

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Nashville Website: 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.

October 8 Program:

Handling the Holidays

End of the year Holidays can be a traumatic time following the loss of a child. 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. The stores' display of holiday décor earlier each year can trigger anxiety of holiday dread far in advance of the actual holidays.

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."

So, how do grieving parents cope with the holidays? Join us at 3:00 for a panel discussion on tips for handling what can be a very difficult time of the year for grieving parents and stay for our small sharing groups after the program.



Tips from our September program:

Our September Suicide Awareness and Prevention program was beneficial to all who attended and inspired us to share the new Suicide Hotline number: **988**. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) offers 24/7 call, text and chat (www.988lifeline.org) access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

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.

It is important that **everyone** wishing to have their child's photo in the memorial service follow very carefully the instructions on page 3 of this newsletter.

THERE IS A SUBMISSION DEADLINE THAT MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.

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 3.**

**Please see the November Newsletter
for location.**

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

Rosemary Aud
October 24
Daughter of
Stephen and Trish Aud

Jacob Sylvester Bell
October 30
Son of Mike Bell
and Michelle Dodrill

**Preston Chauncey
Birdsong**
October 13
Son of
Preston and Janice Birdsong

Roy James Davies
October 19
Son of
Roy and Barbara Davies

Roy Paul Ellis
October 5
Son of
April Ellis

Laura Paige Gibson
October 16
Daughter of
David and Peggy Gibson
Sister of Kay and Claire

Joshua Hovies
October 19
Son of
Alicia Hovies

**James Thomas King
(J.T.)**
October 18
Son of
Tom and Jere King

**Benjamin Bedell
Koomen
(Ben)**
October 9
Son of
John and Betsy Koomen

Jacob Allen Mathis
October 30
Son of
Mark and Debora Mathis

Madison Allen Mays
October 31
Son of
Allen and Rachel Mays
Grandson of
Roy and Carole Renfro

Zi Daniel Rayne
October 17
Son of
Rolin and Shannon Rayne

Jason William Rice
October 26
Son of
Rosemarie Moore

**And in the month of their deaths**

Zackery Tyler Lewis Allen
October 4
Son of
Stephanie Willis

Emily Michelle Childers
October 31
Daughter of
Michael and Paula
Childers
Sister of Sarah and Julie

Katara Dillard
October 2
Granddaughter of
Stacy Atkins

Jon Ashley Duncan
October 6
Son of
Mike and Kay Duncan
Brother of Jamie

Caroline Elizabeth Enright
October 16
Daughter of
Patrick and Stephanie Enright

**Brittany Marie
Hardesty**
October 28
Daughter of
Theresa Hardesty Heimer

Chase Lee Harris
October 25
Son of
Kirk and Shayne
Harris and Paul and
Stacey Fish

James Edwin Hinesley
October 7
Son of
Steven and Sue Hinesley

Alexander Nicholas Parkes
October 15
Son of
Gary Parkes

John Cole Neuhoff
October 14
Son of John Neuhoff and
Martha Houston

Dwayne Moore
October 9
Son of
Clara McClain

Matthew H. Woods
October 22
Son of
Vaughn and Mickie Woods

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*

*Jerry and Loretta Winters
in Loving Memory
of their son,
Don Bruce Winters*

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, 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.



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** _____

Autumn Tears

We look back on September and we realize that somehow we made it through those dreaded first days of school. Whether it was the anticipation or the actual days that were the worst, we survived. We used our faith, our support systems or just plain hard work and made it over yet another hurdle. We watched small children heading for their first day of kindergarten, listened to excited teenagers talk of high school and heard stories of children leaving home to attend post-secondary school. Somehow, we rode the waves of grief and found ourselves ashore again.

As these waves subside new ones will build as we head into the holidays that speak of, and to, children. Halloween will soon approach and for some, painful memories. Thanksgiving arrives to exemplify family and togetherness and Christmas looms ahead. These special days are forever reminders of our loss—the costumes we'll never sew, the empty chair at turkey dinner, the fun and magic we'll never share with someone we love. Forever reminders that our child has died.

To survive when these events and anniversary days come around, let's find time to think of the good memories we have—the announcement of our long-awaited pregnancy at Thanksgiving dinner, the look of excitement on our son's first Halloween night, the vision of our daughter helping prepare the turkey dinner. These holidays will always be reminders that our child died. Let us also make them reminders that our child lived! They left us memories more precious than any others to hold and celebrate!

Penny Young
TCF Powell River, British Columbia

My Witch and My Angel

For Zoë, Halloween is just about as good as it gets. Not much in my daughter's world beats candy, costumes, friends, make-up, and staying up late even on a school night. Life at age six can be gloriously simple.

But I don't know much of what my son Max thought of Halloween. When he died at age two, he only had one real "trick-or-treat" to his credit. That year I dressed him in a pumpkin costume and we traipsed to a few neighbors. I took far too many pictures. Max was a fiend for sweets and with the candy ration lifted for the evening, he had to be living well.

I imagine that year would have been his last dressed as a mommy-pleasing pumpkin. At three or four I knew he would demand Ninja or pirate costumes; I would have laughingly bought them and maybe even the plastic sword. I would have let him paint grotesque stitches across his nose and wear fangs that glowed in the dark.

Instead, this is Zoë's year to cast aside the girly version of Max's pumpkin cap. The beloved pink princess frills and red nail polish are being exchanged for a witch hat and black glue-on fingernails sharpened into talons. For the first time, she wants to be Scary and Ugly. With mahogany lipstick and smoky eyes, she will fly out the door in less than a month to cross one more threshold that her brother did not.

I can see the evening now. As I assemble face paints on the counter, I will take a deep breath—the same one I take every year at every holiday and milestone. With my unsteady hand I will design witchy warts and create wrinkles on Zoë's perfect face. I will declare her the Scariest and Ugliest of All.

But as I help my little witch into her costume, I know my eyes will fill with tears. I will think about the years that were supposed to be: a young boy as Dracula, a 13-year-old teen in

baggy clothes escorting his little witch-sister down the block. Who would he be now, the toddler we knew, the boy we lost? What would our life be like if the scary things were still just make-believe?

Zoë will see my tears, but she won't be alarmed: in our family's emotional lexicon, sad and happy often go together and crying is as OK as laughing. She will ask me why I'm sad and I will tell her the truth: I am thinking about Max and wishing he could be here.

And although she is now the mean and fierce Witch Zoë, she will nod her head with understanding. Her plastic nails will lightly graze my arm as she reaches to pat me. Suddenly the frown on her face will disappear and she repeats what has become her annual Halloween revelation: "Mommy, it's OK. Don't forget that Max can go 'trick-or-treat' as an angel." She describes a glittering figure, luminous wings aflutter, giant treat bag at the ready. I smile at the idea and the moment passes.

Later, I light the candle in the pumpkin and watch Zoë skip next door to show off her costume. She heads up the sidewalk, stopping halfway to turn and wave to me. She makes her scariest face and yells, "Mom—take my picture!" I raise my camera and look through the viewfinder. As the flash glows briefly in the dusk, I see a beautiful angel standing in the shadows beside her. But this angel doesn't wear white and his wings have been clipped. I am sure he never had a golden halo. He is a small chubby boy with a jack-o-lantern face on his tummy and chocolate on his fingers and he is having a really great Halloween.



Just like his sister.

Mary Clark
TCF, Sugar Land, TX

Grief and Marriage

When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for twenty years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise.

We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge. I felt like a time bomb about to explode. I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate.

This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger overwhelmed me as I bitterly realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. * Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings, and then I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of others who had lost children permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique; many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulties after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm. We weren't going crazy; and just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart. My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband. Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

Much later, the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends—if I had only asked for it—saddened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help. I will be forever grateful to The Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms.

We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other smoothed over many rough moments. Time spent alone together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try harder. Some days, we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

As I look back, I see that ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, both of you will inevitably be changed from the experience of losing a child. Back then, understanding these simple facts would have immeasurably helped us.

Pat Retsloff
TCF, Oshkosh, WI

**Editor's note: A survey conducted by the TCF national organization in 1999 found that the divorce rate among bereaved parents is no higher than that of the general population.*



Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.

From *A Grief Observed*
by C. S. Lewis

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.

The Awakening

*One day I awoke
to find that you were gone
Not to the store
Not to school
Away
Forever*

*Now I'm awake
As never before
To pain
To love
To the unbearable absence of you*

*Oh that I might sleep
But now ... I am awake*

Stephen Aud
TCF, Nashville, TN

Midnight Gifts

*The grief
that takes
your sleep away
at midnight,

it brings you hurt.
It also brings you love.*

Sascha



Suicide

*Once you were rich with life,
you were self-confident
and filled with beauty.*

*Until a darkness came
to seize your mind,
a force from out of silence,
an ache without a reason,
a pain without a name.*

*What was this darkness that
would not be conquered?
What force,
what reason,
what pain without a name
would use your hands
to take your life away?*

*Once you were rich with life,
you were self-confident
and filled with beauty.
Now we are left alone
without an answer.*

Sascha

The Last Smile

Once upon a time there was a young boy who smiled all the time. When he was at school, he smiled when he played and he smiled when he worked. He smiled so much that one of the teachers nicknamed him “Smiley.” He continued to smile as he went through life attending college, marrying the woman of his dreams, watching the wonder of two new lives entering into this world.

One day he stopped smiling. His five-year-old Prince and eight-year-old Princess had both died in an auto accident. He couldn’t sleep, he couldn’t think, and worst of all, he couldn’t smile. Life continued on but the bereaved father remained in shock, unable to believe that the two children who had given him so much reason to smile had been taken from him.

As a year passed, the shock started to wear off and the father found the strength to work his way through the grief process. His wife gave birth to a new child—a son—and the father was there for the birth. Another year passed and he was blessed with another child—this time, a girl. “It’s still so hard to smile,” he thought. “I love these children so much, but so many people think they erase the pain that I feel in my heart. Nothing can make the world right again.” He watched as his new children started to grow. He observed as his new son and daughter learned to do the things his older children had done. There were so many similarities. The boy could give you a look with his eyes that sure reminded you of his brother. The daughter resembled her older sister so much that people would look at their pictures from the same age and swear they were the same person.

They continued to grow. A short while ago the new son turned two and the daughter celebrated her first birthday. The pain of losing his older children will always be there with him—but you know what happened?

The father started to smile again—and not just on the outside, but also on the inside. And you know what—it feels good! I know. I’m that person. I’m the one who thought he would never smile again!

Wayne Loder
TCF, Lake Area, MI

CHAPTER INFORMATION

Are you Moving?

Each time a newsletter is returned to us with an incorrect address, we pay to retrieve it in order to find out where you've moved; then we pay again to mail it back to you. This is in addition to the original bulk mail cost. It would help a great deal in both time and money if you would notify us immediately of any address change so your newsletter can reach you right away. You may call, write or email the chapter leaders or the newsletter editor. Thanks for your help.

The “Children Remembered” Listings

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 8283, Hermitage, TN 37076. 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.

How You Can Help

Most people who attend TCF meetings never heard of TCF before they lost a child, and many bereaved parents still have not heard that there is an organization that exists to help them navigate their grief journey. If you know a family in the middle Tennessee area who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you think they would benefit from finding out about TCF and possibly attending a TCF meeting, we will be happy to send you some information that you may share with them about what TCF is and what we do to support bereaved parents. If you have attended a TCF meeting, it might be helpful if you would invite them to attend their first TCF meeting with you. We also have a monthly newsletter that they can receive free of charge simply by asking for it.



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, or go to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network at TSPN.org, and you will find a list of all Tennessee SOS locations.

TCF Website —A Treasure for You

When you log onto the TCF Website at www.compassionatefriends.org you will find a wealth of information about TCF and grief—poetry and articles, chat rooms, grief in the news, other chapter Web sites and numerous other resources.

The Compassionate Friends

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**Return Service
Requested**



October 2023

May I Grieve?

Susanne DeMars
TCF, Miami, FL



*In the daytime I walk and work, and all;
But at home in the evening, I stumble and fall.
The office says, "Function, smile, get control."
But at home I can grieve to cleanse my soul.*

*Must I be two people for the rest of my life?
Can I make it through pain and struggle and strife?*

*If I could be just one person for more than one day,
My freedom to grieve would help light the way.*

*But society tells me not to be sad. They tell me,
"She's at peace now, and you should be glad."*

*When grieving the loss of a child is perceived,
How much easier it is for we the bereaved.*