

Upcoming Planned Events—Mark Your Calendars:

September 22, 2009—*Break out session: TCF National Convention—several group members who have attended will talk about the convention, topics that were presented, & the memorial walk..*

September 26, 2009 - *Dinner out at Davinci's (Stone Ridge Plaza). RSVP by Sept. 19th to Colleen at 388-0376 or colleenkohl@hotmail.com*

November 2009—*Pot luck dinner at Lifetime Care—date TBA*

Upcoming Fundraiser: This fundraiser will involve the sale of *Enjoy the City* coupon books and will kick off at the September 8th meeting. Each book will cost \$20.00 with a portion of each sale benefiting our Compassionate Friends group. The coupon books have a wide variety of offers and make nice gifts. The coupons are easy to use and your savings can quickly add up to more than the cost of the book. Some of the proceeds will be used to help group members attend the National Convention that will be held in Arlington, Virginia during July 2010. *Please consider purchasing a book for your family and selling books to family and friends—Thank you!*



August Donations and Love Gifts

Elaine Wilson in memory of Keith M. Wilson

David & Dolores Swanson in memory of Scott Swanson

Miriam Velez in memory of Cpl Reynold Armand

Carol Ann Britt in memory of Steve Britt

Barb Silverstein in memory of Karen D'Amico

Erica Fraquito

Chapter Information:

Meeting Location:

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

Meeting Days for September 2009:

Tuesday the 8th and Tuesday the 22nd
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:
colleenkohl@hotmail.com

Miscellaneous:



Upcoming Event through Lifetime Care:

See flyer inserted in this month's newsletter for *Writing: A Way Through Grief* that will be facilitated by Cathy Spoto (our Compassionate Friends facilitator).

Registration information is on the flyer.

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.



The ABC's of Grief

As we grieve, and grow and time marches on, we learn so much that we wish we hadn't had to learn. We've received an education that was so very unwelcome, very unwanted, but we were thrust into this school of grief and have learnt so many lessons. These are the ABC's of grief that I've learned and this September marks the 11th year since James left us.

Attitude Adjustment

Again and again, in many different situations and under various circumstances, I've had to adjust my attitude. Whether it's been a holiday, or a regular day, or a special event like a wedding, shower, or birthday celebration, my attitude decides how that day will turn out. At first I was continually sad and despondent and therefore, all the world around me felt sorrowful and dark. Of course, this is the way it should be – dealing & coping with the death of a child is the absolute worst tragedy and what other attitude could anyone have for the longest time but to be grief-stricken with sadness? But we know we can't live like that for the rest of our lives and neither would our child want us to be forever engulfed in sorrow. As we emerge out of the darkness and live in the light of our child's memories, we always remember the lessons our child's life and death taught us. No longer do the material things have the same value and importance "before our child died", a broken car or appliance is no longer earth shattering, getting the laundry done on time is not a big deal, neither is a clean house or cooking a meal every night. Our friends complain and gripe about the weather, or a broken fingernail, or the terrible traffic, getting stuck in a long line at the grocery store or any other such minor inconvenience. We, the bereaved, fluff it off; that's nothing compared with losing a child. I just don't get upset anymore when the checkbook doesn't balance (there's always hope next month) or when a glass breaks, or if I forgot to turn on the dishwasher or if the laundry stacks up. My attitude has adjusted in many situations, not just work or holidays or special events; attitude adjustment is something that goes on daily, but James' life and death taught me if I can just shrug it off, try to smile, make a few jokes, be positive and humorous to others, it somehow rubs off on me too. Bereaved parents have no choice but to adjust their attitudes and if somehow it can be for the better, that's another healing milestone. We will always and forever miss our child & be sad they can't experience every day, holidays and celebrations with us but our child would want to see us have a healthy mix of enjoying life as much as possible mixed in with the times we are sad and ache to see them again.

Bent Not Broken

For the longest time we are totally broken; we are completely heartbroken and physically we feel broken into pieces as the pain of grief is a real stab to our insides and we wonder how can we ever learn to cope with so much pain? For the longest time I cried every day and it amazed me that one person could have so many tears. I felt broken as a person, broken and a failure as a mom, and broken as a wife.

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There was no way I felt I could put any of these pieces back together again and be a fairly together, functional, competent, and content person, in my roles as a wife, daughter, friend, employee and any kind of member of society. Walking into a store and trying to buy items needed was a huge chore. Gone was any sense of organization and focus at work and home. I knew I couldn't survive like this for the rest of my life; but feeling broken apart was just how it was for many months. Somehow, although I really didn't care much about myself, I decided to start caring about others and doing for others and hoped that it would help myself also. Now I can realize that bereaved parents are broken but the pieces gently and gradually blend back together in new ways that allow us to bend, allow us to be better, and not bitter, and our life, although it will never be the same, can somehow be molded so that we can heal and be flexible as we struggle and manage our life as parents, relatives, spouses, friends and members of society. Yes, in many ways I still feel emotionally broken, but through the past 11 years I've been bending, trying to be flexible, trying to be patient & understanding because what and whom I've got left in this life is to be treasured. James taught me to bend, because to continue to be rigid with grief, to allow minor inconveniences destroy my contentedness, will only continue allowing the pieces to be shattered and broken. A life worth living, and yes, we have to learn that our lives are worth living even without our child, is a life that we deserve to have and we need to bend toward the path of forgiveness and fulfillment and not be forever broken in pieces.

Compensate and Compromise

I live a life without my son. As with all bereaved parents, a huge part of our life is forever gone. Although James is with me spiritually and I carry his memories and love with me every day, he is not with me physically and most certainly, this is not the way it should be. Over the years I've learned to compensate and compromise for whom and what I don't have in my life. I'll never watch James graduate from high school or college, I'll never share in his successes & accomplishments with college and/or a career, I'll never dance at his wedding, I'll never have a daughter-in-law to pass family traditions on to, I'll never hold James' child, and my grandchild, in my arms. Many friends and family members do not understand that my grief is not simply for the loss of James; it is for the loss of all that he is not experiencing, it is for the loss that I'll never be a grandmother and a mother-in-law. It is for the loss that my husband doesn't have his son to go fishing with and continue in Scouts with, and carry on the family name. That loss does not end in the first year or the next year; it carries over to different levels & degrees depending on the situation or circumstances. I ache for myself and for my husband and for all the "future" we should have had for and with James. In my own way, I've learned to compensate and compromise to get some enjoyments out of life. I know that total joy, or total happiness, will simply never be a part of my life. I can find a level of peace, and moments of contentment and I am so blessed when I do have these and I have found ways to reinvest my life, both for myself and for others in memory of James, and with my husband. We won't experience high school with James; but we've been host parents for exchange students and we've been fortunate to share their high school experiences with them and our lives are enriched with our international teenagers - even though I've had to compensate and be an "active mom" by borrowing someone else's child. What a life changing experience it's been for us and our girls; they have become family to us. My husband loves Scouting and although James is no longer a participant, he didn't quit Scouting; he continues on to help other teens and (cont'd on pg. 3)

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.

they are benefiting from the compassion and patience my husband has developed. Some people envy me because I travel frequently. I find it difficult to spend too much time at home. I know that I need to be out doors, to travel and discover the beauty and serenity of nature and our beautiful environment. I am extremely blessed to have a group of wonderful friends that plan travel adventures and we all have such good times and create terrific memories. My husband and I enjoy camping and that's another way to spend time outdoors. Quite honestly, I feel closer to James when I'm hiking a mountain trail, hiking to see and photograph waterfalls, walking on the beach (especially at sunset), standing out on the deck of a cruise ship relaxing and basking in the views, and these are my therapy. If only I could be spending my time traveling to visit James at college, or taking him on vacations, going on vacations with my grandchildren, but that will never happen. Yes, during the past 11 years I've learned to compensate and compromise and if others think I'm so lucky to travel, to be able to pick up at a moment's notice and do whatever and whenever, let them try walking in my shoes for a week. The emotional sacrifices and the physical loss I have in my life leave me with no choice but to compensate and compromise and while doing so, find pockets of peace and moments of contentment.

Life is meant to be enjoyed to some degree, to whatever degree we can possibly reach. I know James, and I know our children, would want us to enjoy our lives whenever and however possible. So as we go through our ABC's, and as we learn the lessons our child taught us, as we are educated along our grief journey, I hope we all take it one day at a time and always realize, although we have to adjust our attitudes, become bent not broken and better not bitter, as we compensate and compromise in our own individual ways, we also need to remember, we need not walk alone.

By Meg Avery

Written August 2008

In Memory of my son James Avery, 7/15/83 – 9/22/97

TCF—Lawrenceville, Georgia

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.



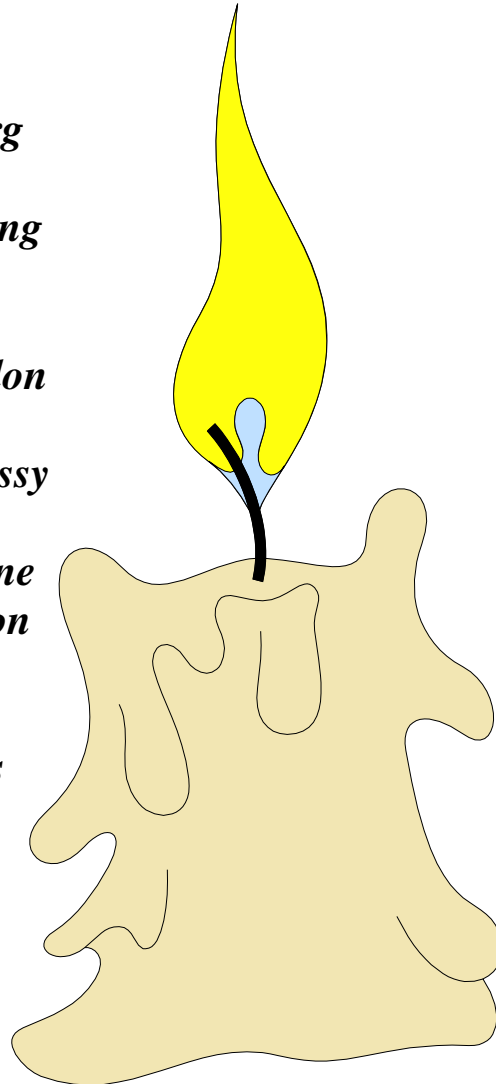


Our Children Remembered
September, 2009
Birthdays and Remembrance Days



Birthdays

Amanda Kate Fagan
Mallory Rose Wurzburg
Claire E. Colyer
Jennifer Duncan- Young
Carrie Jean Kubarycz
Peter R. Loewenguth
Hannah Louise Congdon
Rolf Gerard Hallinan
Matthew Gabe Fogarassy
Daniel F. Andrews
Brandon James McLane
Benjamin Alan Johnson
David Goad
Paul McManus Jr.
Shannon Marie Sayers



Remembrance Days

Joey Giardina
David Carafos
Tara Z. Lennox
William G. Goodridge
Mark F. Buckenmeyer
Bradley L. Consler
Joshua Daniel Price
Catherine F. Anderson
Kristy Lynn Marmo
Isaac Courtney Towne



WRITING: A WAY THROUGH GRIEF

**Journaling and Book Discussion
Bereavement Group**

For: People who are looking for active ways to explore, express, manage and transcend challenging grief reactions following the death of loved ones.

Meets: 1st and 3rd Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. – Next cycle begins October 6th, then meets alternate weeks for 8 sessions, ending on December 15th

**At: Lifetime Care's *Center for Compassion and Healing*
3111 Winton Road, So. (Just south of Brighton-Henrietta
TownLine Rd; across from Cadillac dealer and Pizza Hut)**

Fee: \$5 donation to hospice requested at each session

Facilitator: Catherine Spoto

Features: Sharing techniques such as loss histories, tributes, journaling and other writing exercises plus support for individual grief responses

**To register: Contact the *Center for Compassion and Healing*
(475-8800)**

Note: Participants don't need advanced writing skills – just a desire to integrate loss experiences into their changed world and a belief that healing lies within places of pain. This approach offers a chance to explore grief in greater depth than is usually possible in traditional support groups. It builds confidence that the path of grief can lead to a good outcome.