

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) or 646-8940•Nashville Web Site: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://www.tcfnashville.org)  
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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 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.*

## May 8 Meeting

# Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a special day and it can be a difficult day for mothers.

TCF will honor all mothers with special readings and there will be a picture board to display your child's photo. (Please bring a photo 5"x7" or smaller)

Also, in what has become a tradition in the Nashville Chapter, miniature yellow carnations will be given to everyone who attends. The flowers are provided by David and Peggy Gibson in memory of their daughter, Paige.



## Mother's Day

The person who first thought up Mother's Day knew that it was a good idea. But ... did they realize that:

- It could cause great pain for mothers whose arms ache to hold the one who once called them "Mother"?
- In order to get the title of Mother, one would have to be willing to risk great pain?
- They don't print greeting cards for mothers from kids who can no longer send one?
- Mothers would treasure and save little notes and scribbled pictures that say "I Love You, Mom"?
- There would be mothers who sigh as they wait for the phone call that won't be coming?
- Instead of getting flowers, some mothers would be giving them?

And, did they realize that, YES, even if we knew ahead of time that our hopes and dreams would be smashed and broken...we would do it again? We would, again, take that little one under our wing, wrap them in our deep, incredible, unrelenting love, and...give them all that we have to give.

Mother...another name for love.

Alice Monroe  
TCF, Mesa, CO

## 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

## **BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES**

### **Survivors of Suicide**

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings and receiving their helpful newsletter, you may reach Tina Benson at one of the following: Write to SOS, P.O. Box 40752, Nashville, TN 37204; call 615 244-7444; email [nahsoss@webtv.net](mailto:nahsoss@webtv.net); or fax 615 383-9714.

### **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 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**

### **What is the Yellow Slip?**

Please return your yellow renewal slip. After two years on the newsletter mailing list, you may receive a yellow half-sheet asking that your subscription be renewed. This is simply to keep our mailing list and the information in it current. If you do receive the yellow slip but fail to return it, we must assume that you no longer want the newsletter. Although you are given an opportunity to make a voluntary donation, there is no cost involved in your subscription. You may request that your name be returned to the active list at any time simply by calling 615 356-4TCF (4823).

### **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 "Children Remembered" 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 are unable 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.

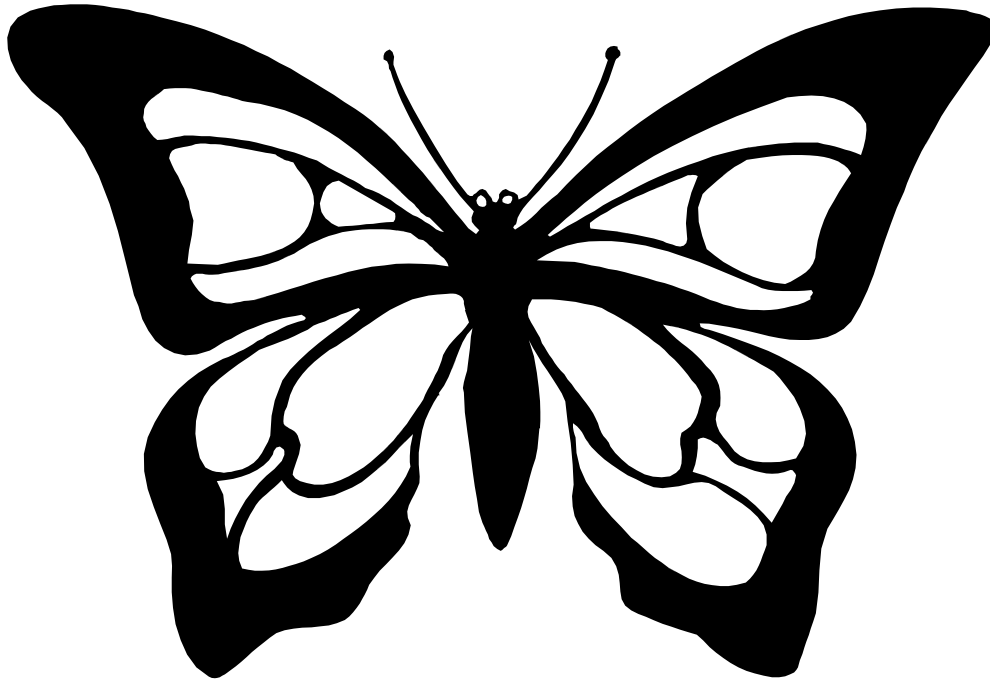
### **TCF Web Site**

Go to the TCF Web site 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.

## The Significance of Mother's Day

I don't think I really appreciated the significance of Mother's Day until I myself became one. My life would never be the same and the death of my only child did not alter the fact that I am still a mother. I still have that intense feeling of love for my own child, a love greater than any I had known before. So as Mother's Day approaches, a day on which we recognize the love and pride of motherhood, I, too, want to be remembered as a mother.

Cindy Smith  
TCF, Charlottesville, VA



*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.*

## Bent But Not Broken

To the mother who has lost her only child, or has no surviving children, the thought of Mother's Day sends a stabbing pain that only the ones of us who are in this situation can understand. We begin to notice Mother's Day cards slipped in right after Valentine's Day along with the Easter cards. Even before Easter the TV advertising starts. We try to blot this all out but our subconscious keeps reminding us, the day is coming closer.

For the first two years we celebrated Mother's Day for my mother and sister very quietly. The third year after my daughter Shawna's death, we decided to go to a local restaurant featuring a nice buffet. We arrived early hoping to avoid the crowd. A very flustered hostess greeted us and found a table for us. The tables had been pushed close together to accommodate more people. It was already becoming very crowded. She asked the question, "How many mothers?" It was then we noticed the flowers she was carrying. Someone managed to stammer out, three – three mothers. She handed us each a flower, while glancing around to find a table for the next group of people. She didn't notice the one she handed me was pretty battered.

My sister wanted to give me hers or get another. "No, it's ok," I said. The stem was bent, but not broken completely. A wilted tired flower was hanging from the stem.

I brought it home and propped it up in a glass of water to revive it. You see, I could identify with that flower.

As a mother without my child, I have felt so bruised and battered. Somehow through all the pain, tears and loneliness, like the flower, I have been bent but never quite broken.

Donna Frechec  
TCF, Enid, OK

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## What is Loss?

I have a friend who never married; who never had a child. She never lost a husband as I did; She never lost a child as I did.

Last night... I wept for my friend...

Gwen Brown  
TCF, Winnipeg, Canada

## Graduation Day

Graduation Day: A day cherished by the graduate and his or her parents; one of the long-awaited "rites of passage" to the new status called "adulthood."

Laughter is heard among the students; tears of joy and nostalgia from the parents. The teachers heave sighs of relief and feel a mixture of accomplishment with just a tinge of sadness for the days of laughter and childhood attachments that must be left behind.

Awards are given.  
Gifts are received.  
Parties are planned.  
Future plans are discussed.  
New goals are dreamed.

There are hurdles to climb. Disappointments are intermingled with successes. All of these things are a part of life for those fortunate enough to have survived the dangers and pitfalls of this complicated society in which we live. There was no prom night at our house. There were no award ceremonies to attend. There was no graduation gift to buy. There was no college to choose. There was no future to plan. Jimmy doesn't live here anymore. His home now is a neatly trimmed patch of grass with bright-colored flowers; a tombstone inscribed with love; a small space carefully tended and watched over lovingly by someone who finds it most difficult to cope, to accept, to go on, or to find joy or peace in anything.

Tears are a way of life now, and spare time is filled with emptiness.

There is sorrow now for a cheerful young boy who will soon be forgotten by all but a few.

Broken dreams.  
Unanswered prayers.  
Disbelief.  
Loss of faith.

And maybe years of endurance of a situation so unacceptable, so intolerable, that from the inner depths, a scream is stifled. With one word my entire being cries out, "WHY?"

Ann Ianni  
Bereavement Magazine

## ***Your Graduation Day***

*Your past school year seems to have ended so fast,  
And your "graduation day" is here at last.  
The day where there is always laughter and tears,  
As friends have memories of all their school years.*

*And although you're not here to remember those days,  
Our hearts will have the "memory" of you always.  
Amanda, I am so proud of you  
In all that you accomplished and tried to do.*

*So for me to have seen you walk down that aisle-  
With your beautiful face and happy smile-  
Would have been my dream come true,  
But instead it will be me walking for you.*

*I'll be bursting inside with joy and pride,  
For you will be in my heart and at my side.  
We'll walk with your friends, my head held high,  
With me trying my best not to cry.*

*And when your name is called what an "honor" it will be  
To have your diploma handed to me.  
Honey, I know you'll be cheering me on in Heaven out loud  
Saying, "Mom, now it's me who's really so proud."*

*I love and miss you so very much.*

*Momma 05/24/96*



*Peggy Wood Nolan  
TCF Nashville, TN*

## ***Mother's Day Without You***

*Even in the fleeting time that the two of us were three,  
You taught us of the purest form of love that there can be.  
Of a mother for her baby, for the new life that she bore,  
For the miracle love created;  
how could anyone ask for more?*

*Short-lived was my chance at motherhood  
because you could not stay,  
And I would give almost anything to see you smile today.*

*Sharon S. O'Keefe  
TCF, Richmond, VA*

## ***A Mother's Love***

*I need no pictures  
to remember your warm smile;  
the lines of your face  
are embedded in my memory of you.  
I gave you life in one second of pain,  
for which you returned years of  
yourself –  
sometimes quiet, sometimes noisy,  
but always thoughtful.  
Sometimes  
I hear a voice that sounds like you,  
and I pause.  
That pang of hurt  
stems from a tiny empty spot  
you have left in my life.  
I carried you in my womb,  
then later in my arms,  
but I will carry you  
in my heart forever.*

*Joy Morning  
TCF, Phoenix, AZ*



## ***Wishes***

*I thought I heard your laugh today,  
While watching children run and play,  
You chuckled in that special way.  
Then you were gone.*

*I thought I saw your gentle face,  
That look which time cannot erase.  
Then it was gone without a trace,  
I was alone.*

*I thought I heard your voice today,  
And suddenly my world was gay.  
I thought I heard you softly say,  
"I love you, Mom."*

*Lily DeLauder  
TCF, N. Hollywood, Ca*

## *Mother's Day*

*Another Mother's Day!  
But a different one this year.  
For you see I am still a Mother,  
but my child isn't here.*

*I am a mother who's hurting  
for this child who was so dear.  
As I face this and every other occasion,  
each and every year.*

*I am a mother who feels emptiness  
over and over again,  
Because I miss THIS child  
and all that could have been.*

*I am a mother who cared  
as I watched my child grow,  
And truly loved her more  
than anyone will ever know.*

*I am a mother who has memories  
and many tears to cry  
over regrets I'll have to live with  
until the day I die.*

*I am a mother who is thankful  
for the miracle of birth,  
and all my child has taught me  
about life and my own self worth.*

*I just can't stop being a mother  
just because my child isn't here,  
because the love we had for each other  
will continue for years and years.*

*And so... on this special Mother's Day,  
I will feel within my heart  
all the pride, love and joy  
which are the parts  
that make me who I am,  
and what I'll always be...  
A MOTHER...Just remember that... Please?*

Judy Sittner  
TCF Murfreesboro, TN

God cannot be everywhere,  
so He made mothers.

- Arab Proverb

## *The Mother's Day Card*

*You handed it to me  
With never a word  
Your eyes shone with feelings  
That no one else heard.*

*When I opened the envelope  
I wasn't prepared.  
Instead of the humor  
We so often shared,*

*There were flowers and rainbows  
And butterflies at play  
In a beautiful meadow  
On a sunshiny day.*

*Inside was a verse  
Like a sentimental song,  
As though you knew  
That you'd soon be gone.*

*This card must last me  
A very long time.  
Is that why you chose  
Such a special rhyme?*

*At the bottom inside  
The heart you had done  
You wrote, "I love you, Mom,  
From Scott, your only Son."*

xxox

Kathi Pittman  
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

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## *Grief*

*GRIEF cannot be conquered  
Like an enemy*

*GRIEF can only be changed  
From pain  
To hope  
From hope  
To deeper life.*

Sascha

## A Debt of Love

When our children die we are caught in the quicksand of grief and we may struggle for years to find our way back to the place where we can cope with life again. Grief is so self-involving that we may not take time to wonder about those who have walked the road years before us, struggled through their own grief and left a heritage of compassion that was in place so we would not walk alone. You probably will not know about many of the children listed in this newsletter on the page for birth and death anniversaries in the month of May, but there is one you should know about. In the list you will find the name of Kenneth Lawley, born August 7, 1956, who died at the age of twelve on May 23, 1969. This boy's death has meant that thousands upon thousands of grieving families around the world have found the help and support they needed when their own child died. His story is a story you should know because we owe him and his parents, Joe and Iris Lawley, a great debt of love.

Kenneth lived in a town in England and, on the way to school one spring morning in May, had stopped on his bicycle at an intersection to wait for traffic to pass. A car, turning the corner too sharply, hit Kenneth and knocked him down. He was rushed to the children's hospital in Coventry where he died. The young hospital chaplain, Rev. Simon Stephens, ministered to Joe and Iris and told them about another couple, the Hendersons, whose twelve-year-old son, Billy, was dying of cancer. After Billy's death the two couples would get together and talk about their children. Rev. Stephens, realizing that they were helping each other in this way, encouraged them to reach out to other bereaved parents and visit them, which they did. And so it was that the Society of Compassionate Friends was started in Coventry, England a few months later.

A group of bereaved parents helping one another was so unique that Time magazine published an article about the Society in May of 1971. In Miami that article was read by Arnold and Paula Shamres whose teenage daughter had been killed in an auto-train accident. They immediately contacted Rev. Stephens and urged him to come to America and help them start a similar group for grieving parents here. In November 1972 Rev. Stephens did come and stayed two weeks with the Shamres and started the first chapter of The Compassionate Friends in the United States. There are now more than 500 chapters across this country where bereaved parents meet every month to help one another through their grief.

On the second Sunday of December each year when thousands of members of The Compassionate Friends all around the world light candles at 7:00 PM in each time zone in memory of their children, I make a mental note of the hour when in England Joe and Iris Lawley would be lighting a candle for Kenneth. Because of Kenneth and Joe and Iris our family was able to survive the death of our daughter. Our family owes them a great debt of love. We all do.

David Gibson  
TCF Nashville, TN