

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

POST OFFICE BOX 583 TAYLORS SOUTH CAROLINA 29687

JANUARY 2003

This newsletter is lovingly dedicated in memory of Rachel Marie Schmidt. This January 1st would have been Rachel Marie's 10th birthday. We love you, think of you, and miss you each and every day.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Josh and Haley

A FEW WORDS FOR RACHEL.....

Her laugh is heard in the laughter of children, her voice echoes in their play. The hugs, the kisses, the giggles and wishes, missed each and every day. Precious memories, crying moments, no real words to say. Rachel, we miss you, we think about you, knowing our memories will stay.

Aunt Hilari, Uncle Paul and Sam

POEMS FOR RACHEL:

"The agony is great and yet I will stand it. Had I not loved so very much, I would not hurt so much.

But goodness knows I would not want to diminish that precious love by one fraction.

I will hurt and I will be grateful for it. For it bears witness to the depth of our meanings, and for that I will be eternally grateful."

-From Scotty, Hospice Chaplain

When you are sorrowful,
Look again in your heart and you shall see
In truth you are weeping for that which
Has been your delight.

-Kahil Gibran,
The Prophet

The heart hath its own memory,
like the mind.
And in it are enshrined the precious
keepsakes
Into which is wrought the givers' loving
thoughts.

-H. W. Longfellow

There is only one way for you to live without grief in your lifetime: that is to exist without love.

-Carol Staudacher

No light that was born in love can ever be extinguished.

-Darcie D. Sims, PhD

Rachel,

We are eternally grateful for being able to have known your beauty, intelligence, sweetness, enthusiasm for life, assertiveness, curiosity, and, of course, your precious love. You are, and will always be our delight, our shining light. Our love for you can never be extinguished.....You are forever in our hearts.

Mommy, Daddy, Josh, Haley

RESOLUTIONS FOR BEREAVED PARENTS:

I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a time table on my grief.

I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.

I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now."

I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.

I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how it feels.

I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself

that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.

I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.

I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and that I won't feel compelled to explain this communication to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.

I will try to eat, sleep and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.

I will know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.

I know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time.

I will let myself heal and not feel guilty about feeling better.

I will remind myself that the grief process is circuitous – that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods, too, will pass.

I will try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.

I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.

Even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

-Nancy A. Mower, TCF, Honolulu, HI

He best understands who has felt the pain.

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents

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OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Devin Baskins 11/29/92 – 01/28/96
Charlie Bellinger 01/21/79 – 05/22/93
Deanna Bridges 11/20/76 – 01/13/00
Jimmy Burns 01/05/83 – 04/04/96
Nicholas Camerato 07/01/87 – 01/12/96
Jon Carpenter 01/31/76 – 02/09/02
Rivers Chandler 01/22/91 – 03/06/00
Terry Lee Davis 09/19/82 – 01/27/01
Hayden DeBo 01/24/97 – 08/11/00
Jill Dunlap 09/24/67 – 01/29/86
Cory King 12/14/83 – 01/02/94
Trent Mauldin 01/10/80 – 06/27/94
Jimmy Mayes 01/12/80 – 04/29/91
Rick O'Brien 10/04/62 – 01/10/87
Paige Lesley Pepper 01/07/91 – 06/16/99
Matt Renner 09/21/72 – 01/13/01
Tommy Runion 05/19/80 – 01/17/99
Rachel Schmidt 01/01/93 – 10/25/96
Monica Sinclair 01/10/95 – 08/27/00
Tracy Whaley 01/09/63 – 02/27/70
Lucia White 05/04/79 – 01/29/95

MONTHLY MEETING

We hope you will join us for our monthly meeting on Thursday, January 9th at 7:30 p.m. We meet at Pelham Road Baptist Church, 1108 Pelham Road.

If you are honoring your child's birthday this month, please bring a photograph, special item of remembrance and/or refreshments if you would like to do so.

Directions: From I-85 North take exit 54, turn left at the light and go 3.2 miles. The church is on the left. From I-385 take exit 39 (Haywood Road), go 2 blocks and turn right on Pelham Road. The church will be approximately 1 mile on the right. We meet in the Fellowship Hall directly behind the Sanctuary Building.

SOMETIMES

Sometimes, something clicks,
And with a tear
Remembrance of the pain
And the loneliness
Flood the heart.

Sometimes, something clicks
And with a smile
Remembrance of the love
And the laughter
Flood the senses.

And there are times
Where nothing clicks at all
And a voice echoes
Through the emptiness
And numbness
Never finding the person
Who used to fill that space.

And sometimes
The most special times of all,
A feeling ripples through your
Body, heart, and soul
That tells you
That person never left you
And he's right there with you
Through it all.

-Kirsten Hansen, Bereaved Sibling,

THANKS

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say: "There is a group in town who might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group"

Thanks to the Mother who went to that first meeting knowing that it would really hurt to talk – and talked.

Thanks to the Dad who said, after that first meeting, he could never come back – but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They can really help."

Thanks to the Mom who, for the first time, was able to bake cookies for her "compassionate friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people – who became a facilitator.

Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men – and didn't say he was sorry.

Because of you we will be able to help someone we don't even know – next month.

-John DeBoer, TCF, Greater Omaha Chapter, NE

May your year be filled with love, courage and hope!