

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org



Chapter Leader: Kris Foust, (931) 216-7801, email: hedstromkris3@gmail.com
 Barbara Davies, (615) 934-6005, email: tcfroyandbarbara@yahoo.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 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.

March 14 Meeting:

For the health and safety of our members, we will gather for our **March 14 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.

Our virtual meeting will begin with sharing our March birthdays. Depending upon the number of attendees, we will move folks to private sharing groups of less than 8 people where we can talk.

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 our chapter website for the status of future meetings, including the possibility of in-person meetings, please watch our Facebook page and our website: www.tcfnashville.org .

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 DeathMike 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 | |


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—

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Carl William Anderson March 9 Son of Charles and Heidi Anderson | Kevin Moncrief March 17 Son of Sandra Merkel | Mary Catherine Elizabeth Ricketts March 22 Daughter of John and Connie Ricketts | Trinity Rhodes Steagall March 18 Son of Rose Steagall |
| August Bunn March 27 Son of Joseph and Nicole Bunn | Samuel James Moore March 28 Son of Darrell and Dianne Moore Grandson of Mac and Polly Moore | Kenna Brooke Gupton Robards March 8 Daughter of Ken and Beth Gupton | Jason Brandon Warf March 30 Son of Ronald and Clada Warf |
| Lucas Dawson (Luke) March 16 Son of Bob and Genevia Graham | Robert D. Neese (Bobby) March 29 Son of Helen Neese | Sheila Rochelle March 17 Daughter of Jennie Reeves | Hunter Cole White March 27 Son of Ronnie White and Stephanie Carpenter |
| Marvin Lee Edwards March 23 Son of Charles and Ruth Edwards | Logan Wayne Pennington March 21 Son of Tim and Kim Pennington | Shannon Nicole Smith March 9 Daughter of Sylvia Smith | Hayley Jo Woellert March 14 Daughter of Jason and Stephanie Woellert and Scott and Shelly Christenberry |
| Crystal Dawn Lane March 21 Daughter of Dorothy Lowe | Michael Reeves March 16 Son of Jennie Reeves | |  |

And in the month of their deaths

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Matthew Johnson Brooks March 5 Son of Mike and Sherry Brooks | Mary Grace Hodsdon March 14 Daughter of John and Mary Hodsdon | Samuel James Moore March 29 Son of Darrell and Dianne Moore Grandson of Mac and Polly Moore | Eric Redfern March 8 Son of Gust and Renee Redfern |
| Kenneth Elberson March 15 Son of Harry E. and Winnie Elberson | Joseph Anthony Jones March 31 Son of Anthony and Theresa Jones | Wade Hampton Morgan March 3 Son of David and Barbara Morgan | David George Shriver March 2 Son of Warren and Donna Jones and George Shriver Brother of Bekki, Bonnie, and Laurie |
| Tyrone Foxworth, II (T.J.) March 12 Son of Tyrone and Kelley Foxworth | David Benton Lowe March 5 Son of Charles and Teresa Lowe | Adam Nicholas Pappas March 2 Son of Gust and Jane Pappas Brother of Andrew, Alex and Erin |  |

Grief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will do. While we all wish for the pain to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved intensely. It is unrealistic to expect the grief to ever totally go away because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed.

Elaine Grier
TCF, Atlanta GA

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.

*Patrick and Ellen Donlon
In loving memory of His mother,
Joyce M. Donlon,
And her grandson, Stephen J. Donlon*



*Craig and Jane Fielder
In loving memory of
Joyce M. Donlon
Mother of Patrick Donlon and
Grandmother of Stephen Donlon*

*Anthony and Magen Honeycutt
In loving memory of
their daughter,
Rylee Grace Honeycutt (Roo)*

*Ann McKee
In loving memory of her son,
Glenn Thomas Allen, Jr. (Tommy)*

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 EASY WAYS TO DONATE TO TCF

***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 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.**

On Dealing with a Violent Death

1. Generally it takes 18-24 months just to stabilize after the death of a family member. It can take much longer when the death was a violent one. Recognize the length of the mourning process. Beware of developing unrealistic expectations of yourself.
 2. Your worst times usually are not at the moment of a tragic event—then you’re in a state of shock or numbness. Often you slide “into the pits” 4-7 months after the event. Strangely, when you’re in the pits and tempted to despair, this may be the time when most people expect you to be “over” your loss.
 3. When people ask how you’re doing, don’t always say, “Fine.” Let some people know how terrible you feel.
 4. Talking with a true friend or with others who’ve been there and survived can be very helpful. Those who’ve been there speak your language. Only they can really say, “I know, I understand.” You are not alone.
 5. Often depression is a cover for anger. Learn to uncork your bottle and find appropriate ways to release your bottled-up anger. What you’re going through seems so unfair and unjust.
 6. Take time to lament, to experience being a victim. It may be necessary to spend some time feeling sorry for yourself. “Pity parties” sometimes are necessary and can be therapeutic.
 7. It’s all right to cry, to question, to be weak. Beware of allowing yourself to be “put on a pedestal” by others who tell you what an inspiration you are because of your strength and your ability to cope so well. If they only knew!
 8. Remember, you may be a rookie at the experience you’re going through. This is probably the first violent death you’ve coped with. You’re new at this, and you don’t know what to do or how to act. You need help.
 9. Reach out and try to help others in some small ways at least. This little step forward may prevent you from dwelling on yourself.
 10. Many times of crisis ultimately can become times of opportunity. Mysteriously your faith in yourself, in others, in God can be deepened through crisis. Seek out persons who can serve as symbols of hope to you.
- Healing can happen if you receive two things—knowledge and human support. The best available tool is the “grief cycle,” but for most people the cycle will not be complete unless they share their grief with someone who has been through a similar experience.

Father Ken Czillinger, Cincinnati, Ohio

To All Bereaved Parents

I am a recovering bereaved parent. I was a parent by choice. One of my children died; I became a bereaved parent, certainly not by choice. As I tried to recapture the security of what was, after many agonizing months, I would always hurt and miss my dead son, and that, ultimately, only I could be responsible for recovering from this hateful disease called grief.

I had to make the choice of being a bereaved parent or a recovering bereaved parent. I chose the latter. I sometimes fall off the wagon, and I know that I always will. The love of my child will never leave me, but thank God for being a recovering bereaved parent. It does take time, however, so don't give up on yourself. It may take more or less time for some others. Be patient.

Eunice Guy
TCF Atlanta, GA

Turning Point

*Dawn does not so much break as it happens
Dark slides into light so slowly my eyes
Adjust without thought, as faint pink ribbons
Turn to streamers of orange in eastern skies.
So goes my grief with no strident fanfare.
Sadness and grieving have been all I know.
Then, for a brief moment, it is not there.*

*Imperceptibly the moments grow,
Until I laugh without guilt. Life's more worthwhile,
I don't feel as compelled to visit the grave.
I can remember some good times and I smile.
There was nothing dramatic and I have
Had no revelation, no special thing.
I just felt a bit better sometime last spring.*



Richard A. Dew
Rachel's Cry



Coping Conflicts

When a child dies, there is no quick cure and no way to fix what hurts. The best we can do is to learn to cope with it. Each individual has his or her own way of coping with stress, and, unfortunately, these differences among us may create great conflict within the family. At a time when we wish we could pull together our individuality may prohibit that from happening.

These differences in coping styles are often noted between the parents when a child dies, and if they do exist, they can and do lead to conflicts between husband and wife and within the entire family unit. If a gregarious, outgoing woman is married to a quiet, sensitive man and the child of that union dies, the coping techniques may be so different that it seems as if two children have died—the mother's child and the father's child.

If the wife wants to talk about the child twenty-four hours a day and the husband throws himself into work and outside activities as an escape, conflict often arises and both parents may, not understanding these differences, react with anger toward each other. If the husband needs to see friends and have some recreation and the wife needs to go to the cemetery, hostility can result. If the wife needs to pretend that her dead child's birthday isn't coming next week and the husband needs to acknowledge the day in some special way, sparks may fly.

In each of these situations, the parent is coping with the loss of a precious child in the only way he or she knows how. We do not automatically receive new coping mechanisms when our child dies; we rely on how we have coped with problems prior to this tragedy.

Think back to other hard times in your life. Certainly, these times pale in comparison to the ultimate tragedy of losing a child, but what did you do then? Did you cry a lot or keep a "stiff upper lip"? Did you talk to anyone who would listen or withdraw from people? Did you throw yourself into your job and work long, unnecessary hours, or did you find yourself disorganized and unable to concentrate? Did you find sleep a viable escape or were you unable to sleep? Did you share your pain with your children or try to protect them? We cannot change our way of coping when we are right in the middle of a crisis. It is impossible to change our psychological make-up when we are fighting for mere survival. The recognition of our own coping mechanisms, as well as those of other members of our family is often the first step in successfully living the life of a bereaved parent, and is necessary to the survival of a marriage. For, you see, there is no "right" or "wrong" way to grieve, there are just different ways, and we must try to give each other permission to cope with our loss in any way we can.

Elaine Grier
TCF, Atlanta, GA

Springtime's Burden Becoming Promise

Seasonal changes are difficult for many bereaved parents. This is often most true as winter yields to spring. The land seems to throb with life once more as young buds emerge and robins return from their sojourn in the South. Lilacs bloom and the breeze carries their fragrance. Woodland animals begin to lose the leanness of winter hunting or quiet hibernation.

The day is longer and filled with renewed vitality to match its length. It is as if a cold hand had loosed its bitter grip and the earth is reborn. It is this quality of resurrection that seems so bitter. For as we struggle in the darkness of loss, all around us is the vigorous rush of life breaking forth in colors and song. But our children do not come forth. They dwell in the land of death and the netherworld of our anguish.

But I believe we can see as well the promise inherent in spring's unfolding glory and grasp the continuity its return affirms. Last fall we saw an acorn, but this year we see the tender shoot of an infant tree. From gnarled, dead-looking stumps, the cut-back rose sends tendrils of green to drink the sun.

In each full cycle of our planet around its sun, we encounter irrefutable testament to renewal. In this, we sense the defeat of death. This is the time of year when twilight surrenders to darkness. We stand by the new earth, hear the chorus of night creatures and sense the rebirth that has no end. Stand silently then, beneath the constancy of the night sky and upon the rejuvenating earth and sense our children, constant and growing too, yet beyond our sight. Life continues. There are no endings. There are only beginnings. That is the promise of Spring.

Don Hackett
TCF, South Shore, MA

Symphony

When I was a young musician my dad liked to tease me by playing the notes of the C-Major scale: "DO-RE-MI-FA-SO-LA-TI..." Then he would stop, step back and wait for my reaction. No matter where I was, my response was certain. It would drive me absolutely *crazy* until I rushed to the piano and played the final note that would make the scale complete.

I feel much the same way about Lindsay at times. Five years ago, we opened the pages of a manuscript and began what appeared to be a very interesting overture in our lives. We didn't just open a book we were the composers and she was our composition. The love and promises grew within me, along with a multitude of ideas and plans we had for the way things would be. We were shaping the future—ours, the baby's and the world's future.



We had only concluded the prelude when the book suddenly and abruptly closed with the clashing of cymbals, just as tightly as the lid on her tiny white casket. There was a supreme silence in her death, but our hearts thundered on as the pounding of tympani drums. I could plead, I could cry, but I could not change what happened. I tried to bargain with God. I tried to deny it. I tried to run from it. For a while, I tried to pretend it didn't hurt. Our lives were overshadowed by an ominous quality—life was uncertain, death was not. We could not escape it. No matter how hard I tried to understand, it was far beyond my comprehension. I chased my "elusive dream" in circles, around and around, until I was utterly exhausted from the effort.

I am her mother, and yet her life seemed so incomplete, without purpose or accomplishment. It was my responsibility to mold and shape her life, and I thought I had been denied that privilege until I talked with my TCF friends. I discovered we can open the pages of our book again. We are still her parents, and she can still make a difference in someone's life—but only if we allow ourselves to let her. Only I can write the notes that complete her life. And I know now the last note will never be written until we hold her in our arms again. (Then it will sing forever!)

I thought the symphony was over; that the pomp and circumstance of her life had been stilled, but that is not true. It is playing, yet in a different way than we ever dreamed or originally planned. The melody becomes more beautiful each time we touch another person with love and understanding, and that feels very comforting to us. I believe she would approve.

Dana Gensler
TCF, South Central Kentucky

The Garden

*Her mom started a garden in the backyard.
I didn't know why she would work so hard.
It was therapy for the psychological blow,
A quiet time and place for emotions to flow.*

*She planted an area for each child to toil.
One child was not there to flower her soil,
However, the bed is still very well attended,
And she shares this with her child departed.*

*Each Sunday morning, I put flowers in a pot,
That are cut from the absent owner's plot.
And then I place them at the foot of her stone,
So that she'll have something new of her own.*

Jere Williamson
TCF, Nashville, TN

The Mention of Her Name

*The mention of my child's name
May bring tears to my eyes,
But it never fails to bring
Music to my ears.*

*If you are really my friend,
Let me hear the beautiful music
of her name.
It soothes my broken heart
And sings to my soul.*

Nancy Williams
TCF, Marlboro, NJ

Stillbirth, Miscarriage and Infant Death

A baby's death is one of the most painful and traumatic experiences a parent will confront in a lifetime. Although nothing can take away the pain you feel right now, it may be helpful to know what others have experienced or found comforting as they struggled to deal with the intense grief that followed the death of their child.

It is important to give yourself permission to grieve. Grieving the death of a baby may last far longer than you and others expect. Frequently those around you may be uncomfortable with the intense emotions you experience. Be patient with yourself and do not expect too much too soon.

No matter what age, your child was and is a part of you, and when your baby died, so did many of your hopes and dreams for the future. Choosing a name as well as having a funeral or memorial service can help affirm that you are a parent and have the right to grieve as long and as intensely as necessary.

TCF, Vancouver Island



*Forgiveness is especially important
at times of grieving.
Forgiveness is especially important
for the griever.
Forgiveness must not be forced.*

Symptoms of Grief

When a child dies, normal symptoms of grief are varied. Parental reactions and intensity of feelings may differ. Typical reactions include the following:

- Crying, loneliness, a feeling of isolation.
- A need to talk about the death and the details of what happened.
- Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, depression.
- Anger, guilt, blame.
- Loss of appetite, overeating, sleeplessness, irritability.
- Inability to concentrate, comprehend or remember.
- Loss of goals and aims in life, a sense of desolation about the future.
- Aching arms, phantom crying, frequent sighing.

The first year can be especially difficult when parents ask themselves painful questions or torment themselves with the following statements:

- Why did this happen to my baby, my child?
- Why did this happen to our family?
- Why didn't I know something was wrong?
- Why didn't I go to the doctor sooner?
- It's all my fault!
- If only.

There may be no adequate or satisfying answers to these questions or statements. Anger and guilt are common reactions and usually accompany grief. Try to share and express these feelings as a way of releasing them, eventually forgiving yourself and others. Also, many parents find it helpful to take time to acquire information that deals specifically with this loss and to become familiar with the problems associated with infant death.

TCF, Vancouver Island Chapters

Starting Small

*Begin with small easy things.
First forgive what
you can forgive without straining.
Then try forgiving some deeper
disappointments – one at a time.*

Sascha

Grief is normal.
Grief teaches.
Their goodness remains.

Pamela Hagens
TCF, Nashville, TN



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
Nashville, TN
37205

Return Service
Requested



March 2021

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

Second Anniversary

*Yes, I'm an adult over 40
And Tom, little brother, was 25
When he died returning from his bar exam.
So what? Does grief have an end age?
Does someone 40 plus not die too losing a sweet small playmate?
I see him learning to roller skate
I'm running beside the bike;
First game of the Cardinals' season
And, scared, in the stands,
A "gorilla" running wild.
Sleepy, at a drive-in, running around the zoo.*



*All that, and as an adult, I knew him too.
At graduations,
Proud in his own pad
Pouring Spanish champagne.
Tireless breaking wood feeding a hungry campfire
Cooking eggs for all, sharing dreams.
This sibling remembers and grieves.*



Jeanne Brady
TCF Olathe, KS