**August 2015 The Compassionate Friends Volume 29● Number 8**

 ***THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

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

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*Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month in the American Builders & Contractors (ABC) Building, 1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210 . 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.*

***August 9 Meeting***

***Reflections on the 38th Annual***

***National Conference of The Compassionate Friends***

S

everal members of the Nashville Chapter attended the 38th TCF National Conference in Dallas, Texas July 10-12. A national conference of The Compassionate Friends is unlike any other conference, providing fresh insights, informative and healing workshops, and new or renewed bonds with other bereaved parents. Our members will relate to us highlights of the conference as our program on August 9. They will tell about the banquet speakers, workshops, and other events they took part in. Following this time together, we will break up into our regular small sharing groups. Please join us August 9 in our new home (see announcement below)!

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***ATTENTION! WE'RE MOVING!***

***BEGINNING AUGUST 9***

***ALL MONTHLY TCF MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT OUR NEW HOME,***

***THE AMERICAN BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS (ABC) BUILDING,***

***1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville,TN 37210 (see map on page 4)***

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National Office P. O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696—Phone 630 990-0010 or Toll free: 1-877 969-0010

TCF Website: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) National Office email:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

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The Storm of Grief

I

t comes like a huge thunderbolt—shocking and deafening you to all else around you. Suddenly the world that has been so bright is black and desolate. There seems to be no hope. The tears come like torrential rains. The winds of reality come, and you are torn by the pains and fears caused by the storm. Even when the tears stop for a while, the dark clouds loom over you, threatening you with more tears and more pain.

Most passersby can’t help you through the storm because they have never been caught in one like it—and some don’t seem to care. There are a few who will reach out their hand to try to pull you from the storm, but the storm must be endured. And then there are the special ones—the ones who are willing to walk with you through the storm. Usually these are people who have been there before and know that the storm can be survived. After a time, the torrential rains turn to slow showers, and then the showers come less often. But the clouds don’t go away. The sadness and pain remain but become more bearable.

Eventually, as the clouds begin to part, there may even be a rainbow—a sign of hope. And as the sun begins to shine a little more, flowers of memory will be enjoyed. I don’t think the showers will ever end, but I believe that as they get farther apart the sky will get more blue. We will see more rainbows and the flowers will bloom more and more. Perhaps it’s even good to have a shower now and then, to cleanse our souls and revive those special flowers of memory.

 Mary Jo Pierce

 TCF Tuscaloosa

**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

615-356-1351

**Infant**…………………..……………..…Jayne Head

 615-264-8184

**SIDS**………….…………..…….……KrisThompson

 931-486-9088

**Suicide**…….………………..………....Ruth Edwards

 615-353-8547

**Small Child**….……........Kenneth and Kathy Hensley

615-237-9972

**Alcohol/Drug Overdose**......…...............……Ed Pyle

 615-712-3245

Death is but a

 MOMENT…

 Love is

 FOREVER !!

 Darcie Sims

#### Footsteps Through The Valley

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A

ttending 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.

**August 2015 TCF Nashville, TN 3**

**TCF NASHVILLE MOVES INTO NEW HOME AUGUST 9!**

**(see map below)**

T

CF Nashville is grateful to Associated Builders and Contractors for providing our new meeting home in their all-purpose room. The location is close to major streets and several interstate exits. TCF families will find this space welcoming for our chapter activities, so park and enter at the rear of the building and join us for the very first session in our new home on August 9 at 3:00.

(Carefully note that the use of different exits is required from various routes.)

**We have received our first contribution through Kroger Community Rewards!**

H

ere’s an easy way to support TCF Nashville as you shop at Kroger to make more of these contributions come in!

Go to the Kroger website and click on “Community Rewards”. All you need to do is create an account and give them the number on your Kroger card. Then designate The Compassionate Friends (Code 37363) as your non-profit choice. TCF will automatically receive 4% of your purchases!

We will try to set up a computer at future meetings to help you sign up for this. There is no cost and it does not affect your fuel rewards.

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**A letter to the TCF 38th National Conference Committee**

H

ere’s a big thank you to the TCF Conference Committee, Alan, Lisa, board members, volunteers, & participants---YOU ROCKED with tenderness, creativity and compassion DEEP IN THE HEART OF HOT TEXAS! The ‘Fam’ and I were inspired!

I have heard that everything in Texas is big! And Yes! Everything in Texas was BIG---from the heat, the hope, the ambiance, and the hotel. We slept to a night time skyline view of downtown Dallas. Then there were workshops with challenging bold new topics. There were presenters who spoke from the heart. Some spoke from the core of pain and transparency. They all spoke of healing, hope and love.

There were siblings who stood up to honor loved ones as I heard an echo of ‘YEAH – Represent!’ and they did just that! They swayed and sang to their version of Paul McCartney & The Crew. There were people who shared their craft and gifting of button making, harp playing, joke telling, Zumba sweating, yoga yielding, organizing, directing, and so much more. There were newly bereaved and sometimes over whelmed families to encourage or just to listen to their story.

Proverbs 27:19 says, “As water reflects the face, so the heart reflects the person.” Thank you for the heart of Dallas that beautifully reflected the face of TCF.

I’m looking forward to Scottsdale, Arizona next year for the 39th TCF National Conference!

Pamela Hagens

TCF Nashville

Sunrise in August

*Can it be true:*

*This is an easy morning?*

*The day is escaping*

*It’s dark confinements.*

*While sun starts brushing earth*

*with silken warmth*

*No strain at all.*

*No hurry anywhere.*

*Can it be true:*

*Your mind is whole and steady?*

*Now you remember things*

*As once they were*

*On other mornings then.*

*And other days…*

*Can it be true:*

*This is an easy morning?*

*Remembering doesn’t hurt?*

*And you can close your eyes*

 *and you can see, can smile at sunrise.*

*This is an easy morning.*

*Use it well.*

 Sascha ***Comes the Dawn***

*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

 from *Rachel’s Cry*

Sorrow makes us all children again - destroys all

 differences of intellect. The wisest know nothing.

 Ralph Waldo Emerson

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**My Perennial Love**

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very summer my son gives me flowers. He planted them 17 years ago—the summer before he died. I remember the day he planted them. Not the exact date, but standing there talking to him as he poked holes in the ground and carefully placed each one. I remember thanking him and thinking how very sweet of him to do that for me.

Terry died the following February. After months of crying and grieving, summer came and with it his flowers bloomed! Of course it made me miss him even more, but how I loved seeing them and knowing that he had put them there the year before. I know nothing about flowers so I was astounded when my mother told me that what he had planted was an annual and not a perennial and that they should not have come back.

A few weeks ago, our neighbor who moved in last summer, commented on my impatiens. She said she was surprised to see them come back from last year. I told her that they have been coming back every year now for 16 years. Just saying it aloud made me realize how extraordinary that really is!

There is something else I have come to realize. My love for my son did not end when he died. My love for him is indefinite; it is enduring. It is perennial.

Maureen Harman

TCF Tidewater Chapter, VA

**You Are Braver**

Y

ou are braver than you will ever know. You may not realize it but you are valiant, magnificent and strong in spirit. You are courageous. You have endured and somehow survived the most horrific injury that anyone in this life can suffer. Your child has died. But somehow you have miraculously found the strength to still breathe in and out. And after a while, you managed to put one foot in front of the other and have tried to the best of your ability to adapt to a strange new world; one that exists without your precious child in it. A world you must step out in to and face every day without any outward signs that you are altered for life. If you were to wear your most grievous wound displayed on the outside of your body like permanent stigmata, would people recoil from the sight or would they perhaps offer compassion and understanding for your piteous condition? That’s why you are so brave. Although no one else can see how horribly injured you are, you are still doing your best to function and participate in this life. I want to challenge you to be brave just once more. If you have not been to a Compassionate Friends meeting, please muster all of the strength and courage you have and walk in the door for that first meeting. We’ll help you from there. We care. We understand. We too have the same wounds as you. We need not walk alone.

Janet G. Reyes
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

**Our Many Special Days**

T

he beginning of the school year each fall seems to signal the coming holidays. The commercial market starts stocking school supplies just after the Fourth of July; shortly thereafter, by late summer the school supplies are crowded out by all the paraphernalia of Halloween! A glimpse of Thanksgiving whizzes by and it is an all out affront on the Christmas season. After the death of our child we stumble around each year looking for the appropriate way of handling these seasons that once had so much joy to them.

But the calendar holidays are far from the only "Special Days" that bereaved parents face. Our child's birthday and death date are especially hard days but also are the days relating to their illness or other events that relate to their death date and funeral or memorial. The most obvious days are not always the only hard days to live with. Rainy days, snowy days, starry nights can all trigger tugging emotions. Tuesday for laundry day may be the hardest day all year long.

No bereaved parent will have the same feeling of a special day or have the same special day because our children were different people to each person. Because of this, like in everything else in our grief work, we have to allow space for each other's "bad" days.

Each passing year after the death of our child finds us relating to special days differently each year. It is a continuing process never to return to that which used to be. As the years pass and we work hard at our "grief work" we will heal but that does not mean being like we were or doing the things we used to do. We are an evolving new person learning to live again.

Gerry Hall
TCF South Central, MO

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**CHAPTER INFORMATION**

**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.

**What is the Yellow Slip?**

Please return your yellow renewal slip. After a year on the newsletter mailing list, those names that were added in that month of a previous year, will receive a yellow half-sheet asking that their subscription be renewed. This is simply to keep our mailing list and the information in it current. If you do not send the yellow slip back, we must assume that you no longer want the newsletter. Although you are given an opportunity to make a voluntary donation, there is no cost involved in your subscription. The newsletter is our gift to you for as long as you wish to receive it. You may request that your name be returned to the active list at any time simply by calling 615-356-4TCF (4823).

**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.

**Newsletter Deadline**

In order to meet printing deadlines, all donations and original poems or articles must be received by the meeting day of the preceding month to be published in the next issue of the TCF Nashville newsletter. All donations and submissions are greatly appreciated.

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**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.

**Survivors of Suicide**

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

**Sharing**

SHARING is a community organization interested in helping parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn infant. Call 615 342-8899 to confirm dates and times of meetings. See www.nationalshare.org

**Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents**

For general information about Grief Support Services at Alive Hospice, please call the main number: 615 963-4732 or email griefsupport@alivehospice.org. Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at 615-346-8554. Contact John Baker at 615-346-8364 for bereaved parent support or individual counseling.

**Other TCF Chapters**

There are several other chapters of The Compassionate Friends you might want to know about. Anytime you are in their vicinity or feel the need to talk with other bereaved parents, feel free to attend their meetings. Also, when you personally know a newly bereaved family in one of these towns, please call the chapter number and give them the information so they can make contact with the family. To locate a chapter, you may call the TCF National Office at 1-877 969-0010, or go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on chapter locator.