



Summer Memories

Summertime is a happy time for most people in this country: vacations, holidays, family reunions, relaxed days at the pool, evenings in the backyard talking with family and friends, the smell of a fresh rain, the long days, the cooling nights, fresh mowed grass and flowers that bloom profusely.

Despite Houston's heat, summer has become a treasured time for me. My son was a child of summer. Born in May, he loved the summer sun on his face and the wind in his hair as he first rode a tricycle, then a bicycle, then drove a car. Those were wonderful times for him.

The summer solstice on June 21 was a favorite day for us both. Since the summer solstice is the longest day of the year, Todd particularly loved to watch the sunrise and sunset. I found myself doing that again this year. As I looked at the sun directly overhead at noon (1:00 pm DST), I made the comment that this is the one perfectly balanced day of the year. Later as I watched a beautiful solstice sunset, I remarked to my husband about the light...the gorgeous light. I was seeing Todd in that light. He was laughing, chasing lightning bugs, running and spinning and turning, filled with the joy of summer. He was happy.

I listened to the neighbors' children playing, and I thought about all the wonderful summer days I had spent with my son. I am thankful that I had that time. I am thankful that my child was a son of summer. He found much joy in

nature, in the outdoors, in activities that took him out of the ordinary and into the sublime.

That's how it is for bereaved parents. We eventually come to a place where we realize that our joyful memories have overtaken the pain of the loss of our child to death. We wouldn't trade the time we shared with our children for anything or any other experience.

We have many relationships in our lives, but the unique nature of the parent-child relationship is so special, so deep, so life changing, that we endure and even embrace the pain because we had, for that time in our lives, a relationship of pure love and pure joy with our child. There is no way to measure the depth, width or volume of a parent's love. It exceeds every other human relationship. Yes, we miss them terribly. We weep silently into our pillows at night. We light candles, take flowers to the cemetery, wear their favorite colors, treasure pictures of our children and keep them forever in our hearts. This is a big part of life for every bereaved parent.

Somehow, on the summer solstice, I felt my child's presence in the light of the day and the beautiful rose color of the solstice sunset. I could hear his voice, see his smile and feel his emotions. Peace slips into our hearts in extraordinary ways.

Annette Mennen Baldwin



Another Loss

by: Mark Gerstner — TCF Rochester, NY Chapter

I didn't know him or his family. When I drove home from work that Sunday night. I saw the familiar chalk burns of road flares and saw the lamp post with no light attached. Then I saw the familiar form of young people embracing. I knew instantly what had taken place. In the paper tomorrow I would read the sad story of a life taken too soon and too tragically. He was 23 and driving home in the early morning of a weekend night. I read the article. Car split in two, died later at the hospital. I thought another victim of the overconfidence of youth. No real impact. Death is the culmination of life. It's the logical conclusion. On Tuesday morning as I drove to my therapist. I passed thinking; life is over in a moment. That's how it is. Wow. He hit the pole and still had the velocity to take out the guardrail. Probably drunk, probably speeding. How does a 23 year old get a Jaguar anyway?

I actually told my therapist I didn't feel any real emotion about it. That kinda bothered me. That I was so far removed from something so relevant in my life, such a short time ago. Later, I went to work. I read the article and obituary in the paper. It turns out he was from the neighborhood and from the church I had grown up in and celebrated the sacraments in. Not to mention, the church my kids had grown up in and celebrated the sacraments in. most significant of all, the church where Slade's funeral was. I still remember the fire truck siren wailing as his casket was taken from the church that warm November day. Turns out Tia knew his brother. Turns out Slade's friends knew the family.

Turns out the family have been members of the Charlotte community for 20 years. Now a whole new perspective as I leave work early to attend my support group. The compassionate friends. I speak about this issue in length at the meeting. I am affected. I am shaken. I am aware once again of the sudden and brutal end to the vibrance of youth. Now my predicament is refreshed anew. It's not gone, only subdued. It will never go. It will only lurk in the shadows. Waiting to attack. I drive by the scene on my way home. Ten hours later and a whole new viewpoint.

I see the young girls lighting candles. I do not want to interrupt. I drive on home, only to turn around and return to the scene. The girls are leaving. I pull up and park. As I get out I instantly smell the odor of something burnt. I look at the scene. Car parts are scattered over a large area. Broken glass, blackened pavement. Chewed up dirt and grass. I can almost sense the tragedy, like the spirit is still there. I think about the impending funeral. How he will be buried in the same cemetery as Slade. Not far from his home, not far from the spot where his existence on this planet ceased. Eerily reminiscent of Slade. My boy. My son. That life created in my likeness. Suddenly I want to attend the funeral, the calling hours. I want to tell his parents I know their pain. I know the uneasiness of that empty room.

The peculiarness of those objects scattered about the house that will no longer have the same meaning. Why does this happen? What do I do with these things? What about the pictures and the movies and the diplomas and trophies and awards? What do they mean now? I played cyaa, I attended holy cross. I had friends at bishop Kearney. I am connected to this tragedy and at the same time disconnected. What does it mean and why? No answers, only deafening silence.

Here I am 41 years old. I feel less informed and more confused than at any point in my life. What an incredible and constantly unfolding mystery this existence is. I will skip the funeral and calling hours. I know I am far from the point his parents are at. Sometime after the hoopla has subsided. When they are alone in their pain and suffering. I will send a card with a heartfelt message. And they will realize for the first time in this endless journey that they are not alone. And that the pain never ends. It is only soothed by the fact that they are not the first and they are not the last. They are now members of an exclusive club to

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.

**My Little Girl
by D. Morgan**

I remember when you were
My Little Girl.
As much a part of me
as my right arm.
My every breath and step
held you in mind.
Then suddenly,
on morning--
you were grown.
I was not finished with you,
But,
we must love our children
enough to let them go.
But in my heart...
you will always be ---
My Little Girl

**My Little Boy
by D. Morgan**

I remember when you were
My Little Boy.
An extension of my very being.
My every waking moment
belonged to you.
One evening,
when I called you to supper,
you came to the table --
all grown up.
Where did all the in - between go?
Suddenly,
I was to let you go ---
Now,
I should always call you
"my son",
But in my heart....
you will always be.....
My Little Boy.

What My World is Like Without You

They say that death changes the way you think,
It changes the way we eat and drink,
It changes the way we plan our lives
It makes us just want to crawl and hide.
Our future is forever now unknown
Each day my heart aches and I groan
There is no sparkle in my eyes
Unless you count those many tears inside.
I wonder what our future will bring
Not the sound of your children singing
No babies to hug, no son to hold
What would it be like growing old?
Your father and I still talk about you
And all the things we thought you'd do
Those dreams are gone, and so is the rest
Of those things in life that you did best.

Love you Ma 6/20/2008

*In memory of my beloved son, David William
Burns Gone four years Born 9-11-1972 and left us
7-2-2004 We love and miss you so much.*

Lydia R. Burns

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:

November 2, 2008— Pot luck/movie/button night at Lifetime Care—5PM contact Mark Gerstner—621-9528

December 9, 2008— Annual Memorial Candle Lighting - Lifetime Care at 7:00PM

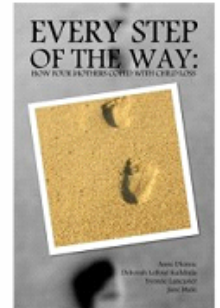
stay tuned for more activities and speakers

Book Review:

[Every Step of the Way: How Four Mothers Coped with Child Loss](#)

by Yvonne Lancaster (Author), Anne Dionne (Author), Deborah Le-Bouf Kulkkula (Author), Jane Maki (Author)

We came together as complete strangers, bonded by our compassion and caring for one another. We are the parents of children who have died before us. Our mission is to share our experiences during our grieving through our personal journeys. We know, firsthand, through the pain and separation of losing a child, that survival is possible, even through the darkest days of bereavement. Collectively, we have found that through love, helping ourselves, reaching out to others, and living a full life through acceptance, faith, and forgiveness, we have been able to move forward. We hope you, or someone you know who has lost a child, will come to a greater understanding knowing you are not alone in your grief or coping with your loss. Our hope is that we can give you the strength, the inspiration, the optimism, and the courage to know there are many different ways to cope—and finding one's way along the path takes time.



September Donations and Love Gifts

Richard and Kathleen Duncan in memory of Jennifer Duncan Young

Chapter Information:

Meeting Location:

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

Meeting Days for October 2008:

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:

Linda Haines— 315-879-7739
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 : msimon2310@comcast.net

Miscellaneous:

New Steering Committee Membership

Linda Haines—Chapter Leader

Becky Price—Webmaster / Librarian

Pat Wheeler—Chapter Leader for a new group starting up on the west side of the city—more info. later

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.

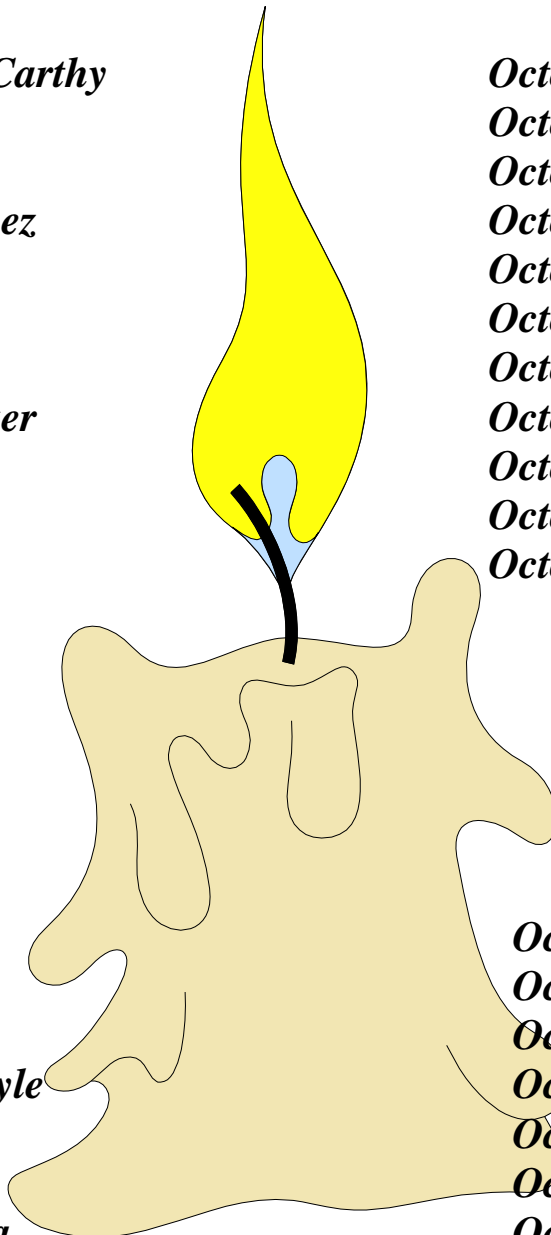


Our Children Remembered *October, 2008* *Birthdays and Remembrance Days*

Birthdays

Zackary Monroe McCarthy
Keith Martin Wilson
Jason S. Grizzanto
Duane Alphonso Lopez
Matthew J. Hallq
Christian Carlisi
John Paul Crescuillo
Stephen Oliver Krenzer
Darla Lynn Schwark
Kelly Lynne Forrest
Sean Cristo

October 5, 1986
October 7, 1963
October 8, 1985
October 15, 1982
October 16, 1990
October 21, 1977
October 23, 1956
October 26, 1973
October 28, 1967
October 29, 1957
October 30, 1965



Remembrance Days

Patrick D. Cooley
Danny Hunn
Earle F. Kyle IV
Nicholas William Kyle
Richard Vito
Jillian Flagg
Randall John Misita
Sabrina Smithe
Lindsay Ann Kyle
Duane Alphonso Lopez
Jim E. Rague

October 2, 2005
October 5, 1997
October 8, 2006
October 8, 2006
October 9, 2004
October 13, 2007
October 14, 1987
October 18, 2007
October 19, 2003
October 20, 2006
October 26, 2006

