

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) or 646-8940•Nashville Web Site: www.tcfnashville.org
 Lamar and Joy Bradley, Chapter Leaders, 615 889-1387, email: lbradley1@mindspring.com
 Candan & Dan Gardner, Newsletter Editors, 615 855-2900, email: tcf@tcfnashville.org
 David Gibson, Regional Coordinator, 615 356-1351, email: davidg14@prodigy.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.

Video for 8 January meeting

How does one cope with the death of a child? Where does one turn for support when the devastation of the loss seems overwhelming? The Compassionate Friends has been one source of support and healing. The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

TCF has produced a short video describing the story of the organization as told by testimonials from some of those most involved with the organization: the executive director, board members, chapter leaders and siblings. The video will be shown at the January meeting and there will be a short discussion by local chapter members of how TCF has helped them in their grief journey.



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

Helpful Hint...

In one sense there is no death. The life of a soul on earth lasts beyond his departure. You will always feel that life touching yours, that voice speaking to you, that spirit looking out of others eyes, talking to you in the familiar things he touched, worked with, loved as familiar friends. He lives on in your life and in the lives of all others that knew him.

Angelo Patri
TCF, Putnam Countv. OH

BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

Survivors of Suicide

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings and receiving their helpful newsletter, you may reach Tina Benson at one of the following: Write to SOS, P.O. Box 40752, Nashville, TN 37204; call 615 244-7444; email nashsos@webtv.net; or fax 615 383-9714.

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

Every other Thursday, an ongoing support group for bereaved parents meets at Alive Hospice. For details, please call John Baker at 615 963-4674.

Times for TCF Videos on TV 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., Fridays at 11:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M., and Saturdays at 10:30 A.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.

Change of Address?

Due to the large number of newsletters we deliver each month, it is essential to keep our database up-to-date. We must rely on you, the recipient, to let us know if you have moved. We ask that you help us by remembering to let us know when you have a change of address so the newsletter will reach you each month. Thank you.

The “Let Us Remember Them” Listings

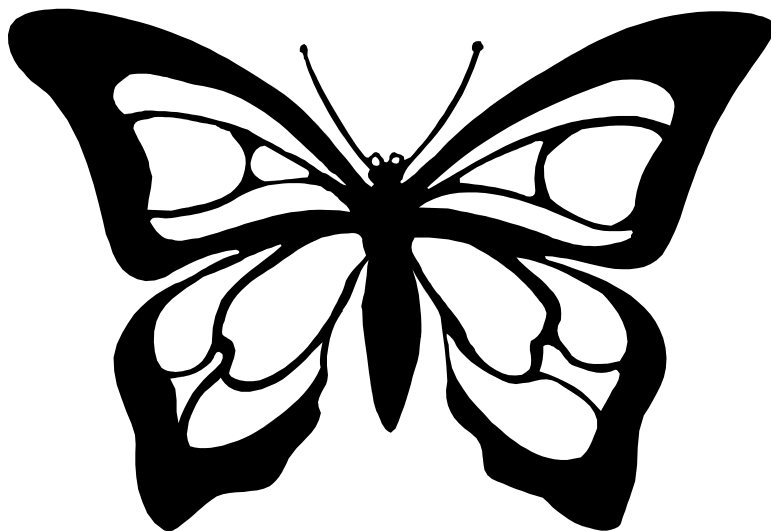
At your first TCF meeting you are asked to sign a registration card that gives us permission to add your child to the “Let Us Remember Them” list on page 3 in the monthly newsletter. If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed, please let us know, printing the 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.

TCF Web Site

Go to the TCF Web site at www.compassionatefriends.org to find a wealth of information about TCF and grief—poetry and articles, chat rooms, grief in the news, other chapter web sites, including Nashville, and numerous other resources. Check it out.

LET US REMEMBER THEM

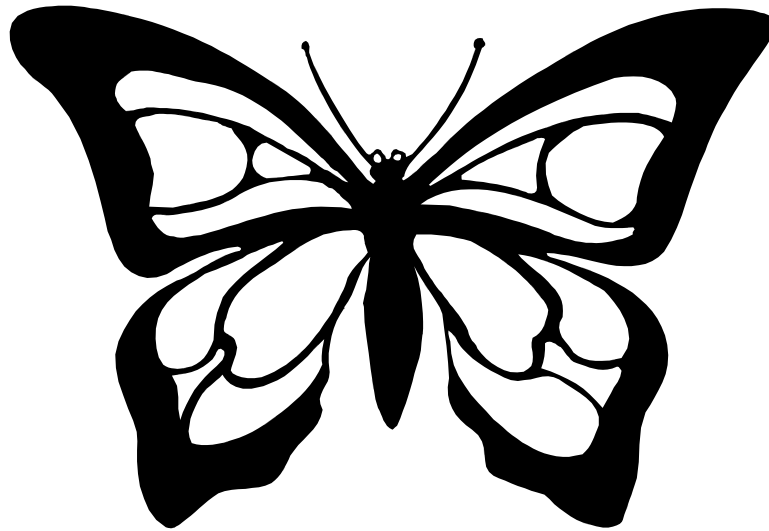
In the month of their births, the month of their deaths—and always, with love



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.

We regret that we incorrectly listed David W. Evans as David L. Evans in the December newsletter. This error has been corrected.



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.

Sometimes

*Sometimes, something clicks,
And with a tear
Remembrance of the pain
And the loneliness
Flood the heart.*

*Sometimes, something clicks,
And with a smile
Remembrance of the love
And the laughter
Flood the senses.*

*And there are times
When nothing clicks at all
And a voice echoes
Through the emptiness
And the numbness
Never finding the person
Who used to fill that space.*

*And sometimes
The most special times of all
A feeling ripples through your
Body, heart and soul
That tells you
That person never left you
And he's right there with you
Through it all.*

*Kirsten Hansen, bereaved sibling,
TCF, Kentifield, CA*

I Believe In Tomorrow

*I believe in tomorrow
Because of today,
Because my brother
Just slipped away.*

*I believe that tomorrow,
After the storm has passed,
I will once again find him,
Once again at last.*

*He made tomorrow,
Because tomorrow is another day,
And tomorrow I will find him,
Because he just slipped away.*

*Sally Grimes
TCF, Rogers, AR*

A Letter to My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer. How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be atrong for others when the sting Of pain is so real, so near?

Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always.

Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness. I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

*Robin Holeman
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL*

Lesa Marie

*Lesa Marie—
I love you—always;
I miss you—always;
I remember you—always.*

*You have been gone so long from my life.
Yet your laughter still is music in my mind.
And my special memories still bring a smile to my face.*

*I am scared when I cannot vividly
Recall how tall you were,
How fast you ran,
What size you wore.
But I will always know how deeply you loved.*

*And I hope that through all my pain in
Missing you, I will pass your depth of love on
To others, who share my special pain—always.*

Lezlie Langford-Peterson



The First Snow

*The first snow since you left
Fell on the coldest day of the year,
Settling onto rooftops and heights,
Onto the ground, drifts of white.*

*I drift in thought to past winters
To silhouettes against white,
Rosy-cheeked children crunching snow
In woolen paws for a snowball fight
Shrieks of delight streak the air
Like rising steam from warm breath.*

*As memories frozen in mind
Thaw like snow in the morning sun,
I don a coat against the wind,
Remembering when past snows
Encased snub footprints in white
And angels fell blinking in the light.*

*Years have passed since that winter scene
Yet those images move my heart still
As memories like angels' wings
Disturb the silence, and the chill,
And the murmur of the wind protests
The coldness of unmarred snow.*

*Peggy Walls
TCF, Alexander City AL*

She's Here, But Not

*She's here—but she's there
She's with us—but she's not
She's right around the bend
But then she's gone again
She's far away—but so near
It's like she's gone—but here again.*

*Stacy Sharp, age 11
TCF, Defiance, OH*

*After the worst thing has happened
With nothing left to fear.
The sun continues shining
With undiminished cheer;
And winds continue blowing
And skies continue fair,
As hearts continue bearing
The pain they could not bear.*

--Author Unknown

A New Year Wish

*I wish you all a blessing
As the New Year approaches us all.
May this year bring gentle memories
Of our child that God has called.*

*I wish you all some sunshine
That clouds can cover on some days.
I pray your hearts will mend
As mine has along the way.*

*I thank God for our TCF "family"
And the Online Sharing each day,
For so many are always there
To help so many find their way.*

*I wish I could take each one of you
And show you what I've learned.
As time has helped my own heart
Your feelings are my concern.*

*The Holidays are the hardest
As you all very well know,
Yet we can find healing
As the New Year unfolds.*

*May you all know I'm thinking
About each and every one of you.
I give you all my blessing
And hope the New Year is gentle for you.*

*Sharon Bryant
TCF, Atlanta Online Sharing*

Who Knew?

*Our eyes are red and grief makes us blue.
We never quite know who to tell your story to.
We ponder our lives without you being here,
To give us purpose, laughter and often a tear.*

*It seems impossible these days we must endure,
Emptiness, helplessness and some fear for sure.
Having no doubt that we'll not make it through,
Then we remember just how much we love you.*

*We celebrate your life with us here on earth,
No matter how long you lived after your birth.
Our lives have been blessed by just knowing you,
Because of your love, we'll make it. Who knew?*

*Dan Gardner
TCF, Nashville, TN*

New Year's Wishes for Bereaved Parents

To the newly bereaved:

We wish you patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

To the bereaved sibling:

We wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.

To those who are single parents:

We wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.

To those experiencing marital difficulties after the death of your child:

We wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

To those who have suffered the death of more than one child:

We wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.

To those of you who have suffered the death of an only child or of all your children:

We offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

To those of you who are plagued with guilt:

We wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances, and that your child knew that.

To those of you who are deeply depressed:

We wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadows."

To all fathers and those of you unable to cry:

We wish you healing tears and the ability to express your grief.

To those of you who are exhausted from grieving:

We wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

To all others with special needs that we have not mentioned:

We wish you the understanding you need and the reassurance that you are loved.

Joe Rousseau
Former TCF President

Just an Idea

As you sit and ponder about what the New Year will bring for you and your family, try this: take a note pad and pen, and at the top of the page, write, "This year I hope I can..." or, "This year I hope to do..." or, another "hope" you wish to concentrate on. Then make a list of what you hope will take place during the year. Later, go a step further and number each "hope" in order of preference or importance. Then work on it...one thing at a time. And mark it off your list as it's accomplished or a goal is reached. Then you can look at your progress. And please remember, each and every time you accomplish something you set out to do—no matter how small or trivial it may seem at the time—that it IS PROGRESS.

TCF, Anniston, AL

Thoughts on Winter

January...February...so-cold, so crisp, so leafless. Beginning a year...a new year...A NEW BEGINNING. You never lived in this year, and that is new. Sometimes new is painful. January is also the month of resolutions and the only resolution we must make is that we must learn to live without our child. What a profound sadness that is! To love them so deeply, so passionately, so completely...only to have us part.

My child, did I ever tell you enough how much I loved you? I've wondered. Do we tell those we love how very much their life has meant to us? Probably we do not. Somehow we just arrogantly believe that time goes on forever. It does. It's just the people do not. We fail to recognize how entirely too brief some lives can be. You were not supposed to die. Death is reserved for others. How could you have disappointed me? Didn't you know that I had such plans for you? I didn't want to face my own mortality. How cruel life was...using you to prove to me that we do indeed come to an end.

I don't want to accept your death...but what choice have I left? Have you any idea how angry that makes me? Oh, I'll mend...although mending sometimes means forgetting. I cannot put you aside, but already memories of you are fading. You know what I like best? When I'm given little tidbits of your life by those that knew you. What a bittersweet delight! Each piece of my jigsaw puzzle life will eventually fit together. You will be the only missing piece.

Dorothy Worrel
TCF, Palo Alto, CA