

June 2006



# The Compassionate Friends

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## Bereaved Parents Need Support

Grief is a long slow process and it's affects last a lifetime.

"Grief goes on for several years...you will always miss your child. The pain lessens and you learn to cope," says Gerri Jablonowski, Co-ordinator for Bereaved Families on Ontario Brant Chapter. "People should never tell a grieving parent that they should feel better now that a year has gone by."

Occasionally something will cause a bereaved parent to start to cry several years after their child's death.

"Don't be afraid of crying," says Jablonowski. "No matter how long its been."

Often friends and family withdraw from the couple after the funeral of their child, says Jablonowski.

"Family and friends are the ones who abandon you in many instances," she says. "Often the onus is on the bereaved parents to make the first move."

Friends and relatives should not let their own sense of helplessness keep them from reaching out to the bereaved parent or avoid the bereaved parent because they feel uncomfortable.

"If you don't know what to say...don't say anything at all," says Jablonowski. "Often just having someone there to listen helps."

People are encouraged to talk to bereaved parents about their child and not be afraid that mentioning the child's name will cause pain.

"Bereaved parents like to know their child is not forgotten," says Jablonowski. "Everyone's grief is unique," says Jablonowski.

With 18 chapters in Ontario Bereaved Families offers a variety of support mechanisms to parents and siblings after the death of a child.

### Permission to Grieve Slip

**This certificate entitles:** \_\_\_\_\_

Permission to grieve for an indeterminate period of time.

Please excuse forgetfulness, unexpected & sudden tearful outbursts, moodiness, disinterest in normal, happy activities such as baby showers & holiday celebrations. Please excuse bearer's seemingly misplaced anger or blame or inability to engage in shallow conversations about sports, work, or draperies.

Excuse tardiness and no-shows. Please remember that Bearer's child died.

Please grant permission for immeasurable sadness for extended periods of times

& please be patient with bearer of this certificate.

Reprinted from May-June 2004 M.I.S.S. Foundation

### 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



<i>Birthdates</i>	<i>Anniversary Dates</i>
Caitlyn Landers Daughter of Don & Sandy Landers 6/02/1998	Katie Raines Daughter of Lenora Raines 6/01/2001
Betsy Moran Daughter of Patti Moran 6/10/1963	Bo Rogers Son of Kay Howerton 6/23/1991
Justin Taylor Son of Donna Taylor 6/17/1983	
Andrew Morello Son of Andrea & Joe Morello 6/28/1975	

### *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

*Thoughts on Father's Day 2004**Alive  
Alone*

To many of us Fathers who are now childless, the meaning, thoughts, and "feel" of Father's Day have certainly changed. When the Day was initially observed in Spokane, Washington in June, 1910, it was set aside to acknowledge the sacrifices that one Father made in raising six children when his wife died giving birth to the sixth child. He raised all six children. A Father living for his children. That's what we used to do. That's what I used to do. That's what we wish we could do now....but we can't because our child/children died. Or can we?

When your child was alive, Father's Day was that special day when you were celebrated as the provider, the disciplinarian, the mentor, installer of values, and all-around good guy that your child looked up to. In the dynamics of any family unit the role of today's Father can vary. Traditionally the Father was the rock and the anchor of the family unit. Many times this Father may be the Grandfather, an uncle, a stepfather, or any male who filled the role of a Father figure. But whether you were the biological Father or Father "designate", this was your day to bask in the love and attention of your child and family.

But then, the unthinkable happens. Your child is gone. Father's Day is changed forever. Even the days leading up to Father's Day can be filled with angst and emptiness. What do you do? How can you cope? Will it always be like this? Now, as a bereaved parent, you find yourself questioning all kinds of things-the meaning of life and death, relationships of all kinds, religion and philosophy. The life long process of healing has begun.

The cycle of healing the grief is on going. It changes with time but it never ends. Generally, men share what they do and not what they feel. They do not find it easy to ask for help. They try to escape or suppress their grief and pain. The consequences of this can be daunting and far-reaching. One of the cornerstones of any healing process is bringing feelings to the surface where they can be talked about, addressed, and understood. Finding someone to talk freely and share with such as another bereaved father can be very beneficial-especially during Father's Day week.

Remember that our child/children gave meaning to our lives that no one can take away. Are you still a Father? You bet you are and always will be. Can we still live for our child? Absolutely! Even though the longing for your child's presence will always be there, it's how you respond that is the key to making progress in your grief journey. The reinvestment activity of sharing with a newly bereaved Father is at the core of any healing process and serves the bottom line of assimilating your child's death into your life. Father's Day is different now but by sharing and helping other grieving Fathers you stay connected and your child lives on in your heart.

Jim O'Connor, Ryan's Dad

*The Compassionate Friends*

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The Compassionate Friends Newsletter  
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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

**Next Meeting: Monday, June 5, 2006**

**GENERAL MEETING BEGINS AT 7:00 P.M.**

**Committee meets at 6:30 P.M.**

**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)

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