

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Post Office Box 583 Taylors, South Carolina 29687
www.tcfogreenvillesc.org

October, 2004

October's Meeting

The Greenville Chapter of *The Compassionate Friends* will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, Oct. 14th from 7:30 to 8:30 pm at Pelham Rd. Baptist Church, 1108 Pelham Rd., Greenville. We are now meeting in the new "Family Life Center". We will have greeters out front to direct you to the meeting room.

The topic for this month's program is **"Using Art Therapy in Your Journey of Grief."** Our presenter is Barb McIntyre, a therapist and bereaved parent. Following the program will be our usual sharing time and visiting around the birthday table. Be sure to join us for this special program and for encouragement, hope and friendship.

Autumn

~Am I the only one who feels a deep sadness and dread of autumn to start? Something about this time of year always saddens me. The tired look to the trees, flowers starting to fade, and the thought of a long bleak winter. Oh to be a bear and to hibernate away this season, instead we must endure the season and the coming of the holidays. I know the calendar still says it's summer ... but I feel autumn in my heart!

Safe and Unsafe People

There is this analogy concerning "safe" and "unsafe" people. The terms of "safe" and "unsafe" were coined by a Compassionate Friend to describe her feelings when in the presence of normal, everyday people – friends, strangers, relatives, or mere acquaintances. To a bereaved parent, these individual people are either "safe" or "unsafe" to be with.

Now for the analogy. A bereaved parent is like a person who has fallen into a deep, cold lake. We struggle to stay up, but

realize we are drowning. As we look toward the shore for help, we see people standing and watching. The "unsafe" people will (1) run the other way, (2) stand and watch because they don't know what to do, or (3) stand on shore and begin to explain to you how to swim, step by step.

Then there are the "safe" people . . . God bless them! They'll jump in the cold, dirty water with all their clothes on and swim out to help. Maybe they have never been drowning themselves, but so what! They care enough to put themselves aside and meet you right where you are, even if where you are is very uncomfortable. I'm grateful for the safe people in my life who are still loving me and swimming with me. They are truly "lifesavers". As for the "unsafe" people, I have mixed emotions. Sometimes it is anger, sadness, disbelief, loneliness, or any combination of all of them. Do the "unsafe" people not care? Perhaps the answer comes in the form of another question: "How much do they care?"

*Darlene Gersch
TCF, Will County, IL*



The following, was read at last month's meeting. We had several requests that it be printed in our newsletter.

**"You Have The Right To Embrace
Your Spirituality"**

No matter the circumstances of the death, you are shaken and broken to the very core of your being.

If this quake of turmoil leaves you afraid and unsteady, distraught and crying about everything, if thinking hurts and breathing is a conscious reflex, what do you do? Where do you turn?

I am a child of God. How can this be? This hurt, this senseless loss, this devastation. Why? Why us? How can this happen? Where do you turn? I turned to God. I turned immediately to God.

I was not in control of anything. When I realized that, I became more receptive to

God's activity around me. I was so poised considering my mortality and the mind scenarios that you go through., that when the gentleness of love came and the vulnerability of myself was opened and displayed to all, I knew that God was my Comfort. Asking questions but not expecting answers when there are none, my struggle to be or to question being came when I could be in a spiritual place—a beach, a church, a garden—feeling a communication with Greg and God. Looking for the awareness that comes when you are searching, I have come to the realization that **HOPE** is the answer.. my answer.

I came here not alone. I found kindness, love, empathy, willingness to listen and encouragement to share from strangers in the church community and this community (TCF). I had a safe haven to be: a place to reflect, to be safe with my rawness of loss, to be on edge or to interact if I choose with a loving community. Many did not know my story but listened and shared theirs. Words and prayers that were spoken may have meant little to those that offered them but not to me . I was afforded strength .. through the **Love** of God. Little by little God's goodness, visible in others and in a changing me became so apparent. The studying and trusting in my faith had given me a calmness for the long journey.

In learning to trust that life doesn't end in death, you have **HOPE**. The **precious one** that you have loved and lost will always be with you in memory and in prayer. The **love** between you two is a **SPIRITUAL** bond that death cannot sever. And, this sacred connection will forever be.

Death makes life all the more precious. Thank you, God, for Precious Memories. You, we share an understanding of the heart deeper than words. If we quiet our spirits, we can sense God's presence. We are given glimpses of our loved ones through time and space in the wind, in a song, in a butterfly.

~ By Judy Lackey
TCF Greenville, SC
Greg's Mom

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**OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED,
 AND REMEMBERED**

Michael A. Allen – 10/16/94 ~ 8/25/02
 Dewey Barton – 5/24/73 ~ 10/6/01
 Kelly Anne Bennett – 9/14/81 ~ 10/28/02
 Hunter Calhoun – 10/20/96 ~ 8/7/03
 Mark Chappell – 10/8/84 ~ 1/9/04
 Alyson P. Duncan – 6/18/84 ~ 10/16/84
 Lisa Etherington – 10/9/80 ~ 2/11/00
 Baron Garrett – 10/26/67 ~ 6/21/78
 Alex Haigler – 10/1/99 ~ 2/6/04
 Jessica Harris – 3/5/93 ~ 10/5/03
 Karen M. Hayden – 10/17/69 ~ 1/19/04
 Robert J. Howell – 11/11/92 ~ 10/11/93
 Kyle Jenkins – 12/5/84 ~ 10/15/97
 Bobby Jones – 10/16/86 ~ 12/22/03
 Damon Leonard – 10/27/74 ~ 7/27/84
 Terrance Lomax – 10/30/86 ~ 6/14/99
 Geoffrey Lowry – 10/29/59 ~ 10/1/87
 Tim McKelder – 10/18/76 ~ 7/18/98
 Mark Miller, Jr. – 10/4/86 ~ 6/18/98
 Ricky O'Brien – 10/4/62 ~ 1/10/87
 Shane O'Sullivan – 8/12/85 ~ 10/20/03
 Stephanie Penland – 10/30/77 ~ 11/25/99
 Derrick Pond – 1/16/80 ~ 10/31/02
 Matthew Roper – 10/7/86 ~ 5/21/02
 Jantzen Satterfield – 2/8/88 ~ 10/17/97
 Rachel M. Schmidt – 1/1/93 ~ 10/25/96
 "Tadpole" Teems – 10/14/96 ~ 10/23/00
 Jason B. Turner – 9/20/81 ~ 10/7/99
 Cam Turner – 5/16/85 ~ 10/4/02
 Daniel Walker – 10/18/80 ~ 9/7/01
 Jason Warlick – 10/12/73 ~ 9/14/98

Love gifts received in memory of:

Rick O'Brien ~ by his Parents,
 John and Peggy O'Brien
Alan Dobson ~ by his Mother,
 Jeannie Dobson
Kim Patterson ~ by her Mother,
 Kathryn Bailey
Candace Sue Cota ~ by her Parents,
 Rick & Tonia Gingrass



On Moving

It was time to sell the sprawling four-bedroom house. Allan had lived here from the day he was born until his untimely death at age 21. I wish to share the steps that I took in parting from a physical location tenderly associated with my child.

I needed to sit at the kitchen table and to call his name and hear it reverberate in tones distinct to that location. I called his name believing that if I called Allan with enough integrity that he would once again bound into the kitchen. Size 12 tennis shoes thumping down the stairs, he would enter the kitchen faking a jump shot, once again leaving fingerprints on that one particular spot on the ceiling. I needed to call him in expectation and in stunned sorrow. Everyday in the two months that I had to pack, I spent part of the day calling. This calling was good, important work.

The things of his life that I could part with, I had already. Now distilled into two suitcases were the fragments of a life, except for his cheese.

I had already moved his Kraft Singles into the refrigerator at the new house. This cheese looks pretty good considering that it is four years old.
 The package is marked: ALLAN'S CHEESE: DO NOT EAT.

What to do about the doorframe where I had marked his height – starting at 4' and culminating at a stunning 6'3"? Allan was my most successful science project. I needed to take this proof that he thrived.
Solution: I taped up a pretty piece of ribbon and copied the markings. Then I transferred them to the doorframe at the new house.

Preparing to walk out the door for the last time, to any molecule or spore of my child that remained, I called, "Come on! Time to go!"

Be happy for me! Now I live in a beautiful new house on a lake. And Allan is here with me. He will always be in my heart. . . .

*Alan's Mom
 Jeannie Dobson
 TCF – Greenville, SC*



Halloween

It is here, this day of merriment and children's pleasure. Gremlins and goblins and ghosties at the door of your house. . . . And the "other" children come to the door of your mind. Faces out of the past, small ghosts with sweet, painted faces. They do not shout. Those children who no longer march, laughing on cold Halloween night, they stand at the door of your mind – and you will let them in, so that you can give them the small gifts of Halloween – a smile and a tear.

~Wintersun by Sascha