the full measure of each day of his life are there to give me peace and solace. Yet, the brutal pain of my son's death is there, too. Unlike any other love in life, a parent's love is unconditional and transcends all. There is a peace in knowing that. The pain doesn't end. It simply reshapes itself into a quiet, soft ache that gives us a gentle, often tearful, reminder that our child will always be with us. And perhaps that is as it should be.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

TCF, Katy, TX



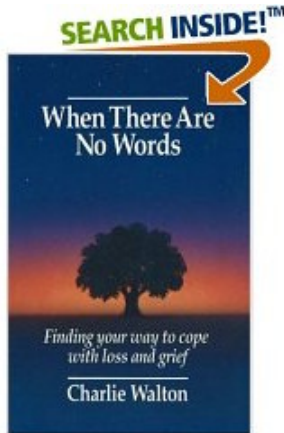
Upcoming Planned Events— Mark Your Calendars:

Annual Memorial Candle Lighting - Tuesday December 9th at Lifetime Care at 7:00PM
stay tuned for more activities and speakers

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.



May Donations and Love Gifts

Bonnie Corbett in loving memory of Kelly Lynne Forrest

Janice Webster in loving memory of Greg Belvees

Barb and Jim VanValkenburgh in memory of Michael VanValkenburgh

Linda and Don Siracusa in memory of Brian Furness

Linnea and Dewey Hammond in memory of Sabrina L. Joy

Chapter Information:

Meeting Location:

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

Meeting Days for July/August 2008:

Tuesday the 8th and Tuesday the 22nd (July)
Tuesday the 12th and Tuesday the 26th (Aug)
7:00 P.M. to 7:15 P.M. - social
7:15 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. - meeting

Contacts:

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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:

After leading the chapter for 8 years Mark and I are leaving the area on July 29th. Effective immediately Linda Haines has taken over the chapter Leadership position. Our wish is that the chapter continue to thrive under Linda's guidance and that she is given the support that we have had over the past years. Phyllis Simon



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



The "Darcie" Event

Wow !!! I cannot believe how time flies. We have been planning this event for nearly a year and now it is over and it went off without a hitch—except, of course, for blowing all the circuit breakers in the training rooms ! TWICE !!

What an incredible day. We had over 80 people at the workshop and 160 at the evening speaking engagement. Comments from everyone were that both events were excellent and enlightening. Darcie truly did a wonderful job for us and we thank her very much for her efforts and for adding the very personal touch to the discussion which she so frequently does. It truly was a wonderful day.

It took a significant effort from many folks to make this event happen. Yes, it cost a bit, but money alone without the wonderful volunteers that we had would not have been enough to make it happen. Sincerest thanks to the TCF volunteers Ed and Jan Levy; Steve and Kathleen Haupt; Bonnie Corbett; Scott and Linda Haines; Ed Bohrer; Mary Mueller; Pat Kennedy; Barb Silverstein;..... as well as to those wonderful volunteers from Lifetime Care that provided significant additional assistance. A special thank you goes out to Theo Munson for helping us to make this happen and for providing the much needed guidance to make sure it came off as planned and to Vicki Edwards for her help with the book sales.



Darcie Sims at the Academy of Medicine



The day after the event was Darcie's birthday so we took her and the volunteers out to lunch at Richardson's Canal House. To celebrate her birthday we had a cake made and all sung happy birthday to her. I think she enjoyed that too.



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.

