**May 2016 The Compassionate Friends Volume 30● Number 5**

***THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

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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.*

**May 8 Meeting: Honoring Our Memories**

**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

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he May meeting is an especially poignant one because it always

falls on Mother’s Day, and since the June meeting is not on

Father’s Day, we like to give special attention to the role of both

mothers and fathers in the lives of their children. If you have a special

memory of a particular Mother’s Day or Father’s Day, we hope you will

come prepared to share it with the group. We will honor all mothers

with special readings and there will be a picture board to display your

child’s photo. (Please bring a photo 5”x7” or smaller.)

This has always proved to be a very meaningful meeting—a safe

place to be on a day filled with memories. We’d like to share it

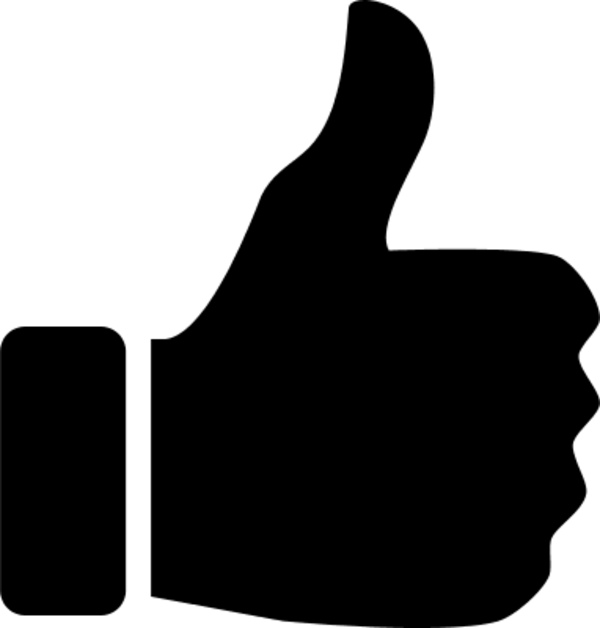
with you.

Keeping our tradition, each person in attendance will be given a

mini-carnation to wear in memory of their children.

Regular sharing groups will follow.



* Join The Compassionate Friends, Nashville, TN on Facebook. Let’s support each other there too.*

*The*[*carnation*](http://www.proflowers.com/carnations-car)*’s scientific name is Dianthus.*

*‘Dianthus’, roughly translated, means “flower of love”*

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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

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**Mother’s Day—or Remembering Mothering Sunday**

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s we approach this special day, so painful to many bereaved mothers, we send our loving

thoughts to all those experiencing the loss of their precious children this year. Somehow these formerly lovely days—like Christmas—are so full of treasured memories that they become especially sad.

In the early days of bereavement, in our often anguished response to Mother’s Day, it is easy to overlook our other children (if we are fortunate enough to have any) who desperately need our love. It is easy to forget, too, our own mothers or lonely older relatives and friends who also need our love and concern. Although we are deeply grieving and will always feel a special sadness on this day as we remember the hug we are not getting, the bright face which should be greeting us, the events which might have been, we must also try to remember our vital and essential place in our families and in the lives of others.

On this Mother’s Day I will be remembering Rhys who next month would have been twenty one. The life I shared with him was incredibly precious and now seems like a beautiful dream. However, now almost ten years later, other facets have appeared to make my life meaningful again. The fog of grief has passed, and now I can look forward to the future once again, treasuring memories, yet growing from my past sorrow. Please believe that it will happen for you, too.

Margaret Harmer

TCF, Melbourne, Australia

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**For Childless Parents**

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know there are many of you out there who have no surviving children. I feel almost apologetic for mentioning Mother’s Day or Father’s Day in the May or June newsletters, but those who have surviving children need to have the feelings that accompany their loss addressed. I do want those of you who are now childless to know we are aware of the pain these special days bring as you struggle to find reasons to go on. I hope you will use the friends you have to help you through these times. Though your child has died, the memories of him or her didn’t die. Share them with someone who cares, who may not know exactly how you feel, but who cares about your pain. I’m one of them!

Mary Cleckley

TCF, Atlanta, GA

**Mother’s Day**

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hat first Mother’s Day after Raymond died was a dark day. I had not only lost my son, but in losing him I was no longer a mother. The telephone didn’t ring; I felt very much alone. I let the tears fall and fell asleep lying on Raymond’s bed.

While I was sleeping a neighbor came by with a small pot of miniature white mums with a note attached. “Now everyone in heaven knows what a great mom you are.” That simple message lifted me, and I was able to smile.

Now, I don’t think I’m a great mom, but a pretty good mom I am—and I’ll always be Raymond’s mom, no matter what! Nothing can take that away. Rather simplistic you say? Yes, but sometimes we need to think in simplistic terms to experience the joy hidden in the sorrow.

TCF, Greater Ozarks Chapter

# *Petunias in a Jelly Glass*

*Held out for me to see,*

*On Mother’s Day*

*for thirteen years*

*My son would give to me.*

*Petunias bobbing brightly,*

*They front a graveyard stone,*

*Watered by my salty tears*

*This Mother’s Day alone.*

Toni Marx

TCF, Springfield, IL

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**A Special Note to Siblings and Fathers**

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n emotional and sentimental day is on Mother’s Day. It can be a very lonely day for moms, even if there are other children in the family, because that one child is not here to wish her “Happy Mother’s Day.”

Siblings, if mom is not responding as you would like her to on that day, give her a big hug and tell her you love her. Be gentle with her. She loves you. She is your mother too, but she is also a mother who is lonely for the absent child.

Dads, hold your wife close and tenderly on that day. She may do a lot of daydreaming and crying and her mind may wander back to when….

If the child who died was an “only child,” dad, be extra kind and loving, maybe take her to lunch or dinner, because even though that child won’t be here with her, she is still a mother and a mother forever she will be.

I am a mother of two beautiful children who are with me and I am a mother of two children who have died.

Verna Smith

TCF, Ft. Worth, TX

***Save the date: June 12, 2016***

Our 24th Annual Balloon Release in memory of our children

Family members and friends are invited to participate and enjoy the picnic and games afterward.



Watch for details on our chapter website, Facebook and the June newsletter.

##### *Break in the Clouds*

*We can’t take a ruler and measure the skies, for they stretch far beyond human sight*

*Yet one little crack in the greyest of clouds is sufficient to let in the light*

*Of the sun gleaming through from the heaven of blue that is shining behind all the grey*

*Just a bit of a rift and the clouds seem to lift and we say, “What a beautiful day!”*

*The sky of your life may be stormy and dreary and your heart may be burdened and sad*

*But there’s bound to be one little break in the clouds, so remember the blessings you’ve had*

*And start adding up all the good things received, there’ll be many, of that I’ve no doubt*

*If you lift up your eyes to the patch in the skies where the sun’s trying hard to come out.*

*The outlook may chill you, the future may fill you with omens of doubt and fear*

*But don’t let it get you, though troubles beset you, look upward and be of good cheer*

*Remember one rift in the grey is enough for revealing the gold and the blue*

*Though clouds seem opaque, there will soon be a break and the sun will come shimmering through.*

Patience Strong

TCF, Mesa, AZ

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he Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Scottsdale, Arizona, will be the site of the 39th TCF National Conference on July 8-10, 2016. "Hope Rises on the Wings of Love" is the theme of this year's event which promises a great National Conference experience. The 2016 Conference will be held at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. Details and registration can be accessed on the national website, www.compassionatefriends.org, as well as on the TCF/USA Facebook Page. Adult Registration (ages 18 +) $90.00 each*,* Child Registration (ages 9-17) $40.00 each.

Limited reimbursement funds are available for some first-time TCF Nashville attendees. Please contact our Chapter Leaders, Roy and Barbara Davies, [tcfroyandbarbara@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfroyandbarbara@yahoo.com) for more information.

*Plan to be part of this heartwarming experience.*

Beginning to Live Again

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he facts surrounding the death of my daughter are painful to recall. Early in my grief, my world was in a shambles. I lived with doubts, became careless about money, my general health. . . everything. I refused to make plans to improve my lot.

How long did this phase last? I think a change began about two years later, in 1980. I began to see other things in the world and decided to try to pick up the pieces of my life. Would a move to new surroundings help? I proceeded slowly on this idea and did not leave my old home until early 1982. Yes, it did help. I busied myself with my new home. I began to have entire days or entire nights without that awful statement, “gunshot wound to the head,” echoing in my mind.

Last year a favorite sister died and that was after I had begun to enjoy life again. Sometimes I feel that I can’t take any more sadness, but as long as I live and care about people something painful will happen. Something else will happen. But here I am. I am a survivor. I try to roll with the punches, look for new experiences and search diligently for cheerful situations. People I know only casually may also have a pain, an agony, they have not shared with me. I try to avoid saying or doing anything that may hurt others.

Losing my daughter will not get any easier. I miss her as much today as I did when she first went away to North Carolina to finish her graduate degree. Some days I am extremely depressed, but other days I am almost happy. Can this be? Is it possible for me to be happy? Yes. I must enjoy the moment: a delicious meal, the pleasure of conversation with friends, the joy of dancing, singing, walking, travelling. I must, for I do not know what is in my tomorrow.

Florence Godfrey

TCF, Camden Co., NJ

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**CHAPTER INFORMATION**

**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.

**What is the Yellow Slip?**

Please return your yellow renewal slip. After a year on the newsletter mailing list, those names that were added in that month of a previous year, will receive a yellow half-sheet asking that their subscription be renewed. This is simply to keep our mailing list and the information in it current. If you do not send the yellow slip back, we must assume that you no longer want the newsletter. Although you are given an opportunity to make a voluntary donation, there is no cost involved in your subscription. The newsletter is our gift to you for as long as you wish to receive it. You may request that your name be returned to the active list at any time simply by calling 615-356-4TCF (4823).

**Religion and TCF**

The Principles of The Compassionate Friends state that TCF reaches out to all bereaved parents across the artificial barriers of religion, race, economic class, or ethnic group. Further, TCF espouses no specific religious or philosophical ideology. Despite our nondenominational status, many writers indicate that they have found comfort in their faith, and some have shared their anger and loss of faith. The opinions and beliefs expressed in letters, articles and poetry are those of the contributors.

**Newsletter Deadline**

In order to meet printing deadlines, all donations and original poems or articles must be received by the meeting day of the preceding month to be published in the next issue of the TCF Nashville newsletter. All donations and submissions are greatly appreciated.

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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.

**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.

**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

**Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents**

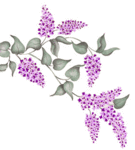
For general information about Grief Support Services at Alive Hospice, please call the main number: [615 963-4732](tel:615%20963-4732) or email [griefsupport@alivehospice.org](mailto:griefsupport@alivehospice.org). Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at 615-346-8554. Contact John Baker at 615-346-8364 for bereaved parent support or individual counseling.

**Other TCF Chapters**

There are several other chapters of The Compassionate Friends you might want to know about. Anytime you are in their vicinity or feel the need to talk with other bereaved parents, feel free to attend their meetings. Also, when you personally know a newly bereaved family in one of these towns, please call the chapter number and give them the information so they can make contact with the family. To locate a chapter, you may call the TCF National Office at 1-877 969-0010, or go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on chapter locator.

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***Lilacs***

Come, look at May with me.

The world is music.

The lilacs laugh

and every meadow sings.

Your heart forgets to think

Of spring or summer,

forgets the grief

that happened in the snow.

Until a memory

moves into sunlight

to bring the child,

the child who is not here.

Still, look at May with me

and hear the music.

And—for a moment—

hear the lilacs weep.

Sascha Wagner

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***Perennials***

*Good memories*

*are the perennials*

*That bloom again*

*after the hard winter of grief—*

*begins to yield to hope.*

Sascha