Many years ago, The Christophers wrote and have said over and over ever since that: “It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness!”

We in Communitas took that wonderful and positive message and applied it to the walks we were beginning in the late 80s when the dreams of the folks we were beginning to accompany seemed impossible to achieve.

We enhanced our understanding of the power of one candle by recalling rituals whereby one candle would enter a room, a chapel or a campfire circle and lit candles being held by participants who would pass the light to his/her neighbors till the whole room, chapel or campfire arena was flooded with the light of each person’s one candle.

Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.

L. R. Knost

We interpreted the light of a candle to be the gift/talent of the person holding the candle. The multiple gifts of friends light the way toward realizing the dream of one that we are accompanying.
ver time we found many examples such as Peter, Paul and Mary’s song “Light One Candle” to encourage our often very difficult journeys with our friends with significant disabilities. Many years ago Peter Yarrow (Peter, Paul and Mary) wrote a powerful song entitled, “Light One Candle”. It is important to read and listen to the words and its significance for the present moment.

Light one candle for the Maccabee children.
   Give thanks their light didn’t die.
   Light one candle for the pain they endured when their right to exist was denied.
   Light one candle for the terrible sacrifice justice and freedom demand.
   Light one candle for the wisdom to know when the peacemakers’ time is at hand.

**Don’t Let The Light Go Out...**
**It’s Lasted For So Many Years.**
**Don’t Let The Light Go Out...**
**Let It Shine Through Our Love And Our Tears.**

Light one candle for the strength that we need to never become our own foe.
Light one candle for those who are suffering they lingered so long ago.
Light one candle for all we believe in that anger not tears us apart.
Light one candle to bind us together with peace as a song in our hearts.

**Don’t Let The Light Go Out ...**
What is the memory that’s valued so highly, that we keep it alive in that flame?
What’s the commitment to those who’ve died?
We cry out they’ve not died in vain.
   We have come this far, always believing that justice will somehow prevail.
   This is the burning, this is the promise.
   This is why we will not fail.

**Don’t Let The Light Go Out ...**
Our latest reminder of the power and symbolism of one candle was the candle our mentor, Bob Perske, kept lit in his second floor office window in Darien, CT. His “long walks” to save and free so many men and women with intellectual disabilities who were falsely imprisoned – especially the 26 year walk with Richard LaPointe (who was freed on April 10, 2015) – required many, many years of candles in the window.

Since writing our first booklet in 1989 entitled “One Candle Power”, through the wonderful 2002 compilation and expansion by Cathy Ludlum of the original 7 booklets of One Candle Power, we have found the hope and solidarity that one candle brings, propels each of us and all we know who pursue difficult long journeys forward. And lest we fall into the trap of believing, “WHAT CAN I DO?” – I’m only ONE small insignificant person?”

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.”


– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Read and listen to the words written by Tom Hunter in 1991, “THE POWER OF ONE”:

“Sometimes don’t you feel like you’re out there all alone? Working hard on so much to get done. You’re tired and discouraged. And you just don’t have the time to notice you’re the power of one!”

*It’s the power of one...*  
*To do what you can do.*  
*To dream a better future and to know*  
*That whenever someone starts to do what they can do*  
*Then the power of one can grow.*

Oh, maybe you are someone who’s looking for a friend...  
For yourself, for your daughter, or your son. You’ve dreamed and you’ve struggled  
And now it’s time to know That you really are the power of one.  
**It’s the power of one......**

It’s a little like you’re going  
Through a field of underbrush  
Hacking out a path for more to come,  
Or **MAYBE YOU’RE A CANDLE THAT**  
**LIGHTS THE DARKENED ROOM**  
With light that’s from the power of one  
**It’s the power of one......**

When somebody says you can’t do things that way  
Cause after all you’re only one  
Remind them that changes mostly happen step by step  
And often from the power of one.  
**It’s the Power of one......**

So the power of one become two or three  
And two or three become ninety one,  
And then you look around to see how things have changed  
Just because you were the power of one!

**Yes, the power of one can grow!!!!**
We wrote **One Candle Power** in 1989 to try to express what we had experienced! Today, almost 30 years later, the reality of these words still rings true:

The Candle was chosen as a symbol because of its simplicity, ease of use, ancient heritage, yet current practicality (when modern lighting technology fails we return to the candle). Its endless symbolic interpretations help us explain and illustrate the important concepts of empowering, enabling and “shining a light on” the abilities and capacities of people within the circle of support.

**ONE CANDLE POWER** was chosen as a title to express the fact that **one candle alone does have the power to give light, to empower another by passing the flame – giving it as a gift to another.** This gift given is not one which causes the giver to lose anything. But the opposite is true – the giver actually receives more light. **Truly, when the light of the candle is passed among people in a circle of support the gifts of all are multiplied and enhanced.** Each person, each person’s gift (light) is important. **No gift is considered insignificant.** In fact each person has the capacity to light another’s candle when it is blown out by disappointment, negative attitudes or major obstacles in the path to the vision or goal. Most of all this symbol and title can be easily understood by any adult or child who is within the circle of support whatever his or her gift, capacity and ability is.

**George Bernard Shaw** quote: *“I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no “brief candle” to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”*
**Tending the Candle** (1993 written) is very difficult and requires many, many diverse hands to shelter the delicate flame. Often we want to give up in despair and question whether all we have done has any meaning at all!

Again we turn to the truth filled and inspiring poetry in song of Peter, Paul and Mary showing their anthem:

“**Carry On, Sweet Survivor**”

“You have asked why the days go by so quickly?
And why each one feels no different from the last ...
And you say that you are fearful for the future ...
And you have grown suspicious of the past.
And you wonder if the dreams we share together ...

Have abandoned us or we abandoned them?
And you cast about and try to find new meaning ...
So that you can feel that closeness once again.

**CARRY ON, my sweet survivor**
**CARRY ON, my lonely friend**
**Don’t give up on the dream**
**And don’t you let it end.**

**CARRY ON, my sweet survivor**
**Though you know that something’s gone**
**For everything that matters**
**CARRY ON......**

You remember when you felt each person mattered
When we all had to care or all was lost
But now you see believers turn to cynics
And you wonder was the struggle worth the cost.
Then you see someone too young to know the difference
And the veil of isolation in their eyes
And inside you know you’ve got to leave them something
Or the hope for something better slowly dies.

**CARRY ON, my sweet survivor**
You carried it so long
So it may come again

**CARRY ON.....CARRY ON.......CARRY ON.....**
So we leave you with one request!!!

Please join us in lighting one candle (a perpetual candle of hope and solidarity) putting it in place where others can see it, and use it as a reminder that ...

“FOR EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS......CARRY ON!!!!