

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (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 in the American Builders & Contractors (ABC) Building, 1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210. 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.

## May 13 Program:

### Honoring Our Memories

The May meeting is an especially poignant one because it always falls on Mother’s Day, and since the June meeting is not on Father’s Day, we like to give special attention to the role of both mothers and fathers in the lives of their children. If you have a special memory of a particular Mother’s Day or Father’s Day, we hope you will come prepared to share it with the group. We will honor all mothers with special readings and there will be a picture board to display your child’s photo. (Please bring a photo 5”x7” or smaller.)

This has always proved to be a very meaningful meeting—a safe place to be on a day filled with memories. We’d like to share it with you.

Keeping our tradition, each person in attendance will be given a mini-carnation to wear in memory of their children.

Regular sharing groups will follow the program.



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  
615-646-1333
- AIDS**.....Joyce Soward  
615-754-5210
- Illness**.....David and Peggy Gibson  
615-356-1351
- Infant**.....Jayne Head  
615-264-8184
- SIDS**.....Kris Thompson  
931-486-9088
- Suicide**.....Ron and Darlene Henson  
615-789-3613
- Small Child**.....Kenneth and Kathy Hensley  
615-237-9972
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose**.....Ed Pyle  
615-712-3245



*The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched.*

*They must be felt with the heart.*



Helen Keller

*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—*

<b>Christopher C. Anderson (Chris)</b> May 28 Son of Mary Hampton	<b>Jeremy Hill</b> May 2 Son of John and Genetta Rushing	<b>Andrew Mitchell (Drew)</b> May 16 Son of Tom and Alice Mitchell	<b>Alicia P. Shaia</b> May 12 Daughter of Cheryl Petrilli
<b>Curtis Patrick Baushke</b> May 17 Son of Bill and Patti Baushke	<b>John Mark Knabe</b> May 27 Son of Mark and June Knabe	<b>Lauren O'Donnell</b> May 8 Daughter of Dennis and Shirley O'Donnell	<b>Jonathan Beaumont Stewart</b> May 29 Son of Bob and Lida B. Stewart
<b>Christopher Jay Bradley</b> May 31 Son of Lamar and Joy Bradley	<b>Joey V. Ladd, III (Joey)</b> May 14 Son of Joe and Melanie Ladd	<b>Ed Pyle (Stobie)</b> May 17 Son of Ed and Dorothy Pyle	<b>Andrew Van Horn</b> May 27 Son of John and Amy Peterson
<b>Randy Lee Buchanan</b> May 17 Son of Jeanette Buchanan	<b>Stetson Taylor McFarland</b> May 27 Son of Nathan and Alisha McFarland	<b>Tate Ramsden</b> May 11 Son of Bruce and Amy Ramsden	<b>Brandon Frederick Weller</b> May 14 Son of Freddy and Pippy Weller
<b>Jason Heflin</b> May 30 Son of Edward and Kay Heflin			<b>Matthew H. Woods</b> May 14 Son of Vaughn Woods

*And in the month of their deaths—*

<b>Russell Alan Abbott</b> May 10 Son of David and Karen Abbott	<b>Jeffery Hampton</b> May 5 Son of Jimmy and Mary Hampton	<b>Jeremy Seth Lunceford</b> May 12 Son of Jane Lunceford	<b>Jason William Rice</b> May 24 Son of Rosemarie Moore
<b>Devin Lowery-Bethea</b> May 2 Son of Johnny and Barbara Bethea	<b>Marieke de Jager</b> May 7 Daughter of Jan and Betsy de Jager	<b>Kensley Caroline Miller</b> May 23 Daughter of Jason and Cindy Miller	<b>Shelia Rochelle</b> May 20 Daughter of Jennie Reeves Sister of Charity Collins Aunt of Kristanna
<b>Jeffery Glenn Eakes</b> May 13 Son of Don and Sherry Eakes	<b>Wendy Evon Kauffman</b> May 17 Daughter of Richard and Donna Green	<b>Lauren Paige Moore</b> May 3 Daughter of Mac and Polly Moore Granddaughter of Paul Trainor	<b>Tony Scott</b> May 26 Son of Eldon and Margie Scott
<b>Charles Courtney Edwards</b> May 3 Son of Charles and Ruth Edwards	<b>John Mark Knabe</b> May 13 Son of Bob and June Knabe	<b>David Pringle</b> May 17 Son of Jim and Margaret Pringle	<b>Ryan James Tropauer</b> May 9 Son of David and Debbie Tropauer
<b>Laura Paige Gibson</b> May 15 Daughter of David and Peggy Gibson	<b>Stacy Leigh Kraft</b> May 18 Daughter of Keith and Meryl Kraft	<b>Ed Pyle (Stobie)</b> May 31 Son of Ed and Dorothy Pyle	<b>Bert Whittenberry</b> May 14 Son of Hunter and Carol Nichols
<b>Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom</b> May 16 Daughter of Charlie and Kris Foust			<b>Michael Ryan Williams (Ryan)</b> May 25 Son of Danny and Kay Williams

## 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*

*Barbara Davies*  
*Through Nationwide's Workplace Giving Program*  
*In loving memory of her stepsons,*  
*Roy James Davies and Taylor Davies,*  
*Sons of Roy Davies*

*Ann Flatt*  
*In loving memory of her son,*  
*Chad Flatt*

*David and Peggy Gibson*  
*Kay Howard and Claire Gibson*  
*In loving memory of*  
*Their daughter and sister,*  
*Laura Paige Gibson*

*David and Barbara Morgan*  
*In loving memory of*  
*their son,*  
*Wade Hampton Morgan*

*Kroger Plus*  
*Community Rewards Program*  
*(See note 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 people and their generosity to all of us.*



*Note: Kroger Rewards—To create an account to benefit TCF, go to the Kroger website and click on "Community Rewards," then follow the instructions on that page. After that, all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Plus Card. Kroger will donate dollars to TCF every time you shop there. It's an easy way to support your chapter.*

## A Letter to My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer. How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near?

Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always. Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason.

Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness. I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

Robin Holemon  
 TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

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## *Perennials*

*Good memories are the perennials that bloom again*  
*after the hard winter of grief—*  
*begins to yield to hope.*

Sascha

## Mother's Day and Graduation

After my daughter Kyra died on November 14 of 2004, one of my first thoughts was I am no longer a mother, because Kyra was my only child. It didn't take me long to realize that that was not true; I am and always will be Kyra's mom. As I have walked my grief journey I have found myself referring to grief as labor. It then came to me that for me, losing Kyra was like giving birth in reverse. I experienced intense emotional and physical pain that I wondered if I could endure, similar to the physical pain of labor, only in grief it lasts for weeks, months and years. It took my breath away, brought me to my knees and often I found myself crying out in anguish and anger, like child birth. It has been over a year and a half since Kyra died and I have felt a break in the pain. It has started back up recently due to graduation but I know it will ease some after May. Some women experience false labor leading up to the birth of their child. I think that those intense pains that come from out of nowhere and last only a short time is something that I will forever experience. I now realize that in letting go of her death, I can embrace and carry her spirit with me always. So, I liken grief to giving birth in reverse.

I go from Mother's Day to Graduation, because Kyra would have graduated from High School at the end of May. Graduation was something I knew would be hard for me to endure without her here, alive and being part of the celebration. I thought about what Kyra graduating would mean to me and it didn't take me long to come up with, it was going to be my day to celebrate. Kyra was an intelligent child with a low attention span, a need to talk, and lower than I would have liked motivation. It was a frustration that her teachers and I shared. So, homework time was a challenge and I used motivational charts, rewards and even punishment. But, I quickly found that you can't force someone to be motivated and went back to encouraging. I knew that she would come around and become motivated and I started seeing it her Junior year, the year she died. I thought that graduation would be the reward for all the long nights and constantly trying to encourage and motivate. Well, it's not to be and I had to decide how will I endure graduation. I began to think about all she is missing. I believe in Heaven so I don't believe she is missing any joy or good times, because I believe she is now experiencing indescribable joy and unimaginable good times. The reality of what she is missing is, she is missing misery, pain, frustration, disappointment, a broken heart, grief, hopelessness and agony. And I am missing her incredible joy and zest for life, her strong faith, beautiful smile and her wonderful heart.

As I close I remember when I was pregnant with Kyra, I took two helpings of food because I said I'm eating for two. Now I will try my best to live life to the fullest and be all that I can because now I'm living for two. Just as her living made me want to be a better person, her dying will make me a better person if I allow it, because I now carry her with me. I will strive to do and see life the way she would have if she could have stayed here longer.

Julie Short  
TCF Southeastern IL

## Mother's Day Floods the Heart with Memories

I remember the day you were born; it was the Wednesday after Mother's Day in 1967. The first time I held you and looked at your sweet face, your rosebud mouth, tiny nose, big, soft eyes and long eyelashes, my heart was forever captured. You wrapped your little hand around my finger and looked at me as if you'd known me forever. For over an hour, silent tears trickled down my face. An unexplained sadness swept over me. I blamed it on the war of the day in the Middle East, Vietnam, the mess we mortals had made of the world. But mostly it was fear for your future in an uncertain, mean world-how to keep you safe yet not smother you. In that hour I came to see the deepest meaning of a Mother's love.

Last year was my first Mother's Day without you. I went to the cedar chest you gave me and took out all the Mother's Day cards you had ever given me. I put them on the piano. The hand painted cards, the little hand plaque, the carefully written cards and finally the many cards you selected from age 12 until your 35th year. It was a painful day, a heartbreaking time for me. I thought of myself as a childless Mother.

Will I torture myself again this year? I don't think so. This year I will quietly and thankfully remember that you were in my life for over 35 years. I will reflect on the fact that the single defining moment in my life was your birth. I reframed my life on that day. Had you never lived, I would be a different person today. Learning to put the needs and wants of my only child ahead of all else has made me a better person. I loved being your Mom, watching you learn to walk and talk, grow and learn. Answering your questions, helping you with your projects and studies, encouraging you, talking with you, candidly discussing your strengths and teaching you to capitalize on those strengths while minimizing the impact of any weaknesses. Gradually you became self-sufficient, kind and gentle, concerned about others, soft-spoken and quietly independent. You learned to keep your own counsel, lend a hand when needed and see people with your heart but evaluate situations with your mind. Intuitively I cautioned you against violence, alcohol, drugs, meaningless pursuits, dysfunctional and negative people. In the process of helping to form who you were and how you perceived the world, I became a better person. You became the man that every Mother wants her son to be: strong, self-sufficient, kind, loving, balanced, mature and accomplished.

You are my son. And while we no longer inhabit the same plane, the wonders and joy of our time together on this earth will sustain me always. While I live there will always be silent tears of overwhelming sadness, but these are tempered by the wonderful memories we shared. In my heart I hear your wishes for a Happy Mother's Day.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF, Katy, TX



## *A Mother's Love*

*A mother's love for her child may begin  
with the very dream of becoming a mother...  
A mother's love for her child may begin  
with the thought of maybe expecting the news...  
A mother's love for her child may begin  
with the verification of her expectations...  
A mother's love for her child may begin  
with the affirmation that the child lives within her...  
A mother's love for her child may begin  
with her first sight of the new life that  
she has delivered into the world...  
A mother's love for her child may begin...  
But it may never end...  
Not even death can steal away a mother's love for her child  
A mother's love for her child knows no end!*

Diana M. Rohrbaugh  
TCF Anne Arundel County, MD



## *Mother's Day Again*

*It is Mother's Day again.  
The day that my first-born son became an angel.  
Time for remembering Mothers  
Time to remember their love for their children  
For me it is a reminder of the day you became an angel  
And a piece of my heart went with you  
Yes, it is Mother's Day again.*

*It is Mother's Day again.  
Time for me to put on my happy face  
Time to celebrate me  
Time to enjoy my daughter  
Tell her how much I love her  
Also, time for me to remember  
My beautiful son who has gone too soon  
Pray he knows how much I love him  
Yes, it is Mother's Day again.*

*It is Mother's Day again  
I will remember the good times with Kevin  
I will remember his smiles  
I will remember his hugs  
I will remember his firsts  
but I will remember most of all  
His love for me, his sister and his daddy.  
So yes, it is Mother's Day again.*

Kathie Kelly  
TCF Fredericksburg, VA

## *Chasing Butterflies*

*So many times I wonder now  
How will I make it through?  
As years go flitting by me  
Taking memories of you*

*Elusive, fragile, here and there  
I chase and cast my net  
Tiny pieces of our long agos  
I fear I might forget*

*Like a thousand butterflies  
So many, yet too few  
Each one a treasured moment  
Each one a part of you*

*Time may bring me closer  
To the day I see your smile  
But time can be my enemy  
Stealing from me all the while*

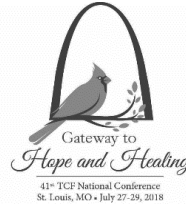
*So I will chase each memory  
Seen through this Mother's eyes  
Until I'm with you once again  
I'll be chasing butterflies*

Donna Gerrior  
TCF Pasco County, FL



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

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION IS OPEN:



The 41st TCF National Conference will be held in St. Louis, Missouri on July 27-29, 2018. “Gateway to Hope and Healing” is the theme of this year’s event. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. **Conference registration is open. The conference schedule, workshop details, conference hotel information and registration are available online at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).**

*Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience filled with uplifting workshops, meaningful interaction with grieving families from all over the world, banquets, an especially supportive sibling program and much more, all culminating in the meaningful ‘Walk to Remember’ on the final morning.*

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### A Moving Experience

We are sorting through and packing up for a move. It’s worse than your usual move from one home of 10 years to another; the house we live in now is the last one we shared with our son, Aaron. We are sorting through and packing up memories, along with the tools, dishes, and books.

I have heard other bereaved parents talk about moving after their child died. For some, it was too painful to stay in a house that held so many images. They spoke of not being able to get away from the sorrow, of running into the pain every time they walked through the door. We never felt that way about our home. This was a place Aaron loved, and we have been very happy here—the last earthly house that Aaron knew.

I know that we will be happy in our new home as well—but *that* house won’t hold a breath of him, as this one does. Now, I can walk out onto the patio and still see him in my mind’s eye, drifting across the pool on a raft. I can easily imagine him coming out of his bedroom door, calling “*Mom . . .*” as he so often did. The new house won’t have any history with Aaron, and so there is a feeling of loss in leaving this old place.

I know that Aaron goes where I go; he is a part of me always and forever. Nonetheless, I will miss walking familiar streets where once he walked. I will miss the feeling of connection as I lie on the side of the hill at the park and watch the clouds drift by. I will miss the scent of his closet and the view from his window. There are stories in these rooms and this neighborhood, stories woven from the fabric of my son’s life. I may carry the stories with me, but I am leaving behind the props.

We have packed up his baby book, the special school projects, and the box of cards we received when he died. Hannah still

has his treasured rocks in her room, and the boxes of comic books so carefully preserved and alphabetized are ready for transport.

But how do you pack up his passion for life? I know what to do about *things* I can hold in my hands; what I want to know is – how am I to carry his heart?

I’ve had a vision of these rooms, empty of all our things: I am doing one last walk through, taking one last look, saying one final goodbye. It is a scene that brings with it a gentle sorrow, and though I know we are moving forward and that all is well, in my heart there is a sense that I am somehow leaving Aaron behind. It makes me think back to those first months when I could not leave the house, even overnight. I told Paul, *I know this sounds crazy, but I feel that if I leave I might come home and find a note on the door that says: “Hi, Mom! Sorry I missed you. Catch you later. Love, Aaron.”*

Six years later, I am not anxious about leaving home; I don’t worry that I might miss a visit. The shock and disbelief of early grief has passed away and the reality of Aaron’s death has settled on my soul. Though I know that I will never again see my son walk through the door, I also know that I know—I will never leave Aaron behind. He goes where I go. Still, I will be leaving a piece of my heart in the old house. Should you visit, listen for the gentle beat. You might sense its rhythm somewhere about—gazing out a tree-shaded window, lingering over a bloom in the garden, or drifting gently across the sky. And you will know that a house holds more than the stuff of memories. A house can hold a heart.

Frankie Wilford  
TCF Carrollton-Farmers Branch, TX

## **CHAPTER INFORMATION**

### **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.

### **What is the Yellow Slip?**

Please return your yellow renewal slip. After a year on the newsletter mailing list, those names that were added in that month of a previous year, may receive a yellow half-sheet asking that their subscription be renewed. This is simply to keep our mailing list and the information in it current. If you do not send the yellow slip back, we must assume that you no longer want the newsletter.

Although you are given an opportunity to make a voluntary donation, there is no cost involved in your subscription. The newsletter is our gift to you for as long as you wish to receive it. You may request that your name be returned to the active list at any time simply by calling 615-356-4TCF (4823).

### **Religion and TCF**

The Principles of The Compassionate Friends state that TCF reaches out to all bereaved parents across the artificial barriers of religion, race, economic class, or ethnic group. Further, TCF espouses no specific religious or philosophical ideology. Despite our nondenominational status, many writers indicate that they have found comfort in their faith, and some have shared their anger and loss of faith. The opinions and beliefs expressed in letters, articles and poetry are those of the contributors.

### **Newsletter Deadline**

In order to meet printing deadlines, all donations and original poems or articles must be received by the meeting day of the preceding month to be published in the next issue of the TCF Nashville newsletter. All donations and submissions are greatly appreciated.



## **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).

### **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.

### **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](http://sharingmiddletn.org). Their informative brochure is found under "Contact Us."

### **Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents**

For general information about Grief Support Services at Alive Hospice, please call the main number: [615 963-4732](tel:6159634732) or email [griefsupport@alivehospice.org](mailto:griefsupport@alivehospice.org). Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at 615-346-8554. Contact John Baker at 615-346-8364 for bereaved parent support or individual counseling.

### **Other TCF Chapters**

There are several other chapters of The Compassionate Friends you might want to know about. Anytime you are in their vicinity or feel the need to talk with other bereaved parents, feel free to attend their meetings. Also, when you personally know a newly bereaved family in one of these towns, please call the chapter number and give them the information so they can make contact with the family. To locate a chapter, you may call the TCF National Office at 1-877 969-0010, or go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on chapter locator.

# *The Compassionate Friends*

**P.O. Box 50833  
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**May 2018**

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## **Shrines**

People have amassed shrines for years. In Prague there is a wall dedicated to John Lennon; flowers and photos adorn the gates of Princess Diana's home in London; an eternal flame shines for the unknown soldier; Shinto shrines celebrate wind, rain, mountains, trees and rivers; we bury our dead and mark the grave with a headstone... we want a marker of those things valuable and important to us. That is how we feel about our dead children; we don't want our children to be forgotten, we must remember them, others must remember them.

My son's boots are my shrine to him.

His boots are the only thing left from his accident. They sit there, worn but whole, and I see him, I think of him, I remember him, I love him. His boots do that for me...they create an instant recall of him, his person, his character, his life.

Don't tell me to put the boots away, don't tell me that it is unhealthy to hold on to things that recall his memory...it is the purpose of the shrine, and yes, I want to remember my son. I want you to remember my son. He had value. He had purpose. He was good and right...recall that gift every time you see his boots. Revel in his glory, laugh with him, smile with him, embrace his life and take him with you, his memory is valuable, he is valuable. Say his name.

Marian Lambeth  
TCF Tallahassee, FL