

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.

Dreams and Other Unusual Events July 9

Have you had a dream of your child that is particularly meaningful to you or one that you found to be a great source of comfort or reassurance?

Have you had an unusual experience or event following the death of your child that was of significance to you?

Such experiences are not uncommon among bereaved parents. This month we will have a round table discussion with parents who are willing to share their experiences with the group. Come join us at 3 P.M.

A Different Love

*When I first knew you
 You grew in my womb
 Then we shared your sweet life
 For a year.*

*Now I'm learning to know you again
 As you grow in my heart
 And I'll share my life with you
 For eternity*

*Maggie Knight
 TCF, Victoria, Australia*

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

Watch the sunrise
 Remember the laughter
 Celebrate what was

Sascha

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 Alexandra Weber 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

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

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.

One of the videos is shown in Williamson, Maury and Giles counties on the Charter Mainstreet TV Channel Mondays at 10:00 P.M. and Thursday at 6:30 P.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?

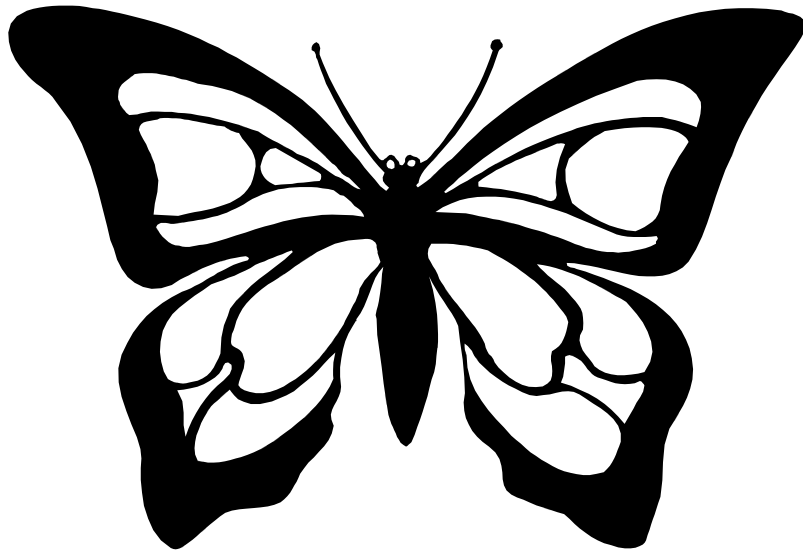
Due to the large number of newsletters we deliver each month, it is essential to keep our database up-to-date. We must rely on you, the recipient, to let us know if you have moved. We ask that you help us by remembering to let us know when you have a change of address so the newsletter will reach you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

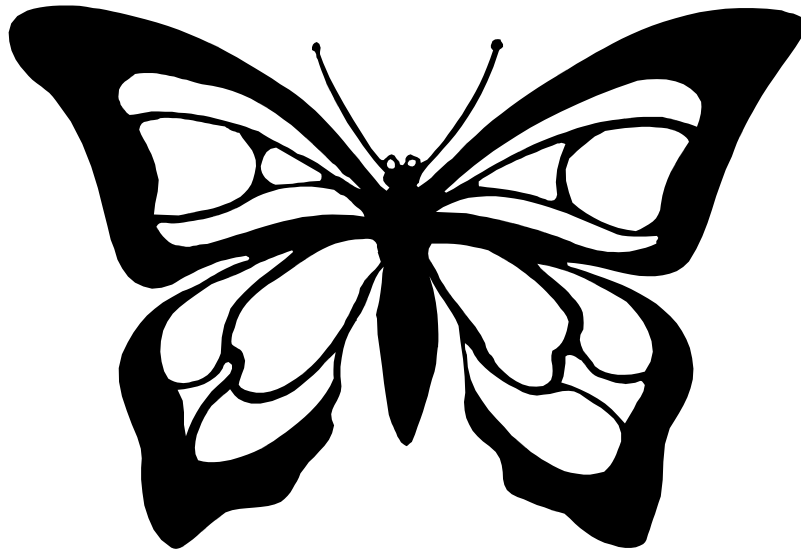
The “Let Us Remember Them” Listings

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 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.

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.





Vacations

Vacation time is upon us again. You may be having trouble with that very thought. My only advice is to go where it is most comfortable for you. Large places with many people may not be the answer this year. The family oriented spots may make it more obvious that one of your blessings is missing. It may be that you are locked into plans that were made before the tragedy of your child's death. You may hesitate to change these plans if they involve other people. I, personally, could only be with people who understood my feelings in the beginning. If the other people involved are not sensitive and understanding, you may want to reconsider your plans. Good, warm, caring friends who will allow you to be wherever it is that you are can be a great comfort. Keeping it simple with a back door through which you can escape if necessary, can be the best answer. Going away and coming home can be a problem in the beginning. Know that it is normal.

Whatever it is that you do and wherever it is that you go, I hope you will keep in mind that it won't always be this painful. IT WILL BE BETTER. Be patient. If you can find peace and enjoyment, do it. You deserve it and it doesn't mean you don't care.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

I leave you the will to fight; the desire to live; the right to anger, to love...to joy, to transform silence into language and action. I leave you a litany for survival.

Audre Lorde

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.

Did You Know?

Did you know:

*you need to rip up sheets
to make a kite that flies.
That you cannot build a fort
without a tree with Y's.
That matchbox cars run better
if they are full of paint.
Or, if you hold your breath too long,
you probably will faint.*

Did you know:

*a baseball bat
makes a terrific gun.
And, yes, an egg can really fry
when left out in the sun.
And cardboard boxes seem to make
the most terrific trains.
And you can swim in puddles
after gentle summer rains.*

Did you know:

*that baseball cards
clipped upon your bike
will make the awful clicking noise
that parents never like.
A crab trap can be used to catch
the most exquisite birds.
And pig Latin
serves to provide
a private world of words.*

And did you know my brothers?

*They died a few years back.
They taught me all these marvelous things
that sometimes sisters lack.*

*Kathi Guthrie
TCF, Cape may County, NJ*

"The most wonderful things in life are
neither seen nor touched, but are only felt
with the heart."

Helen Keller

Playing in the Shadows

*We grew up together,
Big sister, little brother.
I took care of you
Until you were old enough to care for yourself
Though you didn't say it,
I knew you loved me.*

*We played in the sunlight, you and I;
Remember the games of Mother May I and
Hide-and-Seek?*

*Sure we had our fights
As all siblings do.
But through it all we never lost
Our love for each other.*

*Now you're gone.
I'll never see you again
Except in the memories
Of those sunny days.*

*You will forever be sixteen...
Far too young to die.
You had your whole life to live.
I'll always grieve, but I must go on.*

*Still, without you,
I play alone in the shadows.*

*Cheryl Larson
TCF, Pikes Peak*

Footprints

*How very softly
You tiptoed into my world
Almost silently.
Only a moment you stayed.
But what an imprint
Your footsteps have left
Upon the heart.
Thanks.*

*D. Ferguson
TCF, Pocatello, ID*

Valley of the Butterflies

*There is a green, sun-drenched valley—
Light with the scent of clover and lilacs—
Where the butterflies dance.
Leaping and swooping, they reflect colors
Of every hue and dimension.
There are monarchs and skippers,
Swallowtails and delicate spring azures.
Each dances its unique pattern
Of flits, circles and dives,
Stretching its fragile wings toward the clouds
Or brushing its feet on the succulent grass.*

*There are no roads, paths, or gates
To broach the valley's entrance,
Yet it is visited often in thoughts and dreams.
Every parent who has sent forth a child
And vainly waited for its return
Comes seeking in the valley of the butterflies
And there finds a beautiful spirit,
Stretching its wings to the clouds
And brushing its feet on the grass,
Dancing in swoops, flits and dives,
Drying its dewy wings in the warm sunshine of forever*

Marcia F. Alig
TCF, Highstown, NJ

Urgent?

*Nothing is urgent anymore.
No blinking lights
No beepers beeping
No cars screeching
There are no red flags skipping
Up and down on slippery
Car-crash roads.*

*When David died
All the lights went out
And jumped up
Into the sky with David.*

*Call the fireman if you smell smoke
Dial ambulance if you see a flood of blood
Phone me if Grandma dies...
But please don't scream URGENT!*

*When David died
All the lights went out
And nothing is urgent anymore.*

Nancy Jansen
TCF, Cape Cod Chapter, MA

Waiting

*The house is silent, your music no longer plays.
Your art work and trinkets remain on display.
Your bed made up with soft comforter of down
Waiting for you, with the sheets turned down.*

*Clothing folded, put neatly away
Lillie, your kitten, waits patiently, maybe today?
Little reminders of you everywhere
But without you here it's so empty and bare.*

*All remains, as if waiting your return.
OH! For the reunion our hearts so yearn.
But the sound of your steps eludes our ear
No longer your voice calling, "anyone here?"*

*The days are long, nights longer still
Wishing for your presence a space only you can fill.
We gaze at your picture, as if you are there.
Yes, you are gone, but you remain everywhere.*

*Should we take it all down, put it all away?
Pretend it didn't happen, that you'll return someday?
We may fool our minds, but our hearts give it away
You'll not be returning, the emptiness is here to stay.*

Shelia Simmons
TCF, Dallas, GA

The Little Red Wagon

*Little red wagon, dilapidated, that's true
There were a lot of memories tied up in you.
Rust and dirt, spots of blue paint,
A little boy's hand, strong, not faint,
Hauled dirt and rocks and lots of treasures,
Some of it was work and some pleasure,
But now, like you, little red wagon is gone.*

Sam Perry
TCF, San Antonio, TX



When You Are Bereaved, It Is Alright to...

Scream in the shower.
 Yell in the car.
 Howl at the moon.
 Cry anywhere you like.
 Mislplace your glasses.
 Lose the car.
 Forget your own name.
 Put milk in the cupboard,
 Toilet paper in the refrigerator,
 And ice cream in the oven.
 Beat up a pill.
 Stomp on the ground.
 Throw stones in a lake.
 Change grocery stores if it hurts.
 Wear one black shoe and one navy.
 Have tear stains on your tie.
 Eat French fries for breakfast,
 Toast for lunch,
 And peanut butter for dinner
 (as long as you eat).

Write him a letter.
 Bake him a cake.
 Smell his clothes.
 Celebrate his life on his birthday.
 Talk to your pets; they understand.
 Leave his room the way it is
 For as long as you like.
 Say his name just to hear the sound.
 Talk about him to others.
 Tell loved ones what you need.
 Say no when you feel like it.
 Cancel plans if you want.
 Have a bad day.
 It's alright to hurt.

And one day, when you're ready...
 It's alright to laugh again.
 Dance and feel pretty.
 Have a good time.
 Look forward to tomorrow.

Sing in the shower.
 Smile at a friend's new baby.
 Wear make-up once more.
 Go for a day, a week,
 And even a month without crying.
 Celebrate the holidays.
 Forgive those who failed you.
 Learn something new.
 Look at his pictures
 And remember with happiness,
 Not pain.
 Go on with your life.
 Cherish the memories.

And one day when it's time...
 It's alright
 To love again!

Vicki Tushingam

If we don't help each other,
 who will?

Barbara Mandrell

Life, like the ocean,
 Is vast and forever
 And sorrow, but a shadow
 That moves over the sea.

John Grey
 TCF, Birmingham, AL

Please be Gentle

Please be gentle with me for I am grieving. The sea I swim is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day.

My heart is heavy with sorrow, I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path.

Please, will you walk beside me?

Jill Englar,
 TCF, Westminster, MD

Be Good To Yourself This Summer

Summertime is a time to get away and renew yourself. When you are grieving, it is even more important to relax and take time to be good to yourself. Grief work takes physical, emotional and spiritual energy.

Here are some mini-vacations. Get outside as often as possible. The warmth of the sun and soft breezes help you to feel more alive. Exercise helps work off frustration, anger and depression. Search out local parks, nature trails, country roads—even a walk around your own block. Brisk walking, bike riding and swimming are good ways to reduce tension.

Try to visit places where there is water. Watching water and hearing it lap against the shore is soothing. As the waves recede, try to envision your grief receding; as the waves return, imagine them bringing peace and comfort.

Escape into another world through a good mystery or spy novel. Read a book you enjoy or go to the movies. Light reading or an entertaining movie helps to take your mind off your grief.

Don't push your grief down. Get it out into the open so you can deal with it and control it, or it will control you. Find and turn to a good listener. Attend a support group meeting. You will gain ideas on coping and meet those bereaved longer than you, who have survived their losses. The meetings can give you hope and knowledge that you are not alone. I hope "things" get easier for all of you. Please don't lose hope.

Adapted from HOPE Line, Buffalo, NY

