



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
**Ocean County Chapter**

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF OCEAN COUNTY**  
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**DECEMBER NEWSLETTER: Vol. 34 No. 12**

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**(CHAPTER NOTES from David Rothman)**

I would like to thank those who helped with preparing the candles for the upcoming Candlelight Ceremony. It is appreciated. Please remember that we will need people to bring some kind of desserts for the candlelight Ceremony. This should be brought to the kitchen before the service begins. Compassionate Friends will provide the light refreshments.

We are looking to start a phone bank that would help others in dealing with specific kinds of deaths. Please contact me via phone or email and let me know if you would be interested in helping out.

Compassionate Friends will now be selling framed/printed copies of an artists rendering of the park. These will be available for a tax-deductible donation of \$200.00. A picture is available for you to see in the Compassionate Friends Building opposite the park.

This month's enclosed brochure is entitled "Death of a Special Needs Child" The January newsletter will be entitled "You Need Not Walk Alone" Also included in this month's issue is an article on "Surviving the Holidays" which will also be one of the topics at our December meeting.

We will continue our talks on "How to Survive the Holidays" at our Dec. 1 meeting. This was a topic that we went in to at our Nov. meeting and hopefully we can come up with some more useful ideas to help each other.

### 2009 CANDLE LIGHTING

Our candle lighting service will be Sunday, December 13, 2008 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](mailto:friends.ocean@yahoo.com) and we will include the name in the reading.



**St. Barbara's Greek Orthodox Church, 2200 Church Rd, Toms River**

### MEETING DATES

Date: Our next meeting is Tuesday, December 1, 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 making 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, December, 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.

<b>Child's Name</b>	<b>"Birth" dates</b>
Michael Gene Babilya	December 11, 1951
V. Maximilian Buono	December 26, 1993
Gavin Michael Carter	December 17, 1999
Jeremy M. Clarke	December 28, 1976
Stephen Costanzo	December 18, 1956
Richard Thomas D'Aquanni	December 21, 1944
Jay J. DeRaffele	December 30, 1981
Tommy Donzeill	December 03, 2004
Peter Samuel Flipse Dorian	December 3, 1981
Sierra Feaster	December 14, 1995
Rocco "Rocky" Anthony Gangemi	December 24, 1967
Jeffrey Gonazalez	December 30, 2003
Barbara Harrison	December 6, 1971
Raymond John Helm	December 28, 1964
Carol Leigh Horne	December 23, 1953
Gilbert Isabelle	December 17, 1955
David J. Jacob	December 3, 1968

Glenn Jeffrey	December 13, 1962
Andy Jemison	December 6, 1980
Mark Levine	December 16, 1980
Peter Mass	December 15, 1959
Joanne McField	December 30, 1961
George Mifsud	December 10, 1960
John Michael Moskowitz	December 24, 1987
Colleena Mulligan	December 27, 1978
Michael O'Brien	December 9, 1966
Sean O'Connor	December 8, 1972
Roger Plourde	December 21, 1960
John Rak	December 17, 1972
Andy Rush	December 3, 1977
Andrew Shearer	December 12, 1981
David Smith	December 21, 1975
Richard Tello	December 24, 1960
Christopher Wells	December 28, 1999
Scott Wickel	December 3, 1964
Jackie White	December 28, 1956
Patrick Wolf	December 2, 1977
Jessica Connie-Majroie Woodin	December 22, 1982
Lois Jane Yurman	December 5, 1947

<b>Child's Name</b>	<b>"Passing" dates</b>
Darrell Glenn Adams	December 10, 1989
Zoia Assur	December 7, 1991
Sandra Kathleen Bell	December 30, 2005
Jackie Bozicev	December 7, 2009
Mark Bradley	December 11, 2004
Lori Cancel	December 28, 2002
John Carollo	December 16, 1996
Julie Ann Clakeley	December 7, 2002
Sn. Scott Cummings	December 15, 2002
Anthony Rocco DeCarlo	December 28, 1998
Andrea Cindy Dener	December 16, 1982
Dennis Patrick DePhillips	December 30, 1997
Stacie Ann Fischer	December 26, 1998
Matthew Frank	December 30, 1997
Judy Ann Harrington	December 28, 1986
Robert John Kirby	December 25, 2004
Michael Roy Manzi	December 25, 2005
Scott McIntosh	December 11, 2003
Todd Miller	December 14, 2001
Thomas Miraldi	December 18, 2005
Laura Odell	December 29, 2005
Harold C. Paton III	December 25, 2004
Lisa Ann Paul	December 12, 2008
Stacy Lee Peszynski	December 14, 1999
Jacob Harrison Phillips	December 18, 2001
Erica Lynn Schempp	December 2, 2000
Kate Shea	December 26, 1998
Lukas Earl Sutton	December 13, 2006
Scott Tataria	December 26, 1999
Elenore Whalen	December 3, 2008
Gregory Wilkins	December 12, 2006

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.

A special thanks to Nancy Mann for her love gift in honor of Jay J. DeRaffele. and to Maryann and Ralph Simon for their love gift in honor of Sean.

#### **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.

#### **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.

### ***DEATH OF A SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILD***

When a child has special-needs that require constant caretaking, the supportive family finds itself defined by the unconditional love it gives and receives. When the child dies, the family suffers not only the loss of the child, but the loss of an intense and focused way of life. Suffering from this compounded grief, parents need support to find ways to redirect the constant love, energy, and attention given their child for what may have been a short time or many years.

#### ***The Unique Grief of Parents When a Special-Needs Child Dies***

The grief that follows the death of a special-needs child comes not only from the emotional bond shared, but also from the influence the child had on the lives of the parents and family. By necessity, the families of special-needs children lead lives that are—to a greater or lesser degree—different from those of society's mainstream. Since the relationship with the child is unique, it follows that the grief process will also be unique.

Parents often feel grief when they first learn their child is disabled—feelings born in the ashes of hopes and dreams of what will never be. Depending on the depth of a parent's expectations, this grief can be devastating.

Parents often feel resentment and anger during the child's life. Being stripped of dreams for the child's future may lead to feelings of resentment. Anger can result from the constant caretaking and worry that go hand in hand with having a special-needs child. The daily struggle to make a child's life as fulfilling as possible often takes its toll.

The onslaught of guilt is normal. During the lifetime of a special-needs child, it is common for parents to feel guilt over not having enough time to develop a satisfying and deep relationship with the child's siblings or time to spend nurturing the spousal relationship. By necessity, a disabled child's needs take precedence over just about any other aspect of family life. Other forms of guilt may arise when questioning the source of the condition that disabled the child. Many parents worry that they are somehow responsible or were the source themselves. It is important to remember that guilt is an emotion—it doesn't have to make sense or be logical.

After a child dies, parents may agonize over the fact they didn't see the death coming—or that they did anticipate the death but didn't do enough to save the child. Most parents of a special-needs child are aware that the child may suffer an early death and do all they can to prevent or delay it. But when death does occur, parents often second-guess themselves with questions like "Why didn't I sense that my child's death was so near? If I had, maybe I could have done something more!"

When the child dies, parents sometimes feel a sense of release and even relief. This, too, can bring feelings of tremendous guilt. I loved my child they may think. How can I feel relief that he or she is dead? Stepping back and looking closely at these feelings, parents may realize that psychologically it is normal to feel a sense of relief that the child is no longer in pain, and that the huge responsibility to protect the child from harm has ended. Guilt can sometimes be lessened by remembering how much of the parents' lives were devoted to assuring that the child experienced the best life possible.

During their child's lifetime, parents often feel isolated. Most parents of special-needs children find the average parent cannot understand the depths of despair, joy, love, and sadness that are an integral part of living with a disabled child. These feelings of isolation, of not being understood, often continue after the child's death. Though the parents' sorrow may be overwhelming, friends, acquaintances, and even some family members might express thoughts such as, "I know you must feel happy your child is in a 'better place' and isn't in pain any longer," or "I know how much you loved him, but your life was never your own. Now you can go out at night or even take a vacation without feeling guilty." Although certainly well-meaning, remarks such as these which cause pain come from an ignorance of the family's special love for this child.

Grief and pain may not be validated by those who cannot understand that sharing life with a special-needs child has huge rewards that accompany the work and worry. Discussing the rewards experienced as a result of sharing life with a disabled child may be met with blank, uncomprehending stares. Only others who have experienced a similar lifestyle may be able to understand.

Parents of special-needs children tend to develop a strong sense of protectiveness and responsibility, and in return receive unconditional love. It is normal for all parents to assume the difficult and sometimes overwhelming responsibility of protecting and watching over the safety of their children. For a non-special-needs child, this responsibility is most concentrated in the child's younger years. The intense desire felt by parents to keep their special-needs child safe, however, does not diminish as the child ages. It goes on and on. It is, in part, this endless need to nurture that forges the tensile bonds of love and caring, creating a family with a central focus that is, by necessity, the special-needs child. It is the death of the child and the abrupt loss of this focus that compound the grieving process.

### ***Addressing Support Needs for Families***

The pain of a family grieving the loss of a special-needs child may be best shared with and validated by someone who understands the unique lifestyle the family has led, someone who can connect with a statement such as, "I feel pain every time I look at the empty place where we always stored his wheelchair." The Compassionate Friends welcomes as members any family experiencing the death of a child, and those suffering the loss of a special-needs child are warmly included. For those who have access to and are comfortable with the Internet, there are online support groups for families whose special-needs child has died. Intense love, pain, and grief can be shared with others hundreds or thousands of miles away.

### ***Where Do Special-Needs Families Go from Here?***

Families that have experienced years of intense personal and loving one-on-one support for a special-needs child suddenly find themselves with an emptiness in their hearts. Yet the need to give unconditional love continues. Where do they go to put these nurturing skills to work? What do they do now?

If one is physically and emotionally able, spending time as a volunteer caregiver with those who are sick or lonely is one way of reaching out with love to others in need. Grieving parents often discover that when they help someone else, they receive benefits in equal measure.

Schools and facilities for the handicapped offer opportunities for volunteers whose "loving" skills are extraordinarily developed.

Unfortunately, there are many special-needs children who do not have families. Great courage is required to consider giving a home to another special-needs child after suffering the death of one so beloved, but this is an option that can be carefully weighed, knowing that the giving of unconditional love allows the return of unconditional love.

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#### **HOW TO ACCESS**

##### **OTHER SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION**

To access a 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.

#### **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 Friend Memorial Garden.

### 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](mailto:friends.ocean@yahoo.com)

#### Someone is Missing at Christmas

"Let this be a loving reminder  
That someone is missing today.  
Someone our hearts hold on to  
As we travel along life's way  
Someone who made life so special  
For each of us here.  
Someone who won't be forgotten,  
But cherished from year to year.  
And now as we celebrate Christmas,  
Let us fondly recall  
How deeply each of us loved him,  
And oh...how he loved us all."

#### Wintersong

Season of lights, season of love and peace,  
Season of shadow, season of memories,  
Season of warmth and joy, season of secret tears:

Give us the courage to laugh again.  
Give us the vision to hope again.  
Give us the power to love again-  
For all our seasons  
And all our years.  
By Sascha from For You

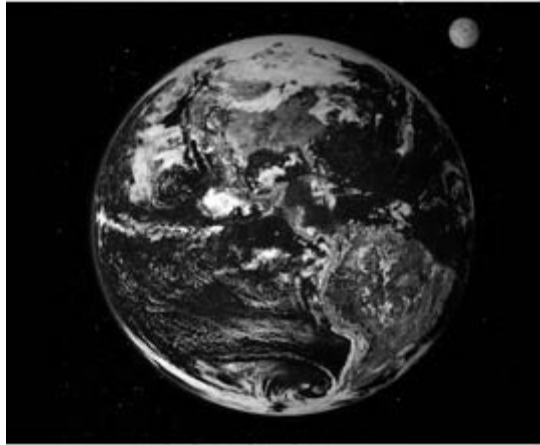
#### I Know You by Heart

There's time and space between where we are and where we've been  
I grieve for what I cannot have or ever hold again  
Just when I think I'm all alone cause you're so far away  
It suddenly occurs to me I see you every day  
You're that hint of inspiration urging me to carry on  
A boost of the needed energy when all my strength is gone  
You're a single shining ray of hope when faith is hard to find  
And twenty-twenty vision when grief has left me blind  
You're lonely roads companion when its hard to find a friend  
A much needed reminder that good-bye is not the end  
You're calm and reassurance when I scream for answers, why  
A gentle voice that whispers Daddy it's okay to cry  
You're a part of everything I am and all I've ever be  
The one who when I'm at my worse still sees the best in me  
And though you're just outside my reach we are never far apart  
I recognize you everywhere child I know you by heart  
By Alan Pedersen for Ashley  
Web site: [www.everashley.com](http://www.everashley.com)

**Elixir of Hope**

The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again.  
Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends

**FLY**



***“YOUR HEART IS PURE,  
YOUR SOUL IS FREE  
BE ON YOUR WAY,  
DON’T WAIT FOR ME  
ABOVE THE UNIVERSE  
YOU’LL CLIMB  
ON BEYOND THE HANDS OF TIME  
THE MOON WILL RISE,  
THE SUN WILL SET  
BUT I WON’T FORGET”***



