

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.



Candlelight Memorial Service

December 10, 2006 - 3:00 pm

HCA Headquarters Auditorium

A *ll family members are invited to join us as we honor the lives of our children who have died.*

Each family is asked to bring a stand-up picture 5"x7" or smaller, or other memento of your child to place at the front of the auditorium.

This will be in addition to the slides and photos already received for the screen presentation.

Refreshments will be served following the service. If you can bring a plate of cookies or snacks, it would be most appreciated. (Please mark your name on the bottom of your plate or container.)

The birthday table will be set up for those who wish to share their child's December birthday.

May the memories of this season come on gentle wings to touch you with peace.

Once I wanted total happiness. Now I'll settle for a little less pain.

- Ashley Brilliant

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.

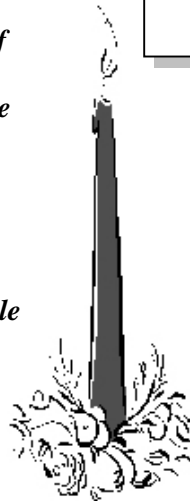
Accidental Death	Mike and Paula Childers	646-1333
AIDS	Joyce Soward	754-5210
Illness	David and Peggy Gibson	356-1351
Infant	Patti Drexler	834-8892
SIDS	Kris Thompson	931 486-9088
Murder/ Suicide	Joe Ladd	361-7996
Small Child	Kenneth and Kathy Hensley	237-9972

Along the Road

*I walked a mile with Pleasure;
 She chattered all the way,
 But left me none the wiser
 For all she had to say.*

*I walked a mile with Sorrow
 And ne'er a word said she;
 But oh, the things I learned from her
 When Sorrow walked with me!*

-Robert Browning Hamilton



Holiday Gifts for Children in Need

Each year, our chapter donates holiday gifts to children at a worthy establishment that works with the needs of children that are not living at home and are under care during the holidays. The Youth Villages organization is who we will be providing gifts to this year. The children's ages are from 6 through 18. For many of these children, our gifts will be the only presents they will receive this holiday season. If you would like to participate, please bring your gifts to the December 10 memorial service.

IMPORTANT: DO NOT WRAP GIFTS. It would be helpful if you would bring gifts in open-top Christmas bags; all others will be wrapped at the center. Suggested items include the following:

Most requested items:

CD players
 Gameboy games (Teen Rated)
 Playstation games (Teen Rated)
 Costume jewelry from places like Claire's
 Remote control cars or planes
 Girly things like journals, gel pens, scrapbooking items
 Model cars
 Gift cards for Malls, like Hickory Hollow or Rivergate
 Board games
 Baby and Barbie dolls & accessories
 Disney movies (DVD & VHS)
 Lego sets
 Watches (girls & boys)
 Model trucks
 Gift cards for Best Buy & Circuit City

Stocking Stuffers:

Match Box cars
 Small notepads
 Pens and pencils
 Jewelry
 Candy
 Hygiene products
 Billfolds/wallets
 Cute change purses for girls
 Makeup
 Socks
 Gift cards to McDonalds & Burger King

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.

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

John Baker has suspended private counseling for the Grief Center at Alive Hospice; however bereaved parents meet as a group the first Thursday of each month. For details, please call John Baker at 615 963-4674.

For general grief (loss of parents, adult siblings, etc.) Call 963-4732, leave a message and a counselor will return your call.



2006 Worldwide Candle Lighting
 In Memory of All Children

Sunday, December 10

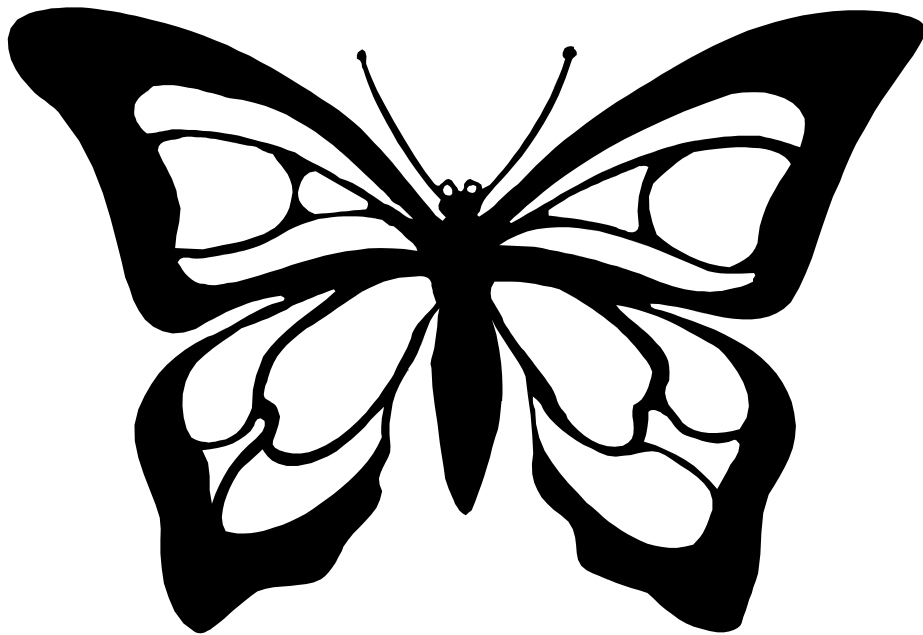
The Worldwide Candle Lighting is held each year on the second Sunday in December, at 7:00 P.M. in every time zone. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lighted in the next, creating a 24-hour wave of light that encircles the globe.

TCF invites you to join in this special day of remembrance by lighting a candle at 7:00 P.M. wherever you are.

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



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.

To Those Who Come After

I never knew my brother, yet I knew well; through my mother's eyes I've seen him, and love him still.

I'll grow tall and strong like him, yet not like him at all.

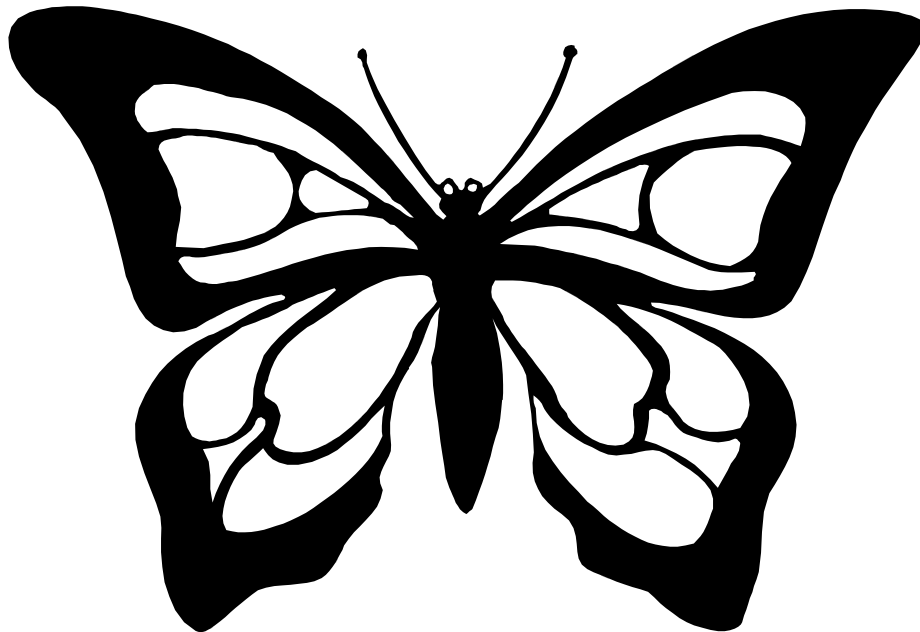
He'll be my guardian angel, and we'll grow through life together, as one.

I have his clothes and his toys and his photos.

I hold them dear to me.

But most of all, I treasure the loving memories, the memories my mother gave to me.

*Karen Holland
TCF, Brisbane, Australia*



What the caterpillar thought was the end of life - - - the butterfly knew was just the beginning...

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.

The Christmas Tears

*I will gather with the family,
Christmas Day is finally here.
But I will reserve a moment of time
To shed my Christmas Tears.*

*This special moment is just for us
A mother and her son
I'll laugh and cry about times gone by
And all the things we've done.*

*As I sing our Christmas carols
I'll open the gift you made for me.
This gift is more precious than gold itself,
It's the gift of your memory.*

*As I sift through the layers of tissue
That are in this gift of mine,
It takes me back to a Christmas past,
To a brighter and happier time.*

*I'll relive all the Christmases
That we had for twenty-two years,
Knowing that there will be no more
Brings on the Christmas tears.*

*But you have bestowed a second gift,
That starts things all anew,
A granddaughter to mend the hole in my heart,
That was left by losing you.*

*I trust these precious gifts of yours
Will sustain me through the years,
And maybe there will be a Christmas day,
With no more Christmas tears.*

*Linda McInturff
TCF Southern Maryland Chapter*

"I have been trying to make the best of grief and am just beginning to learn to allow it to make the best of me."

Barbara Lazear Ascher

A Christmas Card for Robbie

*It's the night before Christmas
We're all filled with joy,
Except when we think of you,
Little boy.*

*The stockings are hung
By the chimney with care,
And in our hearts
It's as if you were here.*

*My children are sleeping,
In their bedrooms they lie,
But we're still filled with grief
For our baby that died.*

*You see, this Christmas
You would have been two
But every Christmas
I know I'll miss you.*

*As I wrap up the presents
My thoughts are on you,
And what we'd have bought
If you were here, too.*

*Kathleen Paley Smith
TCF, Delmar, NY*

The First Yellow Leaf

*Finding the first yellow leaf...
(how it reminds me of autumn)
Finding the first yellow leaf...
(how it reminds me of time).*

*Seems like another new year now.
Not the same year I began.
Nothing reminds me of changings
Quite like a summertime gone.*

*Finding the first yellow leaf
(will it remind me of grieving?)
Everything golden in summer
Turning to gray after fall...*

Sascha Wagner

Sorrow is Not Forever—Love is

So often one attempts to face the whole future at once. But we will not live that period all at once, only day by day. Don't try to face twenty years. Face today. When that has been achieved, face tomorrow. You will find more and more ways in which to you can cope. The Chinese have a saying that a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. There is no way you can take the fifteen or the two hundredth step before you have taken the first.

It can be difficult to face going out again and resuming your regular activities. It can take more courage to face little things than the big things in life.

Going out shopping for groceries for the first time can become an ordeal. Making the change more complete could help. Try a different store, a different day or time, and go with a friend. When it seems very hard what to decide to do first, maybe it's not very important where you start as long as you start. Choose a simple task and get started.

Once you've begun it will be far easier to set your priorities and you will have gained confidence for already having achieved something.

--The facts of Death by Michael A. Simpson

Not Just for the Holidays, But Everyday

When you speak, speak softly, to whomever it is your privilege to speak, to wife, to husband, to child, to stranger, to friend, to God—speak softly.

Touch often. Without human touch the spirit withers and dries to dust. Shake hands, clasp shoulders, embrace, stroke a child's hair or a lover's. Rock someone on your lap in a rocking chair, adults appreciate this probably more than children, it is one of the most loving, secure feelings a person can have. You'll both feel peaceful.

Sing! Sing for someone. Sing loudly in the shower, sing in your choir. Sing as you work. If you "can't sing," sing a lullaby, a baby won't know the difference but will feel the love. Sing a silly song for a small child and the funny sound of your song will make him or her laugh and long remember the time you sang it. Sing the *Star Spangled Banner*, no one can sing that! Everyone will love your singing for some reason and by doing so, love you. And love is what life's all about, isn't it?

Most of all, love. Love yourself first. When you truly love life everyone can see it. It shines from your eyes, your face glows with love-light that makes strangers look at you a second time, you will see the corners of their mouths turn up in the beginning of a smile as they walk by.

My Christmas wish for you is that you find something to do—work or play, that you have an absolute passion for like I do in *The Compassionate Friends*.

Speak Softly, Touch Often, Sing, Love...

Fay Harden
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

The holiest of all holidays are kept by ourselves in silence and apart—the secret anniversaries of the heart.

—Longfellow

Christmas Star

It's here again, son, though I sought to forestall the season from arriving by waiting 'till the day before to buy the tree. Even then I refused to put it in its place before the window until all were abed: To be alone with tree and thoughts of you hoisting it over thresholds of yore with cherry cheeks and white breath. Remarkable, really, that I had no trouble placing the tree in the holder you'd made nor stringing lights, hanging ornaments both store-bought and child-constructed, until I came to the star. Oh, I tried more than once, but each time I could see you creating a ceremony of hanging it just right, and I could not. So, I sat down with cookies and cider to wait for the pandemonium of Christmas breaking o'er the land. Later I noticed something glowing atop the tree. Outside a star shone low in such a way its light appeared upon our tree—where I placed our star to silhouette its glow. Thank you, son, for hanging the star.

Marcia Alig
TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, NJ

Today I Didn't Cry

Today I didn't cry. The pages of your scrapbook stayed dry. As I turned the pages, you came back to me, and we played in the park and I laughed at the ducks. I pushed your stroller down the sidewalk and we giggled at the birds. We had birthday cake and chased the fall leaves together. As I turned the pages, you and I lived again...we were brother and sister. I used to be afraid of closing the scrapbook. I thought the memories might fade if I didn't keep them fresh. But, I haven't opened your book in a long time, and today, when I did, you came back and I didn't cry.

I can't believe that it has been so long since you died, Austin. I was only a little girl then. And now, when I look at your pictures, it's like a very long time ago a whole different lifetime. I've grown up without you, little brother. You are pictures in the scrapbook, memories in my hear, and music in my flute. You are a part of me, and I don't need the scrapbook to remember you. Maybe that's why there aren't tears any more, I didn't lose you, baby brother. You really are a part of me. You are the part of love that never goes away.

Alicia Sims
From: Am I Still a Sister?

TCF Giving

Emerson said it well: "Rings and jewels are not gifts. The only true gift is a portion of thyself." We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the mind: ideas, dreams ideals, principles, plans, projects, poetry. We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the spirit: prayer, peace, faith. We give of ourselves when we give the gift of time and when we give words of encouragement, inspiration, guidance. We in TCF give of ourselves every time we gather in our meeting room in our circle we share our innermost thoughts, we surely give each other encouragement and strength when we listen, when we cry those hot, salty tears. We laugh together something most of us thought we had forgotten to do at the time we entered that room for our first encounter. We give each other hope to carry on our shattered lives—hope that there really is a future for each one of us out there somewhere. Together we go forward month after month, continually giving of ourselves to each other. Remarkable, isn't it? No doubt about it. This is what TCF is all about.

TCF, Rochester, NY

Christmas Thoughts

Beyond the Christmas trees, the angels and stars and beloved carols...Beyond the presents, the shopping, the baking and cooking...Beyond all of these sights and sounds of Christmas...Beyond all of these—there is hope.

Hope for the bereaved parent, even at Christmas, one of the most, if not the most painful times of the year, there is an essence of hope. Hope...It is hope that sustains us through the days of grief and anger and frustration and loneliness.

The hope is that someday the pain of the deaths of our children will be eased. The hope is that someday our smiles will be real. The hope is that once again we will laugh and love and also cry completely without fear and hollowness. It is the hope that someday we can remember our children with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelmed with it.

So it is that for each of you, I would hope: peace, compassion, love, sympathy, understanding, sharing, and listening. In the sharing of our grief with one another, and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and understand all of these gifts.

Carole Ragland
TCF, Houston/West TX

