

# 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 temporarily in the Citipointe Church, 7533 Lord’s Chapel Drive, Nashville 37211 (See Mailing address above.) Park and enter at the rear of the building. We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

## April 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting:

### Video: Out of Order: Dealing with the Death of a Child

In this video, you will hear how three couples have experienced their grief, what has helped them and how they honor and keep connections to the memories of their children. Our regular sharing groups will follow. We hope you will join us.



**NOTICE:** Our April meeting will be at our current location in the Citipointe Church, 7533 Lord’s Chapel Drive, Nashville, 37211. Watch our May newsletter for a change to our new permanent meeting place at the ABC Building (Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Tennessee) which will now be located at 560 Royal Parkway, Nashville, TN 37214, directly across from Park N Fly.



**NO WINTER LASTS FOREVER;  
NO SPRING SKIPS ITS TURN.**

Hal Borland  
*Sundial of the Seasons*  
(Lippincott)

#### 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  
615-646-1333
- AIDS..... Joyce Soward  
615-754-5210
- Illness..... David and Peggy Gibson  
615-308-2520 or 615-504-4307
- Infant..... Jayne Head  
615-264-8184
- SIDS.....Kris Thompson  
931-486-9088
- Suicide.....Ron Henson  
615-789-3613
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose.....Ed Pyle  
615-712-3245



*We remember our children with love and gratitude. We miss their faces,  
their voices and their smiles. And we do not forget--*

*In the month of their births--*

**Patrick Jonathan Bruce, Jr.**  
(Jon)  
April 18  
Son of  
Patrick and Pam Bruce

**Mark Joseph Dinkel**  
April 27  
Son of  
Richard and Kathleen Dinkel  
Brother of Amy

**Aaron Garner**  
April 30  
Son of Don and Vicki Garner

**Sherry Hooten**  
April 15  
Daughter of  
James Flatt and Ann Flatt

**Michael Hunt**  
April 13  
Son of Robin Hunt

**Christopher Lincoln**  
Kingsborough  
April 21  
Son of Paul and Lydia  
Kingsborough

**Stacy Leigh Kraft**  
April 10  
Daughter of Keith and Meryl  
Kraft And Terry Kornman

**David Benton Lowe**  
April 26  
Son of  
Charles and Teresa Lowe

**Tori Nicks**  
April 22  
Daughter of  
Brad and Amanda Nicks

**Christian Thompson**  
April 14  
Son of Chris Thompson

**Daniel Wayne Vick**  
April 5  
Son of  
Wayne and Marsha Vick

**Abigail Wilson (Abby)**  
April 13  
Daughter of  
Danny and Amy Wilson

**Don Bruce Winters**  
April 16  
Son of  
Jerry and Loretta Winters

**Ryan Lee Wiseman**  
April 18  
Son of  
Roger and Deborah Wiseman



*And in the month of their deaths—*

**Christopher Jay Bradley**  
April 20  
Son of  
Lamar and Joy Bradley

**Taylor Martin Davies**  
April 16  
Son of  
Roy and Barbara Davies

**Chad Flatt**  
April 18  
Son of  
James Flatt and Ann Flatt

**Joshua Hovies**  
April 19  
Son of  
Alicia Hovies

**Michael Hunt**  
April 21  
Son of  
Robin Hunt

**Kevin Moncrief**  
April 5  
Son of  
Sandra Moncrief

**Tori Nicks**  
April 29  
Daughter of  
Brad and Amanda Nicks

**Andrew Morris Pack**  
April 19  
Son of  
Robert and Cassandra Pack

**Brandon Allen Payne**  
April 10  
Son of  
Terry and Kimberly Payne

**Bert Rich**  
April 7  
Son of Shirley Rich-Brinegar

**Laurie Lynn Shriver Robert**  
April 21  
Daughter of  
Warren and Donna Jones  
And George Shriver

**Abigail Wilson (Abby)**  
April 17  
Daughter of  
Danny and Amy Wilson

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.

## GIFTS OF LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE

We are deeply grateful for the voluntary gifts of love that make it possible for The Compassionate Friends to offer comfort to those families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

*Barbara Davies  
Through Nationwide  
Workplace Giving Programs  
In loving memory of her stepsons,  
Roy James Davies and  
Taylor Davies  
Sons of Roy Davies*



*Don and Sherron Eakes  
in loving memory of  
their grandson,  
Taylor Brewer  
Son of  
Justin and Tracy Brewer*

*Shirley Rich-Brinegar  
In loving memory of  
her son, Bert Rich*

*Marsha Vick  
In loving memory of  
her son, Daniel Vick*

*David and Barbara Morgan  
In loving memory of their son,  
Wade Hampton Morgan*

*Bill and Jean Reischman  
In loving memory of  
their son,  
Mark Elliott Reischman*

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

*Each month, Allegra Marketing (615 360-3339) donates the printing of this newsletter as a gift to the families of TCF. Deanna Brown and her family assemble, label, sort and mail the newsletter in loving memory of her son, Marcus Dean Brown. We appreciate so much these people and their generosity to all of us*

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## TCF National Supports Grieving Families

Our support helps grieving families in many ways. This report was published by The Compassionate Friends National Office.

### TCF'S GROWTH DURING A YEAR OF CHALLENGE

As an organization and a nation, we did not anticipate that 2021 would continue to challenge us so heavily after our experience of 2020. Yet, limitations, restrictions, and frequent change were prevalent during this past year, once again. New challenges emerged even after we experienced the renewed freedom that vaccines brought early in the year to bring families and communities together.

The Compassionate Friends found ways to grow and support bereaved families as these new challenges appeared. Here are just some of the ways that TCF provided support and met the needs of our growing number of grieving members.

- Many chapters across the country provided monthly Zoom meetings or hybrid support options that met members' needs in flexible ways.
- Our overall online support increased with TCF reaching over 750,000 people.
- TCF's private Facebook groups grew to serve over 102,000 members collectively.
- Awareness of TCF increased nationally, and our TCF USA website now receives over 450,000 visits annually.
- The 2021 Virtual National Conference and other national virtual support programs offered last year served many thousands of people in need.
- Over 8,600 bereavement packets that support very newly bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings were sent as more bereaved people are hearing about TCF.
- Many bereaved families found TCF and used our services following the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling from COVID-19.
- We received hundreds of inquiries each quarter from bereaved individuals requesting TCF's newsletter and *We Need Not Walk Alone* magazine bereavement resources.

As grieving parents, siblings, and grandparents, we know that we can find positive steps forward and that new things can grow even amid pain and significant challenge. TCF has emerged stronger, more flexible, and comprehensive despite the challenges and restrictions we experienced. I appreciate the heartfelt efforts of each of you in supporting the grieving brothers, sisters, moms, dads, grandmas, and grandpas who need us. Thank you for helping TCF continue to grow, restore itself, and be more responsive as we stay ready for what 2022 brings.

Shari O'Loughlin, CEO, The Compassionate Friends  
Connor's Mom and Patti's Sister

## Infant Death

A family was gathered in the hospital where a couple's twelve-hour-old infant daughter had died. The sister of this couple said, "It's so hard to hold her, it makes it all so real." She had spent only hours with her niece and already was feeling the impact of this child's death. If it takes only hours for an aunt to feel the loss, how can we begin to explain the impact on the parents?

Miscarriage, stillbirth and infant death are not thought to be significant because the parents didn't really know the baby. Even with a loss early in pregnancy, the parents know the baby. Once a pregnancy is confirmed, the parents think about the baby all the time. This child is a part of their daily lives. They form a mental picture of the baby and plan what college he or she will attend. Names are chosen and rooms are decorated. In the book, *Swimmer in the Secret Sea*, a couple walks through the woods and pretends the baby has already been born and is swinging along between them, holding onto their hands. After their son is stillborn, the doctor says, "The baby looks perfectly normal. There's no reason why you can't have another child. Laski (the father) listened numbly. He thinks, "That's what has been at stake, our wish for a child, any child, not this particular child who swung down the road between us. They can't know how special he is. They point to the future. But we're here, forever, now."

Parents are sometimes encouraged to have another baby as soon as possible in the belief that they will then forget about the baby that died. Most parents do go on to have another child, if able, simply because they are in the family-building part of their lives. They know it will not take away the pain or replace the child that died.

Some parents have a need to get pregnant again right away and others want to wait for a while. As long as the mother is healed physically, whenever the parents feel ready for another pregnancy is the right time.

Occasionally parents experience some difficulty getting pregnant again and find it takes longer than it did before. Others have no difficulty achieving a pregnancy, but find even a few months a stressful wait.

Getting through the next pregnancy can be an emotional roller coaster. On one hand is the joy and hope for the new baby and on the other hand is the vulnerability and fear that what happened before may happen again. However, because they feel so exposed, parents now worry about everything that could happen, not only what caused the previous loss.

There is little support for parents who experience an infant death. Because many people see infant loss as insignificant and easily forgotten, they offer either no support or support only in the first few days or weeks. After that time, parents are assumed to have healed and forgotten. If there are other children in the family, it is seen as being easier. "At least you have other children" is what these parents are told, as if that makes the loss easier. Since grief is overwhelming and takes so much energy, parents with other children may need extra help with caretaking. If no one offers, frequently parents find it difficult to ask for the help they need.

Parents need to know that it is okay to ask for help or to take life easy and be good to themselves. Remember, grief can heal only if you let it.

JoAnne Matzke  
TCF, Hinsdale, IL



### Born Still

*Life was going to be so good with you  
We happily anticipated your coming  
We so looked forward to your laughs  
And cries, even your dirty diapers*

*We were going to buy a rocking chair  
So we could lull-a-by you to sleep  
Your crib was bought and set up  
months in advance  
You were expected  
You were wanted  
Your every move was noticed*

*But then your movements ceased  
Why were you so still?  
Your body was there inside me  
But your life had slipped away  
You had not arrived before you were gone*



*The shock, the tears, the intense sadness  
We hold your precious little body  
in our arms  
You have your father's face  
You are so delicate, so fragile  
We are scared, and lonely, and empty  
We miss you so*

*Goodbye Sweet Baby  
We will never know the way you were to be  
We never saw your smile or the color of your eyes  
There was no reason  
We needed you so*

Linda Dawson Draper  
TCF, Portland, OR

## Knowledge

*And what of the mystery?*

*All those unknowable things  
What makes us human  
Where does our energy go  
Carbon, nitrogen, sulfur, hydrogen ...  
All the elements go back  
But what of that animating energy*

*Is there such a thing as a soul?*

*It is all right not to know  
One does not need  
To be filled up with myths and illusions  
You can seek knowing  
Yet admit  
Not to have the answers*

*There is much I do not know.*

*Some days are harder than others  
Holding as they do  
Joy and sorrow  
Overwhelming sometimes  
Putting one foot in front of other  
Can be hard to comprehend.*

Melissa Anne Schroeter  
TCF Rockland County, NY



## Last Moments

*Last moments  
Snatches of conversation  
That echo across all decades...  
Priceless words  
Indelibly etched on the heart.*

*Sometimes  
Thoughts were never spoken  
But unexpected sentiment—  
A quick embrace, a silly smirk,  
Or joyous laughter—  
Reaches through the pain  
And warms the heart.*

*We came too soon to understand  
The folly of harsh words  
Or neglected touch,  
For who can know which  
Taken-for-granted event  
Will become  
A last moment.*

Diane Fields  
TCF Westmoreland, PA



## Spring is Coming

**W**e hear of the beauty of spring, and the new life. During my first year after losing my daughter, I expected that spring would cheer us up and make me feel better. How surprised and frustrated I was when, on one of those truly magnificent spring days when life seems to burst forth everywhere...I was “in the pits.” The sense of loss and emptiness was greatly intensified.

Gradually, I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking for something to take away the pain and make our lives all right again. Unfortunately, there is no magical event or moment when this takes place. It does happen, but only with time and the grief work which we all must do before we can be healed.

The coming of spring cannot make everything okay again. What it can do, however, is remind us that regardless of what happens in our lives, nature’s processes will continue, and that can offer us hope.

I am looking forward to spring this year. I welcome the sun’s warmth, the return of the birds from their winter in the South, the forsythia, the daffodils, and the greening of the world. Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don’t expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.

Evelyn Billings  
TCF, Springfield, MA

## April

*(Time for jesting,  
time for laughter?)*

*And if you are not ready,  
not yet,  
to remember something  
that makes you laugh,*

*tell April to be patient.  
Take your time.*

Sascha

*And when we have  
remembered everything,  
we grow afraid  
of what we may forget.  
A face, a voice, a smile?  
A birthday? Anniversary?  
No need to fear  
forgetting.  
because  
THE HEART REMEMBERS  
ALWAYS.*

Sascha

## Grief: A Lifelong Process

When my son was killed, I was certain that I would die. My life went on autopilot, my heart was broken, my will to live was gone and I could see no meaning in the world.

Six months later I was still in a bad place. I could not vary from a routine, I became angry very easily, I rarely laughed and I didn't communicate with many people.

On the first anniversary of my son's death, I was a zombie. I dreaded the day. I remembered the last conversation; I went over his death in my mind a thousand times. I started asking myself what if I had done this or that would my child still be alive? I felt a misplaced guilt that was sadistically hammered home by the wrongful death lawsuit of my former daughter in law and her accompanying attitude that can only be described as purely malevolent. My husband, who was driving the vehicle when my son was killed, spent hours in self-recrimination, hours with attorneys doing depositions, hours quietly sobbing and my response was that we had to buck up. We had no choice. I hardened on the exterior, but inside I was broken into pieces.

I continued to go to Compassionate Friends meetings, became active in our chapter and read books on grief, death, dying and coping strategies. I leaned heavily on my Compassionate Friends as I endured the pain of losing my son and any possibility of a normal relationship with his children. I know the excruciating pain of intentional cruelty and the radiant warmth of compassion.

18 months after my son was killed, I decided that I had to quantify my progress. I began to soften, to give positive reinforcement to those around me. I reached out to others. I stopped thinking of the negatives within myself and began searching for the positives. I began taking down my emotional wall and allowed some people inside.



It has been 3 years and 3 months since Todd was killed and, in hindsight, I can see the progress I have made. Initially each step was difficult. Now I move forward much like an amputee, progress is steady, but it is slow. I will never be the same again. A part of me has been confiscated by death. This is my reality.

I can laugh now, I can enjoy other people, I can see the beauty in each child I meet, each sunrise and each day. But I can also see and acknowledge the ugly side of this world. There is much cruelty in our world. There is much sadness. Some days I focus on the beauty and joy and some days I look at the cruelty and ugliness.

But the choice is mine to make. If I have a day that is good, it is because I have willed it to be so. If I have a bad day, I have also chosen this.

For I have discovered that grief is a lifelong journey. Our children are with us forever. I close my eyes and see my son. I dream of him at night; our conversations are very interesting, very reassuring. He is with me. And because I always told him that the world is what you make of it, then I must also tell myself the same thing. My world is what I make of it.

Yes, I still grieve. I still miss my child. To hear his voice would be a gift worth more than my life. But I have my memories—memories of raising a beautiful son who became an exceptional man. Our time together was the most meaningful experience of my life. I knew it then; I know it now. There is a void in my life that will never be filled.

My world was never perfect. It certainly will never be perfect. Each day I ask myself what kind of day I want this to be. Sometimes I want it to be a bad day. My sadness overwhelms me and I choose to exorcise it with a bad day. I have the right to have a bad day: my only child is dead. But these days I usually want it to be a good day—the kind of day my son would have enjoyed.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF, Katy, TX

## **CHAPTER INFORMATION**

### **The “Children Remembered” Listings**

If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed on pages 2 and 3 in The Children Remembered list, please let us know, printing the exact way you'd like the child's name to appear, the child's birth and death dates, and the parents' names as they should be listed. Drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205. We'll be glad to include them. You need to contact us only once, unless any of your information changes.

### **Corporate Donations to TCF**

To benefit TCF, go to the Kroger website and click on “Community Rewards”; then follow the instructions on that page and designate The Compassionate Friends Nashville Chapter. After that, when you shop at Kroger, swipe your Plus Card or key in your phone number when you check out, and Kroger will donate dollars to our chapter. Also, when going to Amazon, type in “Amazon Smile” and designate The Compassionate Friends; then, each time you go on Amazon Smile a small contribution will be made by Amazon to our organization—It's a free and easy way to support TCF.

### **We Need Your Help**

If you know a family outside the immediate Nashville area who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you have access to the address (and phone number) of the parents, it would be most helpful if you would call us with that information. Our mission is to reach every bereaved family in Middle Tennessee, but we have to know about them in order to give them the support we ourselves have received. If you know the child's name, birth date, date of death and cause of death, so much the better. Our outreach chairperson will send a warm letter of sympathy and information about TCF along with appropriate brochures and articles. We do not phone the family and all information you provide is confidential.

### **TCF Nashville Sibling Support**

We encourage siblings from teens to adults to come support one another at our monthly chapter meetings. Siblings face a unique and complicated grief journey and are finding hope and healing through our sharing groups.



## **BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES**

### **Alive Alone**

Alive Alone is an organization to benefit parents whose only child or all children have died. Visit their website at [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org).

### **Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents**

For general information about grief support services and groups at Alive, please call the Grief Line at: 615-963-4732 or email [griefsupport@alivehospice.org](mailto:griefsupport@alivehospice.org). They offer eight-week groups, ongoing monthly groups, family group and Little Hearts Club for children who have experienced the death of a sibling. Services are in Franklin, Nashville, Hendersonville, Lebanon, and Murfreesboro.

### **Sharing**

SHARING is a community organization for parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of an infant. The website is [sharingmiddletn.org](http://sharingmiddletn.org).

### **Survivors of Suicide**

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings, you may call [615 244-7444](tel:6152447444), or go to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network at [TSPN.org](http://TSPN.org), and you will find a list of all Tennessee SOS locations.

### **TCF Web site —A Treasure for You**

When you log onto the TCF Web site at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) you will find a wealth of information about TCF and grief—poetry and articles, chat rooms, grief in the news, other chapter Web sites and numerous other resources.

# The Compassionate Friends

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April 2022

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## PRECIOUS CHILD

*In my dreams, you are alive and well  
Precious child, precious child  
In my mind, I see you clear as a bell  
Precious child, precious child*

*In my soul, there is a hole  
That can never be filled  
In my heart, there is hope  
'Cause you are with me still*

*In my heart, you live on  
Always there, never gone  
Precious child, you left too soon  
And though it may be true that we're apart  
You will live forever...in my heart*

*In my plans, I was the first to leave  
Precious child, precious child  
But in this world, I was left here to grieve  
Precious child, precious child*

Written by:

Karen Taylor-Good

in memory of her  
nephew, Paul  
Rodgers

*In my soul, there is a hole  
That can never be filled  
In my heart, there is hope  
And you are with me still*

*In my heart, you live on  
Always there, never gone  
Precious child, you left too soon  
And though it may be true that we're apart  
You will live forever...in my heart*

*God knows I want to hold you, see you, touch you  
And maybe there's a heaven  
And someday I will again  
Please know you're not forgotten until then*

*In my heart, you live on  
Always there, never gone  
Precious child, you left too soon  
And though it may be true that we're apart  
You will live forever...in my heart*



