

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



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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

Pat Loder to Visit and Speak September 9

National TCF Executive Director, Pat Loder, will be our guest this month. Driving home on the first day of spring, 1991, Pat and her 8 year old daughter Stephanie and her 5 year old son Stephen, never made it to their destination as her car was struck by a speeding motorcyclist. Her children did not survive. Having just experienced the loss of her older brother to cancer only six months before, Pat was unprepared for the grief struggle that would reshape her life. She found TCF. She went on to co-found a chapter nearer to her home in 1993 and later served as Regional Coordinator for Michigan. She then become involved with TCF on the national level. She and her husband, Wayne were co-founding editors of the national magazine *We Need Not Walk Alone*. It is a rare treat to have the TCF National Executive Director come to one of our chapter meetings. We invite you to come hear Pat share her unique perspective with us as well as her vision for the 2008 National Conference being held in Nashville, July 18-20, 2008.

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

**Annual Picnic Set For September 22, see
Page 7 for details**

Attending your first TCF meeting can be difficult. Feelings can be overwhelming. We have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Please attend two or three meetings before deciding if TCF is right for you. There are no dues or fees. If you choose, you need not speak a word at a meeting. We are an international, non-denominational group, offering support and information to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. We Need Not Walk Alone.

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.

Sharing

Sharing is a community organization interested in helping parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn infant. The parent support group meets the second Thursday evening of each month at 7 p.m. in the Administrative Board Room at The Women's Hospital at Centennial Medical Center located at 2221 Murphy Avenue (between 22nd and 23rd Ave).

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 general grief (loss of parents, adult siblings, etc.) call 615 963-4732, 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. and Fridays at 11:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.



CHAPTER INFORMATION

Annual Picnic Set For September 22, see page 7 for details....

TCF Nashville Outreach

If you know of anyone who has lost a child, who might benefit from The Compassionate Friends, please let us know. Jayne Head is the outreach contact person for the Nashville Chapter. She may be reached at (615) 859-2256. Remember, "We need not walk alone.."

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. You need notify us only one time.

Newsletter and Donations Deadlines

Remember that all newsletter submissions and monetary donations need to be received no later than the day AFTER the monthly meeting. Any suggestions for improving the newsletter are always welcome.

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.

*Calvin and Denise Rougemont
In loving memory of their son
Devin Wade Rougemont*

*David and Jeannie Sevier
In loving memory of their son Evan
Douglas Sevier*

*Phillip and Diane Bennett
In loving memory of their son Danny
Bennett*

*Shirley Rich
In loving memory of her son
Bert Rich*

*Lynn and Sally Moench
In loving memory of their grandson
Jason Lee Gant
Son of
Jeff and Lee Gant*

*Oddie Bryant Jones
In loving memory of her son
James (Jay) Jones, Jr.*

*Ted and Marge Ellis
In loving memory of their daughter
Susan M Ellis*

*Jerry and Loretta Winters
In loving memory of their son
Don Bruce Winters*

*Burton and Linda Cooksey
In loving memory of their daughter
Shannon Nicole Cooksey James*

*Louis and Mary Stano
In loving memory of their son
John Stano III*

*Ruby M Dotson
In loving memory of her son
Donald Lee (Donnie) Fleet*

*Ray Dean and Ruby M Dotson
In loving memory of their son
Robert Dee (Robby) Dotson*

Special Thanks from the Editor

I would like to extend a wealth of thanks to Nancy Willis. I received an absolutely fabulous poem from her this month, but as it has a more wintery theme behind it, I am holding it for a special place in the December newsletter. I wanted to make sure to acknowledge it this month, however, because it's a special month for her and her son, author/bereaved sibling, Stephen Willis. Stephen is getting married this month. He plans to acknowledge his sister Angela, the one the poem is written about, at the wedding. I hate to tease, but I can't wait for you all to read this beautiful piece of poetry...tune in to future newsletters!

Kris Thompson



Some Housekeeping Matters

Inadvertently left off of last month's Let Us Remember Them

Kaigan Issac Gill

6/12/06-8/21/06

Son of Sari Bolden and Chris Gill

Also, a donation was not entered, our apologies:

Charles and Karen Tinnon

In loving memory of their son

Craig Tinnon

Bryan Houstrup and Joe Philpott at Allegra Printing & 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.

Slow Dance

Have you ever watched kids
On a merry-go-round?
Or listened to the rain
Slapping on the ground?

Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight?
Or gazed at the sun into the fading night?

You better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.

Do you run through each day on the fly?
When you ask, "How are you?"
Do you hear the reply?

When the day is done
Do you lie in your bed
With the next hundred chores
Running through your head?

You'd better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.

Ever told your child we'll do it tomorrow?
And in your haste, not see his sorrow?

Ever lost touch,
Let a good friendship die?
'Cause you never had time
To call and say, "Hi."

You'd better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.

When you run so fast to get somewhere
You miss half the fun of getting there.
When you worry and hurry through your day,
It's like an unopened gift...
Thrown away.

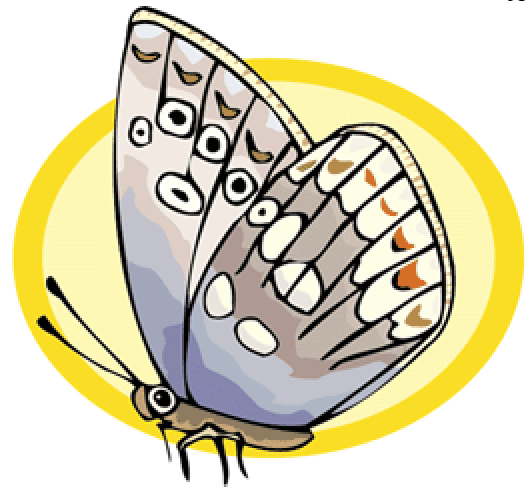
Life is not a race.
Do take it slower.
Hear the music
Before the song is over.

Passed on via email by
Dr. Dennis Shields
Bronx, NY

Grief

It creeps up,
With searing edges, it catches me off guard.
Shoppers stare, not understanding my tears.
It's tendrils clutch at my chest, my heart pounds.
Impossible to breathe, I look for an exit.
There is none from grief.
They say, "Don't cry over spilled milk."
But Haagen Daz, your favorite
Brings tears to my eyes every time.
I make my way to the checkout line,
Determining in my mind,
Next time will be different.

Mary Bell, TCF
Ankeny, IA



Do You Have Children?

How do I answer such a painful question?
Could they possibly understand
My feelings for you?
I have no one to hold.
No one to call me Mommy.
In their eyes, I am childless.
In my eyes, you are part of me.
I am not the same as before I had you.
I love you, I think of you,
Just as any mother would.
If they could only see into my heart,
They would know.
You are with me always,
Yes, I do have children...

Joni Cross, TCF
DeSoto, TX

An Employment Agency Named Grief

Did you know that the minute your child died, you immediately joined the ranks of the employed? Never mind that you already had a job, or that your every moment was taken up by your role as wife/mother or husband/father, or that you had more than you could handle on a volunteer basis. You now have another job that carries with it no title of importance, but it is important nonetheless.

This new job involves the sad, but necessary task of creating a new life that does not include your dead child, and you don't even want to do it. For most, it is full time employment for the next couple of years, if you are newly bereaved. It seems impossible in the beginning when your every waking moment is filled with thoughts of your old life with your child, but even the reliving of memories is a start toward the rebuilding of your life. You can't move forward until you have revisited these old memories enough times. Eventually, you learn by process of experiencing all those special family times how it is you get on with the business of surviving without your child, how to start new traditions.

The job description for your new position calls for abilities you may not feel you qualify for at this time, things such as: an ability to be consumed by anger, and yet you let go of it once you have dealt with it honestly, An ability to acknowledge feelings of guilt and yet be able to eventually forgive yourself because you did the best you could under the circumstances, and a capacity for inordinate amounts of patience with yourself and others around you as you make your way through pain-filled days. You also learn to maintain some hope for better days ahead. All of these are prerequisites to succeeding at your new job. By bravely reaching out in the days and months ahead, you'll find that you are slowly learning how to build one day upon the other until finally you realize you are maintaining a balance you once thought impossible.

You'll look back and discover you're going on with life and that a new life does go on without your lost child. You will note that I did not say a better life—just a new life. Then you'll find you need not continue full time at your job of grief. Maintaining the status quo of your new life will require some attention from time to time. That's when you become employed on a part-time basis. Look forward to that time.

Mary Cleckley
TCF Atlanta

The Secret of TCF

The secret of The Compassionate Friends' success is simple: There is no line between being a helper and being helped. In the early months of people's membership in TCF, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying, letting the grief flow, and learning the ropes of being a bereaved parent. The next step is reaching out to others and helping them. Listening to another person sort out his life helps us to sort out our life too. It is not a big step, but it is an important step because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed. All the energy had been going inward. We had been feeling so empty inside that we kept withdrawing deeper and deeper into ourselves. At that point where we turn around and help another bereaved

parent, when we first listen to another, speak the words of comfort and hope, share our pain instead of just feeling it...It is at that time that real healing has begun.

Dennis Klass, Ph.D
TCF Advisor
St. Louis, MO



Questions and Answers

Q: How long will it take to get over this feeling of sorrow?

A: A lifetime.

Q: How long will I continue to feel guilty?

A: As long as it takes you to realize that you did nothing wrong.

Q: How long will it take me to get over my anger?

A: As long as it will take you to drop the blame on yourself and others and realize that it was the combination of unpredictable happenings that occur in one's lifetime.

Q: Why do friends give such horrid advice?

A: To cover up their own inability to handle the situation

Q: Will I ever be happy again and be able to laugh?

A: An emphatic YES.

Q: How long is long?

A: As long as it takes you to go through the process. Each has his/her own time schedule, but you must make the decision to start healing.

TCF will try to help you find your answers by listening, hugging, and caring to give you support during this period and after. Give it a try. I don't think you'll be sorry.

Irv Schwartzberg
Ft. Lauderdale, FL



Family Picnic Set For September 22 At It's New Location

Mark your calendar for a wonderful afternoon of friendship, fun, good food, and a time for remembering our children!!! The chapter annual picnic is for family and friends. You do not have to be a bereaved parent to attend. Festivities will start at 3pm at Fannie Mae Dees Park (also known as Dragon Park) located at 2400 Blakemore Ave. There is a map located on the website at www.tcfnashville.org.

Drinks and paper goods will be provided. Each family is asked to bring a dish large enough to serve eight, according to last name as follows:

A-G: Prepared main dish

H-M: Dessert

N-Z: Salad or side dish

Please plan to bring lawn chairs or a blanket, balls and bats or other games. Restroom facilities and playground equipment are nearby. There will be a brief candlelight observance in memory of our children.

Grieving Parent's Tribute To A Friend

You walk with me, my friend, along my lonely path. Through a tiny thread of light, I see your kind face. My heart warms in your arms as my strength ebbs and flows. And without words, you know what is in my thoughts. When I am so distant and cold, you reach out with your love as I try so hard to be all I was in your eyes! As the winter comes and goes, there is a trickle of hope. My faithful friend, I hold your hand and my footsteps become lighter. You are always there. As the years pass, shall I learn to hide in the shadows? As I accept your love, a child with sparkling eyes with happy laughter and my pride, my joy, lives in my heart. For all of my life I shall remember the precious love I knew. To lose the young is to break hearts. When the tears begin to fall, my angel, my friend, comforts me. As I walk slowly, friend, you cast the light of hope and understand my heart. Some will forget my child and I know this has to be. I may learn to smile again but just for one like you. My friend for life, I do not know the way; lead and I will follow as I learn to live again. Your footsteps are blessed for I will not forget that you were sent to me. My tears of gentle sorrow are understood by few. The love and compassion that comforts me warms like the sun; the golden light, the ray of hope—for I am not alone. May God Bless You, Friend.

Maureen Seymor,
TCF, Victoria, Australia