



White Plains, NY Chapter Newsletter

The Stories We Need to Tell

Her Birth: Two weeks past her due date, Kaitlyn was born in the late afternoon of June 24th, 1989, and after labor lasting longer than predicted for baby #3, she made her arrival with momentary drama: the umbilical cord wrapping around her neck was swiftly removed and our 8 lb., 10 oz. beauty was ours'.....

Stories - We need to tell our stories, because the stories of our lives not only shape us and define who we are in this world, they also communicate the greatest of our joys....and reveal the most profound sorrows of our life's journeys. When we tell our stories to each other, whether we're standing in line at the grocery store, or sitting at a family gathering, we satisfy the cathartic urge to boast or lament; rejoice or purge, and if another soul is a willing listener or confidante, we will reveal our stories with precise language and vivid details for full disclosure. Countless times we have heard the tales of difficult labors, maternity ward chaos, and anecdotal absurdities, but the result of giving birth to a precious baby, or the finalization of a much-anticipated adoption, is just what we need to hear. It's also the 'silver lining' people need to be able to emphasize to their listener.

By nature, humans are storytellers, and what greater tale than bringing a new life into one's fold? It's exciting, suspenseful, multi-sensory, adventurous, exhausting, and joyful. 'How many hours were you in labor?' 'Did you have natural childbirth?' 'When did you get to meet your adopted child?' 'How much did s/he weigh and how long was s/he?' Tell the story....tell it all!

There's **another** story people need to share, and it is the story, woeful and heart-wrenching, of the death of their child. It is a devastating tale to tell and a devastating one to hear. We understand the phenomenon at our monthly TCF chapter meetings, as members, old and new, carefully tell the sorrow-filled sequence of events, building to that moment when the child that they once thought would surely outlive them, is now gone. At times we tell the longest, most painful version, because folks care to ask, or because the storyteller is so shocked, or angry, or disbelieving, that the details, no longer foreign, must be expressed in great, deliberate measures, like the rich and textured brushstrokes of a largely dark oil painting. This is nonfiction, after all. There's no frivolity in being able to say that it was merely a nightmarish dream, or the act of an active imagination. We only **wish** that it could be that, but instead we continue to tell our stories, and we take comfort in those whom we know are good and caring listeners. We will be telling our stories - how our children came into this world, and how they left us - for the rest of our lives. The tears will fall, our voices will shake, our throats will tighten, and sorrow will weigh heavily in our hearts as we choose our words carefully, so that the story is told with sensitivity and integrity. Our children deserve that, because their lives will **always** be important and losing them as we have, is undeniably the final chapter of their time in our physical world.

Her Death: At 15, Kaitlyn was stricken with a brain aneurysm and taken to the nearest hospital,, where tests revealed more aneurysms. The neurologist's attempt to eradicate them failed and she passed away hours later, on October 2, 2004, surrounded by her family. Her organs were donated, so others could live.

With peace and the comfort of knowing our stories matter to so many.

Dawn Moriwaki (Kaitlyn's Mommy)

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TCF National Web Site

www.compassionatefriends.org

White Plains Chapter Web Site

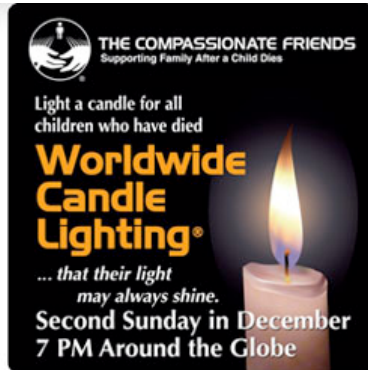
www.tcfwhiteplains.com

Monthly Meetings

The White Plains Chapter of TCF meets on the **first Thursday** of every month at 7:00 pm at the White Plains Presbyterian Church, 39 N. Broadway (between Barker and Rockledge Sts.) in White Plains.

Fall / Winter Meetings:

November 5th
December 3rd: Candle lighting
January 7th : "Where do we go from here?"



The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting®, held annually the second Sunday in December, this year December 13, unites family and friends around the globe as they light candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. Candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memories of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries. This special evening allows us to read or say something meaningful about our children, who have gone too soon. **This year's candle lighting will take place at the home of Karen Bauer in Ossining. Detailed information will be going out in the form of a flyer, including directions to the Bauer home, potluck suggestions, and other specifics. We are very appreciative that Karen has offered her home for this special evening.**

OUR COMPASSIONATE FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS

	Meeting Times	Contact No.
Babylon	1st Friday	(631) 271-1054
Brooklyn	2nd Wednesday	(718) 375-3064
Flushing	3rd Friday	(718) 961-0353
Manhasset	3rd Tuesday	(516) 621-6967
Manhattan	2nd & 4th Tues	(212) 217-9647
Rockville Centre	2nd Friday	(516) 766-4682
Rockland County	3rd Tuesday	(845) 398-9762
Kingston	2nd Wednesday	(845) 255-4560
Stamford, Ct.	2nd Monday	(203) 329-2796
Staten Island	2nd & 4th Thurs	(718) 983-0377
Syosset	3rd Friday	(516) 767-0904
Twin Forks/ Hampton Area	3rd Friday	(631) 653-9444 (631) 894-0317



**Upcoming Events
Mark Your Calendars**

TCF National Conference- "Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope" is the theme of TCF's 33rd National Conference in Arlington, VA, July 2-4, 2010. See page 3 for more information. Additionally, go to the TCF National Web site for details.

Reminder

Our chapter web site is for you and about you. If you would like to submit a photo of your child/sibling/grandchild, along with a biography or tribute piece, please feel welcome. Send it, either via email to Kyle Moriwaki (brother of Kaitlyn) at thewoq@gmail.com or by mail to Moriwaki, 15 Franklin Ave. Larchmont, NY 10538. Your submitted photo and text will be entered onto the web site, a place to share the precious lives of our children.

Newsletter Submissions: Poems, reflections, and tributes are most welcome and we encourage you to send them to us. Remember that we have limited space and corrections to spelling and/or grammar may be necessary. Please share!





"Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope" is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference which will be held in Arlington Virginia July 2-4, 2010. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City promising a beautiful venue for the 33rd TCF National Conference. Independence Day will not only feature our Walk to Remember, but will include a world-class display of fireworks over the National Mall, visible from Arlington.

Winter memories of Kathryn will always bring me to the gifts and sweetness of food and drink in the shelter of her home with the wood fire's warmth and tranquil peace, making it a house of welcome for all.

*A reflection by Barbara Simonetti
(Mother of Kathryn Simonetti Green)*



Strategies to Help Grieving Families Survive the Holidays

(from Therese Rando, Ph.D, author of the book *How To Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies*)

- 1) Recognize that your distress about the holidays is normal.
- 2) Ask yourself and your loved ones what is important for you to make the holidays meaningful and bearable. Compromise and negotiation is important here.
- 3) Do something symbolic....in memory of your loved one. The hanging of a special Christmas ornament, or the planting of a tree on New Year's Day may help you mark the continued presence of your (child, sibling, or grandchild).
- 4) Reevaluate family traditions. Ask yourself whether you should begin to develop new ones.
- 5) Be aware of pressures, demands, depression, increased alcohol intake and fatigue that comes with holidays. Take time out to care for yourself.
- 6) You may have to let your limits be known to concerned others who are determined not to let you be sad or alone. Don't be forced into doing things you don't want to do or don't feel up to, solely to keep others happy.
- 7) Discuss holiday tasks and responsibilities that must be attended to, like preparing meals, doing the shopping, etc. Consider whether they should be continued, reassigned, shared, or eliminated.
- 8) Let your tears and sadness come and go throughout the day, if necessary. The tears and emotions you do not express will be the ones which are destructive to you.
- 9) Plan ahead for shopping tasks. Make a list ahead of time, then, if you have a good day, capitalize on it and do the shopping you can.
- 10) Do something for someone else, for reaching out to another can bring you some measure of fulfillment. You could make a donation in honor of your loved one or give food to a needy family for Thanksgiving dinner.
- 11) What you decide to do this year can be changed next year. Decide what is right for your family now.

We Remember Our Children and Siblings With Love, Always and Forever!

November Remembrance Days

Elizabeth Aceituno 11/30
Daughter of Martha

Rebecca (Becca) Obermeier Coyle 11/08
Daughter of Karen Bauer

Julianne Borsella 11/11
Daughter of Maureen & Anthony
Sister of Anthony & Kristen

Robert Cerullo 11/24
Son of Christine
Brother of Kristianna

Charles Steven Gill 11/26
Son of Pat & Steven
Brother of Kristin

Ryan Isaiah Kisslinger 11/28
Son of Paul & Jennifer Kisslinger

G. Bailey Holt 11/17
Son of Georgia McKenna

Githa Rosanna Ong 11/23
Daughter of Maria & John

Omar Perez 11/26
Son of Celica & Jose
Brother of Hector

Benjamin Strauss 11/23
Brother of Heidi

James Francis Russo 11/15
Son of Rosemary Russo

Gavin Joseph Murphy 11/7
Son of Michelle & Thomas

November Birthdays

Susan R. Cragin 11/04
Daughter of Ed & Ginny

Linda Lulgjuraj 11/24
Niece of Lena Kocovic

Kevin Mitchell 11/04
Son of Jacqueline

Kathy Morris 11/02
Daughter of Helen & Henry
Sister of Larry

Christine Premuroso 11/18
Daughter of Rosalie & Bill
Sister of Elizabeth

Lisa Deutsch 11/7
Daughter of Eleanor & Ronald

Thomas Michelin 11/30
Brother of Brandi Figliola

David John DeGasperis 11/18
Son of Rose & Ronald DeGasperis
Brother of Ronald & Christopher

Evan Justin Pina Bookstaver 11/03
Son of Marybell Bookstaver
Brother of Billy & Taylor

Joseph O'Toole 11/15
Son of Carol O'Toole

Kathryn Green 11/05
Daughter of Barbara & Hal Simonetti
Sister of Kenneth, Ann & Maria
Beloved of Brian, John & Kevin

Avery Grace Offner 11/10
Daughter of Gary & Kathy
Sister of Grant

Jason Soury 11/04
Son of Kathy & John
Brother of Michael

December Remembrance Days

Valentine Echevorria, Jr. 12/17
Son of Tania & Valentine
Brother of Christian & Tania

Marcus Donnell Parker 12/19
Son of Karin

Thomas E. Pearson 12/11
Son of Mary Ellen & Thomas
Brother of Melanie, Jimmy, & Julie

Christopher Puotinen 12/15
Brother of Diane & William

Patrick Kelly 12/17
Son of Mary Nullet

Robert John Orlando 12/22
Son of Pat Orlando
Brother of Dawn Marie

Morgan Beth Hatzel 12/01
Daughter of Leslie Hatzel

December Birthdays

Elizabeth Aceituno 12/08
Daughter of Martha

Audrey Kessner 12/14
Daughter of Rita & Alex Bernstein
Sister to Robin

Scott Joseph Plantholt 12/18
Son of Marilyn & Carl
Brother of Carl, Mark, Donna, & Judith

Jessica Engerson 12/28
Sister of Jamie Mancini

Githa Rosanna Ong 12/23
Daughter of Maria and John

Matthew Dylan Sigona 12/22
Son of Maryann & Anthony
Brother of Diane & Phillip

Domenick M. Aliberti 12/20
Brother of Louise Aliberti

Caitlin Parrish McDonough 12/31
Daughter of Molly & Don

Lisa Herman 12/29
Daughter of Rosemary

Nicholas Novak 12/17
Son of Mary Jo Moro

Joseph W. Marino 12/16
Son of Ann & Dominick
Brother of William

Carlos Lopez 12/19
Son of Christina & Luis
Brother of Diana & Luis

January Remembrance Days

Dylan Copeland 1/20
Son of Raychelle
Twin brother of Darren

Erica D'Alessandro 1/03
Daughter of Andrea & John
Sister of Alaina

Palma Malatesta 1/12
Daughter of Josephine & Tony
Sister of Lina, AnnMarie, & Giovanni

Gina Georgette Murphy 1/21
Daughter of Michael
Brother of Douglas

John Limato 1/05
Son of Marie Limato
Brother of David & Michael

Daniel Marcus 1/27
Son of Emily Laitman

Lisa Deutsch 1/07
Daughter of Eleanor & Ronald

Leah Garcia 1/08
Daughter of Analida Gonzalez

Avery Grace Offner 1/11
Daughter of Gary & Kathy
Sister of Grant

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January Birthdays

Amanda Rachel Archer 1/23
Daughter of Jennifer & Raymond
Sister Of Emily & Alexandra

Valentine Echevorria Jr. 1/04
Son of Tania & Valentine
Brother of Christian & Tania

David John Pagliaroli 1/27
Son of Louise & John
Brother of Jaclyn & Jamie Nicole

Stephen Pappadake 1/05
Son of Nancy & Robert
Brother of Alissa & Robert

Thomas E. Pearson 1/23
Son of Mary Ellen & Thomas
Brother of Melanie, Jimmy & Julie

Christopher Puotinen 1/15
Brother of Diane

Morgan Beth Hatzel 1/28
Daughter of Leslie

Gladys Valdiuezo 1/30
Daughter of Monica Pama



The Compassionate Friends of White Plains

CANDLE LIGHTING

Please come and join us on Thursday, December 3rd at 7:00 pm for our candle lighting ceremony. We encourage you to bring family and/or close friends to accompany us on this special evening. On this night we hope to be able to share memories of our children and most importantly, feel wrapped in the love that our children have given us, continue to give, and express the love we forever hold for them. We invite you to bring a favorite photo of your child, sibling, or grandchild, as it will be displayed and shared on a table specifically set out for photographs of our precious ones. Additionally, if you have a significant poem - whether written by you or another - OR you have something special and meaningful to read in memory of your child (remembering time constraints), please bring it to share in our readings. After our ceremony is complete, we will have a wonderful dessert table, so we ask that you please bring a dessert to share with all!

The Remembrance Tree

Plaque & Tree Dedication

Two families have joined together to create the 'Remembrance Tree' plaque, which has recently been installed at the base of a young, newly planted 'Deodara' evergreen tree in Larchmont, New York. Located in a park on the corner of Weaver Street and Palmer Avenue, a dedication ceremony has been scheduled for November 22nd, 2009, at 2 pm. The Tucker family, who lost their daughter Olivia, 27, in 2006, and the Moriwaki family, who lost their daughter Kaitlyn, 15, in 2004, wanted to give families throughout the community a place to come to remember the life of their child, sibling, or grandchild. All are welcome to attend, and be sure to bring a white ribbon with the name of your child written on it, so that you may tie it to one of the branches of the Remembrance Tree.



-- The Sibling Page --

-THE SIBLING CREDO- We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us. When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.



Grief is lonely. When my sister died two years ago, everyone knew about it and talked about it. Everyone was in shock....but now, two years later, the anniversary of her death came and went without even a card in the mail. No one at work remembered the day. No one called to say "I am thinking of you." No one asked "How are you feeling?" My family has stayed in close contact and we talk about Susan all the time. But when it comes to grieving over Susan, everyone grieves alone. No one knows how I feel about my little sister and how it hurts me so deeply to know she's not here. Everything else in life can be shared with someone else but not grieving. No one can fully understand the pain because everyone's pain is different. When the pain is the greatest, the loneliness is the greatest too. I never thought I could feel this much pain and still survive. I am alone in my grief. There is no one else here with me.

Susan was born when I was almost 11. She committed suicide when she was 16. The baby of the family, the youngest of four kids. Our hearts are broken forever.

Cherie Bagadiiong

TCF, St. Mary's County MD

To My Brother
Wherever we look,
You are there.
You are the light
On the water.
You are the blossom
On the tree.
You are a thought
And you are a feeling.
Wherever we are,
You are.

Martha Dubinsky
TCF, Rockland, NY

Brothers & Sisters

Be it your brother or your sister,
their presence is taken for granted.
When together, you fight and argue.
But also together, you stand against all others.
Then, one day, you stand ALONE.
Gone the friend, the confidante, the rock.
You regret the last fight.
You wish to hear the voice, share your secrets.
The memories are sweet --
Remember the laughs and the jokes.
They now await to be your guide.
John Hollinshead, TCF Lockpart,
NY

Siblings Forever

Sibling Chat: Available for adult and teen siblings to share concerns and feelings. Thursday evenings from 9 - 10 pm. EST. Log onto: http://www.compassionatefriends.org/chat/chat_entrances.



I Thought I Saw Brandon on Saturday

I thought I saw Brandon on Saturday. He was standing there a few rows in front of us, maybe 20 feet away, chatting with friends before the concert. I was spellbound, mesmerized by the sight of him. He had on a baseball cap, with the brown curls sticking out from underneath. He was brown eyed, tall, and lean, with long fingers. He had a beaded, brown macramé choker around his neck, just like Brandon's. He was wearing clothes that Brandon always wore, even had facial features like Brandon. I couldn't listen to what my friend was saying to me, I was so distracted. I pointed the young man out and said to her, in awe, "Look at him, doesn't he look like Brandon??" She agreed, tentatively, not seeming to see the significance. My eyes never left him, as I felt that I was watching my son, my real live son. I had the overpowering, irrational urge to walk up to him and embrace him, hug him just like Brandon always hugged me, see if I could recapture that feeling of hugging my beautiful 18 year old son who was always unabashedly affectionate. The hug Brandon always gave when he came and went. I could almost feel that hug, looking at him. But I had to let it go. As powerful as the urge was, to touch his face, look into his eyes, to see Brandon smile back at me, I knew I could not impose myself on this young man, that I would seem like a crazy woman to him, that as kind as he looked, he would not understand the peculiar affection of a teary-eyed stranger. And so I didn't. But as I let him go, I felt a strange sense of comfort rather than the expected wash of grief. It was almost like I had an unexpected visit from my precious son Brandon.

Light

Decorating her first Christmas tree
my two year-old second daughter
kept chanting in a sing song voice
of wondering worship
"Shiny, Shiny, Shiny"
as she put the tinsel on the lower
branches
as high as she could reach

Two days later
standing in the dining room
listening to music
on a sleepless early morning
wandering in my mind
trying to find some answers
to my everyday questions
I notice for the first time
in the diffused light
from the partly opened kitchen door
that the tinsel on the tree
really is shiny
and as I stare at it
the light begins to glow
leaping out at me
in its brightness

Ned Winterbottom , (father of Laura)



Love Gifts

We are grateful to parents, grandparents and others who, by their love gifts, honor children who have died. Love gifts allow us to offer resources (such as this newsletter, books, brochures and pamphlets) at no cost to assist bereaved families. Love gifts are just that, gifts! They are not required, but they are very helpful and very much appreciated. All gifts are tax-deductible.

In honor/memory of (circle preference)

.....

Dates.....

Message.....

.....

.....

From.....



Phone number..... (Please include this information in case of questions)

Mail this form, along with check (made out to TCF of White Plains), to:
Rita Bloom (Treasurer)
981 Pierce Ave., Bronx, NY 10462

All "Love Gifts" will be announced in the newsletter!

Compassionate Friends Credo

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



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