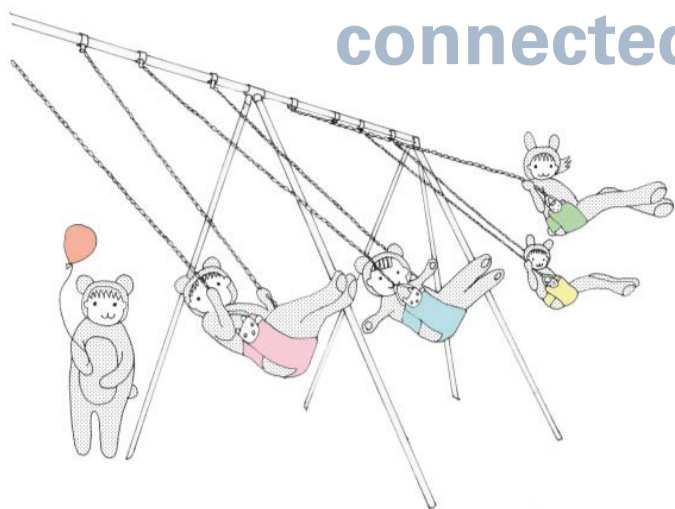


Siblings get connected



www.siblingsgrief.org.au • www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au

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Dear friends

This special issue of *Brothers & Sisters* marks a time of change and new beginnings for our sibling community.

We are excited to announce the launch of the *Brothers & Sisters* website later in August. The site has been created especially to support and connect bereaved siblings through a range of services and tools. It is also designed to be a safe, interactive space to express your feelings and thoughts and honour your sibling. Read more about the features of the site overleaf.

This issue is also the first that I have worked on without the assistance of Karina Rasmussen. As you may have read in the last issue, Karina has decided it's time to move on from the role of assistant editor. Karina and I both started working on the siblings' magazine at the same time, in 2005. We have developed almost 20 issues together and have aimed to continually improve the content and format and ultimately take it online. We would all like to thank Karina for the time and effort she has contributed to supporting other siblings and for sharing her beautiful poems, thoughts and personal experiences over the past years.

Karina was the first bereaved sibling I became close to after the death of my brother, Jarrod. This has been such an important relationship for me, as I don't have other siblings and, at the time, I didn't know anyone else who had experienced the loss of a sibling.

Karina has been a kind, honest and thoughtful friend over the years. In the year that I met Karina, the anniversary of my brother's death on New Year's Eve was especially difficult. Karina called me that night and we spoke for some time; knowing that she cared and really understood made it a much easier night to get through. This was just one of many times that Karina was there to offer comfort and support. I truly appreciate and value her friendship and am so grateful that I got to know her through the siblings' magazine.

Now taking over from Karina as the new assistant editor of *Brothers & Sisters*, is Andrew McNess. We are delighted to welcome Andrew onto the editorial team and look forward to his insights and contributions to future issues. Andrew became involved with The Compassionate Friends after the loss of his brother, Jeremy. Andrew has contributed a number of articles to us for recent issues and has shared many of the findings of his research into sibling bereavement. You'll hear more from Andrew in the next issue of *Brothers & Sisters*.

We hope you enjoy the new online support and services. As always, we welcome your contributions and feedback on how we can make these TCF sibling's services even more relevant and useful for you.

Melanie
(Editor)

Join us for the **Lake Attack** fundraising on Sunday 24 August

On Sunday 24 August, TCF is again participating in the 'Lake Attack Walk' around Albert Park Lake to raise money for our organisation. In order to do this, we need as many people as possible to come and join in on the day.

Lake Attack is all about having fun for a worthy cause. It doesn't matter if you're a first-timer, a seasoned runner or an elite athlete – this event is for EVERYONE. Get your friends, family, colleagues and school mates together for what promises to be a fun and rewarding day out.

So keep the day free, to run, walk or help out as a volunteer. Call Anne Wicking on (03) 9888 4034 if you have any queries. Or go to www.lakeattack.com to enter.

A letter from Nola

My eldest sister Lee is dead!! She died of secondary brain tumours 18-2-08. Lee would have been 79 on 25-5-08. I thought I would be able to handle the separation better as I have survived the loss of a son (miscarriage), granddaughter (3 months, SIDS, 1987) and younger sister 10 years ago in August. I only knew of Lee's illness three days before she died, there was an element of shock. I don't think any of us are ever prepared for that final separation. 'Ever has it been known, love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation', Kahlil Gibran.

We had such a great childhood and adulthood, lots of laughter, mischief, arguments which helped us develop our social skills and to learn forgiveness. Love and shared experiences is what makes a family (even dysfunctional families). I have known Lee all my life (nearly 77 years) and she was great fun and always saw the humour in everything. Sometimes she was exasperating (as we all are). Lee's best friend Val said she loved coming to our house when we were teenagers for all the laughter and fun. Our young brother always tried to bribe us whenever he could get away with it. He is a very dear and special person and much loved.

Death strips away the flotsam and jetsam or the trivia in a relationship and finally we become aware of the reality or the soul of the loved one. Lee brought a richness to my life, I'll miss her.

The loss of a sibling no matter how old or young, is like losing a part of yourself.

I know that my loved ones are okay, but it does not stop me missing them.

Nola Helman
Busselton, Western Australia
May 2008

'No matter where our paths may wind, those childhood days we left behind, are with me in my heart and mind as I remember you.'

Anonymous

'A sister is a love that you never outgrow.'

Anonymous

Thank you!

A big thank you to all who have contributed their time, suggestions and ideas and been involved in the development and launch of the siblings website.

Special thanks go to Sarah Greaves, Sue Beale, Dianne Williams, Karina Rasmussen, Andrew McNess, Corrina Ramsay, Yuichiro Nakano, Emma Longmore, Melanie Yong, Jason Chin, Paul Gadsden, Annie Edwards, Anne Wicking, and the TCF Board.

Siblings groups

If you're over 14 years and would like to meet up with other bereaved siblings, share your experiences or just listen, come along to a siblings group. Informal conversations are facilitated by a bereaved sibling in a welcoming setting. Different people turn up each month, the groups are not large and many siblings find it a very supportive and valuable experience.

Canterbury

Second Tuesday of the month
12 August, 9 September, 14 October from 7.45pm

The siblings group in Canterbury is held on the same night as the parents group but in a different room at the TCF Centre:

267 Canterbury Rd, Canterbury 3126 (Melways ref: 46 E11).

Call the TCF Centre on 03 9888 4944 or 1800 641 091 (country Vic or Tas) for more information.

Ballarat

First Wednesday of the month
6 August, 3 September, 1 October from 8.00pm

Eastwood Leisure Complex, Eastwood Road, Ballarat
Contact: Margaux 0413 996 165

Your suggestions & contributions

If you have any suggestions or contributions for future issues of *Brothers & Sisters*, please send them to:



Attention: The Editor,
TCF *Brothers & Sisters* Newsletter
PO Box 171, Canterbury 3126



Email: cfriends@ozemail.com.au
(include 'Brothers & Sisters' as the subject)



Fax: 03 9888 4900



24 hour grief support:
03 9888 4944

brothers&sisters

online

in August

TCF is committed to expanding the services that are relevant and useful for all of us – especially those who cannot easily reach a TCF centre or siblings group. In order to extend the methods of available support, a standalone website with information and services tailored especially for bereaved siblings will be launched by the end of August 2008.

The *Brothers & Sisters* website is at www.siblingsgrief.org.au

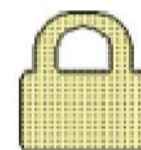
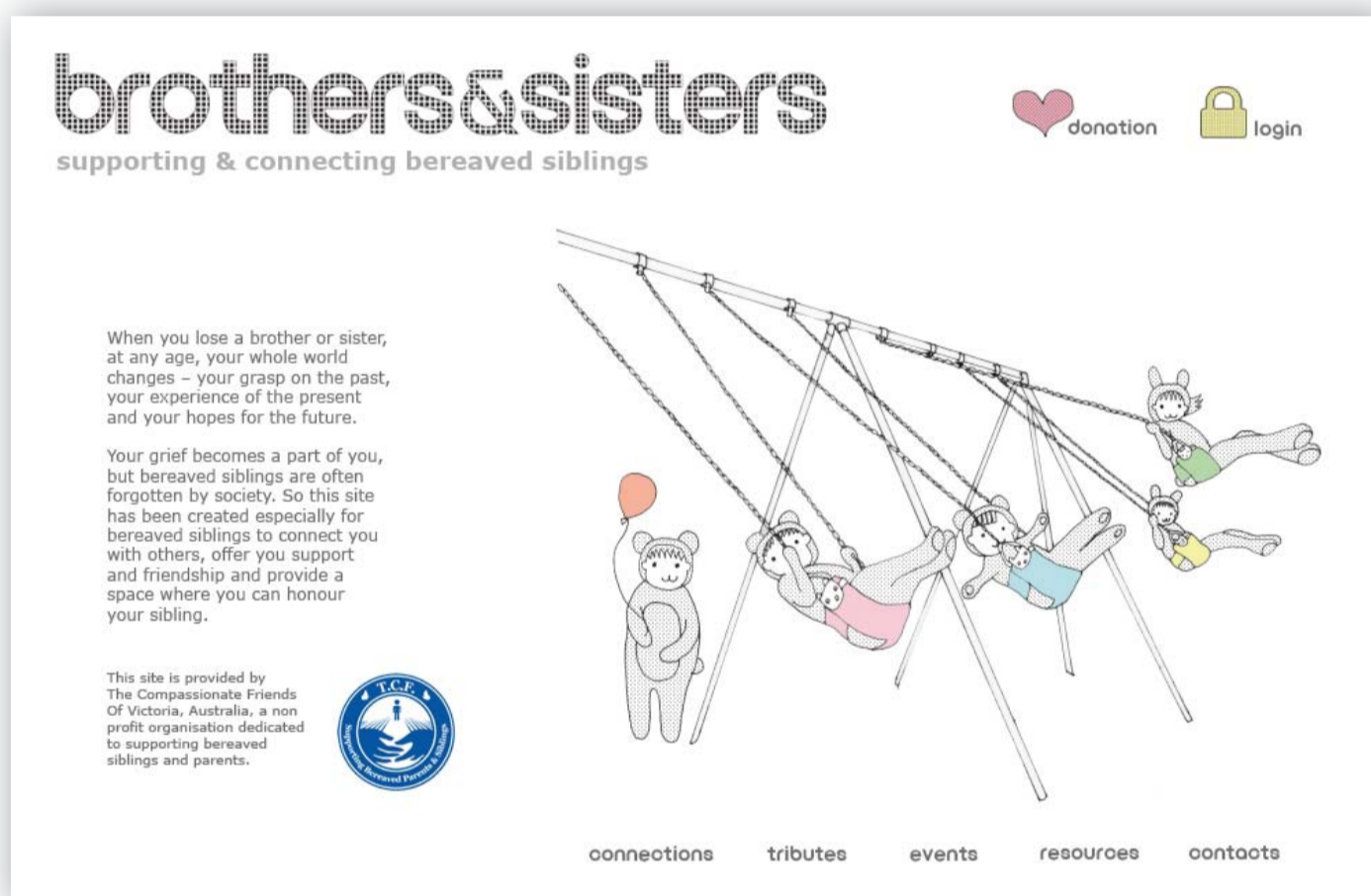
Key features of the *Brothers & Sisters* website

- ➔ Connect with other bereaved siblings
- ➔ Contribute your stories, photos and ideas
- ➔ Find out about upcoming events
- ➔ Explore relevant topics and links
- ➔ Download TCF publications

There are five main sections – Connections, Tributes, Resources, Events and Contacts. Details of the information and services provided in each section are outlined below.

Some parts of the site give you the option to connect with other siblings and add your own contributions and suggestions. You will need to join as a *Brothers & Sisters* member to be able to enter or contribute to these parts of the site. Some of these sections will go live later this year.

The site has been designed with a whimsical look and feel – to allude to the simplicity, fun and innocence of childhood days. We find that many bereaved siblings refer back to their favourite memories of childhood days when they are processing their loss, so the intention was to create a visual link between the enduring nature of memories of these times and the permanence of the sibling bond.



login

You can join as a *Brothers & Sisters* member directly from the site, by clicking this icon. You can choose your own User ID and Password. Enter your personal login details on the special pocketcard below.



donations

If you'd like to make a secure online donation to *Brothers & Sisters* or TCF, click this icon.

brothers&sisters

Return to the home page by clicking the *Brothers & Sisters* logo.

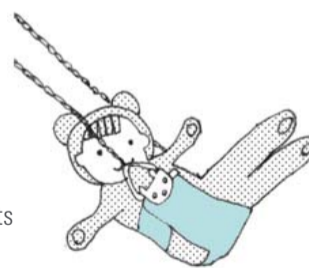


connections

This section gives you the opportunity to connect with other bereaved siblings, if you are looking for support and suggestions or a friend who has had similar experiences. You can find information about TCF sibling groups, request pen pals, and participate in an online sibling grief forum. Some of these services will go live later in 2008, after the initial launch of the site.

resources

A range of information that may be of interest to bereaved siblings is presented in this section of the site. You can download and print TCF fact sheets and back issues of the *Brothers & Sisters* magazine, explore topics and tips relevant to sibling grief, review book and movie lists and find links to other helpful organisations. If there are any other resources, books, movies or links you know of that we can add to the site, we'd love to hear from you.



contacts

Details of how to contact *Brothers & Sisters* and TCF by email, phone or postal mail are listed in this section of the site. You can even send your suggestions and contributions to the *Brothers & Sisters* website or magazine directly from this section.



tributes

This section provides a space for you to write messages to your siblings – for special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries or just any ordinary day when you wish you could see or speak to them. You can also send in your stories, poetry and photos to be uploaded onto the site.



events

This section has information about upcoming events, both TCF events and other events that are relevant or of interest to bereaved siblings – such as support groups, movies, presentations, courses and fundraising activities. We'd also love to hear your suggestions of any other events we can list on the site.



Website login pocket card