



# **The Compassionate Friends**

## **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

Volume 2, Issue 1

Chapter Website: <http://TampaBayCompassionateFriends.org>

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## **THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE**

Life is full of changes. Most times I see each experience as a lesson. Something that will help me for some future event. Not knowing what that might be is stored away in my knowledge base to be used at some point in my life. I don't realize at the time because as all of us know lessons are painful. That is how we seem to learn them – the hard way.

Being a parent, gives us so much in the way of lessons. We learn patience. A newfound appreciation of this big beautiful world. Interesting ways of doing things. The never ending supply of using things in an unusual way to accomplish a task. (Just think back on when you saw your child using an unsafe means to reach something they were never intended to reach in the first place.) Most importantly I've learned to laugh at myself.

What I never thought would happen is that I'd be asked to make the ultimate sacrifice. Losing my son asked more of me than anything I have been through. It is the ultimate sacrifice to let go of something that is so much a part of you. Someone you can't bear to even survive without it. I feel I have lost the best parts of me in some way too. They just went away on March 5<sup>th</sup>. I know you feel it too. No matter what has been asked of us, we have figured out a way to do it for our kids. Whether we found a way to be the best parent ever – the sacrifice was worth it. If we did without so we could give to our children, the sacrifice was worth it. No matter what we loved them completely and gave as we could to enrich their lives.

This is different. I didn't have a choice. You didn't have a choice. We had to endure the ultimate sacrifice of love. Losing our child in such a permanent way. The LOVE of our child was worth it all. To look into their eyes. See their smile. Teach them all we can. Know their dreams and see them come true. But that got taken away on that day and in that moment that's ingrained in our memories.

So, here we are together in this ultimate sacrifice. We have a new companion now named Grief. Most of the time I have to admit, I don't like Grief much at all. It brings me down. Makes me sad. Brings me to tears. Grief reminds me when I've forgotten to pay attention to my sorrow and loss. No matter what Grief is always there to remind me that it is here to stay.

I try to push Grief away. I try to ignore my Grief. I keep myself busy and distracted. Then in an instant, I am face to face with Grief, reminded that you and I have made the ultimate sacrifice. We somehow must continue the grief journey. I am grateful for being given so much love during the time Patrick was here with us. The ultimate sacrifice has asked so much . . .

By: Debbie Rivera

**THINKING OF ALL OF YOU AND THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE YOU  
HAVE MADE TOO!**

*Shakespeare said to "give sorrow words"*



## **MONTHLY MEETING**

### **Meeting Place:**

International Independent  
Showmen's Museum

### **Address:**

6938 Riverview Drive  
City, State Zip: Riverview, FL  
33578

### **When:**

First Thursday of Each Month

Meeting Time: 7 - 9 pm

### **Upcoming Events:**

Walk to Remember: June

Butterfly Release: October

### **Regional Events:**

### **National Events:**

### **Annual Conference:**

July 10 – 12, 2015 | Dallas, TX

• Walk To Remember: July  
12, 2015 | Dallas, TX

### **REGIONAL COORDINATOR**

### **Regional Coordinator:**

Bob and Mary Lane

### **Phone Number:**

Bob (407)761-8591 or

Mary: (321) 442-3540

### **Email:**

[cftcregion@earthlink.net](mailto:cftcregion@earthlink.net)

### **NATIONAL OFFICE**

The Compassionate Friends

PO Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

(877) 969-0010



## 5 RIGHTS OF THE GRIEVING PARENT

**1) *You have the right to your feelings.*** No one knows exactly what it is like for you to lose your child. No one has walked the exact same path as you. No one has lost THIS child who was unique in his or her own special way. You have a right to feel how you feel about your loss. Some days will be better than others. Today might be a good day, moments of laughter might even occur, but that doesn't mean two years from now a deep sadness might not wash over you and you will be tearing up when back to school time rolls around and you're one child short when dropping the kids off to school that day. You get to have all of these emotions and experience them and don't let anyone else tell you otherwise.

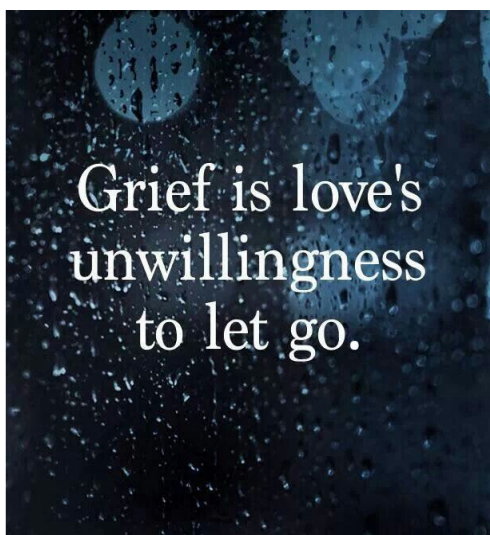
**2) *You have the right to grieve however you choose.*** Remember the saying, "There is no right or wrong way to grieve." We are all unique, therefore the ways we grieve the loss of our child will be unique. If you decide to keep their room the same and untouched for a year after their death, that's fine. If you still have cake and a celebration on their birthday every year, great! If you get a tattoo in remembrance and it's out of the ordinary for you, super! None of these are more appropriate or better than the other. As long as you are not hurting yourself physically or emotionally, there really is no "right" or "wrong" way to do this. Only your way.

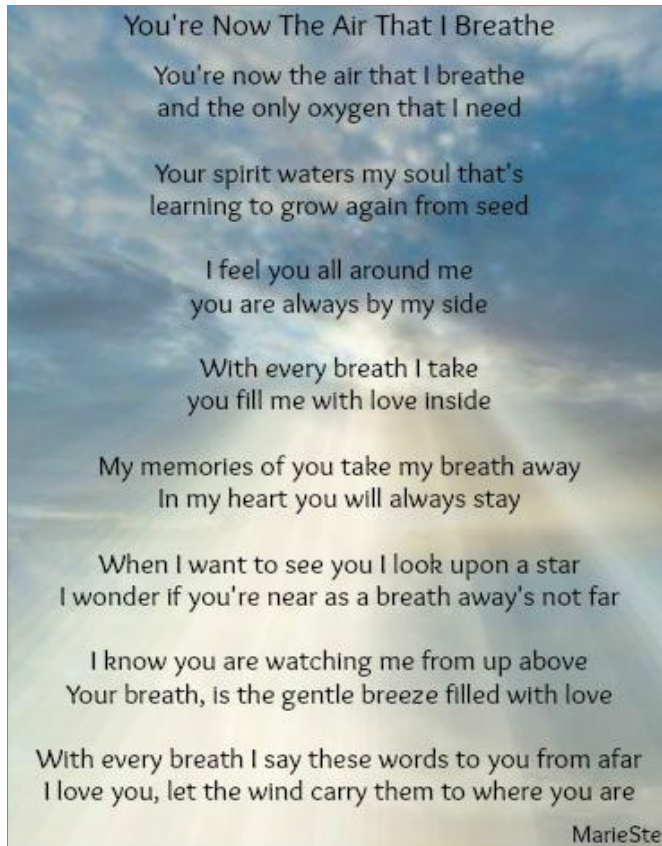
**3) *You have the right to grieve for however long you need.*** Similar in nature to # 2 . There is also another great saying, "There is no time limit on grief." I'm sorry to say you will carry the weight from the loss of your child with you throughout the rest of your life. You will remember them until you can no longer breathe. Don't let people tell you otherwise. Yes, the grief will shift and morph and move. Some days it will be as if it's not there at all while others it will be a heavy burden to bear, but it will never fully or completely go away. And this is okay. You have the right to grieve for as long or as little as you need, even if it's a lifetime because this grief is great because the love was great.

**4) *You have the right to find peace when ready.*** At first grief hurts. There are really no words to describe the pain that comes from losing a child. It is disorientating, out of life's order of events, and feels so soul-crushing. When it first happens, and in the months and years after, it may seem as if any sense of peace will never find you again. However, over time, it will come. It won't ever be the same sense of peace you felt before loss; you know

the one that has innocence tag along with it by its side. It will be a sense of settling into the vulnerability of your soul. It's a place of knowing the pain and being accepting of it. Not necessarily okay with it, but a realization that peace and pain can exist on the same plane, in the same space and at the same time. You have a right to find this place and embrace it when you are ready. Don't let anyone else force you there; it's a place you must find on your own time and at your own speed.

**5) *You have the right to remember and speak their name.*** You know when people ask you that silly now confusing question of, "How many children do you have?" Guess what? You have the right to give the *real* answer. You should say their name as much and as often as you like. Include their name in holiday cards say their name in nightly prayers. As they say, "My child did exist," and you have a right in remembering and speaking of their life and the love they brought to it and in many ways still do. I mean if we don't remember who will? It's our right as bereaved parents to carry their memory with us for as long as our heart beats and speak their name as much as we desire as it is music to our soul.





*If you have an article you would like to submit, a poem, a quote, or anything that would you would like to submit to our newsletter, just email it to the newsletter editor: Marilyn Andreatta <mailto:mjandreatta@gmail.com>*

*"There is no footprint too small to leave an imprint on this world."*

*- Author unknown*



## LOVING LISTENERS

DEBBIE RIVERA

813 690-4448

LET US KNOW IF YOU TOO WOULD LIKE TO BE A LOVING LISTENER . . . WE WILL ADD YOU TO THIS LIST!

**If you need someone to listen, just reach out and make the call . . .**

"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal,  
Love leaves a memory no one can steal"

- Anonymous .

## OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

### **Birthdays**

#### ***JANUARY***

Maggie – 1/16

#### ***FEBRUARY***

Alexia – 2/1

Curtis – 2/4

Lilly – 2/4

Jackson – 2/22

Abigail – 2/24

#### ***MARCH***

Jonathan – 3/7

Joey – 3/9

Susan – 3/11

### **Anniversary**

#### **Dates**

#### ***JANUARY***

Jonathan – 1/1

Maria – 1/1

Allison – 1/5

Cameron – 1/7

Meaghan – 1/18

Joey – 1/24

Zachary – 1/26

#### ***FEBRUARY***

Jessica – 2/6

Dennis – 2/15

Shawn – 2/22

#### ***MARCH***

Michael – 3/2

Patrick – 3/5

Susan – 3/14





## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF TAMPA BAY AREA -

- 501 (c) 3 Non Profit Organization
- Committed to helping families through the loss of a child.
- Monthly Grief Support Group Meetings  
Contributors and other interested parties.
- Annual Memorial Candle Lighting
- Provide Hope, Healing, and Help
- Lending library
- Quarterly Newsletter
- National Support Website
- Special Events



### CHAPTER LENDING LIBRARY

We have a library of books for you to check out and keep until our next meeting. All you have to do is come before or after the meeting time. Look through what we have and make your selection.

We also accept any donations of books and audios that you have read and no longer need.

Please feel free to donate any books that you come across and we will happily add them to our chapter library.

If there is a book you can't find in our collection, just let us know and it will be added by the next meeting.

Thank you.

Debbie Rivera

Chapter Leader





**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
*of Tampa Bay Area*  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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Brandon, FL 33511

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**[www.tampabaycompassionatefriends.org](http://www.tampabaycompassionatefriends.org)**

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**[WWW.TAMPABAYCOMPASSIONATEFRIENDS.ORG](http://WWW.TAMPABAYCOMPASSIONATEFRIENDS.ORG)**

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### *Mission*

*The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.*

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## CLOSING THOUGHT

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