

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.

September 10 Program:

Suicide Awareness Month

Nashville TCF chapter member, Ron Henson, will speak in memory of his son, Daniel. Ron will bring to light questions and stigmas surrounding suicide with his own journey since the death of Daniel.

Our regular sharing groups will follow this program.

Please join us.



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

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller

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.
(Tommy)
September 2
Son of Ann McKee and
stepson of Wilson McKee

Coleton Harris Banniza
September 5
Son of Robert and
Tiffany Banniza

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

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
Brother of Jamie

Gary Lee Durichek
September 2
Son of Jimmy and
Barbara Hayes

Giovanni Mikhail Gilis
September 7
Son of Karrie Robb

Morgan Langham
September 27
Daughter of Mark
and Gini Langham

Andrew Morris Pack
September 8
Son of Wayne and
Kassandra 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
Sister of Stephanie

Kaitlyn Kimberly Cook
September 15
Daughter of Jim Cook
and Sylvia Bosma
Sister of Aaron and Zander

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

Elizabeth Harrison Jackson
September 24
Daughter of Bennet and Jane
Harrison

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

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

Nicholas Sebastian Russo
September 21
Son of Cynthia Russo

Philip G. Sanders
September 20
Son of Jean Porch
Nephew of Deanie Gregory

Isaac Schujahn
September 27
Son of Derek and
Linda Schujahn

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

Christopher Michael Swayze
September 24
Son of Michael 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



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*

*Greenbrier United Methodist
Women
Love Offering
In Loving Memory of
Roy James Davies
and Taylor Davies,
Sons of
Roy and Barbara Davies*

*Shirley Rich-Brinegar
In Loving Memory of her son,*

Bert Rich



*Robert and Cassandra Pack
In Loving Memory of their son,
Andrew Morris Pack*

*Greenbrier United Methodist
Church
Love Offering
In Loving Memory of
Roy James Davies
and Taylor Davies,
Sons of
Roy and Barbara Davies*

Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 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.

That Old Blue Cup

It sits there on the shelf, stained from years of holding early morning coffee. It was my son's cup and he always drank from it. Now, every morning I drink my coffee from that same blue cup. Not a thing of beauty, but certainly a thing of value. It is special, as he was special, and it makes the coffee taste special, as well. Some of the warmth that comes from that cup is from the heat of the coffee, but mostly the warmth is from the memories that it holds. Valuable things these memories. I hold them tight for they are really all I have left of my son and I cherish them, as I do that old blue cup.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

*The stars are like my memories of you;
They seem so small and frail up in the blue,
Yet they may each be greater than the sun.
And now as faint as they appear to be,
The dimmest star, the smallest memory
Are full of shining beauty, every one.*

Sascha

u

Memories

*Memories are flowers growing in the heart.
Flowers picked on happy days
That time arranges in bouquets
To warm the hearts in tender ways
By feelings they impart...*

*Memories are pictures taken through the years.
Memories are pictures taken through the years.
A happy time, a favorite place...
These pleasures time cannot erase.
They are kept as souvenirs.*

Laura Rogers
TCF, Northfield, NJ

Shards of Grief Linger after Murder

On a dreary night in December, a knock came at our door with news that would forever alter our lives. The news was that Anne, our only daughter, had been kidnapped and brutally murdered by persons or a person unknown. The shock, disbelief, anguish and anxieties over the next several months, a small piece of the grieving process, were extraordinary, and I have often wondered how we survived.

There was the extreme rage at the person who was responsible for taking Anne's life for no reason except for the pure pleasure of destroying good. But we survived.

There was the awful anger against the legal system for being so callous and insensitive to the needs of the family and friends. The wounds from Anne's death were already deep and unhealing, but listening to and reading about the insinuations and innuendoes by the lawyers made the wounds grow deeper and deeper. The impression was given the family must endure punishment for allowing our daughter to be in the wrong place. This caused a feeling of guilt. But we survived.

There was the fear that Anne would become just another statistic, and the person responsible would go unpunished. Now the fear exists that the person will be released from prison to repeat his acts of violence. I am afraid that fears are addictive and one replaces another. Perhaps the worst fear is, when your faith in God is at its lowest ebb, that you will never be able to respond to normal stimuli again and regain all that faith. All the fears are real; but so-far we have survived.

These, I suppose, are normal reactions as the result of a violent act. I believe these anxieties delay a normal (so-called) grieving period until after the culprit has been found, tried and sentenced. After these three things happened, I do know a terrible burden was lifted from our shoulders, and we could restart living our lives. Somehow, we survived.

How did we survive? After much reflecting, I firmly believe we survived by recalling the positive aspects of Anne's life and character. Each individual is endowed with certain instruments, and we hear the music of their lives long after they are gone.

Anne's instrument of love of life was a blessing, and we still can hear the melodies of her song in the night. These melodies cannot be taken away, and they are more valuable than diamonds to us.

Anne's instrument of hope for a future in which to achieve her goals and have some effect on society was the backbone of her dream. The songs of hope in work, in life and the goodness of heart cannot be destroyed by evil or circumstances. Today is gone, but we still hear the songs of hope for tomorrow. These songs of hope, heard in the night, sustain us.

Anne's instrument of faith that she would lead a productive life and achieve both her spiritual and material goals was music in her heart. The faith she had in herself, her family and her friends transmits to us, urging us to proceed with our lives. The music of her faith is still a beacon in the night.

We will not believe Anne's dreams have ended, but we believe they will find their place in the world to come. The music that was set in motion by her love, hope and faith will move, everlasting, in sweet memories forever. The wounds from the loss of a loved one cannot be healed by words or deeds. These terrible burdens are borne by each of us in our own way and, hopefully, we survive.



Bill Boggs
TCF, Atlanta, Georgia

Do You Have Children?

*How do I answer such a painful question?
Could they possibly understand
My feelings for you?
I have no one to hold.
No one to call me Mommy.
In their eyes, I am childless.
In my eyes, you are part of me.
I am not the same as before I had you.
I love you, I think of you,
Just as any mother would.
If they could only see into my heart,
They would know.
You are with me always,
Yes, I do have children...*

Joni Cross, TCF
DeSoto, TX

Grief

*It creeps up,
With searing edges, it catches me off guard.
Shoppers stare, not understanding my tears.
Its tendrils clutch at my chest, my heart pounds.
Impossible to breathe, I look for an exit.
There is none from grief.
They say, "Don't cry over spilled milk."
But Haagen Daz, your favorite
Brings tears to my eyes every time.
I make my way to the checkout line,
Determining in my mind,
Next time will be different.*

Mary Bell, TCF
Ankeny, IA

Being Public Takes Its Toll

When one is pretending, the entire body revolts.

Anais Nin

As we attempt to return to our jobs or our social life, or just to leave the house to do errands, we may feel that we must hold our heads up and keep acting brave. So we talk about things that don't interest us instead of talking about what plagues our heart and mind. We reluctantly agree to do things in which we do not have the slightest bit of interest.

All of this takes a tremendous amount of energy. But it does something else, too. Our bodies are under a great deal of stress as we work through our child's death. Trying to create and maintain an artificial front contributes to that stress. And stress, of course, manifests itself in many ways throughout the body—in headaches, rashes, insomnia, digestive disturbances, the inability to concentrate, and the impulse to fidget or be on the move. We may also have more colds and flu as well as unexplained pains in various parts of our bodies.

One of the kindest things we can do for ourselves is to behave, as much as is possible and reasonable, in accordance with our deepest needs and desires. We can greatly reduce the amount of time and effort we put into doing what only seems socially required.

I will not push myself into false situations or require myself to perform in a way that differs significantly from my truest self. I will take care of myself by not forcing certain actions or responses, regardless of the pressure put on me to do so. My self, my body comes first, and I need to remember that my body will revolt against pretending.

From *A Time to Grieve*
By Carol Staudacher

Tears

*Tears wash things clean, teach us.
They will always be a part of me,
but they no longer swamp my life.
Instead they are a soft rain,
moistening the dry spaces
so what is within me
can open
and grow.*



Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
From *Catching the Light*

Beatitudes for Those Who Comfort

Blessed are those who do not use tears to measure the true feelings of the bereaved.

Blessed are those who do not always have a quick "comforting" answer.

Blessed are those who do not make judgments on the bereaved's closeness to God by their reaction to the loss of their loved one.

Blessed are those who hear with their hearts and not with their minds.

Blessed are those who allow the bereaved enough time to heal.

Blessed are those who admit their uncomfortableness and put it aside to help the bereaved.

Blessed are those who do not give unwanted advice.

Blessed are those who continue to call, visit, and reach out when the crowd has dwindled and the wounded are left standing alone.

Blessed are those who know the worth of each person as a unique individual and do not pretend that they can be replaced or forgotten.

Blessed are those who realize the fragility of bereavement and handle it with an understanding shoulder and a loving heart.

Jackie Deems
From *Bereavement Magazine*

A Survivor's Alphabet: Empathy

Where were you when I needed you?

Ever find yourself saying words like that? Ever look for comfort at a point of greatest need and wonder why it doesn't come or help? Family and friends try their best to let us know they care. It never seems enough for just what we need at the critical moment.

What's going on? Family and friends, in expressing their sincere words of comfort and love, are relieving their own anxiety. In their attempts they often bypass our more critical need. It's like two trains passing each other in the night. They meet but quickly go their separate ways.

What we have received is sympathy which, by itself, gives temporary comfort and relief but has little long-lasting effect. It may or may not touch the point of hurting with enough impact to relieve. What is better is a sensitivity to hurt where it is and a response to that hurt that mirrors the crisis itself. What is needed is not sympathy but **empathy**.

Empathy is made up of the following:

Listening. What do you hear when you hear? Isn't it amazing how often we hear but we do not listen. You and I hear the concert while the violinist listens for pitch and tone. We tell a mechanic the engine runs "rough" while he listens and notes that something is wrong with the valves. Developing the skill of listening enables us to be more sensitive to actual need where it occurs. A cry for help may be more, or less, than what we think we hear. Someone is hurting and needs relief,

now. Being with that person we listen and are given clues of what to say and do that will bring the greatest relief. It's not for us to set the agenda; the other person in their hurt and pain does.

Understanding. By careful listening it's amazing what we can learn that we only surmised before. We learn that our agenda can be put "on hold" while the hurting person is considered as top priority. We learn that words do not always have the weight we give to them; a touch will do far more. Maybe just being there without thinking that we have to do something helps. Whatever it is, we are there for the other person and they know it; they are given just what they need at that given moment.

Value. This tacit understanding gives strength for building trust. A bond is created whose value will be noted long after the crisis is over. Friendships are developed that are long lasting. New understanding between family members creates a climate of love. Personal self-esteem is given a boost which has a value of its own. We understand others and they understand us and a network is established of support and caring.

Empathy is "LUV" actively supporting and sustaining to develop strength for times of crisis. It goes beyond in creating long lasting relationships that give personal vitality to each of us.

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One

*16 months and one more day
Since you took your life away.*

*I miss you so
But cannot find
The words to say
Nor any way
(as I look back in time)
to save you.*

*To help you see
How much you mean
To me
To us
To all the world.*

*Yes.
You were just one
And maybe not destined to be
A famous one
Or that well known.*

*But to me,
To us
You mean the world
You are someONE
We miss you so.*



Stephen Aud
TCF, Nashville, TN

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. It's a free and easy way to support TCF.

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 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 Web site —A Treasure for You

When you log onto the TCF Web site 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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September 2023

The Little Floral Trunk

I know “scrap booking” is the “in thing” right now. It’s the latest craze and people are doing it everywhere. There is so much to buy in order to make sure yours is *special* and *unique*. There are large memory books, small memory books, die cuts, colored papers and backgrounds. There is even a variety of scissors that cut little designs and ruffles to border your most precious moments.

My daughter, Neely Ann, died on September 3—the worst day of my life. She was only nineteen years old and a beautiful, sweet child. She is missed every day. With September 3 coming up I decided it would be really nice to sort out the memories in the little floral trunk in my bedroom. These memories had been on hold since that day, and putting them in a neat and organized manner would be kind of nice. She now had nieces and nephews who would never get to love and be loved by her.

So, on that beautiful Monday morning, I flopped down in the middle of my bedroom floor, amidst the scrapbook novelties needed to make this a *special book*, and opened the trunk to begin to sort out the memories. Pictures, cards, little “Dear Mom” notes on scrap pieces of notebook paper and napkins, concert ticket stubs, school newsletters, school trinkets, newspaper clippings, and then a BIRTH certificate and a DEATH certificate. I sat there, stared at the floor covered with colorful papers, ruffle scissors, my large memory book and MEMORIES—MEMORIES—MEMORIES!

As I sat on my front porch later that afternoon, it dawned on me that maybe I’d had a bad idea. My intentions were good, but nine years just didn’t seem that long ago. So, after a short deliberation, I slowly picked up all my good intentions and memories and neatly put them back in the little floral trunk.

Scrap booking, I’m sure, can be a very neat and time-consuming hobby for some, but for me it won’t be this year—maybe next September. My point is this: Don’t feel like you have to put your loved one’s things in order, throw things out, or ever “get over your loss.” I know Neely was *special* and *unique*, so for right now my heart will have to be the large memory book where it will be well protected and cared for. “Time will help.” It’s not the answer we all want to hear in the beginning, but it does. I’m living proof—I was able after nine years to finally OPEN that little floral trunk.

Vicki Hall Polk
TCF, Nashville, TN