

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •  
Nashville Website: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://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 American Builders & Contractors (ABC) Building, 1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210. (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.

## August 8th Meeting:

### Preserving Memories, Digital and Tangible

Our August program will be a presentation on Preserving Memories, Digital and Tangible. Many of us treasure things like voice mail messages, videos, pictures and artwork that can never be replaced and help keep the memory of our children, grandchildren or siblings alive. This program will present information on how to preserve these precious mementos and share them with others.

Bring your questions on this topic too. Our regular sharing groups will follow the program. Come join us and support one another on this long journey.



*It takes strength to make your way through grief,  
to take hold of life and let it pull you forward.*

Patti Davis  
[www.whatsyourgrief.com](http://www.whatsyourgrief.com)



### 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.....Kris Thompson  
931-486-9088
- Suicide.....Ron Henson  
615-789-3613
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose.....Ed Pyle  
615-712-3245

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.

*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—*



**Nancy Louise Copeland**  
August 31  
Daughter of  
Tom and Jenny Copeland

**Jamison Michael Duncan**  
(Jamie)  
August 27  
Son of Mike and Kay Duncan  
Brother of Jon

**Mark Bwayne French**  
August 2  
Son of Jenny Reeves

**Morgan Priscella Graves**  
August 5  
Daughter of Ginger Graves

**Paula Lynn Groves Griffin**  
August 5  
Daughter of Sue Cooper  
Step-daughter of  
Jim Cooper

**Wade Hampton Morgan**  
August 5  
Son of  
David and Barbara Morgan

**Jeremy Russell Powers**  
August 4  
Son of  
Phillip and Linda King

*And in the month of their deaths*

**Preston Chauncey Birdsong**  
August 13  
Son of  
Preston Birdsong and  
Janice Birdsong

**August Bunn**  
August 15  
Son of  
Joseph and Nicole Bunn

**Nancy Louise Copeland**  
August 28  
Daughter of  
Tom and Jenny Copeland

**Robert Thomas Coughlin**  
August 13  
Son of  
Kent and Laura Coughlin

**Laura Abigail Czirr (Abby)**  
August 10  
Daughter of \  
Steve and Paige Czirr  
Granddaughter of  
John and JoAnn Czirr and  
Robert and Cynthia Daugherty

**Mark Joseph Dinkel**  
August 10  
Son of  
Richard and Kathleen Dinkel  
Brother of Amy

**Gary Lee Durichek**  
August 6  
Son of  
Jimmy and Barbara Hayes

**Justin Townes Earle**  
August 20  
Son of Carol Earle

**Marvin Lee Edwards**  
August 3  
Son of  
Charles and Ruth Edwards

**James Austin Garcia (Austin)**  
August 5  
Son of  
Danny and Sherri Garcia



**Lauren Paige Dudney Harshaw**  
August 20  
Daughter of  
John and Dianne Dudney

**Benjamin Bedell Koomen**  
August 9  
Son of  
John and Betsy Koomen

**William Benard Kovarik**  
August 17  
Son of  
Charles and Kathryn Daley

**Lee Leggett**  
August 30  
Son of Patricia Perry

**Thomas Nathan Loftis, Jr.**  
(Nate)  
August 12  
Son of  
Tom and Babs Loftis



**Chloe Noelle Mariea**  
August 18  
Daughter of  
Jude and Tamara Mariea

**Lauren O'Donnell**  
August 17  
Daughter of  
Denny and Shirley O'Donnell  
Sister of Sean and Katie

**Lauren Kristina O'Saile**  
August 28  
Daughter of Don Davenport  
Granddaughter of  
Martha Davenport

**Michael Stanley Overcash**  
August 19  
Son of Mike and Jean Overcash  
Brother of Kim Stanford (Steve)

**Ethan Way**  
August 12  
Son of Jimmy and Kimberly Way

**Lydia Amber Yahn**  
August 18  
Daughter of Jeremiah Yahn and  
Emily Freshour

*In this universe nothing is ever wholly lost.  
That which is excellent remains forever a part of this universe. Human hearts are dust.  
But the love which moves the human heart, abides to bless the last generation.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## *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.*

*Michael and Treva Ambrose  
In loving memory of  
their daughter  
Misty Whitney Ambrose*

*Martha Davenport  
In loving memory of her  
granddaughter  
Lauren Kristina O'Saile  
Daughter of Don Davenport*

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

*Mike and Kay Duncan  
In loving memory of  
their sons,  
Jon Ashley Duncan and  
Jamison Michael Duncan (Jamie)*

*Don and Sherry Eakes  
In loving memory of  
their grandson,  
Taylor Christian Brewer  
Son of  
Justin and Tracy Brewer*

*Danny and Sherri Garcia  
In loving memory of  
their son,  
James Austin Garcia*



*Rebecca Dance Harris  
Will Harris  
In loving memory of  
Her son  
And his brother,  
Max Hillman Harris*

*Mike and Jean Overcash  
Kim Stanford (Steve)  
In loving memory of  
their son and brother,  
Michael Stanley Overcash*

*Troy and Susan Smiley  
Rachel Smiley  
In loving memory of  
their son and brother,  
Jacob Federman Smiley*

*Thanks to you Kroger shoppers, we have Received from the Kroger Plus  
Community Rewards Program \$117.23 (see below)\**

*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.*

### *Some Special Ways to give*



\*To benefit TCF, go to the [Kroger website](#) and click on “Community Rewards”; then follow the instructions on that page. 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 TCF. It’s a free and easy way to support your chapter.

If your employer supports the [United Way](#), you might have the option to “designate” your donation. Every dollar you contribute through your payroll deductions goes to the organization you designate. TCF Nashville is an approved organization with the United Way. Please consider designating your United Way donation to TCF Nashville.

*Those of us who have worked through our grief and found that there is a future  
are the ones who must meet others in the valley of darkness and bring them to the light.*

Rev. Simon Stephens

## About Compassion

We do know about compassion well enough, don't we? Compassion means empathy -- identifying with someone else's experience. Understanding someone else's feelings, sharing someone else's pain or joy. But do we always know HOW to "do it"?

For instance, one of the most important components of compassion is also the most difficult to achieve: it is the loving willingness and ability to suspend one's own wisdom and convictions in order to acknowledge and fully recognize someone else's experience. This is often primarily an emotional experience.

There are lots of genuinely caring people, like me. We are compassionate most of the time--we listen well, we do not necessarily have to have our opinions heard at all times. Yet often (and with the most loving of intentions) we give advice and comfort from our own point of view. Of course, the advice is mostly very good advice. The comforting comes from deeply valid and patently useful insights. But does it come too soon? Should it come at all?

The best advice, reasoning or uplifting comments are of limited value to those in grief. What they need is emotional, spiritual & even practical "soul support." The word compassion means, after all, a passion shared, "feeling life together." Have you ever been with someone who, for a time genuinely tried to understand and know your experience? Someone who did not try to reduce, divert or diminish your grief, someone who accepted the way you felt accepted your

reasons, did not contradict you? That is the greatest gift of compassion: to have at your side a person who accepts your grieving life as closely as possible, without imposing advice, critical comments (however gently offered) or trying to "soothe" your feelings by means of an emotional veil.

Think about it: when someone stands with you, comforting to your experience. This works something like an orthopedic cast (not an elegant comparison, but ...). It supports the broken spot, keeps it from sustaining further damage, allows it to heal. It leaves to your own inner strength the chance to overcome, rather than straining your grief with admonitions, cautions, well-intentioned advice. It reflects the part of you, now hidden, that will be strong enough to survive. If only for a while, someone's compassion braces you against the winds of pain, like the tender tree needs a brace until its roots can hold its own.

Compassion does not require agreement with what may seem like unreasonable notions (grief is not "reasonable!"). Compassion means accepting grief reactions without trying to "fix" them. Thus we support the griever in finding her/his own (slow) solutions--an indispensable tool for survival, healing and restoration. And in accepting a griever's reactions, we give one of the other great gifts which compassion provides: We are also saying, I believe in you. Trust yourself."

Sascha Wagner  
TCF Aurora, CO



## After the First Year

*After the first year  
The pain changes from a crushing weight to a wickedly sharp cutting edge.  
Time speeds up from a grinding plodding  
To a more normal routine  
And sometimes you can forget (for a moment)  
That your whole life was destroyed  
Just last year.*

*After the first year  
You start to remember the good times,  
And you can tell a funny story about your child  
And save the crying for later.  
But sometimes it seems like  
You're the only one left who mourns.  
"What's the matter with you, anyway?"  
"It's been a whole year."*

*After the first year  
Your child seems a little closer  
And yet still so far away.  
Miracle of miracles, you haven't forgotten*



*How he walks, her voice, the shape of his head  
Or the solid warmth of her fingers curving around yours.  
Those memories ambush you at many unlikely moments  
and  
tear you apart.*

*After the first year  
Your heart begins to thaw.  
You remember that you once loved your surviving children  
And you love them again.  
You remember that life used to hold joy,  
And you rediscover some small enjoyment in living.  
You learn to piece your life back together  
In a different pattern.  
After the first year.*

*You pick up your burdens and go on.  
Amazingly, you've survived a blow  
More painful than anything you ever imagined.  
Even though you wished you could have died too,  
It slowly dawns on you that you must still live,  
Because after the first year,  
Comes the second year.*

Liz Ford  
TCF, Madison, WI

## The Waves of Grief

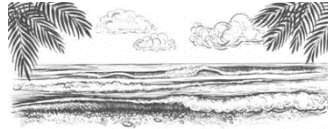
*I watched the waves break on the shore  
I heard them crash and pound and roar,  
Some broke a long way out at sea  
And some washed right up over me.  
And as I watched them ebb and flow*

*They seemed quite like the grief I know.  
They never stopped, yet there were those  
Which carried me with them as they rose.  
Other waves were very calm  
And I could stand and not fall down.*

*While I watched, the tide went out  
And "Grief" retreated without a doubt.  
I knew that it would come again  
And I would feel that awful pain,  
But maybe not so often now  
Will I be overwhelmed somehow.*

*Since David died the grief has changed  
Not dimmed, but rather rearranged.  
The waves of grief I'll always have  
But this I know—I have survived.*

Barb Patterson  
TCF, Coquitlam, Canada



## Vacation

*I still remember  
when I could not sleep  
at three a.m.  
Awake and dark,  
I did not want forgetting,  
night after night.  
Night after night.*

*I still remember  
when I could not sleep  
at three a.m.  
Alone and mute  
I sobbed the same old questions  
into my mind.  
Out of my mind.*

*I still remember  
when I could not sleep  
at three a.m.  
And yet, today,  
I find us new with laughter  
here in the sun.  
Here in the sun.*

Sascha

## Blessings Inside Sorrow

**T**here are blessings inside sorrow, or so I have been told. I am not sure I always agree. At times I can see the gifts I have been given. Love... without measure... fills my heart when I think of you. But I loved you then too, when you were in my arms, not in my heart. And I miss you now. The emptiness you left can never be filled, not by any blessings I might receive from sorrow.

And yet, still, I wonder. Are there blessings? Would I have known how much I cared for you... for your brothers, for your Dad, were it not for your coming, and so suddenly, softly, leaving, without a good-bye? Would I treasure the life I have remaining if it weren't for your loss? Certainly I loved, and treasured before you left, but hasn't my sorrow caused me to express that love and to treasure more highly those around me? I KNOW I can't take for granted that they will always be.

In the aftermath of losing you, when life lay crumbled around me...still was there not a glimmer of hope? That life would go on, and, somehow, we would survive, and build on the ashes of our broken hearts. Building somehow in spite of our pain.

Mixing the cement of our love with tears, we bound ourselves together even more tightly than ever before.

And our love grows stronger. And we have not forgotten. What a bitter lesson! And still, the emptiness will never be filled. There yet remains a hole in my heart... and in all our hearts. Dear son, we will never forget you. The blessings inside our sorrow will never fill the hole you left in the fabric of our lives. It remains open, a testament that you mattered, and that your coming and soft going made a difference. And in that difference lies the blessing inside our sorrow. We were blessed to have held you for a time, even though you could not stay. And even through our tears, we smile at the memories. And we know that you are not completely gone. You shadow our lives, affecting them in big ways and small.

And though I would trade these blessings in a minute just to have you back in my arms, I am indeed grateful for the blessings inside sorrow.

Lisa Sculley  
TCF Jacksonville/Orange Park Chapter, FL

*Tears may soothe the wound they cannot heal.*

Thomas Paine

## Summer Delight

Where is the child who skipped through the sprays of summer rain and laughed his way into my heart? Where is the boy who climbed my trees and spied on me from behind the leaves? Where is the child with the suntanned legs who ran Fourth-of-July races in green parks? Where is the sleepy child who wrapped his arms around my neck and said, "When I grow up, I gonna marry you, Mom?" He's here.

He twines around our past, around my future, and takes me back home, and makes me young again as sure as summer comes. A suntanned spirit with an impish grin still whispers in my ear that stars are not stars at all but lightening bugs he's captured in a jar. In his youth he's my summer's glow, the sunshine in my garden, my comfort on long hot, summer nights of remembering.

Where is the child that once played among my summer flowers? He darts and runs away as I idly dream of yesterday, at once elusive yet so near. Oh, I'm sure he's here. I'm sure I saw him just a minute ago. Or was it just a touch of summer madness that made me think I'd greeted him?

Oh, where is that child of summer gladness? His laughter slides down summer rainbows and captures me with unbound glee. His summer brownness runs barefoot on my heart. With sun-bleached hair, he smiles at me from photos from summers past, and I remember love.

Fay Harden  
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

## When You Lose an Only Child

The loss of an only child is neither greater nor less than the loss of one of many children. However, the loss of an only child is experienced differently. It is different because you lose your parenthood, which is such a large part of the life of any parent.

With the death of an only child, you lose the one person who could use all of the love you had to give every hour of every day.

One of the secrets of parenthood is that from birth, children teach us that we have a greater capacity for unselfish love than we thought possible.

When your only child dies, you may feel that you are drowning in the parental love your heart continues to generate for the child you have lost.



## Silence and the Stars

*Let me have silence and the stars,  
If you would give me peace.  
Words are too brutal. Say not one.  
Silence will give my heart release.*

*Let me have darkness and the storm,  
Lightning and angry rain.  
Thoughts that are mine shall ride the wind.  
I must forget this haunting pain.*

*Let me have silence and the stars,  
Stillness in early dawn.  
Hearts that are sad can sing once more.  
Life and its song must linger on.*

From *A Life of Poems*  
Elizabeth Teal (1920-1999)

Grief is a great teacher when it sends us back to serve and bless the living. We learn how to counsel and comfort those who, like ourselves, are bowed with sorrow. We learn when to keep silent in their presence, and when a word will assure them of our love and concern.

From *Gates of Prayer*  
*Reform Judaism Prayer Book*

With the death of an only child, you lose so much of your own future that was tied to your child's future. Things like: the first day of school, sports, learning to drive, a first crush, a first date, a first heartbreak, high school, college, career, marriage, and most importantly, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. Your only child lost all of this from his or her future. And so did you.

With the death of an only child, you suffer many tiny losses that cause pain only another grieving parent can comprehend.

You have lost the joy of checking the cereal aisle to see if Cocoa Puffs are on sale.

You have lost the reason to keep up with the top ten hits on the pop music charts.

You have lost the joy of caring what prize is in a box of Cracker Jacks.

You have lost the joy of getting up early on a Saturday morning for kids' soccer, basketball, or bowling.

You have lost the reason to hope for a December snow.

You have lost the person who thought you made the best cocoa on a cool December evening.

For me, I lost a gentle, kind, generous child who loved, watched for, and shared beautiful sunsets.

The loss of an only child is a devastating loss. Your child has lost his or her life. And you have lost an important piece of your own life, your parenthood.

Bill Snapp  
TCF, Atlanta (Tucker) GA

## **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*

**P.O. BOX 50833  
Nashville, TN  
37205**

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**August 2021**

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## *A Stranger . . . My Friend*

*I don't remember who,  
but someone called me to the phone that day.  
A lady said she didn't know me, but just wanted to say:  
That she had lost a child, too.  
She would pray for my deep pain.  
My days that had been sunny  
were now filled with crashing rain.*

*Her voice was kind and soothing as she spoke to me with care.  
I grasped each word intensely  
that the stranger was willing to share.  
Her child died in a way similar to mine, a passenger in a car.  
She knew rage, shocking sorrow  
and recognized my new, deadening scar.*

*She said we have a mutual friend in the funeral director there.  
For he had buried her child too and now mine –  
I could not bear.*

*I cried and cried as she talked to me that sad,  
heartbreaking day.  
But she quickly instilled in my mind right then and there –  
that crying was okay.*

*She briefly spoke of brighter days to come  
somewhere along the way.  
She assured me, too, that God was there, if only I could pray.  
I don't remember all she said, my mind was so far away.  
But I thank God for sending her,  
a stranger – my friend – that day.*

*She called me again a few days later to see if I was alive.  
Still in shock, I remembered her, the lady who had survived.  
Such grief, such devastating sadness: I was totally in despair.  
But my new friend called again, keeping me in her care.*

*We came to meet, this lady and I, in life's ungracious bend.  
I love her now, this total stranger:  
She is my Compassionate Friend*



Diana Grider  
TCF, Kokomo, IN