

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER NO: 187

DECEMBER 2021 JANUARY 2022

Dear Friend

Because I really care about you, I'm not going to pretend and wish you a merry Christmas as if nothing's happened. Instead, I'm going to reach out to you and tell you that I realize this must be a very difficult time for you. It probably doesn't seem fair that everyone else is smiling and laughing and enjoying the holidays as usual, while your heart is aching.

There may be times a favorite carol that used to bring a smile to your face now brings tears to your eyes. You may feel confused, cheated, and even angry... and I wouldn't blame you. But rather than force yourself to fake the holiday spirit, please be honest with your emotions.

Cry, be angry, do whatever it takes to get through this.. always remembering that you will get through this. Remember, too, that in time you'll be ready to celebrate Christmas again. And until then, know that there are many people whose hearts are with you, especially now... people who care about you very much and always will.

Renee Duvall, Lakes Area Chapter, MI Loving lifted
from Kamloops
Reprinted from TCF Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter



YOU WILL NOT FEEL THE 'ALONENESS' OF YOUR GRIEF SO ISOLATING, IF YOU REACH OUT TO ANOTHER BEREAVED PARENT

RETURN ADDRESS
72 TOTARA STREET,
NEWFIELD,
INVERCARGILL
9812
NEW ZEALAND

TO

OUR CHILDREN

Children's names appear in this column if parents ask when they complete their annual donation form. You are also able to e-mail, write or phone me to have your child's name included.

This column includes names of those children whose anniversary or birthday occur in the months that the newsletter applies for.

You are also able to contact me if you wish to have a poem or piece, with or without a photo of your child included.

Once again, this is generally used for children whose birthday or anniversary occurs during the months of the current newsletter. I apologise for any omission or mistakes which I may make and ask that you contact me if this occurs.

Please contact me on 03 4326004, or TCF, Lesley Henderson, 76 O'Neill Rd., 17 D R.D., Windsor, Oamaru or by e-mail tcf.nz@hotmail.co.nz

Love transcends time and space, and our loved ones who have passed beyond our sight continue to wrap us in their love, blessing us with that love every minute. Knowing this does not soften the ache of longing, but I am grateful for this truth. May you too feel weave after weave of blessing from your loved ones who are beyond your sight, but never beyond your love.

Kim Minske Bodeau TCF, Chippewa Valley, WI Minneapolis

Our Children ... Remembered with love

Forever Young

Forever Loved

Forever Longed For

Glenn Arscott	Born 12/12/81	Richard Cowie	Died 11/12/90
Stefan Francis Cockill	Born 12/12/57	Shane Elliot Davis	Died 13/12/84
Rick Daysh	Born 27/12/81	Jack Stephen Dyer	Died 6/12/07
Kirsten Patrice Flynn	Born 26/12/92	Gordon Legge	Died 30/12/96
Ryan Joseph Frost	Born 9/12/81	Leonard Donald McLaughlin	Died 1/12/84
Laura Johanna Hood	Born 31/12/89	Caren Amanda Phillips	Died 30/12/01
Matthew David Hubber	Born 10/12/78	Esme Caitlin Millais Stewart	Died 23/12/03
Daniel Philip Innes	Born 13/12/85	Ryan Ashley Thompson	Died 20/12/01
Keryn Sarah Langley	Born 2/12/98	Eddie Te Arihana Tutaki	Died 2/12/00
Jessie Lineham	Born 27/12/89	Ayla Rose Whitaker	Died 9/12/06
Andrew John Manson	Born 8/12/75		
Shaun Mataka	Born 2/12/83	Richard Craig Bell	Died 21/1/05
Maryann Gaye Pearce	Born 21/12/73	Simon Charlton	Died 14/1/08
Craig Noel Campbell Radka	Born 23/12/75	Sophie Kate Elliott	Died 9/1/08
Nikolaas Remmerswaal	Born 5/12/96	Ryan Joseph Frost	Died 16/1/99
Esme Caitlin Millais Stewart	Born 27/12/91	Laura Johanna Hood	Died 21/1/00
Wayne Edward Summers	Born 14/12/75	Tara Louise MacPherson	Died 14/1/05
Ben Watt	Born 28/12/87	Peter John Oxley	Died 6/1/96
Dion Wells	Born 5/12/61	Corey Ryalls	Died 13/1/99
Hayden Ross Whitaker	Born 12/12/86	Anthony Mark Staite	Died 19/1/98
		Dion Wells	Died 1/1/01
Claire(Mary) Benicarke(Schiehsel)	Born 10/1/75		
Nicholas James Cox	Born 15/1/70		
Ricky George	Born 16/1/87		
Ben Henderson	Born 6/1/89		
Steven Micheal Jack	Born 21/1/71		
Kai Klein	Born 22/1/62		
Shane Parish	Born 21/1/70		
Corey Ryalls	Born 4/1/76		
Nicole Leigh Templer	Born 28/1/91		





Worldwide Candle Lighting gives bereaved families everywhere, the opportunity to remember and honour their child(ren) who have died too soon so
that their light may always shine.

For hundreds of years, lighting a candle has been a way to show respect for those that have died. This beautiful gesture shows that although someone may be gone from this world, their memory will endure, and the light of their flame will continue to inspire and guide others.

Worldwide Candle Lighting, now believed to be the largest mass candlelighting on the globe, is a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends International. Always on the second Sunday in December every year, a celebration of solidarity and memory. A day which unites families and friends around the world as they gather to light candles to honour the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who have died too soon and to show that they will always be loved and never forgotten.



Candles are lit at 7pm local time for one hour in every time zone, meaning that a constant warm glow passes around the planet for a full 24 hours.

New Zealand, Aotearoa, being the first country to see the light, commences this virtual 24-hour worldwide wave of light that moves from time zone to time zone around the globe. This event started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since spread throughout the world.

Today hundreds of formal public candle lighting events are held, as well as many informal candle lightings conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance and honour of their children who lived tragically short lives for any number of reasons, baby loss, illness, murder, accident, suicide even war. COVID has meant these may take many different forms.

As everyone lights their candles at seven pm local time, far-flung parts of the world get illuminated in turn, so that eventually the light has moved all around the globe.



If you have experienced the loss of a child in your lifetime, this is a good moment to honour his or her memory by taking part in the candle lighting. You could also invite some close family members to spend this time with you and light their own candles for your late child.

There is a beautiful song we always play (available on YouTube)

'Precious child' by Karen Taylor Good.

This doesn't only have to be a sad occasion however. Children's lives are mostly filled with fun and laughter, so reminiscing about all of the things the child you are honouring managed to enjoy before he or she passed may should serve to lighten the atmosphere.

Keren Marsh, TCF Whanganui

LIGHT A CANDLE IN MEMORY OF YOUR CHILD WHO HAS DIED

World Wide Candle Lighting: Sunday 12th December 2021 at 7pm

On the second Sunday in December at 7pm (local time) parents and families around the world (starting in Aotearoa) will light candles for one hour in remembrance of their children who have died at any age, from any cause, recently or years ago.

Passing through the world's time zones, this 24 hour candle vigil is a moving experience as families unite to visually remember their children gone too soon.

World Wide Candle Lighting was created in 1966 by the Compassionate Friends, an International organization supporting bereaved parents and has been held every year since.



Lights of Love

Can you see our candles
Burning in the night?
Lights of love we send you
Rays of purist white

Children we remember
Though missing from our sight
In honour and remembrance
We light candles in the night

All across the big blue marble
Spinning out in space
Can you see the candles burning
From this human place?

Oh, angels gone before us
Who taught us perfect love
This night the world lights candles
That you may see them from above

Tonight the globe is lit by love
Of those who knew great sorrow,
But as we remember our yesterdays
Let's light one candle for tomorrow

We will not forget,
And every year in deep December
On Earth we will light candles
Aswe remember.

Candle-light Services of Love and Remembrance.

CENTRAL OTAGO/LAKES DISTRICT

Monday 6th December, 7.30pm.

Alexandra Community House, Centennial Ave., Alexandra.

Please bring a candle to light in memory of your loved one and a photo or memento if you wish.

For further details please contact Sue, 027 4420156

SOUTHLAND

Sadly we have made the decision this year to cancel our Candlelight Service and instead go out for a meal.

Wednesday 1st December 6.30.

Foundry Restaurant Waikiwi.

Please contact Vanessa bennettyoungfamily@xtra.co.nz for further details.

WANGANUI

December 12, 2021 - 6.45 PM

COVID willing – we will meet at Virginia Lake Whanganui by the Peter Pan statue.

Follow the footprints

Highlights: Readings : Poetry : Candle Lighting Ceremony at 7pm : Roll call of our children : music :

Bring: Photos ; mementos ; picnic chair if needed

CHRISTCHURCH

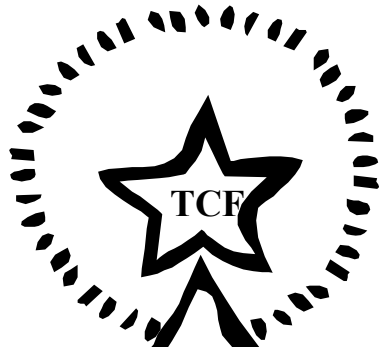
Monday 29th November 7pm

Good Friends 'Natter' cafe area, 47 Whiteleigh Avenue, Addington

Please bring photo of your child/ren also a LED candle if you have one (we will have spare) and a small plate of food. There will be a short service, live music, and a cuppa. All welcome including children. Contact Chris Guerin for further details: 021 0293 1357. We will update you if there are COVID considerations closer to the time (apart from wearing masks to and from the building). Please RSVP by 25 November for seating purposes

*May the Memories
of this season
Come on Gentle
Wings
To bring you
Love and Peace*

Merry Christmas to all
our beloved children. Our
hugs and kisses and all
our love we send to those
we hold deeply in our
hearts and live with
through our memories.



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Paul
Nicole
Glenn Terry
Mitchell Aidan
Brian Stefan Tara Michael
Heath

Andrew
Michael Rick Tineke
Nicholas Henare Ian Jack
Kirsten Richard Hayley Keegan Kyle
Quinntin Ben Daniel Sharyn Claire(Mary)

Rebecca Faye Laura Matthew Ayla
Ryan Pauline Hughan Sally Dan
Paul Nikolaas Vicki Sharyn-Maree Tania
Esme Peter Ryan Shane Marie Gordon Sophie
Yvonne Logan Leonard Hollie Robbie

Cindy Georgia Trinity Wayne
Jake Stefan Hayden Shaun Te-Ahu-Aroha
Anthea Maryann Caren Callum Corey
Callum Cameron Simon Franciss Steven Bevan
Vaughan Gary Greg Richard Brendan Alan
Claire Anthony Peter Craig Melissa Eddi

David Julie Quintin Dion Matthew
Kai Allan Robert James Ricky Rebecca Anna
Krysha Christopher Ben Greg Thomas Keryn
Shane Grant Jaylene Kirsten Timothy Marlen Thomas
Mark Daniel Jonathon Sashi Jessie Jason
Andrew Marcus



Saying 'No' to Holiday Traditions is OK After a Loss

For many of us, for much of the time, it is hard to say "no." Even when we're busy, even when we're tired, even when it's something we really don't want to do. It's especially hard when it's something that we've done before, when it's been our routine, our habit, or our tradition. We get into patterns and they're hard to change.

One of our patterns and traditions can be saying "yes" when asked, especially by friends, family, and those we respect. One of the harder voices to say "no" to is that voice in our head. The one that guides us to what we "should" do. This voice has high expectations. Often this voice is the voice of wisdom and helps us balance our needs, our aspirations and our impulses. It can be helpful. It's the voice that supports the idea that sometimes being mature is doing what we don't want to do when we don't want to do it. Saying "yes" when part of us, a strong but less wise part of us, really wants to say "no." There are times, however, when this voice in our head becomes unreasonable and something of a tyrant. It gets caught up in appearances and shoulds, and then it shoulds on us.

Because sometimes "no" is the right response to a request. Sometimes "no" is what we should say when presented with an invitation, opportunity, or expectation. Sometimes "no" is what needs to be said to the way we've done things before. "No" even to family traditions. We get this need to say "no" and reprioritize when a serious illness crashes into our lives. When our child, spouse, or parent gets the big diagnosis. When we get the big diagnosis. What was important before, on the "have to do" list, now becomes negotiable or off the list entirely. In a healthcare crisis, expectations get a new and needed reevaluation. How important is this in reality (compared to other things that are not negotiable)? Do I now have time for this? Do I have the energy for this? Is this really something I want to do? A friend living with cancer described it this way: "Fewer priorities...I guard what I do with my time like a soldier now. None to waste, especially on fatiguing chemo. I just let go of so much now..."

After a death, it can be the same. Priorities can be fewer and reordered with only so much energy to spend. What felt important before no longer has the same power, draw and pull. Death is the great prioritizer. When it calls, we drop the rest and give it top billing, not because we like it but because it's that important. And in the shadow of death, or perhaps in the light of death, we can often see things more clearly than we did before. With this new clarity, we can be inspired to live differently, make new choices, and make old choices with greater intentionality. And in this new world, grief world, we can be better at saying "no."

Which brings us to holiday seasons. No time of year has more expectations and shoulds, both within and without, than holiday seasons. We get messages all around about how they are supposed to go. The foods to prepare and eat. Decorations that are required. Smiling family gatherings. Holidays which were intended to be meaningful times of remembrance and celebration can become gauntlets of expectations and activities. Holidays don't have to be that way. They can be times where we pick and choose what is meaningful and worth doing. Where we look those voices of expectation in the eye and politely say, "No thank you, not this year. I only have so much time and so much energy, and I am guarding both like a soldier."

When I worked in the pediatric cancer world, I would often see parents reprioritize their lives. Many would comment that they had a different view of what was really important and worth their time. They said "no" to many things they would never have said "no" to before. This change in perspective was powerful and I would wonder if it lasted or what parts of it lasted in the years to follow after cancer treatments had ended.

Here is where the memory of the early days of loss can be our friend. Memory of those days of clarity and fewer priorities can continue to teach us and support us when those should-y voices regain their strength and try to take over again. The wisdom of grief can help us say "no" when it's not worth it, to say "yes" when it is, and to sort out the differences. There is a freedom to be found in grief, and it is one holiday (and life) invitation that deserves a "yes" in response.

Written by Greg Adams on Tuesday, November 14, 2017. Greg Adams is a social worker at Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) where he coordinates the Center for Good Mourning, a grief support and outreach program, and works with bereavement support for staff who are exposed to suffering and loss.

Gratefully lifted from Central Iowa Chapter & Reprinted in Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter

SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

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

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.

Try not to set your expectations too high. 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.

Try to take care of your health. It’s important that you try to eat and drink properly, exercise, and get plenty of rest.

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.

Consider eliminating such things as festive decorations, cooking and baking that you would normally enjoy. Perhaps next year or the year after you may want to do them. 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.

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. Do only what you feel up to. 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.

It is not unusual to want to include your child during the season. You may want to do something like: Ask friends and relatives who knew your child, sibling or grandchild to send you a story about them that you may not have known. Ask friends and relatives to create an ornament or remembrance of some type that reminds them of your loved one 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. You may want to have a paper and pen in the stocking so that others can write a message to your loved one or share a special memory.

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 so they will not feel forgotten.

Consider attending a Compassionate Friends meeting or a memorial event such as The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting held the second Sunday of each December. Most families find comfort by being with others who have experienced a similar loss.

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

Be kind to yourself.

It is okay to cry.

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Johannesburg Chapter



COPING WITH CHRISTMAS

Do you wish that Christmas would just go away this year, or that you could hibernate until it's all over?

When our child has died the thought of celebrations and family times can be very daunting, as we feel robbed of the ability to find enjoyment in such occasions.

The gap that is left in our family seems huge. We have no idea what to expect or how to face the first Christmas, and even in subsequent years we can still feel ill-equipped to deal with it. And for those who expected to celebrate Christmas Day with a newborn baby son or daughter, the emptiness is a stark and painful difference to the excitement, noise and fun that we hoped the day would hold.

When we asked some bereaved parents for their ideas about how best to cope with Christmas they came up with this helpful list of things to avoid, include and change:

Five things to avoid:

Don't try to do things exactly as you did them before, as though nothing has happened

Don't change everything. If you do, any surviving children will not only have lost their sibling but their family traditions as well.

Don't feel that you need to write Christmas cards. If you don't want to send them this year, you don't have to. You can reintroduce them in the future if you want to, perhaps adding a kiss from each family member, including your child who has died.

Don't put pressure on yourself or allow others to. There is no 'ought to'. Do what is right for you and your family at the time.

Try not to listen to the hype about Christmas that comes from outside – shops, adverts, magazines, etc. Try instead to concentrate on what Christmas really means to you.

Five things to include:

Choose a special item such as a Christmas decoration or a candle to acknowledge your child.

Encourage memories of your child by having their photo or one of their favourite toys visible.

Create new Christmas family traditions that in time will be positive memories to look back on.

Allow time to cry but also time to laugh as you remember funny incidents from the past.

Talk with the family about how they'd like to remember the child who has died, and do your best to add in an idea from each person, however small.

Five things you could change:

Have a different type of Christmas meal, eat at a different time, or change the seating arrangements.

Open presents at a different time or in a different order.

Break the day into smaller chunks – for example, going for a walk, time at home, short visits to friends or family, popping out for a drink – so that you aren't in the house all day with the pain of your loss.

If being at home seems too difficult, ask good friends or family if you can spend the day with them. Being with people you feel safe with, who will allow you to cry, laugh or just 'be' is invaluable.

Realise that since things change over the years anyway, you could abandon ‘traditional’ routines totally and do something different; for example, go out for a walk and a picnic.

Harry and Angela found buying presents a minefield: “We sponsored a cow the first year, wondering what Mark would have liked and laughing because he always asked for something expensive!” **Joy** found herself on her own one year as other family members were working, so she tried to just treat it as any other day and watched some TV and skyped her sister.

Sandra lost two babies and on their birthdays tries to give them individual time but at Christmas finds it hard as she misses them both at the same time. She finds it helpful to keep busy and has two glass tree decorations with the girls’ names engraved on them to acknowledge them as a part of the family.

Harry is now able to smile at some past Christmas memories: “I remember going to our local railway station with Mark to put back a station sign he had placed in our garden after a particularly ‘good’ night out he had partaken in with his friends!”

Neil and Sally chose an ‘alternative’ Christmas, helping at a Crisis Centre on Christmas Day and Boxing Day: “It was certainly the best thing we could have done, making us feel useful but also helping us. We were exhausted, but it was worth it, and we still got to see both sides of our family in the evenings.”

So Christmas will come – and it will go again. We may make some mistakes and will know what to avoid another year. However, hopefully we will find space for memories and to be thankful for our precious children, no matter how brief their time with us. And we will value those who we do spend time with, knowing that life and relationships are really precious gifts.

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/>

To Our Family and Friends...

The holiday season is a time of family — festive gatherings, worshiping together, sharing love and gifts, and cherished memories. For the bereaved parent, these aspects of the season are precisely what makes us dread its arrival. The absence of our child when the “whole family” gathers seems to accentuate our incomplete family. We are sorely reminded of “how it used to be” and don’t want to accept what it is now. We need the patience and understanding of our family and friends to help us through the holidays as best we can.

We may want to change the way we spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Hanukkah. If the family traditionally gathers at one house, perhaps the gathering place could be changed, especially if the gathering home is that of the bereaved. If we do prepare the meal, be aware that we may not have the energy that we had in the past and will need a lot of help. Perhaps we’ll try to avoid the holiday altogether by going away for a few days.

Whatever our thoughts are for coping with the day, please take our feelings into consideration when you make your plans. For some of us shopping for gifts is a painful experience. The stores’ festive decorations and music belie our mood as we feel forced into participating in the “season”. We think longingly about that special gift we won’t be buying this year. Again, our depression zaps us of the energy to do things we have done in the past, and we need your understanding for the things that remain undone.

Perhaps the single most helpful thing you can do for us is to include our child in the holidays. We want to hear his/her name, to have you recall fond memories of their lives, to know that you, too, are feeling their absence and remembering them with love. Getting through the holidays is a rough task for bereaved parents. We need to handle them in a way that we feel is best for ourselves and our families. We ask for your love and support at this especially difficult time.

Holiday Healing

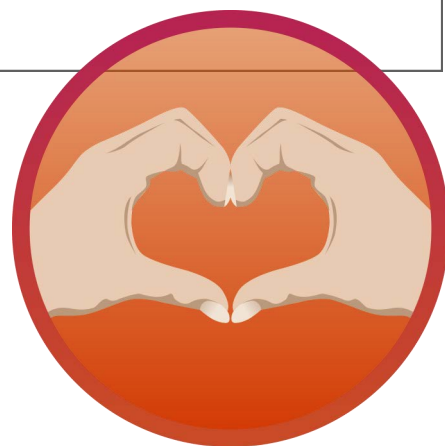
It's been almost two years now, another holiday season rolls around. The second Thanksgiving without you is this week. It's just a stupid day, a day where people eat Turkey and watch football, why should I care? There is no one to visit me this year; there is no one here who cares. The numbness is creeping in. The pain so deep, I can't breathe, I can't think, I can't stand it. All day long I think of you, but why? Why is today any different than any other day? Is it holiday traditions lost? Is it knowing millions of parents everywhere will be with their children this week but I won't be with you? Is it remembering the closeness and laughter on this day throughout the years? Why do the tears fill my eyes and my heart hurt so?

Maybe somewhere deep down inside I am asking myself what am I thankful for and this question is so very hard since you are gone. When someone first told me to be thankful for the years I spent with you or to be thankful I had you in my life I wanted to punch them and scream leave me alone you don't understand! But now I understand because I am eternally grateful for those years. Today almost two years since you left this place, my second Thanksgiving without you here I am thankful for all the love we shared. I am thankful for the gift of Motherhood you each gave me, the greatest gift of all.

On the good days now, which two years since you left this place there are more good days than not, but on the good days, I can't begin to count how many things I am thankful for. But if I had to pick just one thing on Thursday as I say my prayers, I would have to say I am most grateful for each day I spend with both of you tucked safely in my heart!

Deana L. Martin In Memory of my children, Amanda Suzanne Mills and Logan Robert Mills

Reprinted with love from TCF Minneapolis Chapter Newsletter



POETRY / MEMORY CORNER

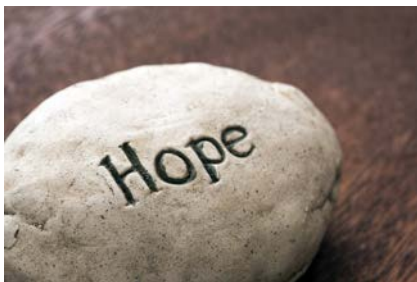
You are all invited to submit poem's, in memory of your child/children. These may be original poems or one that you have read which means something to you and your loved ones. Please remember to add the authors name if known.



The Message of the Season

As the year is drifting away
 We remember the grievers
 The friends and the strangers
 Whose children have gone
 From this life
 In the year that is leaving us now
 We remember the grievers
 The friends and the strangers
 We wish them hope.

Sascha



Watching the candle's flickering light
 its warmth and brilliant glow
 It takes me back to a time and place
 not so very long ago
 She shone so bright, a smile so warm
 She lit our hearts aglow
 To be with us for such a short time
 we had no way to know
 Each night I light my Daughter's Candle
 just to let her know,

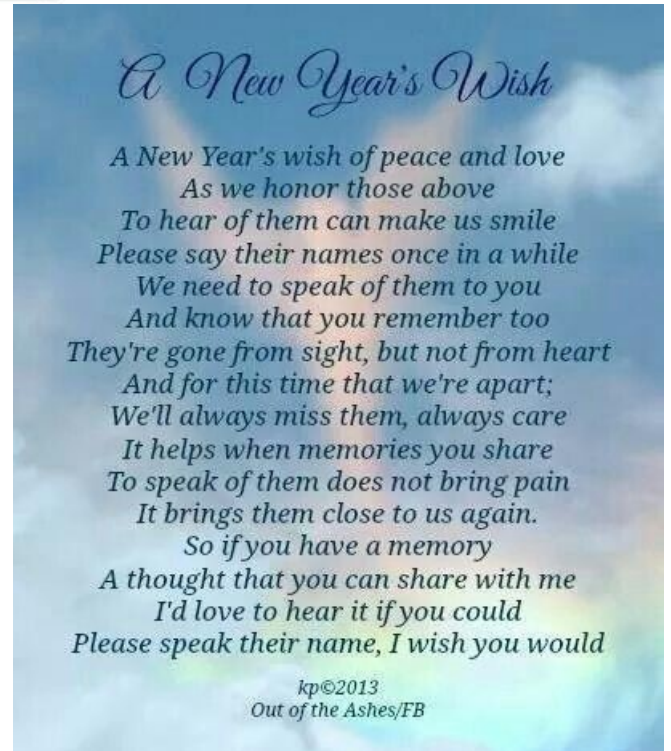
we love and miss her each and every day
 And on my knees, each night before that
 flame
 with heart and soul I pray



A NEW YEAR ...

LET US NOT FORGET THAT THIS MAY BE
THE YEAR WHEN LOVE AND HOPE AND
COURAGE FIND EACH OTHER SOMEWHERE
IN THE DARKNESS TO LIFT THEIR VOICE
AND SPEAK LET THERE BE LIGHT.

Sascha Wagner



Resolving to Care for Ourselves

We all approach the New Year very differently. Many cannot wait for the year our child or sibling died to pass, while others feel it separates them further from that person. But, the one thing most newly bereaved agree on, is that they are glad the holidays are over. For some the anticipation was far greater than the holiday itself.

When pain and stress control our lives it is very difficult to be optimistic. We must try to face the New Year with the thought that we will not always be in this much pain. As difficult as it is for us to believe, the pain does soften. One day you will find a tolerable life again. It will not be the same as it was, but in many ways our lives can be richer, for we don't fret over the trivial things we used to. We have learned the real values in life.

January is the time of year we struggle to put all our trying events behind us, and begin the year with new expectations. Unfortunately, that does not apply to our grief. We cannot "get on with our life" until we have spent sufficient time resolving our grief. All too often, we choose to repress the most painful emotions. They are too difficult to share with others, and we feel too fragile to deal with them. Once unresolved issues become delayed grief, it can be very damaging, and much harder to resolve.

Perhaps, one of our New Year resolutions should be allowing ourselves freedom to grieve. We need to take time to read, attend meetings, phone a friend, cry, walk, eat healthier, and in general remove our name from the bottom of the list of people to care for. We need to place ourselves at the top of the list, making ourselves number one. We cannot always be a reservoir of strength; this may be the time to let others care for us. We can't expect this to be a good year if our grief is fresh.

But, we should expect good things as well as bad. We have survived the impossible ordeal of the death and funeral. We have learned to take one day at a time, and not to set our expectations too high. If a good day comes, cherish it. Many times we have problems with the most important ingredient of recovery, and that is to learn to laugh and be happy again. We feel guilty for that moment of pleasure, and sometimes even feel it disrespectful. This is not a sign of forgetting, or a lack of love, it is a very healthy sign of hope.

Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge, PA Lifted with thanks from TCF Minneapolis Chapter newsletter

[https://www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/effects-of-grief/physical-effects-of-grief/How does grief affect the body?](https://www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/effects-of-grief/physical-effects-of-grief/How%20does%20grief%20affect%20the%20body?)

Appetite and digestion You may not feel like eating in the early days after someone dies. It may feel difficult to swallow and food can taste strange. Or you might find you're eating a lot more than usual. Or only eating foods that you find comforting. This is very normal. Try not to be too hard on yourself if your diet looks different right now. And try not to panic if you notice these changes. What helps? Try to find a relationship with food that works for you. If you don't feel like eating, try serving yourself small, manageable portions. If you don't feel like cooking, try a ready-meal or something that takes little preparation. But most importantly, remember to go easy on yourself. It's okay if you're not eating as you normally would, but slowly getting back to a routine of eating at the same times can help. If you're still worried after several weeks, it might be time to speak to your GP.

Sleep It's normal to have trouble sleeping after someone dies. You might be frightened to go to sleep because of bad nightmares. Or you might find it difficult to get to sleep because your mind is racing. Sometimes, you may dream that the person who died is still alive and find waking up to be very painful. What helps? Try to slowly get back into a night-time routine. Things like taking a bath or showering before bed are great ways to help you relax into the evening. Exercise can also be really helpful to tire your body out. Walking and yoga are gentle ways to get moving if you don't feel up for rigorous exercise. Try not getting into bed until you feel really ready to sleep. Try listening to relaxing music or sleep podcasts.

Anxiety Grief can make you feel very anxious. Sometimes this can result in feeling breathless, having heart palpitations or even a panic attack. This can be very scary. If you start to have these regularly, it's a good idea to contact your doctor. What helps? Exercise is a useful way for your body to reduce tension, and use up the adrenalin that it's producing that's making you feel anxious. But don't try and start an extreme new gym class when a gentle walk is all you can manage. Talking to someone about what's making you anxious can also really help. Find out the ways we can support you through grief and read more about the link between grief and anxiety on our website.

Physical pain It's common to feel physical pain after someone dies. Grief can affect your whole body. It can also reduce your ability to fight off minor infections. What helps? Normally, feelings of physical pain will ease with time. But try to get as much rest as possible and listen to what your body needs. If you find you're still in pain after several weeks, speak with your GP.

Reprinted with thanks from TCF Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter



Sibling Page



Open Letter to Our Siblings

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together. Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief. There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared.

To strive to carry on the best of who you were.

To cherish the brief time we have with others.

To celebrate the opportunity to be alive.

To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own.

To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

Mary Lamourex, TCF/Marin County, CA

Gratefully reprinted from TCF Winnipeg Chapter News





Christmas in Heaven

I still hear the songs
I still see the lights
I still feel your love
on cold wintry nights.

I still share your hopes
and all your cares
I'll even remind you
to please say all your prayers.

I just want to tell you
you still make me proud
You stand head and shoulders
above all the crowd.

Keep trying each moment
to stay in His grace
I came here before you
to help set your place.

You don't have to be
perfect all the time
He forgives you the slip
if you continue to climb.

To my family and friends
please be thankful today
I'm still close beside you
in a new special way.

I love you all dearly
now don't shed a tear
cause I'm spending my
Christmas with Jesus this year.



CHERISHED MEMORIES
of a special

SISTER

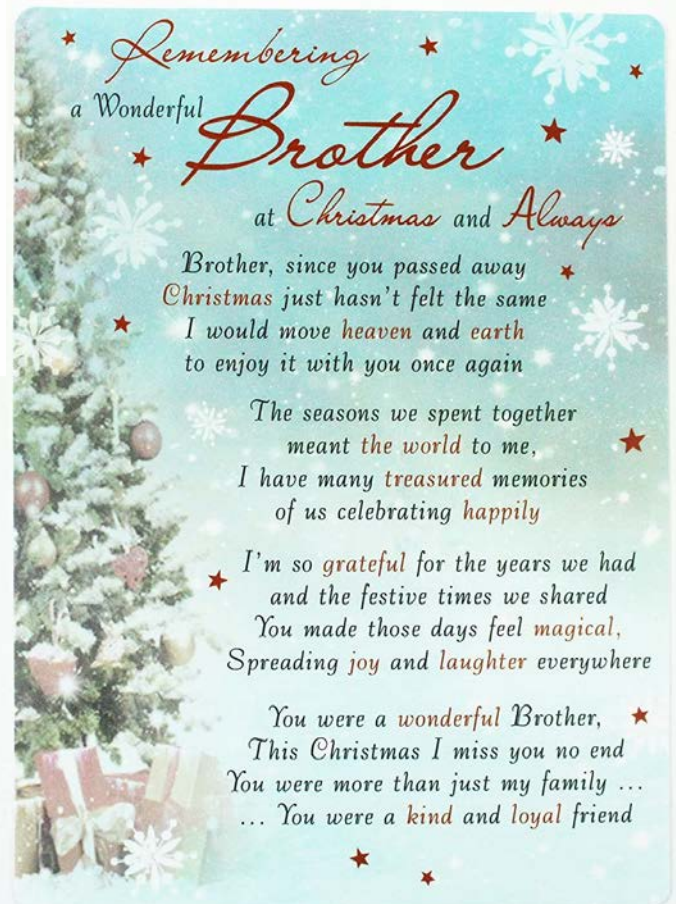
AT CHRISTMAS

I'm thinking back to Christmas times
when we were very small
and how they were the happiest
most exciting times of all

When the sound of Christmas carols
drifted softly through the air
when our world was filled with magic
and life didn't have a care

And then I think of later years
those cheerful hugs and kisses
exchanging gifts and greetings cards
and making special wishes

But it's funny how those memories
can now break my heart in two
for dear Sister, they remind me
just how much I'm missing you





MISSION STATEMENT

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance self-help organisation offering friend-ship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

The primary purpose is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief experienced upon death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings. The objective is to help those in their community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers and professionals to be supportive.

Do you need to talk? Our telephone friends are willing to listen.. **Telephone Friends**

DUNEDIN	Anne Lelena (Son Colin 22yrs Suicide)	03- 455 9274
DUNEDIN	Ngairie Penny (Marlene, 18yr old daughter MVA Nov '91)	03- 455 5391
DUNEDIN	Alexis Chettleburgh (22 yr old son, suicide.)	03-4777649
	Corinda Taylor (Son, 20 years, suicide)	021 2930094
CENTRAL OTAGO	Wilma Paulin (Son & Daughter, 6yrs & 3mths)	03-4493213
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Pessione (16 yr old daughter, accidental)	03-4487800 janpessione@xtra.co.nz
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Johnson, Adult son, Neville, cancer	03 4488360
CENTRAL	Sue Tait Natasha (29) Medical Event Central Otago Co-ordinator	sue.tait@xtra.co.nz 027 4420156
INVERCARGILL	Linda Thompson. (Ryan, 16yrs, Cardiac Failure. Dec 2001) Southland Co-ordinator*	03-2164155 027 390 9666
TIMARU	Phyl Sowerby (Son Cancer 1998)	03 612 -6402
CHRISTCHURCH	Chris Guerin	02102931357
WELLINGTON	Lorraine Driskel Son (twin) 19yrs—car accident	04 9387212 lorraine.driskel@gmail.com
KAPITI COAST	Anna Upton (Son, suicide)	04 2936349
PALMERSTON NORTH	Robyn Galpin (Hayley, motorcycle accident)	06 3535929
TAUMARUNUI CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND	Marie and Ron Summers (Son, Wayne 23yrs, Suicide)	07 8954879
WHANGANUI	Nina Sandilands (Debbie, 16yrs, Brain Virus)	06 3478086
WHANGANUI	Keren Marsh (Simon, 23yrs, car accident)	06 3443345 marshkandb@gmail.com
WHAKATANE	Trish and Alan Silvester	07 3222084 atsilvester@actrix.co.nz

www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz



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