

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org

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The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 P.M. on the second Sunday of each month in the American Builders & Contractors (ABC) Building, 1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210. Park and enter at the rear of the building.

We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

April 8 Program:

Navigating the Grief Process

Hear from a panel of our members who are at different stages of their grief, from newly bereaved to others who are further down the road. They will share insights into how they have handled their individual journeys from coping, changing relationships, managing the dark days and the positive experiences they have encountered. Join us for this program and stay for our regular small group sharing sessions.



Phone Friends

We have all experienced the pain of losing a child. We understand and would like to listen. If you can't reach one of us, feel free to call another person on this list.

Accidental Death	Mike and Paula Childers 615-646-1333
AIDS	Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
Illness	David and Peggy Gibson 615-356-1351
Infant	Jayne Head 615-264-8184
SIDS	Kris Thompson 931-486-9088
Suicide	Ron and Darlene Henson 615-789-3613
Small Child	Kenneth and Kathy Hensley 615-237-9972
Alcohol/Drug Overdose	Ed Pyle 615-712-3245

Self Help

For many of us, the monthly meeting of our Compassionate Friends Group is the only real healing time we give to ourselves. Helping ourselves on a daily basis is critical to our journey in the grieving process.

Many of us find solace in books. Others find it in movies, music, time with friends, meditation or intense spiritual conviction. Each day we should take some time to center ourselves, to find a place of peace.

If you haven't already done so, start with a quiet time of reflection and search your soul for the key to your own solace. There will still be bad, even terrible, days. The effort to help ourselves begins with knowing ourselves and finding the unique activity that soothes our broken hearts for just a little while.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX

*We remember our children with love and gratitude. We miss their faces,
their voices and their smiles. And we do not forget--*

In the month of their births—

Russell Alan Abbott April 17 Son of David and Karen Abbott	Michael Hunt April 13 Son of Robin Hunt	Drew Michael Tipton April 25 Son of Bobby and Shari Tipton	Antonio Lyn Scott Winslett (Chunky) April 27 Grandson of Keith and Wanda Winslett
James Michael Bolton (Mikey) April 9 Son of James and Loretta Bolton	Jack Tolbert Johnson April 10 Son of Bill and Jill Johnson	Daniel Wayne Vick April 5 Son of Wayne and Marsha Vick	Don Bruce Winters April 16 Son of Jerry and Loretta Winters
Evan Fields Derry April 19 Son of Tony and Kelly Derry	Christopher Lincoln Kingsborough (Chris) April 21 Son of Paul and Lydia Kingsborough	Marisa Ann Wade April 11 Daughter of David Roark and Alicia Wade Sister of Matthew Roark and Celeste Summers Granddaughter of David Wade and LeeAnn Tillman	Ryan Lee Wiseman April 18 Son of Roger and Deborah Wiseman
Mark Joseph Dinkel April 27 Son of Richard and Kathleen Dinkel Brother of Amy Dinkel	Stacy Leigh Kraft April 10 Daughter of Keith and Meryl Kraft and Terry Korman	Janessa Dian Wellman April 24 Daughter of Timothy Phariss and Debra Wellman Granddaughter of Glen and Dian Wellman	Megan Alaine Myers Workman April 20 Daughter of Steve and Lisa Kirkland
Kenneth Elberson April 18 Son of Harry and Winne Elberson	David Benton Lowe April 26 Son of Charles and Teresa Lowe		Bert Writtenberry April 17 Son of Hunter and Carol Nichols
	Stephanie Dawn Reeves April 4 Daughter of Barney and Patricia Raymond		



And in the month of their deaths—

Christopher Jay Bradley April 20 Son of Lamar and Joy Bradley	Taylor Davies April 16 Son of Roy and Barbara Davies	Jeremy Hill April 2 Son of John and Genetta Rushing	Andrew Morris Pack April 19 Son of Wayne and Kassandra Pack
Randy Lee Buchanan April 1 Son of Jeanette P. Buchanan Brother of Debbie Hamilton and Keith Buchanan	Chad Flatt April 18 Son of James Flatt and Ann Flatt	Michael Hunt April 21 Son of Robin Hunt	Cameron Blake Parnell April 28 Son of Scott and Gaye Parnell
Amy Kathryn Conforti April 24 Daughter of Robert and Gail Conforti	Connor John Gawaluck April 27 Son of John and Lorelee Gawaluck	Sean Ashley McKittrick April 28 Son of Jeff Kulas and Diana Kulas	Bert Rich April 7 Son of Shirley Rich- Brinegar
	Meghan Brittny Henderson April 1 Daughter of Scott and Mary Beth Denton	Kevin Moncrief April 5 Son of Sandra Merkel	John David Warren (Johnny) April 23 Son of John and Georgia Warren

GIFTS OF LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE

We are deeply grateful for the voluntary gifts of love that make it possible for The Compassionate Friends to offer comfort to those families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

Jim and Loretta Bolton
In loving memory of their son,
James Michael Bolton (Mikey)

Harry and Winnie Elbersen
In loving memory of their son,
Kenneth Elbersen

Wayne and Marsha Vick
In loving memory of their son,
Daniel Wayne Vick

John and Georgia Warren
In loving memory of their son,
John David Warren (Johnny)

Jerry and Loretta Winters
In loving memory of their son,
Don Bruce Winters

Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, donates the printing of this newsletter as a gift to the families of TCF. Deanna Brown and her family assemble, label, sort and mail the newsletter in loving memory of her son, Marcus Dean Brown. We appreciate so much these people and their generosity to all of us.

While You Were Here

*When we held you as a newborn baby
 Our hearts pounding, our hands trembling
 with fear and awe
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*When we walked around the house at night
 Holding you and singing, waiting for you to fall
 asleep
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*We picked you up with a hug
 And kissed your hurts as you took your first steps in
 life
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*When you said "I hate you"
 Because we wouldn't let you have your way
 Or let certain things go unpunished
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*When we "badgered" you about studying
 Because we knew you could pass that test
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*When we could only stand and watch
 As your high school principal suspended you
 For "just being a teenager"
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*When the court took away your license
 And we took away your car
 For being irresponsible and breaking the law
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*When we watched as proud parents
 As you received your degree in Graphic Arts
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*When we did our best to make you realize
 The importance of love and choosing a path in life
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*When we stood there crying and staring in disbelief
 At your body that no longer was alive
 I hope you knew we loved you.*

*Since you're gone now
 We cherish the memories of your 27 years
 I hope you knew we loved you
 While you were here.*



Tom Murphy
 Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH

Don't try to destroy a beautiful part of your life because remembering it hurts. As children of today and tomorrow, we are also children of yesterday. The past still travels with us and what it has been, makes us what we are.

From *Living When a Loved One Has Died*
 by Rabbi Earl Grollman

Don't Look For Me Among the Tombs

*Don't look for me among the tombs,
My life has just begun.
But raise your eyes to the endless skies,
You'll see me in the sun.*

*Hear me in every robin's song,
The rustle of the leaves.
My smile will be in every rose,
My song the summer breeze.*

*I'll be the nodding daffodil
That ushers in the spring.
I'll kiss the earth in summer
With every gentle rain.*

*In every sparkling dewdrop,
In every grain of sand,
Every velvet snowflake,
In every mother's hand.*

*For I am LIFE and LOVE unchained
Where God and I are one.
Don't look for me among the tombs,
My life has just begun.*

Susan Vaughn
TCF, Nashville, TN



Sometimes

*Sometimes
Memories are like rain showers
Sprinkling down upon you
Catching you unaware.
And then they are gone,
Leaving you warm and refreshed.*

*Sometimes
Memories are like thunderstorms
Beating down upon you,
Relentless in their downpour
And then they will cease,
Leaving you tired and bruised.*

*Sometimes
Memories are like shadows
Sneaking up behind you,
Following you around.
Then they disappear,
Leaving you sad and confused.*

*Sometimes
Memories are like comforters
Surrounding you with warmth,
Luxuriously abundant
And sometimes they stay,
Wrapping you in contentment.*

Marcia Updyke
TCF, St. Louis, MO

Sharing

Everybody has something.

Some call it faith.

Some refer to fate, destiny...religion...God...a belief.

It does not matter what you call it; but in your moments of deepest sorrow, know that it is there.
Don't be afraid to question it. Doubt it. Hate it. Curse it. Hide it. Scream at it. Test it. But keep it.

One day your grief will be resolved.

Then you will be able to acknowledge it, accept it, be grateful for it, understand it, share it.

Only then can you live it. I call mine faith. What do you call yours?

Shirley A. Melin
TCF, Fox Valley Chapter, Aurora, IL

*A friend is one that knows you as you are,
understands where you've been . . .
accepts who you've become,
and still gently allows you to grow.*

William Shakespeare

*People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel.*

Carl W. Buehner

On the Carousel

My eyes once again began to focus through this vale of sorrow as the carousel circled around me. My attention was drawn to a small child staring in my direction. He had a kindly, bright and cheerful visage and was riding all alone. He gestured to me to join him. "Come with me on the merry-go-round," he shouted. "Join me and let's have fun. Don't let us pass you again before the ride stops and it's too late to get on." For a brief instant I stood frozen in space, unable to move. Then as if a huge magnet were attached to me, I was drawn to him, finding myself at his side. "Take my hand," he said. I reached out and held his hand as he gently guided me closer to him. An infusion of warm energy surged through my body and soul as the child held on to me. He smiled at me as if to say, "Everything will be alright." I looked into the boy's soft smiling eyes and was overcome by a feeling of calmness and serenity. I looked around at the others enjoying themselves and for the first time in a very long time I was able to clearly see what was happening. I, too, felt the joy and happiness as we rode that carousel together. I turned back to the child as he rode up and down on his horse with my arms tightly embracing him, once again looking at his smiling face. It was then that I clearly understood that his feeling of joy was meant for me, now knowing that I, too, was ready to join the others riding up and down on the carousel.

Nathan S. Berman
TCF, Rockland County, NY

*Friends are quiet angels who lift us to our
feet when our wings have trouble
remembering how to fly.*

Lorraine Kay Mitchell

What Do I Tell My Children?

An incident that happened years ago reminded me once again that coping with my brother's death is a learning process that will continue for the rest of my life. I was shopping for a coat when I heard a little boy question his mother, "Why do I have to stay so close?" She answered him with the all-too-familiar answer, "Because." As I drove home, I began to think about the question the little boy asked. **Why?** Only a three-letter word, but such a huge question.

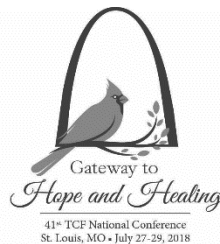
I remember when I was in school that we students needed to understand everything. We were supposed to know how things worked. We were taught to question everything. I nearly drove my Latin teacher crazy with my need to understand the conjugation of verbs. "Why that way?" I kept asking. "It makes no sense!" The teacher never answered why; he just insisted I learn those irregular verbs. He taught me a lot more in class than just Latin. He taught me about life. He taught me that sometimes there is no **why**, there just is. That was a difficult lesson to learn. I wonder how I'm going to teach my children. I know I'll have to. Someday, my children are going to ask where my brother, their Uncle Freddy, is and why he is not with us. What do I say when my children ask me where my brother is? How do I explain something to my children that I still cannot explain to myself?

How are we, Freddy's family, supposed to explain murder to our children? How do we explain that there are some horrible people in this world? How do we make them understand that there are people who commit horrible acts and not make them afraid of life? How do we let our children know how much their uncle would have loved them?

How do we do this? Is there a way? Why should I even have to worry about this? Why? Sometimes there is no **why**, there just is.

Karen Peterson
TCF Franklin Lakes, NJ

MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND:



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the 41st TCF National Conference on July 27-29, 2018. "Gateway to Hope and Healing" is the theme of this year's event. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. Details will be updated on the national website, www.compassionatefriends.org as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) as they become available. **Conference registration will be opening soon. The reduced hotel room rate and hotel registration link will be announced at that time.**

Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

Journaling to Heal

Each time I look back over my grief journey, I remember the important role that journaling played in my first and second years of grief. Handwritten entries, some sentences, sometimes just a few words describing my emotions, helped me to define where I was in my daily life. As I review the tear-stained pages, I am reminded of the deep, deep pain and the catharsis of the journal. Whether I was angry, in pain, deeply depressed or just too exhausted to think, I wrote a few words, maybe even a few lines each day. I saw it as my connection to my son.

As time progressed, my journaling became writing and eventually I returned to the computer and began forming coherent thoughts and sentences, with subjects and messages to my child, myself and to others. But the process started with the healing of the journal. I learned to be very honest with myself in my journal because I never shared it with anyone. I didn't put on a mask or rationalize in my journal, as no one else would be reading it. I was completely candid, and I soon recognized my weaknesses, regrets, strengths and successes. Pure honesty and great insight were achieved in my journal's conversation with myself.

Grief therapists recommend journaling to bereaved parents quite frequently. Some people are able to find an outlet for their daily roller coaster of emotions through journaling. Some seek answers and others seek questions. Many parents feel they are connecting with their child through their journal. There are as many reasons to journal as there are types of journals.

While journaling may not be for everyone, we encourage each of you to at least attempt it for a week. Give it your best effort. If, as some have found, it offers you nothing and is a chore, not a treasured time, then stop and seek other forms of outlet. But if, as many have found, it offers you a place for your thoughts, your messages, your self-revelation and self-evaluation as well as a refuge from the world, then by all means, continue to journal.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX



Ideas for Writing Your Journal

Recently, several new TCF members have asked me for suggestions about what they can do at the early stages of grief and what helped me in my experience in those earlier days of grief when my son, Bobby, died. In thinking about that, I remember my *journal* and what a meaningful and effective way of venting that was for me.

As you may know, very often our close friends think we should be "moving on with life" or "letting go," etc. Unfortunately, for me, they just didn't get it. Bereaved parents who have written about their loss unanimously agree that writing unleashes enormous stress and pain.

In my own experience, I recall one night when I locked myself in the bathroom and wrote a long letter to my son, Bobby. It was my chance to express my feelings without having them diminished by well-meaning and caring people around me trying to be helpful. I will never forget the pressure that letter released for me. Although the letter was not saved, the positive result was everlasting.

Have you ever thought of writing your story or keeping a journal? You may find it helpful to clarify your thoughts about your child by recording your feelings in the form of a letter. Write a letter to your child, expressing your thoughts and feelings about the following:

- A special memory that I have about you.
- What I miss the most about you and our relationship.
- What I wish I'd said or hadn't said.
- What I'd like to ask you.
- What I wish we'd done or hadn't done.
- What I've had the hardest time dealing with.
- Ways in which you will continue to live on in me.
- Special ways I have for keeping my memories of you alive.

Choose one or several ideas that have significance for you or start at the top of the list and work your way down. These topics may serve to help you come up with your own ideas, specific to your situation and relationship. Give yourself this exercise as a gift. If you would like to share your writing at a TCF meeting, please do. You never know how many other parents will be touched and benefit from your experience.

Pat Akery
TCF Medford, Oregon

When

*When your mind cannot find an answer,
open your heart
and ask
for peace.*

Sascha Wagner

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CHAPTER INFORMATION

The Birthday Table

In the month of your child's birthday, a table will be provided at our meeting where you can share photographs, mementos, your child's favorite snack or a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers—anything you'd like to bring. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth and for us to become better acquainted.

What is the Yellow Slip?

Please return your yellow renewal slip. After a year on the newsletter mailing list, those names that were added in that month of a previous year, may receive a yellow half-sheet asking that their subscription be renewed. This is simply to keep our mailing list and the information in it current. If you do not send the yellow slip back, we must assume that you no longer want the newsletter. Although you are given an opportunity to make a voluntary donation, there is no cost involved in your subscription. The newsletter is our gift to you for as long as you wish to receive it. You may request that your name be returned to the active list at any time simply by calling 615-356-4TCF (4823).

Religion and TCF

The Principles of The Compassionate Friends state that TCF reaches out to all bereaved parents across the artificial barriers of religion, race, economic class, or ethnic group. Further, TCF espouses no specific religious or philosophical ideology. Despite our nondenominational status, many writers indicate that they have found comfort in their faith, and some have shared their anger and loss of faith. The opinions and beliefs expressed in letters, articles and poetry are those of the contributors.

Newsletter Deadline

All donations and original poems or articles for the TCF Nashville newsletter must be received by the meeting day of the month preceding the publication month. All donations and submissions are greatly appreciated.



BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

Survivors of Suicide

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings, you may call 615 244-7444, or go to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network at TSPN.org, and you will find a list of all Tennessee SOS locations.

Sharing

SHARING is a community organization for parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn infant. They meet at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Administrative Board Room on the first floor at Tri-Star Centennial Women's and Children's Hospital, 2221 Murphy Avenue in Nashville. The meetings are "open" and free. You can drop by as often as you like. The website is sharingmiddletn.org. Their informative brochure is found under "Contact Us."

Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents

For general information about Grief Support Services at Alive Hospice, please call the main number: 615 963-4732 or email griefsupport@alivehospice.org. Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at 615-346-8554. Contact John Baker at 615-346-8364 for bereaved parent support or individual counseling.

Other TCF Chapters

There are several other chapters of The Compassionate Friends you might want to know about. Anytime you are in their vicinity or feel the need to talk with other bereaved parents, feel free to attend their meetings. Also, when you personally know a newly bereaved family in one of these towns, please call the chapter number and give them the information so they can make contact with the family. To locate a chapter, you may call the TCF National Office at 1-877 969-0010, or go to www.compassionatefriends.org and click on chapter locator.

The Compassionate Friends

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April 2018

The Reason for TCF Meetings

One could ask, “Why go and listen to the woes of other people when it is easier to get wrapped up in our own?” It is not to compare tragedies, nor assess the right or wrong means of grieving, nor to pressure or complicate or confuse a bereaved parent with timetables of grief. This is not the reasoning behind TCF meetings.

When a child of a family dies, the emotional pain can be intense. It is tempting at times to try to run either into solitude or avoidance. A balance is needed to survive and live more than a resigned existence. Finding a way isn’t easy when the “rest of the world” rushes by, taking little notice that our life has changed.

The monthly meetings of The Compassionate Friends are a special time we can set aside to gain and maintain our balance. We need a lot of encouragement to endure and experience our emotions and to express ourselves while grieving. Coming to a meeting can help alleviate the feeling of being alone in sorrow. The environment of other bereaved parents offers a means of keeping in touch with reality, in which there can be a sharing and mutual understanding. There is sustained support knowing that others are willing to acknowledge that though a child’s song might be over, the melody of memories will remain woven throughout the remainder of our lives.

N. Hunt
TCF Sioux Falls, SD

