

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

MAILING ADDRESS: 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. (See Mailing address above.) Park and enter at the rear of the building. We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

## September 12th Meeting:

September is designated as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. So many of our TCF families have been impacted by suicide. Whether a family member, friend, neighbor or acquaintance this type of death leaves us with guilt, stigma and so many questions.

This month we welcome speaker Steven Hinesley. Steven and Sue, along with daughters Mary and Molly, lost their son and brother, James Edwin Hinesley, to suicide in 2018. As painful as this topic is, this family has found that there is healing in helping others. The Hinesley's honor their James by educating and discussing this topic. Please join us at 3pm on Sunday September 12<sup>th</sup>.



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 615-646-1333
<b>AIDS</b> .....	Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
<b>Illness</b> .....	David and Peggy Gibson 615-356-1351
<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

Attending your first TCF meeting can be difficult. Feelings can be overwhelming. We have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Please attend two or three meetings before deciding if TCF is right for you. There are no dues or fees. If you choose, you need not speak a word at a meeting. We are an international, non-denominational group, offering support and information to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. We need not walk alone.

*We remember our children with love and gratitude. We miss their faces,  
their voices and their smiles. And we do not forget--*

*In the month of their births—*

**Glenn Thomas Allen, Jr.**  
September 2  
Son of Ann McKee  
Stepson of Wilson McKee

**Charles Michael Brown  
(Charlie)**  
September 15  
Son of  
Dan and June Brown  
Brother of Katherine

**Emily Michelle Childers**  
September 30  
Daughter of  
Michael and Paula Childers  
Sister of Sarah and Julie

**Jon Ashley Duncan**  
September 11  
Son of Mike and Kay Duncan

**Gary Lee Durichek**  
September 2  
Son of  
Jimmy and Barbara Hayes

**Andrew Morris Pack**  
September 8  
Son of  
Robert and Cassandra Pack

**Bert Rich**  
September 11  
Son of Shirley Rich-Brinegar

**Scotty Lee Rumble**  
September 11  
Son of Kimberly Rumble

**Nathan Young**  
September 19  
Son of Dana Young



*And in the month of their deaths*

**James Michael Bolton (Mikey)**  
September 11  
Son of Jim and Loretta Bolton

**Pamela Sue Chaiken**  
September 29  
Daughter of  
Lionel and Sandra Chaiken

**Kaitlyn Kimberly Cook**  
September 15  
Daughter of  
Jim Cook and Sylvia Bosma

**Darby Felts**  
September 9  
Son of Deanie Gregory  
Nephew of Jean Porch

**Tucker Jordan Griffin (T.J.)**  
September 21  
Son of  
Jason and Angela Griffin

**Christopher Miller Harris**  
September 11  
Son of  
Bill Harris and Judy Harris

**Michael Scott Jones**  
September 16  
Son of  
Warren and Donna Jones and  
Betty D. Jones  
Brother of  
David, Jennifer, and Becky

**Tanner Langford**  
September 14  
Son of Michele Langford

**William Q. Lyons**  
September 20  
Son of Lillie Lyons

**Lindsay Carole Miller**  
September 11  
Daughter of  
David and Rebecca Miller  
Granddaughter of  
Roy and Carole Renfro

**Maxim Siesov**  
September 11  
Lindsay Carole Miller's  
"Other Half"

**Timothy Elwin Spivey**  
September 15  
Son of Don and April Spivey,  
Chad and Kim Keen

**Christopher Michael Swayze**  
September 24  
Son of  
Michael Swayze and  
Carole Swayze

**Keanan Thompson**  
September 15  
Son of Chris Thompson

**Don Bruce Winters**  
September 8  
Son of Jerry and Loretta Winters

**Ryan Lee Wiseman**  
September 5  
Son of  
Roger and Deborah Wiseman



*Findings*

*The greatest comfort  
at time of grieving  
comes, quietly,  
from the love that lives  
within ourselves.*



## *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.*

*Henry and Kathy Beeler  
In loving memory of their son,  
Cole Hansen Kilgore*



*Peggy R. Mayes  
Love offering  
In loving memory of  
Roy and Taylor Davies  
Sons of Roy and Barbara Davies*

*Linda Sue Black  
In loving memory of her son,  
Christopher William Black*

*Greenbrier United  
Methodist Women  
Love offering  
In loving memory of  
Roy and Taylor Davies,  
Sons of Roy and Barbara Davies*

*Mark and Debora Mathis  
In loving memory of their son,  
Jacob Allen Mathis*

*Mike and Paula Childers  
In loving memory of their daughter,  
Emily Michelle Childers*

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

*Robert and Cassandra Pack  
In loving memory of their son,  
Andrew Morris Pack*

*Greenbrier United Methodist Church  
Congregational Love Offering  
In loving memory of  
Roy and Taylor Davies,  
Sons of Roy and Barbara Davies*

*Jerry and Loretta Winters  
In loving memory of their son,  
Don Bruce Winters*

*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.*

### *Some Special Ways to give*



\*To benefit TCF, go to the [Kroger website](#) and click on “Community Rewards”; then follow the instructions on that page. After that, when you shop at Kroger, swipe your Plus Card or key in your phone number when you check out, and Kroger will donate dollars to TCF. It’s a free and easy way to support your chapter.

If your employer supports the [United Way](#), you might have the option to “designate” your donation. Every dollar you contribute through your payroll deductions goes to the organization you designate. TCF Nashville is an approved organization with the United Way. Please consider designating your United Way donation to TCF Nashville.

**W**e are the grieving grandparents, the shepherds of our children’s and grandchildren’s lives. Our grief is two-fold and at times we feel powerless to help. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts. We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild, and we have lost a symbol of our immortality. As we walk by our child’s side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them, and when they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together. We continue to be their guardians. We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We support the new ones, which symbolize the small steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.

Susan Mackey

## A Personal Evolution Through Grief

I have been a bereaved parent now for three and half years. I have learned a few things during that time, and I have much to learn in the future. I am evolving. Evolving from what I once was—a person who had reasonable expectations of a life that included my son, his children, graduations, holidays, birthdays and special occasions. Now I have become a person who has virtually no expectations that are similar to the ones I had before my son died.

I have evolved into a more sensitive person. I know what some people are thinking before they even say the words. I feel others' joy as if it were my own. I cheer for the success of others. I feel their sorrow, their failures, their missteps. I watch children play and remember my childhood, my son's childhood and I think of the joy that is childhood. I sit for hours watching birds at our feeders, marveling at the beauty of the natural world.

I have slowed down the pace. I no longer feel the pressure to be here or there, to do this or that, to call this one or that one, to wear certain clothes, to "put on the best face" for strangers. I have liberated myself from the mundane and the materialistic. Instead, I simply feel deeply about others. I have become extremely sensitive to all that surrounds me.

I believe the loss of my child has changed me in many different ways. I see this in the attitudes of those who are in The Compassionate Friends as well. While few of us will broach no nonsense in our lives because it is meaningless compared with our experiences, we will listen intently for long periods to the weeping, hysterical cries of a newly bereaved mother. Or we will nod quietly as a parent who is far into grief has a sudden flash of sorrow that is overwhelming. We have a heightened sensitivity to others through no choice of our own. It came with the loss of our beautiful children.

I wonder about what my son would think of events that have unfolded since his death. I have come to conclusions about others that aren't, quite frankly, flattering. Yet, he had come to these conclusions before he died. While I tried to mollify his perception of the dysfunctional people with whom he was burdened, he just said, "that's how it is, Mom." And he was right. That's how it is. I have learned to accept people for what they are. If I can help, I will certainly do so. If I can't help, I accept that some things can't be changed, and some people won't change. There is no magic here. It's a simple fact of life. "That's how it is, Msom."

I volunteer more these days. I give of myself, my knowledge, any wisdom I may have acquired on life's path to others who are in need. I give of my time, my talents and my labors to those who don't ask as well as those who do. I am comfortable with this.

I have less appreciation for money than I once had. Perhaps that is the best thing to come out of this. What was I chasing? What was my son chasing? What was the point? Bigger, better, faster, farther, more, more, more. It's a shallow existence when one is so focused on the material things that one is defined by materialism. I have learned to let go of preconceptions, and in that letting go, I have been pleasantly surprised by many people.

How did I get to this place? One minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month at a time. It is a slow journey from crawling through the pits of hell in deep grief to coming back to the reality of here and now. It's as close to a near death experience as I can imagine. Instead of great epiphanies, there are moments of clarity. Instead of instant gratification, there is much work to achieve tiny steps forward. But the effort is well worth making. When I came out from the pits of hell, I realized that my reality was changed; I realized that I was a different person. I discovered that the world doesn't run on the dollar. I found that all people have a capacity for goodness, but that many will never use this capacity.

But most importantly, I discovered that after leaving the pits of hell, there is a road toward hope that is traveled by each of us. Some walk more quickly, some more slowly. But we each walk that road to hope. Hope represents a life that is tolerable once again. Hope represents the acceptance of our child's death and the acknowledgement that we will keep our children alive in our hearts for all eternity as we continue into our tomorrows. Hope is reconciling those two elements: yesterday and tomorrow.

I have learned to adjust to change, because change is inevitable. I have learned to stand up for what is right because that is our duty as human beings. I have learned much about the fears of others and even more about my own fears. I have conquered my phobias as a result of my son's death. Nothing my imagination could conjure would equal that gripping pain, the ache that hangs in my heart forever because my child has died.

But most of all, I have learned that my son was right. "That's the way it is, mom." Shortly before he died, he said he wanted to give me a copy of *Who Moved My Cheese?* He never had the opportunity. But I will read it. I have a feeling I know what it will say. Perhaps Todd gave me the plot line when he died. I'd like to think that he was subconsciously preparing me.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF, Katy, TX

"We may not be able to make the sun shine for you,  
But we can hold the umbrella."

Ann Swann TCF, Valley Forge, PA

## *I'm Sorry*

*I'm sorry, I thought I knew.  
I'm sorry you lost your child.  
Surely time will heal your hurt,  
Your suffering, your pain.*

*I'm sorry, I thought I knew.  
How deep it must hurt.  
The sadness of losing your child...  
The ache in your heart will go away.*

*"Oh, it will take time,  
You need to mourn, it is good for you."  
"I'm sorry but it **will** get better."  
"I'll be there for you."*

*I'm sorry for how long it's taking.  
I didn't know you were still grieving  
And your thoughts were consumed  
Every moment of every day.*

*I'm sorry I didn't know that  
You don't get over it.  
Time may soften the pain but  
You never completely heal.*

*I'm sorry, for now I know  
Of your true pain,  
Your true loss,  
Your true sorrow,  
For I too have lost my child.*

Stewart Levett

## *Lessons From My Son*

*After you were born  
my life became a challenge  
Seeing your poised big sister  
who did everything right  
you escaped out of your crib  
knocked the houseplants over  
decorated a closet wall  
with a bright blue marker.  
You didn't hesitate to scare me  
at eight months pregnant  
waddling like a beached whale  
with a trip to get stitches  
when you fell in the bathtub  
telling jokes and laughing  
as the doctor sewed your chin  
naming the stitches 'my itches'.*

*I can still see those bright eyes  
the excitement over a frog,  
picking green tomatoes,  
covered in birthday cake,  
drinking pool water,  
climbing a pecan tree,  
kissing a neighbor's puppy  
and running naked down the cul-de-sac.*

*From you I learned the art of patience,  
the joy of mothering a son,  
that there are never enough  
hours for cuddling and reading.  
You taught me well  
although you were so young.  
And within my heart,  
I will always hold my gratitude for you.*

Alice J. Wisler  
TCF Wake County, NC

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## *Uneasy Word*

*Hope is not an easy word for grievers  
but we, more than most others,  
need to understand  
what hope can mean for us.*

*Hope means finding the strength  
to live with grief.*

*Hope means nurturing with grace  
the joy of remembrance.*

*Hope means embracing  
with tenderness and pride  
our own life  
and the gifts left to us  
by those we have lost.*

Sascha



## Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

**I**t was nine years ago that two police officers came to our door with news that no parent expects or wants to hear. “We are sorry to inform you that your son was killed by a suspected drunk driver tonight.”

**SHOCK**—My first reaction was disbelief. How could Marc be dead? He has his whole life ahead of him. He was driving a friend home and I was waiting up for him. No, this can’t be! But it was the harsh reality that I could not fathom at that moment that caused me to slip into the nice protective overcoat named “SHOCK.” Thank goodness for the ‘shock’ factor because that is what allowed me to make the necessary arrangements for the days that were to follow.

**ANGER**—From the minute I was told that Marc had died I was angry with God. I talked, screamed and wrote in my journal about being so mad that God did not protect us under His umbrella that I thought was in place for our family. No, I do not believe that God planned for Marc to die at age nineteen or even that it was God’s will. It has taken me years to understand that we, all of us have ‘free will’ and one 42-year-old man used his ‘free will’ to drink and drive that fateful night that killed our son within one mile of our home.

**BARGAINING**—The funeral was held here and a week later we drove home to Topeka, Kansas where we had a Memorial Service for friends and family. We drove back to Georgia arriving late one night after the 14-hour drive. I unpacked a few things in the kitchen while my husband was upstairs taking a shower. When I had finished, I tried to climb the stairs, but I froze and then fell grasping at the carpet on the stairs sobbing loudly in the entryway. I cried out to God asking, “Why didn’t He take me instead?” I told him he could make the change right here, right now and no one would ever know the difference.

**PAIN**—As the shock began to wear off, I felt the intense excruciating pain. It was so deep and cut like a knife. I thought that the pain was going to kill me it hurt so bad. It felt like someone had ripped my heart out. I felt gutted and empty inside. I was surprised to learn that grief is not just about feeling sad. When you experience grief, there is a **real**

physical pain and mine was in my chest that hurt for many months every waking moment. I remember I wanted to die. More importantly I wanted to be with Marc.

**TEARS**—I did not know there were so many different ways to cry or different sounds one could make while crying. I would be sitting in my chair and begin to cry and invariably I would end up on the floor, face down in the carpet crying my eyes out. At other times, I rocked back and forth sobbing so hard and speaking gibberish that even I could not understand what I was saying. Our older son told me that I even cried in my sleep because he had heard me one night.

**DEPRESSION**—I kept the drapes drawn that first year and withdrew from the world. I was like a frightened animal huddled in a corner. My first thought upon waking each morning was that Marc was dead. I would curl up in a fetal position and cry. I had trouble concentrating, remembering things and making decisions. My mind would wander constantly. I had no energy—none—zip! I remember being so proud of myself the time that I completed mopping my kitchen floor that had taken me three days to do.

**RECONCILIATION**—I am nine years into my grief journey. For me, it has been about ‘leaning into my pain’ and stumbling around in the dark searching and trying different ways to cope since the death of our son, Marc. I read grief books, I journal, I attend bereavement seminars, I visit the cemetery and most importantly, I cry.

“DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT”—but stand toe to toe with the beast called grief! Do not be afraid of your thoughts, feelings, and pain. They are ALL normal reactions to the death of your dear child. Instead, I ask you to wrestle grief down to the ground, screaming, kicking and crying until you have made grief your equal and more manageable.

I heard a speaker say, “we did not expect to outlive our child, but we can make a choice as to whether we will become bitter or better with the time we have left.” Let’s begin to take control of our life, picking up the pieces and make the choice to be a better person. If not for ourselves, let’s do it for our children.

Susan Van Vleck  
TCF Marietta Chapter, GA



We are going to heal and grow from this experience and embrace a new future.  
Each day we can point ourselves towards the vision  
and have faith that one day  
we will get there.

Alvin Johnson Jr.  
TCF Magazine, Spring, 2000

## **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 50833, Nashville, TN 37205. We'll be glad to include them. You need to contact us only once, unless any of your information changes.

### **We Need Your Help**

If you know a family outside the immediate Nashville area who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you have access to the address (and phone number) of the parents, it would be most helpful if you would call us with that information. Our mission is to reach every bereaved family in Middle Tennessee, but we have to know about them in order to give them the support we ourselves have received. If you know the child's name, birth date, date of death and cause of death, so much the better. Our outreach chairperson will send a warm letter of sympathy and information about TCF along with appropriate brochures and articles. There will be no harassment, no phone calls, and no demands made upon the parents, and the information you provide is strictly confidential.

### **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.

## **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](tel:6152447444), 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

# *The Compassionate Friends*

**P.O. BOX 50833  
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**September 2021**

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## **Dwelling on Our Loss**

**T**o an outsider, the idea of meeting with a group of people for the purpose of discussing death, our personal experiences with the death of our children, the "grief process," etc., may seem grim if not altogether morbid. All of us who are involved in The Compassionate Friends have run into someone who has asked, "Why do you do this?" or "Why don't you just try to let it go?"

The idea of "dwelling on the loss" is always stated with negative connotations, yet dwelling on the death of a child is not something we can avoid. Indeed, "dwelling" is part of the healing process. It's how we come to grips with the questions "Why, what if...?" that uncontrollably pop up in our minds, and it is how we learn to accept the unacceptable.

Certainly, there is a wealth of information in books dealing with death and dying. Our faith, our pastors, priests, and rabbis have much to contribute to our healing. Psychologists, psychiatrists and therapy may be necessary.

The Compassionate Friends encourages grieving parents to utilize any or all of the above tools, but we also realize the value of learning to verbalize, openly, publicly, the grief and the loss we feel . . . not in the privacy of our doctor or minister's office, where we are very sheltered, but openly among people who know full well how hard it is to say, "My child is dead." We do not put any pressure on people attending our meeting to say anything, but the beautiful part of this group is that it enables you to see people who are "down the long road" a way further and to realize that you will be there in time.

Are we dwelling on our loss? Absolutely. But we are learning to dwell on it constructively, to dwell on it without guilt and without the isolation we have all felt. We learn how to reach out (in time) to others with a compassion that brings healing to others as well as to ourselves.

Philip Barker  
TCF, California