

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Nashville Website: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://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.

Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 P.M. on the second Sunday of each month at the ABC (Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Tennessee) Building, 560 Royal Parkway, Nashville, TN 37214 (**SEE NEW MAILING ADDRESS ABOVE**).

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

## March 12 Program:

### Hope and Wisdom

Kim Harmon will speak at our March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. She is a bereaved sibling and author of the book *Fall Forward*, a story about her family's tragic loss of her brother and the events that followed. Kim will share her personal experience as well as offer words of hope and wisdom about self-care after being kicked in the gut with the worst of life. Join us for Kim's program and for our regular sharing groups that will follow.



#### 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.

<b>Accidental Death</b> .....	Mike and Paula Childers 615-294-4959
<b>AIDS</b> .....	Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
<b>Illness</b> .....	David and Peggy Gibson 615-308-2520 or 615-504-4307
<b>Infant</b> .....	Jayne Head 615-264-8184
<b>SIDS</b> .....	Kris Thompson 931-486-9088
<b>Suicide</b> .....	Ron Henson 615-789-3613
<b>Alcohol/Drug Overdose</b> .....	Ed Pyle 615-712-3245

## Newsletter Renewal in April

Periodically we review our mailing list to make sure that people who receive our newsletter still wish to receive it, and ensure we are making the best use of gifts and donations to keep operational costs down. Everyone who wants our newsletter may receive it free of charge, but some may no longer want it.

**If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter, you must complete the form on page 7 and return it.**

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, you don't need to return it and your name will be removed from our mailing list.

*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—*

**Marvin Lee Edwards**  
March 23  
Son of  
Charles and Ruth Edwards

**Kevin Moncrief**  
March 17  
Son of  
Sandra Merkel

**Samuel James Moore**  
March 28  
Son of  
Darrell and Dianne Moore  
Grandson of  
Mac and Polly Moore

**Michael Reeves**  
March 16  
Son of  
Jennie Reeves  
Brother of  
Sheila, Michael, and Mark

**Sheila Rochelle**  
March 17  
Daughter of  
Jennie Reeves  
Sister of Charity Collins  
Aunt of Kristanna

**Trinity Rhodes Steagall**  
March 18  
Son of  
Rose Steagall

**Hunter Cole White**  
March 27  
Son of  
Ronnie White  
and Stephanie Carpenter



*And in the month of their deaths—*

**Matthew Johnson Brooks**  
March 5  
Son of  
Mike and Sherry Brooks

**Kenneth Elberson**  
March 15  
Son of  
Harry and Winnie Elberson

**Morgan Priscilla Graves**  
March 6  
Daughter of  
Ginger Graves

**Justin Bruce Hensley**  
March 1  
Son of Denise Jones

**Mary Grace Hodsdon**  
March 14  
Daughter of  
John and Mary Hodsdon

**David Benton Lowe**  
March 5  
Son of  
Charles and Teresa Lowe

**Samuel James Moore**  
March 29  
Son of  
Darrell and Dianne Moore  
Grandson of  
Mac and Polly Moore

**Wade Hampton Morgan**  
March 3  
Son of  
David and Barbara Morgan

**Adam Nicholas Pappas**  
March 2  
Son of  
Gust and Jane Pappas  
Brother of  
Andrew, Alex, and Erin

**David George Shriver**  
March 2  
Son of  
Warren and Donna Jones  
and George Shriver  
Brother of  
Bekki, Bonnie, and Laurie



## But it Hurts Differently

There is no way to predict how you will feel. The reactions to grief are not like recipes with different ingredients and certain results. Each person mourns in a different way. You may cry hysterically or you may remain outwardly controlled, showing little emotion. You may lash out in anger against your family and friends, or you may express your gratitude for their concern and dedication. You may be calm one moment - in turmoil the next. Reactions are varied and contradictory. Grief is universal. At the same time it is extremely personal.

Rabbi Earl Grollmon

**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.*

*David and Barbara Morgan  
in Loving Memory of their son,  
Wade H. Morgan*

*Eldon and Margi Scott  
in Loving Memory of their son,  
Tony Bruce Scott*

*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*

*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 people and their generosity to all of us.*

**A note from the editor:**

Dear TCF family,

For many experiencing loss, such as those who wrote the entries you see in our newsletter every month, writing is a great tool for understanding and expressing our grief. You may have a journal, notebook or folder on your computer holding your private writings. Please consider editing some of your entries into poems or articles and submitting them for use in our TCF Nashville newsletter. Your writing can be a balm to others and a great reminder that we do not walk this journey alone.

If your work is chosen for publication, it will be placed in the national TCF database for the editors of other chapter newsletters to use. I draw on that database for the pieces you find here.

Be sure to edit your work before submitting and email it to me at [melanierladd@gmail.com](mailto:melanierladd@gmail.com).

It is my honor to edit this newsletter. May it bring you some ease and hope.

Melanie Ladd

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### ***Will I Get Better***

*The worst hurt you'll ever have is to have a child taken away  
All the pain in your heart will be with you each day  
But you will go on because you'll find so many really care  
Your good friends and family will always be there.*

*So many people ask me does it get better in time  
I tell them each person is different your own way you must find  
You find that as you go on some of your grief will end  
But we do know that your heart will never mend.*

*In time you'll do all the things that you used to do  
But you'll feel in your heart it's not the same to you  
Do things get better that is up to each one  
Some day you will laugh again and even have some fun.*

*But that does not mean you have forgotten your child  
All their memories you keep of their beautiful smile  
Some people may hurt you with the stupid things they say  
You have to just listen to the ones who love you each day.*

*So, try to keep up your spirit for your day will arrive  
And you'll be thankful to all who helped you survive  
The people who remember your child as if they were here  
Those are the loved ones that you'll always hold dear.*

*Now you say will I ever get better how long will it take me  
When you start to help others then you will see  
That you have changed so much since that first day  
Now I say to you that you have found your own way.*

## What Do I Do With My Child's Room?

I guess I put this off as long as I could. I am one of those bereaved parents who has never touched their child's room after they died. I have added things, but never subtracted. Basically, everything is in its place as she left it 6+ years ago. Everything that a normal 15-year-old would possess: posters and pictures of friends held to the wall by thumb tacks, playbills from the school musical she was in, dried corsages from school dances, stuffed animals won at the fair thrown haphazardly on her bed, teen magazines and CD's scattered here and there...my remaining links to the past, flashbacks before the loss of our innocence. One that really hurt was the note that she had left to herself that said, "Work at Perkins. May 14th from 7 - 3." Rather than my Nina excitedly, yet apprehensively going off to the second day of her first "real" job, my family and I were at the funeral home making the final arrangements for her funeral. Surreal and so sad...

I can remember the first year or two when I would peer into her room and look at all the glorious clutter of her active life. I swore I would never touch a thing, never throw anything out...it would be left intact forever. The times I did spend in her room were usually spent wrapped in her afghan on top of her bed, practically curled in the fetal position with a box of Kleenex, and sobbing my heart out. "I will never change this room, never!" was my mindset back then.

But things have changed. Due to some family issues, we have to make room for more people residing in our house. The time had come to face it...I had no choice. It is a long involved process. My sweet Nina was a pack rat, to say the least! She saved everything! I have sifted through page after page of her school work. I have squelched the urge to look through the shoebox that says on the outside, "Notes from Friends, 8th grade." instead choosing to not invade her privacy, even after death. I have gone through her closet, and studied her clothing, remembering what she looked like in each outfit. She was so tiny! Size 3-4 jeans and the teeniest little shirts you can ever imagine. It reminded me why we always said she was "Petite but powerful!"...though tiny she was a giant of a human being...loving, considerate, and so full of good ideas.

I have had my moments of intense sadness, such as when I have come across her "Book about Me" that she made in school, the part that asks who is the most important person in your life, to which she answers in her grade school handwriting, "My Mommy, of course." I cry for the loss of

that love and our close relationship, even something that carried over into her teens, what are supposed to be the "rebellious years." Even in her confirmation book she wrote the same identical thing when asked who was the most important in her life. God, I miss her so.

What I have been pleasantly surprised about, though, is that maybe the fact that I waited so long has made this an easier (for lack of a better word...there is nothing "easy" about any of this!) task. Bittersweet, I guess would describe it. I have found myself laughing more at these pictures and reminders of the past, and crying less. And the most amazing thing has happened. The past three nights I have slept in her bed. I am the first one to have slept there since Nina died over six years ago. After I turn off the lights and crawl into her bed, the glow-in-the-dark stars that she put into perfectly placed constellations, gleam and twinkle...it is the only thing that you can see. I feel like I am lying in her bed, protectively wrapped in her arms, and seeing a piece of heaven just as she does now, and what she used to see from her bed when she was alive. The closeness I feel to her at that moment is indescribable! I haven't slept as peacefully since Nina died as I have these past three nights!

I wanted to share this with you in case there are others out there like me...who haven't taken on the task of clearing out their child's room and wondered if they ever would be able to. And, also for those who have heard the comments, "You haven't cleaned out her/his room YET!?!?!?" I know it isn't the right choice for everyone; as we all know, the ways we handle our grief and our ways of dealing with our child's possessions are all different, just as they should be. But for those who have waited, I want to reassure you that it has turned out to be a much more positive experience than I imagined. All part of seeing that you really ARE making progress and finding a little hope along the way...that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Cathy Seehuetter, Nina's mom forever  
TCF St. Paul, MN

*What the caterpillar thought was the end of life,  
the butterfly knew was just the beginning...*

## I Miss my Son Every Day, and Maybe He Misses Me Too!

Like many of you, I'm grieving my not spending the rest of my life with my precious child. And when the grief gets extra hard, it is such an overwhelming experience. I miss him so much. But lately I've started to wonder if maybe my son Jacob misses me too? This occurred to me during my praying for him and it was such a beautiful thought. Whether you believe in spirit or not, for me it is very healing to think my strong emotions of loss might be shared, or even brought about by Jacob missing me—with us both missing each other.

Mike Bell  
TCF Nashville, TN

## The Arts

*The arts are what makes life worthwhile,  
But I gave it up due to the loss of a child.  
The desire has left me to draw and paint,  
The creative juices have become quite faint.  
This death in part has all but taken its toll,  
The whole is stronger than individual soul.  
The need to express can be for the faint hearted,  
My painting has stopped but my writing started.  
And I write these words to express my belief,  
That the arts have come full circle through grief.*

For Molly Harbert Williamson

Jere Williamson  
TCF, Nashville, TN

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## The Month of In Between

*In between Winter  
And in between Spring,  
Your death has left me  
Feeling in between.  
In between this world  
And in between the next.  
Since you died  
Nothing's the same.  
I no longer feel like I belong,  
Yet I haven't wings for heaven,  
Though I have no heart for earth.  
So I'm somewhere with March.  
I'm somewhere in between.*

Naomi Holzman  
TCF, Volusia/Flagler, FL




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## Counting

*Time to count the crocus on the lawn  
(seven white, four yellow, thirteen blue).  
Windy sunshine breathing ice away  
And the trees are trying to be new.  
You're not ready for spring, you say?  
But spring is ready for you!*

Sascha

## March Winds

*He raced against the wind  
As if his very life depended upon it.  
Eyes bright, cheeks glowing  
From the still almost chilly March wind,  
Throwing me a smile now and then  
To make sure I was watching. I was,  
And when I caught a smile I applauded.  
His effort so great for one small boy.  
I don't remember now  
If his kite ever flew—sometimes,  
In spite of heroic efforts, they don't.  
But I remember the day  
The nip in the air  
His cheeks glowing  
His fresh, clean smell  
My afternoon of playing catch  
With his smiles...  
I remember every year  
When March winds begin to blow.  
Even if he had not died  
Long after the age of flying kites,  
I still would remember.  
Maybe if he were still here,  
Teaching his own small boy  
The delicate art of flying kites  
And catching his own smiles,  
It wouldn't hurt so much  
When March winds begin to blow.*

From *Songs from the Edge*  
By Faye Harden

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## Minds and Hearts

*I think of you,  
Away from me now,  
Yet close in ways  
Of mind and heart.  
I close my eyes.*

*A clear picture now;  
And hope time is good—  
It will never separate  
The minds and hearts,  
Never tear the picture.*

Lezlie Langford Peterson  
TCF National Sibling Newsletter

Save the date:**JULY 7—9, 2023--46<sup>TH</sup> TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Denver, Colorado, during the weekend of July 7-9, 2023. Go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) for more information.

**Flying a Kite**

I have been a kite flyer for a long time. What joy it brought me when I was a child. I remember going up on the high, flat roof of my father's machine shop in the city of New Haven and sending my kites aloft from that rooftop. I felt excitement and wonder as I watched my kite dance among the white clouds and the blue, blue sky. Kites are fun.

Later, as I grew to adulthood, I still had fun with kites, but my kite flying became more contemplative, relaxing and therapeutic for me—a peaceful leisure time activity, much like fishing is to the fisherman. Kites are such curious toys. Often they are flown as symbols of great events or flown as flags of our emotions—and rightly so—because we put so much of ourselves into the flying of our kites.

In Japan, a kite is flown from the house in which there is a newborn, and the child's name is on the kite, flying over the household and announcing the happy birth. In Bermuda, school children fly kites on Good Friday, not only for fun, but as a tradition to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. The sticks of the kites resemble a cross. I believe that kites are also wonderful symbols of resurrection, ascension, and eternal life.

Now I am a bereaved father. My son, Max Benjamin Rausch, died two years ago in May when he was fifteen and one-half months old. I never flew kites with Max. Born in January, he was much too young to participate in kite flying during his first spring, and in his second spring he died. Immediately

after Max's funeral I fled to Cape Cod with my wife, Katherine. I was in shock and rage, clutched by a deep, numbing sadness. "Why should Max have to get sick and give up life?" I howled at the heavens. I remember trying to fly a kite at that time on the Cape, on the beach at Nauset, but it brought me no peace. In fact, the harsh winds broke my kite and my kite fell into the ocean. I reeled my kite in, its wood and plastic body broken and lifeless at my feet, like Max's body on the hospital bed.

Time passes, and God's grace slowly heals. I have not "gotten over" Max's death. I will grieve for Max for the rest of my own life. I now visit Max at the cemetery, then I go to a beach and fly a kite for him. And I feel a deep satisfaction and a great sense of release and peace now when I fly a kite for Max, for with my kite ascend all my sorrow, all my joy, all my anger, all my prayers, and all my love.

Daniel Max Rausch  
New Haven, CT

*Before you know it,  
here's another March  
with daffodils and crocus—  
any hyacinths?*



*Before you know it,  
here's another sorrow—  
the grieving over things  
she used to sing  
about.*



*Before you know it,  
here's another greening  
with quiet hope  
and modest promise—  
listen, when you can.*

Sascha

## COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER RENEWAL

**If you wish to continue to receive the Newsletter free of charge, please check the information below and return this form no later than April 30 to: TCF, P. O. BOX 8283, HERMITAGE, TN 37076**

Check one:

- My name and mailing address on the label on the other side is CORRECT.
- My name and mailing address on the label on the other side is NOT CORRECT. Make changes below:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

List my child's name in the Children Remembered column in the months of their birth and death.

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Death \_\_\_\_\_  
mo/day/yr mo/day/yr

Son of \_\_\_\_\_

Daughter of \_\_\_\_\_

- Don't list my child's name in the Children Remembered column in the months of their birth and death.



### 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, 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.

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**A**tending 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.

# *The Compassionate Friends*

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**March 2023**

## **It's Okay to Grieve**

### **It's Okay to Grieve.**

The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned. Such hurt!

It's okay to grieve.

### **It's Okay to Cry.**

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to level off and continue our cruise along the stream of life.

It's okay to cry.

### **It's Okay to Heal.**

We do not need to prove we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel guilty, for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death. It's a healthy sign of healing.

It's okay to heal.

### **It's Okay to Laugh.**

Laughter is not a sign of less grief. Laughter is not a sign of less love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh.

It's okay to laugh.

Patricia Lufty Nevitt  
TCF Austin, TX