



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS Ocean County Chapter

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF OCEAN COUNTY
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OCTOBER NEWSLETTER: Vol. 34 No. 10

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CHAPTER LEADER NOTES

This month's brochure in the newsletter is entitled "When Your Child Dies by Homicide." The November newsletter will cover the topic "Death of an Adult Child."

With the upcoming holidays approaching, there is a special page dedicated to "surviving the holidays."

During the October meeting we will again be showing a 15 minute video about Compassionate Friends that was provided by our National Leadership.

At this meeting, I will also be sharing my personal journal with the group. It is through notes that I took when I started journaling a week after Jeff died. I never wrote it with the intention of sharing it, but I thought it might be helpful to share these thoughts. It shows, even though our road through grief may vary, much of it is filled with the same emotions. I have expressed these feelings in my own words about shock, anger, guilt, sadness, and eventually compassion for others. Though I kept a journal for six years, this will cover the first six months of my grief journey. I will close with my last entry.

2009 CANDLE LIGHTING

Our candle lighting service will be Sunday, December 13, 2009 at 7:00PM at Saint Barbara's Greek Orthodox Church, 2200 Church Road, Toms River, NJ. You are invited to bring a framed picture of your child to be displayed during the service. The chapter will provide candles, which can be placed in front your child's picture as each name is called. There will be a reception after the service and we ask that you join us to renew old friendships and meet our new members.

Please note that we will only be reading the names of children of families and friends in attendance. Be sure to check in before the service. If you wish to have the name read and cannot make it the service, please contact us at friends.ocean@yahoo.com and we will include the name in the reading.

MEETING DATES

Date: Our next meeting is Tuesday, October 6, 2009 (7:30PM) (Meetings the first Tuesday of each month at the Children's Memorial Garden, Winding River Park-North End (See directions below)

DIRECTIONS TO MONTHLY MEETING, WINDING RIVER PARK, TOMS RIVER

The north entrance to the park is off Oak Ridge Parkway at the intersection with Whitesville Road. From the intersection of Routes 9 and 571 (at the Pathmark/Home Depot shopping center) go west on 571 and make immediate left onto Oak Ridge Pkwy. Go to first light (skating rink will be on your left) and make left onto Whitesville Rd. Make the first right turn and follow the road to the parking lot at the end. Building will be on your left and garden on the right. If you are going 571 East, make right onto 527 South/Whitesville Rd. and park area is just past intersection of Whitesville Rd/Oak Ridge Pkwy. Make a right and follow road to the end. If you are coming from the Parkway drive to exit 82A for Route 37 West and drive to the 2d traffic signal. Turn right onto Oak Ridge Parkway and go 1 mile, the park entrance will be on the right. Make right on Whitesville Rd. and first right into park. Follow road to the end. Do not turn into the entrance for Winding River Park on Route 37, you cannot drive through to the garden site.

MEETING INFORMATION

To Our New Members -coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not The Compassionate Friends will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief. The purpose of our meetings is to listen, share and hopefully offer support. Please be assured that there is no obligation to speak or participate. Just attend and hopefully you will receive some measure of comfort from joining the group and meeting other families that understand. You are also encouraged to bring someone with you for support, we realize how difficult that first meeting can be and assure you that you will find a place where people that do understand are willing to listen and to care.

Grief is experienced by everyone in very different ways, but there are some common thoughts and feelings that all who suffer grief will share. It is important to understand what your normal reactions will be. We cannot change the pain you may experience during grief. We can give you a better sense of control while going through these experiences by make them less frightening. Having something to "hold onto" will help maintain some sense of reality for those going through intense change.

To Our Seasoned Members - We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK - what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF 'veterans' to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better.

All are invited to bring a picture of your child for "Our Children Remembered" table. We will have a candle lit in memory of all the children listed in this month's newsletter and invite you to bring a picture and/or something special if you would like to speak about your child this month. This is the one place that speaking about your child is not considered an imposition and expressing how you are really feeling is appropriate and welcome.

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED, October, 2009

This month we are remembering these children who are sadly missed. Please take a few moments of silence to remember their day. A phone call or note would be so kind. None of us ever forget those very special days and messages that say "I care" really do help.

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>"Birth" dates</u>
Kimberly Smith Ames	October 8, 1998
Kimberly's Baby	October, 1998
Olga Assur	October 7, 1960
Joey Batullo	October 15, 1975
Jermoy Bechard	October 27, 1974
Christopher G. Berberena	October 1, 1981
Andrew Bernstel	October 8, 1990
Vincenzo Bove	October 23, 1976
Michael Thomas Brennan	October 30, 1959
Kamryn Carnick	October 15, 2003
Percy W. Cockrill	October 9, 1975
Eric Paul DaCruz	October 7, 1975
Augie Ernesto	October 23, 1942
Joseph L. Gillick	October 14, 1971
Christina Lynn Golembiewski	October 18, 1975
Jesse Hicks	October 22, 1981
Chase Johnson	October 14, 2006
Amy Lynn Lackett	October 12, 1961
Amie Lark	October 6, 1974
Suzanne Lavecchia	October 1, 1974
Robert Bruce Linton III	October 3, 1993
Vinnie Martucci	October 2, 1970
Stephanie McGill	October 3, 1986
Derek Meglis	October 12, 1973
Thomas Miraldi	October 29, 1947
Jaiden Moore	October 1, 2007
Christopher Nielsen	October 7, 1958
Desmond O'Brien	October 6, 1960
Karin Lyn Pagliaroli	October 14, 1977
Michael Rathgeber	October 13, 1978
Joey Rogers	October 13, 1984
Robert Schildknecht	October 26, 1956
Robert Scott	October 2, 1958
Phyllis Ann Scurman	October 12, 1953
Anthony Skyers II	October 11, 1989
Charles Thomas Smyth	October 22, 2004
Caroline Stark	October 25, 1968
Kathryn McCarthy Titus	October 29, 1948

Miguel Angel Torres	October 1, 1978
Christopher Vertino	October 22, 1961
Jacqueline Nicole Viets	October 15, 2000
Jamie Marilyn Vitello	October 22, 1979

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>"Passing" dates</u>
Kimberly Smith Ames	October 8, 1998
Kimberly's Baby	October, 1998
Heather Ellen Braunstein	October 3, 2001
Heath Butler	October 6, 1997
Jon Byron	October 22, 2004
Michael Anthony Cantillo	October 8, 2003
Kamryn Carnick	October 15 2003
Donna Chick	October 18, 2003
Edward Chick	October 18, 1986
Betty Jayne Clevenger	October 9, 1967
Cassandra Lynn Costello	October 15, 2004
Justin Cruz	October 27, 2005
Dominick William Dellaperute	October 1, 1995
Laurie Ann Edwards	October 15, 1991
Michael J. Goodwin, Jr.	October 28, 2005
Gary Kennis	October 8, 1996
Melissa Anne Kulikowski	October 30, 2005
Robert Bruce Linton III	October 4, 2004
Loriann Long	October 29, 1988
Anthony Patrick Marsh	October 23, 2005
Jonathan McCarthy	October 11, 2008
Dougie Murante	October 27, 2004
Christopher Nielsen	October 11, 2005
Bradley Oppel	October 4, 1993
Rachelle Piourde	October 18, 1981
Dorothy Poliakowski	October, 1957
Robert Rak	October 6, 2005
Amanda Faith Reo	October 29, 2003
Kirstin Liv Roehrich	October 9, 2003
Michael Rondinelli	October 28, 1981
Christopher E. Roxbury	October 29, 2004
Kia Anice Rozier	October 29, 2003
Arielle Diedre Rubin	October 28, 2005
Anthony Patrick Scucci	October 23, 2004
Jason Sears	October 30, 1985
Keith Seiler	October 1, 1980
Virginia Shepard	October 7, 2005
Robert Scott Smith	October 26, 1984
Lukas Earl Sutton	October 13, 2006
Kim Thorston	October 1, 1997
Peter Michael Torakis	October 12, 2001
Kathy Tufano	October 23, 1995
Theresa Ann Urban	October 7, 2003
Geoffrey Vandenberg	October 10, 2004
Alexis Christy Weinstein	October 5, 2000
Matthew Wilkinson	October 15, 2005
Mark Zyla	October 14, 2005

Contact the chapter to have your child included in our listing. Your child's name will appear in the months of their birth and their death.

LOVE GIFTS

A love gift is a tax-deductible donation given in memory of a child that died. Because of these gifts we are able to continue reaching out to bereaved parents. Please try to send your gifts to the chapter by the meeting date of the month prior to the month you wish it to appear. Love gifts can be sent to Compassionate Friends at PO Box 485 in Toms River, New Jersey 08754.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children unites us. Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength; some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We need not walk alone... We are the compassionate friends.

INFORMATION ABOUT OUR LIBRARY

Please note there is a complete selection of brochures, books and other kinds of literature dealing with grief that is available in our Chapter Library. The Library is in the same building in which our once-a-month Tuesday meetings are held (building is in the rear of Winding River Park-opposite the Compassionate Friends Memorial Garden.

HOW TO ACCESS

OTHER SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION

To access information from more than 30 helpful support groups that deal with all kinds of grief go <http://www.oceantcf.com> click on NJ Chapters/Links and scroll down to Other Support Group Information.

Another way to access more support groups can be found by going to the National Compassionate Friends website at <http://www.compassionatefriends.org> Go to resources and then links.

HOW TO ACCESS TO COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

ON-LINE SUPPORT CHAT GROUPS

To access the on-line support system, go to <http://www.compassionatefriends.org> Or use Key word "Compassionate Friends. Click on Resources then click On-Line Support and then click on Schedule & Entrance for On-Line Support. (A schedule of upcoming "rooms" for various discussions will come up. Please note all rooms are moderated.)

RADIO SHOW ARCHIVES

To access past radio shows go to <http://www.compassionatefriends.org> click on Resources then click Radio Show Archives.

ACCESSING BROCHURES

To access brochures go to <http://www.compassionatefriends.org> click on Resources then click Available Brochures.

When Your Child Dies By Homicide

The death of any child of any age is devastating. However, the pain and anguish is compounded when the death comes at the hands of another human being. Parents and family members face many complicated issues, even as they try to make sense of the incomprehensible—that someone knowingly, intentionally killed a child who was loved and will be missed.

Possible Complicating Issues

When a child dies by homicide, there are, unfortunately, dozens of unique issues that may complicate the grief process for the parents and family left behind. These may include:

The child may be the main evidence and an autopsy and the investigation may cause a lengthy delay in the release of your child's body to you.

The child's body may not be found for proper interment or cremation. If found, your child may not be viewable.

A police investigation can take weeks, months, even years.

Authorities may first look for suspects within the family, creating a revictimization of those very survivors feeling the most acute pain.

Information on new developments may trickle in to the family, and sometimes weeks and months may pass without contact unless initiated by the family.

If the child was murdered in another country, the family may be forced to deal with that country's law enforcement and legal system, which may have completely different procedures than in the United States. In addition, there may be language and communication barriers and untold costly and frustrating trips.

Your child becomes dehumanized as the police, the press, prosecutors, and others refer to "the victim," "the body," and "the deceased."

The murderer may never be caught or may choose suicide or death rather than capture.

If someone is charged with the murder, the trial, including appeals, can take years.

The murderer may go free for any number of reasons or receive a sentence far lighter than the family expected.

The child may be blamed by some being in the "wrong area" or participating in a "type of behavior," thus contributing to the murder.

Media coverage will take away any hopes of privacy the family may normally value.

In the case of an older child, the parents may not be the next of kin, as the spouse and immediate family may be given information and kept “in the loop.” Meanwhile the parents may be left on their own to learn whatever they can about the case and developments.

Most officials strive to be sympathetic, but family members can feel like they are living a nightmare. It is normal, as death notification is received, to feel shock and disbelief, numbness, confusion, anger, denial, and a feeling that the world has suddenly stopped. Your world is shattered. Murder is a violation of everything you were taught and believe about rightness and fairness in life. As time passes, reactions may include rage, a desire for revenge, anxiety, inability to sleep or eat, or feelings of hopelessness and depression. Other reactions may include frustration, fear that the murderer may return, survivor guilt, and self-blame (for being unable to protect the child). All of these are normal reactions that need to be addressed in the bereavement process. Researchers suggest that post-traumatic stress disorder is not unusual in survivors and can become part of their new reality.

Notification of others, first within the immediate family, and then of relatives, friends, and even employers can weigh heavily in the aftermath of the initial notification. Often, the press is provided the name of the child who died before the family can properly notify others. Even if the murder occurred elsewhere, it’s likely the press will want to stay in touch with the family every step of the way. Dealing with the media needs to be done in a way that creates the least additional stress to the survivors, sometimes through a family representative like an attorney, clergyperson, or even a close family friend.

A knowledgeable, caring Victims Advocate appointed by the court may also make the legal process more understandable and less daunting. But the pathway to healing does not run through the courtroom; it is just a necessary detour that may prolong the process of dealing with the death. Despite what others may naively say, capture and conviction of the murderer will never bring “closure.” No punishment can bring back your child, but support is available.

How do the Survivors Survive?

The lives of family members become a balancing act as everyone reacts in their own way to the child’s murder. Some may try to continue normally while others may not, understanding that “normal” is gone forever. Unfortunately, when a murder has occurred, the hard work of grieving must be put on hold while the family faces the challenges that the child’s death brings into their lives as survivors.

There will be many trigger points throughout the pursuit of justice and afterward that will bring back the horror of what has happened. These can include:

- 1) Seeing or identifying the accused
- 2) News accounts of the event or of similar events
- 3) Hearings, depositions, trials, and any number of other points in the legal process including parole hearings

- 4) The occurrence of “life events” that the child will never experience
- 5) Holidays
- 6) Anniversaries of when the child was born or died.

Be prepared for these trigger points and their effects on each member of the family. Your reactions are not signs of weakness, but are appropriate human responses to what has happened.

What Can You Do to Help Yourself?

You must undergo grief work—the painful process of intentional preoccupation with your dead child. Study and hold on to the image of what was, reviewing every detail again and again—study old pictures, remember the child’s voice, your conversations, and everything about them, even though it hurts. Share your story again and again and over. With the sharing comes slow but gradual acceptance of the new reality. Your life can and will go on. While the scars will always remain, it is possible to find healing with the help of others.

How Can Others Help?

Here are some ways that friends and coworkers can help:

- ❖ Be a good listener. Allow family members to talk about where they are in the process, in their grief, or whatever they feel is necessary to express.
- ❖ Be non-judgmental. Anger is normal and the survivors may express this in ways you may not expect.
- ❖ Say the child’s name—parents long to hear that others remember.
- ❖ Don’t forget that siblings hurt, too. They are often referred to as “the forgotten mourners” with good reason. Feel free to ask them how they are doing.
- ❖ Family members will find their energy levels reduced and their ability to do even simple tasks may be impaired. See what needs to be done, then do it without asking.
- ❖ Try to be with them throughout the proceedings. They’ll need a shoulder to lean on—and to cry on.
- ❖ Send “thinking of you” cards on important days such as the child’s birthday and death anniversary, and mention the child by name.

How Can The Compassionate Friends Help?

Many grieving parents find comfort in talking to others who have shared the same experience. The Compassionate Friends, as a peer-to-peer support organization, can fill that need, offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child. Talking about what happened, and sharing where you are in your grief, gives you the ability to learn from the experiences of others and the coping mechanisms they have used to survive.

While not everyone who attends meetings of The Compassionate Friends has had a child die by homicide, all feel the acute pain of losing a child and are seeking to learn from others who can help

them bring meaning back into their lives. A meeting of The Compassionate Friends is a safe haven where you don't have to worry about being judged, or having others turn away when the tears start. Many consider it their new home with new friends and the reason all can say, We Need Not Walk Alone!

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Surviving the Holidays

The holidays are among the most difficult times for bereaved families grieving the death of a child. Below are some helpful suggestions that may aid you in surviving the holidays.

- 1) Call a family meeting and discuss your plans for the holiday season, understanding that it would be unusual for you not to feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically drained. Don't set your expectations too high or you may find yourself disappointed.
- 2) Well intending friends and family may want to include you in their plans, believing it best for you to "get away" from grieving your loss. They do not understand that you cannot escape the grief that you feel. There is no obligation to say "yes." Only participate if you truly want to.
- 3) Try to take care of your health. It's important that you eat and drink properly, exercise, and get plenty of rest.
- 4) Take time to do the things you as a person want to do. You may want time alone to reflect or to write your thoughts.
- 5) Consider eliminating such things as the festive decorations, cooking, and baking that you may normally enjoy. People will understand if you're not in a merry or joyous mood or simply don't have the energy. You may try placing an electric candle in your window in memory of your child. Don't feel obligated to send out holiday cards.
- 6) If it is necessary for you to buy gifts, consider ordering them over the Internet or by phone. Most who are bereaved find it draining to go out and fight through crowded stores bustling with holiday cheer.
- 7) Many families that are in mourning may use the money they would have spent on gifts for their child to buy gifts for a child who would not be able to celebrate the holidays otherwise.
- 8) It is not unusual for you to want to include your child during the season. You may want to do something like: Ask friends and relatives who knew your child to send you a story about your child that you may not have known; Ask friends and relatives to create an ornament or remembrance of some type that reminds them of your child so that you can place it around the house or on a holiday tree. If it was your tradition, include placing a stocking with those of other children in your house, even if you do not fill it like the others—this is a symbolic gesture in memory of your child;
- 9) If you have other children who normally celebrate the holidays, you may consider continuing to do so to create some sense of normalcy in the house and so they will not feel forgotten.

10) Consider attending a Compassionate Friends meeting or a memorial event such as The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting. Most families find some comfort by being with others who have experienced a similar loss.

11) Remember that the anticipation of a holiday is often worse than the holiday itself.

12) Be kind to yourself.

13) It is okay to cry.

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SHARING POEMS AND THOUGHTS

We encourage you to share your poems and thoughts. We would like to include them in future newsletters and use them in a Chapter book. They can be sent to Compassionate Friends at PO Box 485, Toms River, NJ 08754 or they can be emailed to friends.ocean@yahoo.com

The Secret of TCF

The most profound way we keep our child is by sharing with others what we have shared with the child. That is the secret of TCF. We learn to take the love we had for the child and turn it outward so that we're loving others. Perhaps, at first that love is directed only to other bereaved parents. As our healing progresses, that circle of caring and loving broadens. We give to the world some of what we gave to our child, and by so doing are able to hold on to the essence of what we share with our child.

Dennis Klass, TCF, Missouri

The Road to Recovery

The road to recovery from grief, therefore, is to take time to do things that will enable us to give meaning to our lives. That's when our journey through grief becomes a journey of discovering ourselves, our potential and our resources in the encounter with life. That's when we become BETTER people, rather than BITTER people. In grief, no one can take away our pain because no one can take away our love. This call to life is to learn to love again.

Father Arnaldo Pangrazzi

Awkward Silence

I wish that someone would say his name.
I know my feelings they're trying spare,
and so we go through the charade,
the game, of dancing around
the ghost that is there,
trying to avoid evoking a tear,
or stirring emotions too painful to bear.

That he be forgotten is what I fear,
that no one will even his presence miss,
as if there were no trace that he was here.

By referring to him, my purpose is
not to stir pity or keep things the same,
but my heart will simply break
if his memory will die
like a flickering flame.

I just wish someone would say his name.

Richard Dew, M.D., Knoxville, TN

The Friend

"When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means that most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle 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 or 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 Nouwen from "Out of Solitude"

I Feel the Joy

Never let there be a time when

I cannot feel the pain

When hurt and sadness are blacked out,

And only numbness reigns.

At least with pain I am alive

But numbness will destroy

For it cannot feel the pain

Then I cannot feel the joy.

Joannetta Hendel, TCF, Indianapolis

Tomorrow

Tomorrow

“I’ll try to understand the excitement behind
Those piercing hazel eyes.
Try to understand her zeal for life,
Tireless energy and love for others.

Tomorrow

I’ll sit down beside her and get to know
This big sister of mine.
I’ll get to know the skinny little girl
I grew up with and shared a bedroom with
For all our childhood years.

Tomorrow

I’ll ask her about her boyfriend.
I’ll ask her about her girlfriends.
I’ll even ask her what her favorite
subject is in school.

Today?

I’m too busy.
I have too much to do.
She’s getting on my nerves.

Today

She’s borrowing my clothes and ruining them.
Today she’s telling me to do all those chores for her.
Today, she’s asking stupid questions
I just don’t feel like answering.

Today

I’m too tired.
But tomorrow
I’ll tell her how much I love her.
I’ll hug her and tell her she’s pretty,
I’ll tell her I’m glad I have a sister...

Tomorrow,

Tomorrow,

Has finally come and she is gone!”

By Jean Anne Read

TCF, Tulsa, Ok

Sometimes

"Sometimes love is a moment,
Sometimes love is a lifetime,
Sometimes a moment is a lifetime."

Pamela S. Adams,
Compassionate Friends, Winnipeg, Canada

From Both of Us

As long as I can
I will look at this world
for both of us.

As long as I can
I will laugh with the birds,
I will sing with the flowers,
I will pray to the stars,
for both us.

As long as I can
I will remember
how many things
on this earth
were your joy.

And I will live
as well as you
would want me to live
as long as I can.
By Sascha Wagner

Don't be Reckless

"Don't be reckless with other peoples heart's
and don't put up with people that are reckless with yours."
Kurt Vonnegut

The Promise

“Your birth brought me star shine,
The moon and the sun;
My wishes, dreams gathered
‘round my little one.
My life become sacred,
Full of promise and light,
All wrapped in the girl-child
Bringing love at first sight.

The years of your living,
Filled with laughter and tears
Excitement, adventure,
Some boredom, some fears,
But ended too quickly,
Ahead of its time.
The loss so horrendous
Such heartbreak was mine.

But from the beginning,
One thought rose so clear;
Never would your death erase
The years you were here.
I would not be defeated
Or diminished by your death;
I would hang on, learn to conquer,
If it took my every breath.

For if your death destroyed my life,
Made both our lives a waste,
It would deny your life’s meaning
And all the love you gave.
I vowed that years of sadness
Would change, with work and grace,
To years of happiness, even joy,
In which you’d have a place.

Memories of you, like shining stars
In the patterns of my soul,
Are beacons flashing light and love,
And with them I am whole.
In your honor, I live my life,
Now living it for two.
Through all my life, you too will live,
You lived... you live... you do.”

By Genesse Boudrea Gentry From Stars in the Deepest Night: After the Death of a Child

TO WHERE YOU ARE



“AS MY HEART HOLDS YOU
JUST ONE BEAT AWAY
I CHERISH ALL YOU GAVE ME
EVERYDAY
CAUSE YOU ARE MY FOREVER LOVE
WATCHING ME FROM UP ABOVE
AND I BELIEVE
THAT ANGELS BREATHE
AND THAT LOVE WILL LIVE ON
FOREVER AND NEVER LEAVE”

Josh Groban