

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org

Chapter Leaders: Lamar and Joy Bradley, (615) 889-1387, email: lbradley1@mindspring.com

Interim Newsletter Editor: Peggy Gibson, (615) 356-1351, email: davidg14@bellsouth.net

Outreach Coordinator: Jayne Head, (615) 859-2256, email: alanandgraysonsmom@comcast.net

Regional Coordinator: David Gibson, (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.

November 9 Meeting

A RESTROSPECTIVE OF GRIEF

Dr. David Martin, bereaved parent, psychologist, teacher, and friend of TCF will be our guest speaker. Dr. Martin has spoken to our chapter numerous times and has always been warmly received. He has presented workshops at TCF national conferences, including the national conference held in Nashville this past July. We hope you'll join us for this always special meeting.



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

**Candlelight Memorial Service Scheduled for December 14—
HCA Auditorium—3:00 p.m.**

Friends and families are invited to attend this beautiful service.

IMPORTANT: Regardless of past participation, if you wish to have a picture of your child shown on the big screen you must return the form on page 7.

CHAPTER INFORMATION

Newsletter Deadlines

In order for donations and contributed poems or articles to be included in the following month's newsletter, we must receive them no later than the Wednesday after the chapter meeting. Any donations received after that date will be included in the next month's issue. Please send them to TCF, P. O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205.

Religion and TCF

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.

TCF invites you to join in this special Day of remembrance by lighting a Candle at 7:00 P.M. wherever you are.



**2008 Worldwide Candle Lighting
In Memory of All Children**

Sunday, December 14

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.

TCF Video on 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. and Fridays at 11:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Sharing

Sharing is a community organization interested in helping parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn infant. This parent support group meets the second Thursday evening of each month at 7 p.m. at The Women's Hospital at Centennial Medical Center located at 2221 Murphy Avenue (between 22nd and 23rd Ave). There will be signs directing you to the meeting room location. Call 615 342-8899 for further information.

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 Children's Grief Counseling, you may call Lauren Thurman, CMSW, at 615 963-4829.

*Here where their silent
voices speak to us
where wind and cloud
and stone bear
out their names.
Here where their laughter
touches our tears,
and where their image
heals the grieving time,
Where memories tremble
between love and pain,
and where their glory
kindles our lives.
Here where their beauty
reaches out to us
and where their kindness
warms a tired world:
Here let us stand and look
unto their graves*

*to find their faces gentle
in the sky.
Let us remember how their
presence was
a treasure and a wealth
beyond account
Here let us weep
Here let us love
Here let us thank them
for the joy they gave
to our living and to
our hope.*

Sascha

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.

A New Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving morning, 1991, I was standing at the sink, peeling potatoes. The turkey was in the oven, the pies were cooling on the sideboard. Just another normal holiday morning. At 10:30 the phone rang. I was closest, so I answered it.

That call from the San Diego medical examiner changed my world forever. Within seconds our whole household was in sheer chaos and shock. Our beautiful daughter, Nancy, had been killed in a car accident earlier that morning.

How could this be? I had just talked with her less than twenty-four hours before. She had wished us a "Happy Turkey Day" and closed her call with an "I love you, Mom." That was to be the last time I would hear her voice.

How did I get from that day of wrenching pain to this day nine years later? The simple answer is a minute, an hour, a day at a time. Putting one foot in front of the other, reaching out for people who had been where I was.

The first Thanksgiving after Nancy's death was the most difficult. I couldn't bring myself to cook or even look at a turkey. The decorated paper plates and napkins

in the store were sickening to me. My solution to the turkey was to serve prime rib instead. That strategy got me through the next two Thanksgivings.

One of my watershed moments came on the fourth Thanksgiving after Nancy's accident. My surviving children wanted the traditional turkey-and-trimmings dinner. They missed the old ways. The truth is, they had moved forward and they wanted me to take that step also. Reluctantly, I obliged, but with a heavy heart. With red roses nearby and her candle lit, we gathered together and counted our blessings.

Today, with love and support of family and friends, I will once again prepare the Thanksgiving dinner. It will always be "different." I can't change what was. I can, however, choose to embrace the life I have now. There is so much to be grateful for. Not a day goes by that I don't count my blessings. Among the greatest of these is the love of family and friends and peace in my heart.

I truly believe that these blessings can be yours, too. Time, tears, love of family, good friends, and reinvestment can lead you there.

Mary Conway

TCF Nashville, TN and TCF Bakersfield, CA

Holiday Gifts For Children

Each year, our chapter donates holiday gifts to the children at Youth Villages, an establishment that works with the needs of children who are not living at home and are under care for the holidays. Since things went so well with Youth Villages last year, it has been decided to provide gifts to them again this year. The children range in age from 6 to 18. For many of these children, these will be the only gifts they receive this holiday season.

You may participate by bringing UNWRAPPED gifts to the TCF Memorial Service on Sunday, December 9. Below is a list of most requested items.

CD Players
 Gameboy games (teen rated)
 Playstation games (teen rated)
 Costume Jewelry (like that found in the malls at Claire's)
 Remote control cars and planes
 Girly things like journals, gel pens and scrapbooking items
 Model cars or trucks
 Gift cards for the malls (as Hickory Hollow or Rivergate)
 Board Games
 Baby and Barbie dolls and accessories
 Lego sets
 Disney movies (DVD and VHS)
 Watches (girls and boys)
 Sweat shirts and pants—boys and girls (6-18 years)

Gift cards for Best Buy and Circuit City

Stocking stuffers requested:

Matchbox cars
 Small notepads
 Pens and pencils
 Candy
 Jewelry
 Hygeine products
 Billfolds/wallets
 Cute little change purses for girls
 Makeup items
 Socks
 Gift cards to McDonalds or Burger King

Please note these items may be brought in gift bags with tissue paper, but DO NOT WRAP the gifts. Youth Villages staff does the wrapping as it helps them to more evenly distribute the donated items.

Magic

*I have no magic words for you
 and none for me as well.
 On the day I buried my child,
 there were no words to tell.*

*Now we have come to bury yours
 and I feel your desolate pain.
 How sad it is to know the sun
 will never shine the same.*

*This is a long hard road, my friend,
 the unendurable which we endure.
 You ask me for magic words to help,
 I've no magic—yet I'm sure.*

*There must be a peace that so slowly
 comes
 You scarcely know when it arrives.
 The peace of knowing our children
 will always be part of our lives.*

*I'm told "it does get better"
 it has to—someday it must.
 Others farther down the road have
 told me so,
 and it's the peace in their eyes I trust.*

Donna Dragoo
 TCF, Norman, OK

Days to Survive

As the holiday season approaches, I realize that it will be a first for many of you. To me, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, 1984, were just that—days to survive. I was still numb from Charles' death, but the hurt was setting in BIG TIME!

I remember very little of it now, but one thing I do remember is hanging up four stockings instead of five. The fifth nail on the mantel looked so forlorn. The stockings were not centered at all. There was a big gap on the end.

I hated the way it looked, and I hated not putting Charles' stocking out. To me it meant a betrayal almost denying his existence.

But, on the other hand, I thought about the reactions of friends and neighbors as they came to visit. Would they think that I had really lost my mind if Charles' stocking were hanging?

I was miserable the entire season, and Christmas day was just horrible—until my sister Ann gave me an envelope as the other children were opening their gifts. I looked at it, and it said "CHARLES." In it was a check to the PICU [Pediatric Intensive Care Unit] at Children's Hospital at Richland Memorial where Charles had been a patient for the week preceding his death.

Ann had remembered Charles! As I cried, she told me that the money she would have used for Charles' gift would still be used for something very special.

Every Christmas since then I have hung Charles' stocking. Santa's been real good about leaving something for a favorite charity in it.

Grace Dibble Boyle
TCF, Sumter, SC

The List of Firsts Tugs at the Heart

How well I remember...

...the first time I mowed the grass after you died. I cried for three hours; that's how long it took for me to mow it alone.
 ...the first time I heard the high school band you were in, play. It was one year after your death. Inwardly, I screamed. Outwardly, silent tears rolled down my cheeks.
 ...the first movie we went to. We left, crying, before the movie was even half through.
 ...the day your sister got her driver's license. She was seventeen when she got it. She couldn't stand the thought of driving—that's how you died.
 ...the first time your sister was thirty minutes late coming home, while driving. We were frantic. We called friends she had gone out with, the State Patrol and the hospital. Once I got through ranting and raving at her, I fell apart.
 ...the first time your mom and I were thirty minutes late coming home. Your sister was as mad as we had been. Did she ever let us have it!
 ...the first time I went fishing. I went to the same place we often went, to the place where you caught your first trout. I cried more than I fished. I was glad I was the only person there
 ...the first wedding we went to—friends of yours. We felt so robbed. My son would never know the joy of having a helpmate, of having his own child.
 ...the first funeral I went to. I sat in shock—the flowers, the casket, the funeral home. I was back at your funeral!

...the first Christmas our doorbell rang and there stood one of your friends. It made us feel good that he thought so much of you he would come to see us. His presence spoke highly of you. He has not missed a Christmas in seven years.
 ...the first time I sang again. I quit singing shortly after you died. It took me four years to start back. There is one song I still can't sing, can't listen to.

As I look back on this list of firsts, my heartstrings are pulled anew. I still miss you, son.

Jess Johnson
TCF, York, PA

"The road to recovery from grief...is to take time to do things which will enable us to give a renewed meaning to our lives. That's when our journey through grief becomes a journey of discovering ourselves, our potential, and our resources in the encounter with life. That's when we become BETTER PEOPLE rather than BITTER PEOPLE. In grief, no one can take away our love. That call of life is to learn to love again."

Father Arnaldo Pangrazze
Overcoming Grief

Turning Point

*Dawn does not so much break as it happens
Dark slides into light so slowly my eyes
Adjust without thought, as faint pink ribbons
Turn to streamers of orange in Eastern skies.
So goes my grief with no strident fanfare.
Sadness and grieving have been all I know.
Then, for a brief moment, it is not there.
Imperceptibly then the moments grow,
Until I laugh without guilt. Life's more
worthwhile,
I don't feel as compelled to visit the grave.
I can remember some good times and I smile.
There was nothing dramatic and I have
Had no revelation, no special thing.
I just felt a bit better sometime last spring.*

Richard A. Dew,
Rachel's Cry

I Had a Dream

*I had a dream the other night
It was a miracle, you see.
I rocked you in my favorite chair
And held you close to me.*

*I sang to you a lullaby
So sweet and clear and fair;
But then awoke, I called your name,
And knew you were not there.*

*As darkness then engulfed me,
I started to softly cry,
"I love you so, my baby,
Why did you have to die?"*

*I pray for sleep to come again,
And hope that I will see
Another dream just like before,
With my son held next to me.*

Sherry Schwande
TCF, Fond du Lac, WI

CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 14, 2008

Regardless of past participation, **every family wishing to take part in the memorial service MUST return this Rform.** We need to receive it no later than Saturday, December 6, 2008. Do not send photos to the TCF P.O. box—they might get bent or damaged.

Mail to:

**Steve & Paige Czirr
1623 Fair House Road
Spring Hill, TN 37174**

Instructions: A computerized process (Power Point) is being used to display our children's pictures on the big screen. An original 5"x7" photo (no copies, please) may be used. If a 5"x7" is not available, any size will do; however, the 5"x7" or larger is easier to process. The original photo will be returned to you at the memorial service while the image will be stored for use next year. **Place a sticky note on the back of the photo with the child's name clearly printed. Do not write on the photo itself.**

Child's name: _____

Please **print** the name as you wish it to be read at the service along with phonetic pronunciation, if needed.

_____ I will attend and am enclosing an original photo of my child. (First time in the memorial service.)

_____ I will attend and am enclosing a different photo of my child to be used **in place of** the photo you have from last year's service.

_____ I will attend and would like for you to use the photo you have saved from last year.

_____ I will attend and would like for my child's name to be called and I'll light a candle, but I will not have a picture shown.

Your name _____ Phone _____

