

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Web Site: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://www.tcfnashville.org)  
 Lamar and Joy Bradley, Chapter Leaders, 615 889-1387, email: [lbradley1@mindspring.com](mailto:lbradley1@mindspring.com)  
 Candan & Dan Gardner, Newsletter Editors, 615 855-2900, email: [tcf@tcfnashville.org](mailto:tcf@tcfnashville.org)  
 David Gibson, Regional Coordinator, 615 356-1351, email: [davidg14@prodigy.net](mailto:davidg14@prodigy.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 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 14 Meeting

# Mother's Day

**M**other'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.



## 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

I want to let all of you know how thankful I have been to receive The Compassionate Friends newsletter. It has been a big help to me when I couldn't go to the meetings. It was about a year and a half before I had the courage to go to a meeting. I felt that I had enough grief of my own; I didn't need to hear anyone else's to bring mine to the surface. And yes, my fear was correct. There were stories with some similarity to mine that stirred up my pain, but I also heard warm memories. This gave me hope. I might get there...someday. For whatever pain may have gotten stirred up, I left with a new helpful idea: to do things that would/would've made my child proud of me. Having the courage to face the pain of loss and discover what I could learn from others is one thing I think would make him proud. Now I want to attend meetings because it's a safe place to cry and a place to find hope.

Jeannie Sevier  
TCF, Nashville, TN

## **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**

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**

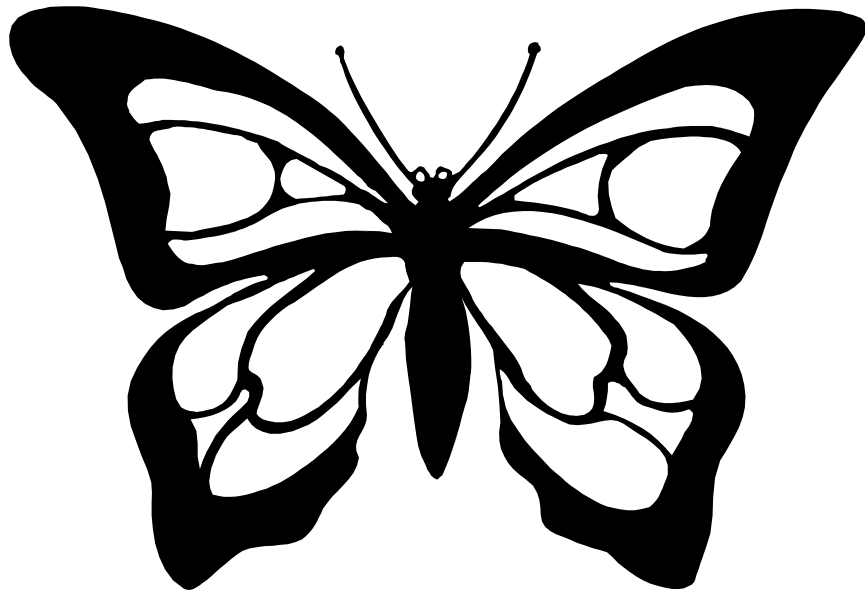
At your first TCF meeting you are asked to sign a registration card that gives us permission to add your child to the “Let Us Remember Them” list on page 3 in the monthly newsletter. If you have not been able to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed, please let us know, printing 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](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.

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



## Camp Evergreen

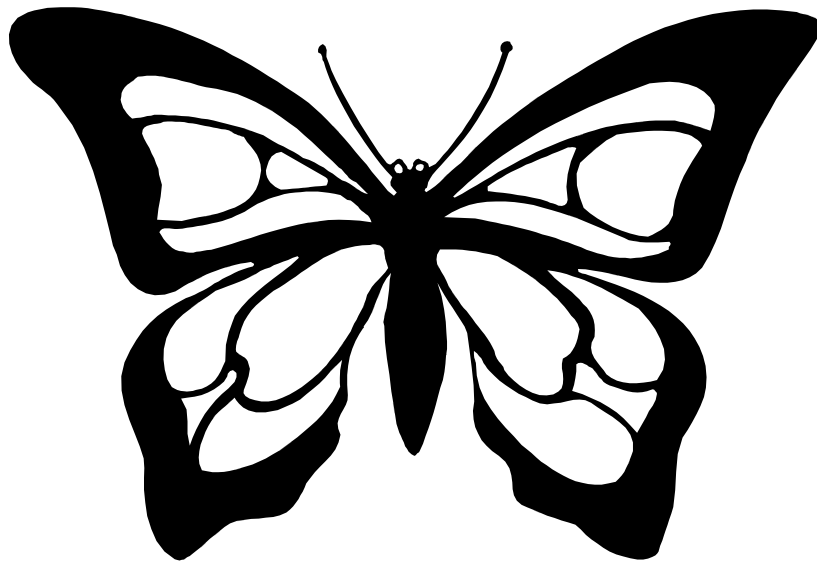
**I**s a two-day camp created to meet the special needs of children, ages 7-14, who have experienced the death of a family member or other significant person in their lives.

The camp will be held at a site in Kingston Springs.

Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>  
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Friday June 2<sup>nd</sup>  
9:00 AM – 7:00 PM.

For more information and registration please contact The Grief Center at Alive Hospice (615) 963-4732.



*A special thanks to Steve and Paige Czirr, who have kindly taken over the responsibility of creating the name tags for our chapter. This process is a labor of love and we know they will do a wonderful job and our members will continue to proudly wear the tags with images of our children and beautiful butterflies.*

*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.*

### **Remembering the Moms**

*who didn't have anyone to turn to and  
traveled this road alone...*

*An old woman rocks quietly with her eyes closed.  
Her mind reaches back to a place she saves,  
A place sacred to her,  
A place she can only visit when alone.*

*Her thoughts drift around in her head,  
At times almost drowning her as she remembers.  
She can again feel for a moment,  
She can again dream for a moment.*

*She sees him in her mind,  
She feels him in her heart...  
He is her child.*

*The child not recognized by others,  
The child that left as quickly as he came.*

*She rocks, she hums.*

*She hums 60 years of lullabies,  
Never heard by her baby's ears.*

*She rocks, she hums,  
And tears fall to her breast.*

*She is still a mother...*

*-written by Lori Ayrault*

### **To My Dearest Wife**

*I searched to find a card for you,  
One with something special to say.  
They were all very trite.  
I decided to write  
My own, for this Mother's Day.*

*To wear the name "Mother" is an honor.  
It requires a heart loving, giving and true.  
In all the world, there is no one else  
Deserves this more than you.*

*You carried her for ten and a half months.  
We wanted, worried, then wept.  
When she was born, she also died.  
There is no measure for our pain's depth.*

*She changed our lives so totally,  
We will never be the same.  
The truth of this shows in what I deeply know:  
You are a mother in more than just name.*

*I remember when we laid her to rest.  
I said, "We've buried a part of us."  
But in my mind and heart I feel  
A part of her lives within us.*

*If I could, I'd bring her back,  
So you could hear our baby say,  
"I love you, mom. I'm doing fine.  
Happy Mother's Day."*

*A bereaved father  
TCF, Salem, OR*

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### **A Bereaved Mother Is...**

**A Bereaved Mother Is** someone who thinks she will spend the rest of her life with this horrendous feeling inside.

**A Bereaved Mother Is** someone who has to learn how to live all over again.

**A Bereaved Mother Is** someone who wishes they would take Mother's Day out of the calendar.

**A Bereaved Mother Is** someone who has to learn to accept the loss of her beloved child and uses what she has learned to help others.

**A Bereaved Mother Is** someone who can again learn to smile, to look forward to the future and get excited again because her Compassionate Friends were there when she needed them.

*Zel Hester  
TCF, Atlanta, GA*

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### **Mothers and Fathers**

*A mother's love for children is a very special thing,  
Filled with all the many days that motherhood can bring.  
Days when children misbehave and try your patience so,  
Days when they are sweet and kind and let their loving  
feelings show.*

*A father's love for children is very strong and pure.  
There's no problem that a child may have which a father  
cannot cure.*

*A parent's love for children is a never-ending thing.  
It lasts from day to day and year to year, through  
summer, winter, fall, and spring.*

*That special love continues still when someone's child  
has died,  
For the feelings that a parent has are impossible to hide.*

*Jean Hotopp  
TCF, Fox Valley, IL*

## How

*It seems so long ago and yet  
Like yesterday we won't forget  
That our beautiful child passed away.  
How did we make it to this day?*

*The love we have for that special one  
The hope, the fear and having fun  
With our child we miss so very strong.  
How could we have survived this long?*

*We speak to her each and every day  
With longing and loving we often say  
We miss you and don't want you to see us cry.  
How is it possible for this much time to go by?*

*We cry more times than we thought we could  
And know that it is healing and also good  
To express our never-ending love for you.  
How hard it has been to make it through.*

*We are healing a little as time moves past  
Because of the life we shared that didn't last  
As long as we wanted, of that we are sure.  
How many more years must we endure?*

*We share your life with those who care  
And try to help others who may not be aware  
Of the time that will pass without their child.  
How do we explain this ride that is so wild?*

*Each anniversary that we manage to reach  
Is part of the healing and helps us teach  
Those around us that are just getting started.  
How long it has been since our child departed.*

*The years seem endless once in a while,  
And yet we still find it possible to manage a smile  
When we think of the life we shared so lovingly.  
How then, do we make it to the next anniversary?*

*We miss her still and after all these years  
Some healing has come through so many tears  
Shed because we love her, that is for sure!  
How else could we have come so far but for her?*

*Eight years ago today 3/24/2006.*

*We are that much closer to seeing her again.*

*Dan Gardner  
TCF, Nashville, TN*

## A Mother's Tear

*A single tear trickles down my cheek.  
It tells a tale I cannot speak  
Of days gone by that have been stilled.  
It tells of dreams left unfulfilled.  
It's wetness holds "what might have been."*

*Not going to the Senior Prom.  
No more "I love you , Mom."  
No cap and gown on graduation day.  
No wedding bells in the month of May.*

*No more family birthday celebration,  
No voting for the leader of our nation.  
Gone, the dream of horse and farm,  
Never mine, to hold her babes in arm.*

*You've followed the path of my lonely tear,  
It speaks of one that I hold most dear.  
Now, you'll hear his mother cry, "Why God,"  
Why did my daughter die?*

*Karen Bell  
Bereavement Magazine*

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## Mother's Day

*Mother's Day is here  
And it is late and almost over—  
Today children give thanks for their mothers.  
You are gone and can't be thankful for me,  
But oh how thankful I am I had you—*

*Each holiday is hard and I doubt they will  
Ever get easier—  
But I am so glad to have had you.  
Even now I can't bear the fact that  
You are gone.  
I look at the pictures of you so sweet and alive,  
And then look at pictures of you in  
That white tufted box—so still—so dead.*

*The Celeste I knew and loved, I give thanks for,  
Lives inside my head and heart.  
And so, on the first Mother's Day without you  
I'm missing you, grieving for you,  
Loving you still and oh, so very  
Thoughtful for you.*

*Happy Mother's Day to me for memories of you.*

*Jo Hughes  
TCF, Gainesville, FL*

## Mother's Day—or Remembering Mothering Sunday

As we approach this special day, so painful to many bereaved mothers, we send our loving thoughts to all those experiencing the loss of their precious children this year. Somehow these formerly lovely days—like Christmas—are so full of treasured memories that they become especially sad.

In the early days of bereavement, in our often anguished response to Mother's Day, it is easy to overlook our other children (if we are fortunate enough to have any) who desperately need our love. It is easy to forget, too, our own mothers or lonely older relatives and friends who also need our love and concern. Although we are deeply grieving and will always feel a special sadness on this day as we remember the hug we are not getting, the bright face which should be greeting us, the events which might have been, we must also try to remember our vital and essential place in our families and in the lives of others.

On this Mother's Day I will be remembering Rhys who next month would have been twenty one. The life I shared with him was incredibly precious and now seems like a beautiful dream. However, now almost ten years later, other facets have appeared to make my life meaningful again. The fog of grief has passed, and now I can look forward to the future once again, treasuring memories, yet growing from my past sorrow. Please believe that it will happen for you, too.

Margaret Harmer  
TCF, Melbourne, Australia

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## For Childless Parents

I know there are many of you out there who have no surviving children. I feel almost apologetic for mentioning Mother's Day or Father's Day in the May or June newsletters, but those who have surviving children need to have the feelings that accompany their loss addressed. I do want those of you who are now childless to know we are aware of the pain these special days bring as you struggle to find reasons to go on. I hope you will use the friends you have to help you through these times. Though your child has died, the memories of him or her didn't die. Share them with someone who cares, who may not know exactly how you feel, but who cares about your pain. I'm one of them!

Mary Cleckley  
TCF, Atlanta, GA

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## Mother's Day

That first Mother's Day after Raymond died was a dark day. I had not only lost my son, but in losing him I was no longer a mother. The telephone didn't ring; I felt very much alone. I let the tears fall and fell asleep lying on Raymond's bed.

While I was sleeping a neighbor came by with a small pot of miniature white mums with a note attached. "Now everyone in heaven knows what a great mom you are." That simple message lifted me, and I was able to smile.

Now, I don't think I'm a great mom, but a pretty good mom I am—and I'll always be Raymond's mom, no matter what! Nothing can take that away. Rather simplistic you say? Yes, but sometimes we need to think in simplistic terms to experience the joy hidden in the sorrow.

TCF, Greater Ozarks Chapter

Mother's Day will soon be upon us and we mothers will be remembering our children who are absent but yet so much a part of us, filling our hearts and renewing memories. I wish for each of you a peaceful day. Yes, it will be very poignant and for the recently bereaved, more painful, but believe me, it does get better. We remember them with gratitude for having given us that most precious of all gifts—their love.

Helen Prokop  
TCF, Bridgeport, CT

## *Beginning to Live Again*

The facts surrounding the death of my daughter are painful to recall. Early in my grief, my world was in a shambles. I lived with doubts, became careless about money, my general health. . . everything. I refused to make plans to improve my lot.

How long did this phase last? I think a change began about two years later, in 1980. I began to see other things in the world and decided to try to pick up the pieces of my life. Would a move to new surroundings help? I proceeded slowly on this idea and did not leave my old home until early 1982. Yes, it did help. I busied myself with my new home. I began to have entire days or entire nights without that awful statement, “gunshot wound to the head,” echoing in my mind.

Last year a favorite sister died and that was after I had begun to enjoy life again. Sometimes I feel that I can't take any more sadness, but as long as I live and care about people something painful will happen. Something else will happen. But here I am. I am a survivor. I try to roll with the punches, look for new experiences and search diligently for cheerful situations. People I know only casually may also have a pain, an agony, they have not shared with me. I try to avoid saying or doing anything that may hurt others.

Losing my daughter will not get any easier. I miss her as much today as I did when she first went away to North Carolina to finish her graduate degree. Some days I am extremely depressed, but other days I am almost happy. Can this be? Is it possible for me to be happy? Yes. I must enjoy the moment: a delicious meal, the pleasure of conversation with friends, the joy of dancing, singing, walking, traveling. I must, for I do not know what is in my tomorrow.

Florence Godfrey  
TCF, Camden Co., NJ