



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Offering friendship and understanding to bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents

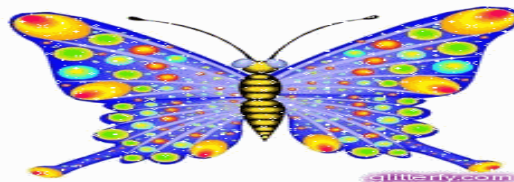
Johannesburg Chapter

NEWSLETTER – JULY 2011

TCF Centre Address: 122 Athol Street Highlands North Johannesburg 2192

E-mail: tcfsa@mweb.co.za P O Box 323 Highlands North 2037

Telephone (011) 440-6322 Fax (011) 887-9494



My dear Friends,

Learn to watch snails, advises SARK, a popular motivator. Those slimy little creatures that cause havoc in the garden - what's to copy! Well, firstly, when sensing danger they retreat into their protective shells. That's not cowardly, it's instinctive preservation. When we are in mourning we are in a very fragile state, easily hurt and quickly upset. Bewildered and unsettled, unable to control our emotions, it's no wonder we lose our confidence, trust and optimism, feeling instead weak, incapable and worthless. This is exacerbated by insensitivity and inconsideration as when we are asked "aren't you over it yet?", instructed to "buck up and get on with things", or advised to count our other blessings. This hostile atmosphere could tempt us to retreat. And ... at times that's not such a bad thing. When moving away means self-protection, do it. Caring for yourself can be the most courageous act, and the wisest. Practice until it becomes innate.

Snails move slowly, no record-breaking kudos for them. 21st century life is in the super-fast lane, even relaxation becomes hectic. Grief, however, doesn't fit into this pattern. Managing loss cannot be hurried; there are no short-cuts in bereavement, no magical quick formulas for recovery. What is material is the acceptance that it's a long, slow process that will last as long as is necessary. There is no single standard for what's called 'closure'. We cope at our own pace with grief as we do with all aspects of our lives. How we do it and the length it takes is individual.

So that is where those snails come in. Like them try to move slowly, pace yourself gently, don't be tempted into imprudent haste. If you need to stop sometimes to reassess your path or perhaps to change direction, that's good. It's your future you're plotting and haste could be counter-productive. Leisure to ponder isn't a luxury, but a basic for your well-being. You could become impatient because this journey of grief is tiresome and exhausting. You may not be aware of your progress as imperceptible as it is initially, but you are moving through mourning towards a steadier management of survival.

Those snails really do know a thing or two, so let's emulate them.

Much love,

Rosemary Dirmeik

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF A TALK GIVEN BY NEAL GETHING TO A NATIONAL GATHERING OF TCF CHAPTERS.

One of two things happen to others -

1. We discard them
 2. We realign ourselves with them; and they have to realise the following:
- We are new and reinvented
 - We have an unusual story to tell; one that makes dinner table conversation go in a completely new direction
 - We need to tell our story over and over again
 - More than likely we are going to be preoccupied with things of the after world
 - Death has become a companion and when we are finished our journeys it will scare us less than before
 - We have a depth to us that makes us a little intolerant of silliness, frivolity and the silly illusions of life
 - It is hard to invest in the things we invested in before
 - Our bodies are going to change
 - Our dreams are going to change
 - The way we love will change
 - Our marriages are now under a lot of pressure and deserve a lot more attention
 - We are far more compassionate and understanding of pain and suffering
 - We know pathos
 - We are more able to deal with uncertainty
 - We are still the same

Please experience me as I am and not as you think I should be. I have transformed and emerged out of the cocoon of ignorance and paradise-like bliss. I have seen the other side of life. I have visited the landscape of suffering and know all its twists and turns, and I need to tell you this story of mine. It will require of you that you listen carefully, and without prejudice. You do not know this land, how can you, so I will teach you about it graciously. At times I may be angry at you for not knowing this place of desolation and suffering, and other times I will forgive you for not knowing it. I will often treat you in a way that makes you feel what I am feeling. I ask you to forgive me for this, but it is a strange experience being me. Often I wonder why people don't visit this place of their own accord. I guess nobody wants to know this kind of sadness unless they have to. My journeys there have made me wiser, stronger, more compassionate, cynical, sad and bitter. It's strange, but all of those qualities can be in the same person at the same time. I have returned to your world a different person and if you want to get to know me as I am now then we can meet and share with each other, if not I will leave your space.

Years



"How long will the pain last?" a broken-hearted mourner asked me. "All the rest of your life". I had to answer truthfully.

We never quite forget. No matter how many years pass, we remember. The loss of a loved one is like a major operation; part of us is removed, and we have a scar for the rest of our lives. This does not mean that the pain continues at the same intensity. There is a short while, at first, when we hardly believe it; it is rather like when we cut our hand. We see the blood flowing, but the pain has not set in yet. So when we are bereaved, there is a short while before the pain hits us. But when it does, it is massive in its effect. Grief is shattering.

Then the wound begins to heal. It is like going through a dark tunnel. Occasionally we glimpse a bit of light up ahead, then we lose sight of it awhile, and then see it again, and one day we merge into the light. We are able to laugh, to care, to live. The wound is healed so to speak. The stitches are taken

out, and we are whole again.

But not quite. The scar is still there, and the scar tissue, too. As the years go by, we manage. There are things to do, people to care for, and tasks that call for full attention. But the pain is still there, not far below the surface. We see a face that looks familiar, hear a voice that has echoes, see a photograph in someone's album, see a landscape that once we saw together, and it is as though the knife were in the wound again.

But not so painfully, and mixed with joy, too. Because remembering a happy time is not all sorrow; it brings back happiness with it. As a matter of fact, we even seek such moments in bittersweet remembrance. We have our religious memories and our memorial days, and our visits to the cemetery. And though these bring back the pain, they bring back memories of joy as well.

How long will the pain last? All the rest of your life. But the thing to remember is that not only the pain will last, but the blessed memories as well. Tears are the proof of life. The more love, the more tears. If this were true, then how could we ever ask that the pain cease altogether? For then the memory of love would go with it. The pain of grief is the price we pay for love. [TCF, Coquitlam]

SURVIVING ANNIVERSARIES

We learn from little to mark special dates on our calendars. We write those dates in our journals. And, we anticipate several holidays each year. We love to celebrate joyful anniversaries! Our culture promotes this tradition of making note of special days and taking time away from our daily routine in order to observe anniversary dates.

When a child dies, there often is an entirely new slant on the way we view special anniversaries such as birthdays, a baby's due date, family vacations, or other significant days. Often, these anniversary days that were once anticipated with such joy have now become a source of dread and fear. The question is asked, "How will I survive the day?" An ominous feeling overcomes a parent as the anniversary day approaches.

How can a parent survive anniversary days when a child has died? Begin by telling someone about your fears. Don't try to face the day alone. Remind yourself that many times the build-up to the dreaded anniversary day is most often worse than the actual day.

Be aware of your needs, and take time to address those needs. Do you need time only to visit the gravesite? Would it help to invite a few close friends to your home to reminisce good times shared with your child? Do you want to "do something" in order to give you a feeling of validating your grief on this anniversary day? Many have found that planting a flower, releasing a balloon, or reading a letter at the gravesite that you've written has tremendous healing power.

Be sure to pay special attention to your physical, as well as emotional needs as the anniversary day approaches. Get extra rest. Stress and anxiety deplete the body of energy and tax every one of the body's resources. Eat nutritious meals, especially paying close attention to food that will aid you in maintaining a balanced diet. This is not a time to fill yourself with junk foods that have little to no nutritious value. Be sure to get ample exercise each day. Walking will get you outside of the house and will help your cardiovascular system which, in turn, will improve your overall health. Physical activity will also release chemicals that will help to improve your emotional health during times of stress too.

Always be sure to drink adequate fluids every day, especially water. It is vitally important to keep your body hydrated. Staying hydrated helps you to stay mentally alert and physically healthy. Good self-care is not selfish. Rather, taking care of yourself is essential.

Create new memories and new traditions for anniversary dates. Trying to keep everything the same following the death of a child is an impossible and unrealistic task. When your child died, all of life changed dramatically. Try doing something different to help get you through the anniversary day. If you always ate dinner at a favourite restaurant on your child's birthday, then order take-out food and eat dinner in or find a new favourite restaurant. Choose something that will be healing and will still validate your grief and loss. Try to honour the day with positive memories of your times with your child. In the case of early pregnancy loss, you can observe the day by recalling those precious few moments you had when your dreams were being realized.

Above all else, remember that there is no right or wrong way to survive anniversaries now that your child has died. When you get through the day, you will feel relieved as you note that you have survived. A new milestone in your grief work has been reached. [Clara Hinton]

This half page was sponsored by Maryna Seldon in loving memory of her beloved son, and brother of Andrew ~~~ Mark Seldon: 08.07.1962 – 10.07.2004
"Missing you so much!"

*Don't try to destroy a beautiful part of your life
Because it hurts
As children of today and tomorrow we are
Also children of yesterday
The past still travels with us
and what it has been makes us what we are.*

[Rabbi Earl A Grollman]

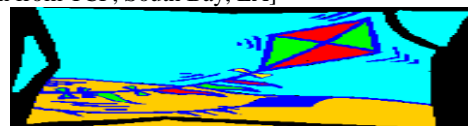
**I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes
several days attack me at once.** [Anon]

**TRULY, IT IS IN THE DARKNESS THAT ONE FINDS THE
LIGHT. SO WHEN WE ARE IN SORROW,
THIS LIGHT IS NEAREST TO US.** [Meister Eckhart]

PLIGHT OF BEREAVED PARENTS

A boy was flying his kite. He kept adding more spools of thread to make it go higher. A woman walked by and said, "You have that kite flying high." And the boy agreed. The woman left and went about her business. On the way back, she looked up towards the kite and said, "I do not see your kite." The boy agreed. She asked, "Then why don't you let go of it?" The boy answered, "I can't. I can still feel it tugging." This is the plight of bereaved parents.

[Taken from TCF, South Bay, LA]



Grieving and Driving

So often the subject of drinking and driving is addressed in the press and on television. What about grieving and driving? There are so many analogies. Which bereaved parent has not at some time been actively grieving whilst driving?

What does this mean? What are the implications and what can be done about it? Grief, somewhat like alcohol, clouds awareness, alters perceptiveness, and is distracting. Tears blur vision. Angry grief is also dangerous behind a steering wheel because it can become vengeful. Depression evokes that desolate feeling that nothing matters anymore – driving into a tree ... speeding ... nothing.

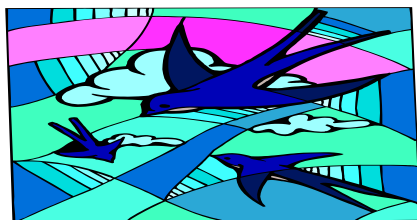
The implications are obvious: it is not safe to actively grieve and drive. Not for yourself, your family (whether or not they are in the car with you), nor for other road-users and pedestrians. Because your concentration and reaction times are affected by grief you are well-advised to drive more slowly and try to be extra-cautious.

How can you, as bereaved parent, take care? For some of you, time spent in your car is the only opportunity in the day to be alone – and so the tears come there. One answer is to cry before you have to leave: shut yourself up in the bathroom for privacy and release the pent-up emotion that you are carrying within. Or perhaps you can hold your tears until you can park in some side road on the way and take time to cry before continuing? You must find appropriate ways in which you can take responsibility for safe driving.

The power of the engine is tempting when you are angry. It may seem to be a well-deserved relief to recklessly accelerate. Maybe your child was killed on the road: will it help to injure or cause another death?

The awful feeling that nothing matters is one of the hardest to combat. Most bereaved parents feel at one time or another that they would like to die and, coupled with the seeming meaninglessness of life, it is easy to get things out of perspective and drive carelessly.

Please remember that, whatever form of grief you are experiencing whilst driving, all your children would want you to be safe and would be horrified if they knew you might have or cause an accident. [Jenny Kander]



**Not everything that is faced
can be changed but nothing
can be changed until it is faced.**

[James Baldwin]

Evening Song



*I failed a little
Dip the wound in water
Wrap it in a redbird's song
Climb into the canoe
And paddle out from the weeping
Let the failing fail
Let the stars bear trouble
Let the canoe carry
What we cannot bury.*

[Joy Harjo]

Late Fragment

**And did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?
I did.
And what did you want?
To call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth.**

[Raymond Carver]

The arrogant and thoughtless attitude of others, that they know when it is time to end grieving is like a knife thrust into an already-damaged heart. [Ted Menten]

Once we have worked our way through anger and denial, and avoidance, and bargaining, and promising, we come at last to acceptance. From that place we can more easily find our way to peacefulness. [Ted Menten]

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS

In our society we avoid talking about death. The death of a baby is even more hidden because it so violates our expectations. A difficult challenge for many of us is society's refusal to acknowledge that the loss of an unborn or newly born child is the loss of a unique individual. The fact that our babies were in the womb or in our arms for such a little while adds to the pain and isolation of losing a child. However or whenever it occurs, a baby's death is a profound loss, and one of the most painful and traumatic experiences a parent will confront in a lifetime. Our attachment can begin before conception. When we lose a child, our hopes and dreams for the child have already become a part of our life. The loss of a child, regardless of gestational age, is a loss of part of our future.

Memories, so important for the bereaved, allow us to experience a more gradual good-bye. When a child dies before or shortly after birth, we have precious few memories. Our child is gone and we have very little evidence that he or she ever really existed. This abrupt hello-good-bye relationship makes grieving very complex and painful.

Unfortunately, many friends and relatives do not recognize the depth of the loss of an unborn or newly born child. Acquaintances may never have seen the baby and find it difficult to imagine our grief over a child we have never seen or perhaps held only briefly. Because so few people actually knew our child, our grief may be even more isolating.

Although nothing can take away the pain, it may be helpful to know what others have experienced or found comforting as they struggled to deal with the intense grief that followed the death of their child. As we travel this path, it may be helpful to seek out those who are supportive in helping us cope with the loss of our babies. May we reach out and comfort one another on this journey. [TCF: Verudugo Hills Chapter]

This full page was sponsored by Lindy Hoffman in loving memory of her beloved son, and brother of Gina and Matthew ~~~ Clifford Hoffman: 15.06.1987 – 24.01.2011



“Let’s not try to imagine the future – take one day at a time”

Mothers and Fathers

*A mother’s love for children is a very special thing.
Filled with all the many days that motherhood can bring.
Days when children misbehave and try your patience so.
Days when they are sweet and kind and let their loving feelings show.
A father’s love for children is very strong and pure.
There’s no problem that a child may have which a father cannot cure.
A parent’s love for children is a never-ending thing.
It lasts from day to day and year to year, the summer, winter, fall and spring.
That special love continues still when someone’s child has died, for the feelings that a parent has are impossible to hide.*

[Jean Hotopp, TCF, Fax Valley, IL]

“For every time you think of me I’m right there in your heart”

Pablo Neruda Sonnet

And now you’re mine. Rest with your dream in my dream.
Love and pain and work should all sleep, now.
Then night turns on its invisible wheels, and you are pure beside me as a sleeping amber.

No one else, Love, will sleep in my dreams.
You will go, we will together, over the waters of time.
No one else will travel through the shadows with me,
Only you, evergreen, ever sun, ever moon.

Your hands have already opened their delicate fists, and let their soft drifting signs drop away; your eyes closed like two gray wings, and I move after, following the folding water you carry, that carries me away. The night, the world, the winds spin out their destiny.
Without you, I am your dream, only that, and that is all.

Thoughts on suicide

Suicide is an HEROIC ACT. Tragically society is unaware and out of touch with its victims! Up to 1974 it was considered a criminal act to attempt suicide. The sad individual in a failed suicide attempt could be arrested and prosecuted. Until recently, suicides were refused burial in normal cemeteries in almost all religious groups. In ancient times the property of a suicide could be confiscated by the state. They were considered pariahs and condemned by everyone. As a result families went to great lengths to conceal the act. It was never discussed. It was a taboo subject.

I have often wondered about this. Why these poor depressed people, trapped in what can only be described as ‘the lonely night of the soul’, have to face at the same time such powerful rejection from their community.

It began some three hundred years after the birth of Christ. The Christians were being persecuted by the Romans. The Roman arenas were filled with Christian martyrs going stoically to their deaths. Christ had offered them a life after death. Instant paradise for martyrdom. A life filled with fear, deprivation and persecution or paradise... . Who could resist such a magical offering?

Constantine, the first Roman to convert to Christianity, realised his small sect was about to virtually vanish in glorious martyrdom. He immediately declared suicide a sin. The Church sensing the wisdom of this took this proclamation into the core of their belief. St Augustine made it a grievous sin with damnation as the penalty. Thomas Aquinas, in his major summing up of theological belief, in turn condemned suicide as ‘usurping God’s power’. The Talmud and the Koran, in tandem with the Church, condemned the act of suicide.

The stage was now set for the most bizarre attitude towards individuals struggling with a horrific depressive illness. (Depression incidentally must be one of the commonest ailments of our 21st century!) I suddenly understand the sense of shame at being depressed. The sense of being weak and letting the side down. The need to mask the depressive feelings, and at all cost, to hide all thoughts of suicide.

I spoke to the Psychiatrist who treated our son days after he had taken his life. She had no idea that he was suicidal... . (He was in therapy with her... .) I have heard this again and again from distraught parents. No one knew they were suicidal.

All depressives wear masks. They have to. They cannot reveal their fears or their pain. In a real sense it is an heroic act to make that fateful decision, to be free of that unspeakable pain. To actually have the freedom of choice to live or to die, in spite of the massive unreal prejudice of the community and one’s religious beliefs. This is an unenlightened hang-over from an age of ignorance. We still struggle with the backwash of this madness.

Education is the only answer. The community has to learn that individuals who suffer from depression and may contemplate taking their lives are suffering from a profound illness. A virtual cancer of the mind... . This frequently leaves the sufferer with little hope and a determination to find peace at any cost. The present attitude makes it impossible for sufferers to call for help. Society and our religious teaching must make a paradigm shift and offer the awareness, understanding and LOVE before it is too late. [Bernard Levinson and Sheila Levinson]

“Every loss is unique. The truth is, the worst loss is the one that is happening to you, the one that has picked you up and thrown you down and left you struggling to put your life back together.” [Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn]

This full page was sponsored by Sheila and Bernard Levinson in loving memory of their beloved son, and brother of Lee Jarzin ~~~ Dan Jarzin: 21.07.1960 – 11.08.2005

“Celebrating your 51st birthday and all that you were and will be forever in our lives”



SIBLING'S CORNER

If nurtured genuinely and authentically a beautiful bond and relationship can be cultivated

GRIEF SPEAKS - SIBLING LOSS

"I am so sorry about your sister or brother. How are your poor parents doing? Remember to be good, since your parents are dealing with so much heartache." This is something that many siblings hear following the loss of their sibling. When the death was of a young person, people focus their sympathy to the parents, often ignoring the loss of the sibling. When the death was of someone who may be older with a family, the focus of the sympathy goes to the spouse and children. Siblings, both young and older, are often overlooked in their own heartache and grief.

Siblings suffer a profound loss after the death of a sibling. That loss is every bit as painful as that of the person's parents. Understanding a loss is paramount if mourning is to occur. Yet, most siblings hear over and over again, that it wasn't really their loss, and eventually they begin to believe that.

You're a Teen

You're hurting. Someone that you love has died. It may seem that no one understands and that you are alone in this loss. It's really hard to ask for help when you're trying to be independent and stand on your own.

Your feelings are so complicated. You're mad, sad, sometimes you might even be glad. You may be a little afraid of what happened, wondering who's next or if it could happen to you. One thing for sure, you feel kind of different from your friends and family. You can tell that people aren't sure what to say around you and no one seems to want to talk about the death with you, even though you really want to.

And, you can never know when it will hit. You can be walking down the street and a memory comes up and, before you know what happened, the tears are running down your face. It's kind of embarrassing.

The most important thing to do while coping with a death, as you'll see, is to talk about your loss and your grief to someone. **Grieving is telling the story. Healing is grieving.** [Griefworks BC website]

This half page was sponsored by Jacqueline Becker in loving memory of her beloved son,
Brendan Ruiters: 21.07.1977 – 16.05.1994

How To Assist Young Siblings

1. Tell them the facts truthfully and appropriately; assess understanding thereof and explain and reassure that family life will return to normal in due time.
2. Deal with their fears by listening to them, and offering appropriate comfort and understanding.
3. Allow them to help and share.
4. Allow them to make some of the minor decisions as they are a part thereof.
5. Allow them to express feelings, questions, and thoughts.
6. Listen to them, hold them.
7. Allay a sense of guilt and/or help them with the issue of forgiveness.
8. Re-establish, as much as possible, the normality in the home – routine, apportioning of attention paid, etc.
9. Continue to keep in touch with their needs and problems.
10. Pay them attention – attend a school sports match/a ballet class
11. Division of labour in the home spreads the load of caring and enables some rest to be taken – tempers 'fray' less
12. Check how they are coping at school, and with peers.
13. Is there a religious context to assist the siblings to cope with death?
14. Are adolescent issues relevant?
15. Make distinctions between illnesses.
16. Get specialized help if you cannot cope.
17. Answer questions openly, honestly, patiently and explore his/her concepts and fantasies.
18. Much disruptive behaviour is attention-getting and indicates a sense of insecurity and an inability to cope with tension. Do not punish for naughtiness, but comfort, assist and set limits. Security is what is required by siblings.
19. Do not impose inappropriate roles on siblings.



The Shock

They say as time wears on,
The shock wears off.
But who knows how long it may take.

In the meantime,
The ordinary routines of your life
Can feel as odd as somebody else's shoes.

The truth is, nobody else
Can walk in your shoes right now.
But we'll walk beside you, every step of the way.
[Barbara Loots, TCF, Qld Newsletter]

"Every new day gives us the opportunity to start afresh,
to set new goals and make new choices" [Anonymous]

I'll Be Here

I cannot ease your aching heart.
Nor take your pain away;
But let me stay and take your hand
And walk with you today.

I'll listen when you need to talk,
I'll wipe away your tears;
I'll share your worries when they come,
I'll help you face your fears.

I'm here and I will stand by you,
On each hill you have to climb;
So take my hand, let's face the world ...
And live just one day at a time.

You're not alone, for I'm still here,
I'll go that extra mile;
And when your grief is easier,
I'll help you learn to smile!

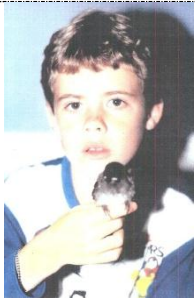
Just as the gestation period varies from creature to creature, the natural process of grieving varies from person to person. The harvest of renewed life will come in its own season. [Ted Menten]

LOVE GIFTS



A Thoughtful Way To Remember Our Precious Children LOVE GIFTS – JULY 2011

Brendan Ruiters In memory of the beloved son, Brendan of Jacqueline Becker: Suicide	21.07.1977 – 16.05.1994	Robert van den Houten In memory of the beloved son, Robert of Gerry and Helen van den Houten, and brother of Kirsty, Peter, Adam and Claire: Suicide	03.12.1986 – 27.09.2006
Gregory Bouca In memory of the beloved son, Gregory of Luis and Margaret Bouca, and brother of Alexandre: Heart Attack	10.02.1971 – 09.11.2008	Neill Tattersall In memory of the beloved son of Peter and Erica Tattersall, and brother of Kim: Multi-Organ Failure "We walk with you in our hearts every second of every day. Love you always."	31.07.1984 – 25.01.2008
Ruan de Bruin In memory of the beloved son, Ruan of Estelle and Jeremi de Bruin, and brother of Wesley and Josh: Suicide	29.05.1990 – 26.02.2010	Teri Smith In memory of the beloved daughter, Teri of Mark and Beverley Smith, and sister of Kerryn, Ashleigh and Tyler: Illness "Your spirit and angelic beauty inspire us all every day of our lives forever."	03.01.1985 – 04.09.2009
Clifford Hoffman In memory of the beloved son, Clifford of Lindy Hoffman, and brother of Gina and Matthew: Suicide	15.06.1987 – 24.01.2011	Lynn Vieweg In memory of the beloved sister, Lynn Vieweg of Karen Bullen and Lee Chapman: Aneurysm	
Brett Fitzgerald In memory of the beloved son, Brett of Gerald and Sandra Fitzgerald, and brother of Greg and Craig: Melanoma	10.10.1975 – 25.07.2007	Nicholas Bartram In memory of the beloved son, Nicholas of Cathy and Allan Bartram, and brother of Simone and Gerrit: Suicide	
<p>PERHAPS THEY ARE NOT THE STARS BUT RATHER OPENINGS WHERE THE LOVE OF OUR LOST ONES POURS THROUGH AND SHINES DOWN ON US TO LET US KNOW THEY ARE HAPPY. [Inspired by an Eskimo Legend]</p>			



RELEASING NICK INTO GOD'S CARE

My small son Nick, was a great outdoor enthusiast, always in the garden looking for spiders and frogs. During one of his adventures he found a tiny bulbul baby bird, it hardly had any feathers on it, and the weather was starting to turn colder each day. He gently picked up the tiny bird and brought him inside, calling for me to urgently find a shoe box. We found a shoebox and lined it with soft material and some cotton wool to keep him warm. He tenderly laid the bird in the box and covered him to keep him warm. The baby bulbul did not look good, and I was doubtful if he would survive the night. He couldn't even walk, he kept toppling over. The door was firmly closed as we had cats and "Jimmy" as my son Nick had named him needed to be kept safe and away from any harm.

Nick ran to the kitchen and pulled out the Pro-Nutro cereal and mixed it with warm milk to a runny consistency. A little dropper was used and soon Jimmy was greedily gulping down each mouthful. Whenever I checked on Nick he was taking great care of the tiny bird, this vigil continued non-stop for a few days. His sister Simone sat close by and watched every day. I did the morning shift and Nick took over in the afternoons. His first question when I fetched him from nursery school was "How's Jimmy doing Mom?"

One morning we heard Jimmy chirping softly, we crept into the room. Outside the window were two adult bulbul's flying around, frantically calling, they sat on the tree close by and carried on calling. By this time Jimmy had made a remarkable recovery, he had even grown feathers and was able to walk. His chirping grew louder and louder. We realized that these were his parent's who had never given up on him and had come to take him home.

I sat next to my son and explained that his work with Jimmy was done, and that because he had loved and taken such great care of Jimmy he was ready to go back, and the right thing to do now was to release Jimmy into his parent's care. My son was very sad but understood that Jimmy needed to be with his Mom and Dad.

He kissed him softly on his head and gently took Jimmy outside and laid him softly on the ground under the tree where his parent's were waiting, soon both parent's flew down and encouraged Jimmy to fly, after a few lesson's he managed to fly and took off with his parents on their migration journey. My son's work was done. Nick was our greatest 'teacher' in this life, he taught us so much about compassion, to appreciate nature and see it through his eye's, it's ever changing beauty, the love he had for all God's creations from spiders to birds.

Our work with you our precious son Nick is done on this earth. Now we too have to release you into God's care and bid you farewell. Fly heavenwards Nick, you are as free as a bird, fly onwards to your new life where God your heavenly father is eagerly awaiting you. You are weak but God will take great care of you and make you strong and well again.

Though our hearts are breaking, we know that you are truly safe and home where you belong in God's loving care.

Memories stored forever in my heart: Cathy Bartram (Mom)

This half page was sponsored by Gerald and Sandra Fitzgerald in loving memory of their beloved son, and brother of Greg and Craig ~~~ Brett Fitzgerald: 10.10.1975 – 25.07.2007



Am A Volunteer

I am a volunteer with an organization that I wish I had never ever been eligible to join. This is my story.

My beautiful first-born son, Nathan, was killed on our roads. He was on his motorbike and an old woman didn't see him and turned right, straight into him.

That one moment has changed our lives forever. Nathan was a 25 year old Police Officer and was all a mother could want; strong, enthusiastic, kind, warm, witty, community minded, so very handsome, and best of all, loved me so very much. He involved me in all his plans and regarded me as a best friend.

I first came to Compassionate Friends five weeks after Nathan died. I was lost and frightened of living another day without him. I needed help. Catherine greeted me at the door and ushered me in with a caring, reassuring hug and sat me down near her.

I told my story along with the others that night and sobbed as I tried to relate the most cruel event that could ever have happened to me. I believed these

people would "fix it" and give Nathan back to me, and my life would go on as it had before.

No, they could not fix it, but they listened and soothed and validated what I felt. This group of people with their own pain were listening to me. The next few months went by – I cannot remember too much about those lost, tear-filled days. After six months I felt compelled to return to Compassionate Friends. I felt they were the only people who would understand, they really did know how I felt.

Three years after Nathan's death I joined TCF's Volunteers. Very nervously I might add! What could I possibly do? All my strength and self-esteem had disappeared that dreadful day. But maybe I could do something. I could tidy up the library, clean the fridge, wash up, write some anniversary cards; just something that may contribute to helping others in my situation.

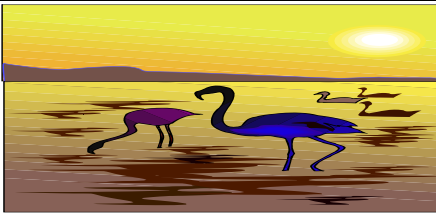
I am now participating in TCF's Listening Skills Course so that I may do phone duty. I do a few hours a month as a Volunteer at the Centre and I attend Volunteer Meetings. I feel somehow I am still doing things for Nathan, still caring for him. I was always involved at his school, sports days, canteen duty, local footy teams, etc., and for me I am doing this for him.

Yes, I am proud I am now a Volunteer for The Compassionate Friends.

[April Bennett, TCF Magazine, Victoria, AU]

This full page was sponsored by Tim and Shirley Lord in loving memory of their beloved grandson, and brother of Shaun ~~~ Matthew Labuschagne: 15.06.2007 – 31.07.2009

The human heart has the extraordinary capacity to hold and transform the sorrows of life into a great stream of compassion. Compassion is the movement of concern and kindness in response to the difficulty of any living being. Compassion arises when you allow your heart to be touched by the pain and need of another. [Jack Kornfield]



*Softly ... May Peace Replace Heartache
And May Warmest Memories Remain*

*Wishing You A Day Of Peace On Your
Child's Birthday – JULY 2011*

Chislaine Lockie 06.07.1981 – 24.01.2000 Beloved daughter of Tolly Lockie, and sister of Rochelle: Suicide	Robert Thomas 20.07.1969 – 21.01.1994 Beloved son of Gyaan Thomas: Road Accident
Lynn Vieweg 07.07.1949 – 06.09.1971 Beloved sister of Karen Bullen and Lee Chapman: Aneurysm	Cardi Dallas 20.07.1976 – 04.01.1996 Beloved daughter of Steve and Glenda Dallas, and sister of Donvae: Motor Vehicle Accident
Kgopotso Ndaba 08.07.1982 – 11.10.2010 Beloved son of Sibongile Ndaba: Illness	Dan Jarzin 21.07.1960 – 10.08.2005 Beloved son of Sheila and Bernard Levinson, and brother of Lee: Suicide
Karabo Makenete 08.07.1982 – 29.10.2007 Beloved son of Thabo and Busi Makenete, and brother of Bonele and Teboho: Suicide	Brendan Ruiters 21.07.1977 – 16.05.1994 Beloved son of Jacqueline Becker: Suicide
Mark Seldon 08.07.1962 – 10.07.2004 Beloved son of Maryna Seldon, and brother of Andrew: Suicide	Marc Howarth 21.07.1967 – 27.05.1990 Beloved son of Margaret Howarth, and brother of Shane
William McCully 08.07.1965 – 02.05.2008 Beloved son of Bob and Elaine McCully and brother of Sheila, Tara, Robert and Noel: Cancer	Ricky Fine 22.07.1954 – 14.11.2003 Beloved brother of Julie Godfrey, and nephew of Graeme and Melvyn: Homicide
Kabelo Kobuane 09.07.1976 – 05.08.2000 Beloved son of Charlotte Kobuane: Homicide	Kagiso Molaane 24.07.1980 – 06.04.2010 Beloved son of Meriba and Maria Molaane, and brother of Neo, Refiloe and Mfshina: Head Injury
Sean Dick 09.07.1975 – 25.07.1994 Beloved son of Brian and Merle Dick, and brother of Craig: Accident	Ashley Payet 27.07.1989 – 17.05.2010 Beloved daughter of Eileen Payet, and sister of Treslet: Motor Vehicle Accident
Garth Geldenhuys 11.07.1966 – 14.10.1995 Beloved son of Neville and Joan Geldenhuys, and brother of Andrew, Veronica and Barbara: Homicide	Nicahl Vithaldas 27.07.1981 – 14.09.1999 Beloved daughter of Idris and Maria Vithaldas, and sister of Clint: Suicide
Fabio Natario 13.07.2010 – 13.07.2010 Beloved son of Marco and Lilliana Natario: Poor Medical Care	Sonette Bothma 27.07.1983 – 27.02.2009 Beloved sister of Vanessa van Niekerk: Wegeners Granulomatosis
Regard de Jager 14.07.1988 – 18.08.1995 Beloved son of Retha Naude-De Jager and brother of Grethe: Road Accident	Donovan Meyer 28.07.1981 – 06.06.2004 Beloved son of Elizabeth Meyer, and brother of Frances and Anthony: Slipped under a train
Wayne Dreyer 15.07.1977 – 06.02.2001 Beloved son of Basil and Beverley Dreyer, and brother of Gillon and Candice: Homicide	Khayelihle Nkabinde 28.07.1989 – 03.05.2006 Beloved son of Thulasizwe and Beauty Nkabinde, and brother of Phelelani, Banele and Nqobile: Suicide
Mikhail Herman 16.07.1992 – 16.04.2009 Beloved son of Mike and Delyth Herman, and brother of Nicole: Illness	Zuaen Amod 28.07.1965 – 01.06.2005 Beloved son of Abel and Amina Amod: Road Accident
Elefa Kokoda 17.07.1976 – 10.04.2010 Beloved daughter of Maria Kokoda, and sister of Nicky and Cansus: Lung Problem	Mark Hofmeyer 29.07.1966 – 13.02.1986 Beloved son of Murray and Joan Hofmeyer, and brother of Gill: Road Accident
Conrad Nelson 17.07.1981 – 13.02.2010 Beloved son of Carol-Anne Nelson, and brother of Claude and Clifford: Wegeners Granulomatosis	Humphrey Mkhonto 29.07.1978 – 28.10.2007 Beloved son of Godfrey and Thoko Mkhonto, and brother of Ethel and Casey: Motor Vehicle Accident
Warren Sell 17.07.1985 – 26.04.2007 Beloved son of Brian and Louise Sell, and brother of Nicola, Claire and Kerry: Road Accident	Elmo Truter 30.07.1968 – 24.09.2008 Beloved son of Braam and Marietjie van Wyk: Brain Tumour
Kimon Moutzouris 18.07.1968 – 03.03.2002 Beloved son of Johnny and Thea Moutzouris, and brother of Lee and Tony: Homicide	Lidia Sanyani 30.07.1983 – 05.01.2010 Beloved daughter of Faith and Isaac Sanyani, and sister of Kutlwano, Tshego, Kamogelo and Phemelo: Illness
Anton van Tonder 19.07.1987 – 11.07.2009 Beloved son of Annette van Tonder, and brother of Chantelle: Kidney Failure	Neill Tattersall 31.07.1984 – 25.01.2008 Beloved son of Peter and Erica Tattersall, and brother of Kim: Illness
Nicholas McCourt 19.07.1980 – 14.09.2005 Beloved son of Robert and Rosemary McCourt: Suicide	<i>NO MAN IS BORN INTO THIS WORLD WHOSE WORK IS NOT BORN WITH HIM.</i> [J R Lowell]



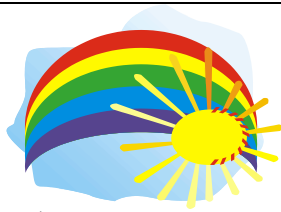
Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered ANNIVERSARIES – JULY 2011

Gift Mokoena 09.06.2010 – 01.07.2010 Beloved son of Thelma Mokoena, and brother of Thabang, Keitumetse, Lebohang: Sids	Paul Figuerinha 06.01.1978 – 14.07.2008 Beloved son of Jorge and Liz Figuerinha, and brother of Daniella: Brain Tumour
Albert Mabetoa 03.04.1984 – 02.07.2010 Beloved son of Sophia Mabetoa: Motor Vehicle Accident	Erin Seegar 24.08.2005 – 14.07.2009 Beloved daughter of Tracy and Leroy Seegar, and brother of Jordan: Drowning
Michael Jospe 12.02.1944 – 04.07.2000 Beloved son of Gerda Jospe, and brother of Yvonne: Embolism	Boitumelo Moloko 13.01.1977 – 15.07.2010 Beloved daughter of Selina Moloko, and sister of Kamu and Ofentse: Illness
Greg Prince 20.12.1985 – 04.07.2009 Beloved son of Kerry Prince	Silvia Dias 25.10.1985 – 18.07.2010 Beloved daughter of Tila and Mario Dias, and sister of Claudia and Pamela: Suicide
Shauneez Vania 20.03.1986 – 04.07.2005 Beloved daughter of Raschid and Belinda Vania, and sister of Ashira and Shaakira: Illness	Nkateko Maluleke 01.12.1985 – 18.07.2009 Beloved son of Thandi Maluleke: Road Accident
Ayanda Sincindi 26.12.2000 – 07.07.2010 Beloved son of Collen and Audrey Sincindi, and brother of Onele: Motor Vehicle Accident	Ross Blumfield 30.11.1973 – 19.07.2010 Beloved daughter of Paddy and Gaye Blumfield, and sister of Kim: Motor Bike Accident
Aletta Buzo 23.02.1976 – 07.07.2010 Beloved daughter of Amanda Buzo: Aneurysm	Shane Pfister 18.05.1985 – 21.07.2007 Beloved son of Paula Pfister, and brother of Natasha: Road Accident
Aiden Marshall 24.10.2006 – 07.07.2010 Beloved son of Lindsay Marshall, and brother of Connor and Sabrina: Medical	Glynn (Max) Baker 07.06.1969 – 24.07.2004 Beloved son of Jean and Douglas Baker, and brother of Sandra, Linda and Justin: Motor Bike Accident
Julia Doherty 14.02.1962 – 08.07.1989 Beloved daughter of Romaine and Jennifer de Kock: Road Accident	Sean Dick 09.07.1975 – 25.07.1994 Beloved son of Brian and Merle Dick, and brother of Craig: Accident
Adrian Doherty 29.08.1961 – 08.07.1989 Beloved son-in-law of Romaine and Jennifer de Kock: Road Accident	Brett Fitzgerald 10.10.1975 – 25.07.2007 Beloved son of Gerald and Sandra Fitzgerald, and brother of Greg and Craig: Cancer
Kutloano Matlala 10.02.1999 – 10.07.2010 Beloved son of David and Joyce Matlala, and brother of Kabelo: Suicide	Craig Brummer 21.03.1970 – 25.07.2006 Beloved son of Charmagne Karow: Suicide
Mark Seldon 08.07.1962 – 10.07.2004 Beloved son of Maryna Seldon and brother of Andrew: Suicide	Zunail Sohan 01.11.1991 – 25.07.2010 Beloved son of Sonita Sohan: Motor Vehicle Accident
Lionel Dirmeik 29.10.1970 – 11.07.1991 Beloved son of Rosemary Dirmeik: Suicide	Zubeir Sohan 03.11.1985 – 25.07.2010 Beloved son of Sonita Sohan: Motor Vehicle Accident
Midalo Mulaudzi 07.03.2000 – 11.07.2010 Beloved daughter of Ntshengedzeni Mulaudzi, and sister of Mbuyiseni, Ndhifelani and Michael: Poisoned	Jacques Malan 19.04.1975 – 27.07.1994 Beloved son of Fanie and Doreen Malan, and brother of Eloise and Theo: Motor Vehicle Accident
Anton van Tonder 04.11.1963 – 11.07.2009 Beloved son of Annette van Tonder, and brother of Chantelle: Kidney Failure	Ryan Hawkins 30.04.1984 – 28.07.2010 Beloved son of Clive and Brenda Hawkins, and brother of Justin: Death after minor operation
Tinyiko Ndimande 19.10.1980 – 12.07.2007 Beloved son of Sylvia Ndimande, and brother of McDonald and Blessing: Motor Vehicle Accident	Bernadette Howarth 05.03.1966 – 31.07.1966 Beloved daughter of Margaret Howarth, and sister of Shane: Gastro
Fabio Natario 13.07.2010 – 13.07.2010 Beloved son of Lilliana and Marco Natario: Poor Medical Care	Garth Littleford 19.02.1975 – 31.07.2001 Beloved son of Derek and Ollie Littleford, and brother of Dion and Janine: Road Accident
Lindi Phahle 11.03.1968 – 13.07.2004 Beloved daughter of Veronica Phahle, and sister of Yoli: Road Accident	Matthew Labuschagne 15.01.2007 – 31.07.2009 Beloved grandson of Shirley and Tim Lord: Burns

“Come what may; Time and the hour runs through the darkest day.” [Shakespeare]
“Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that’s the stuff life is made of.” [B Franklin]

This full page was sponsored by Peter and Erica Tattersall in loving memory of their beloved son, and brother of Kim ~~~ Neill Tattersall: 31.07.1984 – 25.01.2008
 In loving memory of our most beloved son, Neill. We miss you so!”

My Brief Rainbow



Rainbows appear only on dreary, rainy days.
They beautify the world for a few brief moments.
These moments, however, can be spectacular.
You were my brief rainbow.

You entered my life and stayed for but a short while.
Nonetheless, the memories of those moments
When you blessed us with laughter and delight,
Joy and smiles, charm and beauty, gaiety and happiness,
Mischievous and silliness, sunlight and moonbeams,
Giggles and love (ad infinitum) ...
Made the deluge,
The tears of pain and anger,
Helplessness and fear, insanity and agony,
Sadness and heartbreak,
Emptiness and loneliness
Bearable.

Rainbows, however brief,
Make the world a brighter, lovelier place.
How grateful I am that I had you

[Peggy Kociscin, Albuquerque, New Mexico]

The Clock of Life

The clock of life is wound but once
And no man has the power to tell
Just where the hands will stop
At late or early hour.

Now is the only time you own
Live, Love, Toil with a will.

Place no faith in tomorrow
For the clock may then be still.
[TCF, Somerset West]

The most beautiful people we have known are
those who have known defeat, known suffering,
known struggle, known loss, and have found their
way out of the depths.

These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity,
and an understanding of life, that fills them with
compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving
concern.

Beautiful people do not just happen.
[Elizabeth Kübler-Ross]

“Open yourself up to your good. Find the peace inside
yourself which is the source of truth and understanding,
love and strength.”

THE MAYONNAISE JAR

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day is not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and two cups of coffee.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured it into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with an unanimous ‘yes’. The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

Now, said the professor as the laughter subsided, ‘I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things – Family, children, health, friends and your favourite passions – Things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff. If you put the sand into the jar first,’ he continued, ‘there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you.

So ... pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. Take time out with your friends. There will always be time to clean that house and fix that washing machine. ‘Take care of the golf balls first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.’

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. ‘I’m glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there’s always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend.’ [Author unknown]

We are there for you

Coffee/Tea Mornings are held at TCF Centre from 09:00 – 13:00 week days. We invite you to come along and take the opportunity of sharing with other bereaved parents. At this time you are also most welcome to access our library with its large range of grief related books, literature, tapes, leaflets and newsletters.

**WHAT WE HAVE ONCE ENJOYED, WE NEVER LOSE. ALL THAT WE LOVE DEEPLY
BECOMES A PART OF US. [Helen Keller]**

TCF gratefully acknowledges the funding received from:

- ❖ P.A.E. (Pty) Limited R500.00
- ❖ Lenkas Metals

Please put your name on the deposit slip when depositing money.

PLEASE NOTE
THAT ALL DONATIONS ARE
TAX DEDUCTABLE

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- ⇔ Twenty-Eighth Annual General Meeting of the Johannesburg Chapter of The Compassionate Friends to be held on Saturday, 13 August 2011 at 14:00 for 14:30 at TCF Centre.
- ⇔ Candle Lighting to be held on Wednesday, 23 November 2011 at St Columbas Church, Lurgan Road, Parkview, 2193
- ⇔ Globe Lighting to be held on Saturday, 3 December 2011 at TCF Centre



LIBRARY – return of outstanding books

Our **library**, as an outreach programme, can only be helpful to our members if everyone follows our guideline of two months borrowing time. Thereafter the books can be renewed for a further month. If these books have helped you in your journey, then you are aware they could help another bereaved parent. If you are unable to attend the monthly meeting or drop them off at TCF, please contact the office so that alternative arrangements can be made. Thank you for your attention to this urgent request.

Special thank you to our Newsletter packers:

Kathy Cooles, Joan Rees, Gerda Jospe, Belinda Vania, Shannon Palmer

Sincere **THANK YOU** to the following individuals for their generous donations for books for the Library

- ~ JOE LANGLOIS
- ~ CAROL-ANNE NELSON
- ~ ALLAN AND JENNY BAILEY

Welcome - New Chapter Leader

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of Maryna Seldon as Chapter Leader. Maryna has been a member of The Compassionate Friends since July 2004. As a volunteer she assisted at monthly newsletter packing, facilitated at general meetings and in the library. She joined the office staff as the administrative assistant. Her quiet unassuming nature and willingness to offer support wherever possible has endeared her to the Chapter. We wish her well in her new position and are confident that she will meet the challenges of Chapter Leader with her customary enthusiasm, compassion, commitment and diligence.

We wish you a happy and productive period.

Organization of Support Groups

If you are interested to start a Support Group on the West Rand/Krugersdorp area, please contact The Compassionate Friends at (011) 440-6322. You need to be a bereaved parent and a qualified counsellor.

NEW SUPPORT GROUP

Gladys Gagliardi, an experienced TCF Counsellor, is starting a Support Group as from July 2011.

Phone: (011) 787-7876 or 084-500-5440

Venue: 11 Andre Avenue, President Ridge, Randburg (above the Brightwater Commons)

Time: Every FIRST Saturday of the month at 14:00

The first meeting will take place on Saturday, 2 July 2011

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Support Groups for Bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents)

MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR JULY 2011

Saturday, 9 July at 14:00 for 14:30	Johannesburg Chapter Monthly Meeting at TCF Centre, 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	SPEAKER: James Glanville TOPIC: Survival and Growth After the Death of a Child
Saturday, 30 July at 14:00 to 16:00	Johannesburg Chapter Suicide Meeting at TCF Centre, 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	COUNSELLOR: Sheila Levinson (011) 728-3064 or 082-264-4532 COUNSELLOR: Elise Barnes (011) 788-9829 or 083-267-9465
Saturday, 30 July at 14:00 to 16:00	LENASIA Monthly Meeting at Lenasia Recreation Centre, Salvia Street, Lenasia	COUNSELLOR: Roseline Ananmalay (011) 852-5344 or 084-556-4616
Please contact your Counsellor in your area for the time and venue	SOWETO Monthly Meeting	COUNSELLOR: Jabu Jabulile (011) 938-2305 or 082-548-9604
Tuesday, 26 July at 09:00	At TCF Centre. 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	NEWSLETTER PACKING

Counsellors: Shannon Palmer (011) 672-6743 or 082-883-1406
Gary Sheehan 083-633-4732 (Fathers)
Maureen Conway 082-452-4490 (Siblings)

Merle Dick 082-865-4724
Isabel Ferreira 082-335-8593
Ntuthu Radebe 082-741-5761