

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •  
Nashville Website: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://www.tcfnashville.org)



Chapter Leaders: Kris Foust, (931) 216-7801, email: [hedstromkris3@gmail.com](mailto:hedstromkris3@gmail.com)  
Barbara Davies, (615) 934-6005, email: [tcfroyandbarbara@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfroyandbarbara@yahoo.com)  
Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: [melanierladd@gmail.com](mailto:melanierladd@gmail.com)  
Treasurer: Ed Pyle, (615) 712-3245, email: [edpyletaxlaw@gmail.com](mailto:edpyletaxlaw@gmail.com)  
Outreach: David Gibson, (615) 308-2520, email: [davidg14@bellsouth.net](mailto:davidg14@bellsouth.net)  
Regional Coordinators: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: [lolly39@aol.com](mailto: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.

## July 11th Meeting:

In July we welcome Marcello Scalzo as our guest speaker for a short program. Alive Hospice provides loving care for people with life-threatening illnesses, support to their families, as well as grief support opportunities. Alive Hospice’s Grief Center is a resource for the entire community. Alive counselors are specialists who work with families, children, and individuals to discover resilience and joy while grieving.

Join us Sunday July 11th at 3pm in the ABC building on Elm Hill Pike. Following the program, we will break into our smaller sharing groups.



*When I grieve, when I stand by others as they grieve, even in the midst of seemingly unbearable sorrow, grief becomes a way to honor life — a way to cling to every fleeting, precious moment of joy.*

Cortney Davis, Nurse Practitioner

**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

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.

*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—*

**Emily Lynn Bengtson**

July 13  
Daughter of  
Carl and Karen Bengtson  
Sister of  
Robert and Michael

**Daniel Matthew Bledsoe**

(Matt)  
July 26  
Son of  
Dan and Barbara Bledsoe  
Brother of Jason and Kaci

**Kelsee Nicole Corbitt**

(Princess)  
July 26  
Granddaughter of  
Cheryl Carney

**Stephen Christopher Gould**

July 20  
Son of  
Herb and Susan Gould

**Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom**

July 20  
Daughter of  
Charlie and Kris Foust

**Rylee Grace Honeycutt**

(Roo)  
July 3  
Daughter of  
Anthony and Megan Honeycutt

**Michael Scott Jones**

July 4  
Son of Warren and Donna Jones  
And Betty D. Jones  
Brother of  
David, Jennifer, and Becky

**Joshua Allen Kebert**

July 7  
Son of  
Greg Kebert and Susan Whitaker

**Thomas Nathan Loftis, Jr**

(Nate).  
July 17  
Son of Tom and Babs Loftis



**Brandon Allen Payne**

July 21  
Son of Terry and Kimberly Payne

**Megan Emily Rotella**

July 12  
Daughter of Patti Kelly

**David George Shriver**

July 15  
Son of Warren and Donna Jones  
and  
George Shriver  
Brother of  
Bekki, Bonnie and Laurie

**Matthew James Truman**

July 7  
Son of Cathy McMorrow



*And in the month of their deaths*



**Christopher William Black**

July 8  
Son of Ray and Linda Black

**Adam Blake Brooks**

July 19  
Son of Danny Brooks and  
Dawn Armstrong

**Jonathan Lee Collins**

July 31  
Son of Charity Collins  
Grandson of Jennie Reeves  
Brother of Kristanna

**Lucas Dawson (Luke)**

July 8  
Son of Bob and Genevia Graham

**Aaron Garner**

July 30  
Son of Don and Vicki Garner

**Samuel Christopher Hagens**

July 5  
Son of  
Joseph and Pamela Hagens  
Brother of Luke and Caleb

**Matthew Kent Hensley**

July 15  
Son of  
Kenneth and Kathy Hensley

**Daniel Lee Henson**

July 21  
Son of  
Ronnie and Darlene Henson

**Cory N. Hood**

July 22  
Son of Debby Hood

**James Thomas King (J.T.)**

July 14  
Son of Tom and Jere King

**Christopher Lincoln  
Kingsborough**

July 20  
Son of  
Paul and Lydia Kingsborough

**Shawn Patrick Martin**

July 22  
Son of  
Annie and Michael Martin  
Brother of Austin

**Allen Glenn Mays**

July 8  
Son-in-law of  
Roy and Carole Renfro

**Madison Allen Mays**

July 8  
Son of  
Son of Allen and Rachel Mays  
Grandson of  
Roy and Carole Renfro

**Carmen Veronica McMillan**

July 23  
Daughter of Jack McMillan and  
Ana Basoa-McMillan

**Jeremy Russell Powers**

July 13  
Son of Phillip and Linda King

**Michael Reeves**

July 6  
Son of Jennie Reeves

**Alex Watson Tuttle**

July 25  
Son of Ron and Betty Tuttle

**Andrew Washam (Seth)**

July 19  
Son of  
Shannon and Jean-Ann Washam  
Brother of Emma

## *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.*



**Dan and Barbara Bledsoe**

*In loving memory of  
their son,*

**Daniel Matthew Bledsoe  
(Matt)**

**Charlie and Kathy Brumit**

*In loving memory of  
their son,*

**Logan Stratton Brumit**

**Wilson and Jenny Christy**

*In loving memory of their son,  
Jeremy Wilson Cristy*

**Donald and Sherry Eakes**  
*In loving memory of their grandson,  
Taylor Christian Brewer,  
Son of Justin and Tracy Brewer*

**Barbara Davies**  
*Through Nationwide  
Workplace Giving Programs  
In loving memory of her stepsons,*

**Roy James Davies and  
Taylor Davies**  
*Sons of Roy Davies*

**Ann Flatt**  
*In loving memory of her daughter,  
Sherry Hooten and  
Her son, Chad Flatt*



**Paul and Lydia Kingsborough**

*In loving memory of  
their son,*

**Christopher Lincoln  
Kingsborough**

**Sandra Merkel**  
*In loving memory of her son,  
Kevin Moncrief*

**Susan Whitaker**  
*In loving memory of  
her son,  
Joshua Allen Kebert*

*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.*

### *Some Special Ways to give*



\*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.

If your employer supports the [United Way](#), you might have the option to “designate” your donation. Every dollar you contribute through our payroll deductions goes to the organization you designate. TCF Nashville is an approved organization with the United Way, so please consider designating your United Way donation to TCF Nashville.

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## *Soundings*

*The world may wonder:  
are we bound by death,  
we who have lost the child  
whose breath we shared.*

*The world should know  
though we may cry at night,  
we are not strangers  
to the art of laughter.*

*And sometimes  
we reach deeper into life.  
Has death then left us  
with a finer ear  
for listening to the song  
of other children?*

Sascha

## And Then There Was Hope

Once, in what is now another life, I thought support groups were for someone else. I felt that with research, personal work, discussions with the elders in my family and wise friends, I would find all the answers I needed. This worked well until December of 2002. My son died. The death of my only child changed everything. My standard methods of “self help” were not going to get me through this. I needed more than even Solomon could give me. And I desperately needed hope.

My first meeting at Compassionate Friends was in March of 2003. My son had been gone almost three months; I was traumatized, I could not speak and I was doubtful that I would ever find even an obscure hint of peace in my life. April’s meeting was somewhat better. I spoke a few words. In May I was rocked by the dual anticipation of Mother’s Day and my son’s birthday. In June I participated in the balloon liftoff; I sprained my ankle as we were walking back from the park. That night, as I set at home with ice on my ankle, I thought about the past five months. I realized that I was a different person than I had been earlier in the year. I was no longer the woman who walked into her first Compassionate Friends meeting because I was no longer walking alone. There were others at my side, in front of me, behind me, encouraging me, offering gentle suggestions, understanding and listening as I told my child’s story over and over and over again.

I discovered that those who had walked this road before me were holding the lanterns of hope to cast light on my life path. It was these people and only these people who could reach me, who could teach me, whose voices could penetrate my fog, whose hearts could help me to begin the healing process.

By the time I marked the first anniversary of my son’s death, I was beginning to discover that I had been transformed into a different person. Like my child whose body had died but whose spirit lived on symbolically in the butterfly, I had become a different person. I physically felt the pain of other parents. The first time I offered advice I sat in wonder at the realization that this very effort brought a little more light into my soul. Part of my healing process became the helping process.

Healing is what we seek, but we will never be “cured”. As parents who have lost our children, we will never be the same people we were before our child died. I came to accept this fact. But I also found that we can live with this wound which, despite our initial certainty to the contrary, is not usually fatal. It is forever, it is painful, it is the worst wound a human can feel, but it is not fatal. Even when I was wracked with physical

pain in my grief, the light of my Compassionate Friends gave me a new perspective, one of hope.

Yes, a part of me died with my son, but the part that remains is constantly changing, continually evolving and always reaching for the light of hope. We each choose different ways to reach for hope, to live our lives as well as we possibly can without our precious children. But eventually we all awaken to hope.

My hope did not come as an epiphany out of the blue, but rather, it was more like a false dawn followed by true, muted rays of the morning sun. My hope was a process. I engaged the process by reaching out to others, listening, learning. I learned that the quick answer is rarely the right answer. I learned that silence often says more than words. I made peace with my pain, and I began to reach out to others with words of hope. For words were my gift to those who had given me so much.

At Compassionate Friends we see many new faces each year. Most parents continue their relationship with the group for at least a year, some for even two years. A few stay three years. The good news is that those who do not choose to come to meetings have chosen to go forward with their lives in a different way. Going forward with their lives is a very positive step and the goal of each bereaved parent. Not all of us stay; not all of us should stay. But for some of us, the hope continues to rekindle at each meeting. As we meet the newly bereaved and listen to their story, to their child’s story, to the outpouring of pure agony and heartbreak, we hold the lantern. These parents will not know exactly what it is that we are doing as they are lost in the fog, as we all once were. Yet, we quietly hold the lantern, we keep the chapter moving forward, we meet parents and talk about their children, about our children, about grief, about life, about death, about pain and about hope. I have chosen to stay and hold the lantern for those who have followed me. For this gives me hope and peace and it keeps my child close to me in even the darkest of nights.

As grief is our companion, time moves forward; the pain becomes less searing, less encompassing. We learn to co-exist with our loss. We treasure our memories, we love our children and our hearts ache with our terrible loss. Yet, we have moved forward on the path. We are holding the lantern for others who find themselves on this path in life. We give this gift of hope with our presence which symbolizes the future of every newly bereaved parent. I remember my child as I walk this road with you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF, Katy, TX

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

Walter Winchell

## *After*

*After all the pain  
We still can feel the sun.  
Not without pain though,  
Not without recrimination.*

*After all the sorrow  
The sun still shines.  
Not without sorrow though,  
Not without repercussions.*

*For nothing is the same  
And everything is different  
After*

*My eyes open each morning  
But not to you.  
Sun shines,  
Rain falls,*

*The earth revolves,  
The moon shines full each month.  
But you're still gone.  
After.*

*The years go by,  
On and on,  
Milestones pass, but I can't share with you,  
After.*

*When death happens  
There is an illusion of time stopping  
Just an illusion  
For the living go on  
After all.*

Melissa Anne Schroeter  
TCF Rockland County, NY



## **Thirty Years Out**

**D**ear Compassionate Friends,

It has been 30 years since we walked into our first meeting of Compassionate Friends. Our three-year-old son had just passed away and we were dazed and confused as they say. During those early nightmarish weeks and months after his death, we doubted we would live another 30 minutes let alone another 30 years.

Our son was our only child at the time and the house was too quiet and the memories too loud. He had suddenly been replaced by a memory. For many weeks and months thoughts of him filled every hour of our day and invaded our sleepless nights. For a long time, we measured progress in inches.

The enormity of recovery seemed insurmountable. But time worked its strange alchemy. Questions of "what if" and "why" have faded never to be answered. They have been replaced by "what would he have looked like as a grown man" and "who would he have married"? Questions now emotionally more manageable but no less sad. I would like to think that in the strangeness and mysteriousness of life maybe our son helped us to not fall off the edge. I don't think he would have wanted his parents scarred by his death.

My wife and I are thirty years out and counting, because we also found survivor role models in The Compassionate Friends who showed us survival was not only possible but probable. We still miss our son greatly but because of you we have developed the strength to live only with his memory.

Thank you,  
Kathy and Kenneth Hensley and Matthew  
TCF Nashville TN

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*With every struggle, there is a story to be told; it will touch the ear of another.*

Pamela Hagens  
TCF, Nashville

## Butterflies Make Me Happy

Sometimes in our grief we truly believe we are going crazy. We hurt so bad we don't think we can manage to go on living without our precious child here with us. Part of the grieving process is learning how to do just that. Some parents need the reassurance that their child is okay. I think the human mind can only take so much pain and jumps at the chance to see signs from their children, reassuring them that they are okay.

The way I look at it, if you get comfort from a dream or a sign...enjoy it. You've suffered enough, and believing in signs, butterflies, dreams or what ever else gives you comfort and hurts no one else, is your right as a bereaved person.

Are these signs real, or just in my imagination? Can I prove they are messages from my son? Does it even need to be proven? No, I can't scientifically prove it. But I know that dreams, butterflies, signs and enjoyment in nature makes me feel closer to Eric and therefore I will continue to enjoy them. It hurts no one, I'm not obsessive about it and anyone who chooses to think I'm nuts for believing in such things, can think I'm nuts.

We've all heard how the butterfly is a symbol of rebirth. Whether it's our child moving from this world onto a higher plane, or a bereaved parent emerging from the cocoon of grief into a world without our child here. With us, butterflies are a comfort for many. When I'm missing my son and see a butterfly fluttering from flower to flower, I smile and feel better. When I'm in a happy mood and see a butterfly, I enjoy the beauty of such a delicate creature. Taking the time to slow down and watch such a fragile creature going about its business is calming and I don't think anyone should discount the benefits from having a calming moment.

About four months after Eric died, I had a dream about him. I woke myself up from tears of joy running down my face, I knew he was okay...what a relief that was. I still hurt terribly and missed him more than I thought I could endure, but I felt comforted by the dream. Some could say it was my subconscious trying to sort things out, but I choose to believe it was his way of trying to comfort me. Either way, it made me feel better.

Maybe it's because bereaved parents walk around in such a fog and function on automatic pilot that we are moving slow enough to notice the signs that are around us. Maybe dreams are one way for us to accept messages we need to hear and take into our hearts without logically trying to interpret them. Maybe faith is what we rely on when nothing else makes sense and we instinctively know we need something to hold on to. Whatever it is, just give me a second helping; I like feeling closer to my son!

Lynn Vines  
TCF South Bay/L.A., CA

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## On Not Saying It

*I never got around to saying it.  
There was always tomorrow,  
When the time would be more appropriate.  
Besides, you hated "embarrassment,"  
Or was the embarrassed one really me?*

*Now I say it a lot,  
To the sky, to your photo, to a gravestone.  
Knowing facts say you cannot hear it,  
But believing, inside me, you can.*

*When a child, a youth, then a young man,  
I remember how you watched my face.  
First as your god, then as your monitor,  
Finally, I hope, as a friend.*

*But "I love you," as years went by,  
Were words we kept bottled inside.  
Now that you've left, the bottle overflows.  
Until I, too, cross the Divide,  
I have to believe you knew.  
And forgave me for not saying it.*

Leonard Ruppert  
TCF Atlanta, GA

*Believe me, every heart has its secret sorrows,  
Which the world knows not;  
And oftentimes we call a man cold  
When he is only sad.*

Longfellow

## **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 50833, Nashville, TN 37205. We'll be glad to include them. You need to contact us only once, unless any of your information changes.

### **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. There will be no harassment, no phone calls, and no demands made upon the parents, and the information you provide is strictly confidential.

### **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.

## **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](http://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](mailto: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](http://sharingmiddletn.org).

### **Survivors of Suicide**

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings, you may call [615 244-7444](tel:6152447444), or go to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network at [TSPN.org](http://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](http://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*

**P.O. BOX 50833  
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37205**

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**July 2021**

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## **Please be Gentle**

**P**lease be gentle with me for I am grieving. The sea I swim is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day.

My heart is heavy with sorrow, I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path.

Please, will you walk beside me?



Jill Englar  
TCF, Westminster, MD