

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://www.tcfnashville.org)  
 Lamar and Joy Bradley, Chapter Leaders, 615 889-1387, email: [lbradley1@mindspring.com](mailto:lbradley1@mindspring.com)  
 Candan & Dan Gardner, Newsletter Editors, 615 855-2900, email: [gardner3@tcfnashville.org](mailto:gardner3@tcfnashville.org)  
 Jayne Head, Outreach Coordinator, 615 859-2256, email: [alanandgraysonsmom@comcast.net](mailto:alanandgraysonsmom@comcast.net)  
 David Gibson, Regional Coordinator, 615 356-1351, email: [davidg14@prodigy.net](mailto: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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 14 January meeting

**H**ow 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.

### *Ecclesiasticus*

*In life there is an ebb and flow,  
 A time to come, a time to go.  
 A need to turn loose and hold on  
 To memories of times long since gone.  
 An urge to leave the past, and yet  
 A fear of moving lest we forget.  
 An interchange of joy and tears,  
 Acceptance of both cribs and biers.  
 A sense of triumph and defeat  
 In knowing life is both bitter and sweet.*

*From Rachel's Cry, by Richard Dew  
 TCF, Knoxville, TN*

### 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

### *There is a Place*

*There is a place  
 That we call Memory  
 A province by itself  
 Which, though unseen,  
 Is home and haven  
 To the heart...  
 And there  
 In peace and beauty,  
 Waiting,  
 Are those with whom  
 We shared our yesterdays.*

*Nancy Cassell  
 TCF, Monmouth County, NJ*

## **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**

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., 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.

### **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**

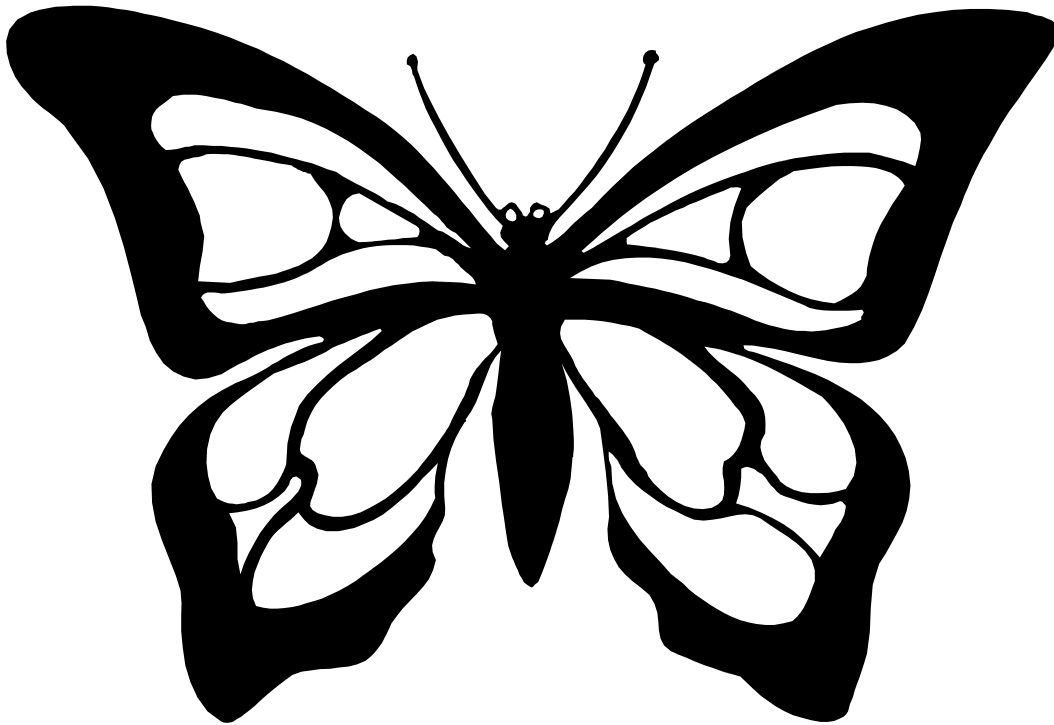
At your first TCF meeting you are asked to sign a registration card that gives us permission to add your child to the “Let Us Remember Them” list on page 3 in the monthly newsletter. If you have not been able to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed, please let us know, printing 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](mailto:tcf@tcfnashville.org). We'll be glad to include your child's name.

### **TCF Website**

Go to the TCF Website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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.



*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 Promise*

*Cold winds blow across the frozen pond.  
Snow lies deep upon the fields.  
But the change has begun.*

*Daylight hours increase slowly.  
With each passing day later sunsets are more  
apparent  
Winter is ending.*

*For bereaved parents  
The change is awfully slow  
The progress is not always apparent  
But the promise is the same.*

*Winter will end.  
Spring will return.*

Betty Stevens,  
TCF, Baltimore, MD

---

## *Seasons Pass*

*At least a month before the seasons changed  
We saw a leaf from the maple fall  
Fluttering down for no apparent reason  
On a still day when it seemed nothing moved at all.*

*We reached down to touch it, to hold it, to know it  
When a gust of wind wrest it from our grasp  
Leaving us wondering why nature, instead of sharing it  
Chose to steal the leaf away so fast.*

*Seasons will pass; the maple will surely spawn other  
offerings  
Over which nature will longer dwell  
But always will we remember that silent spring day  
And the tiny green leaf that fell.*

Roshann Parris  
TCF, Kansas City, MO

The measure of life after all is not its  
duration, but its donation.

--Dr. Peter Marshall

## *The Music is Forever*

*One life, like the song strummed softly on the strings,  
Makes music to the ears of those who hear it sing.  
Discordant notes and harmony, together make the sounds,  
But the space between the notes  
is where the meaning may be found.*

*A life, may be as brief as a note on a page,  
Or as long as a symphony with all the movements played.  
But long or short, the melody has its meaning though  
unfinished.  
And for those with ears to hear it, the meaning's not  
diminished.*

*Somewhere the song continues it sweetly singing phrase,  
The music is forever, not just for those days.  
One life, like a song, strummed softly on the strings,  
Makes music to the ears of those who hear it sing.*

Karen Howard  
TCF, Miami, FL

---

## *I Will Love You*

*As long as I can dream,  
As long as I can think,  
As long as I have a memory...  
I will love you.*

*As long as I have eyes to see  
and ears to hear  
and lips to speak...  
I will love you.*

*As long as I have a heart to feel,  
A soul stirring within me,  
An imagination to hold you...  
I will love you.*

*As long as there is time,  
As long as there is love,  
As long as I have a breath  
to speak your name...  
I will love you.*

*Because I love you more than anything  
in all the world.*

Daniel Haughian  
TCF, Massillon, OH

## Butterflies are Free

They say butterflies are free...

I once knew a butterfly.

She was a beautiful caterpillar when she was born.

So small, delicate and vulnerable, amazing everyone around her.

So agile, so coordinated, so entrancing. As she aged, a cocoon grew around her.

While in the self induced protective shell parts of her regressed but her physical self emerged forever beautiful, forever radiant and yearning to fly.

Unable to detect or acknowledge danger, the beautiful young butterfly was kept safely in a gilded cage.

Unable to be free but yearning so desperately to be so.

One cold winter morning the beautiful young butterfly drifted into a deep sleep. A sleep so deep and peaceful that she was never to awake.

Beautiful butterfly forever sleeping.

At last free to fly

They say butterflies are free...

Jan Davis  
TCF, Alameda County Chapter, CA

## A Time Past

I remember the first time I had the courage to look at old photographs of Kara—as a little girl, a young girl, a young teenager. How I dreaded it, but at the time was compelled to do it. To my surprise, the negative impact of “past, past, those days are all gone,” wasn’t nearly as acutely painful as I had expected since I had already looked at those same pictures before her death in terms of “a time past.” Of course it didn’t bother me then because I knew she had a future.

Truly, it helped me focus more accurately on the reality of my grief: I had lost Kara’s future with us, not her past. Now, I am freer to enjoy those past photographs of a life we shared. I hold them dearly to my heart with all my other memories. My next goal? To work up the courage to look at old movies! This will take time, but I will do it eventually.

Marcia Olson  
TCF, Hinsdale, IL

## Death is Nothing at all

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other that we are still.

Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy tone; wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word that it always was, let it be spoke without an effort, without trace of shadow in it.

Life means all that it ever meant; it is the same as it ever was; there is absolutely unbroken continuity.

What is this death but a negligible accident? Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am but waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner.

All is well.

Canon Henry Scott Holland  
(1847-1918)

## Sunrises and Sunsets

Each life is lived in neat and tidy segments of time—weeks, months, years, sunrises and sunsets, births and death. There is nothing which happens to us that cannot be placed in a specific framework of organized time. Spring, summer, winter and fall not only measure the seasons of the year but the ages of our lives as well. The very young are in the springtime of their life, the very old are in the winter of their years. Sunrises are beginnings. Sunsets are endings. During the progression of time, we keep mental ledgers where we record the passing of time by our successes, mistakes made, love given and received, and if we are lucky, we live long and our sunsets are bright and beautiful and welcome when we are full of time and memories.

But there are sunsets which are not so fulfilled—when the evening comes prematurely to a child of ours, and we are plunged into darkness in the middle of our day. Then there is only night, pain and confusion to measure and only what-might-have-beens to tally. Every scrap of memory is salvaged to being a spark of warmth to the coldness of the night to come. Each failure in our ledger is magnified and mixed with guilt and unanswerable questions. When memories are painful, we may even replace them with a more acceptable unreality to armor our hearts and minds until the time when we can accept the harshness of what has been, and we're again strong enough to begin again—never the same, but sustained by our faith and the healing of time.

But when the child's sunrise and sunset have been compressed into a few minutes or hours, the lack of memories can be equally as hurtful. There are no memories of a beloved face, no remembered first or last, not even a remembrance of some irritating habit to tuck into our battered hearts—only the vacuum created when the mind has been geared to expect so much and is rewarded with only empty arms and blank pages in a baby book.

And so, if you should find yourself measuring your pain against another's, remember this: if you have memories and if your memories are beautiful, you have a gift that is the most worthy of all. For when your morning finally comes after the darkness has lifted, you can look back and see that the darkness was not as complete as you thought. For there in the darkness will wink and glimmer the light of your memories—like fireflies on a summer night.

Judy Dickey  
TCF, Greenwood, IN

---

## There is Life After Infant Death

Here I am, two years later, a normal functioning person. It must be a miracle. Two years ago, I wouldn't have believed it possible, yet here I am. I can smile, laugh and do the every day menial tasks that two years ago seemed to overwhelm me. I feel pain, but not the driving, stabbing pain of the past that comes and goes when the memories of the past creep in to disturb my happier present.

Somewhere along the road, I found the strength hidden within me to go on without Sara. I know my life is less rich without her, but still very much worth living.

Does time heal all wounds? I don't feel healed, but time has given me a chance to learn to live and cope with the pain. I can now go on and live a good life with my husband and three wonderful daughters.

I hope for all those whose pain is new, that they can just hold on until their day comes as mine has today. When they can say, "It's a miracle. There is life after infant death."

Fran Downing  
Winchester HOPE newsletter

## A New Year's Resolution

Now the holidays are over, and once again a new year faces us—for some, the first one without that precious loved one—for others, another one of many. The loss is still remembered, no matter how many others we have faced.

What will we do in the coming months? Each hour seems so long and the days seem to stretch ahead forever, as if another year cannot possibly ever come to an end. But friends, it will and we will survive. The road at times is hard and the pain is so hard to bear, but each year we realize that the pain has eased. We never will be totally without this pain of love and shattered dreams, but we will be able to live. This love that is stored in us for our missed child can be spread out to others to help us to ease their pain.

So, in this New Year, let's make a new resolution—that our love for our dead child will be brought out of our hearts and given with our best effort to others to help them ease their pain. In so doing, we will find our pain is eased also.

Thelma Richardson  
TCF, Mesa County, AZ