

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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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.

August 9 Meeting:

For the health and safety of our members, we will gather for our **August 9 meeting** using “Zoom” virtual meeting platform again. Our virtual meeting will begin at 3:00 PM, and run till about 4:30.

If you are interested in participating, send an email to TCFNashville@yahoo.com. Title the email “Zoom”. We will reply with a link to the meeting and some general instructions on how it works.

About 5 minutes before the meeting, go into your email and click on the link to the meeting. If you have a camera on your computer, be sure to enable your camera so we can see everyone.

Our virtual meeting will begin with a brief program. We will share August birthdays. Then, we will move to sharing sessions much like we do in our regular meetings. Depending upon the number of attendees, we will move folks to private sharing groups of less than 8 people where we can talk.

Please consider joining us for our Virtual Meeting and don't be scared off by the thought of a virtual meeting! Our “Zoom” meetings in June and July went very well. We believe this is our best option right now to keep in touch. You may also join by phone. A phone number will be provided with the email response

Ongoing online support is available at our national website: Compassionatefriends.org and you can connect via Facebook with our local chapter members at The Compassionate Friends, Nashville, TN and with other parents and families at The Compassionate Friends/USA, both private groups.

Check the chapter website for the status of future meetings: www.tcfnashville.org We all look forward to the time our in-person meetings can resume. 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	SIDS ...Kris Thompson 931-486-9088
Suicide ...Ron Henson 615-789-3613	AIDS ... Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
Alcohol/Drug Overdose ...Ed Pyle 615-712-3245	Illness ...David and Peggy Gibson 615-356-1351
Infant ...Jayne Head 615-264-8184	



*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—

Jared Ensley Banta August 23 Grandson of V.G. and Karen Banta	Jamison Michael Duncan (Jamie) August 27 Son of Mike and Kay Duncan Brother of Jon Ashley Duncan	Paula Lynn Groves Griffin August 5 Daughter of Sue Cooper Stepdaughter of Jim Cooper	Dynasty Brooks Parks August 9 Daughter of Dennis and Sherry Parks and Tonya Troutt
Nancy Louise Copeland August 31 Daughter of Tom and Jenny Copeland	Joshua Lynn Finch August 13 Son of Debbie Smith Brother of Jason Finch	Wade Hampton Morgan August 5 Son of David and Barbara Morgan	Jeremy Russell Powers August 4 Son of Phillip and Linda King

And in the month of their deaths

Preston Chauncey Birdsong August 13 Son of Preston Birdsong and Janice Birdsong	Mark Joseph Dinkel August 10 Son of Richard and Kathleen Dinkel Brother of Amy	James Austin Garcia August 5 Son of Danny and Sherri Garcia	Lauren O'Donnell August 17 Daughter of Denny and Shirley O'Donnell Sister of Sean and Katie
Nancy Louise Copeland August 28 Daughter of Tom and Jenny Copeland	Gary Lee Duricheck August 6 Son of Jimmy and Barbara Hayes	Benjamin Bedell Koomen (Ben) August 9 Son of John and Betsy Koomen	Lauren Kristina O'Saile August 28 Daughter of Don Davenport Granddaughter of Martha Davenport
Laura Abigail Czirr (Abby) August 10 Daughter of Steve and Paige Czirr Granddaughter of Bob and Cynthia Daugherty And John and JoAnn Czirr	Marvin Lee Edwards August 3 Son of Charles and Ruth Edwards	William Bernard Kovarik August 17 Son of Bob and Kathryn Kovarik	Michael Stanley Overcash August 19 Son of Mike and Jean Overcash
		Thomas Nathan Loftis, Jr. (Nate) August 12 Son of Tom and Babs Loftis	

From Sascha's pen:

Summer's End

*Always at summer's end
there comes that moment
when memory brings to me
gifts from the past.*

*I see your faces then,
glistening in the sun.
I hear your laughter then,
shared by the wind.*

*And in that glint of time
I feel you near again,
as you were, long ago,
at summer's end.*



August

*The summer runs to harvest—
Do you ask:
How can a harvest in your life be without my child?*

*Friend, some day soon
the harvest in your life
will bring you hope and wealth
from love remembered.*

*Take strength
from your
memories*

*Give strength
to your life*

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.

*Martha Davenport
In loving memory of her
granddaughter,
Lauren Kristina O'Saile
Daughter of Don Davenport*

*Kevin and Lora Dunleavy
In loving memory of their son,
Ryan M. Dunleavy*

*Danny and Sherri Garcia
In loving memory of their son,
James Austin Garcia*

*Rebecca Dance Harris
And Will Harris
In loving memory of her son
And his brother,
Max Hillman Harris*



*Mark and Debora Mathis
In loving memory of
their son,
Jacob Allen Mathis*

*Jennifer Phill
In loving memory of
her son,
Nigel Randolph Phill*


*Thanks to you Kroger shoppers, we have Received from the Kroger Plus Community Rewards Program
\$114.95 on 6/16/20 (see below)**

Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, donates the printing of this newsletter as a gift to the families of TCF. Deanna Brown and her family assemble, label, sort and mail the newsletter in loving memory of her son, Marcus Dean Brown. We appreciate so much these 6people and their generosity to all of us.

Some Special Ways to give

*1. 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.

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

Congrats – Sib! 

TCF Nashville is proud to congratulate Jasmine Wellman as a 2020 graduate of Gallatin High School. Jasmine was instrumental in starting up of the Siblings Group in the Nashville Chapter. Jasmine began attending TCF monthly meetings at age 14 and for at least a year, she was the only "tween sibling" immersed in our parents' support groups. In 2018, Jasmine and Aubrey Dickerson formed a close bond that precipitated specifying a sibling table during the smaller sharing sessions.

During the family celebration, Jasmine's sister, Janessa, was lovingly remembered.

Children lose so much when a sibling dies. When they lose their brother or their sister, they lose their family as they know it. They lose their parents, at least temporarily, because parents are so disabled by their own grief. Their place in the family is forever changed, and so is the family itself. And they have fewer tools to handle it with than adults.

Judy Davis, Director of The Sibling Project
From TCF, Nevada

Seasons of the Heart

*Your special days are unchanging
Seasons of the heart I celebrate.
Your birth, forever spring,
Tender memories relate,
New and green, a dream
From which too soon I awake.*

*The summer of your life was bright
Laughter needed no reason,
Seemingly endless days of sharing.
Sixteen summers. Short in season.*

*Your death brought winter without warning,
What sense in all this can be found?
Summer dreams replaced with mourning.
Where is hope now?*



*But the heart knows what
The mind cannot accept
That when all is lost,
It is love that is left.*

*Love knows no barriers
Time or distance recognize.
Love does not diminish,
But is constant in our lives.
And like a summer breeze
Uplifts and inspires us
With healing memories.*

Peggy Walls
TCF Alexander City, AL

Forgive Me Friend

*Forgive me, Friend
If I don't seem there—
If I seem a little distant
Or you think I don't care.*

My child has died

*It's hard to explain
My down-an-out days
When I don't respond
Or I seem in a daze*

My child has died.



*I seem to be happy
When I suddenly cry—
The emotion overpowers me,
Hard as I try.*

My child has died

*So forgive me, My Friend,
When I can't seem to give.
I'm doing all I can
Just to get up and live.*

My child has died.

Gretchen Warren
TCF Solano County, CA

Not in Color

I remember a Hollywood movie called *Pleasantville*. I don't recall many details about plot or premise, but one of the techniques used in the movie was the juxtaposition of color with black and white in the same scene. People could be in color or B&W; the backdrop could be in both, too.

I know I'm definitely in black and white. No color. The grass is green, the sky is blue, the flowers may be yellow or red or purple or whatever but I am in black and white. Trying to run my errands, accomplish my tasks, walk my dog. But doing so in black and white. Muted. Grey. Definitely not in color.

I live a world where people are in "Technicolor." I can see that they are. I can remember when I was. I wish I were still one of them.

But there's no tint or paint or photo app to make me "in color" again. I suspect if and when color returns, it will be subdued. Pastel. I doubt it will ever be vivid again.

At this stage, I'd take pastel.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Arlington, VA

Count on Grief

Count on grief to increase vulnerability.

Human beings are most comfortable when they are in control of their lives and circumstances. Death, even when it's expected, represents the ultimate "change in plans." When a loved one dies, our former safety and security no longer seem to exist. Instead, we may experience feelings of helplessness and vulnerability that are frightening, as well as disarming. Yet it is precisely this vulnerability that can break down walls of resistance to new thought processes and open the way for new perspectives.

Count on grief to create change.

Grieving is a walk through unknown territory. Familiar internal and external stabilities disappear in a whirlwind of changing thoughts, feelings, and emotional flux. We are reminded of our pain at odd times and in unexpected ways. Emotions hover near the surface and tears are hard to control. The stress of daily living taxes our protective defenses to the limit. Depression seems to slip in from nowhere, and anger erupts without warning. Because grief requires so much emotional energy, our finesse for social game-playing is greatly diminished. The bereaved meet the world at a disadvantage, continually surprising themselves and others with unpredictable responses to familiar situations.

Count on grief to change social structure.

The bereaved find their social networks changing and transforming around them. Disappointment with family and friends is a common theme. Those we expected to "be there for us" may not be able to meet our needs, and friends we didn't know we had appear "out of nowhere" to fill the void. As we come to terms with whatever limitations and expectations we have for ourselves, we also become aware of the limitations of others. Not everyone we care about will receive what they need from us while we're grieving. Not everyone who cares about us will be able to fully share our pain.

Count on grief to stress marital bonds.

Grief, like any other stress, complicates relationships. One grieving partner taxes a relationship – two grieving partners find their pain doubled. Because grieving is an unpredictable, moment-to-moment process, couples must be prepared to build flexibility into their union. Marriages are challenged when each expects too much from the other, and neither receives adequate support from social or extended family networks. Marriages are strengthened when each partner feels supported and is allowed individuality and freedom from expectations.

Count on grief to define priorities.

The bereaved often find themselves realigning their goals and objectives. For most of us, nothing is easily taken for granted after the death of a loved one. We understand that "now" is the only time there is, and that tomorrow may never come. Relationships are more precious than ever, and we are less comfortable with "unfinished business" relating to those we care about. Because the cares and concerns built into our busy lives pale in comparison to our loss, the emphasis on people versus things takes on far greater meaning.

Count on grief to increase spiritual awareness.

The pain of grief prompts spiritual investigation into both the known and the unknown. Answers we were sure of before are not always satisfying in the context of our present reality. God is questioned and religion is held up for examination. Typically, there are many stages of distancing, moving toward, and moving within old and new spiritual concepts and beliefs. Our struggle for inner peace and unity seizes many priorities. In the majority of cases, our connection to ourselves and the universe becomes far more defined.

Count on grief to strengthen compassion.

Grief tears down the boundaries between ourselves and others. Bereavement enhances our humanness and strengthens our ties to the world around us. Our loss is a life-changing event; we will never again be the people we were before. Pain somehow opens us to greater levels of awareness and a greater capacity for compassion and understanding. Bereavement provides the catalyst to become more giving, more loving, and more fully aware.

Count on grief to define the past and open doors to the future.

For the bereaved, the world is completely new. The death of a loved one becomes a reference point around which we define where we've been and how we structure a path for tomorrow. Grief provides a "crash course" in some of the most profound lessons life has to offer. As bereaved individuals, we find ourselves with fewer answers but far more insights. In time, we learn there is no loss without gain and no sorrow without joy. As death closes doors behind us, new doors open before us.



Joanetta Hendel

BE OPEN to small glimpses of progress, tiny threads of hope.

Pamela Hagens
TCF Nashville, TN

*Our brothers and sisters:***Ashley**

When I think of my sister, Ashley, I think of all the good times. And some of the stupid little fights that we had. Maybe those fights used to feel dumb but now I miss them. I love and will always hang on to the good times. My biggest fear is that I will forget her. If I don't think I'm going to remember, I dig out old memories.

I think of her death sometimes as we're sledding down a hill, which is our life, and the sled is getting faster to the end of her life, or the bottom of the hill, but my sled isn't going as fast as hers. I know she can see me, but I can't see her. I hear her calling my name, but no words are coming out of my mouth to call her. This is how I sometimes feel.

Hannah Childs
Northeast Baltimore

**Marc's Birthday**

To my brother Marc in heaven:

Today would be your 40th birthday. It has been 5 years since you left this Earth, but it seems like yesterday. I feel your presence often, and know you are watching over me always, my dear guardian angel. You are of the timeless and formless now, finally and completely free, free of pain, attachments, worldly thoughts, and all forms of suffering. I pray your transition was one of peaceful passing, as you transcended your human experience. You embody the spirit eternal now.

I miss you and love you, my dear brother . . . please continue to guide me in the right direction, to give me the strength and confidence I need to face my fears and conquer my demons as I navigate the bumpy roads on this journey called Life. I used to envision us sharing and supporting one another through life's defining moments . . . I still interact with you nightly in my dreams, only to awake and accept the reality of your physical absence daily. May you R.I.P. Marc. May your spirit soar gloriously above the heavens, gracefully free like a butterfly chasing a rainbow.

Lisa Pearlman
TCF Metrowest Chapter, MA

Pictures on a Mantle

*As I wake each morning, the first thing that I see
Your picture on our mantle smiling down at me.
I whisper good morning, I Love You Forever,
Make a wish that can never be.*

*Here's your picture as an infant, sitting on my knee
Now you're a toddler, how daring you could be
First trip on the bus, your first day of school
All the new friends you met.
Your first dog, first trip to the beach
How much better could it get?*

*There's your soccer team, your baseball team
Oh the pride you made me feel
A bases clearing triple to end the game
Could this be for real?*



*Out of grade school, on to high school
Your innocence almost gone
Your first car, your first prom
A young man you've become*

*A bumpy road in high school
Trouble we couldn't see
Lots of jobs, two years of college
An Associate's Degree.
At last, you were close to being
The person you wanted to be.*

*When you left that fateful night
You said, "Dad, I'll see you then."
How could I have ever known
That I would never see you again?*

*I know you're out there somewhere
In a place we cannot see
Your picture on God's mantle now
Smiling down at me.*

Tom Murphy
Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH

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

At your first TCF meeting you are asked to sign a registration card that gives us permission to add your child to the We Remember Them list on pages 2 and 3 in the monthly newsletter. If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed, 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. You may call the database manager at 615 308-2520, drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205, or email us at davidg14@bellsouth.net. 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 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 a newborn infant. They meet at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Administrative Board Room on the first floor at Tri-Star Centennial Women's and Children's Hospital, 2221 Murphy Avenue in Nashville. The meetings are “open” and free. You can drop by as often as you like. The website is sharingmiddletn.org. Their informative brochure is found under “Contact Us.”

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 Website —A Treasure for You

When you log onto the TCF Website 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. Check it out.

The Compassionate Friends

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

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Grief Work is Hard Work

When I first began my journey of grief following the death my only child, Todd, I didn't comprehend that I would have to take an active role in what would come to be defined as "grief work." All I knew was the pain, the shock, the sorrow, the desire to go to sleep and never awaken. My child was dead, and I had no desire to live.

As the months and then the years passed, I began to realize that I was, albeit unconsciously, doing grief work. Once I realized I could not walk this road alone, I became involved in our Compassionate Friends Chapter. That was the beginning of my "grief work." A few months later I enrolled in a six-week program for bereaved mothers. More grief work. I have since attended seminars, retreats and workshops. From each effort I gained something new, something insightful, something that eased my burden just a bit, something that helped me to cope with this, the worst, of all losses.

I consumed books. Some were about grief; others were about life. I watched movies, some about grief and some about life. I talked with friends...sometimes about grief and sometimes about life.

Along the way I found that if I reached out to others, I was, once again, doing grief work. You see, I discovered that grief work is healing work. It doesn't dry my tears, nor does it mend my broken heart. Instead, it allows me to accept that I am in this place and living in this moment. That doesn't sound like much...unless one has lost a child to death. Lost a child to death. What a horrifying thought. Yet now I can say it to others, talk with others who are raw and new in their grief and know that I have come to accept that my son is gone from this plane. My grief work will continue until I die.

When we attend workshops, seminars, special presentations, Compassionate Friends meetings and privately contemplate the depth of our loss and changes in our lives, we are doing grief work. Each of us travels this road differently, but we owe it to ourselves to do our grief work. Not easy work, not fun work, not immediately rewarding work, but this is work, just the same.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX