

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Post Office Box 583 Taylors, South Carolina 29687  
(864) 288-8342 [www.tcfogreenvillesc.org](http://www.tcfogreenvillesc.org)

MAY 2003

## “Are You Over It Yet?”

by  
Norm Raiford  
TCF, Greenville SC Chapter

“Are you over it yet?” you ask. I know you want to hear me say “Yes.” But in all honesty, no, I’m not over it and I don’t expect I’ll ever be over losing precious Schuyler and the trauma of seeing her die. “When does anyone ever get over losing a child? Heaven forbid that it should happen, but were you to lose your child, when would you be “over it?”

“Are you moving on?” you ask. Every day that I swing my feet out of bed, put on my clothes, and go about my daily tasks, then yes, I am “moving on.” How could I be otherwise? Life stands still for no one, and besides, I now have new work to do, the work of offering compassion to fellow bereaved parents.

“Will you ever have joy again?” you ask. Oh yes. In fact, I have joy right now. You see, I have both joy and deep mourning side-by-side in my heart. The joy comes from the happy memories of wonderful times Schuyler and I enjoyed. The deep mourning comes from my missing her so terribly, terribly much. Only another bereaved parent can come anywhere close to knowing how much I miss my sweet Schuyler.

“Are you okay now?” you ask. Is anyone ever “okay” after losing a child? No, I’m not really “okay” if by okay you mean “back to normal.” There is no “normal” after losing a child. All those things that once seemed important no longer seem so significant. My heart aches, as it should, given losing that dear little

girl. But to answer your question, yes, I am as “okay” as I can be having lost beautiful, 22-month old Schuyler.

“Do you have hope then?” you ask. Oh yes, I have more than hope. You see, Schuyler came to us as a purely unexpected surprise, like a comet that slowly enters our vision, shines brightly for an all too brief time, and then passes over the horizon out of our sight. But I have assurance that when it is my time to cross over that horizon, I will see precious Schuyler fully healed and perfectly formed once again. It is well with my soul, and it is well with Schuyler’s soul. So, yes, yes, for sure I have hope.

“Is there anything I can do for you?” you ask. Oh yes. Say Schuyler’s name, please. Say it every time you see me. If you knew her, then tell me that you too have wonderful memories of her, and that like me you miss her terribly. If you did not know her, then tell me that you wish you had known her; tell me that you can see in my eyes the love that my heart carries for dear little Schuyler.

Oh, and thanks for asking, and thanks for caring. You have done me the greatest service anyone can do, for you see, today you have been my compassionate friend!

The following poem was written by Mary Beth Bryant after the death of her brother, Josh Bryant:

### A sunny day in June

A young man, so sad, so blue.  
He just couldn’t take the pain he went through.  
He tried so hard, to live in his life,  
it’s so sad to think, we couldn’t help his cry.  
The cry that said please help me,

I’m tired of being sad  
The one that said somebody help me I don’t want to be mad.  
His mother tried to help.  
His family in the dark,  
there was nothing we could do but drive past the park.  
The park where he took his life,  
that sunny day in June.  
I still can’t believe it,  
He left us too soon!

### HIS ROOM...

By Dick Gallagher  
TCF, Central Connecticut

I now stand in the midst of “his room”. Once again I reached and touched all of the “little things” he treasured so dearly, yet had no meaning or value to anyone else  
And as I stood there, I wanted to visualize once again times as they once were, only a very short time ago. I yearned once again to hear his voice and his music, and to feel his presence within me.

I glimpsed at the many pictures he had placed upon the wall, each relaying to me some small story that had entered his life.

I listened for familiar voices of his many friends who were always there in abundance each and every day with him here in this very room, but only now to hear a vibration of silence.

I reflect upon all the precious moments we had for our “little talks about life” itself, and all the “momentous” problems which were generally solved in a matter of minutes! And how when I used to walk away from this very room, a smile would always project from within me, as to how very fortunate I was at that very moment to have him—his innocence was always so overwhelming.

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## OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Steve Bell 3/30/55 – 5/6/78  
Charlie Bellinger 1/21/79 – 5/22/93  
Timothy R. Gilbert 5/30/64 – 9/5/87  
James L. Howard II 5/15/70–12/19/97  
Josh Nichols 11/15/78 – 5/3/01  
Jeremy B. Owens 5/15/75 – 11/12/98  
Amy Beth Pieszchala 9/2/76–5/22/01  
Schuyler Raiford 6/15/97 – 5/8/99  
Travis Shane Smith 5/6/72 – 3/5/93  
Clayton Spencer 5/24/90-6/13/02  
Mickey Tinsley 5/2/48 – 11/8/78  
Cam Turner 5/16/85 – 10/4/02  
Arlene Walters 2/20/82 – 5/7/99

## LOVE GIFTS

We acknowledge the following gifts with sincere gratitude and deep appreciation:

James and Vicki Burns in memory of their son, Jimmy  
Betty Hilley in memory of her son, Timothy Gilbert  
Carolyn Jolley in memory of her dear friend's son, Jeremy Owens  
Judy Nichols in memory of her son, Josh  
Jean Owens in memory of her son, Jeremy  
Larry and Susan Self in memory of their son, Josh Bryant  
Tommy and Sara Strange in memory of their son, Tommy Jr.

*He best understands who has felt the pain.*

And as I stand here, I wonder how many others, at this very moment in time, are standing in their "beloved room of memories" as I now am!  
How many others are holding what I am now cherishing within me?

And how many times each day I would hear his voice call to me from this very room, "Dad, I love you, see you later?"

Yes, my precious little man, Mom and Dad will see you later!

## IF ONLY, ONE MORE TIME...

By Vicki Richey  
TCF, Orange County Chapter, CA

To hear your voice loud and clear,  
To see your image as if you're here,  
To feel your warmth like you are near,  
If only, one more time...

To hear you call, "Mom, I'm home"  
To keep me company when I'm alone,  
To watch you run and grab the phone,  
If only one more time...

To watch you sit quietly and read,  
To buy you things you say you need,  
To see you do a thoughtful deed,  
If only, one more time...

To find a note written by you,  
To walk upstairs and trip over your shoe,  
To comfort you when you're feeling blue,  
If only, one more time...

To feel your arms in a soft embrace,  
To see the smile upon your face,  
To understand when you needed "space"  
If only, one more time...

If only, one more time...

## MONTHLY MEETING

Following a period of general discussion, we will break into groups of interest at our meeting on Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>.

If you have an interest in designing a photo page for our chapter photo book or one you can take home, please bring photo/photos of your child. Other supplies will be provided.

Samples of the design of our Chapter cookbook will be available. If you haven't completed your recipe and bio of your child, this would be a good time to do so.

Nona Walser will continue the discussion period for those who would like to share further concerns and feelings.

Mark your calendar for Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm at Pelham Road Baptist Church, 1108 Pelham Road.

26<sup>TH</sup> TCF National Conference  
Atlanta, Georgia  
July 4-6, 2003