

March, 2004



## Spring Cleaning

I am a “spring cleaner.” As one who works full time, my usual house cleaning is what I often call “a lick and a promise.” But once a year I really enjoy taking everything out of a closet, cabinet or cupboard – examining it – remembering (if I can) where it came from – thinking about its potential uses - and often wondering why I am keeping it!

Recently, as I was rummaging around on a shelf finding a few things I’d forgotten about, I thought about how much of what I was doing could apply to my “personal closet,” as well as our living room closet. My “personal closet” is the part of me where I store all sorts of things – anger, guilt, hope, love, caring. If I could dig way down into that closet and find something I’d forgotten I had, and could put it to good use, I’d like to find a big box labeled **“FORGIVENESS.”**

One of the things we may need to do before we can move ahead in any situation is to forgive whatever wrongs, real and imagined (and we do have both), have been done to us. This isn’t easy. I had to forgive the doctors and nurses, whose training had not prepared them to deal with a child whose illness they couldn’t understand – or how to be supportive of her grieving parents and sister. I have to forgive the people who stayed away from us because they had never been taught about the needs of bereaved parents. I had to forgive

people who tried to “cheer us up” or “take our minds off it.” They, too, were baffled by the horror of it all, and were in their own way trying to be helpful. I have to forgive the people who told us that Linda’s death was God’s will. They were trying to comfort us. I have to forgive myself for so many things. This is really a tough one – the times I was cross or demanding, the situations I handled badly as Linda was growing up, the times I screamed or spanked out of my own frustration. I think she has forgiven me, yet the guilt remains and I must forgive myself.

Then there is the question that we ask, “Why didn’t we transfer her to Children’s Hospital sooner?” There are no answers to these questions. If I made mistakes, then I must accept them and forgive myself for them. I know that carrying the burden of blaming myself, and passing judgment on myself will only weigh me down and hold back whatever potential I have for future growth. But, still it’s difficult.

I have to forgive people who don’t understand where I’m coming from now, and make derogatory remarks about their children. I do wish I could help them to appreciate how very valuable and precious those little ones are.

And finally, I have to forgive Linda. Her dying really messed up my life by creating a situation I didn’t know how to deal with. It took a relatively uncomplicated life, smashed it to smithereens, and forced me to attempt to reconstruct it – to put it back together – a hard job, when some of the pieces don’t quite fit anymore!

Yes...I’d like to find deep down inside me a great big box labeled **“FORGIVENESS.”**

### **“With Hope”**

*By Steven Curtis Chapman  
From his CD “Speechless”*

This is not at all how we thought it was supposed to be. We had so many plans for you, we had so many dreams. And now you are gone away, and left us with the memories of your smile. And nothing we can say and nothing we can do can take away the pain. The pain of losing you, but... We can cry with hope, we can say goodbye with hope, ‘cause we know our goodbye is not the end, oh no. And we can grieve with hope ‘cause we believe with hope (There’s a place by God’s grace), There’s a place where we’ll see your face again, we’ll see your face again... And never have I known anything so hard to understand, and never have I questioned more the wisdom of God’s plan. But through the cloud of tears, I see the Father’s smile and say well done. And I imagine you, where you wanted most to be. Seeing all your dreams come true, cause now you’re home and now you’re free. And...we have this hope as an anchor ‘cause we believe that everything God promised us is true, so... We wait with hope, we ache with hope, we hold on with hope we let go with hope.

If you would like to have an article, poem, etc. printed in our newsletter, please mail to: TCF, P.O. Box 583, Taylors, SC 29687

#### **Or e-mail to:**

[Janisgow@mindspring.com](mailto:Janisgow@mindspring.com) by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the next newsletter’s release. (Please be sure to put “newsletter” or “TCF” in the subject line.)

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
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**OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED,  
AND REMEMBERED**

**“As long as we live, they too shall  
live...for they are a part of us as we  
remember them”**



**Our Children Remembered:**

Kevin Adams – 3/19/82 ~ 3/5/99  
Steve Bell – 3/30/55 ~ 5/6/78  
Jeremy Brooks – 3/15/82 ~ 9/6/02  
Rivers Chandler – 1/22/91 ~ 3/6/00  
Carey Corder – 3/15/59 ~ 2/27/03  
Adam Cox – 4/15/85 ~ 3/31/00  
Bryan Denny – 7/23/55 ~ 3/28/98  
Christopher Deviney – 3/8/80 ~ 8/13/98  
Devin Fowler – 2/22/90 ~ 3/2/02  
Kelsey Gossett – 3/17/94 ~ 12/5/03  
Jessica Harris – 3/5/93 ~ 10/5/03  
John Baron Howell – 3/9/90 ~ 3/9/90  
Robert Joel Howell – 3/9/90 ~ 3/9/90  
Lisa Jackson. – 3/20/71 ~ 8/27/00  
Mark Medina – 1/17/58 ~ 3/24/92  
Michael Moyd - 6/24/95 ~ 3/29/96  
Susan Oglesby – 3/31/76 ~ 5/31/91  
Grant Patterson – 3/6/02 ~ 3/7/02  
David Rush – 3/13/75 ~ 6/21/93  
Josh Self – 3/27/80 ~ 6/18/01  
Travis Smith – 5/16/72 ~ 3/5/93  
Tom Stearns – 3/27/64 ~ 8/4/93  
Kirby Walser – 3/14/78 ~ 3/23/99  
Timothy Wilson – 2/12/82 ~ 3/25/01



“Good Memories are the perennials that  
bloom again after the hard winter of grief  
begins to yield to hope.”

*Sascha Wagner  
TCF, Des Moines, IA*

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

- **Rivers Chandler** - ~ by *Walt and  
Ann Chandler*
- **Susan Oglesby**  
~by *Larry and Brenda Oglesby*
- **Matthew Robert Renner**  
~by *Dick and Margaret Renner*

**March's Meeting**

The Greenville Chapter of *The  
Compassionate Friends* will hold its  
monthly meeting on Thursday, March 11,  
2004 from 7:30 to 8:30 pm in the  
“Educational Building” of Pelham Rd.  
Baptist Church, 1108 Pelham Rd.,  
Greenville

The program for this months meeting will  
be “Finding Your Way on the Road called  
Grief.” After a brief presentation, we will  
break into small groups, including one  
just for men, to hear questions and work  
through answers. Last month we had the  
largest number of men in attendance – 9  
in all. We applaud you all for your  
courage to make that first crucial step in  
the road to healing.

Please don't miss this opportunity on  
March 11<sup>th</sup> to follow up our February  
discussion!

**A Solitary Journey**

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but  
you knows the gaping hole left in your  
life when someone you know has died.  
And no one but you can morn the

silence that was once filled with laughter  
and song. It is the nature of love and of  
death to touch every person in a totally  
unique way. Comfort comes from  
knowing that people have made the same  
journey. And solace comes from  
understanding how others have learned to  
sing again.

*By Helen Steiner Rice*

**How To Help Me Grieve**

**Be there for me:**

I feel alone, in pain, I need a friend

**Share my sorrow:**

Speak from your heart. I have to talk  
about my feelings.

**Let me grieve:**

Listen to me, I need to cry. We all grieve  
in our own way and in a different time  
frame.

**Keep the memory alive:**

It is always on my mind. I have so many  
memories.

**I need your help:**

Help me, call me, and pray for me. Do  
whatever you can.

**Don't desert me:**

Don't desert me after the 1st or 2<sup>nd</sup> week.  
I need you especially on holidays.

**Take care of yourself:**

I need to depend on you.

**Help me heal:**

Involve me, listen to me months later. I  
need your interest and invitations.

**Be my friend:**

Don't be afraid of me or my grief. It's  
okay to cry.

Lastly, please don't criticize until you've  
walked in my shoes, instead, **Pray for  
me.**

*By Vivian Sagert  
TCF, Manitoba, Canada*