

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Post Office Box 583 Taylors, South Carolina 29687
(864) 288-8342
www.tcfogreenvillesc.org

December, 2003

First Christmas



Silent night, holy night,
Little angel, taken flight
Forever gone and on your own,
Left your mother so alone.

A Christmas stocking with your name,
Memories I can't reclaim.
No more presents, no surprise,
Reflected in your shining eyes.

Tinsel, sparkle-all seem sad,
Three Christmases were all you had.
Gently haunting – your sweet ghost,
The happy times I miss you most.

*~Joanetta Hendel, TCF
Indianapolis, IN*

Holidays

The holiday period is an especially difficult time for bereaved parents and particularly for the newly bereaved. The holidays, which have been our happiest times with our children, are a time when the changes that tragedy has made in our lives are most evident. As we gather our emotional forces to make a happy day for surviving children, grandparents and other family members, it can be a very difficult time. It helps to know that you will find the holidays less difficult than your fear of them and you will find some of your happy memories, too. Our children live on in our memories and in the many happy holidays now past. We hope that during this period you can find some happy times to remember and to cherish. We were fortunate to have had these Wonderful children as long as we did, and we will have our memories of the good times they enjoyed. The pain of loss will

always be there. We share that, and we have a special concern for those who are having their first holidays without their children. There will be hard times and

sad days. Without grief, there would be nothing. In that grief there are some wonderful memories to cherish. We will be with you in spirit. You are not alone....

~Dayton Robinson, TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

You Ask Me How I'm Doing

My son went first, he lives with God
And here I must remain.
Now it's up to me to learn to live
With all this grief and pain.
You ask me how I'm doing,
I don't know what to say...
Sometimes I'm doing pretty good –
It's different every day.

Sometimes I smile, sometimes I cry,
Sometimes I feel okay.
Sometimes I think I'm going nuts,
It's difficult to say.
Sometimes I hear him call my name
Or see him wave goodbye.
Sometimes I feel him here with me
And then I start to cry.
His gentle hugs are memories now,
His smiles are gone for good.
I'd love to hold his hand again,
Oh, if I only could.
It's lonely here without him,
But the world keeps right on turning.
And this pain I'm feeling in my heart...
that just keeps right on burning.
So ask me how I'm doing
And I won't know what to say.
I haven't really, truly known
Since Andy went away.

~By Ralph Haroldson, Andy's Dad

Let This Christmas

Let this Christmas be gentle for you.
Give yourself the "gift of peace".
Let the magic spin your private cocoon,
With a hope that will never cease.
Remember your children tenderly;
Let the light of their love shine through.

For in the wonder and magic of Christmas time, they are sending their love you.
Sweet Peace, Sweet Hope, Sweet Love

~Dana Gensler, TCF of S. Central, KY

2003 Worldwide Candle Lighting

December 14, 2003

The Worldwide Candle Lighting is held every year on the second Sunday in December, at 7:00 PM, in every time zone. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lighted in the next, creating a 24 hour wave of light that encircles the globe in a virtual 24 hour memorial.



In connection with the Worldwide Candle Lighting, our *Community Candle Lighting* service will be held on Sunday, December 14th at 7 PM at Thomas McAfee's Downtown Chapel, 639 North Main Street, Greenville. Candles will be provided.

Remember...anyone not able to attend may participate by simply lighting a candle at home alone or with family and friends.

Missing You

I just can't believe it . . . The sun still rises and sets. The moon and stars still shine. The flowers still bloom. The birds still sing. I expected a change in everything. I just can't believe it . . . It still gets dark and light. The ocean still has waves. The rain still rains. The wind still blows. Is it because they do not know? I just can't believe it . . . I thought the world would stop. When in my house I found an empty chair, a missing smile. I thought it would stop for just awhile. I just can't believe it.

~Gretta Vinney, TCF Austin, TX

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Post Office Box 583 Taylors, South Carolina 29687
(864) 288-8342
www.tcfogreenvillesc.org

The December newsletter is dedicated to the memory of all our children ~ who left us too soon.

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Cindy Esterl – 11/4/77 ~ 12/26/88
Devin Fowler – 12/22/90 ~ 3/2/02
James Howard II – 5/15/70 ~ 12/19/97
Christopher Howard – 6/15/73 ~ 12/19/97
Deborah Jolley – 12/27/61 ~ 7/4/99
Cory A. King – 12/14/83 ~ 1/2/94
Joseph Kofoed - 9/10/95 ~ 12/18/95
Eli Labbe – 12/31/85 ~ 4/14/02
Greg Lackey – 2/8/76 ~ 12/4/00
Brian Martin – 12/13/78 ~ 6/26/01
Kyle Smith – 12/5/84 ~ 10/15/97
John Turner III – 12/19/76 ~ 9/5/02
Amanda Williams – 12/4/79 ~ 7/25/99
Timothy Wilson – 12/12/82 ~ 3/25/01
Chad Withered – 4/13/79 ~ 12/30/94

DECEMBER'S MONTHLY MEETING



The Greenville Chapter of *The Compassionate Friends* will hold its annual Remembrance Service in memory of our children on Thursday, Dec. 11th from 7:30 to 8:30 pm at Pelham Rd. Baptist Church, 1108 Pelham Rd., Greenville. Light refreshments will be served following the service.



LOVE GIFTS

A love gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends, Greenville SC chapter. It is usually in memory of a child who has died by their parents, but it can also be from friends or relatives who want to honor your child as well. It can also be from someone who simply wants to help in the work of our local chapters. Love gifts are acknowledged each month in our newsletter.

In memory of their children:

- **Roger Strange** ~ by *Pierce and Becky Strange*.
- **Cory Alexander King** ~ by *Mark and Diane King*.
- **Amanda Williams** ~ by *Julia and Wally Muirhead*.

If you or someone you know would like to make a love gift in memory of your special loved one, please fill out the enclosed card and mail back to the indicated address, or better yet, bring it with you to our December meeting and a basket will be available to collect these "greatly appreciated" gifts. Your gifts help to off-set the cost of mailing the monthly newsletters, provide new books for our library and many other expenses incurred for our outreach to the bereaved parents.

Christmas Thoughts

Beyond the twinkling lights, the red and green candles, the poignant aroma of trees, the angels and stars and beloved carols...Beyond the presents, the shopping, the baking and cooking...Beyond all of these sights and sounds of Christmas...Beyond all of these...there is hope.

Hope...It is hope that sustains us through the days of grief and anger and frustration and loneliness.

The hope is that someday the pain of the deaths of our children will be eased. The hope is that someday our smiles will be real. The hope is that once again we will laugh and love and cry completely without fear and hollowness.

It is the hope that someday we can remember our children with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelmed with it.

So it is that for each of you, I would wish hope, peace, compassion, love, sympathy, understanding, sharing, and listening.

In sharing of our grief with one another and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and learn all of these gifts.

TCF, Wabash Valley Chapter

