Tears are the silent language of grief~
Voltaire

If you are receiving the newsletter for the first time, we are sorry for the reason you have found Compassionate Friends. We cordially invite you to our meetings. Nothing is required of you. There are no dues or fees. You need not speak a word. Attending your first meeting does take courage, but parents, grandparents and adult siblings who attend find it helpful. It is here that friendship and understanding can be given by those who have been there. We hope you find new friends who truly understand your grief. If attending a meeting was sad or painful, please come again. It will get easier. We need not walk alone.

**MEETINGS**

**PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS & ADULT SIBLINGS**
7:00 p.m. 1st Wednesday of the month
Beginning 2008, 1st Thursday of the month
New Cassel Retirement Center
900 N. 90th Street —Auditorium Level 2
Additional parking & entrance in back
Wed Sep 5  Your New Normal
Wed Oct 3  The Uniqueness of Your Grief
Wed Nov 7  Handling the Holidays
Wed Dec 5  Making Mosaic Memorials
Sun Dec 9  WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING
6 pm, Holiday Inn Central

**MEETING IN SPANISH**
7:00 p.m. 3rd Wednesday of the month
One World Community Health Center Conference Room
4920 S. 30th Street  712-326-4308

**LUNCH GROUP**
Noon—3rd Tuesday of the month
Tues. Sep 18  Valentinos Mall of the Bluffs
Tues. Oct 16  Fuddruckers, 72 & Dodge

Address Service Requested

New email:
mail@tcfomaha.org. Please update your email with us so that we can connect between newsletters.

At the August 1 program and through email, we have asked for help on the steering committee to replace those who have helped in many roles and would like to move on. We are pleased that 12 attended the steering committee meeting this month, eager to help with the business of the chapter, and some will be attending the chapter leadership training course in Omaha in September. Several committee positions are open if you are interested in coming on board to help. Attending the monthly meeting is mandatory for steering committee members.

Volunteer call for the candle lighting
—work day on Sat, Sep 29, 1-3 pm at New Cassel. Mailing & other committees. RSVP 334-6929
—volunteer to make the slide show
—underwriting. Do you have someone you can ask to help support this event?

If you would like help us keep in touch with hospitals, funeral homes, schools, churches, and counselors, with a phone call or a visit, call us to pick up brochures or a calling list. We would like an email for these contacts.
Your love gifts help spread the message of hope and healing. TCF is a 501c3 organization and funded only by donations. Monetary gifts in any amount are deeply appreciated. Chapter expenses include newsletter printing and postage, library, voicemail and yellow pages, memorial programs.

♥ In Memory of Vicki Katz by her mother Nan Katz  ♥ In memory of Matthew Meisinger by his mother Julie Meisinger  ♥ In memory of Cameron Blackburn by his parents Stephen & Susan Blackburn  “Happy 19th Birthday”
♥ In memory of Joanne Betts by her parents Wayne & Carol Betts  ♥ In memory of Jeffrey Mall by his his parents John & Lorraine Mall “Always in our hearts”  ♥ In memory of Shawn “Boomer” Lattimer by his mother Deb Lantz “We love and miss you - Mom, Al, Trevor  ♥ In memory of Frankie Lyn Anderson by her grandmother Carol Anderson
♥ In memory of Chad Harlow by his parents  “We love you Chad,” - Mom & Dad  ♥ In memory of Emma Juliana Octanto by Lourdes Secola Ocanto  ♥ In memory of Emma Juliana Ocanto by West Maple Dental Specialists
♥ In memory of Angela Shawn McCumber by Warren Distribution  ♥ In memory of Joseph S. Vazzano by his parents Joseph & Joni Vazzano  ♥ In memory of Brianne Faye Dreith by her parents Brian & Cheryl Dreith “We will always love you and miss your beautiful eyes - Love Mom & Dad”  ♥ In memory of Cari Sue Sporhase by Dee Bailey  ♥ In memory of Michaela Olson by Mike Olson

Due to mailing and printing costs, you will no longer receive the newsletter if 2 years have passed since our last contact with you. You can be added back to the list at your request. If you would like to send a “Love Gift”, list your child in “Our Children Remembered”, or have an address change, please clip & mail to:

The Compassionate Friends, 11825 Dorcas Street, Omaha, NE 68144-2948

Name ____________________________________________
Address ________________________________________________________________________________
City __________________ State _____ Zip ___________ Email _______________________

Child’s Name _________________________________________Your Relationship __________________________
Birth Date ____________________ Death Date ___________________ Telephone___________________________

Donation: ( ) Love Gift of $__________ in Memory of___________________________

Message: ______________________________________________________________

I GIVE MY PERMISSION TO PRINT BIRTH & DEATH DATES IN THE NEWSLETTER.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED ____________________________

Does your employer have a matching gift program? __________ 2007

Submit poems, memories or love gifts for the Nov-Dec Newsletter by Oct 15
NEBRASKA  2007 Compassionate Employer Awards

Nashua Corp., Omaha  •  National Research Corp., Lincoln  •  Sandhill Oil, Hyannis

United States Postal Service, Chadron  •  Western State Bank, Waterloo

We in The Compassionate Friends have heard many stories from our members about how their grief was handled in the workplace. Some of these stories have been heartwarming and reassuring, depicting employers that provided a caring, understanding environment for employees grieving the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Others, however, have reminded us that much progress remains to be made.

Through its Compassionate Employer Recognition (CER) Program, The Compassionate Friends seeks to recognize those caring companies and other organizations whose workplace policies and practices go above and beyond the norm in providing a caring workplace for employees who have suffered the death of a child, sibling or grandchild.

Nominations for Compassionate Employer Recognition in 2008 are now being accepted and may be submitted through November 30, 2007. Nominations may be made by completing the online CER Nomination Form or by using the printable PDF version of the form and following the directions for submitting nominations by mail or fax. Nomination forms are also available from the TCF National Office (877) 969-0010.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Spiritual Diversity Celebration, Workshops Rituals Meditations Spiritual Practices, Sunday, September 23  1:30-5:45 pm, www.spiritualdiversity.org   593-1810


6 week grief support group sponsored by Methodist, Alegent, and VNA Hospices. The group provides a safe and supportive environment where bereaved persons can learn about grief, mourn the loss, share feelings, and review the loss. This group is open to adults only. This is an educational group as well as a small support group. Topics for the evenings include: understanding grief, holidays, self-care, role changes, and signs of healing. Cost: Free. Donations welcome. Mondays September 24; October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. 6:15-8:15 PM at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 925 S 84th St.  Registration required by Monday September 17, 2007 Mo at 354-3333

6-week program. John A Gentleman Mortuaries. 391-1664 Rosemary


Kahler-Dolce Mortuary—Grief support during the holidays. 10 week session beginning in November.  339-3232

“2007 Compassionate Friends National Conference – Through the Eyes of a First Timer”

This past July 20th through July 22nd, I was fortunate to attend the Compassionate Friends National Conference. It was one of the most emotionally intense, informative and important weekends of my life.

Just one year before, on July 23rd, 2006, I became a member of a group I had never given any thought to – grieving siblings. My nearly one year old grief journey led me to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to join almost 1,000 other people who had lost children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, friends and siblings. We came to hear speakers, therapists, musicians and fellow bereaved speak about death, grief, coping with and adapting to the aftermath of a profound loss. We participated in workshops and small group discussions.

For three days, everywhere I looked I saw and heard people like me – bereaved. I felt a sense of being understood, empathized with and cared for. No words needed to be spoken.

In addition to the positive feelings I had over that weekend, I also had uncomfortable ones. For three full days, I focused on the worst thing that has ever happened to me, the death of my brother, amongst a huge group of people who have also suffered the unimaginable. It was ultimately a completely worthy endeavor but also emotionally draining.

Someone referred to the world beyond the conference walls as the “civilian world” meaning the world of people who have not experienced a devastating loss and therefore have no idea of the emotional pain and profound sense of loss that we live with everyday. On the final day of the conference, I participated in a two-mile “Walk to Remember” through downtown Oklahoma City. The walk is a beautiful symbol of Compassionate Friends’ mission that we “need not walk alone”. It was very moving to be among hundreds of people commemorating our loved ones. After attending the conference and participating in the walk, I felt more ready and equipped than I had in a long time to interact with and live again in the civilian world.

By Chris Villarreal, Chad’s sister. Chad 1968-2006. TCF Omaha
**Just A Dream**  
By Jill Lenz, 17

I will grieve alone,  
as I dream alone, years will pass, since your death  
I hid my tears from others,  
as I see you in my dreams  
Wondering, Hoping  

I saw, in my dream  
you in your room  
playing with your toys,  
laughing and smiling like nothing happened  
You look at me, knowing I’m your big sis,  
rush to me, hug me  
And ask me to play.  

I do not know how,  
this is happening  
But I don’t want it to end,  
I look over at you once again  
And see your eyes slowing shutting.  

I look at you with tears in my eyes,  
as I see you sound asleep  
I begin to cry as I know,  
this may be the last time  
I will soon wake up and  
realize you’re actually gone  
And it was just a dream.

Written about my little sister Brianne, who died when she was only 13 months old, from rotavirus, in 2006. Daughter of Brian & Cheryl Dreith, TCF Omaha.

**Fireflies**  
By Mary Ann Dolezal, TCF Houston TX

As I spotted a firefly one night  
Thoughts of my child seem to say,  
My light still shines bright; I’m not that far away.  
You see me here, you see me there  
It must be hard to comprehend.  
Don’t ever think my light’s gone out,  
I’m always here, my love I send.  
During waking hours, stay busy.  
Keep your light burning for others to see.  
Strengthen and encourage one another  
As you always did for me.  
When your nights seem the longest  
Don’t give up, just take a rest.  
And remember, it’s the darkest hours  
When fireflies shine the best.

Many members of The Compassionate Friends embrace the butterfly a symbol - a sign of hope to them that their children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom - a comforting thought to many.  
Over 200 family and friends gathered August 1 at the beautiful Elmwood Park Grotto, to hear Alan Pedersen’s “Angels are Forever Concert”, and participate in the release of over 150 butterflies in memory of our children.  
Several photos were taken at the event. Contact us for the password to view or purchase them at www.shutterfly.com, or to share yours.

**In Memory of Lacy**

Since my daughter Lacy’s death, I’ve had to find ways to keep myself busy or I’d go nuts just thinking about her. I also wanted to talk to people who had been down the road of grief because it seemed everyone around me had no idea how I felt. No one wanted to be around me in fear I’d talk about my daughter and that drove me into depression. I have 17 yrs of beautiful memories to share but yet no one wants to listen. I want to hear about other people’s loved one’s who passed away. I found talking (even if we cry) heals just a little bit. I got together with Joanne who had lost her daughter, and it was amazing. She felt the same way. So we made a website in memory of our girls and a way for people to sign a guest book to talk about their loved one. I also came across some wonderful artwork I thought would help people heal if they wanted to purchase it! I wanted to let people know what we’ve done because of our girls, and I know Lacy gave me the idea cause it kept me up for 6 months at night.  
www.mourningexpressionsmemorialgifts.com  
Lisa Johnson and Joanne Henke, TCF Omaha

**Butterflies Everywhere.**
Don't grieve for me, for I am free,
I am following the path God has laid, you see.
I took his hand when I heard his call,
I turned my back and left it all.
I could not stay another day
To laugh, to love, to work or play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way.
I have found the peace at the close of the day.

If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it with remembered joys—
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
Oh yes, these things I too will miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
My life's been full, I savored much,
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.
Perhaps my time seems all too brief—
Don't lengthen it now, with undue grief
Lift up your hearts and peace to thee
God wanted me now
He set me free!

This poem was given to us by the lady we stayed with
the last night in Florida, with Lynnette.
TCF Omaha

We proudly carried our children's names in the National Walk to Remember through the streets of Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma City National Memorial for the victims of the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Building. On behalf of Kelly Pelster, Chris Villarreal and myself, we thank you for the opportunity to proudly carry all your children's names in the walk. Along the walk we were joined by members of other Nebraska chapters. Through the year, we will display the banner at our monthly meetings, as well as our observance of the 2007 worldwide candle lighting on December 9.


2007 Banner —
"Nebraska Remembers, Our Children Gone Too Soon"
The purpose of the banner project is two-fold, to memorialize our children, and support our chapter. 198 names are on the 2007 banner, and we raised nearly $2300 to help provide the newsletter printing and postage, voicemail & yellow pages, and programs including the summer program and the candle lighting. These two special programs have become very, very expensive, and the monies you donate help so much to fund these special events.

TEACHING OTHERS ABOUT GRIEF

In July, TCF was invited to speak to the Bellevue University Class "Death and Dying". Diana Bodnar, mom of David, visited the class. "It was quite a mix of ages which I found interesting. They were very attentive and asked good questions. The professor is a great guy and was not just thankful but also very intuitive. I can't say that I enjoyed it or the reason that I have for doing it, but I was thankful for the opportunity and also think that this type of thing helps one heal. I also like to share with people how to help and respond to people who are grieving. I zeroed in more on the types of grief, the healing process."

Diana Bodnar, David's Mom. David 1970-2005. TCF Omaha

From the National Office

Chapter Leadership Training Program in Omaha
on September 14-15-16. Contact us if you are interested in learning more about the leadership of the chapter.

A weekend of workshops and networking to help you...
understand TCF's heritage and future,
share ideas with leaders of other chapters
find funding in your community
conduct chapter meetings that provide comfort and hope to your members and create minimum stress for leaders
learn community awareness techniques to make sure your community understands and supports The Compassionate Friends
organize your chapter to share the workload and ensure leadership transition
SATURDAY OCTOBER 13, 2007
9:30-3:30 registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

LIVING WITH LOSS: HEALING WITH HOPE
A one day seminar for caregivers and the people they serve

KRACL FUNERAL CHAPEL
1954 Industrial Road
David City, NE 68632

Jerry L. Kracl will present a program covering:
--an overview of grief and mourning
--what is hope, and how do we endure a loss?
--the worst loss
--How we heal

This program is for anyone who has lost a loved one and all who are involved in ministry to hurting people. A time for sharing and building relationships that help us heal

TO REGISTER E-MAIL OR SEND TO
KRACL FUNERAL CHAPEL
P.O. BOX 9
SCHUYLER, NE 68661
COST $15.00 PER PERSON (INCLUDES LUNCH)
DEADLINE OCTOBER 5, 2007

Come and join us for an opportunity to meet those who walk with you on your journey through loss. Together we will seek the truth of love, life and healing

www.revbluejeans.com


**Rose-Colored Glasses**

By Darcie Sims

There are some days when nothing helps. Silent pain echoes across the heart, leaving tear stains and shattered dreams. It hurts to move, to think, to breathe. It even hurts to be. On those days, when memories burn scars deep into the soul, there seems little relief.

All the coping tricks we have tried in the past seem to fail us, and we are left with a pain so deep that we fear we will be consumed by it. We firmly believe that we shall never again find hope or joy in this world. Our own death often seems the only escape...

That despair comes at the bottom of the valley. We have all stumbled across those treacherous rocks—many of us more than once. Just as we begin to think that we might survive, something tumbles us back into the darkness, and we are sure we have drowned.

What then? It is as if we are left without our dreams or our memories. Existence has become a void, filled with nothingness—not even hurt. On those days, we cannot even feel our pain. We come to know that we can never return to the land of fairy tales where everything lives happily ever after.

Those are the days when we must "put on" our rose-colored glasses and learn to "see" in new ways. I always carry my rose-colored glasses with me because I never know when such a day is going to happen.

My special glasses give a rosy hue to even the most dismal of views, but more important, people look at me differently. Maybe they see me differently because I see things a new way.

Just putting on my rose-colored glasses gives me a lift. I know that whatever I am looking at or feeling hasn't really changed. I have changed! Whenever I have dared to laugh in the face of pain, the pain didn't change or go away. I simply changed the way I saw the pain or the emptiness or the hurt of grief.

Rose-colored glasses are simply a dramatic change in perspective. But if I can catch my breath and gain a few seconds of relief from the emptiness of my grief, then they have created a miracle for me.

Wearing them isn't denying anything, either. Rather, it is claiming it all. It is searching for joy and light and love, even in the darkest of corners. Love is the reason we hurt, but on those days when all we see is the hurt, then we fear we may be losing the love as well. Life does become good and warm and loving once again, but only when we have learned to trust enough to claim even that which hurts so terribly. It is a part of us, and as such cannot be ignored or abandoned.

Looking at the world through rose-colored glasses isn't being a Pollyanna, it's being real in the most honest sense. It is an attempt to both accept and live what is, instead of turning it all away and denying that love ever existed. If you ever laughed with your loved one, you have already worn rose-colored glasses. Don't forget them now, they helped you conquer maintains before, and they will help you to see the other side of grief, someday. Don't wait for joy to come to you....go find it. Search for it, insist on it every day. Wearing rose-colored glasses is a change in perspective, nothing more, nothing less. It is not a choice between pain or no pain, but how we manage the pain we feel.

The trick to those days is learning to live with what you got instead of wishing something else had happened. As you pick your next step through the valley, remember the rocks are everywhere, but so is the path! Don't let death rob you of the places in your heart where your loved one lives. Don't let death dominate the place where spring lives in your heart, either. We cannot protect ourselves from the rain, but we can go together in search of the parade. We can't let death rob us of our rose-colored glasses.

---

**Why we still go to TCF** by Richard Edler, TCF South Bay CA.

"Are you still involved with that group? Aren't you over it yet? Why do you go?" These are questions I often heard after it had been more than seven years since Mark died. I suspect you hear them too. There are easy answers. But not everyone understands, unless you have been there. Here are ten I can think of:

1. Because we never want the world to forget our child, so what we do, we do in his or her name.
2. Because when we reach out to help someone else, we also help ourselves.
3. Because someone was there for us when we needed it most, not the best way to say "thank you" is to pass it on by being there for others.
4. Because it is the one thing we do that can bring something positive out of tragedy.
5. Because we have found in TCF better friends and closer bonds than we ever thought possible. Here we can cry and hug people even if we don't know their last name or what they do for a living. And it doesn't matter.
6. Because a few people are qualified to walk up to a newly bereaved family and say, "I know how you feel." And because we can, we must.
7. Because sometimes we need to talk, too, and to remember and share. We are further along than many around us, but we never forget.
8. Because many of us believe that one day we will meet our child or brother or sister again, and he or she will ask, "so what did you do with your life after I left?" And we will have an answer.
9. Because our presence might help newly bereaved families understand that they will survive and even laugh again.
10. Because we love cold coffee and hard metal chairs.

---

By Darcie Sims

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Our Children Remembered
We need permission to list your child. Sign & submit the form on Page 2

In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and their families... on the day of their birth and on the anniversary of their death. If your child has a birthday this month, bring a photo or memorabilia for the birthday table, and a treat to share at the meeting.

**BIRTHDAYS**

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Omitted from Angel Dates in Jul-Aug issue:

8/25/05  KAYLIE FAITH BOUSQUET

Omitted from Birthdays in Jul-Aug issue:

8/19/03 KATRINA HESS
7/12/05 KAYLIE FAITH BOUSQUET

Beginning in January 2008, the monthly meeting is moving to the first Thursday of the month.