

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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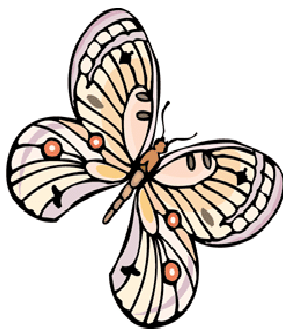


The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

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

Mementos of Our Children February 10

We all have things that are precious to us, that either belonged to or remind us of our beloved children. At this month's meeting, we invite you to bring any one thing that can be shared briefly with the rest of the group. This memento can be something that your child treasured, something your child gave you or you gave to him, or something that simply reminds you that your child lived and was loved, even if his or her life was very short (a footprint, baby blanket, hospital bracelet, etc.) Please join us.



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

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.

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.

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.

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.

*Dale and Cindy Cranfield
In loving memory of their son
Jared Kyle Redden*

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

*Jere and Peggy Williamson
In loving memory of their daughter
Molly Herbert Williamson*

*Martha J Snowden
In loving memory of her son
Chris Gregory*

*Linda Vaughn
In loving memory of her son
Gavin Vaughn*

*David W Evans
In loving memory of his sons
Chris Evans
And
Alan Evans*

*Carl and Jo Ann Laterza
In loving memory of their son
Ryan Michael Laterza*

*Gail Swann and Ellen Nichols
In loving memory of Spencer Buttrey
Son of
Randy and Amy Buttrey*

*Larry and Peggy Ard
In loving memory of their daughter
Samantha Dawn Shore*

*Katherine Hickman
In loving memory of her son
Michael Jay Hickman*

*Robert P Cain, III
To The Compassionate Friends
Nashville Chapter*

*Corinne Ruiz
In loving memory of her daughter
Olivia Corinne Hoff*

*Andrea Burke
In loving memory of her son
Kyle Trace Burke*

February

When February comes, there is finally an end in sight to the long winter. Sometimes melting snow reveals the green tips of an early crocus or even an exquisite blossom itself, a soft flower of hope invading a harsh landscape of graying snow, biting wind and an ominous sky – a small promise of new life to come.

My heart, grieving for my son who died was like that image of winter. For somehow, even during the darkest, coldest moments, an unexpected sign of hope would intrude. And as the hours, days and months dragged on, my heart finally learned once again to be open to the promise of new life.

Painful memories melted into loving ones. Life that seemed forever dormant was once again sprung forth from my heart. In living hopefully and lovingly, the seasons of the heart can change. The living memories of your special child, like the flower in the snow, can be the beginning of the end of winter.

Maryann Kramer
TCF Arlington Heights, IL

Notice from the Editor

Check upcoming newsletters for important information regarding the 2008 TCF National Conference to be held right here in Nashville!

Save the Date

July 18-20

I will be adding notes on conference workshop topics and other conference facts to future newsletters, so stay tuned....



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.

Depression

Depression is a natural result of grief. It comes to all of us. You may experience all or just some of the following. We hope that recognizing the symptoms and then working on the suggestions for coping will enable you to work through it. It can be done.

Symptoms And Solutions

A key symptom of depression is a feeling of deep pervasive sadness and hopelessness that lasts for longer than two weeks. Other typical symptoms may be:

- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Insomnia or sleeping much more than usual
- Inability to enjoy anything
- Apathy/restless or anxious behavior
- Preoccupation with thoughts of suicide, or wishing to be dead
- Loss of interest in sex
- Difficulty in concentrating and making decisions
- Poor memory
- Can't cry/ won't cry/ can't stop crying
- Feelings of guilt
- Withdrawal from friends and relatives
- Headaches/ backaches (more frequent illness or colds)
- Self-criticism, pessimism, discouragement
- Neglect of appearance
- Irrational anger
- Alcohol and drug use to "medicate"

Some Suggestions For Coping With Depression

- Acknowledge your depression
- Accept responsibility for alleviating it
- Depression serves a purpose, face it and work through it
- Talk, it could help avoid serious depression
- Redirect energy into constructive channels to help create more pleasure in your life (trips, night out, etc)
- Exercise. It helps you to relax, work off tension and sleep better
- Lean into your pain. Allow yourself to experience the many feelings you get such as anger and guilt. Express them! Scream, hit a pillow, cry!
- Get involved with others, volunteer
- Try deep breathing, it stimulates physical energy
- Good nutrition is very important
- Think pleasant thoughts as hard as that may be, just one moment at a time
- Avoid alcohol as it is a depressant
- Work on self-esteem; do something that you do well; be kind to yourself
- Remember, you do have a choice. Depression is manageable and does not have to ruin your life

If the depression becomes so severe that suggestions such as these do not help you, PLEASE don't hesitate to seek professional help.

From *Support Newsletter POMC, Inc.*
TCF, Greater Cincinnati Chapter

When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart—and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight

*Kalil Gibran
The Prophet*



No Self

*Be good to myself
I heard,
Be good to myself.
Even when I had no self.*

by
Sue Goergen

Some Things To Think About

There is sometimes a misconception among professionals and the bereaved themselves that participating in TCF will only magnify and prolong the grief process. This is wrong. Grief is painful and we cannot escape or run away from it. If you try to hide it, or sweep it under the rug, you will only postpone it. If you do not deal with it now, you will have to deal with it when another tragic loss occurs in your life. Grief is like an expressway; and learning about bereavement and mourning at TCF meetings is what keeps us on the expressway. The shortcuts and side trips only make our journey longer. We must also commonly expect to feel worse at four to six months, then at one month...and why not? For at one month we were protected by shock and numbness, as though it were all happening to someone else.

Father Ken Czillinger
TCF Sarasota, FL

I'll Never Forget You

*Looking down at you,
I see how beautiful you are,
And knowing that you are my daughter,
I sit back and wonder, would I have been a good mother?*

*I think of your cry, I never got to hear,
Nor your smile did I get to see.
Every day I think of you and
I know that my love for you is more precious than gold.*

*Remembering your tiny little body
And looking at your beautiful face, with those tiny brown eyes,
Holding you close to me,
Not understanding why you had to die.*

*I loved your soft skin
And your tiny hand in mine
Now that you're not here
It's hard to say I'm fine.*

*I'd give anything to see you
And hold your body close
Out of everything I've lost
I miss you the very most.*

Zonda Berry
TCF Missoula, MT

Little White Blanket

*Little white blanket...first snow on the grave since you left.
How can it be? Just yesterday you were here. You left in
summer's humid heat. Cicadas sang your eulogy over fresh-
turned soil. Now snow's first appearance covers your smooth,
flawless sleeping ground.*

*Little white blanket covers and cares for you when I no
longer can. I care for you now with prayers and memories and
by framing photographs of times gone by. Photos of you and
me. When I look at us, I can still feel you sitting next to me,
breathing, smiling, living your life with me.*

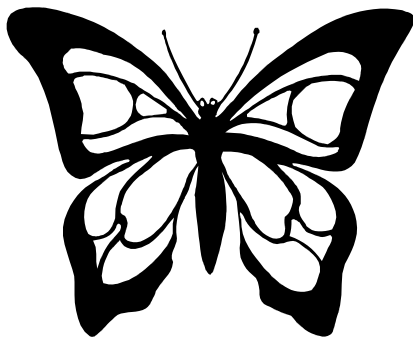
*Then I feel you gone from here, from me. I never knew
before how to feel what's not there. Feeling the not-me-ness of
me, without you.*

*Little white blanket, tuck in my loved one. Cover her gently,
make her comfortable, send her my love. When spring comes
and little white blanket disappears, let the crocuses I planted
bloom their first blooms, counting every **first** since you left.
First morning without you, first week alone, first month bereft,
first Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, first New Year
without you...a strange year without you. With the passing of
time, I fear I'll forget you, so I hold on to my grief, as I once
held on to you.*

*Little white blanket, first snow on the grave, assure me
she's cared for, that she won't forget me, that we are still us,
that I am still me...that somewhere in spirit, she is still her.*

*First snow, nature's wise surround for my departed, little
white blanket, teach me how to mend the hole ripped in the
fabric of my life, christen the ground, baptize me in
understanding the cycles of life; living, loving, and letting go.*

Deborah Antinori
Basking Ridge, New Jersey
Bereavement Magazine, Jan/Feb 1999



When one day at a time seems too long, try
just one minute at a time.

Kristin Thompson
TCF Nashville, TN
(as told to me along my grief journey)

Subsequent Children: The Result Was Worth the Fear

On March 20, 1991, our lives were changed forever when a motorcycle going in excess of 80 mph crashed into the side of our car and ended the lives of our eight year old Stephanie and five year old Stephen. Stephanie and Stephen were so very special. They had a special kindness for all people and a special love between the two of them. Stephanie was our tap dancer who loved books and working in the school library. Stephen had a quick mind, and shortly after learning from me how to play checkers, beat me regularly—and he was only four years old at the time.

We used to laugh at friends who wanted to wait to have children “until...” Until they were more financially stable, until their career was off to a better start, or until they had a new house. We would turn to each other and laugh because we knew the tremendous joy of loving and being loved by a child. It is an unconditional love like no other. When we became parents, we felt we really became people. After the kids died, we knew how bad we needed to feel that again. We found that we were forced to live in a world we didn’t know anymore. We were going through the motions of getting through the day, but they were just that, motions.

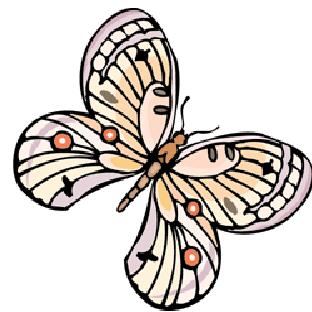
Because of our age, we knew that if we were going to have another child, we would have to do so very soon. Despite medical problems we thought almost insurmountable, we were able to conceive and it happened quite soon after we started trying. All during my pregnancy, I have to admit, I worried continuously. I had miscarried once before between Stephanie and Stephen and the fear was always there. I also had an overwhelming fear that people would feel that we were trying to replace our lost children and that was not the case at all. You cannot replace one child with another. But when your life is centered around your children from the moment you get up in the morning until the time you go to bed at night, there is an overwhelming void. We were parents and had no one to parent.

When the time of delivery came, the fear welled up inside me. I knew that the baby was safe and protected while inside of me but its appearance in the world brought on a whole new list of “what if’s.” Of course at that point, there was no turning back.

A very happy baby boy was born on August 7, 1992. We hope that we will not be terribly overprotective as he grows older. It is something we will always have to work on. I have to admit, when I am playing with him, the words “when you grow up” get stuck in my throat because I do fear the future. We also recognize, like all bereaved parents learn, that the future is always uncertain and that we must live today and do the best we possibly can. We hope to live each day making sure that Christopher knows just how loved and special he is to us. Holding his little hand in ours, we know we made the right decision to have more children. There is no joy like it!

When people ask us how many children we have, we proudly say three. If a further explanation is necessary, we give it. We realize there will always be things we do for each of our children. We work with other bereaved parents in memory of the love and lives of our Stephanie and Stephen. We have started a TCF chapter in our area. It is our hope that we can also teach medical personnel, funeral homes and other people who come in contact with bereaved parents better ways to handle the situation.

Pat Loder
TCF Lakes Area, MI



**We care, we share,
We talk, we listen,
We support each other.**

Quote Taken from
TCF Newsletter March 2002 edition
The Southeast Mississippi Chapter

The Season of the Heart

This is the season of the heart! Yet many of us will be asking how to live during this season with a heart that is broken. Just what is it that our hearts are knowing during these days? What are the feelings that pulsate, ebb and flow?

Is it-- the heart that catches it's breath on a memory and is overwhelmed? The heart where hope seems absent? The heart that feels it cannot hold another ounce of pain? The heart that knows the fleeting smile of a loved one? The heart that catches a fragment of joy and is warmed? The heart that knows pain and keeps on loving? The heart that is tempted to lie still and lonely? The heart that searches for the acceptance of a friend?

Questions arise! Why is a heart red and why does it have two lobes? A response might be—A heart is so vulnerable that it is easily bloodied. A heart consists of opposites, changed by sorrow and by joy. A heart, when whole, includes all emotions. A heart can lie cold and sad and broken. A heart can grow and heal and love.

Marie Andrews
TCF, Southern Maryland Chapter