

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



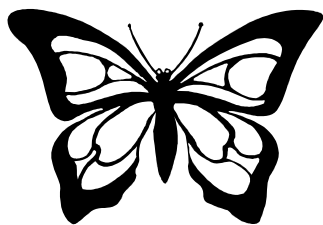
P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org
 Lamar and Joy Bradley, Chapter Leaders, 615 889-1387, email: lbradley1@mindspring.com
 Kris Thompson, Newsletter Editor, 615 480-5038, email: carsonsmom207@yahoo.com
 Jayne Head, Outreach Coordinator, 615 859-2256, email: alanandgraysonsmom@comcast.net
 David Gibson, Regional Coordinator, 615 356-1351, email: davidg14@bellsouth.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.

Guest Speaker John Baker **July 8**

MR. Baker is a counselor for the Grief Center at Alive Hospice. He is a long time staff member at Alive Hospice and familiar to many here at The Compassionate Friends. He has facilitated numerous grief support groups for those coping with loss in their lives as part of Alive Hospice’s Mission in the Nashville Community. We look forward to seeing you.



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., 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. We'll be glad to include your child's name. You need notify us only one time.



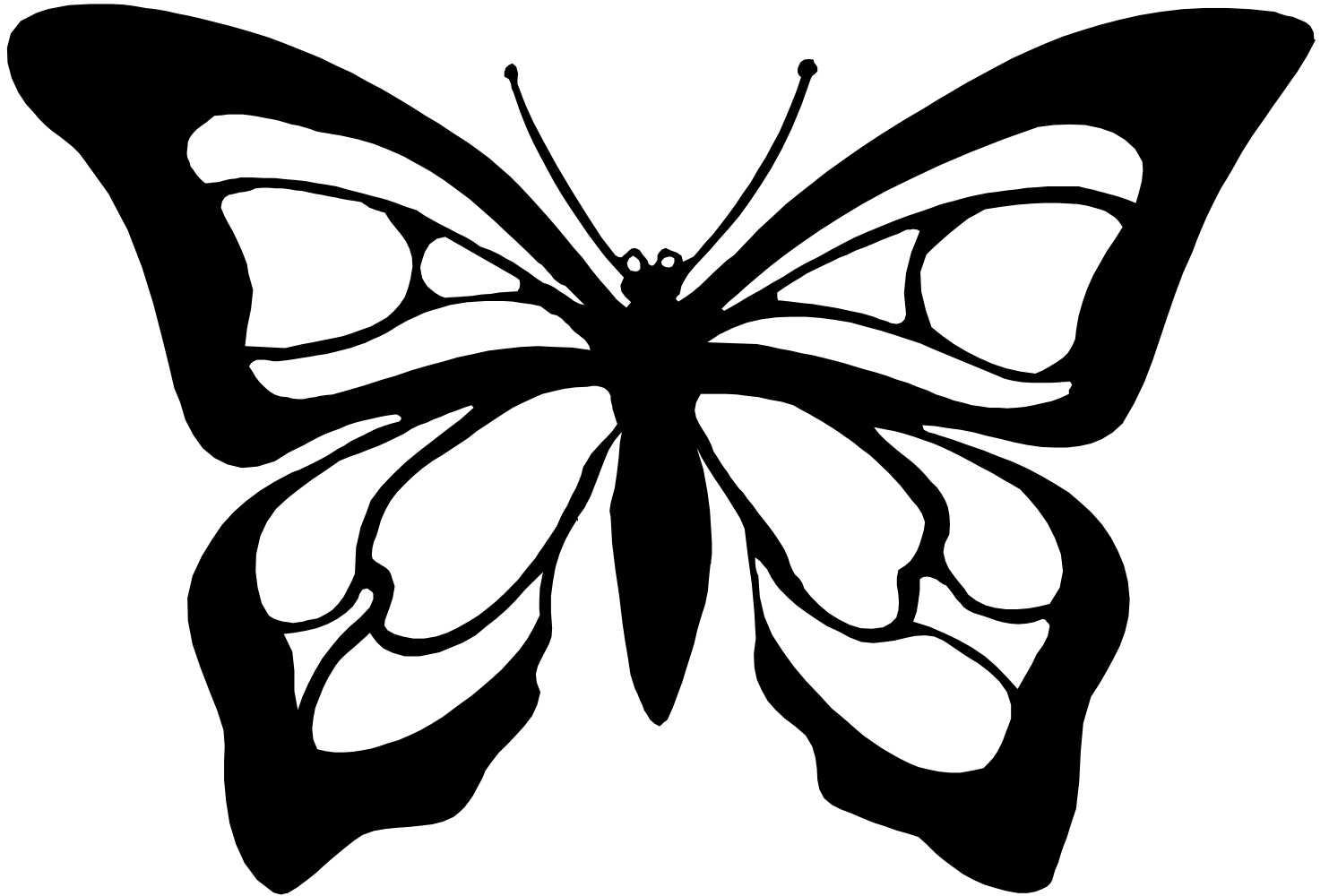
The Compassionate Friends 30th Annual National Conference To be held in Oklahoma City July 20 through July 22



One of the best experiences a bereaved parent can have is to attend a TCF national conference. Here you will meet other bereaved parents and siblings, you will hear fine speakers, and you will have the opportunity to attend several helpful workshops and sharing sessions. A high percentage of the people who attend are within the first year of their child's death.

Go to the TCF Website at www.compassionatefriends.org to get registration forms and all the information you will need to attend this wonderful event.

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.

*First TN Bank
50% matching gift: Steven Czirr
for a gift last month in memory of
Abby Czirr
Daughter of Steve and Paige Czirr*

*Keith and Fritz Ditmore
In loving memory of their son
Kenneth Ditmore*

*Oddie Jones
In loving memory of her son,
Jay Jones*

*Michael and Delores Slade
In loving memory of their son
Clifton (Cliff) Huskey*

*Robert and Ann Bourne
In memory of their grandson
Jonathan M Bourne
Son of John and Patricia Bourne*

*Olivia Bonnell
In loving memory of her sister
Gabrielle Kathleen Bonnell*

*Roland and Deborah San Gil in loving
memory of their son
Ryan Edward T. San Gil*

*Bobbie Sue Graham
In memory of her grandson
Robert Dewayne Harper*

*Cecilia Bonnell
In loving memory of her sister
Gabiella Kathleen Bonnell*

*Shirley Rich
In loving memory of her son
Bert Rich*

In three words I can sum up everything I have learned about life—it goes on.

Robert Frost

Of Frost's 6 children, two died in infancy, one died by suicide, and one after giving birth

May I Grieve?

Susanne DeMars
TCF, Miami, FL



*In the daytime I walk and work, and all;
But at home in the evening, I stumble and fall.
The office says, "Function, smile, get control."
But at home I can grieve to cleanse my soul.*

*Must I be two people for the rest of my life?
Can I make it through pain and struggle and strife?*

*If I could be just one person for more than one day,
My freedom to grieve would help light the way.*

*But society tells me not to be sad. They tell me,
"She's at peace now, and you should be glad."*

*When grieving the loss of a child is perceived,
How much easier it is for we the bereaved.*

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.

A Soldier Remembered

It is July 4th and I am watching all the programs celebrating patriotism and showing appreciation to those who fought in Desert Storm. It reminds me of the war my family was thrust into in 1987.

Three days following our 28th birthday, my twin brother was diagnosed with a form of childhood leukemia. A terrifying enemy set out to destroy someone we loved more than ourselves. God had always been our leader, so we called upon Him for comfort and guidance; then we drafted to notch doctors to act as our generals in this battle. Camp was set up in a hospital, and the generals pulled out heavy artillery called the "red death," trying to discourage the enemy.

At night we would sneak into his barracks and sleep at the end of his bunk. We drew strength and courage from this galliant warrior whom we loved so dearly. Some supporters deserted us. War was greuling and they sought happier conditions. Many remained by his side. The enemy stayed hidden for nine months but was not defeated. The leukemia came out of remission and forced the generals to pull out the biggest gun-- a bone marrow transplant.

The transplant took place in 1988, and our soldier lay near death for weeks. The danger of infection was so great we could not touch him. At night we were forced to wait on the outskirts of camp. He came home and continued to fight the war. We finally lost our soldier in 1989. Battle fatigue and injuries from friendly fire proved fatal. I still have flashbacks and nightmares of our war, and I miss my brother.

Since the treatment of leukemia is ever-changing, my brother's battleground was a learning experience for the generals. They will take the knowledge gained and place it in their arsenal to be retrieved when they are called to duty again. Those who tread these foreign fields in desperate attempts to stay alive have given all of us something no one else can. Generals will continue to learn form these courageous warriors. There are all kinds of wars and all kinds of soldiers, and none should be forgotten.

Judith Matthews
TCF Reydon, OK

For Baby

*Like a miracle
You happened
You were there
I was a flower
Beginning to bloom
Bursting with life
Then you were gone
Like music never written
Existing only in my dreams
And I love you still....*

Stacy Hooks
TCF, Savannah, GA

Remembrance

*I see your smile in the brightness of the summer sun.
A gentle breeze is the touch of your hand on mine.
A wave breaks softly on the shore and I hear you whisper,
"Remember me."*

*A winged bird begins its flight into the distant sky.
The sound of children's laughter fills the air.
The evening stars become your eyes, and I reply ...
"You are ever near."*

Priscilla Kenney
TCF, Kennebunk, ME

Summer

On the beach, cool breezes blow across the water, but the sun's rays feel warm upon my face. The ocean laps gently at the shore. I see one golden haired lad with shovel and pail filling the moat around his carefully constructed sand-castle. I remember another golden haired boy of years long past, wearing his bright red swimsuit, busy at his task and oblivious to all around him. Carefully, patiently, he fills and empties his pail again and again, molding and shaping the sand until he has it just right, until his perfect castle is completed. He runs to me, eyes aglow with pride, his dimpled smile stretched from ear to ear.

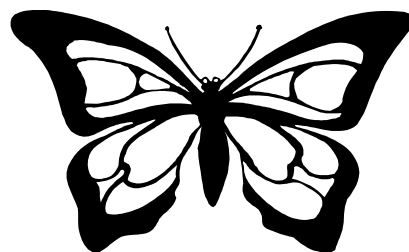
He dances around me. "Mommy, come see! It's finished! It's perfect!" We stand and admire it together. One bucket of sand turned upside down, a tiny trench encircling it. To us, it is a perfect castle. But then it happens. A wave, much bigger than the rest, washes away his labor of love. His green eyes fill, his lip quivers momentarily and then he squares his shoulders and announces, "Oh well, I'll begin again tomorrow." And now recalling that other sunny summer day, my own eyes brimming with tears, my own lip quivers until I remember that I, too, can square my shoulders and "begin again tomorrow."

Betty Stevens
TCF, Baltimore, MD

Guidelines For Grieving Couples

Realize the death of your child will hurt more than you imagined. It will rearrange your life and world view. Your relationship with your partner will be stretched. There are some things you can do to reduce strain on your relationship. You and your partner will grieve differently. Let go of the assumption that you "ought" to do it alike. Respectfully make room for each other's style. Increase the amount of time you spend in each other's company. Listen to each other as much as you can. Do special little things for each other. Realize you cannot meet all of your partner's needs. You have limits. You are both over-extended. Do seek appropriate outside support when you need it. Focus on what you need. Let go of trying to get your partner to do something different about his or her own grief. Grief takes it's time and is not very predictable. Let go of trying to conform to anybody else's idea of how you ought to be doing. Women, if you don't see "Dad" grieving in ways you recognize, stay clear of the trap of deciding this means he doesn't care about the baby (or you) very much. Ask him what he does with his sadness and sense of helplessness. Remember you both hurt. You both feel it and show it in different ways. Men, if your partner needs to talk about the baby and her grief more than you can absorb, encourage her to find additional places to talk. Show her you care in other ways. Keep clear of the trap of thinking you aren't doing it "right." Let go of trying to get her "through it" easier and faster. Remember other parents have survived this much pain. Life will be meaningful again. Keep remembering that life will become meaningful again.

From *Coping with Infant or Fetal Loss: The Couple's Healing Process* by Gilbert and Smart



Summer Delight

Where is the child who skipped through the sprays of summer rain and laughed his way into my heart? Where is the boy who climbed my trees and spied on me from behind the leaves? Where is the child with the suntanned legs who ran Fourth-of-July races in green parks? Where is the sleepy child who wrapped his arms around my neck and said, "When I grow up, I gonna marry you, Mom?" He's here.

He twines around our past, around my future, and takes me back home, and makes me young again as sure as summer comes. A suntanned spirit with an impish grin still whispers in my ear that stars are not stars at all but lightening bugs he's captured in a jar. In his youth he's my summer's glow, the sunshine in my garden, my comfort on long, hot, summer nights of remembering.

Where is the child that once played among my summer flowers? He darts and runs away as I idly dream of yesterday, at once elusive yet so near. Oh, I'm sure he's here. I'm sure I saw him just a minute ago. Or was it just a touch of summer madness that made me think I'd greeted him?

Oh, where is that child of summer gladness? His laughter slides down summer rainbows and captures me with unbound glee. His summer brownness runs barefoot on my heart. With sun-bleached hair, he smiles at me from photos from summers past, and I remember love.

Fay Harden
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL
Songs From the Edge

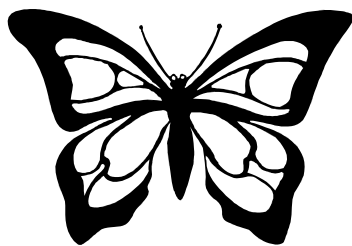
Reflections of a Step-Parent

I watched my mate go through pure hell. And I felt helpless, useless, and sometimes...invisible. Other times, I stood strong while bearing the brunt of my love's anger that lashed out at the world, as an angry God would open the heavens with roaring thunder and lightening. I was accused of not understanding and surely...I could not.

I felt a heavy pain for my step-child, the one who I took as my own. I grieved for the good times we had together; the tugs at my heart that always pierced through any resentments. The guilt weighed heavily on my shoulders, for the times we didn't communicate and I wonder if...I could have made it better. At the funeral home, I felt even a pang of...yes...jealousy toward the natural parent of my beloved step-child. Knowing that they and my mate shared a private room from the past that I could never...ever...enter.

Life must go on...This day to day existence. But things are different now. I offer my support as I see eyes staring off into a distant land. I hold a hand, and kiss away the teardrops. With an added sorrow, I wonder if my love will return to me or stay in that far off land...forever. For deep in my heart I know that this tragedy will bring us closer together or tear us completely apart.

Peggy Hull
Houston Bay Area TCF



Letter From The Editor

Ladies and Gentlemen, the responsibilities involved in publishing this newsletter for our chapter are all new adventure for me. Welcome to my first edition. I am open to any ideas and/or suggestions you may have. Please feel free to email them to me. My email and phone number are atop the front page for your convenience. My only request with telephone calls is that they be made after 6pm as my household is that of a night-shifter. I look forward to providing information, poems, articles, etc, that all may find useful.

Thanks in Advance
Kris Thompson

Independence Day

The Fourth of July, Independence Day, Our Nation's Birthday. Whatever you call it, we celebrate America's independence from England on July 4th each year. As a nation, we have endured for 200+ years to become a significant, independent, and powerful force in the world. We were founded on the principles of equality and religious tolerance, of equity and opportunity, and of rights and responsibilities. Several generations of men and women have defended our precious freedom with their lives. As we celebrate this year, let's take a moment to remember those who paid the ultimate price for freedom-- and to remember their families. It is sometimes easy to think only of the glory of their sacrifices, and to overlook the sacrifice of their families. War is never glorious, no matter how romantic the notion created by Hollywood. War has casualties that go farther and deeper into the fabric of our nation than we may realize. Those who died are buried with fanfare, as befits nation's fallen valliants. Their families learn to go on, just as we have, in spite of their loss. But think for a moment of those who were declared missing in action, or who were prisoners of war. Their families must endure, often for years, and sometimes without an end to their pain and loss. Remember all of our nation's fallen when you celebrate this year. Remember those ceremoniously laid to rest; remember those who were captured, imprisoned, even tortured; remember those whose fate remains unknown. And remember, too, the families of all of them. Death, no matter how noble, is never easy for those left behind. We send our thanks to the veterans-- living, dead, and missing-- and their families.

Tom and Sondra Wright
TCF Tucker, GA