

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) or 646-8940•Nashville Web Site: 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 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.

October 9 Meeting Handling the Holidays

The holidays are coming! How on earth do you face holidays soon after your child has died? Yet, if you have other children, you feel obligated to make holidays special for them, to give them good memories to offset the unhappiness you're all experiencing. And if, suddenly, you're alone, how do you cope?

These and other questions will be addressed by some of our veteran bereaved parents who have survived previous holidays. They will share their experiences and give us ideas they have found to be helpful. Please join us. Small sharing groups will follow.

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 11—HCA Auditorium

IMPORTANT: TO ALL MEMBERS

Everyone who wishes to have a picture of their child shown on the big screen will need to carefully follow the instructions on the form on page 7. This must be completed and received at the address on the form by Saturday, November 26. **DO NOT send forms and photos to the TCF P. O. box.** Slides that we have from previous years may be used, or you may send a new slide or an original photo of your child (preferably 5"x7" or larger, but smaller can be used too.) Copies cannot be used.

Place a sticky note on the back of the photo with the child's name clearly printed. Do not write on the photo itself. Your photo will be returned to you at the service.

Also, please plan to bring a stand-up photo (preferably no larger than 5"x7") to the service to be displayed on the stage at the front of the auditorium.

Following the service, we will gather in the cafeteria for refreshments. It would be most appreciated if you would bring a snack to share.

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 nashsos@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 children's support group is being offered the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 5:30-7:00 PM. For further information, call Nicole Jesser, Children's Grief Counselor, at 615 963-4737.

Alive Hospice Support Group For Bereaved Parents

An ongoing support group for bereaved parents is held the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 5:30-7:00 PM, 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?

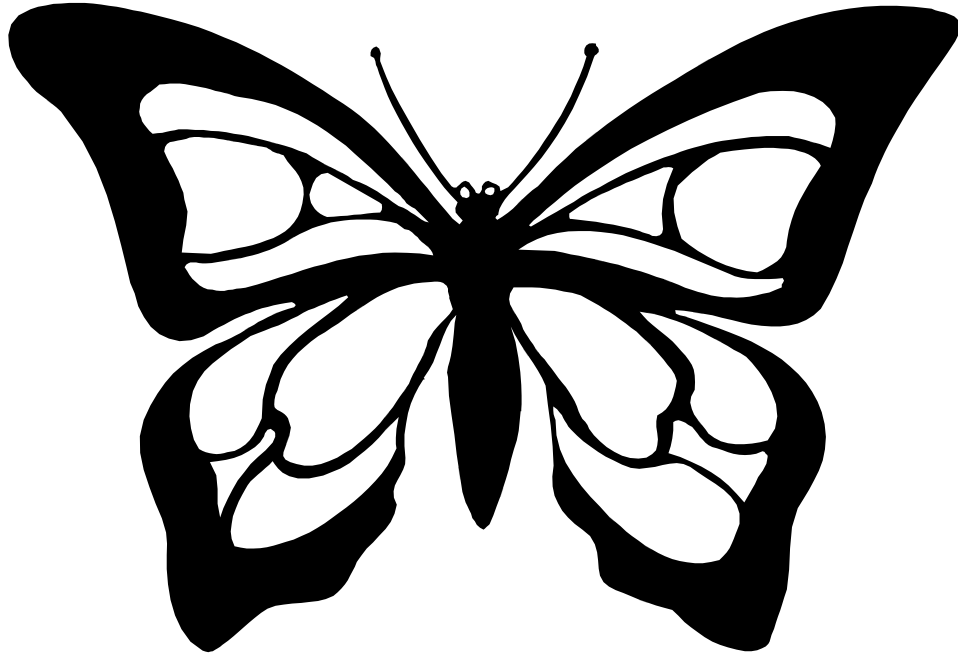
Due to the large number of newsletters we deliver each month, it is essential to keep our database up-to-date. We must rely on you, the recipient, to let us know if you have moved. We ask that you help us by remembering to let us know when you have a change of address so the newsletter will reach you each month. Thank you.

The "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. 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.



My Sister, My Friend

*Within our hearts
You will always be.
Our minds will be filled
With sweet memories.*

*Your spirit and love
Will be never gone,
For each life you touched
Will carry them on.*

*Catherine Hall
TCF, Hinsdale, IL*

Rest, My Brother

*Rest, my brother
You now have peace.
The wars within you
All have ceased.
And the rising sun
Each day,
Upon the heaven
You will play.
Until that day
We meet again,
Know I love you,
My brother,
My friend.*

*Sandra Evens
TCF, Kearsarge, NH*

Circles

*How do you bear it all?
The cry came from a mother
Whose son had died only weeks before.
We were in a circle, looking at her,
Looking around, looking away.
Tears in our hearts, in our eyes.
How do we bear it?
I don't know,
But the circle helps.*

*Eva Lager
TCF, Western Australia*

The Last Trick or Treater

*It's late Halloween night,
The candle in the pumpkin is nearly out,
The candy is almost gone,
The doorbell rings one last time.*

*It's a little boy, in costume,
with a jack-o-lantern for his head
only he has no candy
And no one waiting for him in the dark.*

As he leaves, he stops, turns around and waves to me.

Could it be...

*Barbara April
TCF, Richmond, VA*

Winds of Time

*Already I have shed the leaves of youth,
Stripped by the wind of time down to the truth
Of winter branches. Linear and alone
I stand, a lens for lives beyond my own,
A frame through which another's fire may glow,
A harp on which another's passions blow.*

*The pattern of my boughs, and open chart
Spread on the sky, to others may impart
Its leafless mysteries that once I prized,
Before bare roots and branches equalized;
Tendrils that tap the rain or twigs the sun
Are all the same; shadow and substance one.
Now that my vulnerable leaves are cast aside,
There's nothing left to shield, nothing to hide.*

*Blow through me, Life, pared down at least to bone,
So fragile and so fearless have I grown!*

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

*You once did something for me
More meaningful than the greatest deeds:
You held me in your arms and let me cry.*

*Bonnie Jison
TCF, Topeka, KS*

Halloween

This month is the time for the funny looking creatures appearing at our doors for a trick or treat. Halloween was never my favorite time of the year. I think it was because I could never come up with those cute original costumes for my girls like every other mother managed to do every year. It seemed like after answering the door and seeing 200 original costumes I'd always think to myself, "Why didn't I think of that?" I'd tuck a few ideas away in my head for the next year, but when the time came to execute those ideas, I had tucked them so far away I couldn't remember them. Once again we were scrambling around on October 31st trying to come up with ideas that both girls would be happy with.

There were six years' difference between our two daughters. That wasn't the only difference. Our oldest girl, Kirsten, could have her Halloween candy last until Easter and then we'd throw it out. JoAnn, our youngest, would eat her candy from house to house and would come home with a full stomach and empty bag. In the summer of 1978, JoAnn had her second open heart surgery. She died July 2, 1978 at age six. When October rolled around that fall, I dreaded that evening of seeing the little children coming to the door and remembering how JoAnn loved the candy and the enthusiasm of the evening. As the evening wore on, I realized that the doorbell wasn't ringing very much. I went to the window and saw that there were plenty of children walking in little groups but they were walking past our house.

I realized then that the neighbors and people who knew us had, no doubt, told the children not to come to our house. My emotions were very mixed up. On one hand I knew the parents were trying to protect us from this first experience of not having JoAnn. It was very kind of them. On the other hand, it only reminded me of how different our home was now. When nine o'clock came it was a relief to know the first event was over. It has been five years now since JoAnn died. Halloween doesn't bother me but we all know that the next day we turn the calendar and November is here with the holidays around the corner. For us as bereaved parents these are hard times whether you are a new bereaved parent or have had a number of years since your child died. We need not walk alone but reach out to each other. One of the greatest blessings to me now is the gift of memory and I cherish the happy memories that I have been blessed to remember JoAnn in all seasons of the year.

Cindy Holt
TCF, Jamestown, NY

Dash of the Pen...

There is no chore more boring than standing in front of a waist-high board ironing a week's worth of dress shirts, tablecloths, napkins, pillowcases, and so on. Sometimes the task becomes enormous because it is put off too long. Today I got energetic and tackled the task... B-O-R-I-N-G!

Suddenly, while standing there a thought came to mind about the topic of our last (TCF) meeting. Annette asked us what we were doing to keep our child's memory "alive." All the methods shared by the membership were terrific, and some ideas new to me I plan to try myself. That word "alive" stood out in my mind.

As I glanced outside the picture window, I focused on our small raised garden and saw it truly was "alive." The garden was made by my son and his father for a Boy Scout merit badge project several years ago. It was never very fruitful because twelve year olds usually have other priorities than producing vegetables. But suddenly it became an idea to keep his memory alive. Its location is good, and at present it is alive with a variety of birds and four pesky squirrels who eat off the feeders we have placed there.

Alive. Yes it is indeed alive. And my plans for this spring will keep it that way. A garden as our living memorial—flowers, flowers, flowers, to attract the butterflies and a couple of red sugar-water feeders to attract the hummingbirds!

Yes, it has been a chore to iron shirts. But with this new found interest in that abandoned little garden, it will be a chore no longer. Through my window, viewing the beauty of life out there promises a renewed outlook for ironing day.

Alice Weening
TCF, Cincinnati, OH

Fall

*Leaves so bright and golden in the sun,
Glistening in early morning with dew.
Another season has begun,
Another fall to see, without you.*

*Pumpkins so ripe and beautifully bright,
In the still of a frosty night.
An array of colors for us to enjoy
Their beauty only dulled by the thought
Of our emptiness without our little boy.*

*The wind and the cold and the awesome dark skies,
Somehow disappear in the memory
of your beautiful brown eyes.
We see the beauty of fall colors so clear,
Oh how I wish you were here!*

*The harvest moon shining,
Through the barren trees,
As we prepare for the first hint of snow,
Reminds us of a child who only meant to please.
And all those memories, only you will know.
Life goes on, as the seasons do.*

*But there's one thing that stays the same,
And that is—OUR LOVE FOR YOU!*

*Jean Staicar
TCF, Central Iowa*

The tears are fewer
The sadness less often
But the memories are strong

Georgina Kuwalek
TCF, Livonia, MI



CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 11, 2005



Regardless of past participation, **every family wishing to take part in the memorial service MUST return this form.** We need to receive it no later than Saturday, November 26, 2005. Do not send photos to the TCF P.O. box—they might get bent or damaged.

Mail to:
Candan & Dan Gardner
1090 Thornberry Trace
Goodlettsville, TN 37215

Instructions: A new computerized process (Power Point) is being used to display our children's pictures on the big screen. Either a slide, or 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 a slide or original photo of my child. (First time in the memorial service.)
- _____ I will attend and am enclosing a photo or different slide of my child to be used in place of the slide you have from last year's service.
- _____ I will attend and would like for you to use the slide you have 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: _____

Letting Go of the Pain

A few weeks or a few months after your child has died, you will probably find yourself in a situation where you find yourself laughing or having a good time—then you...think to yourself “How can I dare laugh or have any fun now that my child has died and I hurt so bad?” We’ve all had this feeling in the early stages of our grief. I urge you newly bereaved, PLEASE do not feel guilty about enjoying the happiness that comes with life. When you find yourself laughing and enjoying something in life, it doesn’t mean that you have forgotten your child it just means that you are “letting go” of some of the pain. In all of our lives there will be tears and in all of our lives there should be laughter.

When people used to say to me “You must put it behind you and let go of your child and start living again.” I wondered what they meant by “it.” I would get very angry. How dare those people think I could ever “let go” of my child, or even want to but after a while I realized that I don’t have to “let go” of my child in order to live again. I just have to “let go” of the pain that his death caused. His life will always be a part of me and so will his death; I’ll never forget him, but I don’t have to keep the grief and pain with me always. So if you see me cry, I’m “letting go” of some pain. And when you see me laughing or having a good time, I’m living life again.

Verne Smith
TCF, Fort Worth, TX