

September, 2004

September's Meeting

The Greenville Chapter of *The Compassionate Friends* will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, Sept. 9th from 7:30 to 8:30 pm at Pelham Rd. Baptist Church, 1108 Pelham Rd., Greenville. This month's program will be presented by members of our Steering Committee. The topic will be "The Grieving Person's Bill Of Rights".



Promises of Rainbows

I promise not to offer rainbows after storms or silver linings beyond the clouds. But, if you have tears of sorrow, I will share them. If you have words of anger, I will hear them. If you have moments of confusion, I will help you through them. Perhaps...your tears of sorrow today will water the seeds of tomorrow's garden of spiritual growth, of worthy priorities, of loving relationships, and genuine understanding and compassion. My sad friend, your weeping is not fruitless.

By: Nancy Williams, TCF Central NJ

Dear Friends:

The gift to Pelham Road Baptist Church by the Greenville Chapter of The Compassionate Friends was very thoughtful. Thank you! The decision of the Church to designate the gift to the building program in memory of our son, Baron, touched us deeply.

As each person travels this individual journey through grief, it is my prayer The Compassionate Friends will continue to be a resource for hope and healing.

Always remembering our special children,

Betty Garrett

"I've been trying to make the best of grief ... but now I'm beginning to learn to allow it to make the best of me."

~Barbara Asher

Special Birthday Table

Our Chapter has a monthly Birthday Table. This is a special table set up for those who have a child, grandchild or sibling's birthday in that month. Please bring a photo/memento and share a special memory of your child. You are also welcome to bring your child's favorite food or birthday cake to share with the group. We hope you will take this opportunity to share your child with us.

The Elephant in the Room

~By Terry Kettering

There's an elephant in the room. It is large and squatting, so it is hard to get around it. Yet we squeeze by with "How are you?" and "I'm fine" ... and a thousand other forms of trivial chatter.

We talk about the weather. We talk about work. We talk about everything else – except the elephant in the room.

There's an elephant in the room. We all know it is there. We are thinking about the elephant as we talk together. It is constantly on our minds. For, you see, it is a very big elephant. But we do not talk about the elephant in the room.

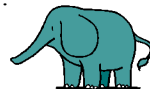
Oh, please, say my child's name. Oh, please say her name again. Oh, please, let's talk about the elephant in the room. For if we talk about her death, perhaps we can talk about her life.

Can I say "Barbara" to you and not have you look away? For if I cannot, then you are leaving me

Alone

In a room

With an elephant.



The Back to School Pressure Cooker

Labor Day can put siblings into their own back to school pressure cooker. Whether this is the first year, or later, our kids may be dealing with questions and comments from peers, teachers, and/or counselors about their brother or sister. Or perhaps no one is talking, because no one knows what to say. Feelings of loneliness, being different, being left out, can surface, and sibling rivalry? Remember if you will, how intense it could get between all your children. What kind of competition existed between them during the school year, or what comparisons were made; athletics, grades, friendships, extra activities?

That kind of emotion is often forgotten when a child dies. But as your children go back to the classroom, to the athletic field, they may see those reminders each day. When they bring home these feelings, positive and negative, they need a place to express them without being judged, or compared to their sibling.

We want to remember good. But we have to remember that no child was always good! To forget that is to make a martyr of our dead child – possibly at the expense of our living children. Our surviving children need special support at this time of year, too. They need to be reassured that they are still lovable – that they can be forgiven for any anger or resentment they may feel toward their brother or sister...that perfection is not a requirement for loving. They need to be reassured that they are separate, unique individuals, not imperfect replacements for the child who died. They need a safe place to talk, to let out their own concerns and anxieties and fears. They too are grieving and need a lot of support, especially during this back to school rush.

~By Cindy Cooper, TCF St. Louis