



Location

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
5401 South Street, Lincoln, NE
(Lancaster Room)

Date & Time of Meetings:

Meetings are held on the
Third Thursday of each month
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
There is no fee for attendance

Supported by:

BryanLGH Medical Center
St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

For Information about the meetings
Call: 481-3068 or 477-0857

Community Friends

A self-help program facilitated by
qualified volunteers and professionals.
This group offers support & networking
to promote healthy grieving and
recovery for those who have experienced
the death of a child.

These monthly on-going meetings are
based on the process of sharing
experiences, seeking information, and
offering support.

Future Meeting Schedule:

June 19, 2008
July 17, 2008

Location

BryanLGH Medical Center East
1600 South Street, Lincoln, NE
(Conf. Rm. #2, in the Medical Plaza)

Date & Time of Meetings:

Meetings are held on the
First Wednesday of each month
7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
There is no fee for attendance

Supported by:

BryanLGH Medical Center
St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center
Sharon's Support System

For Information about the meetings
Call : 402-477-0857

H.O.P.E.

(Helping Other Parents Endure)
A self-help program facilitated by
qualified volunteers and professionals.
This group offers support for parents
who have lost their baby due to
miscarriage, stillbirth, or death of a
newborn. These monthly on-going
meetings are based on the process of
sharing experiences, seeking
information, and offering support

Future Meeting Schedule

June 4, 2008
July 2, 2008

Summer 2008

FATHER'S DAY

Who ache but feel they must carry on.
Who are frightened but cannot show
their fear.

Who are angry but cannot strike out,

Who are lonely but have to smile.

Who grieve but must be strong.

Who love but are afraid to show their
love.

Whose tears cannot fall.

Bereaved fathers are often
desperately tragic people caught in the
trap of society's expectations that we
will, indeed, be strong – that we will do
all in our power to ensure that life carries
on. They expect that our behavior and
temperament will remain consistent and
that, through our attitudes and actions,
others will be able to observe our will to
survive despite the enormity of our loss.

Unfortunately the world does not
always work the way we want.

Bereaved fathers do ache. They are
afraid and angry. They are lonely and
they cry in silent places. They question
their sanity and their will to survive.
They want to run and hide from their
sorrow. And they carry a heavy burden
of guilt for not "living up" to society's
expectations.

As difficult as it may be, take the
risks and develop the courage to express
the way you feel.

*Bt Trevor and Audrey Roadhouse, Regina SK
In memory of Robert Tristan Roadhouse
RELECTIONS FROM THE HEART
A Journey Together, Spring 1998*

A LETTER FROM DAD...

In loving remembrance of
MEGAN COLLEN MCCLAVE
July 2, 1986- July 18, 1994

I have not been able to share some of my
thoughts with others since Megan's
death. I suspect that many fathers' have
the same problem.

Dearest Megan,

It has been almost five years since
you were taken away from us. Although
I often talk to you, it has taken my this
long to put my thoughts down on paper.
I hope that you understand that I want to
share this with other fathers who have
lost a child. Fathers are ill-equipped to
handle the grief and suffering and often
do not look to others for help.

Even now I feel guilty about your
death. Dr. Gillikan told me this is a
natural feeling for fathers; we are raised
to protect our children and if something
happens to them we feel that we have
failed. Although she explained that the
pharmacist made the mistake that took
your life, I still have that feeling of
failing you.

You know most holidays are difficult
for me. I am always thinking of what
they meant to you. I know how much
you loved seeing family and loved ones
that you had not seen for a while and I
am sad that will never happen again. As
your friends grow up I also think about
what you might have been at that age.
You loved life so much that I can barely
stand to imagine you not sharing the
many wonderful things that have
happened to Bethany and me.

Geretta has been a wonderful wife
and stepmother. She thinks I am the
greatest man in the world and shows me
everyday how much she loves me. I
know how much you loved her when she
used to watch you. Bethany has grown
into a beautiful and mature young
woman. She struggled to find the
answers within herself after your death,
but she has found the peace finally.
Robert is such a precocious little man

and you would be proud that he is your stepbrother. When Jarod was born last summer it seemed that we were complete as a family.

Watching Jarod grow this past year has been such a bittersweet experience. He is so like you that sometimes I think my heart will break. He is so happy and full of energy that it is almost impossible to get him to take a nap and bedtime is a battle. He gets that same "little devil" look that you used to when you would grin and your eyes would shine and your body would shake with mischievousness. He loves to look at your picture and reaches out to touch you.

As I close this letter I think about all that I have not said. It seems that there are not enough words to tell you and tell others all about you, other days I cannot say your name without holding back the tears. I rejoice that you are in heaven and will never have to suffer and given the chance to bring you back from that paradise, I would have to let you stay. But please know that I would give everything I own to hold you in my arms one more time.

Love, Dad
Mike McClave

*Bereaved Parents Share
Father's Day Issue, June/July 1999*

IT'S IN LETTING GO THAT WE ARE FREE TO HOLD ON

Recently, I have heard a lot of discussions on the use of the terms closure, letting go, moving on, getting on with your life, and acceptance. So many people who are in the process of bereavement find the glib use of these terms offensive, repugnant and say that it minimizes their intense journey of pain. When taken off guard, the

grieving person is hurt by the insensitivity of the remark and often angered by it; especially if uttered by the inexperienced, but if they are ignorant, then we must enlighten them.

So many times, we are angered and say nothing; we swallow our hurt and put it deep inside on a back burner to slowly burn us up. It is okay to be angry because it is a part of grief, but it also needs to be released and not be allowed to fester. Most of the time when someone makes a remark, we do not live or utters an inane platitude, know that their hearts are in the right spot, they just truly do not understand. We must appreciate their compassion and realize that are perception is jaded by deep personal grief and it umbrage of pain and bitterness.

We tell are friends and educate them so that they will become informed and so we don't harbor resentment. We see past their ignorance, accept whatever words of compassion they give to us and recognize that this is the reason so many of them say nothing. Often times it is not *what* is said, but *how* it is said that threatens are well-being. Positive accolades are never taken well, especially in early grief when they seem to be used the most. People who have never lost a child just don't know what it is like.

Accept their compassions in whatever way they give it. If you must, put a finger to the lips of the fumbling but caring human beings, and simply tell them, "Please don't try and fix it – I don't want to fix it just yet – just hold me like you mean it."

There is one key word in the above-mentioned platitudes that you will notice is one of Kuebler-Ross's stages of grief: *acceptance*. This is the stage of

grief that rules all the others and is the key to understanding and the use of its sister terms: *moving on, letting go, and finding closure*. First of all, I think we all have learned to understand that the five stages of grief: *shock, denial, anger, bargaining, and acceptance* are non-linear and sometimes happen all together, separately, and in all combinations for many years. But they *do* and *will* happen all together, separately, and in all combinations for many years. But they *do* and *will* happen. Each stage serves as a unique purpose for our survival, and that is what these stages are: *survival tools*. *Shock* gets us through the impossible task of burying a child. *Denial* keeps back reality so we can ease somewhat back into society. Like a non-ending bad dream, we continue to live on without our child, but never give up the elusive thought that we will wake up to find that it is really just a bad dream. The first anniversary usually knocks out *denial*, and shock briefly steps back in.

Anger jumps in and out at its leisure and usually catches us off guard, especially when we are going in and out of depression. *Bargaining* is total mind games where we play with our thoughts to rationalize our current state of misery and try to justify it: "I deserve to not get out of bed...If I go to church more often, I will feel better...If I get drunk enough, I can cry and/or sleep...If I pray enough, I will wake up from this nightmare...If I end my own life, I can join him...If I am good enough, maybe he will come to me in my dreams." A seemingly never-ending dialogue takes place that yields no answers, but gets us through another day.

Now back to *acceptance*, the "over soul" of the stages of grief, the one that encompasses all of the others and gives credibility to the aphorisms: *letting go, moving on, getting on with your life* and *finding closure*. We own these words – they are our grief – we paid a heavy price for them and we shall use them as they were meant to be.

In the eventual healing from child loss we find closure from the other stages of grief, but not closure from our child. We usually first find closure from *shock*. As a temporary survival tool, *shock* finds closure on its own when we are no longer numb and when we start to truly feel the pain. When we find closure from *denial*, we know that our child is dead, not this is not a nightmare, that he is not coming back, and that we will have to begin to live with the pain. We eventually find closure from *bargaining*. Because it is a mind game and simply doesn't work.

That leaves us with *acceptance*. We accept the pain, we accept our "new normal," and we accept the new relationship we have with our dead child. We also accept that "dead" does not mean "gone", we accept that we are letting go of many things and people in our "new normal" but not our child. The world must accept our "new normal" and accept that we never "get over our loss".. We will just learn to live with it, just like some learn to live a chronic illness.

We "get on with our life" with our child, We "let go" of illusions of what could have been, we "find closure" in what we cannot change, and we "move on" with our new future as best we can. We are now our child's legacy; we substantiate his life by the way we live ours – so let's

make him proud of use. We do not put their names and memories away, leave them unspoken and hidden shameful secure, but shout that loudly to the heavens and to all that can hear: *"I love my child and I still feel him near."* It's in the letting go that we feel free to hold on.

By Mitch Carmody, Hastings, MN
TCF Newsletter, Topeka Chapter
September-October 2004

FREEDOM'S NEVER FREE

As you make memories with your family this 4th of July, remember the members of our country who have sacrificed their time, bodies, minds, and far too many the *ultimate gift of their lives!!* Give support to any serving for freedom currently and give thanks to those who have served in the past!! And whenever possible give thanks to their families also!!

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES – can be difficult days for bereaved parents and siblings. Perhaps you would like to life them up in thought and prayer as these difficult days approach for them.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Iven Jerome Lottridge Williams Barney	06-28-2007
Gracie Kathryn Berthold	06-15-2006
Johna Jaye Kozak	06-21-1975
Chase Daniel Madsen	06-26-2007
Brooke Roberts	06-30-1978
Ian Scott Smith	06-18-2007
Shelley Thompson	06-30-1987
Robert Daniel Whitney	06-21-1968

JUNE ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

Michala Check Becker	06-25-2005
John Christensen	06-08-2006
Jonathan Engle	06-18-2001
Joshua James Milana	06-10-2007
Randy Miller	06-05-2005
Brooke Roberts	06-04-1996
Gracie Kathryn Berthold	06-15-2006
Ian Scott Smith	06-18-2007
Morgan Brooke Hohnbaum	06-10-2007

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Morgan Brooke Hohnbaum	07-23-1988
Jennifer L. Dorsey Howley	07-07-1967

JULY ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES

Hannah Burnison	07-02-2004
Wendy Notebloom Ewell	07-08-2005

In remembering our precious children, there may be errors or omissions for which I am deeply sorry. If there are any errors, please contact Trish Schuster at 402-673-5395 or trish_schuster@yahoo.com. If you have attended a meeting, or received a newsletter, and have not filled out a database giving us permission to print your child's birthday and annual remembrance please let Trish know.

DEAREST KIMIE

*They say that time will heal my heart
I found this is not so.
You see, with you, my heart went, too
So many months ago.*

*They say I must get over this
I have a life to live.*

*You are my life, and to have you back,
Oh, what I would not give.*

*They say that you are happy now,
In a better place than I.
This, I know is true
As tears fall from my eyes.*

*They say that you can hear me now,
I hope that it is true
I look and listen, day and night
For just a glimpse of you.*

*They say to give it all to God
Do it without delay.
But isn't that just what I did
One year ago, today.*

*Love you, always, Kimie
Love, Mom & family*

Written by Tammy Hill in memory of
Her daughter, Kimie
Comforting Friends, February 2008

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Volunteers for Healing
Friends for the Future
31st National TCF Convention
July 18-20, 2008
Nashville, TN*

If you want further information you may
visit and register on line at
www.compassionatefriends.org
Or call 1-877-969-0010

**National Walk to Remember
July 20, 2008
At the National Convention
Nashville, TN**

If you wish to register your child's name
for the Walk to Remember at the
National Convention in Nashville, TN
You may do so at the above web site or
phone number.

If you wish to sponsor a centerpiece for
the banquet or a workshop or session in
honor of your child you may also do that
at the above website or phone number.

Butterfly Release

Sunday, August 17, 2008
MaDonna Rehabilitation Hospital
Lincoln, NE

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

Please remember we are always happy to
accept any poem or article you wish to
contribute to our newsletter. If you wish
you can do that in honor of your
precious child/children, grandchildren,
brother or sister.

Please send to Trish and be sure if you
send by e-mail you indicate it is for the
Hope/Community Newsletter, so I open
it.

Also, we are going to be doing a
RESOURCE LIST for bereaved
families. We are the ones that are
"living the nightmare after the death of a
precious child." So we are often aware
of resources that are not always known
to other bereaved parents, siblings, and
families. These resources can include
books, songs, newsletters, web sites,
items for memorabilia. I hope to have
this ready to go by fall. Please share
whatever has been helpful to you. If you
are sharing a book, or song. Please try to
check and be sure it is still available and
if possible where it can be ordered and
purchased. Especially when we are first
thrown into this nightmare are energy
levels usually become very low. We
may not have the energy to hardly get
out of bed and take care of our own
personal needs. So please check to be
sure the resource is still available and
where it is available.