**January 2019 The Compassionate Friends Volume 33● Number 1**

 ***THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

**P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (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.

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*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. 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.*

***TCF Video to be shown***

**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**………….…………..…….……KrisThompson

 931-486-9088

**Suicide**…….………………………...….Ron Henson

 615-789-3613

**Small Child**….……........Kenneth and Kathy Hensley

 615-237-9972

**Alcohol/Drug Overdose**......…..............……Ed Pyle

 615-712-3245

***January 13***

T

he Compassionate Friends helps us to cope

with the death of a child. It is a place where

one can turn for support when the devastation

of the loss seems overwhelming. The Compassionate

Friends has produced a short video in which bereaved

parents and siblings discuss their own grief experiences

and what helped them. Among those who speak are the

TCF national executive director, members of the board,

chapter leaders and siblings. This video will be shown at

this month’s meeting, and regular sharing groups will

follow. Please join us.

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***New chapter Leadership--****With much appreciation we thank Barbara and Roy for their time of service as our Chapter Leaders and to Kris Foust and Cheryl Carney for taking the helm of Nashville TCF! Thank you all for your dedication and your compassion for grieving families. The healing you have helped provide is immeasurable. (See a special letter from Roy and Barb on page 5.)*

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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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) National Office email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

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***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—***

**Jacob Taylor Akers**

January 15

Son of James and Carol Akers

**Lisa Allgood**

January 14

Daughter of

Harold and Betty Allgood

**Misty Whitney Ambrose**

January 14

Daughter of

 Michael and Treva Ambrose

**Pamela Sue Chaiken**

January 17

Daughter of

Lionel and Sandra Chaiken

**Jonathan Lee Collins**

January 12

Son of

Jennie Reeves and

Charity Collins

**Jeremy Wilson Christy**

January 20

Son of Wilson and Jenny Christy

**Kaitlyn Kimberly Cook**

January 30

Daughter of

Jim Cook and Sylvia Bosma

**Cam Mantle Davis**

January 9

Daughter of

Jack Mantle and Vicki Little

**Francis Douge**

January 9

Son of Ruth Carrano

**James Wesley Evans**

January 31

Son of Brenda Nelson and brother of Heather Evans

**Ruth Evans**

January 13

Daughter of

Norman and Diane Evans

**Aaron Thomas Gillespie**

January 1

Son of Donna Gillespie

**Samuel Christopher Hagens**

January 14

Son of Christopher and Pamela Hagens

**Matthew Kent Hensley**

January 13

Son of

Kenneth and Kathy Hensley

**James Edwin Hinesley**

January 7

Son of

Steven and Sue Hinesley

**Mary Grace Hodsdon**

January 14

Daughter of

John and Mary Hodsdon

**Kensley Caroline Miller**

January 11

Daughter of

Jason and Cindy Miller

**Adrin B. Ohaekwe**

January 3

Son of Tamera Hawkins

**Lauren Kristian O’Saile**

January 23

Daughter of

Don Davenport
Granddaughter of

Martha Davenport

**David Pringle**

January 13

Son of

Jim and Margaret Pringle

**Gregg Alan Swayze**

January 18

Son of

Michael Swayze and

Carole Swayze

**Gavin Garrett Vaughn**

January 8

Son of

Linda Vaughn

**Michael Ryan Williams**

January 13

Son of

Danny and Kay Williams

***And in the month of their deaths—***

**Brock Wyatt Blick**

January 8

Son of

Mark and Jeri Kay Blick

and Grandson of

Jerry and Bonnie Buckner

**Jessica Bloom**

January 26

Daughter of

Elisabeth Small

**Juri Austin Bunetta**

January 9

Son of

Al and Dawn Bunetta

**Matthew Lance Chitwood**

January 1

Son of

Jim and Connie Chitwood

Grandson of

Margaret Chitwood-Watkins

Brother of

Clayton Lee Chitwood

**Jeremy Wilson Christy**

January 4

Son of Wilson and

Jenny Christy

**Roy James Davies**

January 13

Son of

Roy and Barbara Davies

**Cam Mantle Davis**

January 25

Daughter of

Jack Mantle and Vicki Little

**Justin Paul Hines**

January 3

Son of Kim Buckner

**Joseph V. Ladd III “Joey”**

January 9

Son of

Joe and Melanie Ladd

**Michael David Lair-Kissiar**

January 7

Son of

Amy Kissiar

**Vontrekus Keon Lockett**

January 15

Son of

Willie Sails and

Bernita Honeysucker

**Nathan John McDade**

January 8

Son of

Dennis and Rebecca McDade

**Stetson Taylor McFarland**

January 30

Son of

Nathan and Alisha McFarland

***Continued on page 3***

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***Children Remembered, continued***

**Adrin B. Ohaekwe**

January 3

Son of Tamera Hawkins

**Marshall Roberts**

January 12

Son of

Renee Stanfield

**Trinity Rhodes Steagall**

January 1

Son of Rose Steagall

**Stephanie Hardy Stephens**

January 10

Daughter of

George and Thelma Hardy

**Jason Brandon Warf**

January 21

Son of Ronald and Clada Warf

**James Donald Warren**

January 24

Son of John and Georgia Warren

Brother of John David Warren

**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.**

***Mark Sewell and***

***Tracy Ball***

***In loving memory of***

***their son,***

***Michael Sewell***

***Preston Birdsong and***

***Janice Birdsong***

***In loving memory of***

***their son,***

***Preston Chauncey Birdsong***

***Ross and Libby Cheek***

***In loving memory of***

***their daughter,***

***Elizabeth Osborn Cheek***

***Robert and***

***Cynthia Daugherty***

***In loving memory of***

***their granddaughter,***

***Laura Abigail Czirr (Abby)***

***Daughter of***

***Steve and Paige Czirr***

***Ann Flatt***

***$25.00 11/12/18***

***In loving memory of***

***her son,***

***Chad Flatt***

***John and Mignon Friedmann***

***Dr. John Friedmann, Jr.***

***In loving memory of***

***their daughter and sister,***

***Jennifer L. Friedmann (Jena)***

***Deanie Gregory***

***In loving memory of her son,***

***Darby Felts***

***Kirk and Shaye Harris***

***In loving memory of their son,***

***Chase Lee Harris***

***John and Mary Hodsdon***

***In loving memory of their daughter,***

***Mary Grace Hodsdon (Grace)***

 ***John and Jammie Kemp***

***In loving memory of their son,***

***Jason M. Kemp***

***Tom and Jere King***

***In loving memory of their son,***

***Jams Thomas King (JT)***

***Vicki C. Little***

***In loving memory of***

***her daughter, Cam Mantle Davis***

***Robert and Kassandra Pack***

***In loving memory of their son,***

***Andrew Morris Pack***

***Wayne and Marsha Vick***

***In loving memory of their son,***

***Daniel Wayne Vick***

***John and Georgia Warren***

***In loving memory of their son,***

***John David Warren (Johnny)***

***Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, 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.***

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**Another Year Without My Child**

I

t’s a new year and I am marking it, for the fifth time, without my child. Last month was the fourth anniversary of his death. This is one more milestone in the journey of a bereaved parent. The new year brings the promise of new adventures, happiness and prosperity to others. To bereaved parents it adds another dimension to our loss. It also brings the opportunity to look at where we are and how far we have come.

I remember the first New Year’s Day without my son. What an empty, hollow feeling I had on January 1, 2003. My world had ended, the shock was still systemic in my mind and body, and I counted the days since he last walked, talked and laughed on this earthly plane, dwelling on the passing of days, hours and minutes since the moment of his death. I was frozen.

Looking back at that time, I recall just how the pain felt; unlike other pain, the pain of losing a child is never forgotten. I feel the familiar jolt that rocked my mind and body each time I awoke to remember that my son had died. I remember the misery of slogging through endless, meaningless days. I remember the tears, the second guessing, the anger, the guilt, I remember it all. I still bounce in and out of those emotions; this will never end. It has moderated greatly, but it never ends.

Now I am more focused on my son’s life. Details about his life spring into my mind, happy times, maturing times, good times and funny times. I remember it all with the clarity that only a mother can possess. And so, that is how I will begin this new year, remembering the life of my child but never forgetting the loss.

I am a different person than I was before my son died. I feel as though a lightning bolt struck me on the day of his death, and now I perceive the world from a different vantage point. I have simplified my life from what it once was. I have many new friends who share the experience of losing a child; I have permanently removed old friends from my life who simply couldn’t accept my grief and were fearful of talking about my child. I have a new understanding of the problems that other parents face, problems that a mother of one never has to address. I have become more solidly spiritual. I have gone through Dante’s seven circles, walls and gates of hell and emerged as the unique person I should have been all along. People change. Bereaved parents change a great deal.

I no longer dread each new day. I no longer weep silently every night. I no longer ache from head to foot with the pain of losing my child. I read, I write, I stay active in the community. I work in my small business, doing what I want to do and what I must do. I go to museums, to movies, to stage plays. I listen to music, watch television and work in my home and yard.

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Amazingly, my word recall and memory are returning. Forgetting names, events, people, destinations and other critical factors of daily life was something I dealt with for over three and half years. I thought I had lost my mind until I started talking to other parents. I have begun doing memorization exercises, something I probably should have done three years ago. I am learning that the journey through grief lasts for a lifetime. Each stage is different, each sudden, poignant memory is paralyzing and each new day brings an opportunity to evaluate progress.

Much has changed during the past four years. Much will change throughout my life. Each of us experiences the loss of our child at the deepest level of our psyches. Yet each of us comes to this place with a different set of experiences and a unique genetic composition. I cannot compare myself to others. I can only mark my tiny steps forward with a sense of wonder at the resiliency of the human mind and spirit while simultaneously accepting that I am not in control. At any moment a flash of the past might bring me to my knees. I have learned to go with it.

I have found hope for the future. It certainly isn’t the future I had envisioned. There will be no late-night talks with my son, no holidays or birthdays shared, no participation in my son’s children’s lives, no cards, no handmade gifts. That door was closed by lawsuit-happy former in-laws who have no standing in my life today. I have crawled through the minefields and dodged the bullets of some petty, mentally unbalanced people and survived. I have faced the abyss of losing my only child while enduring the cruelest of sniping, the worst of intentionally inflicted pain. I did none of this with grace and finesse. I merely got through it. I survived. I became stronger by letting go of my anger. I found hope by remembering the goodness that is my son and by leaning on friends who had lost their children. These friends were there for me when I so desperately needed the comfort of kindred souls: Compassionate Friends who reached out to me gave me the glimmer of hope when all seemed forever lost and living was almost intolerable.

Now the healing process has completed its circle. I am here for those parents who need me. Strangely this helps me to heal as well. I reach out to others who are new to the process of grief, and I tell them that there is hope. One day the sunrise will again be beautiful and you will find peace within yourself. You will remember your child’s life, you will honor your child’s life and you will forever be changed by your child’s death. But always, always, your child will remain in your heart. This is my truth to all who wish to know. Lean on us, for we have been where you are today. We will walk with you on your journey toward hope, peace and resolution. It is in this place that the healing will begin. This is a new year.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

TCF, Katy, TX

**January 2019 TCF Nashville, TN 5**

***A Note to TCF Nashville from our outgoing chapter leaders***

*In some ways, it seems like yesterday that we accepted the reigns of TCF-Nashville for our term as Chapter Leaders. The phrase “helping is healing” certainly rings true for us. TCF saved our lives and we were anxious to pay it forward. We have learned so much over the last four years. Bereaved parents share an unspeakable bond. Although strangers, our hearts connect the moment our eyes meet. We have become family and we have loved getting to know your children through you. Our hearts are warmed each time one of you reaches out to comfort another as we remember when you were the one being comforted. No one need walk this journey alone.*

*As our four years of service comes to an end, we want to thank the Steering Committee and other volunteers who gave so tirelessly of their time to create a safe and loving environment for our community of newly bereaved. It takes a village and our village is very special. It has been our honor to serve the Nashville Chapter.*

*The time has come to allow others the opportunity that we were granted. It is our privilege to introduce your new Chapter Leaders, Kris Foust and Cheryl Carney. Many of you know Kris and Cheryl from our sharing tables. Kris serves in memory of her beautiful daughter, Heidi, and Cheryl serves in memory of her sweet granddaughter, “Princess” Kelsee. We know they will be sharing more with you and we encourage you to get to know them.*

*Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.*

 *Roy and Barbara Davies*

*“Roy and Taylor’s Dad and Mom”*

***The Anniversary***

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*Let me be sad today,*

*Give me this day to mourn.*

*It’s the date my little son died,*

*And also the date he was born.*

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*Let me think back to his birth*

*The fear of viewing him, dead.*

*Memories of holding him close,*

*And cradling his little head.*

*Allow me to visit his grave,*

*To let a few balloons go,*

*To place flowers lovingly,*

*And trim the grass that does grow.*

*Allow me tears to cry,*

*Love fills my heart to the brim*

*Spilling it on those close by.*

*While always longing for him*

Elizabeth Dent

TCF McMinnville, OR

**My Heart Catches**

Y

ears ago when my mother-in-law would see a little girl that for a moment looked like her daughter that had died, she would say “my heart catches” and we would say to each other “after all these years!” Now I know what she meant, for it’s been ten years since Phyllis died and every once in a while I see a young woman who at a glance resembles Phyllis and “my heart catches.” Now “after all these years” doesn’t mean a thing–time is irrelevant

Essie Proudman

TCF, Jamestown, VA

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 ***If Only***

*If only I'd been given time
I'd have so much to say
I'd do most anything, you see
To make you want to stay*

*If only you had told me
You had tired of the fight
I'd carry you if this is what
It took to make things right*

*Your heart was breaking deep inside
Your spirit broken too
And if I had the power now
I'd mend it all for you*

*But you have chosen to go Home
To watch me from above
Your spirit has been lifted now
Your heart has filled with love*

*You'll fill my days with memories
Protect and guide me through
For this will be my hardest task
To face not seeing you*

*"If only" cannot bring you back
My tears won't make it so
But you'll be with me in my heart
No matter where I go*

*And when my weakest moment comes
You'll be the stronger one
And safely carry me until
My time on earth is done*

*If only, my dear loved one
I could make it through this pain
I'd live my life as best I could
Until we meet again*

Donna Gerrior
TCF Pasco County, FL

***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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T

he death of a child is a fire in the mind. The mind burns with alternatives that never come to pass, with fantasies of remarkable recuperations, with dreams of adult accomplishment. If we let this fire burn compassionately within us, the grief of the mind, the fantasies, the burning of the spirit, begin slowly to melt away and the child comes more into our heart. Our anguish can be used to open more fully, to enter as completely as we can into this final sharing. And then, as Rabindranath Tagore wrote in the final lines of his poem, *The End,* “Dear Auntie will come with presents and will ask, ‘Where is our baby, Sister?’ And Mother, you will tell her softly, ‘He is in the pupils of my eyes. He is in my bones and in my soul.”

Steven Levine

From ***Who Dies***

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**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**

At your first TCF meeting you are asked to sign a registration card that gives us permission to add your child to the We Remember Them list on pages 2 and 3 in the monthly newsletter. If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed, 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.

**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.

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**BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES**

**Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents**

For general information about Grief Support Services at Alive Hospice, please call the main number: 615 963-4732 or email griefsupport@alivehospice.org. Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at 615-346-8554. Contact John Baker at 615-346-8364 for bereaved parent support or individual counseling.

**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. Visit www.nationalshare.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](http://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.

** *The***

***Compassionate***

***Friends***

**P.O. Box 50833**

**Nashville, TN 37205**

**Return Service Requested**



 **January 2019**



# Here’s Something to Look Forward to in 2019:

 **The TCF 42ND NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

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he 42nd TCF National Conference will be in held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019. “Hope Rings in Philadelphia” is the theme of next year’s event, which promises a great National Conference experience. Stay updated with details on the national website, [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org), as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA) and in this newsletter as they become available. Plan to be a part of this heartwarming experience.

