



The Compassionate Friends

Minneapolis Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

8701 36th Ave N
New Hope, MN 55427

IMPORTANT MEETING CHANGE

We are offering monthly ZOOM meetings. We have to plan month by month. Please watch your emails and our Facebook page for updates. We are hosting one-hour virtual meetings, similar to our in-person monthly meeting format. After the large group portion, we divide into small group breakouts (with a separate siblings group). See Page 2 for ZOOM instructions.

Monday, August 17 — via ZOOM **"How Are We Today?"**

We will check in with each other in large group, then move into small groups.

Monday, September 21—Location TBA **"Journaling"**

Journaling is one way to cope with grief. A tool to remember special kindnesses, dreams and express the ups and downs. Pages become mile markers over time as the expression of grief changes. If meeting in person, we have journals for everyone.

Sunday, October 11 **"Walk to Remember"**

See page 3 for details of this popular, special event for family and friends. It's also our annual fundraiser.

Monday, October 19 — Location TBA **"How Our Loved One** **Lived Their Best Life"**

Join us to share stories of your loved ones—their amazing abilities, escapades, adventures and experiences that continue to touch so many.

When Meeting In Person

We meet 7:00–8:30 pm on the third Monday of each month.

St. Joseph Parish Community
8701 36th Ave N., New Hope, MN

Bereaved Sibling Group Meeting

A bereaved sibling facilitates the group. Siblings (14+) meet separately, but at the same location/time as our Chapter meeting.

We Need Not Walk Alone

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child at any age, from any cause, is welcome. Our meetings give parents the opportunity to talk about their child and feelings as they go through the grieving process. Our meetings are also open to grandparents, older siblings, and extended family. There are no membership dues. There is no religious affiliation.

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. **The Mission** of The Compassionate Friends is to provide highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or daughter, a brother or sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The Secret of TCF's Success is Simple: As seasoned griever reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward, and both are helped to heal.

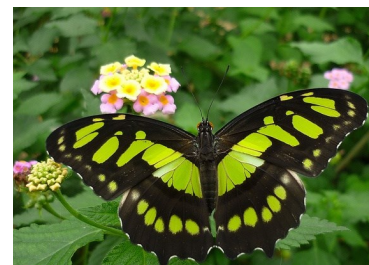
To Our New Members: Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But, you have nothing to lose, and much to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you find the right person...or just the right words spoken that will help you in your grief work.

To Our Members Further Down the 'Grief Road': We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting, we have new parents. Think back, what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you and share your grief?

About Our Meetings: Please don't stay away from a meeting because the scheduled topic does not interest you. At each meeting there will be time to discuss and share whatever is on your mind. We welcome your participation, but it is not required.

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TCF's Vision...

*That everyone who
needs us will find us
and everyone who finds
us will be helped.*

MINNEAPOLIS CHAPTER INFO**TELEPHONE:** (612) 444-1301**EMAIL:** tcf.mpls@gmail.com**Minneapolis Chapter Leader**
Monica Colberg**Treasurer**
John Jordan**Newsletter Editor & Co-Leader**
Gloria Jordan
tcf.mpls.editor@gmail.com**Database Coordinators**
Terri & Tom Lindfors**Webmaster**
Lisa Gross Crees**Facebook Page Administrator**
Lisa Gross Crees**Hospitality Coordinator**
*Position Open***Donor Appreciation**
Pat Reller**Co-Librarians**
Tasha Feigh & Mary Feigh**Special Events Co-coordinators**
Mary Jo Peterson & Monica Colberg**Sibling Facilitator**
Maggie Bauer**Steering Committee Meetings**
Held quarterly to plan events and Chapter direction. Next meeting: October 9.**TCF NATIONAL OFFICE**

Toll Free: 1-877-969-0010

E-mail:
nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.orgwww.compassionatefriends.org**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/TCFUSA**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/TCFofUSA>**REGIONAL COORDINATOR**

Cathy Seehuetter: (612) 991-9954

Email: seehuettercathy@yahoo.comThose who have SUFFERED
UNDERSTAND SUFFERING
and therefore

Articles printed in this newsletter reflect the author's personal views, and not necessarily the opinion of the newsletter editor or The Compassionate Friends.

ResourcesVisit our Chapter Website:
tcfmpls.orgOur Local
Chapter Is
On Facebook.Join our Minneapolis Chapter's private
Facebook community online: [TCF Mpls](https://www.facebook.com/groups/TCFMpls)
Or log onto Facebook and search:
TCF Mpls
www.facebook.com/groups/TCFMplsNational Organization Resources
may be found by visiting:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Click "Find Support" tab.

- National Magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone®*
- Online Grief-Related Webinar Series
- Online Support Community
- Facebook Closed (Private) Groups
[TCF/USA National Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA)
www.facebook.com/TCFUSA

Chapter Locator tool is available on
TCF National Website[Find Chapter Here](https://www.compassionatefriends.org)
[compassionatefriends.org](https://www.compassionatefriends.org)**Instructions for ZOOM Monthly Meeting**Zoom is fairly easy to use, and operates on many devices/
platforms. Attend using Windows, MacOS, and Android and
iOS mobile phones and tablets.You simply click on the link in the emailed Meeting Confirmation
you receive from us and follow the on-screen instructions. You can also call in
with a phone, using the phone number on the Confirmation email we send.
The meeting ID number and password will also be in the email.

- Step-by-step installation guides for are readily available on the [ZOOM.us](https://zoom.us) website, along with tutorials for attending a meeting.
- Here is a link to ZOOM's instructions: [JOIN A ZOOM MEETING](#) Included in the article is a link to attend a practice meeting (don't worry; you'll be the only participant).
- A meeting invite will be emailed to our members.
IMPORTANT: if you are not on our newsletter EMAIL distribution list, you need to email tcf.mpls@gmail.com to request a Zoom meeting invite.
- Next, to maintain our members privacy, you will need to Register in advance for the meeting before attending. Simply click on the link included in our invite email.
- Then, a follow-up Confirmation email will be sent with the meeting link, meeting ID and password you will use to attend. It is important that you do not share this info with others.

Looking forward to seeing or hearing you at our virtual meeting.

**HELPING HANDS NEEDED**

Would you be willing to spend some time helping prepare our newsletter for mailing? Every 3 months, three pairs of hands help fold, seal, stamp, and label our quarterly newsletter for members who are unable to receive it via email. We're done in less than two hours. We usually work on it at the church (meeting location). Email our newsletter editor, Gloria, tcf.mpls.editor@gmail.com with questions, or to say YES!



October 11, 2020

**Bassett Creek Park
6001 32nd Ave N, Crystal MN**

**Check-in begins at Noon;
Walk begins 12:30 p.m.**

Mark your calendar for **Sunday, October 11** for our annual Minneapolis Chapter Walk to Remember. We walk to remember our children, siblings, and grandchildren who have died. Invite extended family and friends to join us.

COVID-19 safety protocols will be followed. Wear a mask; if you don't bring one, we will have some on hand. There's plenty of room to stay physically distanced.

Join us at beautiful **Bassett Creek Community Park in Crystal**, (same park as last year). The official park address is **6001 32nd Ave. N**, between Douglas Dr. N and Hwy 100.

WALK LOCATION INSTRUCTIONS: IMPORTANT - DO NOT use the park entrance off 32nd Ave N. near the ballfield. Turn south off 32nd Ave N. onto Welcome Ave., then turn right, towards the parking area off Welcome Ave., near the playground. Meet at the picnic shelter near the parking lot, just down the trail.

Check-in begins at Noon; we'll start the **Walk at 12:30**. It's just a quick, less than 1-mile jaunt around the pond on an asphalt trail, but we can go around as many times as you want.

This is our **Chapter's annual fund raiser**. There is no fee to walk, but donations are appreciated. We are a recognized 501(c)(3) organization; all donations are tax deductible. Funds received are used to support our chapter's many activities that assist families after the death of a child.

Invite family and friends to join us for friendship and healing. It's heartwarming to see a family wearing matching t-shirts; others brought balloons pinned to their shirts that "lifted" their shoulders. This scenic venue offers free parking, picnic shelters, disc golf, volleyball, a memorial garden with benches, a new playground area, dog park, and more.

We will carry the names of our children and siblings on bibs provided by the chapter.

If you are unable to join us, please submit your child's name and someone will be honored to carry your loved one with us on our walk (email your child's or sibling's name to tcf.mpls@gmail.com).



Leader's Corner

The Minneapolis Chapter recently transitioned from an established and loved tradition of a balloon release with extended families and friends of the chapter members. In the last few years, several voiced a vote against balloon releases because of the environmental impact of balloon bits falling from the sky endangering wildlife.

We moved to a new tradition. It did not have the dramatic effect of orbs of bright colors lifting in the sky. It was a muted tearing of paper notes to our loved ones falling into a basket. The shredded notes would become compost for a community garden.

Change is a given. We have the memories of glorious rounds of color catching the wind and moving on. We will push ahead with new traditions, perhaps not yet thought of, and continue to honor our children and siblings. The energy we create recognizing our loved ones will mingle with our memories of them. We are sending love notes out to them wherever they are.

Monica Colberg,
Art's Mom and Chapter Leader
TCF Minneapolis MN

Chapter Longevity

They said yes. Four years into their grief journey, their progressive healing is thoughtful and intentional and full of sorrow. However, In the last several months, there they were, noticeably leaning into newer members grief with exquisite compassion.

When invited to step into the chapter's leadership circle the answer was not immediate. They would think about it. They are genuine, careful to question whether they are ready for that role.

They said yes. Their yes is the chapter's next strong sturdy footprint into the future. This chapter leader cast a quick thank you to the heavens. This is chapter longevity.

Maintaining our sturdy foundation, long-time steering committee member Mary Jo Peterson agreed to co-coordinate our Special Events committee with Monica Colberg, filling the vacancy created by the retirement of Carol Hawk. We appreciate the five years Mary Jo devoted to maintaining our membership database and producing newsletter mailing labels.

We welcome our newest Steering Committee members, Terri and Tom Lindfors. They eagerly jumped right in to assume the open Database Coordinator position. Our Chapter is secure in fulfilling our mission.

Hope is like a road in the country;
there wasn't ever a road, but when
many people walk on it, the road comes
into existence.

~ Lin Yutang

The Harvest of Your Grief Work

"It isn't right! I go a month sometimes and don't cry. I actually get involved in something and don't think about my daughter for hours. I had fun at the company picnic last week."

"I feel so guilty. Am I forgetting my daughter?"

This mother was two years into her grief. She was doing good grief work—leaning into the pain, talking out feelings, expressing emotions and attending Bereaved Parent's meetings regularly.

But she was hurting less.

When parents begin to reap the harvest of their grief work well done, they fear they are losing their children. The truth is they are just reaping the harvest of their grief work done well.

In the first couple of years, pain ties us to our children. During that time we equate pain with love. By the time we are beginning to resolve our grief (and that is what is happening), pain has been our companion for so long we feel lost without it.

This is one of the few places in grief where our mind needs to take over for awhile. We need to look at the illogic of prolonged grieving. We need to see that we are beginning to reach the goal we hoped some day to reach.

Self talk can help us rid ourselves of this illogical emotion. Ask yourself:

If you believe to keep your child in your heart for the rest of your life, you must hang onto the pain.

Will your prolonged misery make your child less dead?

Does the fact that your child is dead mean that you must die also?

Does your prolonged misery accomplish anything? What purpose does it serve?

Will hanging onto your pain make you grow and change, or will it make you unhappy and bitter?

What effect will your prolonged grief have on your marriage and/or surviving children?

Do you really want to stay in the pit indefinitely?

Will your continuing grief honor your child?

These questions can help you see that beginning grief resolution is as healthy and normal after a couple of years, as allowing yourself to enter fully into your grief in the early months after your child has died. Rethink your reactions. Let yourself get to the other side of your grief. Let yourself appreciate the peace and comfort that is beginning to be yours. Most importantly, let yourself feel the joy of remembering your child without the deep searing pain you have felt for so long.

Margaret Gerner, Bereaved Mother
St. Louis, MO

*Taken from Bereaved Parents/USA WEBSITE, the National Newsletter,
A JOURNEY TOGETHER. www.bereavedparentsusa.org.*



Grief Haiku

A tear shimmers down
Looking out, late summer day
Sunshine missing you

Melissa Anne Schroeter,
TCF, Rockland County, NY

Getting "Better"

As I write this, the fourth anniversary of my son's death is days away. Every year when the calendar turns to October my thoughts turn to all the "lasts" we experienced with Chris—our last Parents' Weekend, our last family celebration, his last visit home, our last hug good-bye. October is painful; it represents the moment in history that divides my life into the "before" and "after." Life "before" was good, our family was happy, the future was bright. Life "after" had been a struggle to survive unspeakable pain, reestablish a new normal, and face a future that is littered with shattered dreams, assumptions, and expectations.

The person I am now barely resembles who I was four years ago. I have gained an acute awareness of suffering and a heightened sense of empathy yet I have lost the ability to dream, the luxury of lightheartedness, and what it feels like to experience joy. The best of times I have a tenuous peace with sorrow; in my worst moments I am consumed by a profound sense of emptiness. At all times I ache with missing him, an ache I expect will never cease. How could anything or anyone fill his place in my heart, my mind, my soul? It is his space, his and mine; it is sacred.

And yet, as I recently admitted to a select few, I have begun to feel "better." Better does not mean I am "moving on" without Chris, that I am "getting over" the loss, or that I am regaining my former self. For me, better means learning to coexist with the sorrow and letting go of the "why?" There isn't an answer to the why that could possibly satisfy me that could make me say, "Oh, so that's why he died. Now I understand. I'm okay with that." Learning to live with mystery is akin to admitting that there is little in this life that we actually control; the only thing we do control is how we react to life's experiences. In the case of losing a child, the option to choose is very slow in coming because the shock is disabling and prolonged. Eventually the opportunity to choose comes, but it is not easy or simple or even obvious. To choose to let go of the blackness is a choice that needs to be made each and every day—consciously, actively, and repeatedly. Feeling better is a journey not an endpoint.

I will never stop loving Chris; never love him less than completely and wholeheartedly. For the rest of my life I will regret that he is not here to share, to love, to experience, to be. Despite all the pain and heartache, I thank God every single day that I had him for 21 years. I wanted more—for him, for me, for my husband and girls, for everyone who loves him. It was not to be. I am grateful for what I had. Perhaps that is what "better" is all about.

Sue Dudek
(We Need Not Walk Alone, Summer 2009
The magazine of The Compassionate Friends)

Our Children Remembered...on Their Birthdays

Loved...Missed...Forever in Our Hearts



August

CHILD	MEMBER
Rhiley	Mike Henneman
Ron Reinert	Sharon Reinert
Dennis Michael Person	Don & Georgia Govednik
David	Derwood Twigg
David Andrew Twigg	Selma Twigg
Kristin Reller	Pat & Don Reller
Kristin Reller (sibling)	Anthony Reller
Jennifer (sibling)	Melissa Blethen
John Benz	Mike & LuAnn Yerks Benz
Ben	Karen & Gary Hansen
Ben Hansen (sibling)	Taylor Gotta
Hailey	Michelle Chamlin
Sheryl Ann Heggem	Ron & Julia Laabs
Sheryl Ann Heggem (sibling)	Sharlene Wimpfheimer
Michael James Lewis	Joanne Lewis
Selene	Deborah Anderson
Selene Anderson (sibling)	Elizabeth Anderson
Archer	Kara Amorosi
Tommy	Sheryl Hutton
Dan Lewis	Chris & Bob Lewis
Zachary James Govednik (grandson)	Don & Georgia Govednik
Antonio	Jeffrey Demeules
Kate	Scott & Lisa Fronek
Juli Elisabeth (sibling)	Melissa and Michael Crees
Juli Elisabeth	Lisa & Steve Crees
Melissa Roeser	Marilyn & Steve Dahlmeier
Matthew	Sue Reid & Mark Schmidt
David	Joan Robson
Paul	Pilar & Steve Hoenack
Lauren	Nancy Riesgraf
Timothy	Rony & Christine Muzik
Sarah	Jane Ramerth & Marc Friedman
Joseph Daniel Muonio	Michael & Anita Muonio
Lawrence	Karen & Dave Philbin
Melissa Marie Vomhof	John & Ruth Vomhof
Anthony Howe Jr.	Fahlon Tiller

September

CHILD	MEMBER
Barrett Ugland	Renee Forst
Nick Harter	Brian & Sandy Harter
Ty'rah White (granddaughter)	Shenna Galloway
Kelsey Eberle	Roxanne & Terry Eberle
Brooklyn	Carrie Roderick
Weston	Mark & Lisa Koch
David Lindgren	Jeff & Jan Bowers
David Lindgren (sibling)	Adam and Tony Lindgren
Rachel Anne	Pam Dugdale
Ethan	Tom Lang
Yoeni	Roberto Falcon
Jaden Dallas Dalton	Karren Gray
Calob	Jessica Bartram
Mark	Tim & Ann Bremer
Jesi	Pat & Sue Harding
Scott (sibling)	Katie Murray
Abigail Grace	Tom & Christina Monroe
Jeanne Platt	Steve & Anne Platt

September (continued)

CHILD	MEMBER
Sullivan (grandson)	Bev Lind
Sullivan	Jamie & Tyler Peek
Paul Daniel Quinn	Joy Hansen
Isaac	Rey Banegas & Anna Kokesh
Tracy Greenwood (sibling)	Tanya Broten
Tim	Rozanne & John Puhek
Keith Demry	Char Fonville
Jason McCarthy (grandson)	Ken & MaryLou Theisen

October

CHILD	MEMBER
Michelle	Katie Krause
Lily	Leah Cameron
Michael John Blesi	Carolyn Blesi
Dani	Wendy Poulsen
Carissa Hayen	Linda Hayen
Christopher	Judi Callas
Brian Joseph Henry	Janine Jordan
Jen	Karen & Gary Gross
Alicia Marie Queen-Wilson	Queen Wilson
Scott	Harriet Lodermeier
Scott (sibling)	Cori Plehal
Matthew Robert Demsky	Barbara & Robert Demsky
Alyssa	Rich & Dori Beattie
Caitlin Louise Higgins	Jeffrey Weihe
Molly	Pat, Charlie & Tyler Brown
Dominic	Aaron Cepeda
Hunter	Sandra Lawver
Corey	Mary Feigh
Gregory Sather	Nancy Sather
Gregory Sather (sibling)	Eric Sather
Gregory Sather (sibling)	Joelle & Paul Valentini
Jordan	Leslie Holt
Allison (sibling)	Andrew Bailey
Allison	Ralph Bailey & Miriam Porter

Birthday Table

Birthdays are given special recognition at our meetings. During your child's birthday month, you are invited to bring photos and memorabilia to share and display on our Birthday Table. Some like to sign up to bring a favorite snack or treat (even birthday cake) to celebrate the birthday of their child.

"Goodbyes are only for those
who love with their eyes.

Because for those who love with heart and soul
there is no such thing as separation."

Rumi

Our Beloved Children...in Our Hearts Always

especially during the Remembrance Month of their death.



August

CHILD	MEMBER
Eric (son in law)	Greg Pulles
Rob	Mary Quade
Noah David Muonio	Michael & Anita Muonio
Natalie Perry Smead	Karen Prieto & Pete Smead
Ty'rah White (granddaughter)	Shenna Galloway
Jeanne Platt	Steve & Anne Platt
Chad	Joyce Rubin
Jonathan Townsend	Kelly Townsend
Kameron	Dawn Gurule
Isaac	Rey Banegas & Anna Kokesh
Gretchen	Susan and Dave Windschitl
Anthony Howe Jr.	Fahlon Tiller
Bruce	Judith Richart
Lily	Leah Cameron
Troy	Gloria Gaspar
Chris (sibling)	Maggie Bauer
Christopher	Mary & Bruce Bauer
Everett (nephew)	Mary Jane Kronberg
Everett (sibling)	Allie Rachko
Everett	Charla Rachko
Everett Rachko (cousin)	Mollie Freese
Alex	Lisa Welke
Abigail	Eric & Sam Zander
Yoeni	Roberto Falcon
Sheryl Ann Heggem	Ron & Julia Laabs
Sheryl Ann Heggem (sibling)	Sharlene Wimpfheimer

September

CHILD	MEMBER
Dani	Wendy Poulsen
Jackson	Kellie Nielson
Dylan Colbath	Lisa Colbath
Matthew (Matt)	Stephen & Carol Hawk
Bridgette	Tom Twining
Dennis Michael Person	Don & Georgia Govednik
Brooklyn	Carrie Roderick
Aiden	Mary Sullivan
Antonio	Jeffrey Demeules
Hunter	Sandra Lawver
Alex	Frank Commers
Adam	Kathryn & Waters
Daniel	Audrey Nelson
Daniel Nelson (sibling)	Michele Dooley
Seth	Lynn Argetsinger & Roger Friedell
John Benz	Mike & LuAnn Yerks Benz
Scott	Stephen Berzins
Scott (sibling)	Suzie Berzins
Scott	Cathy Drexel
Benjamin	Todd & Debbie Huberty
Ann Longton-McNamara	Barbara & Richard McNamara
Danny	Georgie Waulk
Renee	Pat & Roy Schulz
Aaron Ginsberg (sibling)	Leonora Ginsberg
Lisa	Carol Sorensen
Dawn Ankney	Sharon & Gregory Maidment

October

CHILD	MEMBER
Derek	Darwyn & Mary Tri
Carolyn Ann Bedford	Barbara & Robert Demsky
Andrew	Jim & Sue Senger
Paul	Char & Rich Myklebust
Nick (sibling)	Alyssa Kroll
Wilder	Tea Lee
Michelle	Katie Krause
Troy Perron	Gin Johnson
Paul Daniel Quinn	Joy Hansen
Sawyer James Tate	Robert & Joy Tate
Kelly Hyatt	Maureen Hyatt
Mark	Tim & Ann Bremer
Jean Claude Wishard (sibling)	Danielle Wishard-Tudor
Maggie Grace (granddaughter)	Jean Umezu



The Song Is the Same

Different are the circumstances
 of our child's death,
 Different are their names,
 Different was their life and the length of it,
 But their song was the same.
 They lived for one brief moment in history,
 Much too soon they were gone,
 They left us here,
 parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters,
 To remember the gift of their life
 and somehow go on.
 Whatever the time that has passed for us,
 Whatever the pain and grief that we claim,
 We are all here together to remember our kids,
 So your song becomes my song
 and our song is the same.

Barb Seth
 TCF Madison, WI

Parents of Infants — On Losing a Baby

Unlike parents who have had an older child die, our memories are few, and for some people, even non-existent. Those of us who have had a baby die have found it common for some people not to recognize the loss as being as tragic as the death of an older child. Maybe it is just as tragic, maybe it isn't. For most parents who have lost a baby, the tragedy is felt as intensely as can be. For many parents who lose a baby, there is nothing else with which to compare their loss. It is just like we who have lost a child (at no matter what the age) feel that no one can understand the way we feel unless they too have lost a child. Those of us who have not lost an older child have nothing else to compare the loss of our baby with, just as those who have lost an older child cannot completely understand our feelings upon losing a baby.

The death of an infant is often times considered "unfortunate" but so many feel that it can be remedied with the birth of another child. Some people find it difficult to understand the love, hope and the future that has been lost with the death of a "much looked forward to" baby.

In my own situation, I have found that the words of consolation most often given to me are things like, "You're young, you can have other babies..." or "It's so much better that you were never able to hold her and love her." And things like, "It's over with, forget it, put it all behind you..." The truth of the matter for me, at least, was yes, I could have more babies, but it did not matter how many children I could have in the future, I still had lost Jessica. She was the baby daughter I had wanted and tried to have for eight years. Upon her death, all my hopes and dreams and my happiness I felt, were gone. The daughter I had looked so forward to holding and loving and spending time with was gone. Yes, since her death I have been blessed with the birth of two children, a son and another daughter. I give thanks daily for their health and loving presence. But, just as another child could never take their place, nor have they replaced Jessica.

Was it really better that I never got to hold her? I think not. If only I had been able to hold that blessed little angel in my arms, if only for one short moment, I would be better able to cope with my loss. If I had been able to see her (even though she was already dead) I would have had a memory to hold on to the rest of my life. Learn to love her? I already loved her. Any mother who carries a child knows love for that child even though it is still unborn. I loved her. I knew her. I knew that she would become quiet and still when I spoke softly to her, I knew she would react with somewhat violent kicking when surrounded by loud noises. I knew her while she was yet inside me. She was real. I loved her. I can never forget about her. I never want to. I still wonder what she would have grown to be like, what she would have grown to look like. Would she have been fair and active like my son Justin, or would she have been dark and quietly composed like Ashlee? I think about these things even after four years. I expect to think about them for the rest of my life. I wonder what it would have been like around here with three children, close in age, playing together. I wonder what it would have been like with three children to love. I wonder... I guess for a parent of a baby who dies, the wonderings are the worst. We just do not know. We have no memories to cherish.

I am not trying to make a comparison with the loss of a child who lived to be older. I cannot compare things which I do not know about. I just know that a parent who loses a baby feels grief, and loss, and pain and hurt. To grieve is to grieve, to feel the pain and loss is to feel the pain and loss, to miss a child is to miss a child. Of course, there are, as in everything, various degrees of feeling and to each parent his or her child was special and the feelings still go deep and the loss is still felt at no matter what age a child is lost.

Deby Amos

TCF Anniston, Alabama

Tomorrow Will Be Better

When my son died, I felt like there would be no tomorrow. I didn't want a tomorrow. I wanted yesterday with its promise of joy and perfection. I wanted my son to be alive. But he was gone.

Now, when life gets me down, I remember the joys of yesterday, think of all that I was given, take measure of all that still needs to be done, and I promise myself that tomorrow will be better because I will work very hard to make it better.

My grandmother often told me, "If you think you can, you're right. If you think you can't, you're right. What do you think?" As a child I thought this was strange. As an adult, I know it to be true.

Tomorrow *will* be better. Tomorrow I will, once again, tell my mind to stop the negative thoughts. And my mind will do exactly that, as I command my ship of grief.

Annette Mennen Baldwin,

TCF Katy, TX

Forever remembering my son, Todd Menneny

Changing of the Seasons

*The changing of the seasons
Always make me blue
Never use to, now they do.
Now I cry...*

*Cry for the life Gregory never got to live
Cry for all the people who never
got to know him
His sense of humor, his beautiful eyes,
his smile*

*All he had to offer
Cry for all the children who had to suffer
And never had a chance,
all they had to offer*

*Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter
Rebirth, prime, aging, death
Changing of the seasons,
How they make me blue.*

Peggy Satinover Kaiser,
Buzzards Bay, MA.

TCF Greater Providence Chapter



Signs After Suicide: The Red Butterfly

Shortly after noon, I went into Arlyn's bedroom to get a few things to take with me. I was preparing to drive about three miles out into the country, to Woodhaven Road.

I stood and gazed around her room for a few minutes; it was full of Arlyn, but it seemed so empty.

I picked up a folder with some of the poems she had written. Her words. Her thoughts. Her feelings.

I held it under my arm securely while I searched for something else. A Cabbage Patch doll, the dress she was christened in, a blue ribbon she had won for baking a sponge cake when she was ten years old. They were all things that meant something to Arlyn, but I left them alone.

In moving my hands across the top of her dresser, I knocked over a small picture frame. I stood it upright; it held a photo of Arlyn with bright red hair and a happy grin. She was three years old when I had made the Raggedy Ann costume using a mop for a wig. She had flopped around the house for days practicing a Raggedy Ann walk. I smiled at the memory and picked it up to take with me. This was all I needed.

I got into the car, checking to make sure I had not forgotten to put the lawn chair in the trunk. Then slowly, I drove three miles out to the country to a place that drew me to it with an awful, yet irresistible force. To a place on Woodhaven Road.

A few minutes later, I parked the car beside a small stream. I checked my watch; I was early. The rickety wooden bridge which crossed the stream seemed to blend in with the trees and undergrowth surrounding it. There were no other man-made structures in sight.

My eyes tried to follow several small yellow butterflies as they bobbed up and down in this otherwise still picture. I placed the lawn chair on the side of the narrow dirt road, a few feet from the two wooden crosses that announced to the world that this was a place where a death had occurred.

I held on to the folder of writings and the small framed photo as I sat heavily down in the chair. I suddenly realized that I had placed the chair on the exact spot where my daughter's body had fallen when her life stopped. I briefly stiffened and thought about moving, but then, I didn't. A morbid need to connect with her held me there.

I opened the folder and picked up a sheet of paper with Arlyn's handwriting on it. I read:

"The scent of death

Surrounds me

And I am overwhelmed

By it's beauty."

I shook my head; I could not understand.

It was terribly hot, much like it was the day Arlyn died. I sat quietly wondering what she had thought during those final moments, wondering if she has been afraid, wondering.

I looked down and continued to read. I felt a dull pain in my chest. Her hands had written the words I was staring at, but her heart had felt them.

After a while, I looked up and stared at the yellow butterflies blankly. Then, I glanced at my watch and saw that it was almost – that time. If Arlyn's spirit was to come, it would be now.

So I began to talk. At first, I spoke casually. "How are you doing, Arlyn? What's it like up there? Are you with Mammaw and Grandpap and Lori? Have you played your guitar for them?"

I waited, but Arlyn did not reply.

I felt myself growing more anxious, so I began to ask harder questions, pausing after each to listen for a reply.

"Arlyn, do you miss us? When you pulled the trigger, did you have any idea of how badly your death would hurt your dad and me? Did you know how much I loved you?"

Then, as a post-script, I asked her if she'd seen her young cousin, Adam, who was killed the day before, and I asked her to take Adam under her wings.

Again, I closed my eyes and waited. And waited.

Nothing happened. I felt so sad. Finally, I decided I had to try one more time to persuade Arlyn to reply. I would ask for a sign that she was here. She'd been gone four years; I had waited long enough.

I opened my eyes and looked around. As I searched for a sign, I realized I would not know a sign if I saw one. What does a sign look like? Is it a blinking light? A crash of thunder? The image of a face in the clouds? What would I look for?

Then, I spotted two yellow butterflies in the woods behind the crosses. This type of butterfly is common in south Georgia at this time of year. It seems that they only come in yellow. I glanced down at the Raggedy Ann photo that was smiling up with me. The red mop wig almost looked like wings surrounding her face.

I smiled to myself then, and I spoke loudly into the trees. I said, "Arlyn, if you hear me, I need a sign! Will you send me a sign to let me know you're okay? Will you send me a red butterfly if you know how much I love you and how badly I miss you? A red butterfly, Arlyn. Please."

By then, the tears spilling down my cheeks were making their own small stream. I closed my eyes. I felt the stillness, until a cool breeze brushed past. I shivered.

When I opened my eyes again, I saw the two crosses still standing in front of me. The only thing different was that the yellow butterflies in the woods behind them had left.

I sighed. I was so disappointed that I had just passed another milestone date without a sign from Arlyn. I felt myself sinking.

Continued on page 9



Continued from page 8

I was a reluctant traveler on this road. Sometimes, it seemed too hard to go on. Sometimes, I wanted to give up and join her. I missed her so much.

A moment or so later, I caught a red flicker in the corner of my eye to the right, over the stream. I turned and saw a large red butterfly come up from under the bridge. Slowly, it flew towards me, bobbing up and down as if it were on a sea of gently rippling water.

As the butterfly flew closer, I held my breath. The trees behind it faded out, creating a hazy background, accenting the brightness of its red wings.

To my amazement, it fluttered close to me. Then, it flew all the way around the two crosses that bore Arlyn's name. Not once but twice. Twice, the red butterfly encircled those crosses while I sat there spellbound, so close I could have touched it. It hovered a moment, and then it swooped through the air, heading off into the woods behind the crosses and out of sight.

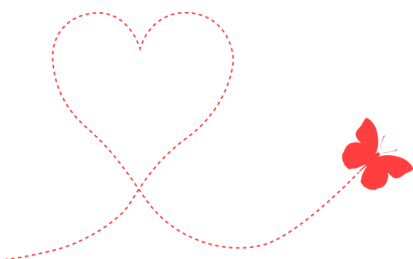
Was it a coincidence that the red butterfly just happened to fly by as I was hoping for a sign from Arlyn? Was it really a sign from her? If it was a sign, what did it mean?

I do not know if it was a coincidence or not; I have visited the place on Woodhaven Road many times in the past four years. The only butterflies I remember seeing there before were yellow.

A sign is something that may suggest the presence of someone who is missing. To me, that butterfly was a sign from Arlyn, because there is no logical explanation for its appearance otherwise. So, what does it mean?

I believe it was a sign that the spirit lives on after death, and that the soul of my precious Arlyn is at peace. I believe the red butterfly was Arlyn's way of letting me know that she knows the depth of my love for her, and the pain of my sadness. I also believe that she sent me this sign so I would know that she is with me always.

This knowledge does not erase the fact I miss her, but it does help me move into the future. I feel an inner calmness that was missing before. I believe I have a mission to accomplish while I am here, so I now understand that the spirit of my child will provide the wings to lift me up.



Most important, though, the red butterfly proved to me that love is eternal. It does not die when the body dies. Hearts and souls that are joined on earth are united forever.

Karyl Chastain Beal, Mother of Arlyn
Columbia, TN

Masters in Education, Certified Thanatologist, Support group facilitator
Mission: Suicide awareness, support and education (and prevention)
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Seventeen magazine, various other magazines and newspapers
Member of AFSP Survivors Counsel & SPAN, Owner of Suicide
Memorial Wall, Suicide Discussion Board and Suicide Reference Library
Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/expert=Karyl_Chastain_Beal

As Time Goes By... Twenty-Five Years Later

Somehow it never occurred to me twenty-five years ago on August 11 that I would see myself in the far distant future writing about this long journey without our Kenneth. I couldn't see surviving more than one day at a time. In the beginning when I saw other Compassionate Friends who were five-year survivors it was incomprehensible that they had even been able to go on living at all.

But here we are; twenty-five visits for every occasion and anniversary to the lake where we took his ashes. Death day, Birthday, Father's Day, Mother's Day, any day at all. Scatter our roses, release our balloons, drink in the beauty of nature while silently contemplating and communing with his presence. We never say much, we don't have to, we know each other too well.

There have been lots of changes since that terrible day; joys of new grandchildren, a great grandchild. Other sorrows and leave-takings of precious family members and friends. Life having its way.

We go on, we live, we laugh, we cry. But never for a moment do we forget to bring Kenneth's precious memory forward with us in all of our celebrations, sorrows and everyday situations that make us recall his laughter and funny sense of humor. We look at his pictures, hear certain songs, see a reflection of him in a smile, eyes, hair, eyebrows, lips, DNA all over the place!

As August 11 is the anniversary of Kenneth's death, so October 30 is the celebration of his birth. Kenneth would have turned 49 this year. It seems impossible to equate that age with the fun-loving, happy 23 year old he will forever be.

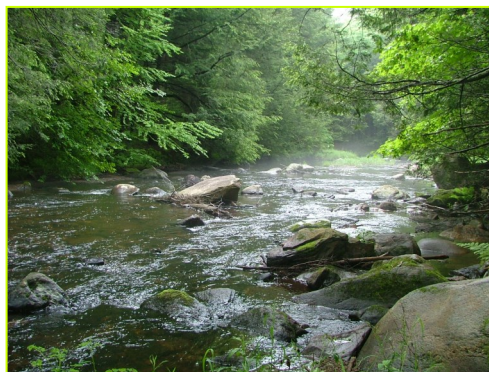
And so we go on twenty-five years later. Some things have changed; the acute pain of new grief softens into the ropy scar of an old battle wound. Sometimes it unexpectedly screams like the phantom pain from a severed limb, but only some times. Most times that dull ache is overcome by the joy and thanksgiving of having this loveable, quirky, all too human among us. The circle is unbroken. Thanks be.

Arleen Simmonds,
TCF Kamloops B.C.

*In loving memory of Kenneth Bruce Simmonds
He went fishing for the last time on the banks of the Thompson River.*

"Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it."

~From *The Song of Solomon*





The Compassionate Friends

Minneapolis Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

c/o St. Joseph Parish
8701 36th Ave N
New Hope MN 55427

The Minneapolis Chapter of The Compassionate Friends operates solely with voluntary donations. While there are no dues or subscription fees, donations to help support our Chapter's efforts are much appreciated. Funds are used for meeting supplies, rent, newsletter printing/postage, and more. Gifts in any amount are appreciated. Please consider a \$10 annual donation if you are receiving a printed, mailed newsletter.

Thank you for your consideration!

Complete and return this form along with your donation to a chapter monthly meeting or mail to our treasurer:

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