

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NEW MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 8283 • Hermitage, TN 37076 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •



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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 at the ABC (Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Tennessee) Building, 560 Royal Parkway, Nashville, TN 37214 (**SEE NEW MAILING ADDRESS ABOVE.**)
We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

August 14 Meeting:

Preserving Memories, Digital and Tangible

Our August program will be a live presentation on Preserving Memories, Digital and Tangible by the owners of Memories to DVD. 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.



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 DeathMike and Paula Childers
615-646-1333
- AIDS..... Joyce Soward
615-754-5210
- Illness..... David and Peggy Gibson
615-308-2520 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

The ultimate goal of the grief work is to be able to remember without emotional pain and to be able to reinvest emotional surpluses. While the experience of grief work is difficult and slow, it is also enriching and fulfilling. The most beautiful people we know are those who have known defeat, suffering, struggle and loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, sensitivity and understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

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 Bwyane French
August 2
Son of Jennie Reeves
Brother of
Charity, Michael, and Sheila

Morgan Priscilla Graves
August 9
Daughter of Ginger Graves

Benjamin David Hardesty
August
Son of Theresa Hardesty Heimer

Brittany Marie Hardesty
August 20
Daughter of
Theresa Hardesty Heimer

Wade Hampton Morgan
August 5
Son of
David and Barbara Morgan

Jeremy Russell Powers
August 4
Son of Linda King

Jacob Federman Smiley
August 24
Son of
Troy and Susan Smiley



And in the month of their deaths—

Preston Chauncey Birdsong
August 13
Son of Preston Birdsong
And Janice Birdsong

Nancy Louise Copeland
August 28
Daughter of
Tom and Jenny Copeland

Laura Abigail Czirr (Abby)
August 10
Daughter of
Steve and Paige Czirr
Granddaughter of
John and JoAnn Czirr and
Bob 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

Marvin Lee Edwards
August 3
Son of
Charles and Ruth Edwards

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

Max Hillman Harris
August 1
Son of Becky Harris
Brother of Will

**Benjamin Bedell Koomen
(Ben)**
August 9
Son of
John and Betsy Koomen

Lauren O'Donnell
August 17
Daughter of
Dennis 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 and Steve

Small Hand

*The small hand
that held your hand—
how long ago—*

*The small hand
now holds our heart
against bitterness.*

*The small hand
that held your hand
can heal your life.*

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.

*Henry and Kathy Kilgore Beeler
In loving memory of their son,
Cole Hansen Kilgore*

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

*Keith and Meryl Kraft
In loving memory of their daughter,
Stacy Leigh Kraft*



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

*Thanks to you Kroger shoppers,
we have Received
from the Kroger Plus
Community Rewards Program
\$141.58 (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 our 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.

Happy Birthday in Heaven

*Today we remember the day we were blessed with your birth.
How wonderful to have your life to share upon this earth.
Too few birthdays you spent with us, now another in heaven.
We wonder what our lives would be if you were still here in them.
But sadly it is not our fate to spend our days with you.
So we will cherish our memories to help see us through.
Our memories of your smile, compassionate, generous ways,
The joy you brought to all you saw each and every day.
Oh Son how we wish so bad we could be together,
But always know we love you today, tomorrow and forever.
Happy Birthday precious angel, may your spirit soar above,
Mom, Dad, Sister, family and friends sending all our love.*

Cindy McClain
TCF of the Wabash Valley, IN

Dealing with Grief: A Sibling Viewpoint

Two things happened to me on January 11, 1992. I lost my brother to death, and I lost my parents to grief. My dad, the one who seemed to always have the answer to my questions, the “rock” in the family, the one whose job was to fix everything, completely lost it. The fear, anger, and shock in his eyes when told that my brother had died are engraved into my memory. He fell limp in the arms of my mother and me in the emergency room at UCLA medical center. This was the first time I had ever seen my parents lose control. At that moment our roles switched.

“I’ll take them,” I said to the nurse as she handed me a bag labeled “EDLER.” It was the personal belongings of my brother. I quietly took them and placed them in my car. For the next three months, I seemed to make many of the decisions. It was not a courageous leader rising up to the occasion. I was the least common denominator. My parents, although they tried, could not help me. They were trying to deal with the tremendous grief themselves.

For this reason, I put off dealing with Mark’s death for many months. I cried and felt sad, but never addressed the issue. My friends were concerned and asked how I was doing. But no one, unless you have been there, really wants to hear the true answers. Mark was the only other person in the world who was a combination of my mom and dad. My friends could not relate nor would I want them to. I would never wish this upon anyone. But this left me alone to deal with it and I chose to put it off.

After three months I met a gentleman at a family retreat with a group of which my dad was a part. Kevin had lost his brother to suicide about nine months earlier. He was farther along in his “coping” than I was. I could talk to him about Mark, mention Mark’s name and share stories without making the whole room uncomfortable about the subject.

I saw someone who was dealing with it and it gave me hope. There is a certain vocabulary that you learn after going through this that no book, no story, and no amount of explanation can do justice. I don’t talk about certain things with my friends because I do not have the time or energy to explain (or try to explain) the many feelings I am having. Kevin understood. He had the vocabulary.

This was the first step into healing. I came to grips with the reality of my new life—different than the one before, but there

was no going back. At this point, I went on autopilot. I remember many events of the three years following the death. My girlfriend and I broke up. My parents changed houses. I went through the many firsts, but just kept moving forward. I was not depressed, however. My lows were not very low. But my highs were not very high.

I became involved with The Compassionate Friends sibling group of our local chapter in the third year. I did it half out of responsibility to my parents and half out of the knowledge that if I was running the meeting, then I was in control of how much sharing I needed to put into it. Kind of a control thing. To my surprise the meetings have become so beneficial to my healing that I am surprised at myself. By sharing with others, I feel that I help them and in turn myself. Many feelings, thoughts, or emotions that I may have thought were just mine, I have found are universal with others. After three years I began to come “out of the valley.” I can only say that by looking back. Hindsight has allowed me to see my steps of healing. I stepped into the role of being strong for our family because I felt that was best. Many others I have talked to mention a similar reaction. Your parents are barely able to deal with their own grief. The last thing you want to do is bring more pain on them, so, you don’t share with your parents.

Last July at The Compassionate Friends conference, many parents walked up to me and asked, “How do I know if my son (daughter) is dealing with this? I am concerned since they do not tell me anything.”

“You don’t know,” I answered, “and neither do I, but unless you see something obviously dangerous, they are dealing with it in their own way at their own speed and you may not be a part of their grieving.”

I now have a different outlook on life. It is precious. I feel that in my new life I am closer to my parents. Each one of us has to live our lives 1/3 better in Mark’s memory. I value my friends and time more. I can handle stress much better. Just think of the alternative. I have become a better person by helping others. I like the new person I have become.

I would trade it all in a second!

Rick Edler
TCF, LA/South Bay, CA



*“A real friend is one who walks in
when the rest of the world walks out.”*

Walter Winchell



The Death of an Only Child or All Children

The following are some of the ways that the grief after the death of an only child or all children differs from the grief of those who have surviving children.

There is no one to “parent.” There are no other children for whom to do the things we have been in training to do. There is acute frustration in not being able to do what we know we can do – parent.

The loss is complete for those who have no hope

of other children, or for single parents who can never have the same mixture of a child with that child’s other parent.

We find we have a lot of time and energy and no direction for it. Our spouse, the dog, the cat, a foster child, babysitting, or having the nieces and nephews over does not compensate for our loss of directed energies.

Our physical space – the house, the car, or perhaps the shopping cart – is not filled with anyone. It is quiet and sometimes the sound of that silence is deafening.

If we cannot have another child, we have lost our future. We may never have grandchildren and the questions arise, “Who will take care of me in my old age?” or “What do I have to look forward to?”

Reactions from other people may be different. Do they still regard me as a parent? Our place in life has changed and other people perceive that. When we are faced with the question of “How many children do you have?” it is more difficult for those of us who have no other living children. The question really becomes “Am I still a parent?”

We may have a tendency to idolize the lost child or children beyond what is natural for the grief process because we have no other children to remind us of what is normal for a child. We have no one else with whom to make a comparison.

As the years go by, concern increases that no one around us will ever have known our child or children and talking about them will become more difficult or unnatural in this company. How will we express ourselves in ten, fifteen, or twenty years? Who will want to know about our dead child or children when the people we know will probably be grandparents by that time? We question if after this length of time we are still a parent at all.

When children die at different times, it seems support diminishes with each loss. Generally, people seem to feel that by now we know how to handle the loss because we have been through it before...that perhaps losing all our children blurs the loss of an individual child.

The death of an only child may prompt a feeling of negating the usefulness of several years of the past and we might feel “What a waste of time, energy and love to have it taken away.” Sometimes we feel “Was it really worth it?”

What we have worked to accomplish and accumulate in our lives can no longer be left as an inheritance for our children.

We have all heard that time will heal all wounds. I believe we need to take control of that time and change the passive waiting into active doing.

We need to seek new outlets for the energy we formerly put into parenting. We might find it helpful to use others who have never been parents as role models or resource guides for building our future. We need to keep a growing edge on life as we reluctantly turn our eyes from the past to the future. We can do it more easily if we seek new interests, new knowledge, new friendships, and, most of all, if we seek new life. Piece by piece we can put the puzzle back together, finding the completeness which comes with total reinvestment and redirection of our energies and love.

Edie Kaplan

TCF, Broward Co./Greater Ft. Lauderdale

Song

*A song is on my mind—
a pleasant song, simple
and almost lighthearted.*

*Nothing else on my mind,
only the song,
singing itself over and over
all day long.*

*It is not a song about you,
but it is a song because of you.
And it means
that I miss you
all day long.*

Sascha



Sometimes you have to quiet yourself, to hear the music of your soul.

Pamela Hagens
TCF, Nashville, TN

To Most People School Means:

*The kids out from underfoot, caps on,
Buying a new lunch box.
New clothes and the usual school supplies;
fixing breakfast and trying to get it eaten;
getting to a school bus on time.*

WHAT DOES SCHOOL MEAN TO A MOTHER WHO HAS LOST A CHILD?

*Watching other children filled with excitement.
A little boy who should be in kindergarten.
A brother who must go off to school by himself.
A teacher who must reach out to a class,
when her little one won't be in school this year.
A mother sending two children off, when there should
be three.*

Many tears, behind smiling faces!

Patsy Hedges
TCF, Maryland



Re-Entering School After the Death of a Sibling

Going back to school after the death of your brother or sister is a hard thing to go through. At first there are three groups of people to deal with: people who give you a lot of support, people who don't know what to say, and those who give you weird looks and stay away from you. This lasts for a little while.

After a short time changes with each group occur. Those who didn't know what to say start to speak or begin to talk. The group who kept away stop ignoring you. The people who gave you a lot of support slowly return to their own affairs. After about a month and a half, everything goes back to normal and is over to everyone except you. This is very difficult to accept and makes you feel all the more alone.

After a long while the shock for you goes away and it is then when you need the support from your friends, peers, and teachers. This month is the first anniversary of the death of my brother. Most people will have forgotten and everything is right with the world. But it is not! Certainly not to my mother and me.

Jordan Ely, Sibling
TCF Albany/Delmar Chapter

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
TCF, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

“Time heals our grief, but the need to have our child remembered, intensifies.”

Leon Kennedy
TCF, Clarksville, TN



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 8283, Hermitage, TN 37076 . 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 who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you have access to the address 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.

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. 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.

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, 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 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 8283
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August 2022

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The Myth of Closure

“**W**hen will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure?” grievors often ask. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievors hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one’s room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual. Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes—surely then, we will have closure, we think. We pray.

The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us.

Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain—turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course.

Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings for people we love.

Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense.

We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn’t exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us—the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again.

But let’s not ever think that we’ll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

by Ashley Davis Prend ACSW
Hospice of North Idaho
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