

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.

Nashville TCF Fourteenth Annual Balloon Release June 11

Families and friends of TCF are cordially invited to gather at our regular meeting place for this very special event.

Please plan to arrive early in order to have time to write a message to or about your child. (Paper, pens and biodegradable balloons will be provided.) The notes will be attached to the balloon's ribbon.

We will walk to Centennial Park as a group for a brief ceremony of a reading and music. Following this, the balloons will be released and we will watch as they sail to the heavens until they are finally out of sight.

Immediately following the release, refreshments will be served. Any snack or treat that you can bring to share will be most appreciated. Please use disposable containers.

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

We, who were helped through our grief by those who volunteered before us, now volunteer so that The Compassionate Friends will be there for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow (or next month or next year).

Karl and Sue Snepp
TCF, Tucson, AZ

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 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

When you know of someone whose child has died and you have access to the parent's address and any other information (dates, cause of death, etc.) please email or call Jayne Head. (See page one contacts)

She will send them a nice letter of sympathy along with brochures and a current newsletter and their names will be added to our mailing list. Please leave your contact information so she can reach if she has questions.

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.

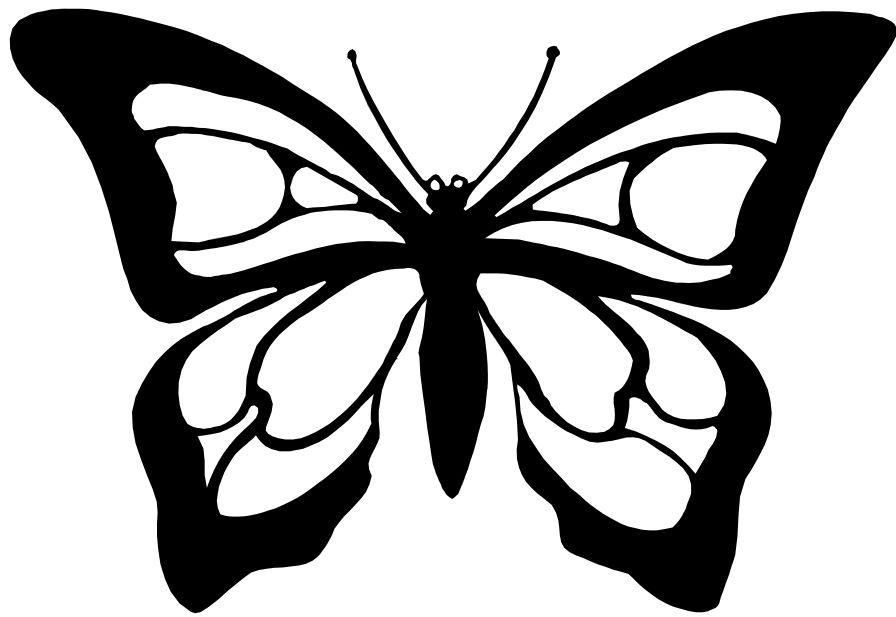
The "Let Us Remember Them" Listings

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.

NOTE: TCF Nashville Newsletters are now available on our Chapter website. <http://www.tcfnashville.org>



Father's Day

As the day approaches, I wonder how I will react.

Am I still a father?

I will sit quietly, never allowing friends and family to see how I feel.

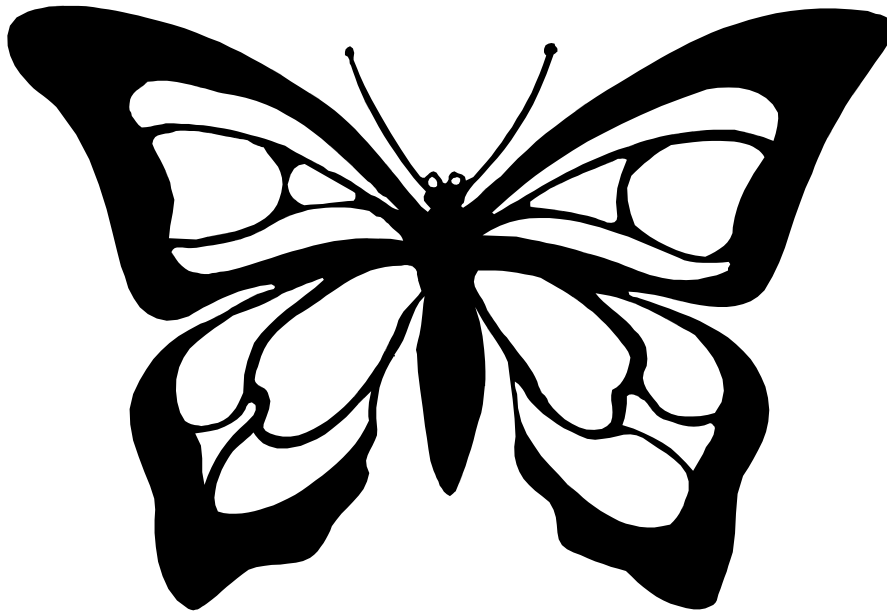
I miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break."
I must remain strong and always be the "rock."

I wish I could just let someone know how much I miss my little angel.
How much I cry and how much I miss hearing, "Dad, I love you."

I am a father, but I wonder, "Will I just pretend, as usual,
that it doesn't bother me?"

Remember me, for I hurt, too, on this special day.

TCF, Tampa, FL



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.

Father's Day

*Warm and sunny day in June,
Father's day.
Children, small and grown
Give gifts to father
Say thanks to father
Say I love you.*

*But there are fathers
Whose children are not here
To give gifts and say thanks
And say I love you.*

*Remember the fathers
Whose children are gone,
Because all too often
They grieve in heartbreak silence*

Sascha

A Wish

*I wish upon a rainbow
In every single dream,
And hope with my entire heart
You will be here again.*

*I wish upon its colors
That together we will be,
For you are my brother
And I want you here with me.*

*It's the way the color blends
That gets my hopes so high.
I know you didn't mean it
When you left without a good-bye.*

*We didn't understand your feelings
Or how sad you were inside.
You drank until it killed you
And your friend right by your side.*

*If only the world could be a rainbow
Maybe they would see,
But even though you're gone
You're forever a part of me.*

*Chasitie Sharp, sibling
TCF, Marion, OH*

The Days Seem Longer

*The days seem longer now, by far,
Wondering, hoping, believing where you are.
We talk about your life, beginning to end
With all who'll listen be it stranger, family or friend.*

*The details will vary as we travel this road,
And our burdens of grief can be quite a load.
But with the memories of you we will survive,
Even if we often don't feel quite alive.*

*The time will come when others will ask,
"How do you manage such a terrible task?"
We will often say that you are our guide
Who has helped us make it on this wild ride.*

*Struggling to make some sense of your death
Has often left us crying and gasping for breath.
Yet we are here and making progress, we feel,
Helping others to know that it is possible to heal.*

*So, as we manage to get through another day,
It is not as hard but still not an easy way.
The strength we have we owe to you
And we'll see you as soon as we are through.*

*Dan Gardner
TCF, Nashville, TN*

Sweet Baby Girl

*It's been five long years,
Yet it feels like only yesterday
Since we held you and kissed you goodbye,
That early Easter morning.*

*So few memories to hold onto,
As we left the hospital with empty, aching arms.
Gone were the hopes and dreams we had for you.
Replaced with only the intense pain and tears of grief.*

*How could we say goodbye...
When we never really had a chance to say hello?
Your footprints will remain on our hearts forever,
Time cannot diminish our love for you.*

*Debbie and Clay Pearson
TCF, Winnipeg, Manitoba*

Men Do Cry

*I heard quite often "men don't cry"
Though no one ever told me why.
So when I fell and skinned a knee
No one came by to comfort me.*

*And when some bully boy at school
Would pull a prank so mean and cruel
I'd quickly learn to turn and quip
"It doesn't hurt" and bite my lip.*

*So as I grew to reasoned years
I learned to stifle any tears.
Though "Be a big boy" it began
Quite soon I learned to "Be a man."*

*And I could play that stoic role
While storm and tempest wracked my soul.
No pain nor setback could there be
Could wrest one single tear from me.*

*Then one long night I stood nearby
And helplessly watched my son die.
And quickly found to my surprise
That all that tearless talk was lies.*

*And still I cry and have no shame
I cannot play that "big boy" game.
And openly without remorse
I let my sorrow take its course.*

*So those of you who can't abide
A man you've seen who's often cried
Reach out to him with all your heart
As one whose life's been torn apart.*

*For men do cry when they can see
Their loss of immortality.
And tears will come in endless streams
When mindless fate destroys their dreams.*

*Ken Falk
TCF, Northwest, CT*

The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more

-- Wordsworth

To My Husband

*My love, these past few months
Seem to have paralyzed us
In pain and anguish,
And I know, in that state,
The flow of communication becomes stilted.*

*The love we have and share
Is forever, darling.
But I realize that you have felt,
As have I, a separateness in our grief.*

*It's air tight, you know, dear.
I guess it is the nature of a loss so devastating,
That no matter how we try to comfort one another
Along the strange path of grieving,
We sometimes feel so alone.*

*We have done marvelously, my love.
We talked, cried and remembered our son.
With tears and smiles
I know we will laugh again.
My dearest beloved,
We will laugh again—I promise...*

*Molly Murphey
TCF, Winnipeg, Canada*

Father's Day

*As the day approaches, I wonder how I will react.
Am I still a father?
I will sit quietly, never allowing friends and family to see
how I feel.*

*I miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break."
I must remain strong and always be the "rock."*

*I wish I could just let someone know
how much I miss my little angel.
How much I cry and how much I miss hearing,
"Dad, I love you."*

*I am a father, but I wonder, "will I just pretend, as usual,
that it doesn't bother me?"*

Remember me, for I hurt, too, on this special day.

TCF, Tampa, FL

Love Him, Love Yourself

“I don’t want to talk about it,” says the TV husband, and we smile because it seems ludicrous that an apparently long-married couple cannot discuss a common, if unpleasant, subject.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” says the real-life husband, and it’s no smiling matter because the subject at hand is the death of their child.

It’s a common problem, one that adds to an already unbearably painful time for parents. One partner needs to discuss and read and visit with others in the same pain. The other, usually the husband, absolutely refuses to read about death, to attend The Compassionate Friends meetings, to go to the cemetery, or to even mention the child’s name. Both parents are hurting, but they cannot share their mutual pain.

As half of such a couple, I know who will read this. The rest of this essay is reserved for you, the one who reads and talks, trying desperately to work through the unbelievable loss you have both suffered.

You are feeling abandoned. It seems that you have lost your spouse as well as your child. You wince every time someone asks, “Has your grief brought you closer together?”

My advice may seem simplistic, but remember that you need everything simpler these days.

You need to LOVE. You must love that seemingly uncaring spouse of yours because he is hurting as much as you are. You must also love yourself. If you need to read books and newsletters, then read them, but don’t insist that he read them too. If you want to attend The Compassionate Friends meetings, then attend. “I wish you wouldn’t go there,” my husband says. “It helps me,” I say with a smile as I leave. When I read something particularly good, I recommend it and then I say no more.

Remember that you are not alone. Call a Compassionate Friend when the silence becomes too much to bear. Try to understand that it is pain, not lack of love, that is coming between you now.

Love him. Love yourself. Maybe some day, when you least expect it, he will say, “I really want to talk about it.”

Linn Ball
TCF, Broken Arrow, OK

Yes, Grandparents Do Grieve!

Thank God, someone stepped up and said, “Hey! This child was and is my grandchild! And I hurt too!” Not looking for sympathy, but wanting the world to know that yes, the mother and father are hurting from the loss of their little angels, but Granny and Grandpa loved these children with their hearts and souls. Totally unconditionally!

I read these letters that are sent to me, every day. My heart hurts for these parents for the loss of their children. But, please, let us not forget any of the grandparents whose loss is twofold. One for their child who is hurting so badly and for the loss of their grandchildren.

I always thought my grandchildren would outlive me. At least that’s the way it’s supposed to be. It doesn’t always work out that way. So yes, my heart also hurts for the grandparents too.

Wanda Bryant
TCF, Vidalia, GA

Grief is Lonely

Grief is lonely. When my sister died two years ago, everyone knew about it and talked about it. Everyone was in shock. But now, two years later, the anniversary of her death came and went without even a card in the mail. No one at work remembered the day. No one called to say, "I am thinking of you." No one asked, "How are you feeling?" My family has stayed in close contact and we talk about Susan all the time. But when it comes to grieving over Susan, everyone grieves alone. No one knows how I feel about my little sister and how it hurts me so deeply to know she's not here. Everything else in life can be shared with someone else, but not grieving. No one can fully understand the pain because everyone's pain is different. When the pain is the greatest, the loneliness is the greatest, too. I never thought I could feel this much pain and still survive. I am alone in my grief. There is no one else here with me.

Susan was born when I was almost 11. she committed suicide when she was 16. the baby of the family, the youngest of four kids; our hearts are broken forever.

Cherie Bagadiong, sibling
TCF, St. Mary's County, MD