



The Waterbury, CT Chapter of

The Compassionate Friends

May/June 2011

The Compassionate Friends is an international self-help group for parents and their families who have experienced the death of a child of any age, including adult children, and from any cause. We offer hope in a network of support, friendship and understanding that only friends who have "been there" can give.



Mother's Day..... Am I Still a Mom????

After my daughter, Tracy, died, I had to attend a seminar for work. The gentlemen running the seminar asked, "How many of you have children?" I didn't raise my hand, I felt funny, but I also knew that my co-workers knew that Tracy was gone. So, I kept my hand down.

As the seminar continued, all I could think about was Tracy. Yes, Tracy is my child! Whether she is here, in heaven, or on the "other side" as some people call it. I do have a child!!!!

The man asked again, about children and this time my hand went straight up as high as I could get it!! Yes, I have a daughter and her name is Tracy!! I have never answered no to that question again. That would mean Tracy didn't exist and my love for her would not allow me to do that.

The next question I had to deal with was on Mother's Day. Am I still a Mom? No one calls me that anymore. I don't hear, "Hey Mom, did you see my sneakers?" or "Hey Mom, let's go to the store?" or "Hey Mom, do you want to put the Christmas lights up today? ... or "I love you Mommy... Happy Mother's Day" ...All that is gone...

So, am I still a Mom ... ?? Yes, I am. I'm Tracy's Mom! It is the same as when I raised my hand up high during that seminar when asked if I had any children. It would be wrong to say I'm not a Mom! Tracy wouldn't like that.

I became a Mom the moment Tracy was conceived and I will continue to be her Mom forever. No matter where she is or what she is doing, I will always be known as "Tracy's Mom," for now and forever.

By Sharon Burns, May 2004, Co-leader of Waterbury TCF

How Many Children Do You Have?

When I first met Sharon Burns, I found out that her granddaughter was the same age as mine. We got together originally because of our granddaughters.

Later, we both found out that we were jealous of each other. She lost an only child and I was jealous thinking that if I lost an only child, I could just commit suicide but I couldn't because I had an obligation to my other children.

She was jealous of me because I had other children and she thought that if she had other children, she wouldn't hurt so badly.

We learned from each other that the loss of any child is a child that cannot be replaced. There was one Tracy, Sharon's daughter, and there was only one Carla, my daughter, and neither of them can be replaced.

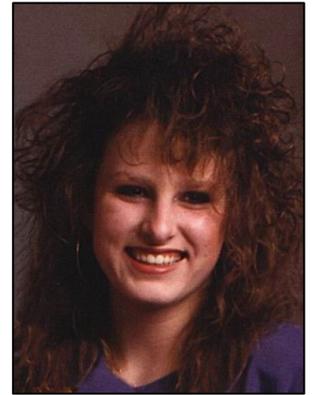
Many, many years later, we are still best of friends. We went out for dinner several years ago and I said we have our daughters to thank for our friendship. Sharon said no, our daughters brought us together, our love for each other kept us together.

She was right. There is a life after the loss of our children. Sharon and I found each other and we both found a life with whatever family and friends we all have left.

Each of us owe it to ourselves to find our own path, without our lost child. There is a sunrise, there is a rainbow, there is a life to be lived. It takes a lot of work. It takes a lot of love.

Sharon had to answer the question, is she still a mom? I had to answer the question, how many children do I have?

Same question, same answer. Sharon lost Tracy, I lost Carla. We're both mothers, we both lost a child that was irreplaceable.



By Judy Palomba, Editor TCF Waterbury Newsletter