



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Bluegrass Chapter Newsletter

**"We need not walk alone."
www.tcfbluegrass.org**

P.O. Box 647, Nicholasville, Kentucky 40340

June 2011

Chapter Co-Leaders

Suzie McDonald

catholic20@windstream.net

Janie Fields

butterflymom@windstream.net

Treasurer

David Fields

Newsletter Editor

Lisa Fields

Bluegrass Chapter

The Compassionate Friends Regional Coordinator

Dusty Rhodes

(502) 330-4769

Telephone Friends

Sometimes it helps to be able to talk to someone who understands. The following bereaved parents are willing to provide support and comfort.

Jim Sims

(859) 858-8288

(859) 797-2168

Mary Camp

(859) 737-0180

Suzie McDonald

(859) 576-7680

Janie Fields

(859) 881-1991

The Compassionate Friends National Office

P.O. Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522

(877) 969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org



When tomorrow starts without me

By: Sean A. Cohen

When tomorrow starts without me, and I'm not there to see.

If the sun should rise and find your eyes, all filled with tears for me.
I wish so much you wouldn't cry, the way you did today,
While thinking of the many things we never got to say.
I know how much you love me, as much as I love you..
And each time that you think of me, I know you'll miss me too..
But when tomorrow starts without me, Please try to understand..
An angel came and called my name and took me by the hand,
It seemed my place was ready - In Heaven far above,
and that I'd have to leave behind, those things I dearly love..
But as I turned to walk away, a tear fell from my eye.
For all of life, I'd always thought, I didn't want to die.
I had so much to live for, so much yet to do,
It seemed almost impossible, that I was leaving you..
I thought of all the yesterdays, the good ones and the bad..
I thought of all the love we shared, and how much fun we had..
If I could relive yesterday, just even for a while,
I'd say goodbye, then kiss you 'til I saw that special smile..
But then I fully realized, that it could never be,
'Cause emptiness and memories, would take the place of me.
And when I thought of all those things, I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you, and when I did, my heart was filled with sorrow. .
But when I walked through Heaven's gates, I felt so much at home.
When God looked down and smiled at me, From his great & golden throne,
He said, "This is eternity, and all I've promised you.
Today your life on Earth is past, but here it starts anew.
I promise no tomorrow, but today will always last,
and since each day is the same day, there's no longing for the past. .
But you have been so faithful, so trusting and so true,
Though there were some times you did some things you shouldn't do. .
But you have been forgiven, and now at last you're free,
So come and take me by the hand, and share my life with me.."
So when tomorrow starts without me, don't think we're far apart,
for every time you think of me, I'll be right there - in your Heart..



*Our Children
Forever Loved and Remembered*

June Birthdates

- 6/1 **McKenna Brooke Hatchett** Daughter of Tim and Melissa Hatchett
6/1 **Mark Davis** Son of Harold and Jeannie Davis
6/1 **DeAnna Marie Friend** Daughter of Barbara Friend
6/2 **Robby Matthew Oesch** Son of Candy Oesch
6/3 **Victor M. Martina** Mar Son of Don and Judy Martina
6/4 **Chasity Marie Green Leach** Daughter of Larry Leach
6/6 **Julie Ann Kilpatrick** Sister of Roy Stewart
6/7 **Nicholas Alan Norris** Son of Greg and Joanne Norris
6/8 **Rylee Jorja McFarland** Daughter of Joy and Chris McFarland
6/9 **Brenda Nicole Smith** Daughter of Carla and Kenneth Smith
6/9 **Brian Jason Hardin** Son of Richard and Sue Hardin
6/10 **Tressa Parsons Adams** Daughter of Linda and Bobby Parsons
6/11 **Donald Ray Bingham** Daughter of Barbara Bingham
6/12 **Cynthia "Cyndy" Ellen Crim** Daughter of Becky & Keith LaVey and Howard Crim
6/12 **Gary James Travis Burke** Nephew of Addie Waugh
6/13 **Thomas Allan Woodrum "Tommy"** Son of Mimi & Thomas Woodrum
6/14 **Becky Fister** Daughter of David and Mariam Fister
6/14 **Erin Renee Glass** Daughter of Martha and Wesley Glass
6/14 **Tim Sizemore** Son of T. C. Sizemore
6/14 **Jonathan Walker Mayberry** Son of Jonathan & Stephanie Mayberry
6/16 **Steve Elliot** Son of Nancy and Carroll Elliot
6/20 **John Martin Laswell** Dec Son of Frances Shaver
6/21 **Juan Pirir Cux** Son of Donna and Dave Uckotter
6/22 **Timothy Ray Elkin** Son of Betty and the late Billy Elkin
6/24 **Thomas E. Masters II** Son of Bess Masters
6/25 **Sharon Davidson** Daughter of Melvin and Sonia Davidson
6/25 **Jacob Daniel Akin** Son of Becky Akin
6/26 **Julie Dawn Hall** Daughter of Sharon and Don Hall
6/28 **Darius Xavier Jerome Young** Son of Deborah Young
6/29 **Phillip Old** Son of Priscilla Old

Janie and I would like to invite any of our bereaved parents seasoned and new to do a newsletter page in memory of their son and daughter. If you interested, please contact Lisa at garandsmom@yahoo.com. We would love to hear your stories.

Love to you all:
Suzie & Janie

*Our Children
Forever Loved and Remembered*

June Remembrance Dates

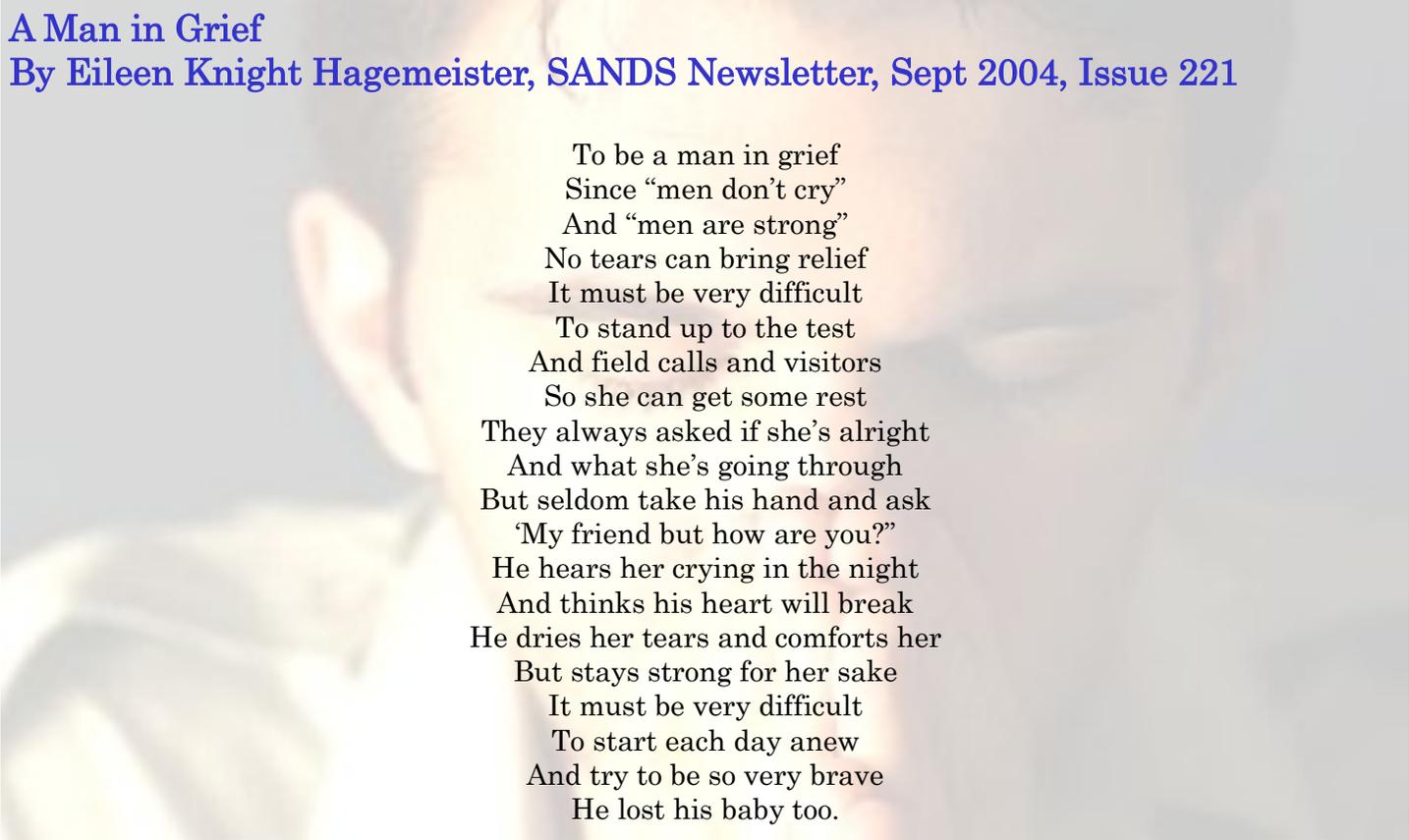
- 6/2 **Spencer David Turner** Son of Kathy and Danny Turner
6/4 **Missy Ann Tomblin** Daughter of Gail Tomblin
6/7 **Kimberly Sue Toye** Daughter of Gail Toye
6/7 **Colin Spencer** Son of Stephanie Spencer
6/7 **Carrie Elizabeth Griffin** Daughter of David and Debbie Griffin
6/8 **Robby Matthew Oesch** Son of Candy Oesch
6/8 **Rylee Jorja McFarland** Daughter of Joy and Chris McFarland
6/9 **Jonathan Hepburn** Jul Son of Jo Hepburn
6/9 **Jan Cecile Richardson** Daughter of Jim and Jean Richardson
6/14 **Dawn Chrystine Beckett** Daughter of Mike and Lynn Lindsey
6/15 **David Scott Fine** Son of Aida and David Fine
6/16 **Gary Ryan Delanhousaye** Son of Glynn and Catherine Delanhousaye
6/17 **Brandon Holbrook** Son of Linda M. Holbrook
6/18 **Richard (Rick) Allen** Son of Richard and Linda Allen
6/19 **Paul R. Criswell, Jr.** Son of Georgia and Paul Criswell
6/20 **Mark Grimes** Son of Betty and Steve Grimes
6/22 **Jacob Issac Gibson** Son of Veronica and Darrell Gibson
6/22 **Spencer David Turner** Son of Kathy and Danny Turner
6/23 **Fred "Lance" L. Murphy III** Son of Patty Murphy, Brother of Stacy Hoskins
6/27 **Edward Charles Cambell** Son of Martha E. Stone
6/28 **Davey Allison Dunavant** Son of Anita and J. C. Harris
6/30 **Katherine "Kate" Tudor** Daughter of Suzanne Tudor & Lewis Perry

Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to give of your time to our chapter, we always welcome volunteers. This is your chance to give back and to help out with the efforts of our chapter. Volunteer opportunities range from helping to set up a meeting, facilitating meetings, and just helping in any way that you can. This is a great way to give back in memory of your child after you have found hope, encouragement and strength from TCF. Making the change from needing and finding help to giving help and support to new parents is another healing milestone.

A Man in Grief

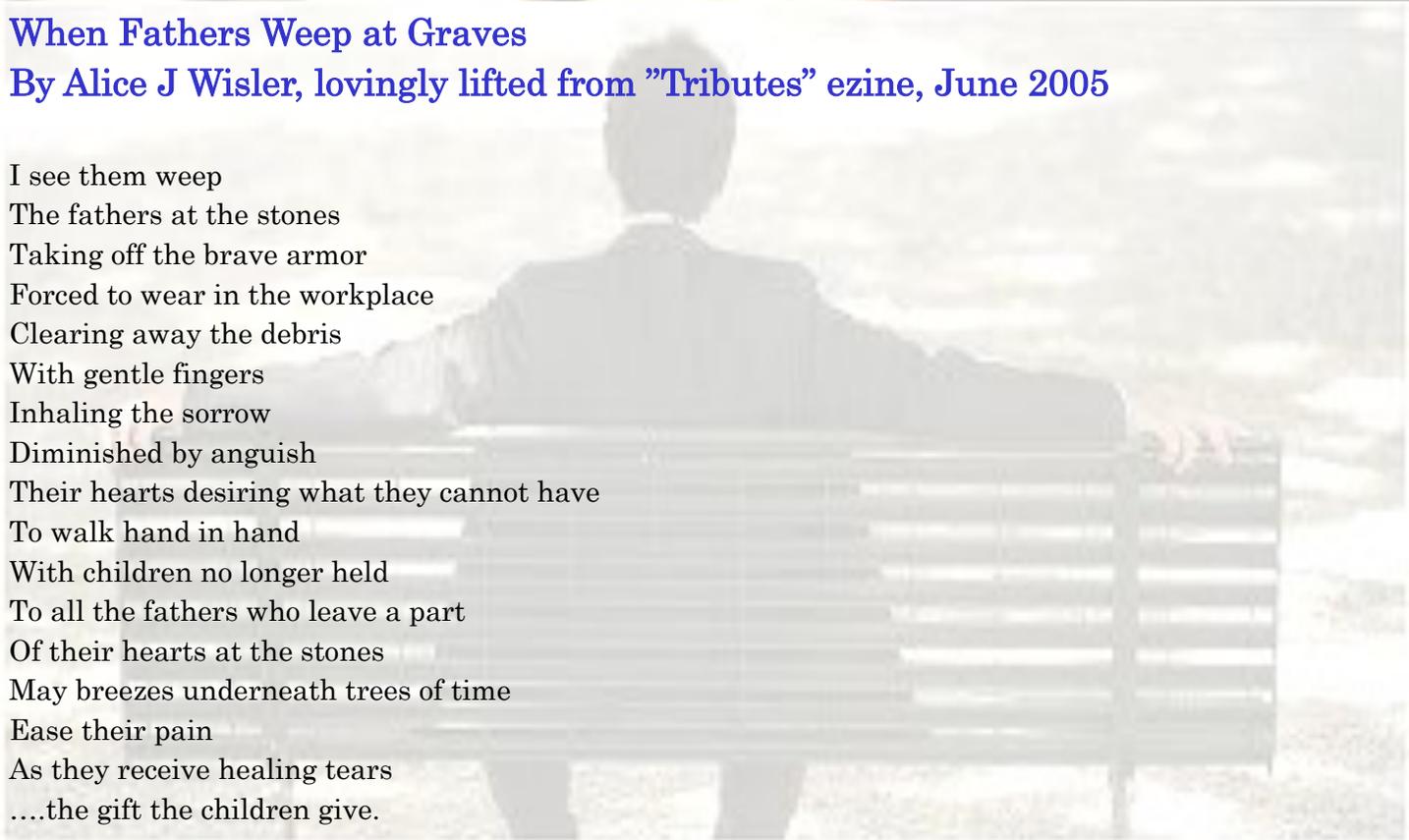
By Eileen Knight Hagemester, SANDS Newsletter, Sept 2004, Issue 221



To be a man in grief
Since "men don't cry"
And "men are strong"
No tears can bring relief
It must be very difficult
To stand up to the test
And field calls and visitors
So she can get some rest
They always asked if she's alright
And what she's going through
But seldom take his hand and ask
'My friend but how are you?'"
He hears her crying in the night
And thinks his heart will break
He dries her tears and comforts her
But stays strong for her sake
It must be very difficult
To start each day anew
And try to be so very brave
He lost his baby too.

When Fathers Weep at Graves

By Alice J Wisler, lovingly lifted from "Tributes" ezine, June 2005



I see them weep
The fathers at the stones
Taking off the brave armor
Forced to wear in the workplace
Clearing away the debris
With gentle fingers
Inhaling the sorrow
Diminished by anguish
Their hearts desiring what they cannot have
To walk hand in hand
With children no longer held
To all the fathers who leave a part
Of their hearts at the stones
May breezes underneath trees of time
Ease their pain
As they receive healing tears
....the gift the children give.

Do You Want To Understand?

Jan Brady, TCF Des Moines, IA, USA

You say to me, "It's been a year, when will your grieving end?
Why can't you be like you once were, my smiling happy friend?"

If you really want an answer, though I wonder if you do,
I'll take you deep inside of me where sadness dims the view.

First, my friend, for your sake, come close and take my hand,
And we will pray that what I share - you will understand.

The 'me' you once knew is no more, it died right with my child.
A voice that stilled forever, yet the echo drives me wild.

You say you lost Aunt Bertha, so you have seen death, too.
Aunt Bertha, though, was not your child - she was eighty, not twenty-two.

I barely survived those first few months, coping was a dreadful task.
I'd tell you I was doing fine while sobbing behind the mask.

If I talked about my precious child, you turned away in fear.
You couldn't stand to see me cry, nor would you shed a tear.

I wanted you to speak to him - please won't you say his name?
But you pretended he never was, so he died over and over again.

Oh, I see you're uncomfortable; you no longer want my hand.
So, as it was before we talked, my friend, you don't want to understand.

We are proud to announce a new TCF chapter in Kentucky!

The Compassionate Friends of the Four Rivers

PO Box 395, Grand Rivers, KY 42045

Phone contact- Fran 270.217.4490

FourRiversCF@hotmail.com

Chapter Co-leaders: Frances and Dean Taets

Meeting information

3rd Thursday of the month@ 7:00pm

Grand Rivers Community/Senior Center

155 W. Cumberland Ave, Grand Rivers, KY 42045

For Fathers, Loss of a Child Carries Special Burdens

By Clara Hinton

Men go through all kinds of identity changes when they experience the loss of a child, especially a child who is older and has lived long enough to create established memories with his or her father.

A man identifies himself by mainly two things: the job he has and the family he has. When a child is taken away by death, a man suddenly loses the largest, most important part of his identity. A real crisis has been created, not just for the father, but also for the role, the father plays with the family. Fathers love to feel needed, and they love to feel like they are the one responsible for the happiness of the entire family.

Men are far less verbal than women by nature, and it makes it much more difficult for family members and friends to understand the changes that are taking place with a father loses a child. He often feels like a failure because he was unable to prevent the death or to fix the death once it took place. This is especially true if the child's life was lost due to an illness.

Fathers often believe their role is to fix things that are broken or in need of repair, and when they cannot fix their child's illness and the end result is death, a father goes through a deep grieving period of feeling tremendous guilt and failure.

A father who loses a child also loses such a large part of his dreams. Fathers don't always openly talk about their dreams of hunting and fishing with their children, or of taking bike rides together, going to ball games together or of tossing a ball in the backyard, but they think about these events all of the time.

Fathers of girls daydream about walking their daughter down the aisle and dancing that first dance at the wedding. They dream about taking care of all of their child's hurts, wiping their tears away, and being called "hero" for all of the ways they show their strength to their son or daughter.

Child loss, in a father's eyes, often represents weakness. Men believe fathers are to be strong and in charge, not at a loss for knowing what to do when death turns life upside down. Child loss is such a helpless feeling, and often this is a foreign emotion for fathers who have been a tower of strength for their children.

What is a father to do? How can a father go on and feel whole once again? It takes time to work through the pain of loss. It takes a long time to build back a feeling of belonging as a father. It will often take years for a father to be able to reclaim his identity of a father. It will take lots of working through feelings of failure and loss to feel like a man who can always proudly wear the name father.

Take it a day at a time, a step at a time. Begin by telling yourself over and over that you will always be a father. Nothing can change that – not even death. Remind yourself often that some things cannot be fixed by you. Remember often that lost dreams are part of the pain every parent feels when a child dies. It takes a lot of tears and years to work past the milestone markers of such things as dreams of your child playing ball, driving a car, dating, getting married, and having children.

These are not easy dreams to release, but with time, you will be able to more vividly remember the times you had with your child than to sorrow over the time you never had. Be patient with yourself. Be kind to yourself. When you fall into the emotional pain of feeling like a failure, remind yourself that **you will always be a father and nothing can take away that badge of honor, not even death.**

At the age of 15, Clara Hinton's 13-year-old sister died tragically, and that loss began a series of events in her life that made grief all-too-real. While experiencing the blessing of living children, Clara has also felt the pain of losing six children due to miscarriage, and has delivered one stillborn son.

When you come to a meeting of The Compassionate Friends, we ask that you attend at least three meetings before you decide if the group is for you. For many... the first meeting may also be the first time they've been able to talk about what has happened to them, their family and to their child. This can bring a lot of emotion to the forefront. Emotion which seems to disappear over the months as you talk about your loss. Don't worry, we'll bring the tissues. Tears are a natural release for a grieving person and is a way to release stress due to grief.

If you're shy or unable to talk about your loss, you do not have to speak, although you will have the opportunity. Some people believe it's harder to talk in front of strangers about something as intimate as the loss of a child, but because everyone else at the meeting has had a similar experience, they understand much of what you are feeling and you will eventually reach a comfort level with those you meet. A point to always keep in mind is that what is said in the meeting stays in the meeting. The privacy of our members is important. We're all there to work toward healing. It may be hard for you to believe, but occasionally you will hear laughter. This is not a dishonor to any child. Rather it is often a reaction to a wonderful memory of a child.

Meeting Information

Lexington

Third Monday of Every Month
6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.
Hospice of the Bluegrass
2321 Alexandria Drive
Lexington, Kentucky



Winchester

First Tuesday of Every Month
7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.
Hospice East
417 Shoppers Drive
Winchester, Kentucky

Meeting Format

Doors open one-half hour before meeting times to provide the opportunity to visit with old friends and acknowledge new ones. Please plan to arrive early so the meeting can begin on time.

The death of a child of any age, from any cause, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, a family needs emotional support for the long grief journey that lays ahead. Since 1980, the Bluegrass Chapter of The Compassionate Friends has been actively helping families toward the positive resolution of their grief following the death of a child.



Our Mission & Purpose is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age by any cause and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Men Do Cry**Ken Faulk, Sands Newsletter, September, 2004, Issue 221**

I heard quite often "men don't cry"
Though no one ever told me why
So when I fell and skinned a knee
No one came to comfort me.

And when some bully boy at school
Would pull a prank so mean and cruel
I'd quickly learn to turn and quip.
"it doesn't hurt", and bite my lip.

So as I grew to reasoned years
I learned to stifle any tears.
Though "be a big boy" it began,
Quite soon I learned to "be a man".

And I could play that stoic role
While storm and tempest wracked my soul
No pain or setback could there be
Could wrest one single tear from me.

Then one long night I stood nearby
And helplessly watched my son die,
And quickly found to my surprise
That all that tearless talk was lies.

And still I cry and have no shame
I cannot play that "big boy" game,
And openly without remorse
I let my sorrow take it's course.

So those of you who can't abide
A man you've seen whose often cried,
Reach out to him with all your heart
As one whose life's been torn apart.

For men do cry when they can see
Their loss of immortality.
And tears will come in endless streams
When mindless fate destroys their dreams.

Returning to the Land of the Living – Sort of...

Sooner or later we make an attempt to return to the land of the living; In order to do that we must find **Hope**. Find one thing that might give you hope. Small or large – just anything that allows even a glimmer of hope.

Now what do we do? We survive one day at a time. When the universe flip-flops and upside down is right side up and happiness seems impossible and the sight and sounds of a single day much less any season -only annoy and hurt, what do we do to survive?

Everyone is tell us we must move forward, learn to LIVE AGAIN, but how do you do that when everything has changed? Nothing fits, belongs or feels right anymore. At times we can't find our shoes, keys, glasses, things that we just had in our hand so how can we find **Hope**? Has it been stolen from us forever?

NO! **Hope** is still in our midst, we just have to seek it out now. Our lives have changed in every aspect; we now have to find what could possibly bring us **Hope** to re-enter the land of the living. First we have to find a way to survive as we get use to our new normal, then in time we will live life again - it will be a different, but worth living.

WAYS TO FIND HOPE AND SURVIVE

- Make a list of things you need to do each day. Start with the necessary things at first. Start with a simple task, such as showering, getting dressed or brushing your teeth, just something that you always did before your "normal" life was turned upside down. Then begin to add things you want to do. This list may be more difficult than the necessary list, but you **will** be able to make this list eventually. **Remember - grieving is hard work and you need to be kind to yourself.**
- Get it out of the house. Take out the trash, walk around the outside of your home; just get out of the house if only for a minute! While you are doing this task, look around you for a sign **Hope**.
- Eat. Whatever you want, just make sure you eat whatever you are "supposed to". Skip the "oughts" and "shoulds" right now and concentrate on the comfort foods. You can't eat this way forever, but you might as well take advantage of your grief and treat yourself.



- Buy a gift for yourself. While you are buying a gift for yourself, buy one for a loved one as well. Look around while buying your gifts for a sign of **Hope.... and smile.**
- Take deep breaths every so often, In and out; In and out. This takes some of the weight off you and your grief, for a moment or two. We need all those "moments" we can get! It's that simple and that hard. Some days just breathing is all you can manage and that is okay because other days it's a bit easier.



*Vacations***By: Betty Ewart , Bereaved Mother , Lewisburg, WV**

There is not a lot written about vacation time even though this can be a very difficult time. I remember so well the first July vacation we took after Ruthie's death in April. I could not face going and –leaving her and going to all the places we had been in the past with her. Here are some hints that may help if you are dreading vacation time. By the way, there is never a time that you don't think of vacations past but the memories get less painful and you begin to forge new memories.

Where do we go?

There is no good answer to that. Yes, if you go where you have always gone on vacations, memories will flood in. But if you choose a totally new place, we found that you just wonder how he/she would have liked it here, what would she have done, etc. So, you take your choice and expect the feelings and plan for them.

What do we do if we visit relatives?

Talk to them. Tell them that it is hard and that it is alright to talk about your child – when they see that you welcome hearing the name and having them share memories they have, everyone can relax.

Will I forget her/him?

Don't fear! You can never forget just because you are away from home memories. Don't be afraid to talk about her/him and let them be a part of things.

Traveling companion?

Remember that you cannot really leave your grief at home when you go on vacation. It will go with you. Plan for it and pack for it. Don't over-schedule the days and activities. You won't feel like doing as much, perhaps, as usual, and you may tire more easily. Take along some reading material – perhaps on grief but some light reading too. Just remember that bereaved families and people need a respite from the daily stresses of work and of life and grief. Also know that often the anticipation is worse than the actual event. If you have been through Christmas, a birthday or a death anniversary, etc., you may remember that the weeks or days before may be worrisome and you may not be sure how you will get through it, but suddenly the day is there and over and it wasn't as bad as you expected, even if it was bad.

So just decide when and where the vacation will be, plan ahead, and go. **Allow yourself to enjoy it.** Often we feel guilty if we have a good time. Remember how much your child enjoyed trips and life and know that she or he would want you to do the same.

From One Father to Another**By: Paul Kinney, Jeff Kinney's Father, Louisville, KY**

Come; let me take your hand. For where you must walk, I too have walked. The road that we must walk is not one that we would choose to walk; it is a difficult road, full of many obstacles.

Yes, we are still fathers. We love and remember our sons or daughters who have died. Their death has left us with a hole in our heart, an ache in our stomach, a pain in our chest, and eyes that cannot see as they are filled with tears.

We must grieve because we dared to love, and it is thru that we will recover. We may never have the life that we once had, but we can build another life. Our heart will heal, our pain will lessen, and we will be able to talk about our son or daughter without tears. There will come a day when we dare to laugh again.

