



The Compassionate Friends

Billings Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January 2014

P.O. Box 50395 * Billings, MT 59105

Website: www.tcfbillings.org

Regional Coordinator: Arlene Priest – (406) 252-3013

National Office * P.O. Box 3696 * Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 * Toll Free (877) 969-0010

Website: www.compassionatefriends.org * Email address: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

NEXT MEETING

Monday, January 13th, at 7:00 PM

Mary Alice Fortin Center
Billings Clinic Hospital, 2800 10th Ave. N.
** ROOM "E" **

PROGRAM

Make a New Year's resolution to take that first step and come to your first TCF Meeting. What would you ask someone who's further along in their grief? If you are further along in your grief what do wish someone would have told you back in the beginning?

We hope you will join us!

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families. The primary purpose is to assist them in positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health. The secondary purpose is to provide information and to educate about bereaved families. The objective is to help those in their community, including family, friends, employers, and co-workers to be supportive.



This newsletter is dedicated to the following children with love:

♥ **Paul Anthony Hultgren** ♥



Paul
Anthony
Hultgren

8/1986 - 1/2012



Paul,

It's hard to believe that it's been almost 2 years since you left us. There's not a day that goes by that I don't miss your smile and your sarcastic, witty sense of humor. It always feels like there's an emptiness when the family gets together, but we always make sure to talk about you and share stories. It seems like you've left a major void in a lot of people's lives. And knowing you for 25 years I understand why! You were always that pesky little brother that followed us around and annoyed us, but if I could do anything to have that time again, I would! I know that you're watching us and always around. Dominic wants to make sure whatever he does would be something you'd be proud of him for. And Blake still talks about you too and even says he sees you sometimes. We all miss you like crazy!! I really hope you have finally caught that golden trout you were always after!! Gone but never forgotten...my little brother...my friend..

Love you forever and more
Love,
Heather, Dominic and Blake

Wishes for Bereaved Parents for the New Year

To the newly bereaved, we wish you patience--patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

To the bereaved siblings, we wish you and your parents a new understanding of others needs and the beginnings of good communication.

To those of you who are single parents, we wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.

To those of you who have suffered multiple losses, those who have experienced the death of more than one child--we wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.

To those of you who are deeply depressed we wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow."

To those experiencing marital difficulties after the death of your child, we wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

To all fathers, we wish you the ability to express your grief, to move beyond society's conditioning, to cry.

To those with few or no memories of your child, perhaps because you suffered through a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or infant death, we wish you the sure knowledge that your child is a person and that your grief is real.

To those of you who have experienced the death of an only child or all of your children, we offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

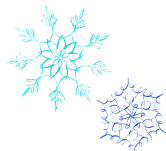
To those of you unable to cry, we wish you healing tears.

To those of you who are tired, exhausted from grieving, we wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

To all others with special needs, that we have not mentioned, we wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.

Look at what you have left, not at what you have lost.

Joe Rousseau, TCF President
Valley Forge, PA



January



Closure--A Misnomer

by Mary Cleckley, Board of Directors of BSP/USA

In the past few years, the non-bereaved seem to have won the battle, and it all came about as the result of someone discovering there is a word in the dictionary called "closure". What battle, you say? Those of us who have suffered the death of someone vital to our lives recognized the need for such a word. Not our word, surely, but the need for the non-bereaved, for, as Shakespeare once said, "Everyone can master grief but he that has it."

It's difficult to have a day go by that someone doesn't insinuate, with seeming great authority, that those of us who grieve and can't seem to put it all behind us, simply haven't put their hearts into achieving "closure."

Bear in mind now, that's the same heart that has been broken, maybe many times over. Do these people who casually demand "closure" of us not realize that, like Humpty-Dumpty, "All the king's horses and all the king's men" couldn't put all the pieces together again?

Some people have been fortunate enough not to know that particular pain, but maybe those of us who do know that pain are more finely attuned to life's realities. The reality that says grief is NOT a simple set of stages, once accomplished, each stage goes away. Instead, some particular stages may visit you time and again.

There is some truth in the old saying, "Time heals all wounds," but there is more truth in the simple knowledge that, with time, life does go on for those who grieve. The reality is life's cadence is never the same, for grief has a tempo of its own.

Understanding that the ones who HAVEN'T A CLUE, as the modern saying goes, are really more comfortable that closure is possible and that loss isn't really so bad. How can THEY know how it feels to have part of you amputated without the benefit of anesthesia? If I didn't know how it feels, I too would wish for it not to be so bad and would shy away from reality.

My dictionary says closure is defined, in part, as "finished; ended." In the twenty years since my son died I know now that closure is not possible. Instead, his death has become a part of the fiber of my life. It is more accurate to say that I have learned to live with my loss more comfortable, but "finished; ended?" That's truly a misnomer.

Reprinted from Comforting Friends, published monthly by the Sacramento Chapter of Friends for Survival, Inc.

This article was sent to Arlene Priest



“Love Gifts” are a beautiful expression of our deep & never-ending love for our children. *“Love Gifts”* help us to reach out to bereaved families, friends, & co-workers in various ways- books, tapes, videos, brochures, and this newsletter. These gifts are deeply appreciated. If you would like to send a *“Love Gift,”* please mail it to: The Compassionate Friends, P.O. Box 50395, Billings, MT 59105. Please include who your *“Love Gift”* is in memory of. Remember, your gift is also *tax deductible!*

With much gratitude, we thank the following for their “Love Gifts.”

*Maurice & Delores Muth, in memory of their children, Deborah & Howard, and granddaughter, Beth Ann
Glen & Pam Thomas, in memory of their daughter, Tavia Thomas, and cousin, Marc Priest
Nancy Barbula, in memory of her son, Jacob Black
Darlene Carlson, in memory of her sons, Tony & Joseph, and grandson, Marko*

Just for Siblings

My Friend

At one time you were my world,
As the years passed us by,
you were my brother,
my friend.
The older we grew,
the closer we drew.
We lived our lives and suffered many sorrows,
together.

But to suffer this one alone,
I just don't know.
You made your own rules,
you conquered the world, and more---
Heaven's door.

The world will forever be a little emptier,
a little colder,
and yet Heaven is so much richer.
Blessed God, please watch over my friend
until I can join him; we'll all join him soon.
I love you still, my friend.

Lori Boyle TCF, Wellsville, NY

MY FIRST FIVE YEARS AS AN ONLY CHILD

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I've aged thirty years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I've accomplished the many things of a typical young adult--learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career. Every one of my accomplishments has been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children, or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews. The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I've learned to accept that he's not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.

My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish annoyances of having a big brother were changing to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I'm angry about all of the things that we've missed and all of the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In five years, I've been forced to grow up too fast. I've been forced into a new outlook on life. I've felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. That person is locked away and is gone forever. Maybe I'm a better person now because of what I've been through. Five years ago I never thought I'd survive, but I'm still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I've made it this far.

Kristina Steiner
TCF, Staten Island, NY

The Rose Park Sanctuary Fund

The sanctuary in Rose Park has become such a meaningful and special place to our members that we want to insure that it is well maintained for years to come. In an effort to preserve and financially support any future additions to our beloved sanctuary we designate these donations to the **“Rose Park Sanctuary Fund.”**

The following donations were recently made:

In memory of:

*Donnaleen Woodley & Barry Dale Zeiler
Kathy Sarrazin
Millie Fry
Jared Rodriguez
Reny Madden Roma
Dan Schmidt
Brandon Bissell*

With love from:

*mom, Lucretia Amen
mom, Gladys Besel
Arlene Priest
parents, Jim Becki Rodriguez
parents, Gilbert & LaVonne Madden
parents, Tony & Marlene Schmidt
mommy, Nikki Olson*

*With much gratitude, we thank you all for your contributions.
Remember, your gift is tax deductible!*



Exciting News!! Sculptor, Drew Brown, has agreed to make The Billings Chapter of TCF “maquettes” of The "FOREVER LOVED" Angel Statue in Rose Park!! These miniatures are scale models of our angel statue. Each is approximately 13 inches tall (including the base) and will be made of durable indoor/outdoor material. If you'd like to be one of the first to order please fill out the form below.

Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Email: _____ (Optional)
Phone: _____(Optional)



Mail this form and your check for \$50 payable to Compassionate Friends to:
Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 50395
Billings, MT 59105

Please call (406) 256-1569 if you have questions about your order. We will contact you if we have any other questions.

SAVE THE DATE: The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Chicago, Illinois, will be the site of the 37th TCF National Conference July 11-13, 2014. "Miles of Compassion through The Winds of Hope" is the theme of next year's event, which promises more of this year's great national conference experience. The 2014 conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, just minutes from the airport. We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.



"I attended my first conference and it was one of the best things I have ever done. The friends I made were incredible and the feeling throughout the whole weekend was so healing. I never thought I would have to belong to such a club, but am grateful it is there to help. Thank you TCF!"



“GIFT OF LIFE” BRICK WALKWAY 2014

We are now taking orders for the 2014 Gift of Life Brick Walkway. If you would like to purchase a brick in honor of someone you love, they may be purchased for \$35.00 – payable to **Compassionate Friends, P.O. Box 50395, Billings, MT 59105**. The bricks will be placed in our “Gift of Life Brick Walkway” adjacent to our Floral Garden at Rose Park, 21st Street West and Avenue D and dedicated with a special ceremony in August. (date to be announced)

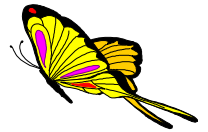
Order forms are available on our website @ tcfbillings.org. Please print name, middle initial and last name.

If you have questions please call Erin at 256-1569 or Lorie at 855-3071.

*****Deadline - July 1st, 2014*****

Lovingly Remembered...

Our children, grandchildren and siblings...



Birthdays

Jamie Danielle McGuinness - 01/22

Leslie Austin

Dan Lee Barber - 01/30

Betty Barber

Scotty - 01/27

Deeon & Mikeal Bickle

Ralph "Casey" Coleman Jr. - 01/07

Ralph & Nancy Coleman Sr.

Larry & Georgia Miller

Aaron Thomas O'Shea - 01/26

Phyllis Crawford

Mike Reed - 01/22

Burton & Sherry Farley

Mike Fanyak - 01/10

Pat Kelly

Loretta Kern Heth - 01/14

Clara Kern

April Lynn Medicine Horse - 01/14

Rebecca Little Sun

Dalrae Medicine Horse

Besty Little Sun

Jim Lynch - 01/18

Mary Lynch

Reny Madden Roma - 01/28

Bert & LaVonne Madden

Ryan McBride - 01/17

Richard & Lois McBride

Mark A. McCullough - 01/28

Mabel McCullough

Latisha Madrid - 01/09

Richard & Laverne Meza

Terri Lee Sloan - 01/28

Charles F. & Betty Moses

Beth Ann Berg Wick - 01/21

Maurice & Delores Muth

Richard "Chael" Novasio - 01/25

Tobin & Tandi Novasio

Marc Priest - 01/25

Arlene Priest

Ryan John Reierson - 01/16

Joe & Gail Reierson

Daniel Schmidt - 01/15

Tony & Marlene Schmidt

Tavia Rae Thomas - 01/26

Glen & Pam Thomas

Debbie VanTine Westra - 01/30

Russell & Dolores VanTine

John Yashinski - 01/16

John Yashinski

Anniversaries

Vanessa Hegg - 01/25

Pat Anderson

Crystal Gerttula - 01/03

JoAnn Arney

Jamie Danielle McGuinness - 01/22

Leslie Austin

William J. Barnette - 01/22

Rick & JoAnn Barnette

Aaron Thomas O'Shea - 01/14

Phyllis Crawford

Marlin Eugene Niles - 01/31

Phyllis Crawford

Aaron Thomas O'Shea - 01/14

Phyllis Crawford

Marlin Eugene Niles - 01/31

Phyllis Crawford

Greg Alan Elmore - 01/21

Jim & Mary Lou Elmore

Dustin Patrick Freese - 01/04

Brad & Stefeni Freese

Bobbi Herridge - 01/30

Ed & Tara Green

Dennis Holmgren - 01/23

John & Margo Holmgren

David Coles - 01/27

Jim & Sandy Huggins

Paul - 01/20

Heather Hultgren

Jeff W. Dick - 01/03

Toni Jarland

Mary M. Dick

William D. Johnston - 01/26

William & Wilea Johnston

Daniel Evan Jordan - 01/06

Elvina M. Jordan

Mike Fanyak - 01/10

Pat Kelly

Sandra K. Ficus Kaneski - 01/15

Glen Kibbee

Tammie Marie Buller - 01/10

Gerald & Betty Koch

Victoria (Vicky) Domke - 01/20

Jessie Kramer

Jim Lynch - 01/08

Mary Lynch

Beth Ann Berg Wick - 01/02

Maurice & Delores Muth

Monica Olson - 01/26

Michelle Nielsen

Paige Dombrowski - 01/02

Jenny Rahmlow

Tim Reed - 01/18

Charlie & Audrey Reed

Ryan John Reierson - 01/16

Joe & Gail Reierson

Randy Roberts - 01/24

Frances Roberts

Gwen Elizabeth Gardner - 01/11

Donna Smith

Casey Stallman - 01/07

Jerry & Dee Stallman

That their light may always shine.....

We know how important it is for your child's name to be included on this page. We apologize if we miss anyone. We encourage you to notify us if you notice an error or if you would like us to update information, especially if your address changes or if we are missing a date. However, if you find it too painful and would rather not have your child's name listed here, please let us know by calling Lorie (855-3071) or Erin (256-1569), or by emailing the newsletter editor at Editor@tcfbillings.org.

Thank you for your patience & understanding.






REMINDERS

Newsletter Dedication: Debbie Clevenger, Linda Caldwell, Terri Haacke & Robin Nash have signed up for the **February** newsletter dedication. Please send your dedication information, as well as, the \$30 donation to: **Billings TCF, P.O. Box 50395, Billings, MT 59105** or you can email it to the newsletter editor at: tcfbillings.org. All information must be submitted by the **15th of January!** Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Treats: **Trudy Stauduhar** has volunteered to bring treats to the **January** meeting. We appreciate & love all of our volunteers!

TCF Rubber Wrist Bands: *Now available in a child's size too!* "FOREVER IN MY HEART" rubber wrist bands are now available in "junior size" too! These blue & white marbled wrist bands are just \$2 & available at our monthly meetings. Shipping is available for an additional \$1.00 fee.

Look for TCF on Facebook! 

TCF clothing items are now available for purchase!!

Women's or men's crew neck t-shirt	\$14.00
Hooded pullover sweatshirt	\$30.00
Crew neck long sleeve sweatshirt	\$21.00
Fleece vest	\$28.00

For more details including sizes and color availability please refer to the order form located on our website: www.tcfbillings.org/catalog.htm. Forms will also be available at our monthly meetings.

PHONE FRIENDS

If you are having that kind of day when you'd really like to talk to someone who cares, please give any of the people listed below a call. Their names are on the list for YOU!

Arlene Priest	252-3013	21-year old son – Illness
Erin Koepf	256-1569	16-mo. old daughter - Heart Defect
Terri Haacke	259-7515	15-year old son – Suicide
Lorie Haacke	855-3071	15-year old sibling - Suicide
Virginia O'Neill	652-0895	20-year old son – Auto Accident
Joan Meyer Nye	322-8587	19-year old son – Suicide
Joe Reiersen	256-8174	23-year old son - Suicide

Dates to Remember

Monday, January 13th - TCF Meeting
7:00 p.m. - *Room E*

Monday, January 20th
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, February 10th - TCF Meeting
7:00 p.m. - *Room E*

Friday, February 14th – Valentine's Day

Monday, February 17th – President's Day

Sunday, March 9th – Daylight Savings begins

Monday, March 10th - TCF Meeting
7:00 p.m. - *Room E*

Monday, April 14th - TCF Meeting
7:00 p.m. - *Room E*

Sunday, April 20th – Easter Sunday

Great News!!

Billings Chapter of TCF will be the recipient of the Billings Gazette "Jeans Day" fund raiser in January. If your business/employer promotes "Jeans Day" please take part and encourage other to do so as well. 100% of the proceeds go to charities like ours!

We thank the Billings Gazette for their continued support of the Compassionate Friends!

THE BILLINGS TCF STEERING COMMITTEE

Chapter Co leaders	Erin Koepf	256-1569
	Lorie Haacke	855-3071
Chapter Advisor	Arlene Priest	252-3013
Treasurer	Erin Koepf	256-1569
Co-newsletter Editors	Lorie Haacke	855-3071
	Sharon Marten	245-6162
Activities Coordinator	Terri Haacke	259-7515
First Contact	Debbie Clevenger	258-6930
Librarian	Janet Jones	860-3622



PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

By Nadine Boyd



Dear Compassionate Friends:

“Change”. Has there ever been a word that can hold so much hope and promise, or fear and anxiety? If you are a newlywed starting out your life together with your beloved this “change” can be exciting and filled with happiness. Where will you live? Will you have a family?

If you are a young adult starting out on your own, this “change” is also exciting and filled with hope. Where will you go to college? Where will you get a job? You will very likely get a new circle of friends who share your interests. These friends may become your friends for life, always there for you and whose lives will be forever intertwined with yours.

Bereaved families, however, have a far different “take” on change. We fear life without our child and the thought of living the rest of our lives without our child brings despair and hopelessness. We don’t want “change”! We want our old lives back-the life with our child. We want to lie down on the floor and kick our feet and wail that life is not fair! We don’t want this change! We want our child back!

We want to be able to look toward the future and the promise of future family memories. A sibling wonders if they are still a sister or a brother, a mother whether she is still a mother to that child and a father still a father. The entire dynamics of the family change. Maybe the child who died was always the social director of family activities and planned the family’s vacations or outings and made each family memory funny and special.

Perhaps the child who died was a prankster and kept the other members of the family always on their toes-never knowing what to expect. Maybe the child who died had many health issues, like our Aaron, and how he felt that day determined your family’s plans or activities. Aaron’s health routines and medications had been such a central part of our daily routine I didn’t know how I could function any more. I felt lost, like no one needed me any longer.

Gradually you come to realize that our old life is over, whether we wish it so or not. We begin to seek answers. How do we do this? How do we function without our child? What do I say when someone asks how many children I have and how old they are? How do I get through his birthday and the day he died without falling apart? What do I do with his belongings? Do I have to change his room?

Change is inevitable in our lives. We grow older, change jobs, people come in and out of our lives, our surviving children grow up and still the sun comes up and goes down. We are constantly re-defining ourselves.

For those of us further along the path to healing we still need to take care of our physical and emotional needs, but we need to find answers to our questions. Come to a chapter meeting, read the chapter newsletter, read one of our wonderful books on grief from the chapter library, or go to one of the Compassionate Friends chat rooms on the website.

You don’t have to do this alone. There are no prizes for “best griever” or “best stiff upper lip”. We are all seeking answers to end our pain, and there are Friends who care and understand. Reaching out for help is a good change. In helping those who hurt we heal ourselves.

I wish you comfort and healing in the answers you seek.

In friendship,

Nadine

Help Us Maintain Our Mailing List

- Please add this name to your mailing list
- Please remove my name from your mailing list
- My address has changed

Parent's name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Child's name _____

Birth date _____ Date of death _____

- I'd like to donate to the "Rose Park Sanctuary."
- I'd like to give a "Love Gift."

I'm enclosing \$ _____, in memory of _____

If this is the first newsletter you have received, it is because someone who cares about you has asked us to send you a copy in hopes this may offer some comfort to you in your recent loss.