



The Compassionate Friends Greater Omaha Chapter

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The Mission of the Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Jul-Aug 2007



[Address Service Requested](#)

Butterfly Release & Angels are Forever Concert, August 1, 7:00 p.m. Pipal Park, 78 & Center

Alan Pedersen has been performing for more than 25 years. An accomplished singer and award winning songwriter, he spent several years writing and recording music in Nashville, Tennessee. Alan has had several songs recorded by other artists. His writing has not been limited to music, he has written commercials, radio news copy, and collaborations for television shows and other comedy projects. His performing credits are numerous as well. Alan has worked as an actor, stand-up comedian, keynote speaker/emcee, and in radio as a network news and sports reporter for Westwood One Communications. Currently living in Englewood, Colorado, Alan is the father of two teenage boys and an angel.

In August of 2001 Alan's life took a tragic turn. His 18-year-old and only daughter Ashley was killed in an automobile accident. This tragedy would take his life in a direction he never imagined. Struggling for months to find answers and trying to cope with tremendous pain and anger, he entered a spiritually based grief program in Denver. He credits this program with saving his life, and inspiring him to honor his daughter's life by helping others. In July of 2003, Alan released a CD of songs he has written about his walk through the valley of grief, titled Ashley's Songbook. Alan now helps others by sharing his story of faith and hope. His message is simple; grief and loss offer the opportunity for ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. He believes that healing begins when we once again give of ourselves by helping others. Alan speaks and plays his music for churches and grief organizations around the country. In 2006 Alan released a new music CD, A Little Farther Down The Road.

Family & friends welcome for this very special event. Bring lawn chairs. In case of bad weather, we will move to New Cassel, 900 N 90th. The new 2007 Nebraska Remembers Banner will be presented.

PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS & ADULT SIBLINGS

MEETINGS

7:00 p.m. 1st Wednesday of the month

New Cassel Retirement Center

900 N. 90th Street — Auditorium Level 2

Additional parking & entrance in back

Wed, July 11— Sibling Panel

July 20-22 — National Conference, Oklahoma City

Wed, August 1—**Memorial Program-Butterfly Release**

Alan Pedersen—Angels Are Forever Concert

Omaha Pipal Park—78 & Center

Wed, Sep 5 — Your New Normal

SPANISH MEETING

7:00 p.m. 3rd Wednesday of the Month

One World Community Health Center Conference Room

4920 S 30th Street 712-326-4308

LUNCH GROUP

Noon — 3rd Tuesday of the month

Tues, Jul 17 — Fuddruckers, 72 & Dodge

Tues, Aug 21 — Valentinos Buffet, 108 & Q

♥ Love Gifts ♥

Your love gifts help spread the message of hope and healing.

TCF is a 501c3 organization and funded only by donations.

Chapter expenses are printing, postage, library, yellow pages, memorial programs.

- ♥ In memory of our son Alan by his parents Alan & Jean Wiles
- ♥ In memory of Michael Peter Mulready by his mother
Anne Marie Zauner "Happy Birthday"
- ♥ In memory of Cathy Jo Thibault by her parents Red & Martha Thibault "We love you miss you every day."
- ♥ In memory of Steve Burhenne by his parents Elmer and Carol Burhenne "Happy 48th Birthday"
- ♥ In memory of David Arenz by his parents Chuck & Kathy Arenz "In loving memory"
- ♥ In memory of Corey Kruse by Cathy Kruse
"Happy Birthday Baby Boy"
- ♥ In memory of Kaylie Faith Bousquet by Kristen & Gregory Bousquet
- ♥ In memory of Brian Nye Paterson by his parents Pat & Sharon Paterson "Miss you every day"
- ♥ In memory of Karlene Patrice Lavon Blake by her mother Kellye Douglas "Thank you for 9 spectacular years."
- ♥ In memory of Brian M. Todd by his parents Tim & Janet Todd
"God Bless you and Keep you."
- ♥ In memory of Marco Phillip Rael by his father Ray Rael
"You will always be with us."
- ♥ In memory of Dan Campbell by Barb Campbell
- ♥ In memory of Ross Mlnarik by his parents Robert & Elaine
"We always remember your love for summer.
Love you Mom & Dad"
- ♥ Corporate gift from Union Pacific through direction of Michael Thomas Ryder for his son Bryan
- ♥ In memory of their son Alan C. Wiles by Alan & Jean Wiles
- ♥ In memory of Nicole Renee Spiegel by Randy & Janice Spiegel
"We will always love you and miss you."
- ♥ In memory of Aaron Hartline Van Knorring by his grandmother Trudy Hartline
- ♥ In memory of Ellen Gloria Cerra on the 4 year anniversary of her heaven date by her parents Beth & Phil Cerra
"We love you and miss you every moment of every day."
- ♥ Website hosting for 12 months by Sharon & Pat Paterson,
in memory of Brian.
- ♥ Thank you to Joyce Sporhase for sending the April, May & June remembrance cards.

Thank you to the following businesses and professionals who have generously assisted us in our mission to offer hope

to bereaved families.

New Cassel Retirement Center
Centering Corporation

Thank You 2006 Candle Lighting Sponsors

Riekas Distributing
Heafey-Heafey-Hoffmann-Dworak
Cutler Funeral Chapels
The Hawks Foundation
Roeder Mortuary
Omaha State Bank
Woodmen of the World Insurance
Security National Bank
Westlawn-Hillcrest Funeral Chapels
Gleoma Arbor #731, Gleaner
Life Insurance Society
HyVee 52nd & Center

You will no longer receive the newsletter if 2 years have passed since our last contact with you. You can be added back to the mailing list at your request. If you would like to send a "Love Gift", list your child in "Our Children Remembered", or have an address change, please clip & mail to:

The Compassionate Friends , 11825 Dorcas Street, Omaha, NE 68144-2948

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Child's Name _____ Your Relationship _____

Birth Date _____ Death Date _____ Telephone _____

Donation: () Love Gift of \$ _____ in Memory of _____

Message: _____

I GIVE MY PERMISSION TO PRINT BIRTH & DEATH DATES IN THE NEWSLETTER .

SIGNATURE REQUIRED _____

Does your employer have a matching gift program? _____ 2007

Submit poems, memories or love gifts for the Sep-Oct Newsletter by Aug 15

2006 Year End Report-Omaha TCF	TOTAL IN	\$ 7,321.23
Submitted to the National Office 3-1-07	TOTAL OUT	\$ (8,506.08)
		\$ (1,184.85)
Cash Donations		\$ 1,090.72
United Way		\$ 17.40
Fundraising Income \$6199.00 - Expenses \$(4905.20)		\$ 1,293.80
Interest		\$ 14.11
Total Unrestricted Income		\$ 2,416.03
Annual Fee 2005—National Office		\$ (452.21)
Meeting Place		-
Bank Charges		\$ (25.00)
Printing		\$ (711.55)
Postage		\$ (1,004.59)
Library		\$ (40.00)
Yellow Pages & Voicemail		\$ (826.21)
Program Expenses		\$ (200.00)
Supplies		\$ (341.32)
Total Expenses		\$ (3,600.88)

Fundraising Income: the Banner, Summer Memorial Program, and Worldwide Candle lighting.

Our chapter reaches out to more than 400 families with the bimonthly newsletter, over 600 attended the 2006 Worldwide Candle lighting, 35-40 attend the monthly support group meetings, and 8-10 at the monthly luncheon. Last year the Adult Sibling Group was started, and recently a Spanish group has formed. Over 100 visit our website monthly. We are pleased that people who need us have found us.

The growth also means increased expenses. The candle lighting requires planning and raising money all year to make it possible. It takes a very large room for 600 to be seated comfortably and safely with coats and children and 600 candles burning. We have contracted with the Holiday Inn again, and Mitch Carmody of Minnesota, to speak at the December 9 event. The entire candle lighting budget is \$3500.00

In the next few months, we would like your help with raising money from corporate sources. Do you know of one friend or business associate that you could ask to help sponsor the Worldwide Candle lighting? We need teamwork.

And it is not too early to make arrangements for 2008, 2nd Sunday in December. If you have an idea or a connection to a place to hold the 2008 candle lighting, please check on it. Is there someone out there who will provide us a location at no expense? We hope that our chapter will find the resources to be able to continue this very special program to come together to remember our children.

TO THOSE WHO CAME AFTER

I never knew my brother,
Yet I know him well,
Through my mother's eyes I've known him,
And I love him still.
I'll grow tall and strong like him,
Yet not like him at all.
He'll be my guardian angel,
And we'll go through life together, as one.
I'll have his clothes and his toys
And his photos,
But most of all,
I treasure the loving memories
My mother gave me.
-----Karen Hoyland, Brisbane, Australia

"Those of us who have worked through our grief—and found there is a future—are the ones who must meet others in the valley of darkness and bring them to the rim of light."

Rev. Simon Stephens, Founder of the
Compassionate Friends in England in 1969.

As Long As You Remember Me.

As long as you remember me,
my memory will live on.
My spirit will be there with you
at every breaking dawn.
I'll sing to you through birds in spring
and whisper through the tree;
I'll bring you gentle comfort with
a warm, caressing breeze.
As long as you remember me,
my love will fill your heart and
help to ease the sorrow that you feel
while we're apart.
With thoughts of me, perhaps you'll see
the wonder of each day, the joy of sunlit
afternoons, and nature's grand display.
As long as you remember me,
I always will be near to lend you sweet
tranquility as nighttime stars appear.
The bond that we have shared will be a
ling from me to you to give you hope
for brighter days and strength to see you
through.
May loving memories bring you comfort and peace.

Submitted by Darlene Joesting, Mom of David, TCF
Omaha. Received this in a card and wanted to share it
with you.

I REMEMBERED

I remembered your first day in the "real world" you were with your
Grandma and you had to leave me at the hospital because I had
fallen sick during labor and delivery, you were nine days old.

I remembered your last day in this world you arrived before me be-
cause you had fallen sick, and I had to leave without you—you were
nine years old.

I remembered how blessed I was to have you, even though we didn't
have much else. And how excited I was to get to know you—this new
little person no one had ever had the privilege of knowing.

I remembered how much your little brother, Kalen, loved you, and
wanted your attention and approval. How he was only three years old
when you left us, and didn't understand why we couldn't go to heaven
and visit you in your new mansion. And now, four years later, how he
so desperately tries to keep his memories of you close—so as not to
forget you.

I remembered my wedding plans being interrupted by funeral arrange-
ments and the emotional rollercoaster ride that ensued. I remember
the arrival of two new babies whose only knowledge of you are your
many pictures still spread throughout our house. And now they call
you 'sister' with slightly perplexed expressions on their little faces.

I remembered the indescribable pain and anguish, the helplessness
and hopelessness, the anger and rage, the guilt and frustration, the
loneliness and isolation, the desperation, the sinking feeling, the feel-
ing of being choked and bound. Feeling like I could not —*would* not
make it through another day without you . . .

And then you know what happened? I remembered your smile and
your contagious laugh. I remembered how intellectually and academi-
cally your concern for others less fortunate than you and how you
hated to see people in pain. I remembered how excited and grateful I
was the day you decided to ask Jesus into your heart. And then I re-
membered how blessed I am, we all are, that you are now with your
Lord in Heaven where there is no sickness, no pain, and no more
tears. I remembered that you are well taken care of and that you can
see us and hear us and you smile upon us every day. And most of all,
I remembered that one day we will be reunited and I will know you
and you will know me —and we will never be separated again!

By Evangelist Kellye A. Douglas, mother of Karlene 10/25/93—3/1/03,
TCF Omaha. Karlene was nine years old when she passed of a
sudden asthma attack at home.

The 2007 Banner was sent to print with 197 names. A total of
\$2215.00 was raised to support the chapter. THANK YOU. The ban-
ner will be carried in the 2007 Walk to Remember in Oklahoma City
by several of our chapter members attending the national conference.
This year's route includes circling the memorial at the site of the
former Murrah Federal Building.

Many bereaved families across the US will be walking on their own
at the same time. Remember your child, in a concurrent walk at 8:00
a.m. on Sunday, July 22. The new banner will be displayed in
Omaha on August 1. Banner donations will be acknowledged with a
personal copy of the banner sent to each family after the banner is
presented at the August 1 meeting at Pipal Park.

THE FOREST FIRE and grief

By Rick Nickles, Donor Spouse

Have you ever been to a forest after a forest fire? The trees are black and charred; it smells bad. It feels terrible to be there. The animals and birds are gone. There is an eerie silence that isn't usually there. Park rangers have told me that forest fires are nature's way of renewing the forest, as seeds don't germinate again after the fire burns everything up. I spent many years in various wilderness settings, but seeing a forest after a fire remains vivid in my memory. I have already forgotten many pretty places, but I'll never forget how I felt in that charred forest.

After a little while, if you look around, seedlings and pretty little flowers begin to show. You may see a bird here or there. Then, maybe a chipmunk or two, not many, just a few. It takes a while, but eventually the birds and animals return, just not in the same number or manner as before. The forest grows again, although it's different than it used

to be. It is often the same with those of us who are grieving. Our old life is gone and the world we once knew has been changed forever. The death of a loved one changes our own existence and may make us question whether we will ever feel good again. Moving forward is difficult, but it allows us to experience new joys.

Grief is about transition and healing. Grief is about looking for the little flowers amid the ruins.

Grief is the transition from the old life to the new life. It starts with the devastating loss and the identity crisis that follows. There are the painful voids in our lives that redirect our focus and attention so that we notice the little things we didn't notice before. Then comes living the new life, with all the growing pains that come with it. It's all about learning to walk, one foot in front of the other foot, trying not to fall. And if we fall, we get back up again and try to keep walking after the death of our loved ones. Grief is about transition and healing. Grief is about looking for the

little flowers amid the ruins.

The night I walked through the charred forest I sat on a rock and looked at the stars and the moon. The embers were still hot and the trees crackled and burned. The moonlight was shining and I could see many varied colors dancing.

The emptiness was still there, but I didn't notice it as much as I couldn't see the blackness and ugliness that remained. It was beautiful. While it was still night, I sat back and enjoyed the moonlight, the stars, the sounds of the crackling and popping, and the colors dancing back and forth in front of me. I forgot about what happened for just a little while.

National Kidney Foundation

For Those Who Give and Grieve

Spring 2007

NATIONAL CONFERENCE July 20-21-22

*Keynote Speakers, over 100 Workshops,
Sharing Sessions, Bring Healing Experience to 2007
National Conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
More information at www.compassionatefriends.org
or call 1-877-969-0010*

Keynote Speakers:

Simon Stephens founded The Compassionate Friends 37 years ago in England when he saw that two sets of bereaved parents could help each other more than anything he could say. Simon is making a special trip all the way from his current home in Russia for TCF/USA's 30th National Conference.

Elizabeth Edwards, bereaved parent, author, lawyer, teacher, and wife of declared presidential candidate John Edwards, shares with those attending the conference the loss of her 16-year-old son, Wade, as she has in the current bestseller *Saving Graces*.

Bill Hancock, bereaved parent and author, his son Will was killed in the 2001 airplane crash along with members and staff from the Oklahoma State University's men's basketball team.

Bud Welch, whose daughter, Julie, was killed in the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Their books:

Elizabeth Edwards—*Saving Graces*

Bill Hancock—*Riding with the Blue Moth*

Simon Stephens — *Death Comes Home*



We have not been able to update the TCF Omaha website for a few months and have transferred to a new server, which is no longer free. **Thank you to Pat & Sharon Paterson for donating the hosting charges for 1 year** to get us going again. TCFomaha.org is visited by 75-100 people every month.

With so many grief websites and other TCF chapter websites with their newsletters on-line, our newsletter is primarily focused on our community and families, rather than duplicating the works of other chapters. If you are looking for more grief materials, we recommend subscribing to *We Need Not Walk Alone* from the national office, or *Grief Digest*, available from Centering Corporation.. Both are excellent publications. Please try out our library, over 250 books are available for your use.

Volunteers are needed for the August Memorial Program and the December Candle lighting. Please watch for this information on our website or call us at 571-4011 if you can help.

Meetings will begin promptly at 7 pm. If you arrive late and someone is speaking, please wait quietly and join the circle when they are finished. You are welcome to attend any portion of the meeting that fits your schedule.

Library books: Someone donated them in memory of their child for other families to use....please return them to keep them in circulation!

Our Children Remembered

If you would like your child listed here, sign & submit the form on Page 2

If it is your child's birthday month, bring their favorite treat the meeting & share a birthday story.

BIRTHDAYS

7/3/1968 LISA JOHANNES RODGERS
7/5/1962 DANA RAY HERREN
7/7/1971 CHRIS COOK
7/11/1967 KEVIN SCHAFER
7/12/1992 EMMA JULIANA OCANTO
7/14/1971 JUSTIN SUURVARIK
7/18/1980 MARK THOMAS MASSIE
7/18/1962 W. DWIGHT WRICH
7/18/1977 TODD NEWILL
7/22/1971 JEFFREY RAY POTTER
7/23/1981 XAVIER E. BEVAN
7/26/1956 DAVID CHARLES ARENZ
7/27/1977 JOEL D. KUDYM
7/28/1967 RODNEY WAYNE JOHNSON
7/30/1961 JEFFERY MALL
7/30/1970 MARK HARDING EPSTEIN
8/1/2003 ISAIAH ALLEN HALL
8/6/1994 SHELDON WAYNE JOHNSON
8/9/1966 BRENT BLANCHARD
8/10/1959 STEVE BURHENNE
8/12/1978 JONATHON (SCOOB) NIELSON
8/13/1981 ERIK MATTHEW BALKUS
8/13/1969 JASON TODD FLOTT
8/13/1962 JIM LEHMAN
8/14/1974 ANGELA SHAWN MCCUMBER
8/14/1991 LISA MARIE WORLEY
8/18/1979 BRAD HANSON
8/23/1962 LUANN MILLER

ANNIVERSARIES

7/2/1994 EMMA JULIANA OCANTO
7/2/1986 CATHY JO THIBAULT
7/5/1999 LISA JOHANNES RODGERS
7/9/2002 ANGELA SHAWN MCCUMBER
7/10/2002 CASEY MURPHY
7/14/2004 JUSTIN SUURVARIK
7/15/2003 BECCA SULLIVAN
7/17/1981 DAVID CHARLES ARENZ
7/20/1983 BRYAN MICHAEL RYDER
7/23/2006 CHAD NICHOLS
7/23/2000 DUSTIN PATRICK FOSTER
7/25/2000 JEFFREY RAY POTTER
7/25/1993 ANDY POWLES
7/26/2002 MIKE B. ANTRIM
7/28/1979 DARYL L. CATLIN
7/28/2001 XAVIER E. BEVAN
7/31/2000 JAYME ROBERT ROSE
8/1/2003 ISAIAH ALLEN HALL
8/2/2001 RACHEL SARAH TALBOTT
8/6/2002 KYLER ANTONY BERKLAND
8/10/2002 SHELDON WAYNE JOHNSON
8/10/2002 RODNEY WAYNE JOHNSON
8/10/2002 MARIAH JO JOHNSON
8/10/2002 ALLYSSA COLLEEN JOHNSON
8/10/2002 AMY JO (MUELLER) JOHNSON
8/16/2003 ELLEN GLORIA CERRA
8/17/2003 LINDA K. SMITH
8/24/1983 MICHAEL HALL KIRK

Ted E Bear Hollow presents

“Keys to Teaching Children How to Deal With Death and Grief.”

Dr. Marv Johnson and Harold Ivan Smith will present this heart warming and creative approach to helping grieving children. This program is geared toward adults only. For parents, volunteers, caregivers, and professionals. No charge. Sunday July 8, All Saints Episcopal Church, 9230 Blondo. 1-4 pm. 502-2773 or sflanagan@tedebearhollow.org

Survivor Safety Sunday, July 8

Noon - 4:00 p.m. Wahoo Smith Park

Local families that have been affected by personal tragedy in the community are volunteering to help with this event, hoping to impact our children in a positive way. Games, Music, Activities, and Other Events Supporting Personal Safety Targeted to All Children. Pork BBQ tickets available from Chamber of Commerce Members. For more information, James and Kelly MacMillan at 443-1868.

<http://www.wahooschools.org/vnews/display.v/ART/2007/05/08/4640c72dbd57d>

Loving Listeners and Remembering Friends

If waiting until the next meeting is too long, the following people may be contacted. They are willing to “listen”. Please exchange contact information with those you meet at the meeting that you would like to keep in touch with. They care.

Adult Siblings— Rod 330-2162

Cancer— Pat 933-6017

Grandparents—

Auto Accident— Sandi 480-1515 sandramassie@hotmail.com

Young children— Kellye Douglas 334-4912

Infant Loss—

Fathers— Bob 493-0665 (h), 402-630-3984 (c)

Suicide—

Sudden death— Pam 296-4492 or cell 319-2873

Multiple Loss— Colleen 455-7949

If you cannot reach anyone on this list, call our 24 hour voicemail at 571-4011, and a volunteer will call you back. Let us know if you would like to be listed here to help others.