

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.

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 11 Program:

Video: "Out of Order"

Our March 11 program offers viewing of the video, *Out of Order: Dealing with the Death of a Child*. We will see three couples whose children have died from different causes, including suicide, courageously share how they experienced their grief, what has helped them, and how they honor and keep connections to the memories of their children. From feeling they have no heart to live, to searching for and finding meaning and understanding, this video of Dave and Debbie, Bill and Chris and M.J. and John sharing their experiences can help us as we travel our own grief journeys. Please join us.



There may be crocus blooming by now, but the chance of inclement weather is still a consideration. In case the weather threatens safe travel, please check our website, Facebook page or call the chapter leaders at the numbers above for possible meeting cancellation.

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.

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**.....Ron and Darlene Henson
615-789-3613
- Small Child**.....Kenneth and Kathy Hensley
615-237-9972
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose**.....Ed Pyle
615-712-3245

*"A real friend is one who walks in
when the rest of the world walks out."*

Walter Winchell

*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—



David James Bass March 29 Son of Jeff and Peggy Brown	Brian Tyler Brown March 23 Son of Carl and Shannon Brown	Justin Scott Heath March 28 Son of Earl and Betsy Branson	Sheila Rochelle March 17 Daughter of Jennie Reeves Sister of Charity Collins Aunt of Kristanna
Jessica Bloom March 19 Daughter of Elisabeth Small	Lucas Dawson (Luke) March 16 Son of Bob and Genevia Graham	Wendy Evon Kauffman March 10 Daughter of Richard and Donna Green	Michael Anthony Sewell March 12 Son of Tracy Ball
Robert Irl Bourne, III (Bobby) March 30 Son of Robert and Anne Bourne	Marvin Lee Edwards March 23 Son of Charles and Ruth Edwards	Kevin Moncrief March 17 Son of Sandra Merkel	Claire Aven Shelburne March 29 Daughter of Terry and Laura Shelburne
Bonnita Brown (Nee Nee) March 18 Daughter of Elaine Frey	Wolfgang Maximillian Gander (Max) March 13 Son of Wolfgang and Evie Gander	Samuel James Moore March 28 Son of Darrell and Dianne Moore Grandson of Mac and Polly Moore Great-Grandson of Paul Trainor	Trinity Rhodes Steagall March 18 Son of Rose Steagall
			Jason Brandon Warf March 30 Son of Ronald and Clada Warf



And in the month of their deaths—

Christopher C. Anderson (Chris) March 25 Son of Mary Hampton	Greg Gutzeit March 8 Son of Doug Gutzeit and Carolyn O'Neil	David Benton Lowe March 5 Son of Charles and Teresa Lowe	David Warren Reagan March 10 Son of Donna Reagan
David James Bass March 9 Son of Jeff and Peggy Brown	Mary Grace Hodsdon March 14 Daughter of John and Mary Hodsdon	Samuel James Moore March 29 Son of Darrell and Dianne Moore Grandson of Mac and Polly Moore Great-Grandson of Paul Trainor	David George Shriver March 2 Son of Warren and Donna Jones and George Shriver
Rachel Elizabeth Bohan March 15 Daughter of Walter and Christy Moore and Donald R. Bohan	Rahmir Scott Kendrick March 23 Son of DeMillie and Felicia Brown	Wade Hampton Morgan March 3 Son of David and Barbara Morgan	Drew Michael Tipton March 24 Son of Bobby and Shri Tipton
Ken Elberson March 15 Son of Harry and Winnie Elberson	Christian Lewis March 27 Son of Christian Harrison and Paschale Lewis	Adam Nicholas Pappas March 2 Son of Gust and Jane Pappas Brother of Andrew, Alex & Erin	Gavin Garrett Vaughn March 22 Son of Linda Vaughn

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.

*Barbara Davies
Through Nationwide
workplace giving program
In loving memory of
her stepsons,
Roy James Davies and
Taylor Davies
Sons of Roy Davies*

*John and Mary Hodsdon
In loving memory of their daughter,
Mary Grace Hodsdon*

*Jim and Faye Mason
In loving memory of Mary Glen Oliver
Daughter of Adrian and Sara Oliver
Granddaughter of Dr. Joseph and
Pamela Vance*

*Ann McKee
In loving memory of
her son,
Glenn Thomas Allen, Jr. (Tommy)*

*Ronald and Clada Warf
In loving memory of
their son, Jason Brandon Warf*

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.



TCF HAS LOST A DEAR FRIEND

On February 6, 2018, Dr. David Martin passed away. David was a true friend of The Compassionate Friends, as well as a beloved member of our chapter. A psychology teacher at Tennessee State University, David offered counseling to bereaved parents in the Nashville area. Through the years, David has spoken many times to our chapter and at the 1998 and 2008 national conferences held in Nashville. His topics were especially meaningful to bereaved parents: “You’re not crazy, you’re grieving” and “Guilt and Anger.”

David and his wife, Auline, who precedes him in death, lost their toddler son, Damon, in 1969 as the result of his accidentally ingesting weed killer. Many of our members have fond memories of our times with David, and we will miss him. Memorial donations in memory of him may be sent to the American Diabetes Association or to The Compassionate Friends, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN, 37205.

The Month of In Between

*In between Winter
And in between Spring,
Your death has left me
Feeling in between.
In between this world
And in between the next.
Since you died
Nothing's the same.
I no longer feel like I belong,
Yet I haven't wings for heaven,
Though I have no heart for earth.
So I'm somewhere with March.
I'm somewhere in between.*

Naomi Holzman
TCF, Volusia/Flagler, FL

As Long As I Can

*As long as I can, I will look at the world for both of us.
As long as I can, I will laugh with the bird, I will sing
with flowers, I will play to the stars, for both of us.
As long as I can, I will remember how many things on
this earth were your joy. And I will live as well as you
would want me to live, as long as I can.*

Sascha Wagner
© The Compassionate Friends



Another “First”...The First TCF Meeting

Here we are again, near the start of another year. Another year that we brought in without our beloved children as a part of. For many of our members, it will be the beginning of those dreaded “firsts” without their child, brother, sister, or grandchild: the first birthday, the first anniversary of their death; the first holidays such as Valentine’s Day, Easter, and the agonizing blitz starting with Halloween and ending with New Year’s Day. Or the unexpected firsts such as the first phone call to your home perhaps from a tele-marketer who innocently asks to speak to your child. To say that the many “firsts” that we are confronted with are difficult would be a gross understatement.

However, I would like to share with you a “first” that, for me, has been a lifesaver. That would be the first time I went a TCF meeting, which I attended approximately three weeks after Nina died. I remember after I heard that there was such a group specifically for bereaved parents, I counted the days until that meeting. I desperately needed to be around other people who felt the same devastation as I did. I needed to see that there were others who weren’t going on about their daily lives as if nothing happened. I knew somewhere there must be other parents who could comprehend how hard it was to get out of bed in the morning and start another day without their beloved child. Those anxiously waiting for their child to come through the door, hoping that it had all been a bad dream, only with the sobering realization that it was not.

However, even though I eagerly awaited that first meeting, when that day actually came I began to feel apprehension, for a number of reasons. I suddenly realized that I really had no idea of what to expect. Rather than feel camaraderie with these other parents, would I feel worse after I heard their own tragic stories?

When I pulled into the parking lot of the meeting place, I sat in my car for what seemed like forever. When I finally made the decision to go inside, I trudged up the sidewalk and saw the sign on the door that said, “The Compassionate Friends Support Group” and suddenly my legs felt as if weighted with concrete. Ever since the day I became a mother, my daily prayers included telling God that he could do whatever he wanted with me, but please don’t ever let anything happen to my children. By entering through that door and going to that meeting I was acknowledging that I now was eligible to be part of a group of people that I had hoped never to be a part of...the reality was that I was now one of “them.” I remember my heart pounding as I dragged myself into that meeting room. It wasn’t long before my fears were calmed. The lady who greeted me at the door gave me a comforting

hug. After hearing my story, she led me to another woman who had lost her daughter suddenly in an accident just as I had and I knew, for the first time, I was not alone. All the parents went around the circle and introduced themselves and their child; some had been there as long as ten years. Some were even laughing! I thought to myself, these people couldn’t have lost a child, for I knew that I would never laugh or find joy in living again. I remember having conflicting feelings. I thought that they must not have loved their child as much as I loved my daughter. On the other hand, maybe this was a hopeful sign, for of course they loved their children too. Maybe this meant that I too would survive the “worst loss”, that I too would find reasons to laugh and smile again.

It didn’t take me long to realize why there were still people who had been there for so many years. It wasn’t because they still needed the support of TCF, but they were there to give support back to the newly bereaved, showing them that there was still life after the death of a child. I will be forever thankful for those compassionate friends who helped me take those first wobbly steps down the grief road and continued that journey with me.

I left that meeting wishing that I could go back again the next day, and the day after that. I felt safe there; I felt understood there. I didn’t want to leave that protective cocoon of understanding and go into the outside world that did not recognize that the world, as I had known it, ended when my precious daughter died.

I am so glad that I took the chance that day back in that tumultuous spring of 1995 and walked through those meeting room doors. I have been doing the same ever since, rarely missing one. I have met people there whom I cherish and know will be lifelong friends. When I tell one of them I am having a difficult day, they don’t chastise me, but rather understand the emotional roller-coaster ride of a bereaved parent and offer me their support. When they say, “I know exactly how you feel”, I know that they truly do.

Years from now, I still plan to be there to greet that newly bereaved parent with an empathetic and reassuring hug, just as I had been welcomed six and a half years before. I know that I will look in their eyes and see the same hollow look mirrored in my own when I was newly bereaved. And I will be there to let them know that if I have survived the unthinkable, they will too.

Cathy Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN



*To know the road ahead,
ask those who are coming back.*



From the website, TCF/Upper E. Tennessee/SW Virginia Chapter

A Bit Richer

I've heard it said that what you get out of a book depends not on what the book brings to you, but on what you bring to the book. It's hard to fathom—much less accept—that we can gain anything by losing a child. Once the black hole has been created, we can't imagine that any light will ever enter it. But, in time, tender mercies start to trickle in. If we keep our eyes and hearts open, we do gain a more insightful view of life. We see and feel things at a deeper level than others can even imagine. I find as a speaker and writer, when I quote books and use examples from movies to help illustrate or clarify my feelings about bereaved parenthood—or more often, life in general—people will say, “I don't remember reading that” “I didn't get that out of it.” “I never made that connection.

Little Women, Pay It Forward, Gladiator, Lost in Yonkers, and yes, the classic *Gone with the Wind* are just a few of the books and movies that portray the depths of life as WE know it while others merely read words or watch actors on a screen. I don't like being where I am. I certainly would never choose to be here. But as I go back to favorite books and movies, I find comfort not only in the familiar, but also in the farther-reaching themes that I didn't see before. Revisiting books and movies will never make up for the loss of my son, but it can make my life a bit richer. And as long as I'm still alive, I'm going to grab whatever I can get.

Susan Larson
TCF Atlanta, GA

The Loss of a Child Who Left Young Children

What happens when your child dies and leaves young children? Others will try to comfort you with words such as, “You have a part of your child,” or “she lives on in her children.” Yes, there is a bright side in having grandchildren. Tending to their needs is a temporary distraction from our grief and caring for others helps one heal. However, those of us who have been through the experience know that the loss is compounded by the pain of seeing our grandchildren coping with the death of a parent. In the case of a very young child, there is the realization that the child will never know the parent, and your son or daughter will never see the children grow to adulthood. Every birthday, graduation, or family celebration becomes “bittersweet” when the parent is not there to share in the festivities.

The difficulties can mount if the in-law spouse remarries and/or moves away. In any case, the bereaved parents hope that their son-in-law or daughter-in-law will allow them to be part of the children's lives. Fortunately, I see my grandchildren regularly, but this may not be so in other situations.

Bereaved parents who have no grandchildren may feel remorse that their child did not leave a living legacy. Those of us who do have grandchildren are faced with additional problems. The grandchildren's needs become our focus. Their pain is our pain. This is the extra baggage we carry as grandparents.

Anita Becker
TCF, Rockland County, NY



Holding Hands Through the Veil

*In silence, it reaches out slowly
Through a veil of perceived separation,
Calling your name as a gentle invite,
Its embrace is compassionate love.*

*The Light beckons, so patient and tender,
Causing my heart to grow painfully sure
That our time spent together on this earthly plane
Is complete in our hopes and much more!*

*Looking back with that radiant smile,
You thank me for helping you grow,
Adding, “This is not a goodbye, but rather a door
To the place that we know as our home.”*

*You ask me to try to be happy,
Promising you'll never be far from my side.
Then you say with a smile, “Watch for the dimes,
As well as other gifts I hope you will find!”*

*So even now as you walk through the doorway,
I feel your spirit stays close to my soul.
And I whisper, “Goodnight,” with tears—and with joy,
For the great gift of the love that we share.*

Catherine Patillo, Editor
We Need Not Walk Alone—Summer 2003

“Everything that has a beginning has an ending.
Make your peace with that and all will be well.”

Jack Kornfield, Buddha's Little Instruction Book

MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND:



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the 41st TCF National Conference on July 27-29, 2018. “Gateway to Hope and Healing” is the theme of this year’s event. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. Details will be updated on the national website, www.compassionatefriends.org as well as on our TCF/USA Facebook Page as they become available. Conference registration will be opening soon. The reduced hotel room rate and hotel registration link will be announced at that time.

Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

Spring's Tears

*When the sun's sharp brilliance echoes in the luminescent blue
A grim, oppressive darkness stabs my aching heart anew.
Its golden glow upon my face, the warmth of winter's sun
Holds the promise of renewal when the icy months are done.*

*It is this vow of nature's of resurgence in the spring
That bows my head, and breaks my heart;
unlocks my suffering.*

*For you will miss again the beauty of this time of year
The growing warmth, the sunny days when life will reappear.*

*For nature has no power over death that holds you still,
And though I know, I still resent spring's early daffodil.
Oh, would that I could speak to Mother Nature face to face!
To beg she work her magic on your lonely resting place.*

*Why can't it be YOUR rebirth when the gray,
cold days are done?*

*Why mightn't YOU not live again
to see spring's fresh new dawn
and feel the warmth of sunshine
relish in the greening earth...
to open arms, embracing life
why can't it be YOUR birth?*

*You were so young, your life so new
when death crept in the door,
And in my grief, beloved child, I'll ask forever more
The reason why the earth's renewed
when spring comes 'round each year
Yet in your grave you're silent still,
and I
condemned
am here.*

Sally Migliaccio
TCF Babylon, NY

A Time for Renewal

Spring has wrapped us in the glory of floral bounty with flowers, blooming bushes and trees and wild bluebonnets hinting at a renewal. In the gentle rains we have received a sweet cleansing of the spirit. It is spring that gives us hope for the future. As the season changes, we sense the cloak of our grief lifting in tiny increments. Yes, it is uplifting. For those of us who are newly bereaved parents or siblings, discovering a bit of lightness in our grief mantle is so very welcome.

And that is how our grief will be for the rest of our lives. No epiphanies, no giant steps, just a slight lifting each day, a microscopic rebirth of ourselves and a step further into our lives after the death of our child. There are setbacks, of course. The pain is agony in the first year....brain pain, soul searing pain, physical pain, anxiety and much more seem to rule our days. But each day is a tiny step forward into hope.

To enhance our grief journey, we must do grief work. Just as the gardener tends to the soil, fertilizes, gently stimulates tender roots and removes weeds from the flower bed, we must tend to our grief daily. Throwing out the negative...the guilt, the anger, the anxiety and adding the positive by seeking our solace in our journals, reading, movie choices, spirituality, friendships kept and friendships left behind. In the garden of our psyche, our grief must be tended as if every day is the first day of spring.

And so it is that with springtime comes a reminder of renewal and the grief work we must do to obtain that renewal of spring. Day by day we change; month by month we make note of that change. One day we will be able to see the blossoming of our renewal as we move forward in life with our precious children in our hearts.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
CF Katy, TX

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.



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 at Alive Hospice, please call the main number: [615 963-4732](tel:6159634732) or email griefsupport@alivehospice.org. Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at [615-346-8554](tel:6153468554). Contact John Baker at [615-346-8364](tel:6153468364) for a bereaved parent support group or individual counseling.

Sharing

SHARING is a community organization for parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn infant. They meet at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Administrative Board Room on the first floor at Tri-Star Centennial Women's and Children's Hospital, 2221 Murphy Avenue in Nashville. The meetings are “open” and free. You can drop by as often as you like. The website is sharingmiddletn.org. Their informative brochure is found under “Contact Us.”

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, 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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March 2018

The Warmth of Compassion

I thought that the end of the world had come when we lost our precious son, Patrick, to cancer.

Eighteen months have now passed, flowers still bloom, traffic races by and the little children play happily.

Breath goes in and goes out. It just does. How can this be?

Compassion seems rationed out. I now understand that people are well meaning, often really hurting for you. Their words come out wrongly. It hurts doesn't it?

Recently I have found some solace in speaking in a small group of bereaved parents.

It is a wonderful thing to talk about your child. How good it is that you want to hear some of my story. TCF has helped me and others along the way. How good that you look at my son's picture, bear with my pride in him and allow me to tell my sorrow.

What is helping? What is hindering? Such gentleness to discover and discuss these things.

Venture out even when the night is cold, the compassion is not.

Thanks a million to everyone whose act of compassion reminds us that the flowers do still bloom.

Judy Dowling
TCF Victoria, Australia