

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: 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 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 14 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.

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.

We ask that families bring a dish of pick up foods to share. Feel free to share desserts, meats, vegetables, or anything that might have been a favorite of your child's.

Come join us in this difficult holiday time.

*May the memories of this season
Come on gentle wings
To bring you love and peace*



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 |

2008 Worldwide Candle Lighting In Memory of All Children Sunday, December 14

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

CHAPTER INFORMATION

Newsletter Deadlines

In order for donations and contributed poems or articles to be included in the following month's newsletter, we must receive them no later than the Wednesday after the chapter meeting. Any donations received after that date will be included in the next month's issue. Please send them to TCF, P. O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205.

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.

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.



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.

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

Nashville Chapter Leadership Transition in 2009

Some of you may know that our local TCF chapter bylaws place term limits on local chapter leaders. We have been privileged to be co-leaders of the Nashville Chapter for the last four years. It has been a rich and wonderful experience for us and we deeply appreciate the confidence shown in us by first electing us in 2004 and re-electing us again in 2006. It has truly been gratifying to work with such a wonderful steering committee and be a part of the best TCF chapter in the nation. Working on the very successful 2008 TCF National Conference was a challenge and a reward at the same time and an experience that we will never forget. The Nashville Chapter is fortunate to have many caring and compassionate people who are dedicated to the success of the mission of local chapters, which is to provide caring and support to bereaved families following the death of a child. The responsibility of chapter leadership will pass to two of those caring and capable people in January 2009 - Joe and Melanie Ladd. Joe Ladd has been part of the Nashville Chapter since May 1995, following the death of his son, Joey, in January of that same year. In addition to assisting Joe in this endeavor, Joe's wife Melanie has also accepted the responsibility of editing the Nashville Chapter newsletter. The Nashville Chapter is in capable hands.

We want to say thanks to all of you for allowing us the privilege of being your chapter leaders for the past four years. This is truly the most remarkable group of people to be associated with. We love you all.

Lamar and Joy Bradley

*Draw strength from the holiday traditions
of your past; hope from the changes you
make for the present; and from them both,
faith in your ability to handle the future.*

*from Handling the Holidays
by Bruce Conley*

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 Art of Giving

We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the heart:
Love, kindness, joy, understanding, sympathy, tolerance, forgiveness.

We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the mind:
Ideas, dreams, purposes, ideals, principles, plans, projects, poetry.

We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the spirit:
Prayer, vision, beauty, aspiration, peace, faith.

We give of ourselves when we give the gift of words:
Encouragement, inspiration, guidance.

Emerson said it well:
“Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts.
The only true gift is a portion of thyself.”

From *THE ART OF LIVING*
By Wilfred A. Peterson

(We appreciate the following poem being shared with us by Tom and Margaret Loose, in loving memory of their daughter, Heather Ann Willis, who died December 13, 2007 at the age of 26. She lives forever in their hearts.)

To All Parents

*“I’ll lend you for a little time a child of Mine,” He said,
“For you to love whiles he lives, and mourn for when he’s dead.
It may be six or seven years or twenty-two or three.
But will you, till I call him back, take care of him for Me?
He’ll bring his charms to gladden you, and should his stay be brief,
You’ll have his lovely memories as solace for your grief.*

*I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return,
But there are lessons taught down there I want this child to learn.
I’ve looked this wide world over in My search for teachers true,
And from the throngs that crowd life’s lanes, I have selected you.
Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labor vain,
Nor hate Me when I come to call to take him back again?”*

*I fancied that I heard them say, “Dear Lord, Thy will be done,”
For all the joy Thy child shall bring, the risk of grief we’ll run.
We’ll shelter him with tenderness; we’ll love him while we may,
And for the happiness we’ve known, forever grateful stay.
But should the angels call for him much sooner than we’ve planned,
We’ll brave the bitter grief that comes and try to understand.*

-----Edgar A. Guest

Holiday Gifts for Children

Each year, our chapter donates holiday gifts to children at a worthy establishment that works with 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 14. Below is a list of most requested items.

CD Players

Gameboy games (teen rated)

Playstation games (teen rated)

Costume Jewelry

Remote control cars and planes

Girly things like journals, gel pens and
scrapbooking items

Model cars or trucks

Gift cards for the malls

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

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 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 parents—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

CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 14, 2008

Regardless of past participation, **every family wishing to take part in the memorial service MUST return this form.** We need to receive it no later than Saturday, December 6, 2008. Do not send photos to the TCF P.O. box—they might get bent or damaged.

Mail to:

**Steve & Paige Czirr
1623 Fair House Road
Spring Hill, TN 37174**

Instructions: A computerized process (Power Point) is being used to display our children's pictures on the big screen. An original 5"x7" photo (no copies, please) may be used. If a 5"x7" is not available, any size will do; however, the 5"x7" or larger is easier to process. The original photo will be returned to you at the memorial service while the image will be stored for use next year. **Place a sticky note on the back of the photo with the child's name clearly printed. Do not write on the photo itself.**

Child's name: _____

Please **print** the name as you wish it to be read at the service along with phonetic pronunciation, if needed.

_____ I will attend and am enclosing an original photo of my child. (First time in the memorial service.)

_____ I will attend and am enclosing a different photo of my child to be used **in place of** the photo you have from last year's service.

_____ I will attend and would like for you to use the photo you have saved from last year.

_____ I will attend and would like for my child's name to be called and I'll light a candle, but I will not have a picture shown.

Your name _____ Phone _____

Giving and Receiving

The secret of The Compassionate Friends' success is simple. There is no line between being a helper and being helped. In the early months of membership, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying, and letting the grief flow—and learning the ropes of being a bereaved parent. The next step is reaching out to others and helping them. It is not a big step, for listening to another person sort out his life helps us to sort out our lives too. But it is an important step, because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed. All the energy had been going inward. We felt so empty inside that we kept withdrawing into ourselves. But we turn around when we first listen to another, when we speak the words of comfort and hope, and share their pain instead of just feeling our pain. At that time, the real healing has started.

Dennis Klas

TCF, St. Louis, MO

