

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org

Chapter Leaders: Lamar and Joy Bradley, (615) 889-1387, email: lbradley1@mindspring.com

Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: melanierladd@gmail.com

Treasurer: Jayne Head, (615) 264-8184, email: alanandgraysonsmom@comcast.net

Outreach: David Gibson, (615) 356-1351, email: davidg14@bellsouth.net

Regional Coordinator: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: lolly39@aol.com

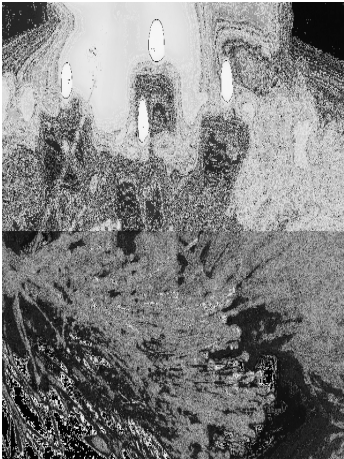
The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 P.M. on the second Sunday of each month in the HCA building at 2501 Park Plaza, just north of Centennial Park off of 25th Avenue, North. Inside, you will see our sign and someone will greet you. We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

Candlelight Memorial Service

Come Light a Candle with Us

*December 8, 2013— 3:00 p.m.
HCA Building*

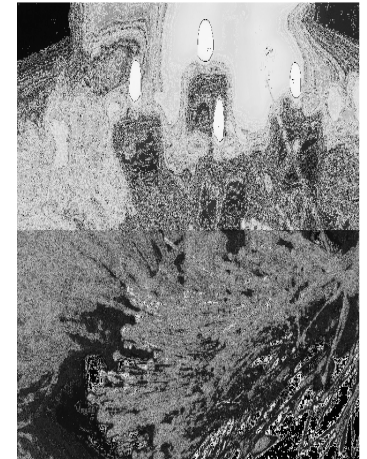


Your family is cordially invited to join us as we honor our children who have died.

Each family is asked to bring a picture 5"x7" or smaller, or other small memento of your child to place at the front of the auditorium. This will be in addition to the slides already received for the slide presentation.

We will have a time of refreshments and fellowship following the service. We ask that families bring a dish of small pick-up foods to share following the service. Please put your name on the bottom of your container.

The Birthday Table will be set up for those who wish to share their child's December birthday.



Share the Love As We Remember Them

*May the memories of this season
come on gentle wings to touch you with peace.*

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National Office P. O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696—Phone 630 990-0010 or Toll free: 1-877 969-0010

TCF Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

National Office email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Christmas Memories

*When snowflakes dance on winter winds
And colored lights shine Christmas cheer,
When children's laughter fills the air
And family gathers from far and near,
I try to celebrate with them
And not let my hurting show.
But the empty space within my heart,
At this season, seems to grow
'Til oftentimes it fills the days,
And many nighttimes too,
With aching thoughts and memories
Of Christmases I spent with you.*

*Yes, memories do hurt, it's true
But I have this feeling too.
I'm so glad I hold these memories,
For with them I hold part of you.
So for now, I'll wipe away the tears
And join with loved ones dear
To celebrate this Christmas time,
For I know that, in my heart, you're here.*

Arden Lansing
TCF, Monmouth County, NJ

Christmas Thoughts

Beyond the Christmas trees, the angels and stars and beloved carols...

Beyond the presents, the shopping, the baking and cooking...

Beyond all of these sights and sounds of Christmas...

Beyond all of these—there is hope—hope for the bereaved parents—even at Christmas, one of the most, if not the most painful times of the year, there is an essence of hope. HOPE! It is hope that sustains us through the days of grief and anger and frustration and loneliness.

The hope is that someday the pain of the deaths of our children will be eased. The hope is that someday our smiles will be real. The hope is that once again we will laugh and love and also cry completely without fear and hollowness. It is the hope that someday we can remember our children with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelmed with it.

So it is that for each of you, I would hope: peace, compassion, love, sympathy, understanding, sharing, and listening. In the sharing of our grief with one another, and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and understand all of these gifts.

Carole Ragland
TCF, Houston/West TX

Chanukah Is Here

*I see the candles glow,
Red, pink and blue.
But you're not here
To see their pretty shadows.
I shop for gifts.
And this year, again,
Once more,
I won't be in a quandary
Of what to buy.
I give you my love,
My precious son,
For that is eternal.
And once again,
It will have to do.*

Ginnette Kravet
TCF, Central Jersey

Chanukah and Christmas

For those who think that Christmas and Chanukah are just nice days to give and get presents, bereaved parents have another message. Mixed with the joy is the knowledge of sadness. With the hope of birth comes the threat of death. We should not try to cover up our sadness in front of people, for we have a lesson to teach them. But the holidays have a lesson for us, too. Yes, there is death. Yes, there is great bitterness in life. There is darkness. But there is hope. There is birth. There is light.

In a society, which works so hard to deny death, perhaps only bereaved parents and a few others can truly understand the depths of these holidays.

Dennis Klass
TCF, St. Louis, MO

*When the time comes
For lighting festive candles,
Let them remind you
Not only
Of what you lost
But also
Of what you had.*

Sascha Wagner
TCF, Des Moines, IA

The Promise

*Your birth brought me starshine, the moon and the sun;
My wishes, dreams gathered round my little one.*

*My life became sacred, full of promise and light,
All wrapped in the child who brought love at first sight.*

*The years of your living filled with laughter and tears,
Excitement, adventure, some boredom, some fears,*

*But ended too quickly, ahead of its time.
The loss so horrendous, such heartbreak was mine.*

*But from the beginning, one thought rose so clear;
Never would your death erase the years that you were here.*

*I would not be defeated or diminished by your death;
I would hang on, learn to conquer, if it took my every breath.*

*For if your death destroyed my life,
Made both our lives a waste,
'twould deny your life's meaning and all the love you gave.*

*I vowed that years of sadness
Would change, with work and grace,
To years of happiness, even joy, in which you'd have a place.*

*Memories of you, like shining stars
In the patterns of my soul,
Are beacons flashing light and love,
and with them I am whole.*

*In your honor I live my life, now living it for two.
Through all my life, you will too.*

*From Stars in the Deepest Night
Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
TCF Marin County, CA*

CANDLES IN THE NIGHT

A heart broken by the death of a child can never be healed. As parents we try every way that can be thought of to cope with the loss, but the void will always be there. At first that emptiness seems to take your breath away and most times we wish it would.

This becomes different with the passage of time. It never goes away, but at some point we learn to live with it, and in fact this horrible feeling becomes a lifeline of sorts. One of our biggest fears is to forget our children. Forget how they looked or how their voices sounded. The smiles and tears that blur together to make a child. This emptiness in effect becomes a constant yearning to remember our children.

Our hearts force us to find ways to fill that void to maintain our role as parents. Some are as simple as visiting the cemetery and some are as complex as changing our entire lives, dedicated to the memory of our child. In between are the many rituals we create or borrow from others to honor the memories and to keep our child's name alive.

Lighting a candle and saying a child's name keeps their memory burning bright. It means we are struggling to cope with this unwanted role of bereaved parent in the only positive manner we can. We will most certainly shed tears every time and we will still miss our child, but we are doing something that allows the world to hear our child's name and for that one moment the candle means so much more than anyone else could ever understand.

For a fleeting second that is our universe and every memory we have comes flooding back to us as we see the flame through tears, distorting it into something magical. It's the only gift we can give our children. This is as close as we can get to our child now. A tiny, flickering flame that can warm the heart and it's nice to think that perhaps they can see it also. It's a beacon, our light in the window, our shining star in the darkness. It's an opening of our hearts and a way to share our grief.

We gather to honor the memories of our children and to share this bond of lighting a candle for the children all over the world. We miss them so much.

Jim Lowery
TCF Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter, TX

Draw strength from the holiday traditions of your past; hope from the changes you make for the present; and from them both, faith in your ability to handle the future.

From Handling the Holidays by Bruce Conley



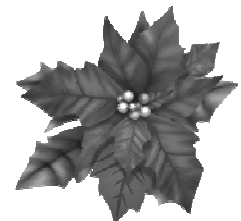
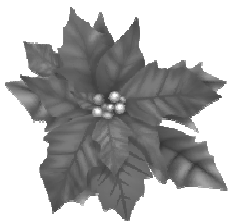
In the evening following our December 8 Memorial, join The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting that unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries. Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone.

Our TCF Nashville volunteers listed below truly understand your grief and are ready to listen if you need a compassionate friend during the holiday season.

Phone Friends

We have all experienced the pain of losing a child. We understand and would like to listen. If you can't reach one of us, feel free to call another person on this list.

- Accidental Death**Mike and Paula Childers
615-646-1333
- AIDS**.....Joyce Soward
615-754-5210
- Illness**.....David and Peggy Gibson
615-356-1351
- Infant**.....Jayne Head
615-264-8184
- SIDS**.....Kris Thompson
931-486-9088
- Suicide**.....Ruth Edwards
615-353-8547
- Small Child**.....Kenneth and Kathy Hensley
615-237-9972
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose**.....Ed Pyle
615-712-3245



CHAPTER INFORMATION

The “Children Remembered” Listings

If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed on page 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. You may call the database manager at 615 356-1351, drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205, or email us at davidg14@bellsouth.net. We'll be glad to include them. You need to contact us only once, unless any of your information changes.

Picture Name Tags

If you will bring a clear picture of your child, wallet size or larger, to a TCF meeting, Lamar Bradley will make a beautiful permanent name tag with your child's picture on it for you to use each month. You will also have an opportunity to select your own butterfly to accompany the photograph. The original photo will be completely safe with Lamar and will be returned to you at the following meeting. The best part of this is that there is no charge. A big thank you goes to Lamar for unselfishly giving his time and talent.

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 demands made upon the parents, and the information you provide is strictly confidential.

TCF Nashville Sibling Support

We encourage siblings from teens to adults to come support one another at our monthly chapter meetings. Siblings face a unique and complicated grief journey and are finding hope and healing through our Sibling Sharing Groups.



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

A support group for bereaved parents meets at Alive Hospice. For details, please call John Baker at 963-4674. Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at [615 327-1085](tel:6153271085).

Sharing

SHARING is a community organization interested in helping parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn infant. Call 615 342-8899 to confirm dates and times of meetings.

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. Check it out.



Holiday Gifts for Children Needed

Each year, our chapter donates holiday gifts to children at a worthy establishment that works with children who are not living at home and are under care for the holidays. We will provide gifts to the children cared for by Youth Villages again this year. 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 TCF December 8 Memorial Service. Below is a list of the most requested items.

Gifts:

- CD Players/ MP3 Players
- Art Supplies
- Video games (teen rated)
- Make up for Teens
- Costume Jewelry (like that found in the malls at Claire's)
- Remote control cars and planes
- Girly things like journals, gel pens and scrapbooking items
- Model cars
- Board Games
- Baby and Barbie dolls and accessories
- Lego sets
- Trucks

- Disney type movies
- Watches (boys and girls)
- Gift cards

Stocking Stuffers:

- Matchbox cars
- Small notepads
- Pens and pencils
- Candy
- Jewelry
- Hygiene products
- Billfolds and wallets
- Cute little change purses for girls
- Makeup items
- Socks
- Gift cards for fast food restaurants

*Once again, remember, these items may be brought in gift bags with tissue paper, but **DO NOT WRAP** the gifts. Youth Villages staff does the wrapping as it helps them to more evenly distribute the donated items.*

