

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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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.

Our Meeting Place: 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 Mailing address above.)

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

July 10 Meeting:

The Power of TCF Friendships

Many of us form strong friendships through TCF and similar grieving experiences. In July, two such friends, Kathy Kilgore Beeler, Cole’s mom, and Carol Akers, Jacob’s mom, will discuss how impaired driving forever changed their lives.

Kathy and Carol will reflect on how their shared grief for their sons brought two strangers together and how they honor their boys' memories.

As volunteers for MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers), Kathy and Carol often speak together at outreach programs. They do not blame or judge, but find healing in creating an awareness from their tragedy.

Sharing groups will follow. We hope to see you there.



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 615-294-4959
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

“And can it be that in a world so full and busy the loss of one weak creature makes a void in any heart, so wide and deep that nothing but the width and depth of vast eternity can fill it up.”

Charles Dickens



*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	Caroline Elizabeth Enright July 26 Daughter of Patrick and Stephanie Enright	Michael Scott Jones July 4 Son of Warren and Donna Jones and Betty D. Jones Brother of David, Jennifer, and Becky	Brandon Allen Payne July 21 Son of Terry and Kimberly Payne
Daniel Matthew Bledsoe (Matt) July 26 Son of Dan and Barbara Bledsoe Brother of Kaci and Jason	Stephen Christopher Gould July 20 Son of Herb and Susan Gould	Joshua Allen Kebert July 7 Son of Greg Kebart and Susan Whitaker	David George Shriver July 15 Son of Warren and Donna Jones and George Shriver Brother of Bekki, Bonnie, and Laurie
Kelsee Nicole Corbitt July 26 Granddaughter of Cheryl Carney	Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom July 20 Daughter of Charlie and Kris Foust	Robert Bryan Parrish (Bryan) July 7 Son of Marvin and Debbie Hampton	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	Matthew Kent Hensley July 15 Son of Kenneth and Kathy Hensley	Shawn Patrick Martin July 22 Son of Annie and Michael Martin Brother of Austin	Jeremy Russell Powers July 13 Son of Linda King
Jonathan Lee Collins July 31 Son of Charity Collins Grandson of Jennie Reeves Nephew of Kristanna	Daniel Lee Henson July 21 Son of Ron and Darlene Henson	Madison Allen Mays July 8 Son of Allen and Rachel Mays Grandson of Roy and Carole Renfro	Michael Reeves July 6 Son of Jennie Reeves Brother of Sheila, Michael, and Mark
Aaron Garner July 30 Son of Don and Vicki Garner	James Thomas King (J.T.) July 14 Son of Tom and Jere King	Allen Glenn Mays July 8 Son-in-law of Roy and Carole Renfro	Christian Thompson July 14 Son of Chris Thompson
Samuel Christopher Hagens July 5 Son of Christopher and Pamela Hagens Brother of Luke and Caleb			Alex Watson Tuttle July 25 Son of Ron and Betty Tuttle



Death forces a grace period on all of us. The dying offer the living a final chance to be the best that they can be. We must take our cues from them, value the moments that lead up to and follow their departure, and work toward acceptance after they are gone. This is a vow as sacred as any we will make over the course of our lifetimes.”

From *In Lieu of Flowers*
Nancy Cobb
Pantheon Book

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.

*Linda Black
In loving memory of
Her son,
Christopher William Black*

*Charlie and Kathy Brumit
In loving memory of
Their son,
Logan Stratton Brumit*

*Laura Buchanan
In loving memory of
Her grandson,
Kamden Joseph Hayes
Son of Joseph Hayes*



*Wilson and Jenny Christy
In loving memory of their son,
Jeremy Wilson Christy*

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

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



*Reginald and Judith Lowe
In loving memory of
Paige Gibson,
Daughter of
David and Peggy Gibson*

*Ed Pyle
In loving memory of
His son,
Ed Pyle (Stobie)*

*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.

Letting Go

Recently I received an award for volunteering in the community. I was honored to receive it. Some of the people in my life mentioned that it looked like I had “let go” of the pain of losing my child. “Let go?” Of course, they don’t understand.

But when the award was mentioned at our monthly Compassionate Friends meeting, a bereaved mother made an interesting observation that touched my heart and reminded me why I need this special group to keep me centered and balanced.

“I remember that article you read to us last Mother’s Day...the one your son wrote about how proud he was of you,” she said. “Wouldn’t it be great to put that article in our memory book with the newspaper article about your award? He was right about you. He was proud of you.”

What a great idea! What a wonderful way to bring my son into my life even though he is no longer on this plane. That’s what Compassionate Friends do... we help to bring our children into our lives even though our children are no longer alive. For a few hours each month, our children return to us. We’re proud parents who can share our children’s stories and keep our children in our lives...without explaining why we won’t be “letting go.”

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX



Listen to someone’s story.

Extend comfort and you have given shelter.

Pamela Hagens



Grief's Silent Battle

*As I lay here in the bed
I'm screaming, screaming in my head!
I want you back
Begging God to backtrack*

*What kind of man would you now be?
If only, if only I could see
What would you look like, long or short hair?*

*Opening my eyes to find you smiling in your favorite chair
To clearly hear your sweet deep voice
Saying, "Sorry Mom, sorry for my choice!"*

*Why did I bury you at age 19? Always my baby...
God must want me to share your legacy
Worlds collided that fateful day on Highway 47
But I thank the good Lord, KNOWING you're in Heaven!*

*An exhausted calm finally mumbles around in my head
As I lay here, silent tears tumble onto the bed...*

*I love you, Cole Hansen Kilgore
Your Momma – Forever and Always*

Kathy Kilgore Beeler
TCF, Nashville, TN



Your Life

*Your life, so shiny and new,
A lot like your eyes, so shiny and blue.
You seemed to fly through each day,
Always so eager to run and play.
To find a new stone, yet untouched,
Waiting for a boy who loved rocks and such.
Your eyes would light up at any new toy,
Just waiting to be loved by a small boy.
You embraced each day as only you could do,
Through your eyes I always saw something new.
You flew through life with every flag unfurled,
Your life...
I wouldn't have missed it for the world.*

Jane Daulton
TCF, Tidewater, VA



A Struggle With Anger

Some time after we have lost a child, we struggle with anger. Initially it may not be there and we may even have a sense of smugness that we don't feel angry, that we've risen above it. I know I've felt this way. Some may never feel angry, but for others, like myself, it can be very difficult to cope with.

The anger can take many forms. Anger at God (Why does He allow any parent to experience this pain?) If we don't allow ourselves to be angry at God (I may need Him), then we take it out on other people. They did not help enough or they did not call or visit, we think. There is a smoldering ache that sees neglect and uncaring silence. Or, we become very angry at some stupid remark someone has made. "You are lucky he did not suffer." I am not lucky at all, my son is dead.

Sometimes our anger is directed at the person who died, some circumstances more fertile ground than others for anger. Sometimes it is toward other grieving parents, perhaps specifically for supposed neglect. (Why weren't you watching her more carefully?) Often, the anger is against ourselves, for not doing what we feel we should have done. At times it is less specific (Why am I not coping better? or Why am I not over it yet?) For many parents, there is the third party at whom the anger is directed: the murderer, the drunken driver, or medical personnel.

In many cases there is an overwhelming great, big ANGER, with no specific direction. "It's not fair!" But things not being fair did not stop the anger. When I realized this, I became aware I was taking my anger out in a diversionary channel.

People who had hurt me, sometimes many years ago, injustices I had suffered, all surfaced, often with great clarity and detail and my anger became directed toward those people. A justifiable anger, after all, because I had been hurt and it was more comfortable to live with that than the non-specific anger. Perhaps you can identify with this diversionary anger, too?

How do we deal with this anger? It is most important to allow it to be. You are angry, very angry because your child is dead and it is not fair. Your faith hasn't seemed to help and people have said stupid things. Visitors have stopped coming. It is okay to be angry about all of this. It is normal, other bereaved parents feel the same way.

Realizing I was normal and that my feelings and diverted anger were shared by others, helped me to keep balanced. I had a very supportive friend, who listened when I ranted and raved over imagined and real hurts. Being able to express those feelings often dissipated much of their force. I could picture in my mind Jonathon, who had died at age 21, smiling and saying, "Let it go, Mum, life is too short." For him it was too short.

Because of him, I am choosing to let the anger go. I have read many times in The Compassionate Friends newsletter to be gentle with myself. Now, as time goes by, I'm learning to be gentle with others, too. Jonathon would be pleased with the progress I'm making.

Margaret Baird
Kingston, Jamaica

Daydreams

*Once a day and sometimes more
You knock upon my daydream door
And I say warmly come right in
I'm glad you're here with me again.*

*Then we sit down and have a chat
Recalling this, discussing that
Until some task that I must do
Forces me away from you.*

*Reluctantly I say good-by
Smiling with a little sigh
For though my daydreams bring you near
I wish that you were really here.*

*But what reality cannot change
My dreams and wishes can arrange
And through my wishing you'll be brought
To me each day; A happy thought.*

*Stephen A. Wright
TCF, Champaign-Urbana, IL*

A Beginning

One day you wake up and realize that you must have survived it because you are still here, alive and breathing. But you don't remember the infinitely small steps and decisions you took to get there. Your only awareness is that you have shed miles of tears on what seems to be an endless road of sorrow.

One day—one glorious day—you wake up and feel your skin tingle again, and you forget just for an instant that your heart is broken...and it is a beginning.

*Susan Borrowman
TCF, Kingston, Ontario*

For Baby

*Like a miracle
You happened
You were there
I was a flower
Beginning to bloom
Bursting with life
Then you were gone
Like music never written
Existing only in my dreams
And I love you still...*

*Stacy Hooks
TCF, Savannah, GA*



I had a Dream

*I had a dream the other night
It was a miracle, you see.
I rocked you in my favorite chair
And held you close to me.*

*I sang to you a lullaby
So sweet and clear and fair;
But then awoke, I called your name,
And knew you were not there.*

*As darkness then engulfed me,
I started to softly cry,
"I love you so, my baby,
Why did you have to die?"*

*I pray for sleep to come again,
And hope that I will see
Another dream just like before,
With my son held next to me.*

*Sherry Schwande
TCF, Fond du Lac, WI*

*Hold on to what is good
Even if it is a handful of earth
Hold on to what you believe in
Even if it is a tree which stands by itself
Hold on to what you must do
Even if it is a long way from here
Hold on to life
Even if it is easier to let go
Hold on to my hand
Even when I have gone away*

Pueblo Indian prayer



As The Tide Recedes

It has been two years since our son Nathan died, and I am often amazed at how much our family has changed during that time. I think of our grieving process as being a lot like a stroll along the beach at high tide. In the beginning, when our loss was fresh and new, the waves of pain were unbearably intense, coming at us without pause. They seemed to hit us everywhere at once—in the face, in the stomach, in our hearts—knocking us down to the ground.

The grief and anger we felt swelled up over our heads; we were drowning in emotions we could not understand. And we began to wonder if we would ever be able to breathe normally again. “How can life go on,” we asked, “when it hurts so much?”

But time passed, and the tide receded. The water had dropped to the level of our knees. The waves seemed to strike with less frequency, and when they did hit, their power was diminished. And yet, we sensed that we were still not free. Sometimes, when we least expected it, a huge wall of grief seemed to rise up out of nowhere, pounding us with the memories. We stumbled but did not fall.

One day, we looked up and discovered that we were walking only on wet sand. We had been battered by the waves, but still we stood erect. And we recognized that our loss had given us an enduring strength.

Scattered on the shore before us were numerous beautiful treasures that had previously been hidden by the deep water. These treasures, which sparkled like jewels in the sand, were all of our priceless memories of our child that we had submerged in our pain. Now it was possible to gather up our thoughts of the happy times and hold them close to our hearts.

Today, we walk through the shallow, lapping waves with a new confidence, leaving our wet footprints in the sand. Following behind us, however, there is another set of footprints, invisible prints which are quickly washed away by the swirling water. These are the steps which our child will never take.

The past, like the salt of the sea, clings to our skin. We know that the tide will return—with anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, and special family occasions—but the grief will never be as powerful or as strong. We have learned to live like the flotsam which floats on the surface of the water. Ride gently with the waves; let the grief carry you forward, so that you will be ready to stand strong and upright when once again your feet touch solid ground.



Janet Lyet Gassman
TCF, Colorado Springs, CO

*Life, like the ocean,
Is vast and forever
And sorrow, but a shadow
That moves over the sea.*

John Grey
TCF, Birmingham, AL

Changes

Has anyone heard this recently? “What you need is a CHANGE” or “A CHANGE might do you good”? Easier said than done! To make a change one must first make a choice. In our situation, here are some choices we might feel the need to make:

If the radio or television plays a song or a program that reminds us of our child—CHANGE THE STATION.

If a particular room in our home is a constant reminder of our child—CHANGE THE FURNITURE.

If the church we attend only reminds us of our child’s funeral—CHANGE THE CHURCH.

If vacationing is not the same without our child—CHANGE THE PLACE.

If holiday rituals seem empty without the child—CHANGE THE ROUTINE.

So many reminders—so many choices—so many decisions. CHANGE—CHANGE—CHANGE.

We could go on and on making CHANGES, but one thing cannot and will not CHANGE. Our child has died. Nothing will CHANGE that!

So, what are we to do? Are we trapped forever, making endless CHANGES? I think not. CHANGE infers that we will take a different direction. I would hope that, through CHANGE, we will adjust our “living” to their “dying.”

We must make room for this tremendous loss we have suffered, and then, and only then, can we, in time, reverse some of our CHANGES and let some things back into our lives—a loving tribute to our child.

As totally painful as many things are now, time may eventually let them be a comfort to us, binding us even more closely to our loved one.

Mary Pilot
TCF, North Adams Berkshire Co., MA

CHAPTER INFORMATION

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.

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 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.

TCF Nashville Sibling Support

We encourage siblings from teens to adults to come support one another at our monthly chapter meetings. Siblings face a unique and complicated grief journey and are finding hope and healing through our sharing groups.



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](tel:6152447444), 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

**P.O. BOX 50833
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July 2022

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I Honor You

*I honor you
for coming here.
I know how much
you're grieving.*

*Coming here,
joining us,
you look to life
and living.*

*You have received
life's cruelest blow,
feel crushed
and left in tatters.*



*And here we talk
and here we cry
and share what
really matters.*

*The burden of
our grief is told,
the heartache
that each faces,*

*And brings to light
our truest hearts
and friends to lonely places.*

Genesse Boudreau Gentry
From *Catching the Light*

