

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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Monthly Meeting

February 8, 2007

Always the second Thursday of the month

Topic:

“Telling Your Story”

Facilitated by:

Dick Renner.

Meeting Time & Location

7:30 P.M.

Pelham Rd. Baptist Church,
Family Life Center
1108 Pelham Rd., Greenville, SC

We acknowledge with much appreciation, the “Love Gifts this month in memory of:



- **Rachel M. Schmidt** ~ by Lynel, Dave, Zaria & Asher Kantor
- **Matt Renner** ~ by Dick and Margaret Renner
- **Shane O’Sullivan** ~ by Vickie O’Sullivan Bray
- **Patrick Whitehurst** ~ by Dan and Trudy Whitehurst
- **Rachel Marie Schmidt** ~ by George and Renate Schmidt
- **Eric White** ~ by Carolyn White



There’s a Valentine Waiting for You

By Mary Cleckley
Lawrenceville, GA

There’s a valentine waiting for you, that’s different from all the others.

It’s there every month at our meetings of heartbroken fathers and mothers.

Its envelope is made of caring, the glue of understanding seals it tight.

This non-judgmental group who’ve “been there” help to take away your fear and fright.

So, come join with us together, read your loving message printed clear.

In not only this month’s valentine, but all those throughout the year.

The Role Model

I watch with wonderment as you go about your daily tasks. I see determination, the quiet confidence, and wonder if you were always like that or did your child’s death touch you deep inside and soften your soul?

Did your priorities change? Did your pace slow?

Am I seeing the new you or the old?

I see you laughing and talking with friends and wonder if you still cry when you’re alone and remember your child with death memories too bitter to own?

Or have you traveled to a higher plane, another phase beyond the tears and grief and fears and untold sorrows that trap me in their maze? I don’t know.

I know only that I look to you and hold on tightly with hope in my heart that someday, I too, can gather strength and find my new start.

TCF ~ Montgomery, AL



We wish there was a magic formula for chasing away those post-holiday, pre-spring gloomies that so many of us suffer from in January and February. Problem is there’s no such thing as a generic cure-all for the blahs. The task of “grief work” after the death of a child is hard work. There is no way to predict how you will feel. The reactions of grief are not like recipes with given ingredients and certain results. Each person mourns in a different way. You may cry hysterically, or you may remain outwardly controlled, showing little emotion. You may lash out in anger against your family and friends, or you may express your gratitude for their concern and dedication. You may be calm one moment – in turmoil the next. Reactions are varied and contradictory. Grief is universal. At the same time, it is extremely personal. Heal in your own way.

Rabbi Earl Grollman
“Living When a Loved One Has Died”



The following “Love Gifts” were received in memory of special loved ones, but were inadvertently left out of last months Newsletter. Please accept my apology!

- **James L. Howard II and Christopher Howard** ~ by Gale Howard
- **Timothy Gilbert** ~ by Betty Hilley
- **John R. Johnson III** ~ by Virginia Johnson
- **Charlie Bellinger** ~ by Pete and Mary Bellinger
- **Robert Ewing** ~ by Caroline Ewing
- **Chad Withered** ~ by Dennis and Janet Withered
- **Amy and Donny Wilkinson** ~ by Don and Anne Wilkinson
- **Christopher Ellison** ~ by Roger and Debbie Ellison
- **Tim Malone** ~ by Frank and Jean Malone
- **Jeremy McIntyre** ~ by David and Barbara McIntyre

The February's newsletter is lovingly dedicated to the memory of our children....gone too soon.

Our Children Remembered:

Pamela Askew – 2/18/82 ~ 11/21/00
Brianna Barton – 1/14/04 ~ 2/9/04
Celeste Bright – 2/22/80 ~ 4/14/94
Brenda W. Burnett – 8/8/62 ~ 2/28/03
Jon Carpenter – 1/31/76 ~ 2/9/02
Carey Corder – 3/15/59 ~ 2/27/03
Candy Cota – 6/4/87 ~ 2/24/04
Lisa Etherington – 10/9/80 ~ 2/11/00
Clifford Gammons IV-2/4/68 ~ 12/21/04
Kim Gregory – 1/23/74 ~ 2/6/01
Greg Lackey – 2/8/76 ~ 12/4/00
Tim Malone – 9/18/60 ~ 2/16/04
Melissa Rowland – 7/11/81 ~ 2/10/99
Jantzen Satterfield – 2/8/88 ~ 10/17/97
Austin Shealy – 2/1/93 ~ 4/10/02
Billy Smith – 2/26/61 ~ 2/27/83
Roger Strange – 2/6/61 ~ 3/13/88
Nathaniel Tate – 2/24/04 ~ 6/2/06
Tracy Whaley – 1/9/63 ~ 2/27/70
Eric White – 8/11/57 ~ 2/5/97

The Greatest Grief

*Peggy Gibson
TCF, Nashville, TN*

A sudden accident killed your child. That terrible phone call changed your life with no warning – you didn't get to say goodbye – this has to be the most terrible loss of all.

Your child died by suicide – you feel you should have been able to prevent it. Your guilt is devastating. How can you live with such an incomprehensible tragedy?

You only had one child – now you have none and your focus in life is gone. What's the point of living? What could be more devastating?

You've experienced the deaths of more than one of your children – will it happen again? How does one survive this pain again?

When your baby died, your dreams died – you have few memories and you're too young to be suffering like this – this loss is the most unfair.

Someone murdered your child – an unbelievable violation – you're angry and your frustration with the legal system feeds your anger. This must be the very worst.

You're a single parent – your child has died and you have no one to lean on, no one to share your grief – surely your suffering is the most painful.

The unbelievable has happened – your adult child died – you had invested so much in that child – now who's going to care for you in your old age?

You had to watch your child suffer bravely through a long illness – you were helpless to ease his pain and to prevent his death – how do you erase those horrible images? Yours must be the greatest grief.

The truth is that the death of any child is the greatest loss, regardless of the cause, regardless of the age. Our own experience is far more painful than we had ever previously envisioned, so how

could we possibly comprehend what others have undergone? To make comparisons between our own suffering and the pain of others is an exercise in futility. It accomplished nothing and sometimes can be hurtful to others. To say that one type of death produces a greater or deeper grief than another tends to place different values on the children who have died. Each child is worth 100% of our grief, each person's sorrow is 100% and each loss is 100% of our being. I can't imagine wanting to walk in the shoes of any other bereaved parent, can you?



A Beginning

One day you wake up and realize that you must have survived it because you are still here, alive and breathing. But you don't remember the infinitely small steps and decisions you took to get there. Your only awareness is that you have shed miles of tears on what seems to be an endless road of sorrow.

One day – one glorious day – you wake up and feel your skin tingle again, and you forget just for an instant that your heart is broken . . . and it is a beginning.

*Susan Borrowman
TCF-Kingston, Ontario*



Grief never ends, but it changes.
It's a passage, not a place to stay.
The sense of loss must give way if we're to value the life that was lived