



The Compassionate Friends Fayetteville Area Chapter



Volume 17, Issue 4

December 1, 2013



Gifts, Garlands and Grief by Sandy Goodman



I remember our first Christmas after. It began the first week of November in 1997, three short months into our worst nightmare, but a lifetime into missing our child of eighteen years.

He had died suddenly, one of those “in the wrong place at the wrong time” things, and he took our hearts with him when he left. Summer screeched to a halt and autumn came and went without our participation. Still standing in confusion at the threshold of grief, we were stunned when the stores replaced the gloomy ghosts and goblins with sparkling ornaments and cheerful decorations.

Neighbors strung lights on their houses, friends sent cards wishing us joy filled holidays, and not one person mentioned Jason’s name.

Closing our drapes, we huddled in our cocoon, waiting for his return. Thanksgiving passed. I recall the empty chair, the unbroken wishbone, and more turkey than three of us could eat. There was an unwatched football game and a failed attempt at gratitude. That was our day, and it was good enough. It was inconceivable that we would ever enjoy another holiday, much less be thankful for it.

Snow fell. Carols rang out, lights twinkled, church bells pealed. Our thoughts were of Jason, fixed more acutely on his departure than on his arrival eighteen years before.

Memories of prior Decembers pervaded our present. Jason ice fishing. Jason sledding. Jason’s birthday. Jason opening gifts. Jason

throwing tinsel on the tree, on his brothers, and on the dog. Every memory brought tears but every tear brought Jason closer to us. We found him in the pain, the only place we knew how to get to.

I believe that first Christmas had to be that way. Showing up was the best we could do.

But now it is six trees, six silent nights, and six collectable ornaments later. I’ve learned a few things about this path I’m on and found a few crutches for when the road gets too rough. Holidays can be disabling for those who grieve. I’d like to share some things that might help:



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Our Quarterly News



Our chapter’s candle lighting service will be on December 8th at 2:00. The service is open to families and friends. We will also have refreshments after the service so please bring your favorite snack item to share. See page 5 of this newsletter for more information.

The National Candle Lighting will also be on Sunday December 8th, beginning at 7:00 PM, you are invited to participate in the Annual “...that their light

may always shine” remembrance event. All bereaved parents, grandparents, siblings and friends are invited to join us in this worldwide event, people are asked to light a candle at 7 PM in memory of all children. As new candles are lit in each time zone, beginning in New Zealand, the result is a wave of light circling the globe. You can do this in the privacy of your own home or anywhere you choose to be.

This time of year the hole that is in your heart seems to grow, I will not tell you that the pain will stop, I will say with the passing of time the pain becomes softer and you will be able to focus more on the good memories. That is my hope for you this holiday. That you are able to see the good memories even if it is through tears. I know that mine will be.

Peace and hugs during the holidays.
Sharon

(Continued from page 1)

- Believe that your loved one is with you. Include them in your celebrations and in your sadness. Include them when you talk with others about old times and holidays past. If you don't mention them, no one else will.

- Talk to THEM. They hear your thoughts...and if you listen, you can hear their replies.

- Light candles. For six years now I have lit a special candle for my son. This year I will light five, one for each of us, living or not. Why perpetuate the myth of separation? Jason is still part of this family.

- Do good things in celebration of your loved one's life. Random Acts of Kindness (<http://www.actsofkindness.org>) bring smiles to everyone involved. Buy anonymous gifts, scoop snow from a stranger's sidewalk, or light candles at unmarked graves.

- Connect with your loved one who has died. Buy yourself a holiday reading with a reputable medium, take a meditation class, create a special place to go to where you can feel their presence.

- Call a newly bereaved friend or neighbor and invite them to reminisce with you. Cry with them, listen to them, share your journey.

- Give to an organization that your loved one supported. Make a memory tree. Buy a small tree and decorate it with tokens of their life. Don't worry about what others will think. You are solely in charge of this journey. It's all yours.

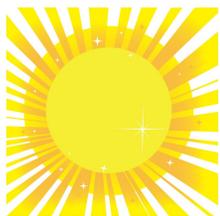
Love someone who is grieving? Lost as far as how to help them through this upcoming season?

Any of the above suggestions can be adapted (i.e. give money in celebration of their loved one's life and tell them about it, make them a memory tree, buy them a reading with a medium) to fit your needs. However, there are two gifts that you can give to a person deep in the pit of grief that will mean more than anything else:

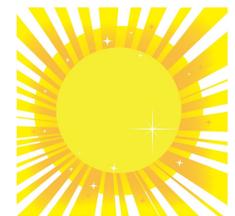
- Undivided attention
- Unconditional acceptance of their journey, wherever it leads them.

I won't end this article with a wish that you have your merriest Christmas ever. I know that for some of you that is not possible or even desirable. Instead, my wish for you is this: That you find a quiet moment during the sometimes magical but often horrendous season upon us and relax. That you take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and envision your friend, child, parent, sibling, spouse, grandparent, or partner. That you accept that dead doesn't mean GONE. That you send out a "Merry Christmas" and "I love you" and then BELIEVE when you hear his or her whispered reply of "I love you, too. Merry Christmas."

Sandy Goodman
 Author of "Love Never Dies: A Mother's Journey from Loss to Love"
 Reprinted from TCF Saint Joseph County Area Chapter, Dec 2009



Our Children By Gloria Grant, TCF Miami, FL
I like to think that they are encircling us,
Sunlight in their hair,
Starlight in their eyes,
Holding hands in love.
The older ones nurturing the younger,
Helping them to grow.
I like to think that they are one,
As we are ONE,



Our Credo

We need not walk alone.
 We are The Compassionate Friends.
 We reach out to each other with love,
 With understanding, and with hope.
 The children we mourn have died at All
 ages and from many different Causes,
 but our love for
 Them unites us.
 Your pain becomes my pain
 Just as your hope becomes my hope.
 We come together from all walks of life,
 from many different circumstances.
 We are a unique family because
 We represent many races, creeds and
 relationships.
 We are young, and we are old.
 Some of us are far along in our grief,
 But others still feel a grief so fresh
 And so intensely painful
 That we feel helpless and see no hope.
 Some of us have found our faith
 To be a source of strength;
 While some of us are struggling to find
 answers.
 Some of us are angry,
 Filled with guilt or in deep depression;
 While others radiate an inner peace.
 But whatever pain we bring
 To this gathering of
 The Compassionate Friends,
 It is pain we will share
 Just as we share with each other
 Our love for the children who have died.
 We are all seeking and struggling
 To build a future for ourselves,
 But we are committed to
 Building that future together
 We reach out to each other in love
 to share the pain as well as the joy,
 Share the anger as well as the peace,
 Share the faith as well as the doubts
 And help each other to grieve
 As well as to grow.
 We need not walk alone....
 We are The Compassionate Friends.



Twas the Night Before Christmas - for bereaved parents by **Faye McCord (bereaved mother)** **Compassionate Friends (UK)**

‘Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days,
 That I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.
 The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
 In hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.



As others were making their holiday plans,
 My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.

I had lost my dear child a few years before,
 And I knew what my holiday had in store.
 When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,
 I sprang to my feet and was looking around,
 Away to the window I flew like a flash,

Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash

The sight that I saw took my breath away,
 And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
 But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.

With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
 I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,
 That my child was still near me and
 that I was loved.



The message they brought was my holiday gift,
 And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.

As I knelt closer to get a better view,
 One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -
 That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,
 To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed I carried the thought,
 Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -
 That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,
 Our children are with us - they're not really dead.
 Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,
 A message of hope - a message so dear.
 And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,
 "To all bereaved parents - We love you tonight!"





Love Gifts



A Love Gift is a donation of money or time to honor a child who has died, or as a memorial for a relative or friend. We thank the following for their kind generosity, love and sharing.

All love gifts are greatly appreciated.

Vickie Bowles in memory of her son Bryan Bowles

Evelyn & Eldridge McNeill in memory of their daughter Phillippia A. Epps

Leigh McNeil in memory of her son Sharnale De'Mar Thompson

Mike & Petra Syfrett in memory of their son Archi Kagy

Bob & Laura Davis in memory of their Grandson Zackery Hollister

Ruby Britt in memory of her daughter Pam Tatum

Tammy Thompson-Jenkins in memory of her son Sharnale De'Mar Thompson

Mickey and Hazel Smith in memory of their son James "Randy" Smith

John and Jennifer German in memory of their daughter Amy Elizabeth German

Jody, Jennifer, and Shaun Hall in memory of their daughter Amber Marie Hall

Sharon Jackson-Davis in memory of her daughter Crystal Dawn Jackson

If you wish to make a donation or a love gift, please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends C/O Jennifer German, and mail to 703 Rosebud Court, Vass, NC 28394. Please include the name of the child, love one, or friend that you wish the donation to be made in memory or honor of.



The National Office of The Compassionate Friends

P.O. box 3696

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Web Site: www.compassionatefriends.org

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Regional Coordinator for the Fayetteville Area Chapter of TCF

Donna & Ralph Goodrich

704-822-4503 or iluvu2lauren@earthlink.net

Meeting Time: 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM
Room 102, Medical Arts Building, 101 Robeson Street, Fayetteville NC

The Compassionate Friends
 Candle Light Memorial Service
 December 8, 2013 at 2PM
 Second Baptist Church on Person Street



The service is open to bereaved families and friends who have experienced the death of a child at any age and from any cause.

The Church is located on Person Street
 Please come and bring a picture or
 an item of remembrance for the memory table.
 We will have refreshments after the service.
 You may bring your favorite refreshment to share.
 Please arrive early, the service will start at 2

For more information call Jennifer German at (910) 245-3177 or
 Sharon Davis at 910-850-4998

Siblings

**Siblings
 Walking Together**

(Formerly the
 Sibling Credo)

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.
 We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.
 Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be.
 We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us. When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.
 We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.

Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life.
 Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. ® The Compassionate Friends



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
 Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all children who have died

**Worldwide
 Candle
 Lighting®**

*... that their light
 may always shine.*

**Second Sunday in December
 7 PM Around the Globe**



TCF World Wide Candle Lighting is an annual event where persons around the globe, united in the loss of a child, light candles for one hour the second Sunday in December. Candles are first lit in New Zealand at 7pm, local time. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lit in the next. This creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world.



Our Children & Siblings Remembered

Each month some of our members face special but very painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents, grandparents, and siblings of the following children's:



December

Crystal Dawn Jackson December 5

Pam Tatum December 5

Zach Grullon December 6

Tammy Owens December 7

Kendra "Candy" Shay December 8

John Krause Jr. December 11

Shermicka Grant December 14

Ricky Diaz December 15

Edward Duane Cantrell December 16

Darrell Lee Dean December 16

Randy Watson December 19

Chances Briggs December 21

Nickolas Ross Hayden December 25

Ra'Mael De'Jon McArthur December 28

January

R Davis Turner January 7

Jeremial I. Davis-Kraut January 9

Eddie Santistevan January 10

Erica Graham January 10

Bennie Michael Traylor January 15

Alexa Nichole Hignight January 16

Isabella Cantrell January 23

Manzonian Hall January 25

Wendy Hair January 25

Matthew Boinski January 25

Christine Bailey January 28

Graylin Jackson January 29

Birthday's



February

Victor Spearman February 1

Patrick "Pat" Shea February 2

Richard Miller III February 3

Juliana Wilkins February 6

Allen Arnette February 12

Amber Marie Hall February 13

Christina "Tina" Varnadoe February 17

Gabriel Somers February 20

Gavin Torello February 21

Daniel "Adam" Clark February 22

Ian Redshaw February 23

March

Corey Fullwood March 1

Joe Dan Rumley March 3

Robert Stevens March 4

Kyle Harris March 7

Nancy Noga Brown March 8

Dennis Tart March 9

Stephen B. Bruno March 10

Christopher "Chris" Hondros March 14

R. Davis Turner March 18

Malachi Sebastian Matthews March 18

Logan Zimmerman March 18

Talisha Morris March 22

Akiana Lopez-Sellos March 25

Sean Thomas March 28



Our Children & Siblings Remembered

Each month some of our members face special but very painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents, grandparents, and siblings of the following children's:

December

Stephen Dew December 12

Dan Arrowood December 29

Ryan Stevens December 30

January

Ra'Mael De'Jon McArthur January 1

Melissa Dawn McCoy January 2

Nancy Kathleen Noga January 7

Jeremiah I. Davis-Kraut January 9

James (Randy) Smith January 12

Duane Alan May January 12

Sean Thomas January 15

Charles Cook January 17

Kevin Harlan January 21

Ronald Hamilton Jr. January 23

Amy Lynn Zinsser January 24

Erica Graham January 24

Shermicka Grant January 25

Alexa Nicole Hignight January 25

Matthew Boinski January 27

Joshua Huggins January 28

Zach Grullon January 28

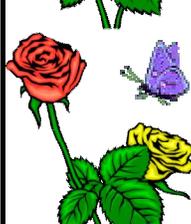
February

Evelyn Copeland February 5

Dennis Tart February 5

Juliana Wilkins February 6

Memorials



Omar Sharaf February 8

Chad Allen Arnette February 14

Judith (Judy) Bowman February 19

Gabriel Somers February 20

Corey Fullwood February 21

Edwin "Lamar" Beard February 23

Wendy Hair February 26

Gavin Torello February 26

March

Cody McLendon March 2

Tammy Owens March 2

Isabella Cantrell March 6

Natalia Cantrell March 6

Zachary Dow March 9

Sharnale DeMar Thompson March 13

Elizabeth Akins March 16

R. Davis Truner March 16

Stephen B. Bruno March 18

Bryan Bowles March 26

Stephen Carroll March 27

Michael "Wesley" Hurt March 30



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Fayetteville Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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We're on the Web
www.tcffayetteville.org

In This Issue: Gifts, Garlands and Grief by Sandy Goodman

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Love Gifts

There is no charge for our newsletter, meetings, or lending library, and we depend solely on your contributions. Love gifts can be made in memory of your child, grandchild, or sibling. Your love gift will insure that all who need our newsletter, will receive it.

I wish to make a donation in memory of _____

Date of Birth _____

Date of Death _____

Donated by _____

Relationship _____

Address _____

All love gifts, poems, donations, etc. must be received by March 10, 2014 in order to appear in the next newsletter.

If you would like to make a donation please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends, and mail to 703 Rosebud Court, Vass, NC 28394

Please send form with check. **A donation is not required to submit items for the newsletter.**