

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

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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.

November 12 Program:

Facing the Holidays:

Traditions vs. Self-Care

Anticipation of the year-end holidays can be a traumatic time following the loss of a child. So, we are offering an expanded version of our October program, "Handling the Holidays". Much of the focus of these holidays is on children, family, and giving, and many times one's sense of loss is so overwhelming that the joy of the season is lost. Some parents have said, "I would just rather do without the holidays, but I don't have that option." Others have said, "I just want some way to survive the holidays."

Join us at 3:00 for this discussion on tips for handling what can be a very difficult time of the year for grieving parents. Our regular sharing groups will follow.



The 2023 Candlelight Memorial Service will be Sunday, December 10 at 3:00 p.m. at Citipointe Church, 7533 Lords Chapel Drive, Nashville 37211.

The location is off Nolensville Road (Highway 31A) about a mile south of the intersection of Bell Road (Old Hickory Boulevard) and Nolensville Road.

Candlelight Memorial Service Scheduled for December 10

This is a very moving and powerful program. All family members, siblings and friends are invited to join us. Following the service, we invite you to remain for fellowship and refreshments. If you wish, you may bring a dessert, but other finger foods and drinks will be provided.

It is important that **everyone** wishing to have their child's photo in the memorial service follow very carefully the instructions on page 6 of this newsletter.

**PHOTO SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Friday, December 1.**

We would like for all of you to enjoy this opportunity to see your child on the big screen! If you have not previously attended the candlelight memorial service, we encourage you to do so.

**Information and Photo Submission
Form are on Page 7.**

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM--**In the month of their births**

Christopher William Black November 23 Son of Ray and Linda Black	Taylor Christian Brewer November 2 Son of Justin and Tracy Brewer Grandson of Don and Sherry Eakes and Penny Waters	Eric DeWayne Brown November 18 Son of Sharon Brown	John Roaten Cheadle, III (Ro) November 29 Son of John R. and Nancy Cheadle
James Austin Garcia (Austin) November 30 Son of Danny and Sherri Garcia	Tucker Jordan Griffin (T.J.) November 9 Son of Jason and Angela Griffin	Jacob Alexander Griffin November 5 Son of Karen Griffin	Max Hillman Harris November 10 Son of Becky Harris Brother of Will Harris
Cole Hansen Kilgore November 14 Son of Henry and Kathy Beeler Nephew of Kacey Gant	Cami Leigh Parrish November 19 Daughter of Debbie Hampton	Mark Elliott Reischman November 2 Son of Bill and Jean Reischman	Jenna Leann Ruddy November 11 Daughter of Janet Riggan
Shane Tanner Scruggs November 7 Son of Don and Joan Johnson; James and Lisa Scruggs	Joe Vick (Joey) November 6 Son of Kay Bogle Brother of Angie Hoffman		Lindsay Ware November 16 Daughter of Scott Ware

**And in the month of their deaths**

Rosemary Aud November 15 Daughter of Stephen and Trish Aud	Taylor Nicole Barton November 25 Daughter of Alan Barton and Stella Stephens	Jacob Sylvester Bell November 30 Son of Mike Bell and Michelle Dodrill	Daniel Matthew Bledsoe (Matt) November 11 Son of Dan and Barbara Bledsoe Brother of Jason and Kaci
Stephen Joseph Donlon November 24 Son of Pat and Ellen Donlon Brother of Katy, David, John, and Elizabeth	Jayce Montez Easley (Bucky) November 11 Son of Heather Jarrett	James Wesley Evans (Snowman) November 24 Son of Brenda L. Nelson Brother of Heather Evans	Stephen Christopher Gould November 18 Son of Herb and Susan Gould
Rylee Grace Honeycutt (Roo) November 18 Daughter of Anthony and Magen Honeycutt	Morgan Langham November 30 Daughter of Mark and Gini Langham		Cami Leigh Parrish November 19 Daughter of Debbie Hampton

GIFTS OF LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE

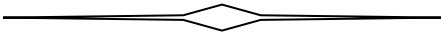
We are deeply grateful for the voluntary gifts of love that make it possible for The Compassionate Friends to offer comfort to those families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

*Don and Sherry Eakes
in Loving Memory of their grandson,
Taylor Christian Brewer,
Son of Justin and Tracy Brewer*

*Thanks to you, Kroger Shoppers,
we received a gift of \$124.14
from the
Kroger Plus Community Rewards Program*

Phone Friends	
We have all experienced the pain of losing a child. We understand and would like to listen. If you can't reach one of us, feel free to call another person on this list.	
Accidental Death	Mike and Paula Childers 615-294-4959
AIDS	Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
Illness	David and Peggy Gibson 615-308-2520 or 615-504-4307
Infant	Jayne Head 615-264-8184
SIDS	Kris Thompson 931-486-9088
Suicide	Ron Henson 615-789-3613
Alcohol/Drug Overdose	Ed Pyle 615-712-3245

Each month, Price Printing, 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.



Life

*What is a Life?
To a parent - a life is a miracle.
A gift underserved but deeply loved.

To the world - a life means nothing, and yet everything.
The world does not grieve a single lost one,
But each of us grieve when we suffer one lost.

To each one of us,
Life is - everything.
Not ours to keep, but ours to spend as we will.
For good.
For evil.
To spread hope, or destruction.
To shine or fade away.
Not asked for, not earned, a chance.
It's all you've got,
So livelikeyoumeanit.*

Stephen Aud
TCF, Nashville, TN

Hope

*My heart has been broken.
My soul has been crushed.
My mind has gone to depths I never knew existed.
Places where only God,
In His most infinite Love, could understand.

And even He could not console me at times.
But I am here on earth,
For whatever reason I still do not know:

And I have hope that, in time,
God will show me the way
And give rhyme to my reason.
So I wait in hope for a future
And a new beginning.*

Kathleen Leeper
TCF Valley Forge, PA



Come back. Even as a shadow, even as a dream.
Euripides

Thankful Versus Thankless

This is the time of the year when many bereaved parents start saying out loud what newly bereaved parents have been thinking for weeks and weeks—"I really am dreading the holidays." And why not? When your grief is so new, you haven't had the necessary time to accept life as it is for you now.

On the other hand, there are those of us who have had that necessary time and proper support, who are able to observe the holidays in a less painful way. We have kept some of those old traditions that warm our hearts and thrown out those that are either too painful or meaningless now. We have created a life that doesn't include someone who was a vital part of who and what we were. We're different now, doing different things, because losing a child forces you into that position if you are to survive in an emotionally healthy way.

The words thankful and thankless follow one another in my dictionary; so close together in a book, yet so far apart in meaning. When you think about it, the difference between the two words is full and less. Though those of us who have had more time do, like the more newly bereaved, have less in the

way of family, our lives still do have a fullness because we have learned to be thankful and appreciate that which we have left in the way of people and memories—more so than we ever thought possible.

As you approach this Thanksgiving, if you haven't yet been able to make your adjustment, I hope you will feel what you must, for now, because whatever you are feeling is okay. It isn't until you have reached the place in your grief where the ability to make good choices returns to your life that you can make some important changes in how you approach the holidays.

I hope the transition from thankless to thankful will be soon in coming for you, for that will mean some peace has returned to your life. Above all, I do wish you peace during this holiday season. I wish you more of the same in the new year.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA



Thanks

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say: "There is a group in town that might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."

Thanks to the mother who went to that first meeting knowing it would really hurt to talk — and talked.

Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back — but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help."

Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies — for her "Compassionate Friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people — who became a facilitator.

Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men — and didn't say he was sorry.

Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know — next month.

John DeBoer
TCF Greater Omaha, NE

Sorrow is like a precious treasure...

...shown only to friends.



African Proverb

A Circle of Stars

I do “phantom basketball” at the Y now, just glancing out of the corner of my eye into the gym where the boys play. I pass by there on my way upstairs to the women’s locker room and catch a glimpse of some long-legged, dark-haired boy loping down the court, or wiping sweat from his brow onto his shoulder, or a boy in baggy shorts and white tee shirt, and I pretend. It’s Jason. I recall all those years of driving back and forth to basketball practice, putting up the goal in our backyard, Saturday morning church league games and his lanky way of running down the court, the whop of the dribble. It is so hard to lose them so beautiful, just on the cusp of manhood, full of energy and life.

Then, last spring, I noticed there were new renters next door, but I hadn’t seen them yet. I had the back door open, cleaning house, and heard that sound—the whop of a basketball hitting blacktop. My heart skipped a beat. I went outside and there were my new next-door neighbors, a gaggle of college boys from Belmont and Lipscomb shooting baskets and shouting epithets at each other, hair and sweat flying. It was a bittersweet moment. The floodgates of yearning opened over me and I started to cry. And I knew right away what I had to do. I went inside and got out the mixer—chocolate chip cookies! I left them on the back porch next door without so much as a note.

Jason will always be my handsome dark-haired prince loping down the court with the ball, jumping for that basket. Only, for him, while he was still so young and strong that no one knew how far he could reach, the hoop turned into a circle of stars, and Jason reached through it, forever to touch the face of God.



Sue Kite Mather
TCF, Nashville, TN

I Will Love You

*As long as I can dream,
As long as I can think,
As long as I have a memory...
I will love you.*

*As long as I have eyes to see
and ears to hear
and lips to speak...
I will love you.*

*As long as I have a heart to feel,
A soul stirring within me,
An imagination to hold you...
I will love you.*

*As long as there is time,
As long as there is love,
As long as I have a breath
to speak your name...
I will love you.*

Because I love you more than anything in all the world.

Daniel Haughian
TCF, Massillon, OH

Why?

When my sister died, I asked what every surviving sibling most likely asks himself: Why? For quite a while this question gave me something to strive for, a purpose to fight for. But what I soon realized was that there was no use in asking. That question is irrelevant; the point is moot. It no longer matters why she died. The fact remains that she died, and there is nothing I can do to change that, including finding the answer to “why?” There is no such answer.

If perchance God would speak to me, would that change anything? If he would say, “Trey, I took your sister because I want her up here in Heaven,” what would that mean to me? I still lost her. I would still question God’s decision. What it comes down to, however, and although it is hard, we who have lost a sibling must accept the fact that they are now gone. Put aside the fact of why or how they died, and remember that they once lived and they will always be alive in your memory and heart. Bypass the question of why they died, and instead concentrate on how we should now live. Remember, they would have wanted it that way.

Trey Martin
TCF, Hardin County, OH
From *This Healing Journey—An Anthology for Bereaved Siblings*



Some Suggestions for Handling the Holidays

Be Intentional About How You Plan Your Holiday

- Together, as a family, examine the events and tasks of the celebration and ask the following questions:
- Do we really enjoy doing this? Is it done out of habit, free choice, or obligation?
- Is this a task that can be shared?
- Would the holiday be the same without it?

Decide What You Can Handle Comfortably

- Whether we are open to talk about our child.
- Whether we feel able to send holiday cards this year.
- Whether we can handle the responsibility of the family dinner, holiday parties, etc., or if we wish someone else to take over some of the traditions this year.
- Whether we will stay at home for the holidays or choose a different environment.
- Shopping is definitely easier if you make the entire list out ahead of time. Then, when one of the “good days” comes along, you can get your shopping done quickly and with less confusion. Shopping online or from catalogs can also help.

Don't Be Afraid to Make Changes. It Can Really Make Things Less Painful

- Let the children take over decorating the tree or invite friends to help.
- Open presents the night before the holiday instead of in the morning.
- Have dinner at a different time. Change the seating arrangement.
- Burn a special candle to quietly include your absent son or daughter.

Our Greatest Comfort May Come in Doing Something for Others

- Giving a gift in memory of our child to a meaningful charity.
- Adopting a needy family for the holidays.
- Inviting a guest (foreign student, senior citizen, someone who would otherwise be alone) to share the festivities.

Evaluate Your Coping Plans

- Do your plans isolate you from those who love and support you best?
- Do your plans allow for meaningful expression and celebration of what the particular holiday means for you?

Let Your Plans and Limits Be Known

- Write or phone family and friends to let them know of any intended changes.
- Share with friends and family how you plan to approach the holiday and how they can best help you.

Don't Be Afraid to Experience Enjoyment

- Enjoyment, laughter, and pleasure are not experiences in which you abandon your lost child. You have not forgotten him/her. Your child would not want you to be forever sad; you need not feel guilty over any enjoyment you may experience.
- Give yourself and members of your family permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holiday.

Finally, as you seek to make sensible plans, remember to make them firm enough to support you, but flexible enough to leave you some freedom. Most important, take time in your plans...to love and let yourself be loved — for this is the real gift of the holiday season.



"The only good that can come from the death of your child is the person you become for the rest of your life."

Rich Edler
TCF South Bay CA



Holiday Gifts for Children Needed

Every year for the past 16 years TCF Nashville families have generously donated toys and gifts to the children of Youth Villages in Middle Tennessee that works with children who are not living at home and are in foster care for the holidays. The children range in age from 6 to 18. For many of these children, these will be the only gifts they receive this holiday season. **If you would like to help this year, you may participate by bringing new UNWRAPPED gifts to The Compassionate Friends December 10 Candlelight Memorial Service. Below is a list of the most requested items.**

Suggested gifts include:

Art Supplies and Craft Kits	Board Games (Monopoly, Life, Mouse Trap, Jenga, Uno etc.)	Nail Kits and Polish
DVD's (rated G, PG or PG-13)	Barbie Dolls & Accessories for Barbie	Action Figures / Superheroes Toys
Xbox / Play Station Games (Teen Rated)	Matchbox or Hot Wheels car sets	Jewelry and Hair Accessories
Remote Control Cars, Trucks or Planes	Lego Sets	Sports Equipment, Balls etc.
Journals, gel pens		Young Adult Books

Here are alternative ways to give to Youth Villages if you prefer not to bring a gift to the Candlelight Memorial Service:

- Make a monetary donation of any amount online by going to the website for Youth Villages Middle Tennessee.
- Be a Holiday Hero by signing up to sponsor a specific child. As a Hero you will receive a specific child's wish list (ages newborn to 23), shop for their gifts and return them unwrapped to Youth Villages' Nashville collection site. The amount to be spent on each child is \$100 to \$150. To be a Holiday Hero to a child in need, please contact Greg Schott at (615) 250-7262 or email greg.schott@youthvillages.org.
- Purchase gifts from the suggestions above to be given to children who come into Youth Villages programs during the last two weeks before Christmas. Drop off your gifts in person at 301 Plus Park Blvd, Suite 110, Nashville, TN 37217.



CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 10, 2023

Regardless of past participation, **EVERY FAMILY WISHING TO TAKE PART IN THE MEMORIAL SERVICE MUST RETURN THIS FORM.**

We need to receive it no later than Friday, December 1.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND FORMS OR PHOTOS TO THE TCF P. O. BOX—it is important that they go directly to Lamar.

MAIL TO:
Lamar Bradley
4772 Cascade Drive
Old Hickory, TN 37138
 or

You may e-mail your child's photo to lamar.bradley@comcast.net
Be sure to include your child's name in the e-mail.

Instructions: A computerized process (Power Point) is used to display our children's pictures on the big screen. An original 5x7 photo (no copies, please) may be used. If a 5x7 is not available, any size will do; however, the 5x7 or larger is easier to process.

The original photo will be returned to you at the memorial service while the image will be stored for use next year.

Place a sticky note on the back of the photo with the child's name clearly printed. Do not write on the photo itself.

Child's name: _____
Please print the name as you wish it to be read at the service along with phonetic pronunciation, if needed.

_____ I will attend and am enclosing an original photo of my child. (First time in the memorial service.)

_____ I will attend and am enclosing a different photo of my child to be used in place of the photo you have from last year's service.

_____ I will attend and would like for you to use the photo you have saved from last year.

_____ I will attend and would like for my child's name to be called and I'll light a candle, but I will not have a picture shown.

Your name _____ Phone _____

The Compassionate Friends

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

P.O. BOX 8283

Hermitage, TN

37076

Return Service
Requested



November 2023

From the pen of our TCF Poet Laureate, Sascha Wagner:

*Give yourself permission to grieve—
do not deny any feelings that cry from within.
Grief, more than any other emotion,
lets you know who you are.
And some day “The truth shall set ye free?”
And some day you may even find
“The peace that passeth all understanding.”*

*Bittersweet parents we are,
loving and giving still.
We render what tears
grief demands—
until, out of grieving darkness,
we come to celebrate
our children’s life,
and our own.*

