

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •

Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org



Chapter Leader: Kris Foust, (931) 216-7801, email: tcfkrisfoust@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: melanierladd@gmail.com
Treasurer: Ed Pyle, (615) 712-3245, email: epyle@wyattfirm.com
Outreach: David Gibson, (615) 308-2520, email: davidg14@bellsouth.net
Regional Coordinators: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: lolly39@aol.com
Dana Young (931)581-7090

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. (See Mailing address above.) 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.



Memorial Services to Be Held on December 13, 2020

The Coronavirus has affected everything in 2020 and our annual Memorial Service is no exception. This year our Memorial Service will include a virtual program, prerecorded and broadcast online as well as a limited in-person service, both to be held at 3:00 PM Sunday, December 13, 2020. Registration is now closed, but we hold all our children dearly in our hearts during these services. If you did pre-register, be sure to check your e-mail for further instructions.



*May the memories
of this season
come on gentle wings
to bring you love
and peace.*



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 Henson
615-789-3613
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose**.....Ed Pyle
615-712-3245


*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—




Zachary Curtis Aldridge December 12 Son of David and Kim Campbell	Taylor Martin Davies December 14 Son of Roy and Barbara Davies	Jeremy Seth Lunceford December 15 Son of Jane Lunceford Brother of Aubrey, Shelby, and Brittney	Mary Catherine Nicholson December 2010 Infant Daughter of John and Suzanne Nicholson Sister of Baby Nicholson
Hank Thomas Ashworth December 6 Son of Rick Ashworth	Darby Felts December 10 Son of Deanie Gregory Nephew of Jean Porch	Chloe Noelle Mariea December 3 Daughter of Jude and Tamara Mariea	Michael Stanley Overcash December 8 Son of Mike and Jean Overcash
Taylor Nicole Barton December 2 Daughter of Alan Barton and Stella Stephens	Chad Flatt December 7 Son of James Flatt and Ann Flatt	David Alan McCoy December 31 Son of Billy and Beverly Edwards and Gary McCoy	Philip G. Sanders December 8 Son of Jean Porch Nephew of Deanie Gregory
Josh Baskin December 17 Son of Carol Bayless	Jennifer Lee Friedmann (Jena) December 25 Daughter of John and Mignon Friedmann Sister of Dr. John Friedmann, Jr.	Lindsay Carole Miller December 19 Daughter of David and Rebecca Miller Granddaughter of Roy and Carole Renfro	Drane Smallwood, III December 5 Son of William and Alana Smallwood
Adam Blake Brooks December 7 Son of Danny Brooks and Dawn Armstrong	Daniel Lee Henson December 13 Son of Ronnie and Darlene Henson	Arianna Marie Mitchell December 27 Daughter of Christopher Mitchell and Heather Evans Granddaughter of Frank and Brenda Nelson	Timothy Elwin Spivey December 15 Son of Don and April Spivey and Chad and Kim Keen
Clayton Lee Chitwood December 28 Son of Jim and Connie Chitwood Grandson of Margaret Chitwood-Watkins	William Benard Kovarik December 12 Son of Ben and Kathryn Kovarik	Lauren Paige Moore December 30 Daughter of Mac and Polly Moore Sister of Darrell and Paul	Stephanie Hardy Stephens December 29 Daughter of George and Thelma Hardy Sister of Jeremy George Hardy
Matthew Lance Chitwood December 10 Son of Jim and Connie Chitwood Grandson of Margaret Chitwood-Watkins	Briana Leigh Kulesza December 5 Daughter of Larry and Donna Kulesza		Kevin Tolentino December 30 Son of Sarah Tolentino
Toby H. Daniel December 25 Son of Christy Daniel			

And in the month of their deaths

Jared Ensley Banta December 26 Grandson of V. G. and Karen Banta	Clayton Lee Chitwood December 28 Son of Jim and Connie Chitwood Grandson of Margaret Chitwood-Watkins Brother of Matthew	Lee Edward Halker December 10 Son of Joe and Janene Halker	Jeremy George Hardy December 31 Son of George and Thelma Hardy Brother of Stephanie
Elizabeth Osborn Cheek December 9 Daughter of \\ Ross and Libby Cheek		Gary Dale Hamilton December 14 Son of Emma Mathis; Stepson of Dallas Mathis	


Continued on page 3

Children Remembered, continued

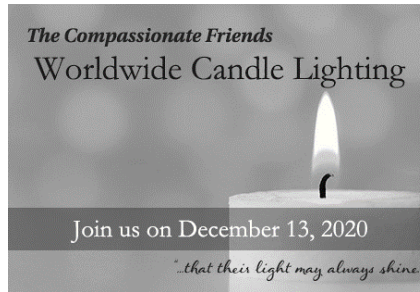
Robert Jason Heflin (Jason) December 31 Son of Eddie and Kay Heflin	Mary Catherine Nicholson December 2010 Infant Daughter of John and Suzanne Nicholson Sister of Baby Nicholson	Jacob Federman Smiley December 9 Son of Troy and Susan Smiley	Janessa Dian Wellman December 19 Daughter of Timothy Pharris and Debra Wellman Granddaughter of Glen and Dian Wellman
Abigail Rhea Little (Abbie) December 6 Daughter of Rhea and Marie Little	Robert Bryan Parrish (Bryan) December 12 Son of Marvin and Debbie Hampton	Robert Andrew Way Swift December 13 Son of Travis Teal and Gayle Swift Teal	Heather Ann Willis December 13 Daughter of Tom and Margaret Loose
	Mark Elliott Reischman December 23 Son of Bill and Jean Reischman	Daniel Wayne Vick December 14 Son of Wayne and Marsha Vick	

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.

Rose H. Bartlett <i>In loving memory of her grandson, Chase Lee Harris</i> Son of Kirk and Shayne Harris Paul and Stacy Fish		Barbara Davies <i>Through Nationwide Cyber Grants In loving memory of her stepsons, Roy James Davies and Taylor Davies</i> Sons of Roy Davies	Wayne and Cassandra Pack <i>In loving memory of their son, Andrew Morris Pack</i>
Linda Sue Black <i>In loving memory of her son, Christopher William Black</i>	John and Mignon Friedmann Dr. John Friedmann, Jr. <i>In loving memory of their Daughter and sister, Jennifer Lee Friedmann (Jena)</i>	Carole Renfro <i>In loving memory of Her Granddaughter, Lindsay Carole Miller, Daughter of David and Rebecca Miller Her son-in-law, Allen Mays, and Her Grandson, Madison Allen Mays, Son of Allen and Rachel Mays</i>	
Margaret Chitwood-Watkins <i>In Loving memory of Her grandsons, Clayton Lee Chitwood And Matthew Lance Chitwood, Sons of Jim and Connie Chitwood</i>	Don and Vickie Garner <i>In loving memory of their son, Aaron Garner</i>	Jerry and Loretta Winters <i>In loving memory of their son, Don Bruce Winters</i>	
	Tom and Jere King <i>In loving memory of their son, James Thomas King, (JT)</i>		

Allegra Marketing (615 360-3339) 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.



The 22nd Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting will be held this year on Sunday, December 13, 2020. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of the children. This is a very special and moving event, when bereaved families join together from around the world in memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 22nd annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, it has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

A Flicker in the Distance

*In this time of grief,
When the darkness is so great,
And your heart is aching so,
You feel that it may break.*

*Remember that in this darkness
There is a candle's light
A flicker in the distance
Small but intensely bright.*

*That tiny little glow
That seems so far away
Will grow brighter and brighter
With each passing day.*



*Time does not heal, as they say,
But it tends to numb
The ache we feel inside our heart
When that darkness comes.*

*In time your heart will feel lighter
And the memories won't bring such pain
The tears won't flow as often
And you will find laughter again.*

*So keep your eye on that distant glow
To see how far you came...
Because at the end of the darkness
That flicker becomes a flame.*

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
©1999. Permission for TCF chapters to reprint granted by the author

Seasoned Grief

There used to be a point to summing up a year just passed, not as a personal accomplishment but as a reflection. Leaving previous hurts behind was welcomed and the sensible thing to do. I thought I was getting wiser as I was getting older, with the New Year's clean slate full of possibilities. Becoming another person seemed simple, another chance at getting it right. Like redemption, being forgiven for having blundered or been found wanting.

But death changed everything, without permission. Resolutions made sincerely and broken quickly, offended my need to hold on to the past—to rewind life very fast, backwards so that I could capture what I had lost. Still, time went on, regardless of my pleas. And when exhaustion sets in, as eventually it must, I understood there would be another future; not the one I thought I had the right to expect, but one where I dared carry hope in my heart again

Eva Lager
TCF Perth, Western Australia

Christmas Past, Christmas Present: An Ever-Changing Perspective

TIs the season....to be maudlin. For bereaved parents, the artificiality of the Madison Avenue inspired advertising, marketing, store displays and endless streams of television commercials can be overwhelming. We are not like those happy families in the pictures and television commercials. We are different. We are not merry; we are maudlin. We are insulted by this artificial joy and “must have” concept that further belittles the intent of the holiday season. The death of our child has changed our perspective on the holiday season forever.

For the first few years after my son died, I could not think about Christmas. Everything screamed buy, buy, buy. Christmas season sales projections by the retailers were being viewed by the Wall-Streeters as the gospel according to King Scrooge. The “Greed Creed” seemed oppressive. Displays in stores before Halloween swept me with a tsunami of anxiety. As Thanksgiving approached and passed, I began to feel more deeply depressed....more maudlin and sad.

Then on the 19th of each December, I marked my son’s death anniversary. I never even considered those words until my son died. Now they had become the biggest part of my holiday vocabulary. I couldn’t shop, write Christmas cards, go to holiday parties or watch television “specials” without feeling very, very sad. Tears would silently slide down my cheeks as I thought about all that would never be, all that was lost.

Two years ago I began to analyze these feelings. I realized that I could shut out those things that harmed me and gently embrace those elements of the season that comforted me. That’s when I began to control the messages with which I was bombarded. I turned off the television or watched commercial free shows. I rented movies that I liked. I watched “It’s a Wonderful Life” several times and felt the message of the story in my heart. I shopped on-line, staying away from the garish, gaudy and tasteless displays in the stores. I controlled my environment until I could overcome the negative impact of the seasonal stimulation.

Do all bereaved parents feel this way? I suppose a few don’t, but in the first few years of grief the bombardment and the reminders of all that we have lost paralyze us. Some turn to their religion for guidance and comfort. Some ignore the season entirely. Others vacation each year during the holidays. The majority of us eventually learn to start new traditions....traditions that include our absent children yet bring some measure of peace to our hearts.

And I think that’s how my son would want it to be for my husband and me. He would want us to be with gentle people who enjoy companionship and memories more than the material goods. He would want us to continue to help those in need....to buy a gift and give it in his name, to donate to the Salvation Army so that others might have a happier holiday.

This year I will work with other bereaved parents, parents who are still raw and new to their loss. I will reach out to them, give them the benefit of what wisdom I have acquired and send them a message of hope. Instead of showering my son’s daughters with yet more junk or the crass gift of cash, I will donate to a very worthy cause in their names. These three donations will help three children who live on the opposite end of the economic spectrum from them. I doubt that they will grasp the meaning of this gift given the value system in which they have spent the last five years. But I will. Their father would approve. And that’s what really counts. I’ll do the same for my grandson...he will appreciate the meaning of this gift.

As far as some of the other people in my life, I will buy a little something....on-line. I might even enter a store or two this year. But the buying spirit has eluded me for five years. I don’t think it’s going to return, and I don’t miss it.

The anxiety hasn’t started yet. It starts later every year. I am not quite sure why this is, but I would guess that as salient beings, we learn to cope with the unthinkable. I doubt that anxiety will keep its distance from me throughout the season, but I think its grip on my mind has lessened considerably.

Am I looking forward to the holidays? Not really, but then I feel that way about a lot of things now. It’s just the way it is. The holidays come, the death anniversaries come, the birthdays come, the taxman certainly arrives and the world keeps right on spinning. Since my grandchildren are absent from my life by their mother’s choice, I do not know them anymore. This is sad, but not devastating. This is just the way it is. I have gotten through the anger and bitterness and arrived at a place of peace on these lost relationships.

We’ll spend Christmas with my family. We’ll cook, we’ll talk, and we’ll exchange little gifts. Sometimes my husband and I buy something together that both of us will enjoy. Sometimes we just skip it. We keep it simple and we reach out to others who need reassurance, help and understanding. That is the real meaning of the holiday season, and this keeps us closer to Todd.

Whatever you choose to do this year, it will be right. Know, too, that the anxiety you are feeling is far worse than the actual day itself. Try not to pressure yourself too much; talk with your family about your needs and be open as to what you can handle. Do what is best for you. We’re all different people who share a very unique experience....we have lost our precious children to death. We are seekers of peace and hope. One day we will find both.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX



You gave them the gift of life and they gave you the gift of love in return. Nothing can deny that gift exchange.

TCF, Portland, OR

Tradition, Tradition, Tradition

Even in normal times, tradition isn't what it always is cracked up to be, and sometimes "tradition" gets in the way of sanity. Often, we cling to tradition because it's easier, we don't want to offend others, we don't want to be embarrassed, or we don't know what else to do.

When you are a grieving parent, giving in to tradition can drive you over the edge. I found myself in the "tradition predicament" regarding putting up a tree the first Christmas holiday after my son, Chad, died. I didn't want, need, or have the energy to put up a tree. Yet other family members wanted a tree and they wanted it as it always had been, big, bright, and decorated with ornaments they had purchased or made through the years. What eventually took place, with regard to a tree, changed our holiday forever and it has been a good thing for everyone involved.

I don't know the exact circumstances of how our "new tradition" came into being that first year. But I do remember tears, frustration, and upset people. I also remember my daughter saying to me it was her Christmas too and *she needed a tree*. It was her older brother, the one she remembered getting up with every Christmas morning when she was little, that was dead and she had to have something so she could deal with the emptiness. So, she came up with a plan. She and her father would go find the tree and she would take care of the decorations all by herself.

That was ten Christmases ago and this year, once again, my husband and my daughter will leave early in the morning a week before Christmas and hunt for a tree, just the two of them. When they come home, I will prepare breakfast while

they get the tree in the holder and move the furniture. We will sit down together and enjoy our meal and then my husband and I will leave for several hours. During that time, we will do whatever we feel like doing. We have gone to the cemetery, gone for walks, gone to the bookstore, visited friends etc. When we return my daughter will have decorated our Christmas tree and the whole house! Every year the tree has been different limited only to my daughter's imagination and the budget we keep her on. She didn't use our regular ornaments for a while and when she did, she told me ahead of time and said how meaningful it was for her to be the one who put Chad's ornaments back on the tree.

We have continued this "new tradition" to this day. Now, I find angel ornaments to put on the tree to honor our missing angel, and enjoy with my husband, sons, and family my daughter's traditional tribute to her brother. This "changing tradition" has been so healing. Our family has had the brightness and beauty that a lighted tree can provide, and I have been able to save my energy for other things I wanted to do.

During the next few weeks, I hope you will make the activities of the season as stress free as you can. I hope that you will feel free to experiment with new traditions, knowing there is no "right way" to go through this season only "your way." I hope that you will remember Christmas is only one day and that the time leading up to that "one day" will probably be more difficult than the actual day. And finally, I hope for peace in your hearts if not today then tomorrow or the tomorrow after, or the tomorrow after that. Take care ...

Sue Anderson
TCF Seattle, Washington

Wintersong

*Season of lights, season of love and peace
Season of shadow, season of memories,
Season of warmth and joy, season of secret tears;*

*Give us the courage to laugh again
Give us the vision to hope again
Give us the power to love again—
For all our new seasons
And all our new year*

Sascha



'Tis the Season

*It is trying to be
A warm and loving time,
With kindness and light,
And a feeling of hopeful renewal.*

*Find what blessings you can.
Help your heart to remember
That the children who died
Are about us, everywhere,
Trying to make this,
Even for you,
A warm and loving time.*

Sascha

Holiday Gifts for Children Needed

Every year for the past 15 years TCF Nashville families have generously donated toys and gifts to the children of Youth Villages in Middle Tennessee that works with children who are not living at home and are under foster care for the holidays. The children range in age from 6 to 18. This year we will **NOT** be collecting these gifts at our Memorial Program as in the past but we do not have to abandon this tradition of helping these children.

Instead of bringing the gift in person, here are some alternatives:

- Make a monetary donation online by going to the website for Youth Villages Middle Tennessee, and choosing the ‘Donate’ tab. When making your donation, include “Holiday Heroes” in the “Leave a comment” box.
- Drop off your gifts in person by December 7 at 301 Plus Park Blvd, Suite 110, Nashville, TN 37217.

Suggested gifts include:

Art supplies & Craft Kits

DVD's (PG-13 and Under)

Gift cards such as Wal-Mart, Target, and Amazon

Current Rap/ Pop CD's (Teen Rated)

MP3 Player/iPod Shuffle

CD Players/ Boom Box

Gameboy Games (Teen Rated)

Xbox/Play Station Games (Teen Rated)

Remote Control Cars, Trucks or Planes

Girlie things like Journals, Gel Pens, Scrap-Booking items

Board Games (Monopoly, Life, Mouse Trap, Jenga, Uno etc.)

Barbie Dolls & Accessories for Barbie

Matchbox/ Hot Wheels car play sets

Lego Sets

Hats, Gloves & Scarves

Nail Kits & Polish

Action Figure/Superheroes Toys

Jewelry & Hair Accessories

Sport Equipment

Young Adult Books



Spirit Gifts

Grief is such an individual journey. We are cast on its path without our consent, enveloped by a depth of pain we never dreamed existed. We all have times when despair and loneliness threaten to engulf us.

But we do have one companion on this lonely, unsought road: our child who died. I think there is never a moment in the day when a part of me is not connected to Philip, to our years together — and to our present relationship. Our journey through grief is a good-bye to the physical presence of our children, but it is never good-bye to their spirits and to the essence of their beings. Philip lives inside me now, and the same gifts he gave me when he was physically alive are still available to me through his spirit. In some ways, those “spirit gifts” are stronger, because they are contained and undiluted within me.

When the days get unbearably hard, when I think of all this wonderful young man missed by not getting to live out his life, I try to remember to focus on the present Philip, the one inside me. I try to integrate his gifts into my life, sometimes seeing through his eyes, thinking from his heart and mind. Often when I walk in the hills, I'll hear his voice “Pay attention, Mom.” (He noticed the details in nature so much more than I.)

No matter how old your child who died, the essence of this unique being remains within you forever. It is through us and others who knew them that our children continue to live and affect our present world. Though not in the way we hoped and expected, our beloved children are still alive.

May the spirit of the child who lives so deep within your heart help you through this month and through every moment of the re-establishing of your life.

Catharine (Kitty) Reeve
TCF Marin Co. & San Francisco, CA

*Perhaps they are not stars in the sky, but rather openings
where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are happy.*

Eskimo Legend

The Compassionate Friends

**P.O. BOX 50833
Nashville, TN
37205**

**Return Service
Requested**



December 2020

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nashville, TN
Permit No. 593

The Christmas Tears

*I will gather with the family,
Christmas Day is finally here.
But I will reserve a moment of time
To shed my Christmas Tears.*

*This special moment is just for us
A mother and her son
I'll laugh and cry about times gone by
And all the things we've done.*

*As I sing our Christmas carols
I'll open the gift you made for me.
This gift is more precious than gold itself,
It's the gift of your memory.*

*As I sift through the layers of tissue
That are in this gift of mine,*

*It takes me back to a Christmas past,
To a brighter and happier time.*

*I'll relive all the Christmases
That we had for twenty-two years,
Knowing that there will be no more
Brings on the Christmas tears.*

*But you have bestowed a second gift,
That starts things all anew,
A granddaughter to mend the hole in my heart,
That was left by losing you.*

*I trust these precious gifts of yours
Will sustain me through the years,
And maybe there will be a Christmas day,
With no more Christmas tears.*

Linda McInturff
TCF Southern Maryland Chapter

