



A U S T R A L I A N N A T I O N A L N E W S L E T T E R

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From the Editors

Cheery greetings from Chris and Maxine

Thank you to all contributors for getting your articles to us on time. Thank you too for following our 'Australian Style' suggestions; this made our goal of trying for consistency throughout the newsletter much easier.

The words National Body appear frequently in this issue. There is definitely 'movement at the station'. Would it be a good idea for the next newsletter to include comments, ideas, concerns and hopes from individual TCF members in regards to the National Body as well as any formal progress reports about its formation?

It is so interesting to read of the activities that happen in each state, some unique and some in common. Being part of a national TCF body does not mean that we will all be following the same program throughout the year - but there will always be a place for the sharing of good ideas.

TCF Heritage sites. Are there any more Heritage sites out there to add to the registry – at the moment we only have information about five of them. If you have one to add please fill in the form at the end of the newsletter and send to Chris.

Please also check that all your details are correct in the TCF Australian Directory. Updates can be sent in at any time.

This newsletter is for any TCF member – please pass it on to any other interested members.

Yours in compassionate friendship,

Maxine and Chris

Interstate News



ACT and Queanbeyan

Eight TCF members have just participated in a day's retreat for volunteers working in bereavement support. It was a lovely day and an excellent mixture of education and self care. In the morning there was a talk and discussion around the latest research on loss and grief, followed by a session on listening and talking skills. This was particularly helpful to those members who might be considering taking a more active role in supporting others – but all of us can benefit with a few reminders about 'active listening'. After lunch we looked at a way of checking through a list of all sorts of aspects of life to see how balanced our lives are, and perhaps focus on ways of trying to fill any obvious gaps. This was followed by a talk about aromatherapy (with the more than 20 participants sitting on chairs in a circle with our feet in bowls of scented water). Then we gave and received a hand or foot massage to the person sitting next to us, and ended the day with a guided meditation.

The weekend before this, six members attended a weekend 'Bereavement Journey Workshop'. This was run under the auspices of SIDSandKids with input from TCF. Participants had a chance to step back from their usual lives to spend time focusing on their child who has died, to do some creative exercises in relationship to their loss and also to other

aspects of their lives. This was done in a safe, nurturing atmosphere with an experienced facilitator. As usual at such events, a big component of the weekend was the support, understanding and companionship shared amongst participants.

Other education, training, rest and recreation events to look forward to this year are: a training day with a local funeral company, a weekend retreat just for TCF members in the Southern Highlands; and joining with TCF NSW at their annual Weekend Gathering, this time to be held in Tamworth.

We are also in the process of supporting the formation of the National Body and I have had several discussions with John Hurley on how TCF ACT and Queanbeyan might support this very worthwhile cause. I feel that we, and all bereaved parents, can gain significant benefits from the formation of a national body. Unfortunately, we are not in a strong financial position to contribute on a monetary basis but we have access to a number of federal government contacts and we may be able to lobby a few of our federal members. I plan to meet with John in early April when he has planned to visit TCF NSW in Sydney.

Yours in Compassionate Friendship
Chris and Maxine
TCF Act and Queanbeyan



New South Wales

The year got off to a busy start for TCF NSW with plans underway to open new chapters in Nowra, Orange and Bega. The newest chapter leaders have already met with Council members in Sydney for orientation and will be holding their first support group meetings in March. We are very grateful to the volunteers who have seen the need to extend TCF's outreach to bereaved families in their country areas. To even further improve our service throughout the state, we are planning a chapter leaders' workshop so that all new and experienced leaders throughout NSW can get together for a weekend of support and training. Further details of this will be in the next newsletter.

We thank Heather Stephens of the Blacktown chapter for her sterling work over the years. Heather recently retired from her duties as chapter leader after many years of dedicated service to bereaved parents and siblings in that area.

Candle lighting services were held in December by a number of chapters and were well attended with many visitors from other chapters as well as friends and relatives from those regions. A luncheon at the Bereaved Parent Centre for Centre volunteers and other hard workers for TCF was another highlight of last quarter. Both the Murwillumbah and Miranda chapters raised significant funds for TCF by raffles at their Christmas luncheons, both raffles included beautiful hand knitted rugs.

In February 2006, a regular craft day commenced at the Bereaved Parent Centre under the leadership of scrapbooking expert Sue Berry. Members meet monthly for several hours for knitting, crocheting, quilting or scrapbooking—and for a rich time of productive support and companionship.

The Residential Weekend for TCF NSW is scheduled for 8-10 September 2006 and will be held at the Frog and Toad Function Centre at the Comfort Inn Hallmark in Tamworth. Council member Marlay Brown is already hard at work on the planning, and further details will be in the next newsletter. Julie Dunsmore, who is well known throughout Australia for her caring service to bereaved persons, will be our headline facilitator at this weekend. Her professional insights at the workshops will be invaluable; and this pleasant country setting will offer opportunities for new friendships to be forged and old ones to be strengthened. Plans are in the works for a chartered bus from Sydney and return so that the drive will provide a chance for even more companionship.

Once again we at TCF NSW express our appreciation to the editors of the National Newsletter for offering this forum for Australia-wide news. We extend an invitation to all our friends throughout Australia to visit the Bereaved Parent Centre whenever you are in Sydney.

Judy Tuggle
TCF NSW



Queensland

As I sit here with fingers poised deciding what to include in this report I feel that I must sound like a cracked record as I always seem to say the same things – *just where does the time go as it only seems like yesterday we sent in our last report and now here we are March 2006 and another report is due.*

As always it has been a busy time especially the lead up to the Christmas period. We had our Christmas charity markets in early December and due to another group having to cancel because of the ill health of several of their volunteer workers we were fortunate to be given their booked space plus an extra day,

which turned out to be a real bonus as we raised a good amount of money. It is also a great opportunity to further awareness of TCF - something I know we all constantly strive to do.

Our Candlelight Service on 11 December was well attended despite the hot, humid conditions on the day. We had a number of members travel quite a distance to attend the evening event. We also posted the details about our service on the USA web site and were most surprised to have a number of people contact us asking for details not only about our own service but also any information we had about other services were being held in Australia.

Since the Brisbane City Council stopped us from releasing helium balloons on council land and in their parklands, we have changed the format of our ceremony to commemorate International Children's Memorial Day and this year we held a service on 30 January at the Drop-In Centre. We based the service on the John Williamson song 'Flower On The Water' from his album 'Chandelier of Stars'. The song was written in memory of the Bali bombing victims so we thought it appropriate and all those who attended our ceremony lay a little frangipani gently on the water in memory of their child. We also lit frangipani shaped floating candles. It was a really gentle service, a meaningful occasion and very different from what we have done in previous years.

At the present time we are busily – I could almost say frantically – working on a number of fundraising activities – our third charity golf day to be held on 24 March, a monster book sale and sausage sizzle at our Centre on 1 April and on 7 April psychic medium, Charmaine Wilson, is presenting her show 'Spirit Whisper' to benefit TCF Queensland. She recently did a similar show at a Gold Coast venue for the Brave Hearts organisation, which is based in Brisbane.

It proved to be a profitable evening with about 300 attending and we are hoping ours will be as successful. Charmaine has recently toured parts of New South Wales and in late March and April will be visiting Queanbeyan and a number of venues in Victoria.

We were delighted to receive a visit from John Hurley, President of TCF Victoria, recently when he was in Queensland visiting relatives. We discussed a number of issues with John including the TCF National Body. Up until his visit we had only had dealings with him by phone and email so it was nice to put a face to the voice and we look forward to hearing from him with progress reports. As we have mentioned in previous newsletters we are very much in favour of establishing a national body, with at least one representative from each state, but realise that there are a number of issues to be ironed out.

Maxine and Chris requested details of TCF heritage sites in each state so we would like to let you know that we have a bench dedicated to TCF in the Mt. Cootha Botanic Gardens, Brisbane. It is in an area with running water not far from the Japanese Gardens. The Townsville Chapter has a TCF memorial in Queens Gardens, Paxton Street, Townsville (near the old hospital).

We have a new postal address –
PO Box 1930,
NEW FARM QLD 4005

So please adjust your records however, a re-direction will be put on our Springwood address for quite a while so hopefully we will not miss any mail.

We have had reports from a number of our members this week that they have heard mention of TCF on the Channel 10 Morning Show with Evelyn Hague from TCF New South Wales being interviewed. What wonderful promotion

for TCF and it will be interesting to hear if any of the States get increased requests for our information?

On that note I think I will conclude this report. We eagerly look forward to receiving our copy of the National Newsletter to catch up on all the news and happenings within this wonderful organisation of ours.

Best wishes to you all,
Marion
On behalf of TCF Queensland Committee



South Australia

Since our last report we have had our annual candlelight service, which continues to be well attended and appreciated by our members. Also our International Children's Memorial Day notice on the 29 January was again well supported, and on this occasion, brought us new members who had seen it in the Sunday Mail.

Our balloon release saw a small but very chatty and friendly group attend, with our president doing a great job on the BBQ....we were still there at 8pm!

Our web site is nearing completion, with only some minor information updates and editing to be completed. It should only be a week or so before it is ready for web publication.

Our president, Tony Hurren, has been working actively with John Hurley, Victoria, with the objective of formally establishing the National Body for TCF. In my discussions with other associations that now have national bodies, it is clear there are many advantages. I believe this is a milestone we have all been anticipating.

I must take this opportunity to thank our long time newsletter editor, Audrey

Edwards, for her wonderful work over many years, and all the committee wish her well in her decision to move on. We are very grateful to Catherine Pettit, for coming on board and assuming the role.

That's all for now and best wishes to all from the committee here in S.A.

Baden
TCF South Australia



Victoria

It is with great enthusiasm that I bring you up-to-date with the happenings at TCF Victoria. In Victoria we continue to support our bereaved parents and siblings by providing a range of services aimed at diminishing the sense of isolation and supporting physical, emotional and mental well-being. Over the past three months we, the board and staff, have been working on a draft strategic plan from which we will develop a three year business plan. Board members have also been offered the opportunity to participate in the On Board series of seminars, developed by our www.ourcommunity.com.au and the city of Boroondara, the aim of the program is to provide current training on issues that voluntary boards and committees of management need to address. These seminars which are free of charge may be available in different states; if you go to www.ourcommunity.com.au there is a great deal of information available.

Since December we have been busy working on the 2006 Compassionate Employer Recognition Awards. On Tuesday 28 February our Patron Rhonda Galbally, AO presented 22 organisations with the award. These employers are leading the way in workplace practices showing extraordinary compassion to their employees who had experienced the death of a loved one.

The awards program publicly recognises employers who had gone above and beyond standard bereavement practices and hoped to encourage similar support from all employers.

2006 Compassionate Employer Award Recipients

- *Lite'n Easy*
- *Mercy Hospital for Women*
- *Rhino Grating*
- *St. Peter's Primary School*
- *Draper's Civil Contracting Pty Ltd*
- *ABB Australia Pty Limited*
- *Holmesglen Institute of TAFE*
- *The Midfield Group*
- *Western Region Health Centre*
- *Overnewton Anglican Community College*
- *South West Healthcare – Nursing Management Team Warrnambool*
- *Members Equity Bank*
- *Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA)*
- *Wettenhalls Group*
- *Moonee Valley City Council*
- *St Kevin's College*
- *University of Ballarat*
- *Werribee Mercy Hospital*
- *ObjectMastery*
- *Mildura Rural City Council*
- *Barwon Health*
- *Manningham Community Health Service*

TCF Victoria has also been advised that we are again one of four charities to be the recipient of funds raised by the Australian Defence Force from the Defence Lake Attack 2006 events. This year it kicks off on 28 March with the Fosters Grand Prix Lunch and Launch followed by the Lake Attack at Albert Park Lake in August and then a formal Black Tie Dinner at the Officers Mess Victoria Barracks in September. DHL is the major sponsor for these events.

Calendar of Events 2006

28 March 2006 Foster's Grand Prix Lunch (hosted by Australian Defence Force and Fosters - fundraising event)
26 April, 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 May 2006 Volunteer public speaking course
26 May 2006 Bereaved parent and sibling seminar; Emotional Freedom Technique
22-23, 28 July 2006 Refresher Day
July (date to be confirmed) Bereaved Parent and Sibling Seminar: Companionship in Adversity: Caring for Ourselves, Caring for Others
6 weeks in July and August 2006 Bereaved Parent and Sibling Course: "Identity"
27 August 2006 Defence Lake Attack Family Fun Run – Albert Park Lake
30 August 2006 Herald Sun Honour Roll
19 September 2006 Defence Lake Attack Charity Dinner
7 October 2006 Volunteer Group Leader Training

In friendship,
John Hurley
President
TCF Victoria



Western Australia

Mandurah

Our annual Candlelight Memorial Service is held in a different church each year and the 2005 service was held at the Mandurah Baptist Church. It was a lovely service and very well attended. We had two events on Sunday 29 January for International Children's Memorial Day. The morning gathering was at Palm Beach and those in attendance placed flowers with messages written on butterfly shaped cards tied onto the flowers with raffia, into the ocean. This was followed by a sausage sizzle. The

evening gathering was held at The Lakes Memorial Cemetery where balloons were released and a picnic enjoyed afterwards.

We are currently in the midst of organising our first “Walk to Remember”. This will take place on Sunday 19 March. I was very impressed by the memorial walks that take place annually in the U.S and the one that was held during the International Gathering in Canada. The USA national event ensures that many people there are aware of what TCF is all about. Here in Australia we have maintained a low profile with the result that a huge portion of the community does not know who we are and what we do. We’ve based our organising on the information generously provided to us by Pat Lowe, (CEO of TCF USA.) and are hoping that the walk will be a successful awareness event. We have sponsorship from two local businesses and from the Healing Hearts Foundation. Members of the Lions Club of Mandurah are cooking the sausage sizzle and we will be wearing T-shirts with our logo on. If this is successful perhaps we could have a national memorial walk. Does this take place in any other state? What is the opinion of the other chapter leaders?

Soon we will be organising our Mothers’ Day Luncheon. This is one of our most popular annual events and this year our luncheon is part funded by the Zonta Club of the Peel region. We are privileged to have as our guest a well known author, Anna Jacobs. Anna resides locally and she is donating a copy of her latest book as a raffle prize.

It was a pleasure to meet John Hurley on his recent visit, to show him a little of Mandurah and discuss various issues with him. Any other visitors from interstate will always be welcome at our centre.

Margot McAllister
TCF Mandurah



TCF National Body Proposed formation.

My name is John Hurley, currently President of TCF VIC and at present I am trying to establish a national body for TCF Australia, as has been recently suggested in the National Newsletter.

All the states have indicated by mail of their agreement to a national body and I have had the privilege (due to family commitments) over the last few months to visit the state bodies in Perth, Mandurah, Adelaide and Brisbane. These visits have enabled me to meet the various committees and to discuss some of the problems that they are facing.

From these visits, the following TCF Reps have agreed to assist in this process:

Tony Hurren TCF SA President
Baden Jacob TCF SA Treasurer
Chris Dennys TCF ACT and Queanbeyan
Co-ordinator

At this time we are looking at the best way to set up the National Body as a legal entity and once set up and formed, the inaugural committee will then be able to discuss the issues that all various states have suggested.

The establishment of a national body could pursue the any of the following benefits;

- *Literature Development*
- *Sharing Resources*
- *Credibility*
- *Lobby Strength*
- *Support*
- *Central Contact*
- *National Fundraising*
- *Economy of Scale*
- *Federal Funding*
- *National Publicity*
- *Corporate Sponsorship*

and many others that may be added to the list.

As all state bodies may not be able to assist financially, the National Body will have to survive on its own resources.

Contact will be made with all state groups over the next few months to advise of the progress of the above.

Regards
John F Hurley
President TCF VIC

International Council News

For a number of years now, Joe Lawley - one of TCF's founder members - dreamed of an international council to advise and help establish new groups abroad. At the 4th International Gathering in Vancouver August 2005, Joe's dream came true. Representatives from around the world agreed the time was right and I was elected Chairperson.

Following the establishment of a link on the USA TCF website - enquiries have been received from Mexico, Jordan, Israel, Guam, Spain, Namibia, The Philippines, Uganda, Tanzania and India. The World-wide Candle-lighting held in December attracted a lot of interest and many new groups of bereaved parents got together to join in this event. A support group has re-opened in Namibia and we have a new telephone contact in France.

I am currently up-dating our international contact list - a slow, lengthy project - and would appreciate any information, especially email addresses, which will give us an accurate picture of where TCF can offer help and where we do not have an active group. Please provide your contact details to your International Council representative who will pass it on to the Council.

Globally, we have had a number of natural disasters recently. In the wake of every event of this kind, many families

are left bereft of at least one of their loved ones. Many parents lose one or all of their children and children may lose their parents or siblings. TCF is a unique organisation; we can offer genuine support based on the fact that we are all bereaved parents/siblings/grandparents ourselves. We know the pain caused by the death of a beloved child and it is our duty to ensure that help is available when and where it is needed. Hopefully, with your support, the International Council can help to make it happen.

Yours very sincerely
Margaret Pringle (David's Mum)
Chairperson
TCF International Council

International News

News from the Netherlands

Here is some news from overseas, from 'Vereniging Ouders van een Overleden Kind' as our TCF organisation in The Netherlands is called.

On 23 February 2006 we commemorated 25 years of Compassionate Friends in our country. Our committee, of which I was one, organised a one day symposium for people who are working on the professional side of grief, eg. funeral directors, psychologists, police, nurses, day-care workers, specialists, fire-fighters, teachers etc.

The day was attended by 180 people and was well received. The title of the symposium was: "The death of a child, possibilities and boundaries for the care-taker."

On 25 February 2006 we organised a remembrance day for our members (we have approx. 2800 people in the whole country), 400 of them attended the day in a church in the middle of the country.

Together we sang a translation in Dutch from the song 'Share the love', it was very

moving. Also we had tables with photographs of our deceased children with a blue TCF light which was given to all the parents.

The illustrator of our bi-monthly national newsletter had made 16 paintings on large panels on which every parent could glue a paper butterfly (I had cut out 500 of them), with the name of their child on it.

If you do have access to a computer, please have a look at our website www.vook.nl - of course it is all in our Dutch language, but you can have a look at the butterfly quilt which we made for this commemoration and if you click underneath the photograph on: "bekijk hier de foto's van de herdenkingsdag en het symposium", you can see the photographs made on the days of the symposium and the remembrance day.

On the personal side I like to tell you that we are very grateful and ever so happy to announce the birth of our sixth grandchild from our only surviving daughter Nicolien and her German husband Thilo. Her name is Rosalie and she was born on 5 February 2006. We feel so fortunate to have this wonderful 'bunch of flowers in our empty meadow'. Our oldest grandson Lucas will turn eight in March; in April our youngest grandson Julian turns seven; our oldest granddaughter Charlotte is five and a half; our twin granddaughters

Melissa and Sarah are now three and a half - and now we have our youngest granddaughter Rosalie in our family.

They are all living in Berlin, Germany. Many people ask us if we feel unhappy because they are 'so far away'. I always reply, "Marieke is the one who really is far away, we can't reach her anymore... And Nicolien and her lovely family are reachable in many ways, by car, by plane, by telephone and by e-mail, so what do I have to complain about.....?"

And I'm always thinking of the parents who have lost their only child or children and never have the chance and the happiness of becoming and being grandparents...., but at the same time we will always miss our beloved Marieke, she is always 'present in absence' and over the nearly 13 years since she died, we have learned to live with her absence and we know she's always around us. By now we know that sorrow and joy can live together, but that doesn't mean we that we don't always miss our dearest oldest daughter Marieke.

To all our compassionate friends all over Australia and other parts of the world we send you lots of compassionate love and please take care of yourselves.

Betsy de Jager in The Netherlands.

Poetry and Prose

Strength by Serena

I remember in those early weeks and months, people would look at me and say "Serena you are so strong" which I hated. To me it implied that all they could see was the shell of me which was a mess of shock and disbelief, they couldn't see inside to me completely broken heart and know that every cell in my body was aching to get to Rory, that every truck I didn't drive into the path of on the highway was a miracle.

The intense fear I felt of what was to become of me; where was my boy who couldn't stand to be without me for five minutes...all of that was all-consuming. Strength to me meant that I had to 'overcome' which I didn't want to do. I just hated the thought of "being strong" - people would stop taking care of me if they thought I was strong enough to take care of Rob and the kids and me on my own.

As time goes on, I have a different perspective on what being 'strong' means. I believe that during those times that we allow ourselves to be consumed by the intense pain that is grief - that we go with it, rather than trying to fight it: that is strength.

When we allow others to help, to sit and be with us and offer some sort of support - even though we know they have no understanding of the pain we are in - that is strength.

When someone comes to us with what seems like a stupid petty problem, but they feel their world is falling apart, and we choose to show compassion and try to help them anyway, that is strength.

Pointing your face toward the sun while your heart is in the gutter - that takes strength.

Sometimes what we have been brought up to think of as weakness - in that lies great strength.

I have become very skilled at showing the sort of strength that society accepts as 'being strong' - stiff upper lip and all that. But it is when my mask comes OFF and I let it stay off for a while, even though the person under the mask is vulnerable and frightenedthat's when in my heart I know I am strong.

*Serena's youngest son, Rory drowned at home on 13 September 2004. He was three years old.
Received by email*

Points to Ponder

I don't think I am getting any better. - I have heard those words from virtually every bereaved parent I have ever talked to. Bereaved parents don't see their own grief improve because they are with it 24 hours per day. Answer the following questions to see if you are "getting better":

- (1) Have I gotten through one hour without crying?
- (2) Have I gotten through the morning without screaming?
- (3) Have I slept at least two hours without waking?
- (4) Have I caught my self smiling instead of crying when I think of my child?

We have to remember to take our grief one step at a time. If you answered "yes" to at least one of the questions above, then you are making progress - you have just taken another step.

Pam Duke

TCF, San Antonio, TX

From We Need Not Walk Alone – Compassionate Friends Oak Brook Il.

To Sink or Swim

"To sink or swim" are not the only alternatives in life. Many survive just by FLOATING. There were many times after my son died that I did feel as though I was sinking below the waves of grief and I was just too exhausted to try and swim to the other side of that lake of pain. It was at those times that I just simply FLOATED. By floating, it may have taken me longer to reach the shore than it would if I had tried to swim; besides, the shore seemed just so far away that I wouldn't have made it by swimming anyway. But by just floating along with the current, I did not sink and the other side is getting closer all the time.

Verna Smith

TCF, Ft. Worth, TX

From We Need Not Walk Alone – Compassionate Friends Oak Brook Il.

In Celebration of Laughter

Today I laughed,
a throaty little giggle,
a tiny laugh
this first time
since you died.

Today I laughed,
no hearty chuckle,
a light laugh
this first time
since you died.

Today I laughed,
a little laugh,
little laugh
since you left.

Today I laughed,
a tinkling laugh,
echoing from my soul.

I was happy
it is a beginning ...

Toby Sue Shaw

TCF, Stamford, CT

From We Need Not Walk Alone – Compassionate Friends Oak Brook Il.

Autumn

In the fall
When amber leaves are shed,
Softly-silently
Like tears that wait to flow,
I watch and grieve.
My heart beats sadly
In the fall;
'Tis then I miss you
Most of all.

Lily de Lauder

TCF, Van Nuys, CA

*From We Need Not Walk Alone –
Compassionate Friends Oak Brook Il.*

Take this thread

Take this thread
Of hope
And let it be
A new beginning -
A thread in the new fabric of life
You must now weave.
Choose your colour:
You have known the blues
And sunk deep into them
Yet also known the calming
Of a cloudless sky
You have known the reds
Sublime sunsets
Flashes of anger
Flames of passion

What about green?
You have known the gentle cushion
The balmy restfulness
Of a grassy verge
Known also the green-eyed monster
Jealous of those who still have
What you have lost.
You have seen the sunny yellows
Absent for a while now
Overtaken by the grey
Always the grey.

Choose these threads of hope
Draw them together;
Take the positives
Turn the greys to silver.
Remember how it was
And know you will
Once again, some time,
Come to that place of harmony.
But first choose your threads carefully
And much later
Much stitching later
Weaving, working
After much hard work,
Love and care
Your fabric will glow again
A different fabric
For it can never
Be the same
But it will be beautiful
A new form of beautiful.

© Carolyn Salter,
TCF Walcha NSW

Letter to My Mum

Mum, I haven't forgotten my brother. I just find it hard to talk about it. I see your pain, and wish I could run and hug you tight. But I hold back, regretting it so much. On his birthday I try to talk, but I can't express myself I have so much to tell you, but I can't. I don't want to upset you, but I know it would help and I know it's what you would like.

Mum, I want to tell you that he would be starting school next year, we should be buying his uniform and school bag. Everyday I see children his age and I see your longing look, I feel that way too, Mum. I try to imagine what he'd look like and what sort of personality he'd have. I remember the short time we spent with him, the pain when he left us. Mum, I want to tell you how much I love him, but I can't.

I see your secret pain when your friends forget his anniversary or birthday and when people apologise for bringing up his name. Mum, I hate it when my friends avoid the subject too and when I'm down they tread lightly, just like I do. When really we both want the same thing, to laugh, cry and remember.

*Anonymous, Sibling.
From Words Of Sorrow, Word Of Love – The Death of a Child*

His Room

I now stand in the midst of "His Room." Once again I reached and touched all of the "little things" he treasured so dearly each day, yet had no meaning or value to anyone else.

And as I stood there, I wanted to visualize once again times as they once were, only a very short time ago. I yearned once again to hear his voice, his music, and to feel his presence within me.

I glimpsed the many pictures he had placed upon the walls, each relaying to me some small story that had entered his life, I listened for familiar voices of his many friends who were always there in abundance each and every day with him here in this very room, but only now to hear a vibration of silence

I reflect upon all of the precious moments we had for our "little talks about life" itself and all of the "momentous" problems which were generally solved in a matter of minutes. And how when I used to walk away from this very room, a smile would always project from within me as to how very fortunate I was at that very moment to have him - his innocence was always so overwhelming.

And as I stand here, I wonder how many others at this very moment in time are standing in their "beloved room of memories" as I now am! How many others are holding what I am now cherishing within me?

And how many times each day I would hear his voice call to me from this very room, "Dad, I love you. See you later!!"

Yes, my precious little man, mom and dad will see you later!

Dick Gallagher

TCF, Central Connecticut

From We Need Not Walk Alone – Compassionate Friends Oak Brook II.

Resources

Have you heard of the Dougy Center – for grieving children and families? It is in Portland, Oregon in the U.S. A colleague from SIDSandKids ACT visited the centre a couple of years ago with the thought of setting up a similar centre in Canberra. He was very impressed – but the project is taking a long time. However in the meantime information, books and pamphlets are available from their website <http://www.dougy.org> We have the book ‘Healing a Child’s Grieving Heart’, 100 practical ideas for families, friends and caregivers by Alan D. Wolfelt. It is good, clear and simple - one of our families found it a very valuable resource with their six year old son after the death of his younger brother.

Two other books about children’s grief are:

‘The Grieving Child’ – a parents’ guide, by Helen Fitzgerald – a Fireside book published by Simon and Schuster.

‘Keys to Helping Children Deal With Death and Grief’ by Joy Johnson – a Centering Corporation Resource www.centering.org

Suggestions for Friends and Relatives of the Grieving Survivor

The following are suggestions summarised from an a folder collected by Eva Lager compiled by Jensen (1985):

- Get in touch.
- Say little on an early visit.
- Avoid clichés and easy answers.
- Be yourself
- Keep in touch.
- Attend to practical matters.
- Encourage others to visit or help.
- Accept silence.
- Be a good listener.
- Do not attempt to tell the bereaved how he or she feels.
- Do not probe for details about the death
- Comfort children in the family.
- Avoid talking to others about trivia in the presence of the recently bereaved.
- Encourage the "working through of grief".
- Write a letter.
- Encourage the postponement of major decisions.
- In time, quietly draw the mourner into quiet, outside activity.
- When the mourner returns to social activity, treat him/her as a normal person.
- Be aware of needed progress through grief.

If you are close to the bereaved person, you may have to give more time, more of yourself than you imagined. You will have to perceive the special needs of your friend and creatively attempt to meet those needs. Such commitment and effort may even save a life. At the least, you will know the satisfaction of being truly and deeply helpful. It is important to keep in mind that a major loss will change the survivors.

From "Grieving", Maureen Pollock (BP); assignment for Psych Nursing Degree. 1996.

TCF AUSTRALIAN DIRECTORY

TCF AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

(Editors - Maxine Davies and Chris Dennys)

Postal address:

TCF Australian National Newsletter
C/- Grant Cameron Community Centre
27 Mulley Street
HOLDER ACT 2611

Email:

[TCF National Newsletter Editors](mailto:ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au)
(ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au and
mmdavies@cyberone.com.au)

Telephone:

Maxine: (02) 6286 6134
Chris: (02) 6291 9029

International dialling prefix : 61 2

TCF INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Interim Australian Representative Chris Dennys

Postal address:

Chris Dennys
73 Hemmings Crescent
RICHARDSON ACT 2905

Email:

ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au

Website:

<http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org>

Telephone:

Chris: (02) 6291 9029

International direct dialling prefix: 61 2

TCF AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY AND QUEANBEYAN

Postal address and meeting rooms:

The Compassionate Friends ACT and Queanbeyan Inc.
Grant Cameron Community Centre
27 Mulley Street
HOLDER ACT 2611

Website: <http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/ACT.htm>

Telephone:

Coordinator: (02) 6291 9029
Grief Support: (02) 6286 6134

(Hosted on TCF NSW website)

TCF NEW SOUTH WALES

Postal address:

The Compassionate Friends NSW Inc.
PO Box 1303
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Email:

tcf@bigpond.com.au

Website:

www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au

Office address and drop-in centre:

4th Floor, Room 404
32 York Street,
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Telephone:

Office and Grief Support: (02) 2 9290 2355
Facsimile: (02) 9290 2445

International direct dialling prefix: 61 2

TCF QUEENSLAND

Postal address:

The Compassionate Friends Queensland Inc
PO Box 1930,
NEW FARM QLD 4005.

Email:

tcfqld@powerup.com.au

Website:

<http://www.uq.net.au/tcfbrisbane/>

Office address and drop-in centre:

505 Bowen Terrace
NEW FARM QLD 4005

Telephone:

All enquiries: (07) 3254 2657
Facsimile: (07) 3358 2533

International direct dialling prefix: 61 7

TCF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Postal address:

The Compassionate Friends South Australian Inc.
Adelaide Chapter
PO Box 26,
KENT TOWN SA 5071

Email:

tcf@arcom.com.au

Office address and drop-in centre:

Telephone:

Message bank: (08) 8351 0344

International direct dialling prefix: 61 8

TCF VICTORIA

Postal address:

The Compassionate Friends Victoria Inc
PO Box 171
CANTERBURY VIC 3126

Email:

Grief enquiries: support@compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au

Administration enquiries: cfriends@ozemail.com.au

Website:

www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au

Office address and drop-in centre:

267 Canterbury Road,
CANTERBURY VIC 3126

Telephone:

Grief Support: (03) 9888 4944

Administration: (03) 9888 4034

Facsimile: (03) 9888 4900

International direct dialling prefix: 61 3

TCF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PERTH

Postal address and drop-in centre:

The Compassionate Friends Western Australia Inc.
Bereaved Parent Centre
City West Lotteries House
2 Delhi Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Email:

tcf@eftel.com.au

Web site

<http://www.compassionatefriendswa.org.au/index.html>

Telephone:

Grief Support: (08) 9486 8711

Facsimile: (08) 9486 8717

International direct dialling prefix: 61 8

MANDURAH

Postal address and drop-in centre:

TCF Mandurah Inc.
Room 2 Mandurah Lottery House
7 Anzac Place
MANDURAH WA 6210

Email:

tcfmandurah@bigpond.com

Please notify directory amendments to newsletter editors

Updated 17:45 12 March 2006

Telephone:

Phone/Facsimile: (08) 9535 7761.

After hours: (08) 9582 8113

International direct dialling prefix: 61 8

For International dialling use the IDD prefix plus the last 8 digits

TCF AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE SITE REGISTER

TCF Chapter: TCF ACT and Queanbeyan

City/Town: Canberra

State: ACT

Description of site: Children's Memorial Seat in Weston Park overlooking Lake Burley Griffin within a stand of eucalypts and near a BBQ area.

Significance of site: Seat has been erected by ACT Government and has a memorial plaque dedicated to our children.

Site is used for TCF ceremonies and gatherings and also for private reflection.

Location of site: Weston Park YARRALUMLA ACT 2600

Map reference: UBD map 58 J9

Access to site – hours: 24 hour access

Local chapter contact: Chris Dennys (02) 6291 9029

Other information: Weston Park is open to the public full details of the site are available at: <http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/ACT.htm>

TCF Chapter: Miranda

City/Town: Gymea

State: NSW

Description of Site: A memorial garden and park bench in the grounds of Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Art Centre. The garden has eleven Compassionate Roses (planted in the eleventh year of the Miranda Chapter). The roses are planted in a round bed with a small hedge border. Sutherland Council donated a memorial plaque which is mounted on a sizeable rock and placed in the garden. Placed near the rose garden we have a "Cotswold" park bench with a similar plaque. This bench was donated to Hazelhurst through the Miranda Chapter by the Waratah Social Group. The memorial plaque is dedicated to the memory of the children of the Miranda Chapter and contains the TCF logo and a tribute to the children. Hazelhurst comes under the control of the Sutherland Shire Council, whose landscapers take care of the gardens.

Significance of Site: The site is used by TCF members as a meeting place for coffee and lunch and is used as a quiet place for the chapter leader to meet with newly bereaved parents.

Location of Site: Hazelhurst Gallery and Regional Arts Centre, 782 Kingsway, Gymea 2227

Map Reference: Entrance is on Kingsway, Gymea, between Talara Road and Holtham Road

Access to site: Open 7 days a week from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. except Christmas, Boxing Day and Good Friday

Local chapter contact: Valda Hamilton (02) 9520 4921

Other information: The Hazelhurst Gallery is open to the public and is well worth a visit in its own right. Full details are available at <http://www.hazelhurst.co.au>.

TCF Chapter: Miranda

City/Town: Kogarah

State: NSW

Description of Site: A bed consisting of nine Compassionate Friends roses planted around the flagpole on the grounds of Calvary Hospital. The rose garden is flourishing and is cared for by the hospital's maintenance staff.

Significance of Site: The roses are on the grounds of a hospital which serves as a hospice for terminally ill individuals so the site is a wonderful expression of the Compassionate Friends motto that "we need not walk alone".

Location of Site: 1485 91-111 Rocky Point Road, Kogarah, NSW

Map Reference: Located at the corner of Fitzgerald Avenue and Rocky Point Road in Kogarah

Access to site: Not applicable-not a public venue

Local chapter contact: Valda Hamilton (02) 9520 4921

TCF Chapter: Brisbane

City/Town: Brisbane

State: QLD

Description of Site

Mt. Cootha Botanic Gardens, Brisbane. It is in an area with running water not far from the Japanese Gardens.

TCF Chapter: Townsville

City/Town: Townsville

State: QLD

Description of Site

The Townsville Chapter has a TCF memorial in Queens Gardens, Paxton Street, Townsville (near the old hospital).

**TCF Australia
Heritage Site Notification**

Please include details of the under-mentioned site/s in the International Council's listing of TCF Heritage sites:

Post or email preferred completed details to:

Chris Dennys

73 Hemmings Crescent

RICHARDSON ACT 2905

Phone: (02) 6291 9029

Email: ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au

TCF chapter	
City/Town	
State	
Description of site:	
Significance of site:	
Location of site	
Map reference	
Access to site - hours	
Local chapter contact	
Other information	

Example sheet:

TCF chapter	TCF ACT and Queanbeyan
City/Town	Canberra
State	ACT
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Significance of site:	Seat has been erected by ACT Government and has a memorial plaque dedicated to our children. Site is used for TCF ceremonies and gatherings and also for private reflection.
Location of site	Weston Park Yarralumla ACT 2600
Map reference	UBD map 58 J9
Access to site - hours	24 hour access
Local chapter contact	Chris Dennys (02) 6291 9029
Other information	Weston Park is open to the public full details of the site are available at: http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/ACT.htm

CLOSING DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

10 July 2006

PLEASE SEND ARTICLES, LETTERS AND COMMENTS TO

Maxine Davies mmdavies@cyberone.com.au and
Christopher Dennys ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au

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