

The Compassionate Friends



Boca Raton Chapter, December 2008 561-368-0324

The Compassionate Friends, Inc., is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to all bereaved parents. TCF is non-denominational and all bereaved parents are welcome. TCF National headquarters is P.O. Box 3686, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522. Telephone 630-990-0010, toll free 877-969-0010, Fax 877-969-0010. Regional Coordinator, Sally Migliaccio 561-747-2691.

Schedule of Meetings: Held at St. Paul's Church 701 W. Palmetto Park Rd., Boca Raton All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.	<i>Chapter Leader</i>	<i>Gail Schroeder (Engel's Mom)</i>
December 1	<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	<i>Gail Schroeder (Engel's Mom)</i>
December 17	<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Ina & Cary Winters (Randi's Mom & Dad)</i>
	<i>Librarians</i>	<i>Jerry Flax (Brett's Dad)</i>
	<i>New Members</i>	<i>Nate Kimbleton (Robin & Melinda's Dad)</i>

Special Days

We call them "Special Days" and there is really nothing special at all about a child dying. The important thing is that we never forget them and by listing their birthday and the anniversary of their death, we always acknowledge their existence...that they were HERE, that their lives had MEANING, and they were LOVED, and that they are MISSED.

Richard, son of Carol & Sidney Berman, date of passing 12-1-95
Susan, daughter of Bernice Rothstein, birthday 12-2-47
Karen, daughter of Faye Landau, date of passing 12-2-98
Emily, daughter of Fran & Steve Levine, birthday 12-2-88
Linda, daughter of Elaine Weinstein, date of passing 12-2-05
George, son of Linda & Henry Seeley, date of passing 12-7-02
Erica, daughter of Davin & Sarah Cline, birthday 12-7-90
Steven, son of Marilyn & Len Weinberg, birthday 12-7-59
E. Jaime, son of Debbie & Jaime Restrepo, birthday 12-9-80
Paul, son of Romayne Melnick, birthday 12-9-71
Rusty, son of Pat Compton Percy, date of passing 12-9-06
Jordan, son of Janet Vogel, birthday 12-10-81
Alex, son of Maxine Rosenberg, birthday 12-11-56
Michelle, daughter of Judy & Gene Cooper, date of passing 12-14-05
Jake, grandson of Fay Cheskin, date of passing 12-13-05
Ricky, son of Bonnie Lay, date of passing 12-16-06
Kurt, son of Sandy Kimmelman, birthday 12-19-61
Brett, son of Jerry Flax, date of passing 12-21-05
Guy, son of Lenore Merkle, birthday 12-21-65
Kathleen, niece of Patricia Monahan, birthday 12-21-84
Barry, son of Arnold & Myrna Edelman, birthday 12-22-65
Carol, daughter of Thelma & Joe Wasley, birthday 12-22-57
Melissa, daughter of Bonnie Sue Levine and granddaughter of Bob & Phyllis Levine, birthday 12-24-98
Gary, son of Rosalind & Marty Falkoff, date of passing 12-25-06
Alan, son of Emily Simon, date of passing 12-26-03
Tylee, daughter of Susan & Ian McLeod, birthday 12-27-84
David, son of Frances Dryer, birthday 12-29-48
Bill, son of Rudy & Jayne DeBenedictis, birthday 12-29-54
Richard, son of Joe & Greta Cohan, birthday 12-30-58
Gregg, son of Larry Grossman, date of passing 12-30-07
Steven, son of Rosalie & Richard Waitkos, birthday 12-31-70

New Members:

Richard and Carla Genendes, daughter Laura 4-19-86 8-13-08

Maxine Rosenberg, son Alex 12-11-56 10-23-08

Seymour Schneiderman, daughter Louise 10-4-51 7-26-08

Richard Weinstein, son Jason 1-15-82 9-5-08

Patty Azzinaro, daughter Dorothy 8-20-69 10-17-08

To Our New Members

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person – or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

To Our Old Members

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting, we have new parents. THINK BACK...what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldie” to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “your pain will not always be this bad; it does get softer.”

Telephone Friends...if you need to talk

Gail Schroeder	561-368-6916
Jerry Flax	954-341-8657
Ronda Fryburg	954-753-0493
Nate Kimbleton	561-414-0811



A love gift is in honor of a child who has died. All gifts are of no charge to our members and you may either submit one by calling the chapter phone number or by leaving one at any meeting. Remember you may use this tool in our newsletter for your child or in memory of other's children. This is a wonderful way for others to say, "I am remembering your child."

Dear Eric: Have a Merry Christmas in Heaven. I hope you like your ornament. I thought it was perfect! Think of you always.

Love and xxooxx Mom

Dearest Engel: Merry Christmas baby. When I go back in time in my memories, I can see you coming out of the bedroom on Christmas day, with eyes wide open and smiling at the presents Santa left you under the tree. When you left us, the joy of Christmas left as well. I can only imagine what Christmas must be like in Heaven. We are going out of town this year with Aunt Debbie because she is also missing her son. Your presence is so strong lately which makes us very, very happy.

Love Mommy and Daddy

A Message From The Chapter

Christmas and Hanukkah are upon us once more. December is an emotionally laden month for bereaved parents. We pause and ponder the meaning of “Peace on Earth, Good will toward Man.” We overflow with nostalgia for holidays past. We touch base with our beliefs, rituals, traditions and treasured memories.

In passing on this heritage to our children, we are like conduits connecting past, present and future. It is a bit of immortality and a sense of tradition flowing from generation to generation. It is this very essence of the holidays that stabs at the heart of bereaved parents.

Our children represented our future. We may wonder what is the point of tradition with so many pieces of the future dead. Each grieving parent must struggle to answer that question effectively in order to establish a framework for the holiday season. Since we can not ignore it or make it go away, we can deal with the situation by making specific plans with our families or friends. We can assess priorities. We can make changes. We can decide which traditions to uphold and which to set aside this year. We can choose to acknowledge openly to our family and friends our grief.

To ourselves, we can grant the gift of acceptance by realizing that our grief is a necessary process. To our missing children, we can bestow the gift of homage by determining to work through our grief, so that we may live life again with a new normal.

Most importantly, we can try to concentrate on the blessings our children were in our lives. They came through our lives to bring us something; a gift, a blessing, a lesson we needed to learn. They taught us something while they were here. They were special souls and we will have that gift forever!

Gail

TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting

Sunday, December 14, 2008

The soft glow of a candle. Gentle music plays in the background. Tears fall silently to the floor, a tribute to a child who has died. This scene is repeated perhaps thousands of time around the world during The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting, which has captured the eye of the world like no other event of its type. To be held on the second Sunday in December, as always, this year's Worldwide Candle Lighting is scheduled for December 14th 2008.

The Worldwide Candle Lighting shows that people from around the world can gather in peace and unity to remember all of the precious children who have died. This has been TCF's gift to the bereavement world.

Please plan now to participate in the 12th Worldwide Candle Lighting on December 14. Those who are unable or do not wish to attend a formal service are asked simply to light a candle in their home with friends and family. Last year one person made a special request of his neighbors. Anyone driving down the street of his home saw candles lit in the windows of every home.

In addition, heartfelt messages are submitted by the thousands to TCF's online Remembrance Book which is open only on the day of the Worldwide Candle Lighting. You may do so at

<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

12th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting
Sunday December 14, 2008

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting is believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe which gives all bereaved families a special day each year to remember a beloved child who lives on in their heart.

Program begins at 6:15 p.m. Please arrive by 6:00p.m.

Poetry Readings: Ina Winters, Walt Schroeder
Parent Speakers: Scott Wynkoop, Eileen Kesnig
Special Speaker: Darcie Sims

We will have a special table set up for our children's and sibling's pictures. Bring a stand up picture no larger than 5 x 7 of your child to share.

Any individual remembrances can be shared after the lighting of the unity candles and individual candles.

**** Dinner will be served after the ceremony****

Ceremony will be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel. Address is 1950 Glades Road, Boca Raton. From I-95, exit Glades Road. Go west to the first traffic light and make a U-turn. The hotel is directly on the right. Event will be in the ballroom, located at the back of the hotel, near Mario's Restaurant.

Meeting Schedule and Topics

January 5

Coping-Moping-Hoping (post holiday meeting)

Presented by Gail Schroeder

January 19

Men on one Side, Women on the Other

Presented by Jerry Flax

February 2

Religion and Spirituality

Presented by Walt Schroeder

February 16

“Am I Making Progress”

Presented by Nate Kimbleton

March 2

Coping With Grief

Guest Speaker Abby Mosher

March 16

Death by Illness versus Sudden Death

Presented by Gail Schroeder

April 6

Surviving Passover and Easter

Presented by Nate Kimbleton

April 20

Marriage Survival after the lost of a child

Presented by Ronda Fryburg

May 4

Grief of Mothers and Grief of Fathers

Presented by Gail Schroeder

May 18

Myths about Grief

Presented by Gail Schroeder

June 1

Share a Story about your Child

Presented by Gail Schroeder

June 15

What’s Bothering Me?

Presented by Jerry Flax

The Gift

”Maybe some people just aren’t meant to be in our lives forever. Maybe some people are just passing through....maybe they get it all done faster than the rest of us. They don’t need to stick around for a hundred years to get it all right. They get it down real quick.

It is like some people just come through our lives to bring us something, a gift, a blessing, a lesson we need to learn, and that is why they were here. They teach you something about love and caring.

That was their gift to you. They teach all that and then they leave. Maybe they just didn’t need to stay longer than that. They give you the gift and then they are free to move on. They had a special soul. You will have that gift forever.....



Those who have lived in our hearts are never really gone. As long as we keep them with us in our hearts and our thoughts, they will be with us always. For love, which is timeless, never ceases to exist.

Thoughts for the Holidays

Plan Ahead. Bereaved parents who experience the most difficulty with the holiday season are those who have given little thought to the challenges they will encounter. Consider ahead of time what may be expected of you, both socially and emotionally, as well as your own preferences.

Accept your limitations. Grief consumes most of your available energy no matter what the season. The holidays place additional demands on your time and emotions. Plan to lower your expectations to accommodate current needs.

Make Changes. Your circumstances have changed. Expect to make necessary alterations in holiday plans to accommodate those changes. Consider changing your surroundings, rituals, and or traditions to diminish the stress. Serve notice on family and friends that this year things may be somewhat different.

Ask for and Accept Help. Accept offers of assistance with holiday shopping, decorating, cleaning, cooking, etc. Chances are loved ones are looking for ways to lessen your burden at this time of year. Allow those who care about you to offer their support in concrete ways.

Inform Others of Your Needs. Give family and friends the tools they need to help you through the holidays. Be specific with them about your preferences and desires and keep them up to date when those needs change.

Give yourself Permission “To Be”. Allow breathing space and expect fluctuations in mood and perspective. The bereaved work overtime. Not only is life more complicated, but all energy is siphoned into mental and emotional resolution. Grieving is nature’s way of healing the mind and heart from the greatest injury of all. Allow yourself the privilege of limping until your wounds have healed and you can learn to run again.

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes but our love for our children unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life and many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds. We are young and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful, that we feel hopeless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength; some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt, or in deep depression; others radiate an inner peace. But whatever the pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is a pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and share the anger as well as the peace; share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.