

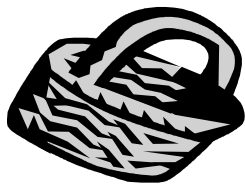
# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) or 646-8940•Nashville Web Site: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://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 HCA building on Park Plaza just north of Centennial Park off of 25<sup>th</sup> 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.*



**August 12**

## Ask it Basket

**B**ereaved parents are often plagued with questions regarding their grief. 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. If there is something bothering you, bring your questions for the basket. We invite our old-timers to come and lend a hand.

### 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  
646-1333
- AIDS**.....Joyce Soward  
754-5210
- Illness**.....David and Peggy Gibson  
356-1351
- Infant**.....Patti Drexler  
834-8892
- SIDS**.....Kris Thompson  
931 486-9088
- Murder/ Suicide**.....Joe Ladd  
361-7996
- Small Child**.....Kenneth and Kathy Hensley  
237-9972

## Grief and Vacation Time

**B**e gentle with yourself. Don't expect too much on your first vacation. Remember, as bereaved parents, the first time we do anything without our kids is tough, whether it is going to the movies, shopping or on a vacation.

Plan to do some grief work because you will...planned or not. Give yourself the freedom to change your plans if you had a bad day.

Know that your child will be on your mind just as if you were at home.

Plan a vacation that is restful. You need all the rest you can get. An exhausted body will depress you.

If you have surviving children, plan some activities especially for them. Remember that vacation time is difficult for them too.

Allow yourself to enjoy your vacation. You are not being disloyal to your child if you do. New experiences in new places with new people can refresh you. However, when you do something that your child would have enjoyed, you will probably still hurt.

Going away and coming home can be especially difficult for the newly bereaved. Know that this is normal, but keep in mind that it will be better in time.

Anne Baklarz  
TCF, Pittsburg, PA

## BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

### Survivors of Suicide

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings and receiving their helpful newsletter, you may reach Tina Benson at one of the following: Write to SOS, P.O. Box 40752, Nashville, TN 37204; call 615 244-7444; email [nashsos@webtv.net](mailto:nashsos@webtv.net); or fax 615 383-9714.

### Help for Bereaved Children

The Grief Center at Alive Hospice now provides individual counseling for grieving children and teens, as well as their family members. Also, a periodic children's support group is being offered. For further information, you may call Lauren Thurman, CMSW, Children's Grief Counselor, at 615 963-4829.

### Alive Hospice Support Group For Bereaved Parents

Every other Thursday, an ongoing support group for bereaved parents meets at Alive Hospice. For details, please call John Baker at 615 963-4674.

### Times for TCF Videos on TV Channel 19

Do you have a question about what you're feeling? This informative thirty-minute program about grief and The Compassionate Friends can be seen on Channel 19 (Community Access Channel) in the Nashville area. Two videos are shown, with a break between them giving information about the Nashville chapter. The program may be seen on Mondays at 2:00 P.M., Tuesdays at 8:30 A.M., Wednesdays at 10:00 A.M., Thursdays at 7:30 A.M., Fridays at 11:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M., and Saturdays at 10:30 A.M.

## CHAPTER INFORMATION

### Religion—A Continuing Theme

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.

### Change of Address?

Due to the large number of newsletters we deliver each month, it is essential to keep our database up-to-date. We must rely on you, the recipient, to let us know if you have moved. We ask that you help us by remembering to let us know when you have a change of address so the newsletter will reach you each month. Thank you.

### 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 "Let Us Remember Them" list on page 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 your child's name to appear, the child's birth and death dates, and the parents' names as they should be listed. You may drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205, or email us at [tcf@tcfnashville.org](mailto:tcf@tcfnashville.org). We'll be glad to include your child's name.

### TCF Web Site

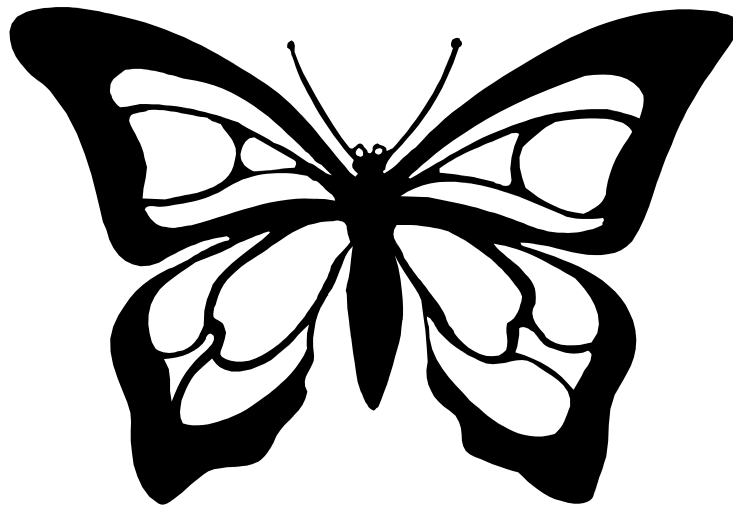
Go to the TCF Web site at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) to find a wealth of information about TCF and grief—poetry and articles, chat rooms, grief in the news, other chapter web sites, including Nashville, and numerous other resources. Check it out.

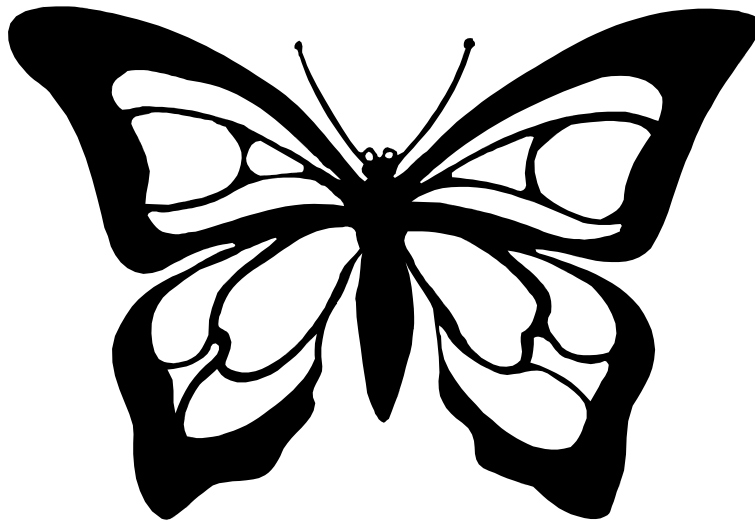
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**NOTE:** TCF Nashville Newsletters are now available on our Chapter website. <http://www.tcfnashville.org>

## LET US REMEMBER THEM

In the month of their births, the month of their deaths—and always, with love





The melody of the child who played upon the piano of my life will never be played quite that way again, but I must not close the keyboard and allow the instrument to gather dust. I must seek out other artists of the spirit, new friends who will help me find the music of life again, creating new tunes and harmonies to enhance the melody which will always sing in my heart.

Carol Cavin

*Bryan Houstrup and Joe Philpott at Allegra Print & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, donate the printing, collating and stapling of this newsletter each month as a gift to the families of TCF. Deanna Brown and her family label, sort and mail the newsletter in loving memory of their son, Marcus Dean Brown. We are very grateful for these people and their generosity to all of us.*

## *Nobody Lets Me Cry Anymore*

*Nobody lets me cry anymore.  
They say they are so proud.  
They're proud of how I'm doing.  
How can I let them down?*

*I want to scream, I want to hide.  
I want to run away.  
Sometimes I truly wonder  
How I can face another day.*

*I wear a mask, it's made of steel.  
It is supposed to be so strong.  
But inside I am dying.  
Where did it all go wrong?*

*Life was supposed to be happy.  
In my dreams it was never sad.  
But losing a child is something else.  
The feelings of grief are just too bad.*

*I wonder if I'll ever be  
The same person I was before.  
But as I see the days go by,  
I realize my heart is torn.*

*Never will I have a day  
That peacefully passes by.  
My days are filled with hauntings.  
With you a part of me died.*

*I love you, Hannah, with all my heart.  
Please hear these words I speak.  
Nobody lets me cry anymore,  
But in my heart your memory I'll always keep.*

*Kimberly Grimme  
TCF, Jackson, MS*

*I will always cry sometimes..  
Because I miss him.*

*I will always laugh sometimes...  
Because I knew him.*

*TCF, Lexington, KY*

## *Just Ten Weeks*

*For just 10 weeks  
I had you to myself.  
And 10 weeks seems too short a time  
For you to have changed me so profoundly.  
In just 10 weeks I came to know you...  
And to love you.  
You came to trust me with your life.  
Oh, what a life I had planned for you!  
Just 10 weeks.  
Then I lost you.  
I lost a lifetime of hopes,  
Plans, dreams, and aspirations.  
A slice of my future simply vanished overnight.  
Just 10 weeks.  
It wasn't enough time to convince others how  
Special and important you were.  
How odd, a truly unique person has died recently  
And no one is mourning the passing.  
Just 10 weeks.  
And no "normal" person would cry all night over  
A tiny 10 week fetus, or get depressed and withdrawn  
Day after endless day.  
No one would, so why am I?  
You were just 10 weeks, my little one.  
But it seems you only needed 10 weeks  
To make my life so much richer and give  
Me a small glimpse of eternity.*

*Susan Erling  
TCF, St. Paul, MN*

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## *On Your Birthday*

*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 the 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*

## *Once...Forever was Forever*

Once...forever was forever,  
 A wisp of happiness once known  
 And held so gently at a mother's breast,  
 A tiny hand curled tightly into mine at dusk  
 A tear that falls onto a quivering mouth  
 While a sensitive heart lies broken,  
 And all who watch will see  
 A smile so brave beneath  
 The glistening eyes.  
 Such a few short years,  
 Filled with dreams of things to come,  
 Yet nothing changed  
 In all the years of dreaming.  
 The tear, the smile,  
 The tender heart,  
 The shoulders squared beneath  
 The cruelty of the times,  
 A birth...a life cut short...  
 And forever lasted but a moment.

Cathryn Haywood  
 TCF, Nova Scotia, Canada

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## *Sometimes*

Sometimes, something clicks, and with a tear  
 Remembrance of the pain and the loneliness  
 Floods the heart.

Sometimes, something clicks, and with a smile  
 Remembrance of the love and the laughter  
 Floods the senses.

And there are times when nothing clicks at all  
 And a voice echoes through the emptiness  
 And numbness never finding the person  
 Who used to fill that space.

And sometimes the most special times of all  
 A feeling ripples through your body, heart, and soul  
 That tells you that person never left you  
 And he's right there with you through it all.

Kirsten Hansen  
 Bereaved Sibling  
 ] TCF, Kenifield, CA

## *#1 Brother*

I've been wanting to write these words for so long  
 But found it hard to say what I was feeling.  
 Besides loneliness and feelings of forlorn,  
 There's this missing piece in my life,  
 A space in my heart  
 That I know time can never heal.

Some days when I'm thinking of you  
 A smile comes easy.  
 Other days, like today,  
 It's my tears that fall like the rain.  
 I'm missing you so much, big brother.

I look for you in the face of a crowd.  
 I search to find resemblance anywhere, in anyone,  
 Hoping that seeing that slight  
 Resemblance will numb the pain  
 At least for a while,  
 Maybe take a way the ache in my heart  
 And put that smile back on my face.

I know you're watching out for me,  
 And I know you're with me.  
 And until the day when we are with each other,  
 I'll have to learn to live with the memories  
 And continue to search for your face  
 In the crowd.

Suzanne Hemenway  
 TCF, Montgomery Area

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## *Summerwind*

The one who owns this summer is not here,  
 Not here to know the tender summerwind,  
 Not here to share the glowing and the song.

The one who owns this summer did not live,  
 Not live to touch the richness of this day,  
 This day in summer when you are alone.

Weep to the summerwind,  
 Weep and love again  
 The one you remember.

Sascha

## To Parents Who Have Lost a Child Through Suicide

Parents and siblings of a young person who has completed suicide face an almost overwhelming burden of emotions. It is one of the cruelest tragedies that can happen to a family. To pull oneself out of the emotional wreckage is a mighty struggle. Each parent can be utterly devastated and unable to be supportive to mate or to surviving children. Other family members are shocked and unable to cope with the event. They do not know how to console or help us. Our friends wonder “how could such a thing happen?” They, too, do not know how to help us. We struggle with the “whys”...the unanswered questions and painful memories.

We who count ourselves as survivors...we’ve made it a year, two years; some of us are in the third year...would like to share a few thoughts.

First, you are not alone. We understand whatever you may be feeling for we have been there! Suicide can intensify the feelings of shock, denial, guilt, anger, depression...all a part of the grief process. The course of recovery is up and down. Give yourself plenty of time. You need a great deal of support, at least through the first year. The suicide of one’s child raises painful questions and doubts and fears. We can find ourselves in a spiritual crisis. We question our beliefs and may feel cut off from God. Through sharing with others and listening to others who have walked the same path you may gain some understanding of your reactions, and learn some ways to cope.

But most of all, we, who are in the process of rebuilding our lives, have not forgotten the dark hours of those early days and weeks when we thought we could not live again. We cannot offer you any shortcut through the pain. There isn’t any. But you can help yourself along the way to healing. We can offer you support, encouragement and the hand of friendship.

JoAnn Dodson  
TCF, Louisville, KY

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### She Picked Daisies

One day in the summer of 1984, I was sitting in the den with my husband, David, and our oldest daughter, Paige. We were chatting about nothing in particular when David made an interesting suggestion. “I know what let’s do,” he said. “Let’s plan our funerals.” Since he loved poetry, his first request was for “Thanatopsis” to be read at his own funeral. Before I could even think about my own wishes, Paige spoke up with her own—and they were very clear. She had a warm bond with her father—knowing he liked the poems of Robert Frost, and she asked that Frost’s poem, “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” be read. We feel this was intuitive on her part, for that poem deals with the death of youth. She also said that daisies were her favorite flower and asked that they be used on her casket.

Three months later, in November, Paige came home for the weekend from Memphis where she was doing her graduate studies in social work. Early Sunday morning she lost consciousness following a night long headache. Emergency surgery revealed a highly malignant brain tumor, and six months later she died from complications of chemotherapy. At her funeral, her requested poem was read. Without knowing about our conversation, many people sent arrangements of daisies. Her church sent a lovely white Bible opened to the 23rd Psalm, surrounded by masses of white daisies, and of course, her casket was covered with a blanket of them. On either side of her gravestone, there are bouquets of silk daisies at all times.

As the months go by, we add various other flowers to signify the season—mums in the autumn, pink poinsettias at Christmas time, jonquils in the spring. On each of her special days, her birthday and death anniversary, as well as holidays—vases of fresh daisies are also placed there. At home, I keep fresh daisies on our breakfast table, sometimes a bunch, sometimes only one in a bud vase. Last year, one of our younger daughters was married. As she and her dad came down the aisle, they paused beside a lovely arrangement of daisies to light a special candle in memory of Paige. Paige spent her life “picking more daisies”—she filled her years with usefulness and unselfishness, but, sadly, it’s true: “Nothing gold can stay.” We’ve moved away from those first years of dreadful grief; our lives have not stood still; however, as long as I’m able, I’ll pick daisies in huge handfuls - and our Paige will always be close by.

Peggy Gibson  
TCF, Nashville, TN

## A Grandparent's Point of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives—family, friends, and even strangers.

I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the love a grandparent has for a grandchild and the loss that is felt when the child dies. For a grandparent, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day. The smile that was always on her face is no longer there.

The hurt is so deep and the questions so many. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss the hurt away as you did when she was a child. You have no answers for her questions, for you don't understand the many feelings that you are experiencing yourself. Each day you hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on her face. You search for a little something to say or do that will comfort her. It seems that there is no end to the suffering.

As time goes slowly by, the healing process begins. In time, a ray of hope will show on her face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to you for what little comfort you can give to her. There will always be a part of you that is gone, but in time you can learn to live with the part that is still here.

Ruth Eaton  
TCF, Savannah, GA