



**The Compassionate Friends**  
**Manhattan Chapter**  
 Supporting Family After a Child Dies

MANHATTAN NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018 Vol. XL No. 2

**FINDING “OUR PEOPLE”**

It’s Spring Again. A season that always brings me back to the beginning. I watch now, with a combination of delightful anticipation and sadness, as tiny buds appear on trees and little sprouts of green struggle to break the surface of my garden. Everything comes back I think - except Peter. It’s always in the Spring, along with the tulips and daffodils, that the emotions lurking just below the surface seem to want to break through my skin.

I remember clearly what it was like in those early years. The pain that was not like anything else I had ever felt, heard about, or read about. The frustration of not being able to describe what was happening, what I was feeling. I felt as though I was trapped in my own mind, unable to speak as the world tried to convince me that they understood and sympathized. I was flailing around, angry at everything and increasingly furious that in spite of their entreaties, nobody “got it” - nobody who had ever suffered could imagine what my reality was like. I felt so isolated and alone, stripped of any purpose or reason to go on without my beloved Peter.

The only company I had then was my journal. I could blabber into my journal at will. Into it I vented all my pain, my suffering, and my frustration at never having the adequate words to describe what I was feeling. Then one day, I came to a Compassionate Friends meeting. I felt as if I had been on a frozen planet, alone and afraid, and had come upon a campfire

*(Continued on page 8)*

**10 YEARS...HOW CAN IT BE POSSIBLE?**

This Sept. 22, 2007 marks the 10th anniversary of the day James made the decision that ended his life, and in turn, also changed our lives forever. It just seems impossible that it’s been ten years since that day when we were faced with the most painful unimaginable, grief, sorrow and despair we have ever endured. When we went to our first TCF meeting in November, it seemed that we would never find the kind of hope and level of acceptance that some parents, further down the road, had seemed to achieve. Truly, I never thought I would live a year without my son. The heartache was utterly unbearable, the sadness was a gut-wrenching pain that would leave me physically doubled over. I thought for sure I would die of a broken heart, and many nights I would wonder if I would wake up the following morning, but much to my surprise, and sometimes dismay, I did. My husband and I continued to attend TCF for a couple months until we learned that couples grieve differently and while I had found a source of comfort and understanding that I needed, it wasn’t the right place for my husband. Another lesson that we had to learn was that it is okay for couples to grieve differently, in spite of the fact that we, as parents, were both suffering the same loss, the death of our only child. Month after month I willingly went to TCF meetings, even though sometimes it was difficult as I drove there, once again realizing that attending a meeting was another jolt of reality that where I was going was a place where I fit in and that because James died, I belonged to such a group. I listened to other parents and when I heard

*(Continued on page 10)*

**TELEPHONE FRIENDS** - When you’re having the kind of day that you feel only another bereaved parent or sibling can understand, we are willing to listen and share with you. Don’t hesitate to call our Manhattan Chapter phone for meeting information (212) 217-9647. However, if you need to speak with someone please call one of the following volunteers: Jacquie Mitchell (eves) (347) 414-1780 jacquienytcf@gmail.com.

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MEETINGS** are always the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

**Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church,**  
 55th and 5th Avenue. Enter at 7 West 55th street.  
**We start PROMPTLY at 7:00PM.**

*The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. We are a group of bereaved parents who are seeking support in our grief or are able to give it. Among us, your religion, your race, your politics, your job or social standing are not important. We care about your grief—the tragedy that each of us has shared—and how we can grow through it, not back to the person we were but to the person we can become.*

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# SEVEN HABITS OF SUCCESSFULLY COPING BEREAVED PARENTS

by Nora Yood

As a newly bereaved mother, it seemed I would never escape the sink hole of grief, guilt, and sadness that engulfed me. Yet, I have managed to once again become a functioning member of society, due in a large part from the support and example of others who have walked down that same bleak path as I. Over these years, I have developed strategies that have made it possible for me inch forward toward a to a new normalcy. With a shout out to Stephan Cove, author of the blockbuster self-help guide about how to become a highly successful person, I call my strategies *Seven Habits of Successfully Coping Bereaved Parents*. The choice of the term coping is deliberate, because coping best describes what we can do. These *habits* have served me well, and I offer them with the hope they may provide some comfort or insight to you as well.

- #1 You can choose what you tell people about the circumstance and events surrounding your child's death.** If you are faced with inquires that are intrusive or insensitive, too personal or upsetting, you need only reply *I don't feel comfortable talking about it*. You are under no obligation to satisfy anyone's curiosity, or make superficial conversation. If you are asked about how you are doing and you are hurting, angry, or resentful, you can say that, since the person did ask. You are also not required to put on a phony smile and mouth fake bromides in order to avoid making the inquisitor feel uncomfortable.
- #2 Give yourself enough time to allow time to its job.** Grieving has no shelf life. You will discover time is a constant and ever present friend, always with you – a steady but slow companion as your mourning lingers and morphs into different expressions. Time heals but does not cure. Losing a child carves a hole in your heart, which may close but still leaves a scar, no less permanent and indelible than the residual marks of surgery. The persistence of the pain and sadness that hovers constantly in your consciousness is a testimony to the depth and inconsolability of that reality of your loss.
- #3 Avoid toxic triggers.** If there are people, places, and things that set off extremely negative reactions or responses, stay away from them if at all possible. Consider their exit collateral damage. For example, I cannot enter the restaurant where I received the call notifying me that my son had died. Sometimes the behavior or comments of certain individuals are too hurtful or clueless, to be ignored or forgiven, and for your own recovery, contact with them needs to end. If there are reasons where the relationships can't be totally severed, make sure the interactions remain limited and within specific parameters, so that you do not relive the original offense suffered during your most vulnerable period.

- #4 Keep your child with you as part of the activities of your life.** Perhaps you want to continue to attend certain sport events that you enjoyed with your child, prepare his favorite favorite food from time to time, attend a sequel to a blockbuster originally watched by the two of you together. Perhaps you can keep in contact with some of your child's friends. Or practice daily meditation dedicated to her/his memory. Enjoy sharing anecdotes and recollections often. Some parents are able to establish foundations or other charitable events to commemorate of their loved ones. I admire, and wished I could be one those with the ability to organize his kind of endeavor, but smaller tributes matter as well. Donate to causes and volunteer in organizations that reflect your child's interests or are involved ameliorating the causes of his/her death.
- #5 Give yourself a Mother's Day/Fathers Day present.** The first Mother's Day following my son's death I couldn't bear to be around any ritual and consumerism related to the occasion. I needed to leave town and land in a place where Mother's Day did not exist and I was anonymous. I discovered an ashram in upstate New York that provided yoga, vegan meals, walking trails. Solitary and silent, I could apprehend the spirit of child my greeting me just as he never failed to in the past. After all, I am still his mother, even if Hallmark doesn't recognize that. I give the gift of this retreat to myself every spring. Find a way to be kind, generous and loving toward your self on these difficult national celebrations. I feel certain that what you daughters and sons would wish for you.
- #6 Reach out to other bereaved parents.** During the early days phase of bereavement, joining a support group can be a lifeline to sanity. It allows you to become aware that you are not alone and isolated, uniquely singled out to to be a victim of a cruel and indifferent universe. You will be surrounded by other parents who relate to what you are going through in a way that even the most sympathetic acquaintances cannot. Group members who have progressed further along the journey toward finding acceptance of the loss that cannot be replaced and gratitude for the life that once was shared can serve as reservoirs of wisdom and as role models. Finding a few individuals to bond with and share the ups and downs of the reality of life after the death of a child mitigates against loneliness and isolation and bestows the restorative balm of unconditional and honest friendship.
- #7 Take what you like and leave the Rest.** This is the most important habit of them all!

~ Nora

**A LOVE GIFT** is a donation given in memory of a child who has died, or sometimes as a memorial to a relative or friend. It can be in honor of a happy event that you would like to acknowledge. Your contributions can be in any amount, are tax deductible and are a source of income for our chapter that helps us to reach out to bereaved parents and siblings through books, programs, meetings and this newsletter. In this issue we want to thank and acknowledge the following for their generous support of our chapter and especially, our newsletter. Note, on advice from our National office, because of concerns about identity theft we have changed our format and eliminated years from birth dates and anniversary dates.



- Leah Peskin** In loving memory of her son **Gavin Peskin**, forever 35
- Ervine Kimerling** In loving memory of her son **Sean Kimerling**, forever 37
- Claudette Hannibel** In loving memory of her son, **Troy O. Meyers**, forever 33
- George & Barbara Rubin** In loving memory of their son **Andrew Rubin**, forever 27
- Peggy McAloon** In loving memory of her son **Pierre McAloon**, forever 21
- Leslie Kandell** In loving memory of her daughter **Elinor Friedberg Blume**, forever 41

## SUPPORT THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

**Be sure your child, grandchild, brother or sister is included in our  
Keepsake Memorial Journal**



41<sup>st</sup> TCF National Conference  
St. Louis, MO • July 27-29, 2018

ADS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup>

*Dear compassionate friends,  
At our 41st National Conference in St. Louis, MO,  
July 27-29 we will once again have a Memorial Keepsake  
Journal, so whether or not you plan to attend, be sure your  
beloved child, grandchild, brother or sister is included in  
this once a year amazing event.*

*go to: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)*

PHOTO	MESSAGE
NAME	

### AD SPECIFICATIONS:

Full page:	\$400
Half page:	\$200
Quarter page:	\$150
Eighth page (business card size )	\$ 75

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## AWKWARD SILENCE

by **Richard Dew, M.D.**, TCF, Knoxville, TN

I wish that someone would say his name.  
I know my feelings they're trying to spare,  
and so we go through the charade, the game,  
of dancing around the ghost that is there,  
trying to avoid evoking a tear,  
or stirring emotions too painful to bear.  
That he be forgotten is what I fear,

that no one will even his presence miss,  
as if there were no trace that he was here.  
By referring to him, my purpose is  
not to stir pity or keep things the same,  
but my heart will simply break if his  
memory will die like a flickering flame.  
I just wish someone would say his name.

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## THE CALL

It was a sunny day the week of  
May 11th, I held, a miracle in my  
arms.

My husband and I were on our way  
home from the hospital with our  
baby boy.

Forty-three years later...

It came upon a summer day, in July  
- a call. News that my son, my only  
child, Sean went away.

The call regrettably wasn't about  
his planned vacation or a leave to  
military service.

It came with a lasting BLOW!  
Sorry! Your son, Sean, was found  
dead in his home.

OH NO! My only child, that I  
would call "my baby" even at  
age 43.

The call came, with a blow, my  
baby, Sean, is GONE!

I love you Sean.

Mom

~ **Patricia McClure**,  
TCF Manhattan

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## MY PHOTO ALBUM

By **Jeanne Losey**, Shelbyville, Indiana

The photo album of my mind  
Holds treasured thoughts of you,  
And I can almost see again  
The things we used to do.

I hear your voice; I see your smile;  
I feel you close to me.

The photo album of my mind  
Shows how we used to be.

Time may have changed us through  
the years  
But I will always find  
You're just as I remember in  
The album in my mind.

And, as I turn page after page,  
Such precious scenes I see.  
The photo album of my mind  
Is very dear to me.

It holds the pictures of our past  
Like reels of film unwind.  
I cherish all those photos in  
the album of my mind.

*Lovingly lifted from the March 2008 TCF  
Arlington, DC, Leesburg, Prince William,  
and Burke-Springfield-Fairfax Virginia  
Chapters Newsletter*

## EASTER THOUGHT

One more winter overcome,  
One more darkness.  
Winter is the price for spring.  
Struggle is the price for life.  
Even in sorrow,  
Remember to prepare your heart  
For celebration –  
Next spring perhaps  
Or the spring after that –

~**Sascha Wagner**, WINTERSUN

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# SIBLINGS

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## THE COURAGE TO LET LIFE GO ON

*"Courage is not the absence of fear and pain.  
But the affirmation of life despite fear and pain."  
Earl Grollmann*

"Life goes on" - I have often heard this sentence, said perhaps to console me, or perhaps as a way to put an end to a conversation about loss and death. Of course, life goes on, no matter how shattered our lives are by the loss of someone we love so dearly. Life doesn't ask whether we want to go along. We want the world to stop turning because of our loss. Days turn into nights, again and again, and this is how we arrived at this day. Suddenly another month, another year has gone by, although we all probably asked ourselves how we would be able to go on living. It just happens. We do not die because of the pain. We keep on living and I still wonder how this can be.

I do not want life to go on, but to stop it right here, or better yet, to turn back to the day when I lost my sister and baby niece. I do not want the changes life brings. Each change seems to increase the distance between the life I knew with them and the life I live today. I cannot ask my sister's opinion about the new things that happen. I

cannot share them with her, tell her about them, laugh or cry with her about them. Changes make me aware that in fact life does go on, without her. My birthdays make me sad because they change the difference in age – my sister was always four years older than I was, and now we are down to three years. Sometimes I feel guilty that I live on. I breathe, smell, touch, feel, see and experience life, while my sister and her daughter were ripped away from it. My sister and I never talked about death or losing each other, but if we had, I am sure that we both would have said that we could not imagine life without one another. If it had been me, my sister would have been forced to do exactly the same: go on living despite the agony, just because there is no choice.

Before I lost them, I trusted life to be good. I believed in fairness; if we are good, life will spare us tragedies, and besides, these tragedies only happen to other people, those I do not know, those I read about in the papers, distant, easy to forget about. I lost this sense of security and trust in life. I now find that living takes courage.

Life becomes meaningful through love and friendship, but loving someone is what makes us vulnerable. Daring to invite love into our lives means to increase our vulnerability to the threats that seem to be around every corner. Instead of asking "why us?" I often find myself asking "why not us?" Tragedy hits good and bad people for no reason. It seems the world is just random and unpredictable. Just because I am a good person and I already lost so much, does not mean that I will be spared from more pain.

Life goes on, and because it does, with all the good and bad things that happen to us, it scares me to live and particularly, to love. What if more happens? The fear is paralyzing. I pray to God, to my sister and my niece to protect us, although I know they don't have the power to prevent other bad things from happening. What then can I ask them for? Courage, I guess. Courage to let life go on, to give myself a chance that new and good things happen to me that will add joy to my life.

**Britta Nielsen,**  
*TCF Manhattan, NY, 2004*

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## BROTHER

A part of me, my only sibling,  
You alone hold the history of my youth.  
The barbecues at Grandma's, and fishing at the dam,  
The Easter egg hunts and sparklers on the Fourth...  
When little we fought like brothers sometimes do,  
But more often played, and laughed, and teased  
I tried to be what I thought a big brother should be,  
And you played younger equally well.  
The we reached that age when interests differ;  
I thought you were too crazy and wild,  
And you were sure I was too uptight.  
Neither of us planned to get together,  
Thinking we would always have the time.  
It was only when they came to tell me,  
After leaving a note on Mom's door,  
And again I had to be the big brother,

To let her know you weren't coming back.  
For a while I believed it should have been me,  
Since I had failed; I hadn't watched over you.  
And it was hard to see how much Mom hurt,  
Wondering if there was something I could have done.  
But then I finally realized, probably with your help,  
That I did nothing wrong; it was just your time.  
The love we've always had will never leave,  
And the memories we share will always be alive.  
So even though I'll always be the big brother,  
I realize my baby bro has some special gifts now,  
And I want to thank you for being that rascally angel  
Who often lets us know he's always around.

By **David Ardenall**  
Reprinted with permission from *We Need Not Walk Alone*,  
Summer 2008

with a circle of knowing, understanding sufferers just like me. They knew nothing about me - only that I had experienced the unthinkable - just as they had. They made no attempt to comfort me with empty words. Silently, they hugged me and shared their own pain while they nodded their understanding. And I knew they knew. As my young friend Marilyn said recently - I had found 'my people'.

Knowing that no one who hasn't survived this kind of catastrophe can possibly "get it", we are so fortunate to live in a time when "our people" can be found sitting together in a circle of friendship at a Compassionate Friends meeting, ready to welcome newcomers and offer a nod of understanding - not requiring any explanations or descriptions of this pain that has no words because they do indeed, "get it".

My compassionate friends have given my life new purpose. They have allowed me to keep Peter in this world. The memorials - the scholarships, the gardens, the park benches, the animal shelter that bears his name - all wonderful. But it is my compassionate friends that make Peter's memory come alive. It is a gift you keep on giving. And I am so grateful.

**Marie Levine**

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### **I Never Believed...**

**I** never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return.

But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on... that it can still have meaning...that even joy can touch your life once more.

**Don Hackett**  
*TCF, Higham, MA*

### **"PLEASE"**

- Please** - don't ask me if I'm over it yet. I'll never be "over it".
- Please** - don't tell me he's in a "better place". He isn't HERE!
- Please** - don't say "at least he isn't suffering". I haven't come to terms with why he had to suffer at all.
- Please** - don't tell me you "know how I feel" ...unless you have lost a child.
- Please** - don't tell me to "get on with my life". I'm still here, aren't I?
- Please** - don't ask me if I feel better. Bereavement isn't a condition that clears up.
- Please** - don't tell me "God never makes a mistake". You mean he did this on purpose?
- Please** - don't tell me "at least you had him for years". What year would you chose for your child to die?
- Please** - don't tell me "God never gives you more than you can bear". Who decided what another person can bear?
- Please** - just say you are sorry.
- Please** - just say you remember him ...if you do.
- Please** - just let me talk if I want to.
- Please** - let me cry if I must.

**Eddie Gorme**

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## RANDOM THOUGHTS ON A 12 YEAR JOURNEY

by Richard Auletta

Our daughter Kelli died 12 years ago and, needless to say, our lives changed forever. After the horror after her death, we realized we were consumed by trying to read anything and everything we could on the subject and often would read a chapter two or three times before we could remember what it said. We now know what we were looking for was an understanding of why, what and how we were going through an experience for which no one can ever be prepared.

It was six months after our daughter's death that we found Compassionate Friends. We walked into our first meeting, saw people were smiling and laughing and both said, "We do not belong here!" But, indeed we did, as we learned midway through our first meeting when Mary finally was able to speak up through her tears and said she thought she was going crazy because she called our daughter Kelli's cell phone every day to hear her voice. A gentleman in our group said, "You are not crazy. I have been paying \$40 a month for the last four years to hear my son's voice." A dim light suddenly went on and we thought, maybe, just maybe, our journey had brought us to a safe harbor.

After 12 years, I guess we qualify as veterans in a club that no one chooses to join and one from which no one ever can leave. The lessons we have learned are many. We have two lovely grandchildren which reaffirmed to us that life does go on. We see and understand things we never thought of before. Why is it that suddenly in watching a movie that has moments of tenderness, the tears flow? Or, walking to work on a cold winter day we can explain away the tears because of the bitter wind. We stop more often to help tourists who are looking at a map and seem to be lost. We thank people for their kindness and good service. We treasure those who mention our daughter's name and long to talk about their memories of her. We forgive those "friends" who abandoned us and we never hear from. We treasure the friendships we have developed with other members of our club. As we have often

said at Compassionate Friends meetings, we know our children could be sources of great frustration and once in a while deserved a whack across the back of the head but how we wish our daughter could frustrate us even one more time.

For those who are interested, here are a few of the books that helped us understand what we were going through and that we did not walk alone:

FIRST YOU DIE

by Marie Levine

INTO THE VALLEY AND OUT AGAIN

by Richard Edler

LAMENT FOR A SON

by Nicholas Wolterstorff

WHEN WILL I STOP HURTING?: DEALING WITH A RECENT DEATH

by June Cerza Kolf

THE WORST LOSS: HOW FAMILIES HEAL FROM THE DEATH OF A CHILD

by Barbara D. Rosof

I recently looked through some of the books and especially at the pages that we had marked with post-its. You know what, the tears came as fast as they did when the words were first read. **IT NEVER ENDS!!!**

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Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart  
and try to love the questions themselves...

Don't search for the answers,  
which could not be given to you now,  
because you would not be able to live them.  
And the point is, to live everything.

Live the questions now.

Perhaps then, someday far in the future,  
you will gradually, without even noticing it,  
live your way into the answer.

**rainer maria rilke**

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*10 YEARS... (continued from page 1)*

seasoned bereaved parents talk calmly without crying, I thought “that will never be me”. My world as I knew it was over and trying to rebuild a life seemed impossible, and I really didn’t even care about tomorrows anymore either. Just making it through each day, one day at a time, took all the physical and emotional strength I could muster. It was quite a surprise to me when the first anniversary came to be and I was still alive. I was convinced that people could die of a broken heart, but it didn’t happen to me. I knew that I was alive and I had to live; I had to care about myself and the life I had left. It has been ten long years of rediscovering how to enjoy life, learning coping skills, having to compensate and compromise with what I’ve got and what and whom I don’t have. Dealing with all the grief issues, handling all the constant questions, being haunted by the what ifs, should be’s and supposed to be’s, the many why’s, gradually subsided to a level that didn’t deplete my emotional energy on a daily basis.

In these ten years I’ve learned more than I ever wish I had to and I constantly wish I could have learned these lessons from another way. I’d give anything to have James back but it will never happen. We won’t be reunited again here on earth; every day brings me one day closer to seeing James again in our eternal life. In the meantime, my husband and I have overcome so many obstacles that it truly seems a miracle that we are alive, still married, and seemingly mostly normal adults (at least to most people) while living a life that is just not the way it’s supposed to be. Of course we dreamed of the day we’d see James graduate from high school, that we could support his college and career choices, that we’d dance at his wedding and rejoice when he would become a daddy and we would be proud grandparents. Instead so many dreams are left unfulfilled and we watch friends and relatives life paths follow “the way it’s supposed to be.”

There’s always an ache when it’s someone else’s wedding and someone else’s grandchild, but that’s just the way it is. We are blessed with the many wonderful memories of the 14 years and 2 months that we had with James, and we try not to focus on the sadness and bitterness that we can no longer create more memories.

For those who are beginning their journey, I wish I could say that it gets better. Some days are better than others. Sometimes it gets easier and the pain is not so sharp. There are still the triggers that bring up tears. Holidays are not the same and never will be. I’ve learned that what

works for me and how I feel and how to deal with a situation is what I need to do, no matter what people tell me I should do or how I should feel. Their “shoulds” are a burden I don’t need. Figuring out what I’m capable of and what’s right for a particular circumstance in my world that seems so wrong without James, guides me in the direction for hope & healing. Not a day goes by that I don’t think of James. Every morning when I wake up he’s the first person I think of, no matter where I am, at home or away. I think of what he would say in a certain situation, what he would do, where he would be now, all the wonderings fill my thoughts daily.

There have been many moments of healing, comforts and support over the past ten years, as well as tons of anguish, pain, guilt, sorrows and regrets. Compassionate Friends is now a place where I help others, instead of being the one who needs help. Reaching out to other families in the school where I work has given me an outlet to help others, in memory of James. My husband continues to volunteer with Scouts and has worked with so many teenagers, in memory of James. We’ve been host parents to five foreign exchange students and our lives have been enriched. Our marriage has had more than its share of rocky times, but we’ve endured and recently celebrated our 29th anniversary. We can’t help James anymore, but we can help ourselves and help others, in his memory. We know now how important it is to have patience, kindness, compassion, sensitivity, and thoughtfulness toward each other and to friends and family. We treasure each and every day because we know how precious life is. James taught us so much with his life and with his untimely death and those are lessons we can’t turn our backs on. His life was important, made a difference and we remember him every day, miss him every day and love him every single day. We validate his life by living our lives to the fullest for all three of us.

So on this tenth anniversary, although we are filled with sadness as we remember and relive the tragic moments of that terrible day, we know we have to be proud of ourselves and how far we’ve come and we thank James for coming into our lives, being the terrific son that he was and we celebrate his life, on his anniversary and every day. He is forever young, forever loved, forever missed & forever remembered.

**By Meg Avery, James’ mom**

7/15/83 - 9/22/97

~reprinted from Autumn 2007 Newsletter Gwinnett GA Chapter

## MOTHER'S DAY

As I write this I am very much aware that Mother's Day is coming soon. That will be an undoubtedly difficult day in countless homes. For all the thousands of mothers who will be glowing with a radiant kind of pride and happiness that day, there will also be those of you whose hearts are aching for that phone call that will never come, that special visit, that one Mother's Day card which will not arrive. For us, the reading and re-reading of that one last card - "Mom, you are the greatest and I love you" - will have to last a lifetime. How does a mother face a lifetime of silence on "her" day? Ask those of us who have "been there" already, and we will tell you of lonely Mother's Day visits to spring-green cemeteries where the

sweet clear notes of a single Spring bird perched nearby float over our heads and seem surely to have been intended as divine comfort for a heart full to breaking. You will hear of yellow roses being sent to a small church - "in memory of...", and a cherished story of a kind and sensitive friend who sent a single rose that first Mother's Day "in remembrance".

Always we struggle with the eternal questions - how does life in fairness extract from us the life of a beloved child in exchange for a clear bird call in a spring-green cemetery, a slender vase of yellow rosebuds or even the kindness and sensitivity of a friend who remembered our loneliness and pain on that day? Where is the fairness and justice in such barter?

The answer comes back again and again - life does not always bargain fairly. We are surrounded from birth to death by those things which we cannot keep, but which enrich, ennoble and endow our lives with a foretaste of Heaven because we have been privileged to behold, to experience, to wrap our arms around the joyous and beautiful.

Can we bottle the fragrance of an April morning or the splendor of a winter's sunset and take it home with us to lace it on our fireplace mantle? Can we grasp and hold the blithesome charm of childhood's laughter? Can we capture within cupped hands the beauty and richness of a rainbow? Can we pluck the glitter of a million stars on a summer night or place in an alabaster box the glow and tenderness of love?

No, we cannot. But to those who have been given the splendor, the blithesome charm, the glory, the glitter, the tenderness and the love of a child who has departed, someday the pain will speak to you of enrichment, the compassion for others, of deeper sensitivity to the world around you, of a deeper joy for having known a deeper pain. Your child will not have left you completely, as you thought. But rather, you will find him in that first clear, sweet bird call, in those yellow rosebuds, in giving and receiving and in the tissue wrapped memories that you have forever in your heart.

~ **Mary Wildman**, TCF, Moro, IL

### 41st TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Our National Conference will be held in  
St. Louis, MO  
July 27 - 29, 2018



If you have never attended one of these amazing events you should do whatever you can to get there. For three days you will be in the company of fellow travelers from all over the country.

With more than 100 workshops to choose from, with keynote speakers, banquets, a candle lighting ceremony, daily sharing sessions and the Walk to Remember on the final day, you will learn so many of the coping skills we all seek on our healing journey.

Hotel reservations go quickly. If this is your first conference, talk to your chapter leaders about your plan to attend so we can arrange to offset your conference registration fee.

go to: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) for details

## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CHAT SCHEDULE

**Go to:** [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org), and click on CHAT. Times are Eastern Standard Time.

EDT	9:00-10:00AM	8:00-9:00PM	9:00-10:00PM	10:00-11:00PM
MON			General Bereavement Issues & Grandparents/Stepparents	General Bereavement Issues & Men's Chat
TUE			General Bereavement Issues, Bereavement over 2 years & Pregnancy Loss/Infant Death	General Bereavement Issues & Pregnancy Loss/Infant Death
WED	Newly Bereaved		September 11 Families & Siblings	General Bereavement Issues
THU		No Surviving Children	General Bereavement Issues & Siblings	General Bereavement Issues
FRI		Suicide	Special Needs Children	General Bereavement Issues
SAT				General Bereavement & Siblings
SUN	Siblings		General Bereavement Issues & Siblings	General Bereavement Issues & Siblings

**The Compassionate Friends National Office**  
P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
Toll Free (877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
email: [nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)

***We Need Not Walk Alone***  
TCF National Magazine  
1 yr. subscription \$20

**Deadline for Newsletter article submissions:**  
Fall: August 1st Spring/Summer: April 1st  
Winter: February 2nd Holiday: October 1st

**Mark Your Calendars!**  
Our next Chapter meetings are Tuesdays:

MAY 8	JUN 12	JUL 10	AUG 08	SEP 11
MAY 22	JUN 26	JUL 24	AUG 22	SEP 18

### OUR COMPASSIONATE FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS

Babylon	1st Friday	(516) 795-8644	Medford	2nd Friday	(631) 738-0809
Bronx	2nd Tuesday	(914) 714-4885	Rockville Centre	2nd Friday	(516) 766-4682
Brookhaven	2nd Friday	(631) 738-0809	Rockland County	3rd Tuesday	(845) 398-9762
Brooklyn	3rd Wednesday	(917) 952-9751	SmithPoint/Mastic	2nd Thursday	(631) 281-9004
Flushing	3rd Friday	(718) 746-5010	Staten Island	2nd and 4th Thursday	(718) 983-0377
Manhasset	3rd Tuesday	(516) 466-2480	Syosset (Plainview)	3rd Friday	(718) 767-0904
Marine Park, Bklyn	3rd Friday	(718) 605-1545	Twin Forks/Hamptons	3rd Friday	(646) 894-0317
			White Plains	1st Thursday	(914) 381-3389



**The Compassionate Friends**

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