**March 2017 The Compassionate Friends Volume 31● Number 3**

***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.*

**March 12 Meeting:**

**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 and Darlene Henson

615-789-3613

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

615-237-9972

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

615-712-3245

***Ask It Basket***

B

ereaved parents are often plagued with

questions regarding their grief. If there is

something bothering you, bring your questions

for the basket. This meeting will provide an

especially good opportunity for those of us who

are farther along in our grief to give the benefit

of our experience to those who are just beginning

their sad journey by addressing the questions.

We invite our old-timers to come and lend a

hand. Together we can find the support we need.

       Our regular sharing sessions will follow this

       program.



I am here. Let’s heal together.

a friend

A

ttending 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.

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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

**bd06374_bd06374_2 TCF Nashville, TN March 2017**

Why We Still Go to TCF

***“Are you still involved with that group? Aren't you over it yet? Why do you go?”***

These are questions I often hear now that it has been more than seven years since Mark died. I suspect you near them too. There are easy answers. But not everyone understands, unless you have been there. Here are some I can think of:

* Because we never want the world to forget our child, so what we do we do in his or her name.
* Because when we reach out to help someone else, we also help ourselves.
* Because someone was there for us when we needed it most; now the best way to say “thank you" is to pass it on by being there for others.
* Because it is the one thing we do that can bring something positive out of tragedy.
* Because we have found in TCF better friends and closer bonds than we ever thought possible. Here we can cry and hug people even if we don't know their last name or what they do for a living. And it doesn't matter.
* Because few people are qualified to walk up to a newly bereaved family and say, “I know how you feel.” And because we can, we must.
* Because sometimes we need to talk, too, and to remember and share. We are further along than many around us, but we never forget.
* Because many of us believe that one day we will meet our child or brother or sister again, and he or she will ask, "So what did you do with your life after I left?" And we will have an answer.
* Because our presence might help newly bereaved families understand that they will survive and even laugh again.

Richard Edler

TCF South Bay/LA, CA

**For Brothers and Sisters:**

***A Brother Means So Much On Your Birthday***

*The gift of a brother*

*Is a precious treasure.*

*It is the love, tears, and*

*Joys of a friendship that*

*Has unbreakable bonds.*

*The beauty of a brother*

*Cannot be described,*

*Measured or defined.*

*For it is a wonderful legacy*

*That will always be carried*

*In a sister’s heart.*

Jill Hricik

 TCF, Pittsburg, PA

*I wrote this date this morning, Paused,*

*And felt the room grow cold.*

*It always does*

*When I remember*

*All of it –*

*Down to the last petal*

*Tossed by winds*

*Above the upturned earth*

*This time the chill*

*Does not leave*

*So easily*

*It would have been your birthday.*

*Soon, I shall be*

*As old as you will ever be.*

Wanda M. Trawick

TCF, Acme, PA

**March 2017 TCF Nashville, TN 3**

**Grieving in Pairs**

H

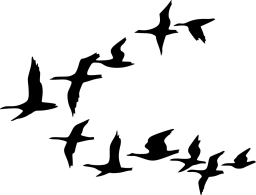
ow many times have people said, “Well, thank god you have each other.” How many times have you felt “each other” to be entirely inadequate at meeting your need?

We hear of the rocky road parents may encounter in their marriage after the death of a child. We sometimes see in ourselves a touchiness or quickness to become irritated that wasn’t there before. It always seems that my “bad” day is my wife’s “good” day, or the day she wakes up crying was the day I had planned on playing tennis.

Or sometimes, even more difficult, we both have a bad day and find no help from the other in pulling things back together. How can one person hold up another when he is himself face down in the mud.

Every person grieves differently. This is a rule that even applies within a family. And the needs of every individual are different. While you may need to talk and talk and talk, your spouse may need some time alone to reflect inwardly.

You have both been through the worst experience of your life. And, while at times you can face “recovery” as a team, sometimes you must develop the patience to be able to wait out certain needs—alone or with someone else. Realize that no matter how it shows, your partner hurts too.



Gerry Hunt

TCF, River Junction, VT

***Missing You***

*I just can't believe it...*

*The sun still rises and sets,*

*The moon and stars still shine,*

*The flowers still bloom, the birds still sing.*

*I expected a change in everything*

*I just can't believe it...*

*It still gets dark and light,*

*The ocean still has waves,*

*The rain still rains, the wind still blows,*

*Is it because they do not know?*

*I just can't believe it...*

*I thought the world would stop*

*When in my house I found*

*an empty chair, a missing smile*

*I thought it would stop*

*For just a while.*

*I just can't believe it...*

Gretta Viney

TCF Yakima, WA

**The Magic of You**

W

hat can I do to get better? This is the question most often asked by newly bereaved parents, as if the right actions could work a miracle. They are seeking easy rules, methods or steps of healing.

But there are none. There are no special words, no miraculous system, no magic wand to take the pain away. There is only time, hard work, and compassionate support. Grief is a process which must be allowed to function thoroughly in order for healing to take place. There are no short cuts. Attempts to ease the process such as through alcohol or drugs often end either in disaster or in complicating the grief process.

There is no magic. There is only you, the bereaved person, who must decide yourself to work within the process to resolve your grief.

No one else can do it for you, but others can help by supporting your grief rather than searching for magic words to wish it away. Others can help within The Compassionate Friends by providing models of healed parents who are willing to listen and share.

You can help yourself by being patient with grief instead of searching for easy methods. You can help yourself by learning about the grief process.

You can help yourself by sharing your story with others and listening to their stories. You can help yourself by reaching out to others, for helping others is the source of your own healing.

Magic pills, or incantations? There are none. Look to yourself. The Compassionate Friends can help, but you alone determine the progress of your grief. The magic of healing is within yourself.

Marcia Alig

TCF, Mercer Area, NJ

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**I Never Believed...**

I

never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on...that it can still have meaning...that even joy can touch your life once more.

Don Hackett

TCF Hingham, MA

***Counting***

*Time to count the crocus on the lawn*

*(seven white, four yellow, thirteen blue).*

*Windy sunshine breathing ice away*

*And the trees are trying to be new.*

*You’re not ready for spring, you say?*

*But spring is ready for you!*

Sascha

**How Can I Smile Again?**

A

fter the death of a child, how many of us, as bereaved parents, might say to ourselves, “How can I ever smile again? How will I ever be able to laugh again?” I know I felt that way after the death of my son. I have heard bereaved parents, especially during the early days after the loss, say, “I suddenly found myself laughing at work—how could I have done that?”

After my son died, I went back to work one week after the funeral, and one of the first things I had to do was attend a department meeting. At one point someone made a humorous remark. Everyone laughed except me. One of my coworkers, seeing my poker face, called across the table, “Come on, don’t look so sad.” There were other times, too, when people thought I should not be so glum, that I should be smiling or laughing. Once, while riding in my car pool, the driver turned around to me after observing my mask-like expression in the rearview mirror and exclaimed, “Smile!” I remember retorting with some acerbity, “You smile.”

But in time I did smile. I did laugh. It must be the subconscious guilt within ourselves that denies us the right to smile or laugh. It happened—I don’t remember how long it was—at least several months after Ken’s death, I think. I have seen parents at a TCF meeting, whose loss is recent, with a tear-stained face, smile when someone at the meeting says something that tickles the funny bone. How many of us have heard our non-bereaved friends say to us, “How can you go to that support group? It’s all doom and gloom!” How wrong they are! Of course we cry at TCF, but there are moments of laughter, too. Crying and laughter, after all, are often interchangeable, such as crying at weddings, at graduations, and giggling inappropriately at the sight of someone taking an unceremonious pratfall on a slippery sidewalk.

Perhaps laughter is also the beginning of nature’s way of mending, of healing us.

Dave Ziv

TCF, Southhampton



***I Saw You***

*I saw you today in the morning dew*

*As brilliant as a sea of shimmering diamonds*

*I shared the most amazing sunrise with you today*

*A million shades of red so random in their perfection*

*I heard you today in the laugh of my children*

*An enchanting melody a thousand angels strong*

*I walked with you today and we talked about everything*

*. . . and nothing all at once*

*I saw you today in the changing of the leaves*

*The colors of your life, the close of one season*

*And the ushering in of another*

*I sat beside a stream with you today*

*The peaceful flow, steady and constant*

*I saw you today . . . and you were perfect*

*And rest assured . . . I shall see you again*

Avery Smith

TCF, Ada Area Chapter

One often calms one’s grief by recounting it.

Pierre Corneille

**March 2017 TCF Nashville, TN 5**

# Put this on your calendar:

# https://www.compassionatefriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2017-conference-bg-800x533.jpg

# THE 40TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

T

he Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Orlando, Florida, will be the site of the 40th TCF National Conference on July 28-30, 2017. “Rays of Sunshine, Oceans of Hope” is the theme of this year’s event. The 2017 Conference will be held at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek. Details will be updated on the national website, www.compassionatefriends.org , as well as on our TCF/USA Facebook Page as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

**Nashville REgional Conference**

O

ur Steering Committee has approved moving forward with a Regional Conference in Nashville.  We are looking at October but the actual date has not yet been confirmed.  If you have the time and desire to help with this program, please reach out to Roy Davies, [615-604-2087](tel:615-604-2087) or by email at TCFRoyandBarbara@yahoo.com.  Be sure to provide your contact information as we will be forming a Conference Committee soon.

**The Wounded Heart**

C

hildren have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, nor will we be the last, to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now right now it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending.

Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger; and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life.

A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed.

The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

Nancy Green

TCF Livonia, MI

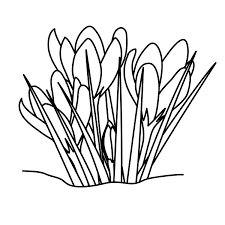
**Some Things To Think About**

T

here is sometimes a misconception among professionals and the bereaved themselves that participating in TCF will only magnify and prolong the grief process. This is wrong. Grief is painful and we cannot escape or run away from it. If you try to hide it, or sweep it under the rug, you will only postpone it. If you do not deal with it now, you will have to deal with it when another tragic loss occurs in your life. Grief is like an expressway; and learning about bereavement and mourning at TCF meetings is what keeps us on the expressway. The shortcuts and side trips only make our journey longer. We must also commonly expect to feel worse at four to six months, than at one month…and why not? For at one month we were protected by shock and numbness, as though it were all happening to someone else.

Father Ken Czillinger

TCF Sarasota, FL

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**CHAPTER INFORMATION**

**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. 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 sharing groups.

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**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 at Alive Hospice, please call the main number: [615 963-4732](tel:615%20963-4732) or email [griefsupport@alivehospice.org](mailto: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 a bereaved parent support group 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. See 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.