



The Compassionate Friends



El Paso Chapter



Welcome to our
Holiday Candlelighting Ceremony

Date: Sunday
December 9, 2007

Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

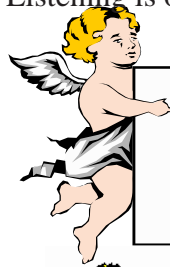
Place:
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
1000 Montana Avenue
El Paso, Texas

Board Of Directors:
Chairman: Susan Crews
542-0908
Sec/Treasurer: Lou Cain
Newsletter, Copies & Mailing:
The Winkelmans

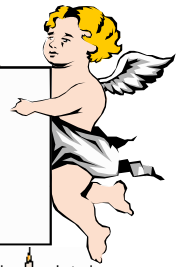
Mark Your Calendar For Future Meetings

January 30: Regular Meeting
February 27: Regular Meeting
March 26: Regular Meeting
April 25: Regular Meeting

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is a self help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purpose of TCF is to aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of their child and to foster the physical and emotional health of bereaved parents and surviving children. The El Paso chapter meets in donated church facilities, but no religious creed or affiliation is involved. There are no dues and no one is required to talk at any meeting. Listening is okay! Please join us, together we can make it.



Editor's Notes



HAPPY HOLIDAYS



We want this newsletter to be *your* newsletter. To do that, we need your help. You are invited – actually, you are strongly encouraged – to contribute to this publication. I'm hoping that one of your New Year's resolutions might be to send in something for the newsletter at least once this coming year. Please write and share your stories of your child or your sibling. Some of us get to know each other's children through the monthly chapter meetings. But, this newsletter also can be a forum for us to share. Writing is a form of therapy. It will help us get to know each other a little better and it will help us to heal a bit, too. We all have favorite memories that we can share – things that have helped us over the days, months or years. I hope you'll share them with us. It doesn't even have to be a full article. Sometimes, brief paragraphs of memories or thoughts are perfect.

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www.compassionatefriends.org

Visit Our New Website: www.elpasotcf.org

Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Worldwide Candle Lighting®

When a family has experienced the death of a child, the year simply would not be complete without a day of remembrance that honors the memory of that child. TCF's gift to the bereavement community, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, this year December 9th, offers that opportunity.

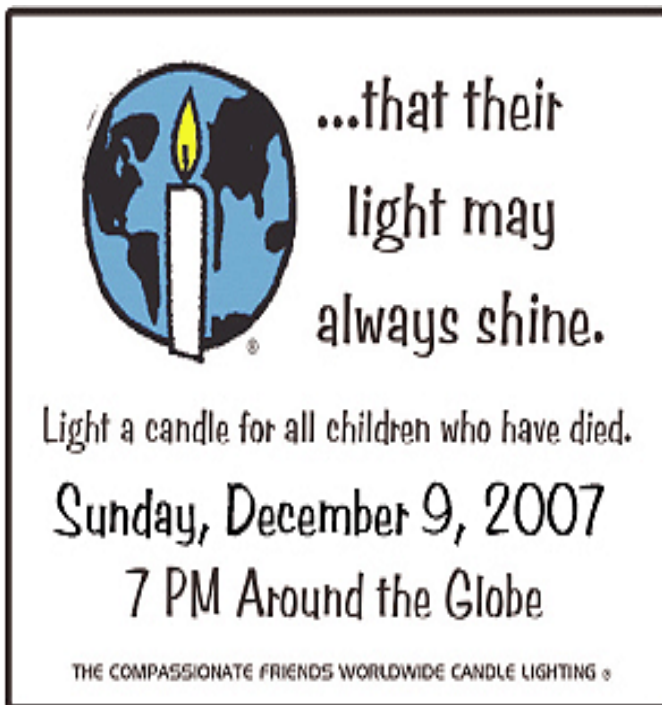
The event is held annually the second Sunday in December at 7 p.m. local time. Candles stay lighted for one hour in each time zone around the world creating a virtual 24-hour wave of light. What meaning does the Worldwide Candle Lighting hold for so many people?

Last year, information was received on nearly 370 U.S. services, as well as services in more than a dozen countries outside the United States.

The Compassionate Friends wishes to welcome the national organization Twinless Twins which is joining TCF and other allied organizations in observing the Worldwide Candle Lighting this year.

If you are unable to attend a candle lighting, please plan to light a candle at home. Don't forget to visit The Compassionate Friends national website December 9 so you can place a message in the Remembrance Book.

We do this . . . that their light may always shine!



Please **bring a candle** for each member of your family, a **memorable picture** of your child and your **favorite holiday dish or dessert** to share after the ceremony.

El Paso Chapter Annual Candlelight Remembrance Service

Special Invitation

**Sunday, December 9, 2007 arrive at 6:30 p.m. to commence ceremony precisely at 7:00 p.m.
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1000 Montana**

Our Candlelight Remembrance Service is an annual event to honor and remember our children and siblings who have gone too soon.

Please bring a candle for each member of your party. After the service, we will have a potluck and a memorial picture presentation of our children and siblings in the basement.

We also want to invite our members to bring their favorite holiday dish or dessert to share at our fellowship after the service. We look forward to seeing everyone and sharing this special evening with you, your family and your child.

May their Lights Continue to Shine...

Thanksgiving

Gifts of Love

by Cathy Seehuetter ~ TCF, St. Paul, MN

As I type this, it is the day after Thanksgiving. People in the retail business say that it is the biggest shopping day of the year. Before Nina died, I was one of those crazy shoppers who on that day sat out in the parking lot of whatever store that opened at 6 a.m. waiting for them to open their doors so I could shove my way into whatever “blue light special” was being offered. My children’s wish list in hand, I was ready to power shop ‘til I dropped. But that was then, and this is now. Five Christmas shopping seasons later, my life, as all of our lives, has changed irrevocably as one precious child is no longer on that shopping list.

Not too long ago, I was in a fitting room trying on some clothes when I overheard the conversation between mother and teenage daughter in the room next to me. There was a volatile exchange of words between the two of them as the mother was trying to hustle her daughter along. She kept saying to her, “You know, I don’t have all day to waste because you can’t make up your mind.” The heated discussion continued and concluded with the girl’s mother saying, “That’s it! I am never taking you shopping again!” That phrase sent a chill down my spine. It took everything in my power to keep from bursting from my fitting room and admonish that mother; tell her that I would give anything to have my daughter alive so that she could cause that so-called “inconvenience” that obviously hers was causing her. I then realized that in this woman’s agitated state it would only fall on deaf ears. It has been four and a half years since my daughter died and I still go into the shops that we frequented and see some adorable outfit hanging on one of the mannequins and think, “Nina would have loved that.” She was my shopping buddy. She could never say no to an invitation to go shopping. And it wasn’t just shopping for herself that she loved. From the time she was very young, she loved buying gifts for others. She would scrape whatever money she had saved from birthdays, etc. to buy a small gift for each of us. Interestingly, the gift she gave me our last Christmas together was an angel. At that time I had not even started the angel collection that I have now since she died.

Be prepared to find “gifts” from your children when you unpack your Christmas decorations for the first time. It seemed as if each box I opened there was something left there from her, something that I had long forgotten about: one box contained a picture of her in a Santa hat...smiling that brilliant braces-laden grin, another her carefully crafted handmade ornaments, another one a hand-written card in her just-learning-to-print handwriting, and on and on...so many memories. I realized that in a sense, these were Nina’s gifts to me now that she wasn’t physically here. She was giving me the gifts of memories...beautiful memories that were given in love. Those memories will only increase in value as the years go on. They are invaluable because they are yours and yours alone...no one can ever take those priceless memories away. Though they may hurt now and probably always will but not as intensely, give yourself a gift...the gift of emotion and allow those healing tears to fall. Give yourself time to grieve.

If I could give each of you a gift I would want to give you the gift of peace, as much peace as you can possibly find. And the hope that you can remember some of the joy and love that was yours from Christmas past.



ONE LITTLE CANDLE

I lit a candle tonight, in honor of you
Remembering your life, and all the times we’d been through.
Such a small little light the candle made until I realized how much in darkness it lit the way.
All the tears I’ve cried in all my grief and pain what a garden they grew, watered with human rain
I sometimes can’t see beyond the moment, in hopeless despair
But then your memory sustains me, in heartaches repair.
I can wait for the tomorrow, when my sorrows ease
Until then, I’ll light this candle, and let my memories run free
~written by Sheila Simmons, Dallas, GA

Thanksgiving at Our House

Of all the holidays, Thanksgiving seemed to mean the most to our Daughter Natalie. When she was small she would get up with me early Thanksgiving morning and she would help me make the fixings for the stuffing. I would toast the bread and she would tear it up into small pieces. After all the ingredients were added and the turkey finally went into the oven we would push the cranberry "log" out of the can and cut it into slices. It would soon be time for the Macy's parade and we would all sit around the television wondering when we would see Snoopy or Hello Kitty. My job caused us to move far away from where all our family lived. Sometimes we would have friends or family from out of town but many times we did not. It didn't seem to make any difference because we had each other and the thoughts of the Thanksgiving Dinner.

When Natalie went off to college I would look forward to the Thanksgiving break like I was a kid counting the days until Christmas. It was a six hour drive to pick her up from school and all the while I thought about how she would describe what the Thanksgiving dinner would be like. She always would make a list to make sure we didn't forget anything. After Thanksgiving Dinner we had a few movies we always watched. Our favorite was "Christmas Story". We all knew the story by heart, but we laughed just the same.

In October 1997 we took her to the Hospital in a place far from home. She was doing well I enough that she could come back to our apartment for the Thanksgiving Holiday. I had decided that no matter what it took, I was going to cook Thanksgiving dinner just like every year. As always, Natalie made the list and I made the dinner. She couldn't help me with the stuffing because she had to go back to the hospital for a couple of hours. But when she returned we had our dinner and her Mama and I were pleased that she ate so much of everything. The next morning we heard her in the kitchen searching for the leftover stuffing.

That was the last Thanksgiving we had together before Natalie left us. As it was last year, there is no one to pick up at school, no one to make the list or help with the stuffing bread. But Natalie's Mama and I intend to make the big Thanksgiving dinner according to our Daughter's specifications like we always have. We know that somewhere, Natalie will be sharing the Holiday with us and is thinking about the leftovers she will enjoy the day after.

I am thankful that these memories of Natalie are more wonderful each time they come into my mind.

In Memory of our Daughter [Natalie](#) (5-11-75 - 1-22-98)

Terry and Evelyn Sparks, Lawrenceville, GA

Special Thanksgiving Gift

I am Joanne, Ryan Gallant's mom from Alberta, Canada. First I would like to say what a great help it has been to have this group of TCF on line. It will be four years since my son Ryan was killed in an accident. I have and still go through what you all talk about, as far as people would rather cross the street than risk hearing me bring up Ryan's name, and if his name does come up before they can escape, then there is this awful silence until some one suggests that I should be over it by now. I will never get over it.

I thought I would share with everyone what my family does for the Thanksgiving holiday. Thanksgiving was our last family dinner together, it was on October 13 in 1996, and on October 20, our lives changed forever.

Thanksgiving was always a very special holiday for us. We still have the big dinner and invite all the people with nowhere else to go, but we do something very special on the Monday following Thanksgiving.

Today, October 8 is Thanksgiving in Canada, and everyone will be here. Tomorrow we will clean the highway one mile south and one mile north of where we live, in memory of Ryan. We adopted this section of highway in the summer of 1997 and have been cleaning it every Thanksgiving since. It is the day when we are all together again, as each of us feels Ryan very close to us.

Doing this cleanup is what gets me through the actual day of Thanksgiving, I look so forward to the cleanup day, that the actual Thanksgiving day goes by quite fast. Up here when you adopt a section of highway, the county puts up signs that say, in our case, In Memory Of Ryan Gallant with the provincial flowers in the background. I don't know if you have the same program in the States, but I thought I would mention it in case. Ryan was a rodeo cowboy who loved the outdoors, and each of my other kids and myself know how he approves of this cleanup done in his memory. Please think of us, and say a little prayer for Ryan on October 20. Thanks again for all the great support you all have given me these years.

Ryan's mom, Joanne

And For This I Give Thanks

I am acutely aware that autumn is here. As I write this, the air coming through my window is crisper and the leaves are taking on the golden and scarlet hues of the season. The shorts and tee shirts, which were the summer mainstay of the neighborhood children, are being replaced by sweats and flannels. Pumpkins are replacing pink flamingos as lawn ornaments. The beauty of nature is at its most spectacular. It is unmistakably here, welcome or not...

This will be my fifth autumn, to be followed by my fifth holiday season without my daughter Nina. I find that I am far enough along in my grief to find memories to smile about now, but still close enough to remember those first few years and the piercing stab of pain in my heart that went along with them. Halloween, with memories of the costume party she threw when she was 10 years old, the major production she made out of what she would wear as a trick-or-treater, and as she got older, her enjoyment in passing out candy to neighborhood goblins. Then came Thanksgiving, one of my favorites. I liked the idea of family and friends gathering together with no other purposes other than eating until you nearly exploded and being thankful for each other and the blessings of the past year. No presents required, just the joy of family togetherness - and the knowledge that my children were here, all of them. On that first Thanksgiving the empty chair and place at the table seemed to scream out at me that someone precious was missing. And the message of this particular holiday was thankfulness? What on earth could I ever find to be thankful for?

Some TCF parents have memories of being unable to choke down any morsel of food because they were continually trying to choke back tears that first Thanksgiving. Just wanting to curl up in a ball, pull the covers over their heads, and wake up some time in January after the last remnants of the holidays were cleared away. In all honesty, I cannot tell you even one detail of that first one: where I spent it, who was present, where I was, if I cried all day... I remember nothing. I do remember three months after Nina had died, though. On a visit to my neurologist I tearfully told him of my depression over her death. His response to me was "Why don't you count your blessings rather than your sorrows? Think happy thoughts and maybe you won't feel so sad." I, of course, asked him if he had ever lost a child. He had not... obviously. Only someone uneducated in the school of grief would say something like that. Almost five Thanksgivings' later, have I found reasons to be thankful? I asked myself this question and decided to put pen to paper. I was surprised to say the list was quite lengthy, so I will only share a few of them. I am thankful for: - My loving family, and the welcomed joyful additions in the last few years. - My memory, because now the painful memories are, more often than not, replaced with the beautiful memories of the past, and they were such beautiful memories. - My life, for whom else will keep Nina's memory alive? Of course, my family, but they have lives, as they should. I am the self-appointed keeper of my daughter's memory. - Nina. The joy of loving her, the privilege of being her mother. Though I wish it had been much longer, I wouldn't trade those 15 ½ years for anything. - Smiling a genuine smile, laughing a hardy laugh, and finding my sense of humor again. I sincerely believe that Nina likes to hear me laugh and that she would want me to find humor in life again. - My sight, because I commented (for the first time in five autumns) on the magnificent colors of the autumn foliage and the grandness of Minnesota's most sumptuous season. I didn't think I'd ever notice again. But I did. - The Compassionate Friends, who showed me there is life after the death of a child; who allowed me to express my emotions, listened patiently, understood my pain, and welcomed me into their hearts. They helped salvage what remained of my sanity and I will be eternally grateful. - The opportunity to give back, through TCF meetings and this newsletter. To bring hope to the newly bereaved in the knowledge that it won't always hurt this bad, and that you will make it with the love and support of family and your Compassionate Friends. And, that there will come a time that you too will find things to be thankful for again.

I am told, by those who know, that peace and acceptance are that light we are searching for at the end of the tunnel. Though I find myself still looking for it at times, those further down the grief road have reassured me it will come. Maybe not this Thanksgiving or next, but that it will. And I believe them...

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy Seehuetter, St. Paul, MN - TCF

Happy Holidays

Our Christmas Butterfly

This is a very true story of a beautiful butterfly that came to comfort my husband Ronnie and I. One day in mid December 1996, I had made several butterfly magnets to give to all of my Compassionate Friends at our Group (of other bereaved parents), Candlelight Meeting, But as luck would have it, we were both sick with the flu and sore throats, I was feeling very depressed and very lonely that evening, and around 10:30 PM. a beautiful orange and brown butterfly came to me and landed on my leg, I woke my husband up and immediately, the butterfly flew over to him and landed on his shoulder,, then flew back to me, and then back to him again, this happened several times, and I called my friend Gusty, who suggested that I take a picture of it with a camera that had the date on it. As I clicked the camera, the butterfly disappeared, and we never found it again that evening.

The next morning though, it was in a puddle of water in my sink of dirty dishes, thinking it was just a scrap of food, I picked it up to dispose of and I saw the little antenna move ever so slightly, I reached and got a paper towel and blotted the water off as good as I could and put the butterfly into a glass gallon sized jar, and gave it a few drops of water on one side of the jar, and a piece of apple scrapings on the other side to get nectar from. The butterfly lived happily and fluttered around in her new home for 5 days, on a table, under a light between Ronnie and myself, and on the 5th day we were to travel to our other daughter Cindy's house for Christmas with her and her family in South Carolina, so we took our butterfly with us. Then on a warm Christmas day, we turned her loose, she flew a few feet, then stopped, then flew a few more, I had the feeling, that even though she wanted to be free, she didn't really want to leave us.

That same Christmas, My daughter Cindy, gave me a small little trinket dish with a butterfly picture on it and a verse that said "Happiness, like a butterfly, settles upon you when you least expect it." In the trinket dish there was a note she had written to me before she wrapped it up that said, "Mom, This is from Teresa's things, I know if she had known you loved butterflies so much, she would have given it to you herself." The strange thing about this, is that Cindy did not know about the Butterfly at the time she wrapped the little trinket dish as a gift to me.

There was also another incident that happened after this that is very meaningful to me, about 2 weeks later, my sister-in-law, Sheryl and I were driving past a church in a nearby town and as I was telling her the story about the butterfly and the trinket dish, and just as I looked up at a sign in front of a church, I noticed it said,, "IF you think you need a sign from God, this is it. I truly do believe that God had sent us this butterfly as a sign of comfort from our daughter Teresa, who had died a little over three years before. I'd also like to add that the butterfly is also the symbol of The Compassionate Friends, as a sign of the living spirit and rebirth..

Over the past few years we have experienced many butterfly "happenings" which includes last December, Christmas of 1999, as we planned our trip to Cindy's house again for another Christmas we had another beautiful orange and brown butterfly appear, and we also kept it in a jar and took it to South Carolina again with us and set it free. This is just too much of a coincidence not to be a sign from God and Teresa. We live in Central Indiana, and everyone knows it's just too cold for butterflies in December.

Jackie Wesley Miami-Whitewater/ East Central Indiana Chapters of TCF

Memories of Chris

The last Christmas that Chris was alive, my husband asked what I wanted for Christmas. I told him I wanted a bottle of Poison (perfume, not arsenic). My son Trinity also asked me what I wanted for Christmas. I told him a bottle of Poison. My daughter-in-law asked me as well and so did my parents. I told them all the same thing. Chris never asked what I wanted and since he had JUST started his job I wouldn't think of suggesting he buy me anything for Christmas. I just wanted him to take care of his car payment, insurance etc. The 'important' things. On Christmas morning, my parents gave me a cookbook and candy. My son and daughter-in-law gave me a sweater and dishtowels, my husband gave me a bottle of Passion (close but no cigar) and everyone else gave me everything BUT the Poison. When Chris gave me my gift from him I was shocked that he had even shopped. Between school and work, I didn't know he had time. Between the car payment and insurance I didn't know he had the money. When I opened the box, there it was, my bottle of Poison. I said to him, "How did you know that's what I wanted? I never mentioned it to you." And he said to me, "Duh, I KNOW what you wear!" Bless his heart. That's the way Chris always was.

(This has nothing to do with holidays....but I had to share) When Chris was barely 16 I was in the hospital for a few days. My family all came bearing gifts, from flowers to candy to magazines to stuffed animals. Chris came bearing a bomb pop (my favorite) in his pocket. Needless to say by the time he reached the hospital it had almost completely melted in his pocket. His response was, "Well you didn't want me speeding did you?"

Ricki Z, Omaha, NE

In memory of Chris (July 5, 1978 - July 17, 1995)

'Twas the Night Before Christmas''

~ For Bereaved Parents ~

'Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days,
That I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.
The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
In hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.
As others were making their holiday plans,
My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.
I had lost my dear child a few years before,
And I knew what my holiday had in store.
When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,
I sprang to my feet and was looking around,
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash
The sight that I saw took my breath away,
And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.
With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.
The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,
That my child was still near me and that I was loved.
The message they brought was my holiday gift,
And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.
As I knelt closer to get a better view,
One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -
That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,
To help me get through the holiday scene.
In the days that followed I carried the thought,
Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -
That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,
Our children are with us - they're not really dead.
Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,
A message of hope - a message so dear.
And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,
"To all bereaved parents - We love you tonight!"
-By Faye McCord - TCF, Jackson, MS

ONE LITTLE CANDLE

I lit a candle tonight, in honor of you
Remembering your life, and all the times we'd been through.
Such a small little light the candle made
until I realized how much in darkness it lit the way.
All the tears I've cried in all my grief and pain
what a garden they grew, watered with human rain
I sometimes can't see beyond the moment, in hopeless despair
But then your memory sustains me, in heartaches repair.
I can wait for the tomorrow, when my sorrows ease
Until then, I'll light this candle, and let my memories run free

Holidays in Heaven

The Holiday Season is just not the same,
A smile is missing when saying one name.
For parents who've lost a daughter or son,
Nothing can bring back the delightful fun,
Of watching them talk, laugh, or just run.
The memories are all that we do have now,
We do go on.....only God knows how.
A New Year comes as midnight arrives,
Our Angels still a big part of our lives.
If only we could trade the presents we receive,
For one more day with those whom we grieve!
But nothing can bring back our beloved child,
The one that laughed, cried, and often smiled.
They are together in a much better place,
Watching us cry.....touching our face!
Although we miss them on Holidays to share,
Be assured their loving presence fills the air,
At home, in church, at New York's Times Square!
So celebrating the Holidays are now hard to do,
But always remember they are thinking of you too,
Wishing you happiness and showing their love,
Not on this Earth, but from Heaven above!
-Dan Bryl, Lawrenceville, GA TCF
In Memory of his daughter, Jessica

LIGHTS OF LOVE

Can you see our candles burning in the night?
Lights of love we send you rays of purest white
Children we remember though missing from our sight
In honor and remembrance we light candles in the night
All across the big blue marble spinning out in space
Can you see the candles burning from this human place?
Oh, angels gone before us who taught us perfect love
This night the world lights candles that you may see them
From above tonight the globe is lit by love of those who
Know great sorrow, but as we remember our yesterdays
Let's light one candle for tomorrow
We will not forget,
And every year in deep
December On Earth we will light candles
As.....we remember

Santa's Secret Wish

On Christmas Eve, a young boy with light in his eyes
Looked deep into Santa's, to Santa's surprise
And said as he sat on Santa's broad knee,
"I want your secret. Tell it to me."
He leaned up and whispered in Santa's good ear
"How do you do it, year after year?"
"I want to know how, as you travel about,
Giving gifts here and there, you never run out.
How is it, Dear Santa, that in your pack of toys
You have plenty for all of the world's girls and boys?
Stays so full, never empties, as you make your way
From rooftop to rooftop, to homes large and small,
From nation to nation, reaching them all?"
And Santa smiled kindly and said to the boy,
"Don't ask me hard questions. Don't you want a toy?"
But the child shook his head, and Santa could see
That he needed the answer. "Now listen to me,"
He told that small boy with the light in his eyes,
"My secret will make you sadder and wise.
"The truth is that my sack is magic.
Inside It holds millions of toys for my Christmas Eve ride.
But although I do visit each girl and each boy
I don't always leave them a gaily wrapped toy.
Some homes are hungry, some homes are sad,
Some homes are desperate, some homes are bad.
Some homes are broken, and the children there grieve.
Those homes I visit, but what should I leave?
"My sleigh is filled with the happiest stuff,
But for homes where despair lives toys aren't enough.
So I tiptoe in, kiss each girl and boy,
And I pray with them that they'll be given the joy
Of the spirit of Christmas, the spirit that lives
In the heart of the dear child who gets not, but gives.
"If only God hears me and answers my prayer,
When I visit next year, what I will find there
Are homes filled with peace, and with giving, and love
And boys and girls gifted with light from above.
It's a very hard task, my smart little brother,
To give toys to some, and to give prayers to others.
But the prayers are the best gifts, the best gifts indeed,
For God has a way of meeting each need.
"That's part of the answer. The rest, my dear youth,
Is that my sack is magic. And that is the truth.
In my sack I carry on Christmas Eve day
More love than a Santa could e'er give away.
The sack never empties of love, or of joys
'Cause inside it are prayers, and hope.

Not just toys. The more that I give, the fuller it seems,
Because giving is my way of fulfilling dreams.
"And do you know something? You've got a sack, too.
It's as magic as mine, and it's inside of you.
It never gets empty, it's full from the start.
It's the center of lights, and love. It's your heart.
And if on this Christmas you want to help me,
Don't be so concerned with the gifts 'neath your tree.
Open that sack called your heart, and share
Your joy, your friendship, your wealth, your care."
The light in the small boy's eyes was glowing.
"Thanks for your secret. I've got to be going."
"Wait, little boy," Said Santa, "don't go.
Will you share? Will you help? Will you use what you know?"
And just for a moment the small boy stood still,
Touched his heart with his small hand and whispered, "I will."

An Angel's Christmas Wish

I looked through the clouds and what did I see,
The face of my mother, and her thoughts were of me.
He eyes filled with tears and her face looked so sad,
My wings fluttered softly and I felt so bad;
For I could do nothing to change how she felt,
Nor could I alter the hand fate had dealt.
My tears fell like raindrops, my heart felt so tight,
I lifted my face to heaven and told God of my plight,
For I can never be free just to fly,
As long as there's one lonely tear in your eye.
My years on earth were spent to please you,
And though what has happened was not my own choice,
The plan, my mother dear, came from a much higher voice.
As the birthday of our Savior and Lord draws so near,
I have a small plea I would like you to hear,
Remember me, Mom, with happiness and smiles,
And know when you do my soul will soar miles.
My wings will be light, and my heart will be free,
In the brightest sunshine is where you'.. see me.



Love Gifts

A **LOVE GIFT** is a gift of money or service to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died but it can also be a gift to help in the work of the El Paso Chapter of TCF. Your gifts are tax deductible and are our Chapter's only monetary support. Your donation will help us pay for postage and labels for sending our newsletter each month.

LOVE GIFT

Name of Person to be Remembered _____

Special Occasion of Person _____

Given By _____

Send To: Mary Lou Cain
5664 Beth View
El Paso, TX 79932

Love Gifts

Cindy Shahan; in loving memory of Brandon Shahan, Happy Birthday Brandon 10/3/83, DOD 3/25/2007

Gabriele Mietinski; in loving memory of Christopher Mietinski, Love Always and Forever, DOD 2/7/2007

Kari & Clark; in loving memory of Philip Thomas Coneaux, "Our Angel", DOD 5/01/2007

Maribel Perry; in loving memory of Nikolas Torres, DOD 8/15/2004

CARDS AND NOTES

I am at a stand still on how to sign our Christmas Cards.... I really don't want to send any, but my husband thinks we should.... So I will for him.... But I don't know how to sign them.... We lost our son in April of this year, but he is still a part of our family, and I want to include him in our names... Do you have a suggestion, I just don't know how..... I thought about signing it Our Silent Angel Joey... But wasn't sure if that sounded right..... Please help....



As for signing cards.... My living child Megan and I always sign our names along with Sara's and we put a halo over her name. On our Christmas cards this year we only signed our names but inside the card on the left, I wrote "In loving Memory of My Precious Daughter, Sara Victoria Koski" along with her birth and ascension dates. The card has a little angel beside Santa... I made a graphic set from the card.



In response to your inquiry regarding signing your holiday greeting cards: I've seen some parents write, "...and from Joey, our angel in heaven." What I've found to be the best solution for me is to send the cards from my husband and myself, in memory of Tracey. I make my own holiday cards on my computer, and next to her name, I add a photo of her smiling face. (This year on the back of the card I wrote: "In memory of our precious daughter, Tracey. We remember her. . . always." Her picture was below this message.)

Though many of 'us' aren't comfortable sending cards since our child died, I feel it gives me an opportunity to remind people that she lived, and she continues to be a precious part of our family.

Angel Feather

I read the butterfly stories and felt I had to share this. My story isn't about a butterfly, but about a feather. This past Saturday, I was missing my son so much. Ratt (20) has only been gone for nine months, and with the holidays approaching and as each day goes by, my heart gets heavier. Each time I go into a store to buy gifts for my two step-sons, I end up leaving there in tears thinking about all I wasn't going to buy for Ratt this year. No snuggle socks (our Christmas Eve tradition), no CD's, nothing.

Anyway, on Saturday, as I was going through some pictures, I started wondering why he left us. His cause of death was listed as suicide, even though he died under very "suspicious" circumstances. I was going through the why's. If he did kill himself, why. I kept asking him in my mind, did you hate me so much son that you had to leave me. Did you not know how much I loved you? Did you not know that we would have been there for you no matter what. And on and on I went.

I decided to go on a cleaning spree and had just washed and waxed my floor. I was sitting at the kitchen table with my husband about 30 minutes later and I looked down and there was this pure white feather. Not a bird feather, not a duck feather, just a beautiful white angel feather. And there is no way I could not have missed that feather while I was washing and then waxing the floor, but there it was, beautiful, white and pure. And I knew then that my son was there with me and left me that feather as a reminder that he is with me and he does love me and he is now an angel, my favorite of all things.

I still hurt so bad. And the days are getting worse. But I look at that feather and at least I know for just a moment, he was there.



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