

The Compassionate Friends



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org
Lamar and Joy Bradley, Chapter Leaders, 615 889-1387, email: lbradley1@mindspring.com
Kris Thompson, Newsletter Editor, 615 480-5038, email: carsonsmom207@yahoo.com
Jayne Head, Outreach Coordinator, 615 859-2256, email: alanandgraysonsmom@comcast.net
David Gibson, Regional Coordinator, 615 356-1351, email: davidg14@bellsouth.net

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 to be held December 9 at 3pm

We will be honoring our beloved children this month through our annual Candlelight Memorial Service. It is held in the auditorium of the HCA building where our monthly meetings are held. Family, friends and siblings are all invited to this event. We ask that families bring a dish of pick up foods to share. Feel free to share desserts, vegetables, meats, or anything that might have been a favorite for your child. During the ceremony, you will see our children displayed upon the movie theater-like screen. As the children's names are spoken, parents are given an opportunity to come forward and place a candle in front of a photo of their child on the stage. Please remember to keep photos 5x7 or smaller as space is often at a premium. Come join us in this difficult holiday time.

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 PM



Chapter Information

Gifts for Youth Villages Children

At December's monthly meeting, you are invited to bring any donated items collected for our TCF holiday charity opportunity. Each year, the TCF family finds a needy charitable organization to assist during the holiday season. This allows bereaved parents the opportunity to make a difference in another child's Christmas by getting gifts together to give. This year, we have selected Youth Villages. There is a list on page 6 of suggested/requested items. Remember, please, DO NOT wrap the gifts.

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.

Newsletter and Donations Deadlines

Remember that all newsletter submissions and monetary donations need to be received no later than the day AFTER the monthly meeting. Any suggestions for improving the newsletter are always welcome.

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.

Note: TCF Newsletters are available on our chapter website at <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.

*Wayne and Marsha Vick
In loving memory of their son
Daniel Vick*

*Bill Watkins and Margaret Chitwood-
Watkins
In loving memory of their grandsons
Clayton Lee Chitwood and
Matthew Lance Chitwood
Sons of Jim and Connie Chitwood*

*Booker and Tula Anderson
In loving memory of their daughter
Stephanie Renee Anderson*

*John and Georgia Warren
In loving memory of their son
James Donald Warren (Donnie)*

*Bob and Cissy Burgeson
In loving memory of their sons
John Edward Burgeson and
Bill Burgeson*

*Shirley Rich
In loving memory of her son
Burt Rich*

*Jerry and Loretta Winters
In loving memory of their son
Don Bruce Winters*

*Stephen and Monica Bonnell
In loving memory of their daughter
Gabrielle Kathleen Bonnell*

*Jessie and Bernice Thompson
In loving memory of their son
Terry Dixson*

*Jim and Charmayne King
In loving memory of their son
Curtis Daniel Barnes*

*John and Georgia Warren
In loving memory of their son
John David (Johnny) Warren*

*Dr and Mrs Roy Renfro
In loving memory of their grand-
daughter*

*Lindsay Carole Miller
Daughter of
David and Rebecca Miller*

*Preston and Janice Birdsong
In loving memory of their son
Preston Chauncey Birdsong*

*Oddie Bryant Jones
in loving memory of her son
James (Jay) Jones, Jr.*

*Stan and Ann Smith
In loving memory of their son
Jonathan Daniel Smith*

*Beverly Sudberry
In loving memory of her son
Jason Roden*

*Ruth Edwards
In loving memory of her son
Marvin Edwards*

*Ike and Kim Shore
In loving memory of their daughter
Samantha Dawn Shore*

*Bobbie Sue Graham
In loving memory of her grandson
Robert Dewayne Harper*

*Dwight and Jane Newman
In loving memory of their daughters
Brittney Ann Newman
and
Megan Frances Newman*



TCF
Worldwide
Candlelighting
December 9
See Page 7
For details

Gratitude: The Key To Happiness

I am convinced that the real key to happiness is gratitude. I did not come upon this insight. I learned it from Dennis Prager, a wonderful and gifted man who is both author and talk show host for KNBC Radio in Los Angeles. I give him all the credit. But I have thought a lot about this idea after my son, Mark, died seven years ago. At first, people who smiled, or even laughed during TCF meetings offended me. These were the people who seemed to have somehow re-entered the land of the living. How dare they greet each other with hugs? How dare they laugh? How dare they appear normal when their children have died? But over the last seven years, I have learned three valuable lessons:

LIFE GOES ON AND WE MUST TOO. Gradually the pain eases and the warm memories replace the sadness. Gradually we return to life. One day we find that it is 11:00 in the morning and we have not thought about our child yet. At first we feel guilt. Then we also realize we are going forward. We will never forget. But we decide that the loss of our child will not be the all-consuming factor in our life. We choose to enjoy friends again. We choose to go out to dinner again. We choose to laugh again. I am convinced that this is what our children would want for us. The pain does not bring our child back. It only makes us miserable without end.

BECOME GRATEFUL FOR WHAT WE HAVE, NOT FOCUSED ON WHAT WE HAVE LOST. I see people in our chapter meetings who have gone through “every parent’s nightmare and want no part of life again. But, I ask these compassionate friends also to think about the ways they have been blessed, as well as hurt. In my experience, most people have more to be thankful for than they realize; health, other children, a loving family, a career they enjoy, financial security, life in a free country, a faith that works for them, a true best friend, a spouse whom they love. Nobody has it all. But compared to most of the world, we have a lot.

THE LIFE WE NOW LEAD WILL BE BETTER THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN. That does not make our child’s death a good thing. **It just means that our child’s life mattered, and it has changed us forever.** It means that in some small way the world will be better because our child lived, and we are the ones who make it so. We have a new sense of priorities. We “don’t sweat the small stuff.” We know what matters because we know what is irreplaceable. And we know how deeply other people hurt because, we too, have been there. We know how they feel.

And when our life is different and better because our child lived then that child is never forgotten. Each of us would do anything in the world to go back in time, but we can’t. It is up to us now to go forward, and we can.

Richard Edler
TCF South Bay/Los Angeles, CA

A Love Song

**The mention of my child’s name may bring tears to my eyes
But it never fails to bring music to my ears.**

***If you really are my friend, please don’t keep me
from hearing the beautiful music.
It soothes my broken heart and fills my soul with love.***

Holiday Gifts For Children Needed

Each year, our chapter donates holiday gifts to children at a worthy establishment that works with the needs of children who are not living at home and are under care for the holidays. Since things went so well with Youth Villages last year, it has been decided to provide gifts to them again this year. The children range in age from 6 to 18. For many of these children, these will be the only gifts they receive this holiday season.

If you would like to donate this year, you may participate by bringing **UNWRAPPED gifts** to the Memorial Service/December TCF event on Sunday, December 9. Below is a list of most requested items.

CD Players
 Gameboy games (teen rated)
 Playstation games (teen rated)
 Costume Jewelry (like that found in the malls at Claire's)
 Remote control cars and planes
 Girly things like journals, gel pens and scrapbooking items
 Model cars or trucks
 Gift cards for the malls (as Hickory Hollow or Rivergate)
 Board Games
 Baby and Barbie dolls and accessories
 Lego sets
 Disney movies (DVD and VHS)
 Watches (girls and boys)
 Gift cards for Best Buy and Circuit City

Stocking stuffers requested:

Matchbox cars
 Small notepads
 Pens and pencils
 Candy
 Jewelry
 Hygiene products
 Billfolds/wallets
 Cute little change purses for girls
 Makeup items
 Socks
 Gift cards to McDonalds or Burger King

Once Again, please note these items may be brought in gift bags with tissue paper, but DO NOT WRAP the gifts. Youth Villages staff does the wrapping as it helps them to more evenly distribute the donated items.

Christmas

*Christmas is for children
 And one of mine is dead!
 That thought keeps running through my mind;*

*When I'm shopping, When I'm walking
 When I'm listening to friends talking*

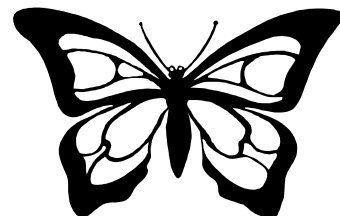
Gaily about their holiday preparations and their kids.

*You learn to stand there
 Silent, smiling, and deeply hurting.*

Member
 TCF Oklahoma City, OK

**You once did something for me
 More meaningful than the greatest of deeds;
 You held me in your arms and let me cry**

Bonnie Jison
 TCF Topeka, KS



First Christmas

Silent night, holy night

*Little angel, taken flight
Forever gone and on your own,
Left your mother so alone*

*A Christmas stocking with your name,
Memories I can't reclaim
No more presents, no surprise
Reflected in your shining eyes.*

*Tinsel sparkle, all seem sad
Three Christmases were all you had.
Gently haunting, your sweet ghost,
The happy times I miss you most.*

Joanetta Hendel
TCF Indianapolis, IN

Dwelling On Our Loss

To an outsider, the idea of meeting with a group of people for the purpose of discussing death, our personal experiences with death, our children and “the grief process,” may seem grim if not altogether morbid. All of us who are involved in TCF have run into someone who has asked, “Why do you do this?” or “Why don’t you just try to let it go?” or “Why keep dwelling on the loss?” The idea of “dwelling on the loss” is always stated with a negative connotation, yet dwelling on the death of a child is not something we can avoid. Indeed, this “dwelling” is part of the healing process. It is how we come to grips with the questions of why and what if, that uncontrollably pop up in our minds. It is how we learn to accept the unacceptable. Certainly, there is a wealth of information in books dealing with death and dying. Our faith, our pastors, priests and rabbis have much to contribute to our healing. Psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists may be necessary. The Compassionate Friends encourages grieving parents to utilize any or all of the afore-mentioned tools. We also realize the value of learning to verbalize openly and publicly, the grief and loss we feel, not in the privacy of doctors’ and ministers’ offices where we are very sheltered, but openly among people who know all too well how hard it is to say, “My child is

dead.” We do not put any pressure on those who attend our meetings. You do not have to say anything. But the beauty of a TCF meeting is that it enables us to see people who are a bit further “down the road” and to realize that we will be there in time. Are we dwelling on our loss? Absolutely! But we are learning to dwell on it constructively without guilt and without isolation that we all have felt. We learn how to bring our grief under control and how to reach out (in time) to others; with a compassion that brings healing to others as well as to ourselves.

Philip Barker
TCF Sacramento, CA

A few months ago, I wrote a quick thanks for the submission of a poem from one of our chapter members. Her son, a bereaved sibling, wrote the poem below in tribute to his sister lost. I saved it for December, as it seemed appropriate for this month. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did upon

Christmas Has No Color

Christmas has no color now

*Since you were torn away.
Twinkling lights and wrappings bright
Are only shades of gray.*

*I thought we had a hundred years
To say what you meant to me.
How could I have known we'd had our last time
Spent 'round the Christmas tree.*

*Christmas has no color now
The tomorrows come no more.
I'll never see your face again
Appearing at my door.*

*If I had only known back then
Your life so soon would end,
I'd have hugged you close with all my might
For I'd had no better friend.*

*It's too late now to make amends
For all I'd meant to do.
Though Christmas has no color now
I'll always remember you.*

Stephen Willis(sibling) Son of Nancy Willis
TCF Nashville, TN Written in tribute to Angela



**2007 Worldwide Candle
Lighting
In Memory of All Children**

Sunday, December 9

You can draw the drapes, go to bed and hope to die... But what kind of tribute to your child is that?

John and Carolyn Bryan
TCF Orange Park, FL

The Worldwide Candle Lighting is held each year on the second Sunday in December, at 7:00 P.M. in every time zone. As

Coming Unwrapped

We wrap ourselves for the holidays much like the presents we give. The brightly colored paper hides what is within. When people look at us, they only see the outside. We promise ourselves we will not come unwrapped. We'll make it through the family celebrations, the church services, and the big occasion. The paper and ribbon will remain intact. But it is the small thing that manages to untie the bow. The little insignificant moment, the Christmas parade, the search for the tree, the discovered ornament, the special carol, the memory. And the paper gets wrenched off. The true Christmas presence shows itself. The inevitable tide of feelings bursts out of the artificially decorated façade. The emotions pour out. The intense anger wells up. The tears are shed and the holidays come. These are as sure as the tides of the sea and the march of time. Only a compassionate friend, a bereaved parent, knows of what I speak. Yet the answer isn't in fighting or denying these feelings. We have paid the price. We have the right to grieve. The resolution of our grief is the grieving. Our hope for all who read this newsletter is that you will make it through the holidays. We cannot make the pain go away, but know that there are others who suffer with you. We have made it and together will continue on.

*Hank Hewett
TCF Scranton, PA*