

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NEW MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 8283 • Hermitage, TN 37076 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •

Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org



Chapter Leaders: Justin and Tracy Brewer, (615) 812-1504, e-mail: tbrewer395@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: melanierladd@gmail.com

Treasurer: Ed Pyle, (615) 712-3245, email: edpyletaxlaw@gmail.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 at the ABC (Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Tennessee) Building, 560 Royal Parkway, Nashville, TN 37214 (**SEE NEW MAILING ADDRESS ABOVE**).

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

January 8 Program:

Self-Care and Resources

Our own TCF Nashville member, Pamela Hagens, will be speaking at our January meeting on self-care techniques and resources. Included will be sharing experiences, journaling, redirecting and creating intentional moments. Pamela is a member of our TCF Nashville Steering Committee, a member of TCF National Board of Directors and she served as the National Conference ‘Healing Haven’ coordinator. As a community volunteer and avid learner of how to walk and grow through loss and grief, Pamela will bring an informative and insightful program. Our regular sharing groups will follow. Please join us.

You may bring a snack to share and the birthday table for December and January birthdays or our children will be available.



Attending your first TCF meeting can be difficult. Feelings can be overwhelming. We have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Please attend two or three meetings before deciding if TCF is right for you. There are no dues or fees. If you choose, you need not speak a word at a meeting. We are an international, non-denominational group, offering support and information to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. We need not walk alone.




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 615-308-2520 or 615-504-4307
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--

Lisa Allgood January 14 Daughter of Harold and Betty	Misty Whitney Ambrose January 14 Daughter of Michael and Treva Ambrose	Matthew Johnson Brooks January 14 Son of Mike and Sherry Brooks	Pamela Sue Chaiken January 17 Daughter of Lionel and Sandra Chaiken Sister of Stephanie
Jeremy Wilson Christy January 20 Son of Wilson and Jenny Christy	Cedric Lamar Collier January 13 Son of Greg Collier	Jonathan Lee Collins January 12 Son of Charity Collins Grandson of Jennie Reeves Nephew of Kristanna	Kaitlyn Kimberly Cook January 30 Daughter of Jim Cook and Sylvia Bosma Sister of Aaron and Zander
John Calister Davidson (Buddy) January 4 Son of Steve and Telese Davidson	Britney Dozier January 28 Daughter of James and Anita Dozier	James Wesley Evans (Snowman) January 31 Son of Brenda L. Nelson Brother of Heather Evans	Robert Black Faison, Jr. (Pete) January 15 Son of Robert Faison and Kimberlee Daus
Samuel Christopher Hagens January 14 Son of Christopher and Pamela Hagens Brother of Luke and Caleb Hagens	Justin Bruce Hensley January 13 Son of Denise Jones	Matthew Kent Hensley January 13 Son of Kenneth and Kathy Hensley	James Edwin Hinesley January 7 Son of Steven and Sue Hinesley
Mary Grace Hodsdon January 14 Daughter of John and Mary Hodsdon	Cam Mantle January 9 Daughter of Jack Mantle and Vicki Little	Shawn Patrick Martin January 4 Son of Annie and Michael Martin Brother of Austin	John Cole Neuhoff January 2 Son of John Neuhoff and Martha Houston
Lauren Kristina O'Saile January 23 Daughter of Don Davenport Granddaughter of Martha Davenport	Matthew Douglas Pate January 10 Son of Melanie Pate	Travis David Pate January 9 Son of Melanie Pate	Laurie Lynn Shriver Robert January 15 Daughter of Warren and Donna Jones and George Shriver Sister of David, Bekki, and Bonnie
Gregg Alan Swayze January 18 Son of Michael and Carole Swayze			


A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out.

Walter Winchell

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

Anonymous

And in the month of their deaths—

Emily Lynn Bengtson January 20 Daughter of Carl and Karen Bengtson Sister of Robert and Michael Bengtson	Brock Wyatt Blick January 8 Son of Mark and Jeri Blick Grandson of Jerry and Bonnie Buckner	Patrick Jonathan Bruce, Jr. (Jon) January 7 Son of Patrick and Pam Bruce	Matthew Lance Chitwood January 1 Son of Jim and Connie Chitwood Grandson of Margaret Chitwood-Watkins Brother of Clayton
Jeremy Wilson Christy January 4 Son of Wilson and Jenny Christy	Cedric Lamar Collier January 21 Son of Greg Collier	Roy James Davies January 13 Son of Roy and Barbara Davies	Britney Dozier January 21 Daughter of James and Anita Dozier
Susan Edwards January 21 Daughter-in-Law of Charles and Ruth Edwards	Kamden Joseph Hayes January 30 Grandson of Laura Buchanan	Joseph V. Ladd III (Joey) January 9 Son of Joe and Melanie Ladd	Cam Mantle January 25 Daughter of Jack Mantle and Vicki Little
Stetson Taylor McFarland January 30 Son of Nathan and Alisha McFarland	Heather Marie Robinson January 14 Daughter of Carol Green	Megan Emily Rotella January 4 Daughter of Patti Kelly	Shane Tanner Scruggs January 22 Son of Don and Joan Johnson; James and Lisa Scruggs
Trinity Rhodes Steagall January 1 Son of Rose Steagall	Kevin Tolentino January 28 Son of Sarah Tolentino	Joe Vick (Joey) January 10 Son of Kay Bogle Brother of Angie Hoffman	

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.

Roger and Deborah Wiseman in Loving Memory of their son, Ryan Lee Wiseman	Don and Sherry Eakes in Loving Memory of their grandson, Taylor Christian Brewer, Son of Justin and Tracy Brewer	Margaret Chitwood-Watkins in Loving Memory of her grandsons, Clayton Lee Chitwood and Matthew Lance Chitwood, Sons of Jim and
Bill and Linda Heath in Loving Memory of their daughter, Terry Lynn Heath	Martha Davenport in Loving Memory of her granddaughter, Lauren Kristina O'Saile	Connie Chitwood Vicki Little in Loving Memory of her daughter, Cam Mantle
	Jim and Loretta Bolton in Loving Memory of their son, James Michael "Mikey" Bolton	

Each month, 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.

**To benefit TCF, go to the Kroger website and click on "Community Rewards"; then follow the instructions on that page. After that, when you shop at Kroger, swipe your Plus Card or key in your phone number when you check out, and Kroger will donate dollars to TCF. It's a free and easy way to support your chapter.*

Coping

January is a reflective month. Ice ponds reflect the leaden sky, and the heart reflects the emptiness of a frozen spirit. When will we begin to thaw? When will we feel like we're making some progress in this place of icicles and cold sheets, sunless days and long, empty nights? Will we ever be happy again? Will I ever be ME again? January is also the month for making promises, commitments, and resolutions (resolutions are just fanc promises). We begin our new year with high hopes, strong wills, and long lists of things that will be different this year. To celebrate my commitment to a **new me**, I bought a workout clothes, expensive shoes, a smartwatch, and M&M dispenser (you've got to have some motivation). **THIS YEAR WILL BE DIFFERENT!**

We also spend some time looking back over the road we've traveled, and sometimes we wonder if we have made any progress at all. In the beginning, we misplace car keys, checkbooks, toothbrushes, relatives, and important stuff like the TV remote. We had to begin making lists of everything. We simply couldn't remember anything. I couldn't remember my address, social security number, zip code, or my mother-in-law's birthday. (I never could remember that.) I even started making lists of my lists! I knew I was going to be all right when I first discovered I could remember that I had made a list.

You know you're making progress when you can coordinate an entire outfit again. Shoes, belts, ties, purses, even sweaters and jackets often got left, simply because when we were hurting so terribly, we couldn't think about what to wear. Many of us didn't even know our pants were on backwards, or the tie was crooked. If you are wearing matched shoes right now, then you are making progress.

You are making progress when you no longer choke when you say your loved one's name. When you can walk down the cereal aisle in the supermarket and not dissolve into tears, progress is being made. When you can enjoy baking HIS favorite cookies or pie or cake again, you are on your way. When the photographs come back out once more and you can

wander through the scrapbooks again, letting the smiles peek through the tears, then hope is returning. When memories, for the most part, bring comfort and warmth instead of emptiness and pain, *January grows shorter*. When you begin to understand that putting away your loved one's things does NOT mean putting him out of your life, then your step becomes lighter.

Progress occurs when you completely understand that your loved one DIED, but the love you share between you can never be destroyed. Hope begins to return when you can hear laughter again—and some of that laughter is your own. Recovery is possible once unrealistic hopes for a lost future are given up, grieved for, and moved beyond. Perhaps it is not so much saying good-bye to our loved one as it is saying farewell to the old us and the life we shared. Making progress through grief doesn't mean that you no longer miss your loved one. He is part of your life forever, but his role in your life changes. Our lifestyle and habits change to reflect a different family landscape.

Now as you look back, it is amazing to see the life fabric—no longer ripped apart with a gaping hole, but mended with tiny stitches, left perhaps a bit lumpy (like lots of us), but patched with time, effort and love. Old threads and new threads have blended together and have been re-woven into a pattern not quite the same as we had originally planned. It is a tapestry of love, given and received, remembered and shared. Life can become good and whole and complete once again, not when we try to fill up the empty spaces left by loved ones no longer within hug's reach, but when we realize that love creates new spaces in the heart and expands the spirit and deepens the joy of simply being alive. The renewed energy and love we feel as winter turns into spring becomes the memorial to our loved one...not the grave markers we decorate, not the books we write, not the speeches we give, but the LOVE we share and pass on.

Darcie Sims
TCF Enid, OK

New Year's Wish

*I wish you gentle days and quiet nights.
I wish you memories to keep you strong.
I wish you time to smile and time for song...*

And then,

*I wish you friends to give you love,
when you are hurt and lost and life is blind.*

I wish you friends, and love, and peace of mind.

Sascha

Winter Grief

*Grieve as if to find eternal winter,
ache as if to banish every spring,
In your broken footstep follows mourning
for the children who were with you once.*

*Grieve as if to keep the day from dawning,
weep as if to kill each song you shared,
But be ready; when the sun grows stronger,
spring will yet reclaim your loving heart.*

Sascha

TCF . . . Unconditional Caring

My Son Philip died when he was 26 years-old. He died by suicide, influenced by a genetic illness, bipolar mood disorder (manic depression). I well remember how I flinched inwardly when people began referring to Philip's having "committed suicide." It seemed to diminish my wonderful son, to make him into what he never was: a kind of criminal. I wanted people to remember the beauty of his soul, yet what they focused on was the shocking way in which he died.

So it has been personally important to me to learn that TCF has made a change in the language it uses related to suicide. TCF now uses the terms "died of suicide" or "died by suicide" in all publications and presentations. The new, emotionally neutral language helps to lift the burden of stigma from all of us whose children or siblings died by suicide. It gives us strength and helps us heal.

If your child or sibling has died in one of society's less "acceptable" ways—by suicide, murder, alcoholism, from a drug overdose, AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases or in prison—do know that TCF does not accept society's stigmas. There is no room for blame or condemnation when all our hearts are aching for the children we no longer have. We honor your child and your grief, no matter the cause of death.

Similarly, if you are a parent or sibling who may feel "other" in our oft-judgmental society, please know that you will not be "other" in TCF. We welcome you with understanding and compassion, whatever your age, your race, your ethnicity, whether you are rich or poor, married or single, gay or straight, whatever your religion or lack of religion. We welcome you.

And if you have endured the most terrible tragedy, if you have had more than one child or sibling die or have lost all your children or siblings, you are welcome. Many people are terrified that we are "contagious" because the worst nightmare has become a reality in our lives. They don't want to believe what we know: that neither we, nor they, can keep our children safe and alive. So they avoid us. And they especially may avoid you who have had more than one child or sibling or all your children die, because the horror of what has happened in your lives terrifies them. We welcome you, and we honor your courage and want to be helpful to you in your healing. We offer our compassion and understanding to all parents and siblings and other family members who are on this very difficult journey into healing. May the unconditional acceptance one finds in TCF someday be mirrored in a wiser and more tolerant society.

Kitty Reeve
TCF Marin and San Francisco Chapters, CA

My Grief Installment Plan: Letters to Jacob

It's been three years since my son, Jacob, ended his life with severe mental illness. On the plus side, my periods of relative peace without severe storms of grief have gotten longer and longer. I take this as a positive sign of healing. However, a fear of Jacob being forgotten crept up on me. How could I go this long without the continuing, intense mourning over him? Not only were friends and family seemingly forgetting him, but was I forgetting him too? I do realize that when I bring up Jacob to most people it probably triggers their worst nightmare with a kneejerk reaction, "Oh my God, I could lose my child too!" Then the conversation gets awkward, and I totally understand where they are coming from.

Thankfully, I can come to Compassionate Friends meetings and everyone I talk to is very patient and compassionate. With their support I continue to tell Jacob's stories, keeping him alive and remembered. But recently I realized it was Jake's and my dialogue that I really missed, our jokes and talking about the things that matter. Well, I talk to Jake all the time and I pretty much know what he'd say about any topic. He was a smart, funny, twenty-year-old and I loved our conversations. So, I bought a new journal and started writing "Letters to Jacob."

I start my entries as a letter or even a short note like – "Hey, Jacob, what's new in Spirit land?" And then I'll tell him about my day, or bring up some of our shared memories of building with Legos, teaching him to ride a bike, or drive a car. There's something about writing what you would say to your child. Putting ink on paper is slower than speaking, and more meaningful than just having fleeting thoughts about your loved one. I've been doing it for some weeks now, and I find it very healing, like we're having coffee together, like old times. And best of all, I don't feel Jacob is in the rearview mirror anymore, he's right here by my fireside listening to me as I write.

Maybe this is a form of a grief installment plan, where I don't wait four months to shed gut-wrenching tears over him. With our "conversation" back on a regular basis, it's a more gentle, weekly grief, with renewed blessings of joyful memories.

Mike Bell
TCF, Nashville, TN

The First Snow

*The first snow since you left
Fell on the coldest day of the year,
Settling onto rooftops and heights,
Onto the ground, drifts of white.*

*I drift in thought to past winters
To silhouettes against white,
Rosy-cheeked children crunching snow
In woolen paws for a snowball fight
Shrieks of delight streak the air
Like rising steam from warm breath.*

*As memories frozen in mind
Thaw like snow in the morning sun,
I don a coat against the wind,
Remembering when past snows
Encased snub footprints in white
And angels fell blinking in the light.*

*Years have passed since that winter scene
Yet those images move my heart still
As memories like angels' wings
Disturb the silence, and the chill,
And the murmur of the wind protests
The coldness of unmarred snow.*

Peggy Walls
TCF, Alexander City, AL

She's Here, But Not

*She's here—but she's there
She's with us—but she's not
She's right around the bend
But then she's gone again
She's far away—but so near
It's like she's gone—but here again.*

Stacy Sharp, age 11
TCF, Defiance, OH

*After the worst thing has happened
With nothing left to fear.
The sun continues shining
With undiminished cheer;
And winds continue blowing
And skies continue fair,
As hearts continue bearing
The pain they could not bear.*

Author Unknown

A New Year Wish

*I wish you all a blessing
As the New Year approaches us all.
May this year bring gentle memories
Of our child that God has called.*

*I wish you all some sunshine
That clouds can cover on some days.
I pray your hearts will mend
As mine has along the way.*

*I thank God for our TCF "family"
And the Online Sharing each day,
For so many are always there
To help so many find their way.*

*I wish I could take each one of you
And show you what I've learned.
As time has helped my own heart
Your feelings are my concern.*

*The Holidays are the hardest
As you all very well know,
Yet we can find healing
As the New Year unfolds.*

*May you all know I'm thinking
About each and every one of you.
I give you all my blessing
And hope the New Year is gentle for you.*

Sharon Bryant
TCF, Atlanta Online Sharing

Who Knew?

*Our eyes are red and grief makes us blue.
We never quite know who to tell your story to.
We ponder our lives without you being here,
To give us purpose, laughter and often a tear.*

*It seems impossible these days we must endure,
Emptiness, helplessness and some fear for sure.
Having no doubt that we'll not make it through,
Then we remember just how much we love you.*

*We celebrate your life with us here on earth,
No matter how long you lived after your birth.
Our lives have been blessed by just knowing you,
Because of your love, we'll make it. Who knew?*

Dan Gardner
TCF, Nashville, TN

CHAPTER INFORMATION

Are you Moving?

Each time a newsletter is returned to us with an incorrect address, we pay to retrieve it in order to find out where you've moved; then we pay again to mail it back to you. This is in addition to the original bulk mail cost. It would help a great deal in both time and money if you would notify us immediately of any address change so your newsletter can reach you right away. You may call, write or email the chapter leaders or the newsletter editor. Thanks for your help.

The “Children Remembered” Listings

If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed on pages 2 and 3 in The Children Remembered list, please let us know, printing the exact way you'd like the child's name to appear, the child's birth and death dates, and the parents' names as they should be listed. Drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 8283, Hermitage, TN 37076. We'll be glad to include them. You need to contact us only once, unless any of your information changes.

Corporate Donations to TCF

To benefit TCF, go to the Kroger website and click on “Community Rewards”; then follow the instructions on that page and designate The Compassionate Friends Nashville Chapter. After that, when you shop at Kroger, swipe your Plus Card or key in your phone number when you check out, and Kroger will donate dollars to our chapter. Also, when going to Amazon, type in “Amazon Smile” and designate The Compassionate Friends; then, each time you go on Amazon Smile a small contribution will be made by Amazon to our organization—It's a free and easy way to support TCF.

We Need Your Help

If you know a family outside the immediate Nashville area who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you have access to the address (and phone number) of the parents, it would be most helpful if you would call us with that information. Our mission is to reach every bereaved family in Middle Tennessee, but we have to know about them in order to give them the support we ourselves have received. If you know the child's name, birth date, date of death and cause of death, so much the better. Our outreach chairperson will send a warm letter of sympathy and information about TCF along with appropriate brochures and articles. We do not phone the family and all information you provide is confidential.



BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

Alive Alone

Alive Alone is an organization to benefit parents whose only child or all children have died. Visit their website at www.alivealone.org.

Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents

For general information about grief support services and groups at Alive, please call the Grief Line at: 615-963-4732 or email griefsupport@alivehospice.org. They offer eight-week groups, ongoing monthly groups, family group and Little Hearts Club for children who have experienced the death of a sibling. Services are in Franklin, Nashville, Hendersonville, Lebanon, and Murfreesboro.

Sharing

SHARING is a community organization for parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of an infant. The website is sharingmiddletn.org.

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.

TCF Web site —A Treasure for You

When you log onto the TCF Web site at www.compassionatefriends.org you will find a wealth of information about TCF and grief—poetry and articles, chat rooms, grief in the news, other chapter Web sites and numerous other resources.

The Compassionate Friends

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**Return Service
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January 2023



Questions and Answers

Q: How long will it take to get over this feeling of sorrow?

A: A lifetime.

Q: How long will I continue to feel guilty?

A: As long as it takes you to realize that you did nothing wrong.

Q: How long will it take me to get over my anger?

A: As long as it will take you to drop the blame on yourself and others and realize that it was the combination of unpredictable happenings that occur in one's lifetime.

Q: Why do friends give such horrid advice?

A: To cover up their own inability to handle the situation

Q: Will I ever be happy again and be able to laugh?

A: An emphatic YES.

Q: How long is long?

A: As long as it takes you to go through the process. Each has his/her own time schedule, but you must make the decision to start healing.



Irv Schwartzberg
Ft. Lauderdale, FL