

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.

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 25th 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.

Nancy Guthrie Speaks August 12

Nancy “challenges the brokenhearted to move beyond the question ‘Why?’ Don’t let your pain be wasted, she urges. Whether you are struggling with the death of a loved one or the death of a dream, embrace your sorrow and discover it’s hidden gifts.” These words are taken from the jacket of her book. Nancy is author of *Holding on to Hope* and a twice bereaved parent. Please join us as she shares her story.



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

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.

BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

Survivors of Suicide

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings and receiving their helpful newsletter, you may call the Crisis Center at 615 244-7444.

Sharing

Sharing is a community organization interested in helping parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn infant. The parent support group meets the second Thursday evening of each month at 7 p.m. in the Administrative Board Room at The Women's Hospital at Centennial Medical Center located at 2221 Murphy Avenue (between 22nd and 23rd Ave).

Alive Hospice Support Group For Bereaved Parents

The first Thursday of each month, an ongoing support group for bereaved parents meets at Alive Hospice. For details, please call John Baker at 615 963-4674. For general grief (loss of parents, adult siblings, etc.) call 615 963-4732, leave a message and a counselor will return your call.

Times for TCF Videos

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. and Fridays at 11:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.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.

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.

The "Let Us Remember Them" 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 have not been able 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. We'll be glad to include your child's name. You need notify us only one time.

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

Gifts of Love and Remembrance

The following voluntary donations will help The Compassionate Friends to be here for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow. Thank you.

*Kande Wyatt
In loving memory of her son
Will Hinds*

*Stan and Beth Lane
In loving memory of her daughter
Jennifer Lynn Whited*

*Oddie Jones
In loving memory of her son
Jay Jones*

*Donation from
Heather Bowman Nelson
In memory of John Clayton Garrett
Son of Judy Felts
(note that this donation was court
ordered because Heather and another
person caused John some injury. Judy
asked that it be given to TCF)*

*Teddy and Janice Jones
In loving memory of their daughter
Bethany Ann Jones*

*Bill and Silenea Ketchum
In loving memory of their son
Cliff Lyons*

*Larry and Julie Crist
In loving memory of their daughter
Cindy Faye Crist*

“And can it be that in a world so
full and busy the loss of one
weak creature makes a void in
any heart, so wide and deep that
nothing but the width and depth
of vast eternity can fill it up.”

-Charles Dickens

Bryan Houstrup and Joe Philpott at Allegra Printing & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, donate the printing, collating and stapling of this newsletter each month as a gift to the families of TCF. We are very grateful. Also, a special thank you to Deanna Brown and her family who label, sort and mail the newsletter in loving memory of their son, Marcus Dean Brown. We appreciate all of your generosity.



News from the 2007 National Conference



The Trail of Our Tears

One day we'll be together
Like days in the past
As I hold you in my arms
The time has come at last

Until that day arrives
We'll gather once a year
As we try to shed some light
From the shadow of our fear

We gather here in numbers
That is what we do
One thing we like to show
The love we have for you

As our thoughts turn to you
And we sit around and cry
We lost someone we loved
We often wonder why

Our tears are like a river
For sometimes we cannot stop
I think I can count
The falling of each drop

As we sit here together
At a table with our peers
We help each other cope
With the trail of our tears

Vern Bradley
Father of Terri

Oklahoma City, OK

TCF Conference: A Beginner's Perspective

Off to my first National Conference! After an "adventurous" day of rescheduled flights and layovers, I finally arrived weary from travel only to learn that my hotel did not offer shuttle service from the airport, but I digress. Thursday was a day designed more for professionals and TCF Chapter Leader-types. Some local sight seeing could be done, but after a day of airline unexpecteds, simply getting to the hotel was adventure enough for one day.

Friday, it was early to rise to get checked in at Cox Convention Center. My roomie and I missed the opening ceremony but Elizabeth Edwards (bereaved parent and wife of Senator John Edwards) was quite a hit with the conference-goers. I began attending workshops and was pleased with the variety of topics offered. There was something for everyone: Single or married, loss by long term illness or sudden and unexpected means. There were workshops on coping techniques for the now childless and for those with multiple loss, grandparents, stepparents and siblings, to issues of faith. One could learn about things like journaling and scrapbooking or simply learn to heal through yoga.

Some of the presenters were professionals, others were peers. Friday's Luncheon was some of the most wonderful catered chicken I have ever put in my mouth, such spectacular flavor! The guest speaker for the luncheon was Bill Hancock (Bowl Championship Standings Chairman and bereaved parent). His talk was so moving and so charismatic. I laughed, cried, then he got us laughing again--just in the nick of time. Workshop topics continued throughout the afternoon. Some retreated to the reflection room while others found their way to the Butterfly Boutique for some shopping. Still others found the bookstore. We missed a few, but we tried to get all of our Nashville Chapter attendees together for dinner Friday night in Bricktown, followed by a visit to the Oklahoma Bombing Memorial. It is a very powerful site, moving and very tastefully done.

There is a chair to honor each of those who died that tragic day. The children's chairs are smaller than the adults'. They are lighted and so beautiful at night across the site, by the reflecting pool. There is a portion of the original chain link fence that surrounded the site still erect and full of mementos, notes, wreaths, and some personal effects of the victims. Nashville TCF Chapter left a small stuffed bear on the fence for all of the children lost in the bombing.

Saturday was a long day of cramming in as many workshops as possible. I found myself having to choose between topics and times. I was eager to experience all I could since, as a steering committee member, I will be involved in helping to plan the 2008 Conference, since our chapter is proudly sponsoring next year's gathering of bereaved parents. Saturday ended with a banquet. It's not black tie, but everybody gussied up. The Rev. Simon

Stephens was the guest speaker. For those of you not familiar, he is the founding father of TCF. Many stayed after to visit and share, while others planned to discover the local nightlife. But with the Walk to Remember starting early Sunday morning, this conference attendee found her way to bed.

I don't do mornings, but I will walk for our children, so it was early to bed, early to rise! The Walk to Remember was phenomenal! So many people with so many names of children lost written across their backs! The local news stations covered the event and the local police stopped traffic and kept us safe as we marched the streets of downtown Oklahoma City. Closing ceremonies followed, with yet another guest speaker. Bud Welch lost his daughter in the 1995 Bombing in Oklahoma City. We said goodbye to local chapter friends we'd be seeing soon and to newly-made friends we hope to see again next year.

As a first-timer, I found the national conference to be quite a rewarding experience. I regret not finding my way to one sooner in my eight years with TCF. It never ceases to amaze me, how close the loss of a child can bring us to so many strangers from so many different places and walks of life. For the newly bereaved and the "old-timers" that have never been, I encourage each of you to try to attend the TCF National Conference. We of the Nashville Chapter have a real gift in having next year's right here in our own back yard, so to speak. It is so rewarding and so worthwhile. If you are on a budget, if traveling is a fear, 2008 is your national conference year.

Kris Thompson
TCF Nashville

Sunrise in August

Can it be true:
This is an easy morning?
The day is escaping
It's dark confinements.
While sun starts brushing earth
with silken warmth
No strain at all.
No hurry anywhere.

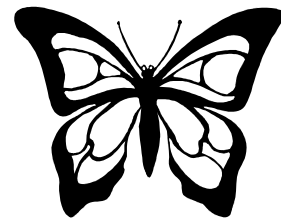
Can it be true:
Your mind is whole and steady?
Now you remember things
As once they were
On other mornings then.
And other days...

Can it be true:
This is an easy morning?
Remembering doesn't hurt?
And you can close your eyes
and you can see, can smile at sunrise.

This is an easy morning.
Use it well.

-

Sascha



Death is but a
MOMENT...

Love is

FOREVER !!

Darcie Sims
Footsteps Through The Valley

Origins

Origins are important- they give us a sense of our heritage. I was thinking about the origin of the butterfly as the symbol of The Compassionate Friends, and I heard or read somewhere that the butterfly was selected because it was often used in artwork by children in concentration camps in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II. Upon doing a little internet research, I discovered the book, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. It was a fascinating and painful book to read, as I had never studied much about the events of the Holocaust. The book contained a collection of drawings and writings, mostly poetry, of children who passed through the ghetto of Terezin (Theresienstadt) near Prague between 1942 and 1944. Terezin was a German propaganda "model city" built to house deported Jewish citizens and convince the world that the German treatment of Jews was humane. What the world did not know was that Terezin was only a stopover, and the ultimate destination of the occupants temporarily housed there were the gas chambers and furnaces at Auschwitz and other death camps. More than 141,000 Jews passed through Terezin during the time of its use as a concentration camp. The book says, "A total of 15,000 children under the age of 15 passed through the Terezin Concentration Camp between the years of 1942 and 1944; less than 100 survived." It is a horror so evil, that there are no words to describe it.

Those children left behind more than 5,000 drawings and many poems which were preserved. A poem written by Pavel Freidman dated June 4, 1942 was part of the legacy. Pavel was deported to Terezin in 1942 and perished in Auschwitz in 1944. The poem was called "The Butterfly," Pavel was only 23 years old when he died.

The Butterfly

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzling yellow

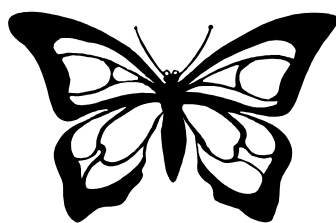
Perhaps if the sun's tears
Would sing against a white stone
Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished to
Kiss the world goodbye.

For seven weeks I've lived here,
Penned up inside this ghetto
But I have found my people here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut candles in the
court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don't live in here,
In the ghetto.

Pavel Freidman

Article composed and poem submitted by Lamar Bradley, TCF Nashville. Thanks for your insight



New Donation to the Library

Special Thanks to Jenny Shoemaker, donating in memory of her sister
Sharlene Borden Gladstone

Thanks to her, we now have *Celebration of Angels*, by Timothy Jones
As a welcome addition to our chapter library.

Don't forget the library is here for you. Check things out, keep as long as you need then return them
when you can

The Storm of Grief

It comes like a huge thunderbolt--shocking and deafening you to all else around you. Suddenly the world that has been so bright is black and desolate. There seems to be no hope. The tears come like torrential rains. The winds of reality come, and you are torn by the pains and fears caused by the storm. Even when the tears stop for a while, the dark clouds loom over you, threatening you with more tears and more pain. Most passersby can't help you through the storm because they have never been caught in one like it-- and some don't seem to care. There are a few who will reach out their hand to try to pull you from the storm, but the storm must be endured. And then there are the special ones—the ones who are willing to walk with you through the storm. Usually these are people who have been there before and know that the storm can be survived. After a time, the torrential rains turn to slow showers, and then the showers come less often. But the clouds don't go away. The sadness and pain remain but become more bearable. Eventually, as the clouds begin to part, there may even be a rainbow—a sign of hope. And as the sun begins to shine a little more, flowers of memory will be enjoyed. I don't think the showers will ever end, but I believe that as they get farther apart the sky will get more blue. We will see more rainbows and the flowers will bloom more and more. Perhaps it's even good to have a shower now and then, to cleanse our souls and revive those special flowers of memory.

Mary Jo Pierce
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL