

*The Compassionate Friends*

The Compassionate Friends Newsletter  
c/o Anne Rinaldi-Nonamaker  
168 Lake Point Lane  
Naples, Florida 34112

Compassionate Friends Web Address: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
Regional coordinator: Sally Migliaccio (561)747-2691



TCF meets **EVERY** first Monday of the month, unless otherwise noted

MEETINGS WILL BEGIN AT **7:00 P.M.** STARTING WITH THE MARCH 6th MEETING

MOORINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
791 HARBOUR DR., NAPLES

GOING NORTH ON U.S.41, HARBOUR DR. IS A LEFT TURN  
ABOUT A MILE NORTH OF COASTLAND MALL AND GOLDEN GATE PARKWAY.

Please don't hesitate to call me at 239-287-5968 if you need information of any kind or email: [anne.rinaldi@comcast.net](mailto:anne.rinaldi@comcast.net)

March 2006



# The Compassionate Friends



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Siblings chat: Wednesdays, 9 p.m. EST: [www.compassionatefriends.org/Chat/chat\\_entrance.html](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Chat/chat_entrance.html)

## When a Child Dies: *The Vow to Remember, The Call to Comfort*



*For Bereaved Families and Grief and Trauma Professionals*

**May 31-June 4, 2006**

Featured Tracks Include: Family Resilience, Professional,  
Creative Arts, Clinical/Academic, Spirituality Roundtable and

***Kid's in Sympathy and Support Camp***  
*For Grieving Children and Teens*

*On the Yavapai Nation in Fountain Hills, Arizona*  
Continuing Education Certificates Provided

***Can't Make the Trip? You can attend via the internet***  
*email: [info@ekrfoundation.org](mailto:info@ekrfoundation.org) or call: 480-861-7511*

*Please visit:*

[www.ekrfoundation.org](http://www.ekrfoundation.org), [www.elisabethkublerross.com](http://www.elisabethkublerross.com) and [www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org)

*Brought to you by: Elisabeth Kubler-Ross Foundation; MISS Foundation;  
ASU's West campus College of Human Services, Department of Social Work*

### Our Mission

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age, and to provide information to help others to be supportive.

The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.



## Our Children, Loved and Remembered



### *Birthdates*

<b>Nestor Kratz</b> Son of Valerie Kratz	3/1/2001
<b>Jesus Salinas</b> Son of Sergio G. & Patricia Salinas	3/2/1981
<b>Chelsea Rose Stevenson</b> Daughter of Debbie Stevenson	3/13/1994
<b>Stephen Kenneth Bogee</b> Son of Dee Bogee	3/16/1980
<b>Scott M. Jessie</b> Son of Sara Ruble	3/20/1975
<b>Timothy Taylor</b> Son of Richard & Cheryl Taylor	3/21/1978
<b>Debbie Pascarella</b> Daughter of Jeanne Milano	3/31/1958
<b>Todd Swaine</b> Son of Margaret Swaine	3/31/1975

### *Anniversary Dates*

<b>Greg B. Williams</b> Son of Lloyd & Judy Williams	3/1/2001
<b>Tanya Lake</b> Daughter of Elizabeth Lake	3/7/1990
<b>Bert Buede, Jr.</b> Son of Bert & Josette Buede	3/8/2003
<b>David X. Nonamaker, Jr.</b> Son of Anne Rinaldi-Nonamaker	3/9/2004
<b>Leah Rose McCarrick</b> Granddaughter of Pat & Fred Bifulco	3/11/2003
<b>Rachel Louise Brown</b> Daughter of Susan & Michael Brown	3/19/2003
<b>Timothy Taylor</b> Son of Richard & Cheryl Taylor	3/28/2004
<b>Collin Creed</b> Son of Terese Walker	3/30/1996

### *Why Butterflies?*

Since early times, the butterfly has symbolized renewed life. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and freer existence. Frequently, the butterfly is seen with the word "Nika" which means victory. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of the children's dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since Elisabeth believes in the innate intuitiveness of children, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us a message. 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.

\*\*If we have inadvertently missed your child's Birthday or Anniversary Date or made any other errors, please accept our deepest apologies. Do call us at 287-5968 or email [anne.rinaldi@comcast.net](mailto:anne.rinaldi@comcast.net) to make an immediate correction.

**Dear Friends, To receive this newsletter by email, which will help us save on the cost of printing and postage, please send an email to me at: [anne.rinaldi@comcast.net](mailto:anne.rinaldi@comcast.net). On the subject line insert "TCF Email Newsletter" and your name and you're done.**

**For those of you who would like to share your ideas, growth, insight, stories or poems, please email your material for the newsletter. Or if you prefer, mail it to my address: 168 Lake Point Lane, Naples, FL 34112.**

**Sincerely, Anne Rinaldi-Nonamaker**

### Thank you for your Gifts of Love

All donations are gratefully accepted and assist the chapter in its mission to help bereaved families following the loss of a child.

### *Loving Listeners:*

For those times when you need to speak to someone who will listen with understanding and who can offer hope and support from their own process of healing in grief please call us:

Annette Carruli 250-4071  
Teresa Walker 353-3215  
Anne Kithcart 775-5640

### Empathy and Brain Pain Relief, by Bob Baugher, Ph.D., Des Moines, WA

One of the many lessons we can learn from a death is to reserve our opinions until we have walked in another person's shoes. Despite this, many people react almost instinctively to reduce their own pain caused by the empathy they feel as they listen to the story of the tragic death of a child, sibling, partner, or other beloved person. Reading this, you might be saying, "I don't judge anymore. The death of my child or sibling has taught me to accept." This article is written with caring and concern to shed some light on an area that few people talk about. Let me begin by telling a story. I have worked with hundreds of bereaved parents for more than two decades. For five years I was a clinician with the University School of Nursing Parent Bereavement project in which we worked with more than 100 parents in small groups for a 10-week period in the early months following the death of their child by accident, suicide, or homicide. By the end of the project, I had heard what seemed to be every imaginable story of horrendous death.

I wasn't prepared for my reaction to the following story which I have modified to protect the confidentiality of those involved. Sitting with a group of seven parents I listened to a father describe the death of his son in a freeway auto accident. I sat, as did the parents, empathetically listening to a story of monumental tragic proportions watching this man struggling to express the details of his son's final moments. It was a scene not unlike many I had experienced over the past 20 years, but the pain was no less excruciating. Then I heard this father say, "...and he had alcohol problems." At that instant I remember feeling a shift in my response to his story almost a relief. And I caught myself saying in my head something like, "Oh, I see." And then catching myself and saying, "I see? What am I doing? This father is describing the death of his son and I'm feeling somewhat relieved?" It was as if a part of my brain was trying to ease my pain by saying, "He had alcohol problems that's it. That explains how this senseless tragedy could have taken place." For a moment, the senseless seemed to make at least some sense.

If our brain could speak to us during the exact moment that a fellow human being is crying, telling the story of the loss of their child, and describing the intense pain of grief, it might say something like, "My God, this is terrible. I can't take all this pain. Do something to make it not hurt so much." I believe our response to this plea of our wounded brain is to make a desperate attempt to reduce the pain and try to make some sense of this. I like to call this: "Brain Pain Relief."

Let me continue with my example. Here was my brain saving, "Oh, I see, it was alcohol that contributed to the death." Perhaps at a deeper level my brain was saying, "And since your kids don't drink and drive (something, of course, that I could never prove; but I wanted to believe), this tragedy won't happen to them."

However, I was in for a surprise, and I believe that this is why I was able to catch myself in these short-lived thoughts. What this father said next took away my brief feeling of relief. His words were, "Alcohol was not involved in this accident. They found none in his bloodstream." I remember the immediate shift I felt. Suddenly I was back into the pain, back into the depths of the senseless tragedy of the death of this young man and back into the grief of this devastated father sitting no more than three feet from me. Yet there was a part of me that still wanted, in some small way, to link the alcohol problems with the accident. That's how insistent my brain was. I remember saying to myself, "Don't forget what just happened to you." And this is why I am sharing with you today what I hope is some insight for you into the workings of the human mind.

It may be that your own life tragedies have modified the tendency toward Brain Pain Relief. If so, then you have moved beyond the reaction of most people. But for the rest of humanity, whose brains continue to attempt to protect them, it is important to be aware of how subtle and automatic this reaction can be.

Another facet of this mode of thinking is for people to say to themselves, "Yes, this story is tragic; but it's not as bad as..." To judge by comparison is, I believe, another way for our brain to minimize the pain of a loss. A final example of this tendency is shown when people who listen to your story of loss fall into the trap of beginning a sentence with the deadly words, "At least..." Again, the brain is begging to reduce the pain.

What can we do about this natural tendency? I have three suggestions. First, realize that it is more likely to occur when we are listening to information regarding a tragedy. When you know that you are about to listen to the story of a death (in many cases you won't see it coming, except perhaps at TCF meetings), you might say to yourself, "I need to watch my tendency to try to make sense of this tragedy and try not to compare it with other tragedies." Second, as the person tells you their story, try to counter the minimization process by saying to yourself phrases such as: "Let the pain be. Accept it." "Don't try to look for reasons." "Just be there for this person." Third, forgive yourself if you catch yourself judging. Remember, it is a natural human quality to try to reduce the pain in our lives. The important fact is that you are now more aware of what you have been doing and you can focus more on providing what we all need: a caring listener who is going to be there and not judge. This is the greatest gift you can give.