

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • 615 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org
Lamar and Joy Bradley, Chapter Leaders, 615 889-1387, email: lbradley1@mindspring.com
Kris Thompson, Newsletter Editor, 931 486-9088, email: carsonsmom207@yahoo.com
Jayne Head, Outreach Coordinator, 615 859-2256, email: alanandgraysonsmom@comcast.net
David Gibson, Regional Coordinator, 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.

Handling the Holidays to be Discussed at October 14 Meeting

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

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 9 HCA Auditorium

The December meeting is fast approaching and our lives get even more complicated through the holiday season. It is important that everyone wishing to have their child's photo in the Memorial Service follow the instructions on page 7 of this newsletter very carefully. There is a submission deadline that MUST be strictly adhered to. We invite all of you to enjoy this opportunity to see your child on the big screen! If you have not attended the Candlelight Memorial Service, we encourage you to do so. This is a very moving and powerful program. All family members, siblings and friends are invited. More info to come.

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.

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

John Baker has suspended the counseling for the Grief Center for Alive Hospice. Bereaved parents meet the 1st Thursday of each month. For details, please call John Baker at 615 963-4674.

For general grief (loss of parents, adult siblings, etc.) Call 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., Fridays at 11:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

CHAPTER INFORMATION

December Candlelight Memorial – An annual event that you don't want to miss !!

At December's monthly meeting, we invite you to submit a photo of your child to be digitally displayed on the big screen in the auditorium of our usual meeting place. This year it will be Sunday, December 9. See page 7 for important deadline information. PLEASE NOTE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS FIRM DEADLINE. Much work goes into the power point presentation, so late entries cannot be accepted. Please submit your photos now!

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.

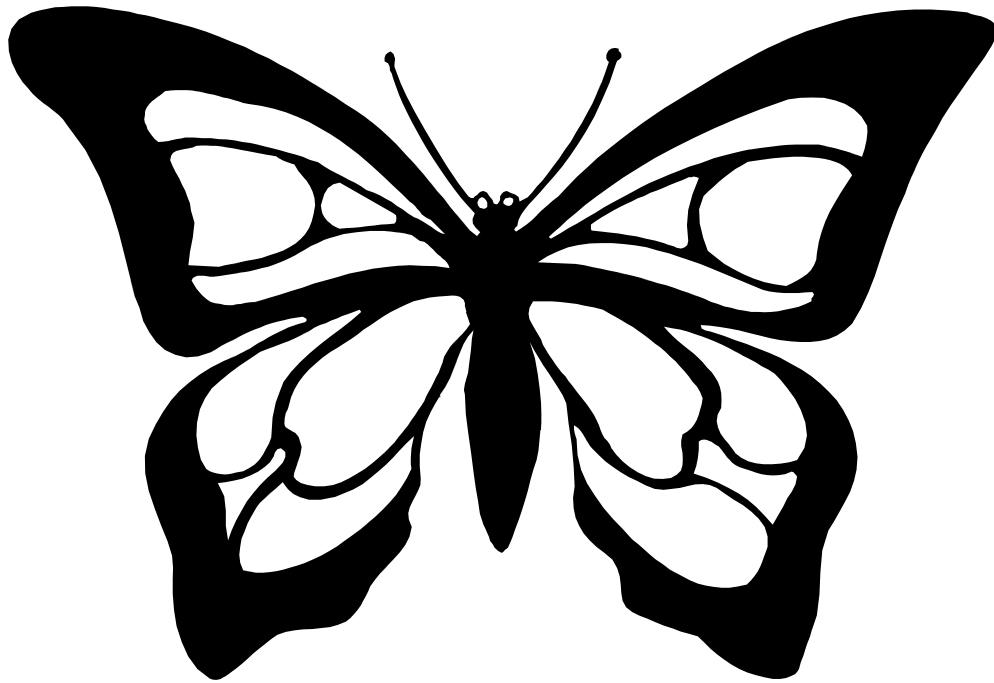
The Birthday Table

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.

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



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.

*Richard and Judith Peterson
In loving memory of
Their son,
Richard Peterson*

*Lourdes Aulet
In loving memory of
Ashley Nicole Strickland
Daughter of Deborah Wilder*

*Bobby and Kay Crowder
In loving memory of their daughter,
Lyndi Ann Crowder Goodall*

*Mike and Paula Childers
In loving memory of
Their daughter,
Emily Michelle Childers*

*Mr. Ed Larson
McReynolds-Nave & Larson
Funeral Home
Clarksville, TN*

*Gerald and Vicky Donegan
In loving memory of
Their son,
Clinton Wayne Donegan*

*Bonnie Rodgers-Ingram
In loving memory of
Her son,
Paul Rodgers*

*David and Peggy Gibson
In loving memory of
Their daughter,
Paige Gibson*

*Scot and Jayne Head
In loving memory of
Their son,
Charles Alan Head*

*Joyce Soward
In loving memory of
Her son
Andy Ross*

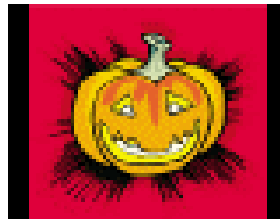
*Virgil and Arlene Singleton, Sr
In loving memory of their son
Virgil Singleton, Jr*

Trick or Treat, Now and Then

For me, Halloween marks the beginning of the holiday season. This used to mark the start of an emotional decline that ran straight through Valentine's Day. October has Halloween, November has Thanksgiving Day, December has my birthday, my Cathie's birthday, and Christmas. January has New Year's Day (the day the accident happened) and January 13 (the day she died). So when Halloween came, I would just as soon have gone to sleep and not wake up until sometime in February.

As the children came to the door and called out, "Trick or Treat!" I would cringe because I would think of how I would never hear Cathie say those words again. That was THEN...Now, fifteen years later, I am able to hear those words. And as I hand out their "goodies," I inwardly thank them for letting me remember when Cathie did go trick or treating and had so much fun. I have those oh-so-very-good memories. They are good memories NOW...And it's all of those good memories that keep me going, even after all of these years.

Cherie Gordon
TCF N. Dade/ S.Broward, FL.



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. 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.

The Little Black Spider

It's funny how a seemingly small incident can be magnified to something of great significance when you're a bereaved parent. With this in mind, here is a story about a spider I encountered one day while doing housework:

What is it about spiders that makes them like water? I don't know what it is, but it seems they definitely prefer a sink as their natural habitat. (remember the itchy bitsy spider?) Or do we just notice them more when they are in our way, rather than when they're up on the ceiling. At any rate, on this particular summer's day, the sun was shining and the air smelled fresh. I was enjoying the scenery from my kitchen window as I prepared to wash dishes. And there it was, a very small black spider in the kitchen sink. Now it's funny, but before my daughter died several years ago, it did not bother me as much to kill insects. After we lost her, though, I became a bit more hesitant to kill anything. All life (except mosquitoes and flies!) seemed more precious to me. So, I didn't want to just pick this little guy off just because he was in my way. Instead, I touched him lightly and he ran up the side of the sink out of harm's way. While I was washing the dishes, he kept getting dangerously close to the sudsy water, so I kept shoving him off. I was really starting to get annoyed. Later that day, he was in the sink again. This time, I put him in the corner of the window sill over the sink. I figured he'd be happy there. I'd seen other bugs there, so obviously it was a popular hangout. Shaking my head, I walked away slowly, wondering how crazy I must be to go out of my way to protect a spider. I mean, this little bugger had inconvenienced me all day! I must be nuts to put up with it.

As the day went on, I forgot about my little annoying friend. I began to get dressed for work in between starting supper for my husband and kids. Around 4pm is always the most hectic part of the day for me, as the kids are refreshed from their afternoon nap and raring to go. Cooking is a chore, since it does not come naturally to me. I also work a couple of nights a week and this was one of them. So I was running around like a chicken with it's head cut off, when suddenly the sky clouded over and a thunderstorm ensued. I raced upstairs to shut the bedroom windows and then back downstairs to close all of the others. The last one I got to was the kitchen sink. The wind was blowing wildly and a couple of tall glasses had been knocked over. The windowsill, counter and sink were drenched. That's when I saw my little black spider. He was completely soaked. In the sink, dead. I went through all of the stages of grief in

about two seconds. First, I could not believe it, after all I had done to preserve him and he died anyway. If only I hadn't put him in the windowsill! Why didn't I just take him down into the cellar in the first place! Then I was mad at him. "You stupid thing, why didn't you just stay down at the other end of the kitchen where I put you this morning?" Then the tears came...I was standing in the kitchen crying when my husband came in from work. I just looked at him and said, "Would you look at this spider. All day he was in my way and I kept moving him and now he's dead. Sometimes no matter how hard you try, you just can't keep something alive." He looked at me sadly and said, "That's true." We were both thinking of our beloved daughter. Nature pulled a fast one on her, too. I took a matchbook cover and gently slid it under the spider, carefully laying it in the trash can. My husband, knowing how upset I was over it, tried to rationalize: "He might not be dead, just waterlogged. Leave him nice and flat and I will keep an eye on him." But I knew in my heart he was dead. I left for work feeling really sad and stupid for letting it bother me so much.

As I drove to work, I kept thinking about what had happened. That is when I decided to write the story for the newsletter. I realized why the incident bothered me so much. It was because it touched on issues of control (or rather lack thereof). We try to control everything, at least, I do. Losing a child is the ultimate loss of that control we so desperately seek. I had done everything in my power to protect that little spider and out of nowhere, a force unseen snuffed out his life. You just can't live somebody's life for them. You can't cover all the angles and make sure that nothing bad ever happens to them.

When I got home later that evening, my husband told me to go look in the trash. I did and the spider was gone! My little spider had recovered from his shock and crawled away. I couldn't believe it! (I suppose my husband could have removed it, but I doubt it...he knows how important the truth is to me.) Now there's no story to write, I thought. Then reconsidering, I decided I would still write one. But how? Instead of sadness, my tale would hold an element of rebirth; and that is how I like to think of our daughter. I know, logically, that she died. I was there. But perhaps there was a reprieve for her too. Nature knocked the wind out of her, as it did my little black spider. But maybe, she woke up on the other side of life, in a place just waiting to welcome the rest of us.

Debi Abraham Petrishen
TCF Norrthshore/ Boston Chapter

Yes Grandparents Do Grieve!

Thank goodness, someone stepped up and said it. "Hey, this child was and is my grandchild and I hurt too!" Not looking for sympathy, but wanting the world to know that yes, the mother and father are hurting from the loss of their little angels, but Granny and Grandpa loved these children with their hearts and souls...totally and unconditionally! I read these letters that are sent to me everyday. My heart hurts for these parents for the loss of their children. But please, let us not forget any of the grandparents, whose loss is twofold. One for their child who is hurting so and one for the loss of their grandchild. I always thought my grandchildren would outlive me. At least that's the way it's supposed to be. It doesn't always work out that way. So yes, my heart also hurts for the grandparents too. (Grammy to Victoria King 04/17/98-04/11/99)

Wanda Bryant
Vidalia, GA

On Seeing Orange Colored Butterflies in September

*Time between summer and winter.
Time under changing skies.
Muted and heavy with foresight, or
endless blue, smiling at butterflies.*

*Time between summer and winter.
Time between laughter and tear.
Harvest of beauty remembered,
and voices (where are you?) to
hear.*

*Time between summer and winter.
Thoughtful and painful and wise.
Muted and heavy with losing, but
also smiling at butterflies.*

Sascha



How Long Does It Take?

As long as it takes; that's how long it takes.

It's not about forgetting. It's about hurting.

And I know that if I am alive twenty years from now, and I happen to look at a blue sky with puffy clouds and think of my son, Fred. And figure how old he'd be, what he'd be doing, and what his children would be doing—I'll hurt.

And know that if I can switch my train of thought from what is not, to what was, a happy memory, I'll be able to smile through the tears.

We don't stop hurting, ever. But so many things occur each day. So many events and thoughts and happenings intervene, that our focus is shifted. The death of our child changes from the main concern in our life, to one of many.

A life may stop; but the loving goes on. To love deeply is to be vulnerable.

For all our days.

Joan D Schmidt
TCF Central Jersey Chapter, NJ

*When A Good Day Comes...Relish it.
Don't Feel Guilty And
Don't Be Discouraged
Because It Doesn't Last
It Will Come Again And Multiply.*

Author from another
TCF Chapter Newsletter

Tips For Preserving Photos

Photographs represent memories. For bereaved parents, pictures may well be among the most meaningful of remembrances we have of our children. While the holidays arrive, many of us pull out the pictures so friends and relatives can join us in celebrating the lives of our children and siblings. But will your pictures look the same in another ten or twenty years? With care, they can. Here are a few basic things you can do to help protect and preserve your photos: **Photo Albums**--Replace old albums with ones that specifically state they are acid free or archival quality. Avoid magnetic pages. The wax which holds pictures in place will eventually dry out and make it virtually impossible to remove a picture without destroying it in the process. **Storage**—Avoid storing photos in attics or basements. Temperature, humidity and light are the major causes of photo deterioration. Pick a storage location in your home (usually an interior room or closet on the main floor) that avoids extremes of temperature and provides minimal humidity and low light conditions. Avoid storing or using strong chemicals (paint, sprays, or mothballs) in the same storage area. **Duplicate**—Important pictures (especially polaroids that fade with time), slides and negatives should be duplicated by a quality film processing service. Store a set in a safety deposit box at the bank. Consider this also for irreplaceable videotapes. **Identification**—Each photograph should have the people, event, date, and location on the back. Place photo face down on glass surface and write on the back using a #2 pencil. Do not press hard or you may leave an indentation. Sort photos by date pictures were taken. **Avoid**—using any of the following items which can damage pictures; elmers glue, paper clips, masking tape, metal staples, ball point pens, pvc plastic, cellophane, or rubber cement. **Acquire**—an archival catalog. Check the internet or your local camera store. Purchase those items you may need. Usually these catalogs provide a wealth of information regarding photo preservation and the products needed to accomplish the task.

Jim Staniforth
TCF Madison, WI

CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 9, 2007

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 24, 2007. 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 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 _____



We Are Shaped and Fashioned By What We Love



Halloween Magic

Halloween has always been a special time. I regret that our son only had a one-time experience at this magical time of year. I remember—as though it were yesterday—the wonder in his face, how he tried to eat the candy through his mask, how he said *thank you* without coaxing. Then I think of all the parents whose child never had the opportunity and I am grateful for that one time.

It's hard watching all the children trick-or-treating, and yet there is something special about this season that comforts me. As I watch the trees around me, I am reminded that there is a beauty even in their dying leaves. There's a special aroma, a breathtaking color scheme, and if you listen, a rustling in the air. I believe there is a message in fall. I believe God wants us to know that death is like a change of seasons, that our child now knows far more beauty than we can ever imagine, like the tree that lives on through the barren winter and comes alive again in spring, our children are not gone. They live!

Nancy Cassell
TCF, Monmouth Co, NJ