



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

KAMLOOPS CHAPTER

 *Spring 2013* 

The Compassionate Friends is a voluntary self help organization offering support, understanding and hope for the future. All bereaved parents are welcome.

CHAPTER LEADER

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NEWSLETTER

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MEETINGS

1st Wednesday every month *
Kamloops United Church
421 St. Paul Street, Kamloops

TCF CANADA NATIONAL OFFICE

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NEXT MEETINGS 7:00 pm

April 3, 2013

May 1, 2013

June 5, 2013

July 3, 2013

Welcome

Especially to those newly bereaved who have joined us for the first time.

We are sorry we had to meet under such circumstances, but we are glad you found us. We would like to do all we can to help you through these times. We cannot hurry you through it or take away the pain, but we can help you understand more about what you are going through. Sometimes just knowing what you are feeling is normal can be helpful.

We are other parents who have experienced the death of a child and offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings, a lending library, support material and a listening ear. We have learned the key to survival for bereaved families is communication.

We ask that you give us more than one meeting to decide if the Compassionate Friends is for you. It takes courage to attend your first meeting, but those who do come find an atmosphere of understanding from other parents and siblings who are having or have experienced the feelings of grief that you are now feeling.

If ever I heard blessing it is there
Where birds in trees that shoals and shadows are
Splash with their hidden wings and drops of sound
Break on my ears their crests of throbbing air.

Pure in the haze the emerald sun dilates,
The lips of sparrows milk the mossy stones,
While white as water by the lake a girl
Swims her green hand among the gathered swans.

from April Rise by Laurie Lee



FYI ...

Thank you to everyone who helped with the TCF Kamloops 27th Annual Candlelighting Memorial Service on December 9th. Your participation helped to make the service and the fellowship afterward a meaningful and comforting experience for the 200 plus bereaved family members who attended.

IMPORTANT NEWS: Starting in November we returned to our former meeting night of the 1st Wednesday of the month. We will now be in the newly renovated Kamloops United Church, 421 St. Paul Street, same time, 7:00 pm.

LINKS FOR ONLINE RESOURCES

**BC Bereavement Helpline Service(s): Helpline, referrals, information. Contact: (604) 738-9950
Email: bcbh@telus.net Website: www.bcbereavementhelpline.com**

Suicide Support SurvivorAdvocates@yahoo.com

Sibling Websites www.tcfatlanta.org/sibling.html

**Grief Works BC Service(s): Provides comprehensive support for the bereaved.
Contact: Kay Johnson at (604) 875-2741 Email: kjohnsoncw.bc.ca**

Alive Alone Support for parents who have no surviving children. <http://www.alivealone.org>

Grief Watch: www.griefwatch.com

AN INVITATION: Frequently readers are invited to submit their original writings about their grief journey experiences. Many already use the therapeutic tool of journaling. Writing is not only healing for ourselves but sharing our experience is often very helpful for others on this journey. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter please contact me (Arleen Simmonds) at waskamloops@shaw.ca

When you write from the heart, you not only light the dark path of your readers, you light your own way as well . ~ Marjorie Holmes

CONTRIBUTIONS:

THE UNITED WAY Contributions to The Compassionate Friends/Kamloops may be made through the United Way. This can be done directly or through payroll deduction. The Compassionate Friends Kamloops Chapter must be specified as the designated recipient. The United Way will issue receipts to individuals for these donations. We are given a total only, no names of donors, and so we thank everyone who donates in this way other means of donations can be made directly to The Compassionate Friends of Kamloops or through other employee charity campaigns. We thank all those who support us with their donations, helping to carry out the important outreach done in the memory of our children.

We Are A Registered Charitable Non Profit Organization. Receipts Will Be Issued For Income Tax copyright 2012



Lamps For The Journey...

*And Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
rose from the dreams of its wintry rest. —Percy Bysshe Shelley*

“Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind.” ~*Bertrand Russell*

We find a place for what we lose. Although we know that after such a loss the acute stage of mourning will subside, we also know that we shall remain inconsolable and will never find a substitute. No matter what may fill the gap, even if it be filled completely, it nevertheless remains something else. ~ *Sigmund Freud(1961)*

After all," Anne had said to Marilla once, "I believe the nicest and sweetest days are not those on which anything very splendid or wonderful or exciting happens but just those that bring simple little pleasures, following one another softly, like pearls slipping off a string." ~ *L.M. Montgomery, Anne of Avonlea*

“When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.”

~*Henri J.M. Nouwen in The Road to Daybreak: A Spiritual Journey*

"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words." ~*Rachel Naomi Remen,*

"The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering." ~ *Ben Okri, Nigerian poet and novelist*

Kindness is more important than wisdom, and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom.

~ *Theodore Isaac Rubin*

Gratitude is born in the hearts that take time to count up past mercies. ~ *Charles E. Jefferson*

When everything is dark, when we are surrounded by despairing voices, when we do not see any exits, then we can find salvation in a remembered love which is not simply a recollection of a bygone past but a living force which sustains us in the present. Through memory, love transcends the limit of time and offers hope at any moment of our lives. ~ *Henri Nouwen*

*"O the green things growing, the green things growing,
The faint sweet smell of the green things growing!
I should like to live, whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life of my green things growing."*

- *Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, Green Things Growing*

On Suicide

Dear Parents,

My daughter, Lynn, killed herself. I have been where you are now. I know how badly it hurts. I know that you feel the most terrible aloneness of your life. It is normal for you to feel desperately unhappy, angry, guilty, frightened and out of control. You wouldn't feel terrible if you hadn't loved your child so much.

Most people who kill themselves had depression--usually unrecognized and undiagnosed. People who have depression have an illness. Chemicals get out of balance in their brains, which regulate how they think, feel and behave. No amount of love and caring, or trying to build up their self-esteem could have altered their misconception that their situation was hopeless.

Please don't let anyone tell you how you should feel. People will say that the death of a child by suicide is the "worst" thing that can happen, that you will "never" get over it. Don't believe them; these are the voices of the taboo and stigma on suicide. This is part of the extra burden you will have as a suicide survivor. Others don't hear gasps of shock as we do when we tell how our child died. Others don't hear gross jokes and ridicule about the manner of their child's death. That's extra for us.

You may feel bewildered and stunned; go over and over the events leading up to the death; feeling that somehow--if you had done one last thing--you might have saved your child; you may be fearful and anxious about yourself and the rest of your family. These things, and more, are normal reactions after a suicide death.

You will survive the suicide death of your child because you have to, but you have the choice about how you will survive. You have gotten through the days since your child died--the worst that can happen already has happened. It cannot get worse. You have been through the worst, and you have survived. The next several months will gradually get easier, but it probably won't feel that way day by day. It will be up and down. It helps to look back over a week or a month and compare. Recognize your small victories. Death leaves a scar that we always have, and we will feel pain from it through our lives, but the intense pain you feel now will gradually get better; the pain won't be there forever. Ultimately for suicide survivors, it is not so much how our children died, as that they died.

Keep in mind that you are a good person, and you deserve to be happy again. You are going to be alright, but it will not be easy especially at first. I still miss Lynn, but I know she went as far as she could, and that she would have stayed with us if she could. Some people, like your child and my Lynn, have to leave before the play is over. Be good to yourself.

~ Adina Wroblecki, Professional Speaker/ Writer about Suicide & Suicide Grief.

I have this to say about grief. In my experience you don't get over it. You incorporate it into the very fabric of your life. Your experience of grief will inform your attitudes, your decisions and your relationships for the rest of your life. You will be changed. If you can address your grief and work through it in a positive and meaningful way, you will be a more compassionate, forgiving and understanding person than you might have been. You will also incorporate and carry forward all the finest qualities, joys and memories of your loved ones. They will live on in your compassion, your actions and the telling of their stories ~ Arleen Simmonds TCF/Kamloops, B.C.

TIMELESS ENCOUNTER WITH LOVE AND LOSS

By Jim Taylor Taken from *Jim's email column Sharp Edges* November 11, 2012

The Burren is a vast limestone plateau in the west of Ireland. The rock itself is 320 million years old, laid down in a warm sea before two ancient continents collided and thrust the hardened sediments up from the ocean bottom.

From the sea coast along Galway Bay, the Burren broods over postcard-pretty villages like a great grey glacier, cracked and crevassed. Parts of the Burren still look as primeval as they must have looked when bare rock emerged into light and air for the first time.

Countless centuries have eroded the limestone slabs into gigantic paving blocks. In the cracks and crannies between blocks, vegetation ekes out survival -- bright buttercups and daisies, sweet clover, various kinds of violets, gentians, harebells, and even some orchids. Some 70 per cent of Ireland's entire flora are found in the Burren.

Over 6000 years ago, unknown Stone Age people used those slabs of limestone to build burial sites called portal tombs or dolmen. If you've ever built a house of cards, you have a good idea of a dolmen. On the sides, you stand the slabs upright. Then, to keep them from falling, you rest another slab on top to lock them all in place. Except that the "cards" here are blocks of limestone two feet thick, ten feet long, ten feet across. Each slab weighs many tonnes. Ancient people with no metal tools, no cranes or machinery, pried those slabs up, stood them on end, and raised the largest block of all into the air so that they could perch it gently on top of the other blocks.

They did it so well that the stones still stand, 6000 years later. Then they buried the bones of their most honoured warriors within that structure. That's a guess, of course. Because those ancient peoples had no writing to leave records of their reasons.

But the remains within the tombs have been carbon-dated from between 4200 B.C. to 2900 BC. That's older than Jericho or Babylon. Older than Moses and the Pharaohs. Older than Stonehenge...

More than that, no one knows. Did they do their ceremonies at noon under the midsummer sun? At midnight, in the dark of the new moon, with torches flickering on the surface of the limestone? On the spring or fall solstice, as the first rays of the rising sun lit the great standing stones? We don't know.

They were certainly not buried in disgrace. Because the common tomb contains valued possessions -- stone axes, pendants, pretty crystals, beads...

Then the ceremonial burials stopped. For a thousand years.

And then there was a final burial. Of a child. Not inside the dolmen itself -- that would be sacrilegious. But on the path, just in front. About 1700 B.C., some unknown parents brought their child here for burial. It was not a ritual sacrifice, to appease some vengeful god. If the gods had demanded that kind of sacrifice, there would have been other examples, not this one small body.

The parents came to commit their child to the company of the great ones. I can only imagine the emotions that prompted that child's parents to choose that place. To come back to a site untouched for 40 generations, perhaps protected by taboos. To lay their child to rest for the last time, there, in the company of the greatest of their ancestors...

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In truth, I can imagine their feelings. I can imagine their desperate need to perform this one last act of devotion to their child. They felt such love that only this place could do justice to their sense of loss. Because the place had been hallowed by those emotions for 2,000 years. And I realized that I know those grieving parents. I have felt the same emotions. So has any parent who has ever lost a child.

And suddenly the veil of centuries that separates us is torn apart, ripped down the middle. It splits, fades, and dissipates like Irish mist in summer sunshine. Languages, power struggles, politics -- these all change. But we humans don't. The ancient Irish warlords could be as brutal and ruthless as any culture today. But that small body tells me that there was also love. And grief.

Sitting silently on a slab of ancient weathered limestone on the Burren in August 2006, I felt a deep and surprising kinship with people 6000 years ago. I still do.

They are me, and I am them. Amen.

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*It is the gift of hope which reigns supreme in the
attributes of The Compassionate Friends.
Hope that all is not lost.
Hope that life can still be worth living and meaningful.
Hope that the pain of loss will become less acute,
and, above all else,
The hope that we do not walk alone,
that we are understood.
The gift of hope is the greatest gift
that we can give to those who mourn.*

*—Rev. Simon Stephens, Founder,
The Compassionate Friends*

Our Friends Are Worth It

By Redlynn Kaufmann-Townsend

From Share Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support

When I had my first miscarriage, three of my friends were pregnant. We had been friends since high school, and while our lives had taken divergent paths, we had remained friends through college and boyfriends and broken hearts and nutty professors and new boyfriends and fiancés. We cried when one of us wasn't chosen to pledge a sorority. We were bridesmaids in each other's weddings. We were by each other's sides with wine and chocolate when one of us broke an ankle or had to say goodbye to a beloved pet. We comforted each other when there were deaths in our family or our circle of high school friends.

We called ourselves the Four Musketeers and vowed we would be friends until we were old ladies with blue hair.

Then, we all became pregnant one by one over the course of a few months. Two of us came home to the town we grew up in after marriage, and two of us were scattered on each coast. But, thanks to Facebook and smart phones, the distance between us seemed like nothing. We texted each other daily and set up a group on Facebook just for us to keep up with each other's pregnancies. We joked about how "one in four pregnancies end in miscarriage" and decided that was for other people, not us.

And then, it was one of us. The joke was on me, but there was no joke in that.

At the time, my friends were so supportive and caring and loving. One of them flew out to visit me the next weekend as a surprise. She was a few months ahead of me, and she had no idea that looking at her cute little round belly would break my heart every time I looked at her. She tried, she really did. She took me out for sushi. She tried to be a good friend. She tried to say all of the right things.

Except they weren't the right things. It is never right to say, "Thank God it happened early. I can't imagine if something happened to my baby NOW." Especially while you are rubbing your own full-of-life belly.

It is never right to say, "You'll have another one, I just know it!"

The weekend ended, she flew home, and I began avoiding each one of my friends. I didn't look at our Facebook group, and I began to dread their calls and texts. And I felt like the world's most terrible friend. I couldn't understand what was wrong with me. I couldn't understand how I could almost hate the women who had been there for me through so much, but I did.

I hated them. I loved them, but I hated them. And it really wasn't even their fault.

Less than three months later, I became pregnant again. I breathed a sigh of relief, called each of my friends one by one, and told them I was once again a member of their special club. They all breathed a sigh of relief, too. Two of my friends were far enough along that they knew they were having baby boys. The other friend did not know what the sex of her baby was, and we teased the other two that we would have girls who would marry the boys. We laughed about being mother in laws someday.

Just a few weeks after I passed the point of my first miscarriage, the first of my friends gave birth to her little boy. We gathered around our friend's hospital bed and took turns kissing him and vowing to be his aunties until we were old and senile. The happiness in the room was palpable, and we placed our hands on each other's bellies as we toasted with plastic champagne flutes of sparkling grape juice.

I went home dreaming of the day my friends would gather around MY hospital bed kissing and loving MY precious little baby who would be swaddled in a soft pink blanket.

The next day at work, the cramping and bleeding started. I was 13 weeks pregnant, and I thought I was safe.”

I wasn't safe. Later that night, I gave birth to a thumb-sized baby in the emergency room at the same hospital where my friend lay snuggling her newborn son just a few floors up.

Once again, my friends really did try to be there for me. They just didn't know how. I wasn't always very nice to them, and they eventually gave up and began avoiding me as much as I avoided them.

Over the next months, each of their babies arrived pink and screaming. They all gathered around each other's hospital beds, but one of us was missing. Me

I couldn't be there. I couldn't be there to joyfully welcome my friend's babies when I couldn't welcome my own. And they didn't understand. I received texts and emails and cards telling me how much I hurt them by not being there for them. I wanted to tell them how much I hurt when they weren't there for me.

I would like to be able to write that my story has a happily-ever-after ending, that I soon joined my friends in the motherhood club, but I have since had 3 more miscarriages—5 altogether. One of my friends now has two beautiful children. All of my friends have full arms and lives, and my arms and home are still empty.

In one way, though, my story does have a happy ending. Despite all of the loss, hurt, tears and distance between us, we remain friends. Our friendship has changed, though. In some ways, it has changed for better and has deepened, in other ways, it has changed for worse. It hasn't been an easy road, that's for sure. We have all worked together to maintain our friendships, even though the threads that connect us are tenuous and fragile at times. The reason I have been able to stay friends with them at all are many and varied. The biggest reason is because I came to the realization that they were each so important to me and I couldn't imagine my life without them, and I vowed to do whatever it took to keep our friendship intact. However, the main reason our friendships have survived because we have all had to learn how to not only be completely honest with each other, but we have had to learn how to really listen to each other as well.

Let me explain. I had to learn how to tell them how I really feel, and I had to do it in a non-threatening way. While I sometimes wanted to angrily shout, “Why are you so insensitive to my feelings?!!” I had to instead take a step back and realize that my friends were not intentionally trying to hurt me, that they really did want to help, they just didn't know how. So, I had to learn how to nicely tell them they were hurting my feelings without making them feel attacked. In turn, I had to also learn how to listen to them. When they apologized for accidentally hurting my feelings, I had to accept their apologies and not hold onto the hurt I felt. I had to listen to them and accept their feelings when they told me that while they understood how sad I was, it hurt them when I shut them out of my life. When they cried and told me that they missed me, I had to allow myself to cry too and admit that I missed them as well.

I have learned more than ever that friendship is a two-way street, full of bumps and potholes and slippery surfaces. And while it is hard sometimes to navigate this treacherous path when we are grieving and our friends have what we so desperately desire for ourselves, it is very worth it in the end if we can remember why we are friends in the first place. It is hard but worth it to let go of hurts and resentments, especially when we know in our hearts that our friends love and care about us. It is worth it to do what it takes to maintain a close friendship at a time when so many things are out of our control. None of it is easy, but in the end, it's all worth it.

Easter

Easter is coming and it is a season of highs and lows at the best of times, especially if we are observers of the Christian tradition. For us, as Compassionate Friends, it just underlines our own unique juxtaposition between mourning the deaths of our children and rejoicing that we had them in our lives, even for so short a time.

For me Easter is the most favourite time of the year. It combines the best aspects of Christmas and Thanksgiving. We have the gift of Jesus' sacrifice for us and the glorious thanksgiving of Easter Sunday. Even if we don't subscribe to the tradition of the Resurrection and Passover most of us are caught up in celebrating the rites of Spring with the very earth clamoring in resurrection from the cold darkness of winter, the gifts of eggs and chocolate bunnies symbolizing new life and high spirits.

But, like nature and like Jesus and his friends we have had to experience the winter season of the soul with our own version of Good Friday. Before we can get to resurrecting our natural instinct to experience joy, we have had to travel that road of mourning and grieving.

After Kenneth's death my first experience of Easter and Spring was very difficult. Kenneth died in August when we still had weeks of summer left. The days seemed too long, the sun too brilliant, the sky too blue. I just couldn't look up. Winter seemed almost like a relief, finally weather that matched my mood and I could just hide out. Then Spring came. Once again all that colour and energy and everyone else seeming so bright and cheery. How could they, my son was dead. It was all so unfair and depressing. Easter seemed like a black hole, I was stuck at Good Friday.

On August 11 that year, the first anniversary of Kenneth's death, we planted a Spartan apple tree in his memory. The rest of that year was almost as hard as the previous one.

Then eventually Spring rolled around again. I remember kneeling under Kenneth's tree planting blue pansies for his blue eyes. Petals from the apple blossoms fell on my shoulders, they felt like tiny blessings from heaven. Later that Spring a little bird died in our back yard near the tree. My grandsons Paul and Geordie, who were very small then, asked me if we could bury the bird under Uncle Kenneth's tree so he could look after it. We buried the little bird with a simple service and said the words of a little hymn, "God sees the little sparrow fall, it meets His tender view....."

That Spring was much easier to accept than the previous one. Easter came and I could recognize my need to work through "Good Friday" as I struggled to reach "Easter Sunday."

This year I will acknowledge Easter as I have done for many years now. I will walk through the darkness of Good Friday and my own loss and then on Easter Sunday I will be at the river at sunrise in the company of others. I will be on the shore of the river that claimed my son's life and I will eat bread and fish and celebrate life beyond life.

In Loving Memory of Kenneth Bruce Simmonds
October 30, 1964 -August 11, 1988
Arleen Simmonds/TCF Kamloops, B.C.



Mothers Day Brings Joy and Pain

Mother's Day used to mean special times, great moments, sweet gifts and acknowledgement of the deep bond that Mothers share with their children. I have many happy memories of Mother's Days past. Their value is incalculable. But that was before . . . everything now is measured in "before" and "after." When I lost my only child, Mother's Day changed. Now Mother's Day has a different meaning . . . one that is not as happy as it once was, but one that still reinforces the many years I shared with my son on this earth.

I was considering this strange paradigm, this shift in my thinking over the past six plus years, and I have come to the conclusion that eventually bereaved parents begin to accept the death of their children on a subconscious level. But before that happens, our subconscious minds wage war on our conscious minds and we experience such terrible emotional lows. It's an internal fight for each of us. Along with the fight to survive, to acquire the will to continue living, we are battling internal forces that must resolve themselves. Once that internal war ends, our healing begins. We will always love and miss our children. We will always shed copious tears for no reason. But something inside of us has shifted, shaping our perspective from this point forward.

So, this Mother's Day I will acknowledge my beautiful son, the wonderful life that he lived, the joy I received in raising him and the wisdom I acquired through the gift of my child. We learn unconditional love when we become mothers. We learn foresight, gentleness, joys in the simple elements of life. I will remember past Mother's Days and think of the wonder that is my only child! I will remember him with much love, more than a few tears and a special sense of thankfulness that his life graced mine for over 35 years.

I will honor the fact that I am a mother. Although my son does not share this earthly plane with me, he is forever my child and I am forever his mother. This is a bond that time, space and death do not alter. Quietly, with serenity and peace in my heart, I will mark this Mother's Day doing what I want to do. I will know what that will be when I get there. Live in the moment . . . that's another element of life that I learned from my son.

We are each unique on our grief journey, and we will each mark this Mother's Day in a different way. Whatever your choice might be, make it your day . . . your day to celebrate the eternal bond between mother and child. There is nothing more beautiful.

Annette Mennen Baldwin In memory of my son, Todd Mennen TCF, Katy, TX



I remember vividly the first Mothers Day after my son died. Had there been a vote that Year, I would have cast mine for the abolition of Mothers Day. I didn't want there to be such a day and I didn't want anybody to remind me that it did, indeed, exist. My response to those who were left who loved me was to pull away and isolate myself.

I Made A Mistake!

Between the first and second Mother s Day I made a number of discoveries. Probably the most important one I made was that my surviving child needed to be allowed to show her Love for me. She was and is as important as my son who died and has that right. I also learned that my salvation lay in the hands of those people who cared for me, and when I learned to let them help me, I helped myself.

Help yourself this Mothers Day

~Mary Cleckley

THE GIFT OF LOSS by Abigail A. Fuller

Most of you know that I lost my 8-year-old daughter Scout to cancer on July 7, 07. The past nine months have been by far the most painful of my entire life. I don't know that there is anything worse than losing a child. At first, I didn't want to live-and this is typical for parents who lose a child. In fact, many plan their suicides. For months I woke up every day wishing that the world would disappear. I tell you this not to elicit your sympathy, but so you will know that it was from the depths of this kind of pain that came the unexpected gifts I will talk about today.

I had thought that if Scout died, I would not be able to go on. And yet here I am. And not only am I here, but I have learned more in these past nine months than I ever thought possible. I feel like I have undergone the most astonishingly rapid spiritual growth spurt of my life-sort of spiritual boot camp, if you will. It's tough going, but it makes for fast changes.

What have I learned?

1. I have learned that our culture deals very badly with death.

We ignore it, deny it, and avoid it as much as possible. This is manifested in so many ways: the positive value our culture puts on youth and looking young and feeling young (instead of valuing the wisdom that comes with age); the measures we go to, to keep people alive at the very end of their lives; the way we consign dying and death to hospitals and funeral parlors, instead of allowing these very natural and inevitable things to happen at home.

Why does this matter, our culture's denial of death? Because when death comes-and it always does-we are shocked, frightened, unprepared, at a loss. We don't know how to sit with someone as they die, comforting them and supporting them as they make the sacred journey to the other side. A dead body seems creepy to us because we have never touched one before. We push aside grief and try to "move on" because our sadness is uncomfortable to those around us, and to ourselves. We don't know what to say when a friend or family member loses someone close to them, and so we stay away and say nothing.

Compare our culture with this example:

Sobanfu Some is an African healer and lecturer. She speaks about the way grief is regarded in her culture. In her village, at any given time there is a grief ritual-taking place. Anyone who is grieving is welcome to come, to cry, and to feel together in a community of others as a simple matter of course. The notion of avoiding this process and these feelings is as illogical to them as avoiding a meal when feeling hungry. Holding onto grief is likened to holding onto a toxic substance. It is only through the acknowledgment and expression of the grief that the health of the organism is restored.

And our fear of death is really an aspect of a larger concern: our fear of loss. Think about this: "All relationships end." All relationships end. I read those words recently and was struck by the paradox that while this is so obviously true, we almost never pay attention to it. It's too frightening; I think to live daily with this realization.

In a strange way, embracing the inevitability of loss has given me comfort: what happened to Scout and to me is not out of the order of things, it is PART of the order of things. As my husband said, "Eventually, if she grew up she'd have to say goodbye to us when we died. She just happened to go first."

I've been reading a lot of Buddhist philosophy these past months, and a central precept of Buddhism is that the source of human suffering is an unwillingness to accept loss. But as Mary Oliver reminds us, loss is a part of life, because change is a part of life. So if I face my mortality head on, the next question becomes, What am I going to do with this life that I do have?

The moment we fully acknowledge the inevitability of death is the moment we fully feel the preciousness of life, because it doesn't last. So life and death are parts of a whole-one can't exist without the other. Which brings me to the next lesson I've learned:

2. Happiness is overrated.

I don't think the point of life is to be happy. I think the point of being here on earth is to grow as human beings-to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for all that is. And guess what: we don't grow when we are comfortable. It is when we are challenged, when we suffer, when we are uncomfortable, that we grow the most.

Now, you might argue that as we grow as human beings, we in fact become happier-yes, happy in the truest sense of the word-not fun, ha-ha, laughing at jokes happiness, but a kind of hard-earned happiness that comes from experiencing both pain and joy, both life and death. From realizing that they are parts of a whole. The happiest person I ever met was a Holocaust survivor. My senior year in college I took a course on Literature of the Holocaust, and toward the end of the semester the professor invited this woman to speak to the class. She had the most serene, genuine, warm presence I have ever seen in a person.

3. I have learned to let go of what I cannot control (and to cherish what I have).

This lesson was a gift that first came when Scout was diagnosed with cancer in January 07. During those first days, as I sat crying in her hospital room, I realized, "I cannot control the outcome of this. But what I can do is love her with every ounce of my being for as long as she is here." And I did that. I was also determined not to allow the terror of losing her to distract me from enormous gift of having her there right then. But the possibility that I could lose her gave me the gift of a deep, attentive love with her. I remember her asking me last spring, "Mom, why are you kissing me so much?"

Letting go of what we cannot control means also letting go of the fantasy that somehow if we are good, if we are kind, if we believe in God, if we make the right choices, then nothing bad will happen to us. When Scout died, I wondered, "Why her? Why not some kid who was a bully, who didn't have a happy life, who was dumb, whose parents didn't care about them?" And I realized after a time that the answer to, "Why me?" is "Why not me?" Nothing makes me or my family immune from death or illness or injury. (And of course the life of a kid who is a bully or not so smart or whose parents don't care about him are just as precious as my daughter's life.) But I suffered a loss of innocence: I realized I am not immune from tragedy.

No, we can't control what happens to us... but we can make do with what we've been given. What really matters in life is not what happens to you, it's what you do with it.

4. I have learned that when your heart breaks, it breaks open.

I think of it this way: each of us builds a hard shell around our heart to protect ourselves from deep pain. (But in my vision, the shell doesn't keep pain from coming into your heart-because the pain is already there, it's an unavoidable part of life, because loss is an unavoidable part of life. Rather, the shell keeps the pain in, confines it, so we don't have to think about it or feel it.) But this same shell also keeps in feelings of deep joy and deep love and of peace, of oneness with the universe. So, since my heart was broken from losing Scout, I have experienced not only the greatest pain of my life, but also the greatest love and gratitude I have ever known.

I find I am less interested in judging people, less willing to get in the middle of conflicts, I spend less time speculating about people's motives, more aware of and appreciative of the good qualities in people. I spend more time amazed at and grateful for what life has brought me-especially Scout. What a miracle that she was here, for eight perfect years, that I got to be her mom.

In my extended family, there has been an astonishing change since Scoutie went up. I have four sisters, and my mom and dad are still around, and we have always been close, but with conflict. But since July, each and every one of my sisters and both my parents have shown an enormous generosity of spirit, not only toward me, but toward each other. Scout's death changed my parents' relationship, my relationship with my husband, and more.

5. I have learned that love is the strongest force in the universe.

I told this story at the celebration of Scout's life in September, so some of you have heard it. In late August, my friend Marcie said to me, "You are going through such an extraordinary time. What are you learning?" I told her that I didn't know; I was too deep in grief to see that yet.

Later that night I was lying in bed and suddenly the answer to her question came to me-and it was so simple that I had almost missed. The big lesson in all this, in Scout's illness and our struggle to get her cured and our deep sadness upon losing her-the overarching theme in all this is not loss, or cancer, or how unfair the world is, but LOVE. As I lay there, I found myself actually grinning. My love for Scout, and Neil's love and Leo's love and my sisters' love for Scout, Scout's love for us, the outpouring of love that my family received from friends and colleagues and neighbors: everything else pales in comparison to that love.

Most importantly, I realized when I lost Scout that nothing, but NOTHING, could take away my love for her, and so I would always be connected with her in that way. Cancer could take away her body, but it could not touch my love. Love can outlast time, distance, and even death. It is, indeed, the strongest force in the universe.

As anyone who has suffered a terrible loss will tell you, I would return all of these gifts in a second if it meant I could have Scout back. But I can't have her back. A few months ago while I was swimming laps, I thought to myself, "My life is over." And the universe spoke to me--or maybe it was God, depending on your beliefs--and said gently but firmly, "No, it's not over; it's just different." I can't have Scout back--and so the important question is, What do I do now with what I have? Here, now, in this life that is so very different from the one I had, and from the one I wanted--and this is where I find myself. Where do I go from here? I have these unexpected gifts to help me along the way, and I feel they are gifts from Scout.

**Delivered at the Wednesday chapel service at Manchester College, April 2, 08.*

Abigail A. Fuller, Associate Professor of Sociology and Social Work, Director, Peace Studies Program Manchester College
aafuller@manchester.edu ~reprinted from Love Never Dies <http://www.loveneverdies.net>

Spring Waiting

*Winter's end is almost here.
Crocus struggle in the snow.
Sunlight has a softer glow.
Is the winter long this year?
Spring waits, watching for a cue...
Not to rush your grief away.
But to be there, when you say.
Spring is waiting, friend, for you.
Find a little time for Spring,
Even if your days are troubled.
Let a little sunshine in
Let your memories be doubled.
Take a little time to see
All the things your child was seeing -
And your tears will help your heart
Find a better time for being.
~Sascha Wagner*



Coincidences (?)

Sometimes uncanny incidents or coincidences happen in a powerful one time only, knock you on the head way. Sometimes they happen in a series of small events that can easily be overlooked. They are like beads added to a necklace; only until the last one is in place do you see the whole effect in an AHA moment. As bereaved parents we are perhaps open to these signs and seeming coincidences, or synchronicity, or serendipity, call it what you will. When we put out a call for a sign as I often do, we need to be ready to receive it no matter where the path leads.

Last August I found myself in the midst of a series of small events that gave me that AHA moment. The anniversary of our son Kenneth's death from drowning is August 11, as a family we always go to a favourite place of his, Paul Lake, to remember him. We send up a blue balloon and throw a rose in the lake and have our own moments. This year was the same, but a little different. Instead of a plain round blue balloon we sent up a blue balloon shaped like a star on which was written Kenneth's name, dates, and a few words.

For some reason the sight of that balloon sailing upward with words on it, reminded me of a story long forgotten, that I had read in Reader's Digest magazine many years ago. I shared the story with those within earshot. The story as I remembered it was about a little girl in California whose daddy had died. She was having a very hard time and her mom and grandma were despairing about how they could help her. The little girl's daddy used to read her the story of The Little Mermaid every night and she missed him so. It was decided that on her daddy's birthday they would all visit his grave and send off a Little Mermaid balloon with a message tied to it. The message from the little daughter among other things mentioned her daddy's birthday and her own coming birthday, wishing she would get a card from heaven.

The balloon left California and sailed thousands of miles to Prince Edward Island. On a cold November morning a forest ranger from the tiny town of Mermaid left his home to go hunting at Mermaid Lake. On the shoreline, snagged in a bush, he found a silver balloon with a picture of the Little Mermaid on it. To cut to the chase, the ranger and his wife, after reading the heart rending note, bought an adaptation of The Little Mermaid story along with a card to "a dear daughter" and they included a letter and sent off a package to California. They told the little girl that since there were no stores in heaven they were shopping for her daddy and thought he picked them because they lived in Mermaid. It made all the difference to that little girl. I felt quite happy to have remembered that story and to share it.

Moving along on this journey of the 24th anniversary of Kenneth's passing, things took another strange turn. On the closest Sunday to the anniversary, (this time, the next day), we put a rose in a pottery vase that Kenneth gave me, on the communion table at our church. We also put a notice in the church bulletin saying that the rose is for Kenneth from his family along with one or the other of two bible verses I associate with him. I always alternate between the two. The verse this time was to be from Philippians: *"I thank my God upon every Remembrance of you."* As usual I send this notice from my computer to the church several days before. You can imagine my surprise that Sunday when reading the bulletin I see my alternate verse from The Song of Solomon, *"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."* I couldn't see how I'd made that mistake but it was just fine, no big deal.

Another day went by and still in that quiet reflective mood of these days around the anniversary; I was looking for some gentle quiet reading time. I found a book that had caught my eye the previous week at a thrift store. The title really appealed to me, "Windows of Hope," it is a Readers Digest publication. I opened it for the first time, flipped through it and.....another bead on the necklace of coincidence, it opened to the story of the little girl and the Little Mermaid balloon. As I re-read the story from so many years ago, it revealed even more than I'd remembered. In the Little Mermaid adaptation the folk from Mermaid, PEI had sent little Desiree, the little mermaid dies and is taken to heaven by angels. Desiree feels that the little mermaid saw her daddy in heaven and as a result lots of wonderful things happened including visits to her new friends at Mermaid PEI.

At the end of the story, on the last page, was a quote. *"Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it."* The last bead on the necklace. Coincidence? Perhaps. The answer to a prayer for a sign? Maybe. I say, AHA!

~ Arleen Simmonds TCF Kamloops In Loving Memory of Kenneth Bruce Simmonds 30/10/64 – 11/08/88





Grandparents' Remembrance

*We are the grieving grandparents,
 the shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives.
 Our grief is two-fold and at times we feel powerless to help.
 We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief
 and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts.
 We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares
 with a grandchild and we have lost a symbol of our immortality.
 As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength.
 We reach into their hearts to comfort them,
 and when they reach out to us in their distress,
 we begin the journey to heal together. We continue to be their guardians.
 We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss.
 We support the new ones which symbolize the small steps on their journey.
 It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.*

~ Susan Mackey, TCF/Rutland, VT

Things That Never Die



*The pure, the bright, the beautiful
 that stirred our hearts in youth,
 The impulses to wordless prayer,
 The streams of love and truth,
 The longing after something lost,
 The spirit's longing cry,
 The striving after better hopes -
 These things can never die.*

*The timid hand stretched forth to aid
 A brother in his need;
 A kindly word in grief's dark hour
 That proves a friend indeed;
 The plea for mercy softly breathed,
 When justice threatens high,
 The sorrow of a contrite heart -
 These things shall never die.*

*Let nothing pass, for every hand
 Must find some work to do,
 Lose not a chance to waken love -
 Be firm and just and true.
 So shall a light that cannot fade
 Beam on thee from on high,
 And angel voices say to thee -
 "These things shall never die."*

~Charles Dickens

Going Back, Going Forward

By Mitch Carmody

As a national writer and speaker on grief, I am mostly recognized for the death of my nine-year-old son, Kelly James Carmody, who died of a malignant brain tumor in 1987. That event changed my life forever, but many may not know of other familial losses I have incurred that were also instrumental in forming my life. Like the corner pieces of a puzzle, our losses define the foundation, of our life portraits; they create our *today*.

I have now realized in a recent epiphany that for all the years I knew my mother, she was a bereaved parent. I have lived with a bereaved mom my whole life. Things now seem more transparent, and I understand her better than I ever have before. I also am a bereaved parent now; I get it. I now look at my life and put all our family losses together and realize how much my mom lost. She had buried a young husband, her only sibling, three of her children, and three grandchildren, the first child having died before I was even born.

Five years before I came along, my mother gave birth to her fifth child John, who was healthy and full-term, but the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck, strangling him at birth. John's life was buried with his body and was never mentioned again; an unfortunate incident. You move on; you get over it; you can have other children. She did, giving birth in 1955 to two more children, a boy and girl set of twins; me and my sister Sandy. In 1969, my father died at age 49. A year later my mother's only sister died, and in 1978 my older brother David died in a state mental institution. My mother continued to put each death behind her and move on with minimal tears and emotion. Dead is dead; you buck up, get over it, and get on with your life.

In 1984 my twin sister, Sandy, was killed at age 29 with her two young sons in an auto accident. She had a set of 18-month-old boy/girl twins at home when she died. My mother reacted the same way; "What is done is done, son; we have to put it behind us." I struggled to bury my grief away, and then less than two years later my son was diagnosed with cancer. I had to fight that fight to save my son, and put my sibling grief on hold for a long, long time. I was getting good at it. We were the twins, a curiosity and oddity being boy/girl twins, and some questionably intelligent people would seriously ask if we were identical. We were "the twins." Of course we did not dress alike and we each had our own friends, but we were special unto ourselves. We also shared our friends and had big parties together with quite a mix of everyone. I was a straight-A student, and she was not. She got pregnant young and never graduated. I went to college. She was Goofus; I was Gallant (an old cartoon found in a kid's magazine at the dentist's office). She was a fundamentalist Christian, and I am a New-Age seeker of enlightenment. As kids, Mom would make Sandy a devil's food chocolate cake; I would get the white angel food cake. We were so different in so many ways, but we were so much in touch in the wordless way that only twins would understand.

I still feel the void of her physical presence in my life big-time and always will. I still miss her so much, but I have felt a connection with her on a spirit level through the years in signs and dreams, and I know she is around always; even her children—now adults—feel her presence, someone they cannot even remember in life.

Grieving my son was the hardest challenge I have ever faced. His death was the straw that broke the camel's back; I felt totaled, beaten, and apathetic. I wallowed in a wasteland of broken dreams and non-ending despair that lasted for almost ten years. I grieved like I was taught and put it behind me, until one day I walked by a photo of my son and I dropped to my knees in newfound agony, screaming loudly to the heavens, "I cannot live like this. I cannot pretend this did not happen!" I embraced the deaths of my son, my father, my brothers, my sister and her boys; I sucked it all in like a newborn taking its first breath. I started living and feeling my losses, grieving, mourning, and lamenting to all who would listen.

I was finally grieving fully for the first time in my life, and for the first time in ten years I saw beauty in the sunrise again. I got my life back, and I did not have to let go to do so. I only had to simply embrace it, not erase it. It is never too late to process your loss. I could not fully work through the enormity of the death of my son before I processed all my other losses in a proactive way. So many times the losses experienced by young children are marginalized. Whether they lose a parent or a sibling, they are expected to get over it quickly and encouraged to be strong. We learn at a young age to hide our feelings, and it may take years before we process the total assault to our psyches.

If you are a sibling who has experienced the death of a brother or sister at any age, recognize it, take it out of the closet, and talk about it with pride rather than shame or embarrassment. Also remember that your parents are changed forever and may still be falling apart inside; forgive them their shortcomings, for they are bereaved parents. Bring your sibling back to the dinner table; keep them in your life and in the conversation with your parents and your friends. Dead is not gone, and we do not have to let go; we do not get over loss, we learn to live with it, it is part of us. Knowing that, not only can we survive, we can thrive.

Mitch Carmody is the author of Letters to My Son: A Journey Through Grief and the newly released 2nd edition, Turning Loss to Legacy. Mitch is currently a staff writer with Living with Loss magazine and has published many articles for a variety of national grief periodicals, newsletters, and Internet sites as well as appearing in many radio and television interviews. He is an accomplished artist and creator of the innovative, "20 Faces of Grief," as well as his groundbreaking S.T.A.I.R.S model of grief staging. Mitch is well-known for his enduring workshop, "Whispers of Love, Signs from Our Children," which has been a favorite conference presentation for over five years. He also performs interpretive sign language to many songs that he calls "Songs of Sorrow," and weaves them throughout most of his presentations as well as a workshop titled by the same name.



When I first took the measure
Of my heart,
I could not see,
The light was dim.
A friend held the lamp while I looked in.
There was room for someone's sorrow
And another person's pain
And plenty of room for other people's tears,
That fell like rain.
The depth of my compassion
Everyone could see.
But none of it really mattered until
There was room in my heart
For me.

~ P.G. White

First published in Changes magazine, august 1994

The morning mist
Lifts from the lake
Mystical it holds
My gaze

The unseen loon
Calls out in vain
As I do
When I

Call your name
I look for you
In cloudy skies
Seeing shapes

And secret signs
That let me know
Your spirit soars
And travels near

I see you
All around me here
In sunset skies
Starry nights

And the wonder
Of a child's eyes
An eagle's flight
The morning light

A rainbow's beam
The morning dew
They all make me
Think of you



And until
We meet again
I will always
Miss you Ken

By Kelly Simmonds TCF/Kamloops
In Loving Memory of Her Brother
Kenneth Bruce Simmonds 30/10/64 – 11/8/88

My Angel

*When you died, sister my world crashed around me.
My other half was ripped away from me.
Suddenly there was a gaping hole in my heart.
My days were dark without the light of your presence.*

*But you proved me wrong, for you are with me.
You show me your presence in many ways.
When I cry and ache for your presence,
You visit me in dreams, giving me a taste of Heaven.*

*You heal my broken heart with your smiles
Through my dreams, I know you are trying to
Help me pick up the pieces of my life.
Your presence is felt in other ways.*

*The scent of your perfume, an echo of your voice,
When I am angry or saddened over unanswerable questions
I receive an answer from the wisdom of a friend.*

*When I am alone and my heart is still,
I am filled with an inner peace and joy that can only be from you.
Though you're physically gone, you live with me in my heart.
I know I have an angel to watch over me,
For that angel is you.*

~ Colleen Burgess, TCF Austin, TX



We give thanks for places of simplicity and peace.
May we find such places in ourselves.

We give thanks for places of freedom and beauty.
May we find such places in ourselves.

We give thanks for places of refuge and love.
May we find such places in ourselves.

May we begin to mend the outer world
According to the truth of our inner life.

- Adopted from Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, California



Our Annual Retreat in Seabeck, WA ~ May 31 - June 2, 2013

For over thirty years bereaved parents have been crossing the wooden bridge into the quiet serenity of Seabeck Conference Center. The majestic Olympic Mountains rise to the west, scenic Hood Canal lies between you and the Olympics and wooded hills slope up from the beach which set this place apart from being just another conference center.

Our retreat is just that...a *retreat*. We leave behind the busyness of our everyday lives and enter a relaxed and safe haven to work on our grief and bond with other bereaved parents. The retreat is a place where we share our thoughts, feelings, and precious memories of our children. The weekend includes workshops, sharing groups, a reflection room, burden basket, crafts, Children's Memorial Garden and a candlelighting ceremony on Saturday night.

The retreat is low-key and there is no pressure to attend every scheduled session. The weekend is yours to use however you need to take care of yourself. If it's time for an activity and you want to take a nap or take a walk, do it. Do what YOU need to do.

Some people choose to not participate in sessions and yet do a lot of grief work because they have the opportunity to be in a safe and supportive setting that allows them the time and space to work on their grief away from the distractions of a busy daily life. It's a nurturing environment and you are with people who understand what you are going through.

Our TCF chapter works with WICS - Widowed Information and Consultation Services – to plan the retreat. We share the main speaker and workshops, but TCF and WICS have separate sharing groups, memorial ceremonies and housing.

Together, TCF and WICS provide a children's program for those who want to bring their children (ages 5-17). The children's group has their own program with their own activities and ceremonies. All three groups share the dining room at meal time, but each group has designated tables, so each is with their own group. *(For information about the Children's Program, contact WICS at 206-241-5650.)*

About 60 bereaved parents from Washington, Oregon and British Columbia attend our retreat. At Seabeck you will find bereaved parents with caring hearts who can relate to you and your grief.

Please join us at our Seabeck Retreat this year!! For more info call 206-241-1139 or email: tcfmarge@aol.com.



The Mask

Lennie Neal, TCF, Victoria, BC

There's an old mask I wear for the public,
Smiling face, I'm sure you've seen the act.

Concealing all the grief so deep and wild,
The deep and desperate longing for my child,
Buried under courtesy and tact.

An invitation brought me to Seabeck
Hesitantly, hoping for some peace.
Walking slowly, shy among the strangers
Mask in place, alert for hidden dangers,
Hoping against hope for some release.

A fortunate seating at the table,
I sat beside a woman, calm and mild.
She turned to greet me with a gaze so fine,
Compassionate eyes that never left mine
As she smiled, and asked about my child.

The wave of relief fairly shook me,
I saw at once that I could drop the mask.
The workshops and the sharings all were real,
Emotions in the songs that made me feel,
The meals also, all that I could ask.

Candles in the night, so very moving,
We gathered on the bridge under the moon.
Couldn't stop the flood of tears from streaming,
Can't mistake the song, or miss its meaning,
Our children all were taken far too soon.

Our burdens were all burned at the closing,
Cascades of bubbles floating far and near.
The sense of community was stronger,
But we just couldn't stay any longer,
That's OK, we'll all come back next year. ♥

Seabeck 2012 Testimonials



The thoughts run through my mind, wondering why I was there. I have had enough sadness over the last 13 months since we lost Byron and I wondered if this was going to be another three days of it. I could have turned around then, and headed back home. In reflection of the weekend, a retreat, that I was not sure that I wanted to be at, I was so glad I came to. I left feeling stronger, understanding more and bonded with several people that are going through the same thing. The closing ceremony, in the memorial garden, was difficult - saying my goodbyes to my new found friends who, 36 hours ago were strangers. I would recommend the TCF Seabeck retreat. Roy

Today, we go to work, take care of the house and yard, cook dinner, pay bills, run errands - all the normal things of life. We often seem to be on "auto". The people we interact with everyday and even some of our friends and family don't see that we are still broken inside. Our life has a big void, and words of comfort like "he'll always be in your heart", just don't make up for that. The weekend at Seabeck, I didn't have to hide my grief or pretend that I'm ok. Everyone there was grieving at one stage or another. I cried, talked, rested, and listened. I could do these things with the support from others who could relate. It takes so much energy to get through our new "normal" life; Seabeck was a respite from that. We met people with different stories, some people have lost more than one child. We also met someone who had lost a son about the same age, around the same time, under similar circumstances as we did. Linda

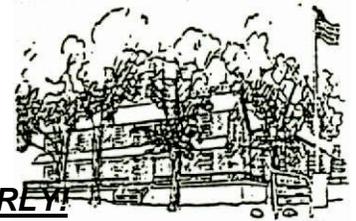
Registration Form On The Next Page



Registration Form

Due by: **April 30, 2013**

(After April 30, we'll accept registrations until spaces are filled.)



SPACE IS LIMITED!! SEND IN REGISTRATION FORM & FEE EARLY!

Name: _____

person

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip: _____

considerations):

Phone: Home (_____) _____

Alternate (_____) _____

Email: _____

Please check all that apply:

Single Occupant room – add'l cost: \$40 per

(Limited number of single rooms available.)

Double Room with: _____

Special Diet: _____

Special Needs (Physical limitations/other

Chair Massage – available Saturday for \$20. payment & apt made at retreat. **Please indicate your interest.**

Box Lunch – Sunday (for those who need to leave early)

WAIVER - The Compassionate Friends and Seabeck Conference Center assume no responsibility for injury to guests, loss or damage of personal property. Participants are responsible for safeguarding their persons and possessions during the retreat.

Signature: _____

First Name(s) of child/grandchild/sibling - as you want it to appear on your name tag: _____

Birth date: _____ Death date: _____ Cause of Death: _____

• May we include your information in the TCF Retreat Roster that is given to all the attendees? Yes: No:

Topic Specific Sharing Groups: What group/topic is of most interest to you? 1) _____ 2) _____
(Ex.: Men Only; No Living Children; Siblings; deaths due to Addiction; Accident; Illness; Suicide; ... your suggestion?)

Make checks payable to: **The Compassionate Friends** Send registration form and payment to:

TCF Retreat, P.O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166-0896
~ Please include a completed registration form with your payment. ~
(For our Canadian friends: Please make funds payable in US Dollars)

~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~  
**Limited Scholarships are available.**  
~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~

Thank you to those who contribute to the scholarship fund.

♥♥♥ Your contributions make it possible for other bereaved parents to attend the retreat.♥♥♥



2 Nights (Shared Room) & 6 Meals: (Fri. supper thru Sun. lunch)\$210.00 USD per person.
(Lodging includes all bedding, towels, washcloths & soap)
Single Occupant Room Fee: \$40.00 USD per person _____

Contribution to Scholarship Fund: (used to assist other bereaved parents attend retreat) _____

Total Enclosed with Registration: _____

REFUND POLICY: If Request Is Made BEFORE Registration Due 50% Refund
AFTER Registration Due Date NO REFUND

Office Use:

Reg#: _____ PostMarkDate: _____ AmtRecd: _____ Check#: _____ SchAmt: _____ ConfLtr: _____