

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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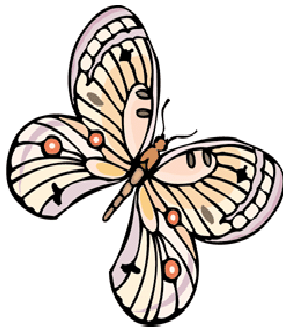


The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

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

Ask-It Basket Scheduled for Meeting March 9

Bereaved parents are often plagued with questions regarding their grief. This meeting will provide an especially good opportunity for those of us who are farther along in our grief to give the benefit of our experience to those who are just beginning their sad journey. If there is something bothering you, bring your questions for the basket. We invite our old-timers to come and lend a hand.



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. and Fridays at 11:30 A.M. and 5:00 PM



CHAPTER INFORMATION

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.

Newsletter and Donations Deadlines

Remember that all newsletter submissions and monetary donations need to be received no later than the day AFTER the monthly meeting. Any suggestions for improving the newsletter are always welcome.

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.

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

It is with sadness that we report the death of our friend, Cissy Burgeson. Her quiet presence in the center of the front row will be missed, as will the wonderful rum cakes she made for our special occasions. She was very much loved.

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.

*Oddie Bryant Jones
In loving memory of her son,
James (Jay) Jones, Jr.*

*Dan and June Brown
In loving memory of
Their son, Charlie Brown*

*Jim and Loretta Bolton
In loving memory of their son,
Michael Bolton*

*Phil and Diane Bennett
In loving memory of
Cissy Burgeson
Wife of Bob Burgeson and
Mother of
Jim, Rob, Bill and John Burgeson*

*Dan and June Brown
In loving memory of
Cissy Burgeson
Wife of Bob Burgeson and
Mother of
Jim, Rob, Bill and John Burgeson*

*Barrie and Jackie Friends
In loving memory of their Daughter,
Leanne Catherine Friends*

*Moya Leuty
In loving memory of her daughter
Janice Darlene Leuty*

*Charles and Marsha Vick
In loving memory of their son,
Daniel Vick*

*David and Peggy Gibson
In loving memory of
Cissy Burgeson
Wife of Bob Burgeson and
Mother of
Jim, Rob, Bill and John Burgeson*

*Larry and Julie Crist
In loving memory of
Cissy Burgeson
Wife of Bob Burgeson and
Mother of
Jim, Rob, Bill and John Burgeson*

*Glen and Tina Olson
In loving memory of their son,
Glen Olson, Jr.*

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

*Billy and Silenea Ketchum
In loving memory of their son,
Cliff Lyons, Jr.*

*J. Michael and Angel Floyd
In loving memory of their son,
Jesse Matthew Floyd*

A Letter of Apology

It is with a very sincere heart that I write this message for the March edition of the TCF Newsletter. I need to start by saying that taking care of this newsletter is at times a bit overwhelming. For months there has been one unexpected complication after another with a glitch in our template. Now, to add insult to injury, during the month of January, my computer went through a complete overhaul of sorts. Everything made it into the new hard drive from the old EXCEPT my Bejeweled game, and of all things, the TCF database! That being said, it is the intent of this writer/editor with this space to express my deepest apologies to those of you who opened the February Children Remembered page to find no sign of your child's name as anticipated.

Four names have been brought to my attention but I feel certain that my personal computer problems affected many more of you than let on. I therefore wanted to take a moment this month to acknowledge the following children lost in the shuffle but *so* not forgotten;

Again, please accept my apologies and know that a new plan is in place for better tabulating the children's names in the following months. It is my hope that something like this does not happen again...not on my watch, anyway.

Respectfully,

Kris Thompson

TCF Nashville Newsletter Editor

*Ryan Michael Laterza
Son of Carl and Jo Ann Laterza*

*Bradley Kyle Rozell
Son of Lori Rozell*

*Leanne Catherine Friends
Daughter of Barrie and Jackie Friends*

*Tamarra Watson
Daughter of Carolyn Watson*

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.

Sex and Bereavement

Sex and how it is affected by our grief is rarely discussed at meetings. Yet it is a problem with many. Perhaps this information taken from the book, *Help for the Bereaved Parents*, by Mildred Tengbom, will be of some help to those who have concerns.

All the men questioned expressed that they felt the need for sexual relations to continue. "But it was different," one of the men said thoughtfully. "It wasn't as much of a physical drive or urge as before. Rather I was hoping to find some way to tell my wife how much I loved her and how much I cared and it seemed to me that this was the most meaningful way I could do so."

Most wives had misinterpreted their husband's motives. "I felt used," one said. "It was completely, absolutely, entirely without feeling of any kind," another remarked. "How can you respond when you don't have any feelings? I was too tired, absolutely worn out as it was," a third woman stated. "To me, it seemed that my husband was trying to pretend that life should continue as it had before, and how could it? I felt My whole life had been wrecked and I hated him doing what I thought was playing pretend," stated another woman.

"We all need to be needed," one man explained. "A husband has a profound need to feel needed at a time of great crisis. When your wife doesn't want to have sex, you feel rejected and not needed."

"I actually told my husband I didn't need him in that way right now," one of the wives remembered. "His face looked as if I had slapped him. I realized—but not clearly enough—that I had dealt a stinging blow to his self-esteem."

The following are some points made on a TCF tape, *The Sexual Adjustment of a Bereaved Couple*, by Clare Schultz:

1. Death and sex are both taboo subjects and it is difficult for some to admit that sex is altered by grief.
2. Grief is stressful so it can affect sexual feelings, thus causing a marital problem.
3. It can be more of a problem if it only affects one in the couple.
4. Sometimes a partner says that he/she wants sex but gets no satisfaction from it. This can be confusing.
5. A person needs to "let go" for sex and this is difficult when grieving.
6. Some feel the deceased can "see." Others feel they should not experience joy—that it diminishes the relationship with their child.
7. Reactions can differ if there is no sex, and often a couple will stop trying, and touching is avoided.
8. It is suggested that couples try to verbalize sexual desires.
9. An orgasm is often felt to be paramount and that intimacy without it has no value—but cuddling and holding *are* necessary as the need for touch is increased with grief. (This need for touch is emphasized throughout the tape.)
10. The skin is the largest sense organ and the hands the chief pleasuring organ, so there are many possibilities for comfort-giving.
11. Although some do not plan a date and time to be intimate, it is suggested this may be helpful if spontaneity is not occurring. Each is able to prepare mentally.

TCF Winnipeg, Canada

Walking In The Shadow Of My Child

Wherever I go, I walk with his shadow on my being. I am clothed in coloration not visible to the naked eye. It casts an unexpected influence on how I carry myself as I journey through life. It clouds my way of looking at things; forces perspectives which I didn't know were part of my psyche. The shade of grayness through which I now view things absorbs some of the radiances which I experience. Yet my shadow comes not from the valley of death, but from my child being closer to the light.

Ed Kuzela
TCF Atlanta, GA

Notice from the Editor

Check upcoming newsletters for important information regarding the 2008 TCF National Conference to be held right here in Nashville!

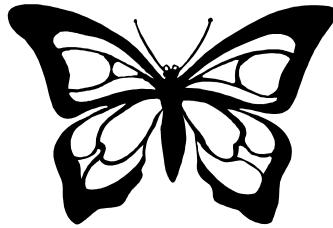
Save the Date
July 18-20

I will be adding notes on conference workshop topics and other conference facts to future newsletters, so stay tuned....

Seasoned Grief

There used to be a point to summing up a year just passed, not as a personal accomplishment but as a reflection. Leaving previous hurts behind was welcomed and the sensible thing to do. I thought I was getting wiser as I was getting older, with the New Year's clean slate full of possibilities. Becoming another person seemed simple, another chance at getting it right. Like redemption, being forgiven for having blundered or been found wanting. But death changed everything, without permission. Resolutions made sincerely and broken quickly, offended my need to hold on to the past—to rewind life very fast, backwards so that I could capture what I had lost. Still, time went on, regardless of my pleas. And when exhaustion sets in, as eventually it must, I understood there would be another future; not the one I thought I had the right to expect, but one where I dared carry hope in my heart again

Eva Lager
TCF Perth, Western Australia



Breath of Winter

*The breath of winter
Painted fragile stars
On all the windows
Of my quiet house.*

*And there I found
Your face,
More fragile even
Than the season's art,
A wonder to my eyes.*

*How can it be
The winter paints
Such secret things
In white and silver sheen
For those who cry alone
At frosted windows?*

Sascha Wagner

*"Grief is the price we pay for love.
We did not lose our children.
They died, taking with them
Our hopes and dreams for the future,
But never, never taking away their love.*

*Though death comes,
Love will never go away.
Hold it tight, the love our children gave us.
Hold it tight through the storms of grief
And bring it with you into today.*

Love never goes away...."

Darcie Sims
TCF Winnipeg, Canada

Goodbye

*As the stars rise above, I see your beautiful face.
In that very moment, I remember our special place.
When you were born my heart sang out with joy,
A warm body with curly hair,
Not some little toy.
Little darling with big brown eyes just for me
My baby girl's finally here for the world to see.
Then you left me way too soon.
Now I always cry.
My reason is I miss you so and I don't want this
Goodbye!!*

Michelle Sonderleiter
TCF Winnipeg, Canada



Surely there is no journey as lonely, nor one embarked upon with more pain, than the walk a grieving parent takes through the wilderness of grief.

From *Are You Weeping with Me, God?*
By Martha Bittle Clark

Will You Know Me?

*Jordan will you know me
When I get to your home?
When I walk through the gates
Will you call me your own?
Will you say, "Laura, my sister,"
Or "Hi, what's your name?"
Will I look different?
Will you look the same?
How will we act?
Will it be like before?
Will we laugh again until our sides are sore?
Will the love be like it should
Between a sister and brother?
Or will it be as if we just met one another?
When I get there, you'll never be alone.
Jordan, will you know me
When I get to your home?*



Laura Touton
TCF Knoxville, TN



For Some Dumb Reason

What I cannot understand is how some men will run to someone else to get a small splinter out of their finger, but will refuse to ask directions when driving, and will drive and cuss for hours without asking for assistance. The biggest "splinter" I ever got was when my daughter died. I needed help. Ministers, funeral directors, friends, co-workers, doctors, psychiatrists, couldn't help. They couldn't **know** what I was going through. One friend whose son had been murdered said, "Go to a Compassionate Friends meeting." He knew!

I went to a TCF meeting. No one "took the splinter out," no one offered any "how-to's" No one told me, "you should..." No one could, or tried, to take away my pain. But they had been there! They knew, and because they knew, it helped.

What I had walked through in my grief, some had walked through before me. That knowledge has assisted me in my travel through this pain. I am glad that I wasn't too macho, too proud, or too blind to go to that first TCF meeting. I still have a hole in my gut, my eyes still well up at odd times, but I know that I am not crazy. I know that I am not alone. I know that others have gone through the same thing, and for some dumb reason, that helps.

Tom Crouthamel
TCF Sarasota, FL

Attention All TCF Nashville Members

It is with great pleasure I announce that starting with next month's issue, your mailbox will see this newsletter arrive earlier in the month so as to allow those parents with children's birthdays at the beginning of the month may enjoy seeing their child's name on or before that month, rather than after their special day!



*After the worst 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 thing they could not bear.*



Blessings Inside Sorrow

There are blessings inside sorrow, or so I have been told. I am not sure I always agree. At times I can see the gifts I have been given. Love, without measure, fills my heart when I think of you. But I loved you then too, when you were in my arms, not in my heart. And I miss you now. The emptiness you left can never be filled, not by any blessings I might receive from sorrow.

And yet still, I wonder. Are there blessings? Would I have known how much I cared for you were it not for you were it not for your coming, and so suddenly, softly leaving without goodbye? Would I treasure the life I have remaining if it weren't for your loss? Certainly I loved and treasured before you left, but hasn't my sorrow caused me to express that love and to treasure more highly those around me? I *know* I can't take for granted that they will always be.

In the aftermath of losing you, when life lay crumbled around me, still was there not a glimmer of hope? That life would go on and somehow we would survive to build on the ashes of our broken hearts, building somehow in spite of our pain? Mixing the cement of love with our tears, we bound ourselves together even more tightly than ever before. Our love grows stronger and we have not forgotten.

What a bitter lesson! And still the emptiness will never be filled. There remains still a hole in my heart, all of our hearts. The blessings inside our sorrow will never fill the hole. It remains open; a testament that you mattered, that your coming and softly going made a difference. We were blessed to have held you for a time. Even through our tears, we smile at the memories. We know that you shadow our lives, affecting them in big ways and small. And although I would trade these blessings in a minute just to have you back in my arms, I am indeed grateful for the blessings inside sorrow.

Lisa Sculley
TCF Jacksonville/Orange Park Chapter, FL

