

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org



Chapter Leaders: Justin and Tracy Brewer, (615) 812-1504, e-mail: tbrewer395@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Melanie Bell, (615) 513-5913, email: melaniebell2210@gmail.com

Treasurer: Ed Pyle, (615) 712-3245, email: edpyletaxlaw@gmail.com

Regional Coordinators: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: lolly39@aol.com

Dana Young (931) 581-7090

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 13th Meeting:

Men and Women Grieve Differently - A Panel Discussion

Grief is handled differently by each one of us and it is very hard work. Many bereaved parents have found that our grief differs greatly from the same process in our spouse or significant other. It is a fact that men and women grieve differently.

At our August meeting, we will address these important issues in the form of a unique panel. Please join us as we learn from each other. You might just be enlightened as to “why they do that,” or “why they don’t do this.”

Our regular sharing groups will follow.

We hope you will be with us.



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
	615-294-4959
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

Where grief is still very fresh, the most important resolution made may be the dedication to survive each new day.

Bruce H. Conley

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	Jared Ensley August 23 Grandson of V.G and Karen Banta Son of Tim and Ann Banta	Mark Bwyane French August 2 Son of Jennie Reeves
Morgan Priscilla Graves August 9 Daughter of Ginger Graves	Brittany Marie Hardesty August 13 Daughter of Theresa Hardesty Heimer	Benjamin David Hardesty August 20 Son of Theresa Hardesty Heimer	Wade Hampton Morgan August 5 Son of David and Barbara Morgan
Selena Renee Potts August 12 Daughter of Timothy Potts and Nicole Wentzel-Potts	Jeremy Russell Powers August 4 Son of Phillip and Linda King	Nicholas Sebastian Russo August 5 Son of Cynthia Russo	Jacob Federman Smiley August 24 Son of Troy and Susan Smiley Brother of Rachel

And in the month of their deaths



Preston Chauncey Birdsong August 13 Son of Preston and Janice Birdsong	Alex Stephen Cook August 13 Son of Jean Cook	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 Robert and Cynthia Daugherty, John and JoAnn Czirr
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 Harris	Benjamin Bedell Koomen (Ben) August 9 Son of John and Betsy Koomen	Brooke Jasmine Murphy August 13 Daughter of Elaine Murphy	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 and Steve	Lindsay Smith-Thistle August 29 Daughter of Wendy Smith and Greg Thistle	

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.

*Charlie and Gay Ryman
in Loving Memory
of their son,
Mark William "Brutus" Ryman*

*Mike and Jean Overcash,
Kim and Steve Stanford
in Loving Memory of
their son and brother,
Michael Stanley Overcash*

*Martha Davenport
in Loving Memory
of her granddaughter,
Lauren Kristina O'Saile*

Thanks to you, Kroger Shoppers, we received a gift of \$121.29 from the Kroger Plus Community Rewards Program

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.

Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 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.

Two poems from Catching the Light by Genessee Bourdeau Gentry:

The Winds of Life

*The more the wind blows,
the more music wind chimes make,
the louder the music.
They make no music without the wind.*

*So too, the winds of life
blow against us, buffet us,
and the pounding winds of change
bring out the music in our souls.*

The Present Moment

*This moment is an oasis.
Healing, soothing, nourishment
is available here.
Stillness and magic
reside here.
Just by stopping here
my body relaxes,
my mind slows down
and I can breathe
and be
me.*

And Then There Was Hope

Once, in what is now another life, I thought support groups were for someone else. I felt that with research, personal work, discussions with the elders in my family and wise friends, I would find all the answers I needed. This worked well until December of 2002. My son died. The death of my only child changed everything. My standard methods of “self-help” were not going to get me through this. I needed more than even Solomon could give me. And I desperately needed hope.

My first meeting at Compassionate Friends was in March of 2003. My son had been gone almost three months; I was traumatized, I could not speak and I was doubtful that I would ever find even an obscure hint of peace in my life. April’s meeting was somewhat better. I spoke a few words. In May I was rocked by the dual anticipation of Mother’s Day and my son’s birthday. In June I participated in the balloon liftoff; I sprained my ankle as we were walking back from the park. That night, as I sit at home with ice on my ankle, I thought about the past five months. I realized that I was a different person than I had been earlier in the year. I was no longer the woman who walked into her first Compassionate Friends meeting because I was no longer walking alone. There were others at my side, in front of me, behind me, encouraging me, offering gentle suggestions, understanding and listening as I told my child’s story over and over and over again.

I discovered that those who had walked this road before me were holding the lanterns of hope to cast light on my life path. It was these people and only these people who could reach me, who could teach me, whose voices could penetrate my fog, whose hearts could help me to begin the healing process.

By the time I marked the first anniversary of my son’s death, I was beginning to discover that I had been transformed into a different person. Like my child whose body had died but whose spirit lived on symbolically in the butterfly, I had become a different person. I physically felt the pain of other parents. The first time I offered advice I sat in wonder at the realization that this very effort brought a little more light into my soul. Part of my healing process became the helping process.

Healing is what we seek, but we will never be “cured”. As parents who have lost our children, we will never be the same people we were before our child died. I came to accept this fact. But I also found that we can live with this wound which, despite our initial certainty to the contrary, is not usually fatal. It is forever, it is painful, it is the worst wound a human can feel, but it is not fatal. Even when I was wracked with physical pain in my grief, the light of my Compassionate Friends gave me a new perspective, one of hope.

Yes, a part of me died with my son, but the part that remains is constantly changing, continually evolving and always reaching for the light of hope. We each choose different ways to reach for hope, to live our lives as well as we possibly can without our precious children. But eventually we all awaken to hope.

My hope did not come as an epiphany out of the blue, but rather, it was more like a false dawn followed by true, muted rays of the morning sun. My hope was a process. I engaged the process by reaching out to others, listening, learning. I learned that the quick answer is rarely the right answer. I learned that silence often says more than words. I made peace with my pain, and I began to reach out to others with words of hope. For words were my gift to those who had given me so much.

At Compassionate Friends we see many new faces each year. Most parents continue their relationship with the group for at least a year, some for even two years. A few stay even three years or more. The good news is that those who do not choose to come to meetings have chosen to go forward with their lives in a different way. Going forward with their lives is a very positive step and the goal of each bereaved parent. Not all of us stay; not all of us should stay. But for some of us, the hope continues to rekindle at each meeting. As we meet the newly bereaved and listen to their story, to their child’s story, to the outpouring of pure agony and heartbreak, we hold the lantern. These parents will not know exactly what it is that we are doing as they are lost in the fog, as we all once were. Yet, we quietly hold the lantern, we keep the chapter moving forward, we meet parents and talk about their children, about our children, about grief, about life, about death, about pain and about hope. I have chosen to stay and hold the lantern for those who have followed me. For this gives me hope and peace and it keeps my child close to me in even the darkest of nights.

As grief is our companion, time moves forward; the pain becomes less searing, less encompassing. We learn to co-exist with our loss. We treasure our memories; we love our children and our hearts ache with our terrible loss.

Yet, we have moved forward on the path. We are holding the lantern for others who find themselves on this path in life. We give this gift of hope with our presence which symbolizes the future of every newly bereaved parent. I remember my child as I walk this road with you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX



Little Baby

*Little baby who was not to be,
You were a person – at least to me.*

*Would your eyes be blue?
Or hazel and dark?
Would you caw like the crow?
Or sing like a lark?*

*Would you have ten little fingers
and ten tiny toes?
A rosebud mouth?
A turned up nose?*

*Would you be laughing and happy,
or somber and quiet?
Would you run and jump or rather be still
Would you like to read, or prefer to play?*

*None of my questions will have an answer.
Your chance to live will never be.*

*The only thing I truly know –
Little baby, we would have loved you so!*

Joan D. Schmidt
TCF, Central Jersey



What am I?

*I have only one son.
And I am grateful to be so lucky.
But to others that one is none.
What am I?*

*He has a day of birth.
But he did not move, he did not cry.
He never had a life on this earth.
What am I?*

*Now I have nothing.
No dirty diapers, no midnight feedings.
But I have the pain the death of a child can bring.
What am I?*

*My son did live!
For those nine long months inside of me.*

*We learned because he had so much to give.
I am a mother!*

Page Hassman
TCF, Austin, TX



Your memory feels like home to me. So, whenever my mind wanders, it always finds its way back to you.

Ranata Suzuki

Strange Words Welcome New Members

I am always amazed at the instant empathy we each feel as new members come to their first meeting. We have the strangest welcome for these parents: “We are so sorry you have to be here.” In other organizations the questions are probing: where did you go to school, where do you work, where do you live? All designed to “size up” the newcomer, put him or her in the proper perspective of a neatly ordered world. For us, this information is meaningless.

We know the world isn’t neat and orderly; we discovered that when we lost our children. We care about you, the newly bereaved parent, whose life was tossed into a cosmic blender when your child died. We care because we are you. We have been here a while, in this purgatory of pain.

We have learned to live our lives in a different way, to place value on understanding and hope, the intangibles of the purest meanings of life. We have learned to value each other, to reach out and talk, to wait patiently during the silences needed to form thoughts. We listen intently as you quietly say your child’s name, tell your child’s story, speak of your heartbreak.

Yes, this is a different kind of welcome. But it is the most deeply sincere welcome we will ever receive. We are kindred souls, you and I. Each of us lives in the “after death” world of losing our child. Each of us has learned gradually that the hope we have attained has made life better, lessened the pain, moderated the isolation, tears, emotional devastation and pure mayhem that once overtook us. Each of us has learned this slowly, in our own time and in our own way. Each month new parents who have suffered the most horrific loss that a human can endure are welcomed into our group. We reach out, we listen with our hearts and we remember.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX

What Does the Wind Look Like?

What does the wind look like? I can hear it whooshing through the trees or whistling down my chimney. I can feel its force when I'm outside on a stormy day. I can watch snowflakes swirling through a blizzard, but I can't actually *see* the wind itself — only what it can do. A certain intersection in downtown Buffalo has the distinction of being a somewhat dangerous place to be when strong, northerly winds come whipping off Lake Erie. More than one person has been blown off their feet, and I have held onto a fellow pedestrian many times as we tried to cross together. I have discovered, as others have, that by bending over and kind of leaning into the wind, I can better maintain my balance and keep my footing as the wind "rolls over" me.

I don't think one can describe what death "looks like" either, but we feel its destructive power and experience the results of what it can do to our lives in the death of a child. When our son died, I felt as though I was being propelled along a path of uncontrollable grief, much like the wind pushes me along against my will in a winter storm. I heard the sound of death in my own weeping and in the weeping of others in my family. No, I can't change the fact that death "happened" to our son any more than I can change the direction of the wind. But I have learned to "bend a little" so that I don't always feel the brunt of grief's storm.

There are times, even after all these years, when I'm caught off guard, much like coming around the corner and unexpectedly being hit by a strong gust of wind. Something triggers a bad day, and I'm knocked off my feet. Getting up is

not always easy, but it isn't impossible. The skipper of a sailboat has to adjust his sails to the various wind currents so his boat isn't blown off course or flipped over. We can do the same thing in life's currents — we can adjust our sails and get back on course after those down days that can and do blow into our lives. We can "bend" a little and let the storm "roll over" us. It's often difficult, especially in the early dawn of grief, but remember that the winds will not always prevail — there is the promise of quiet, easier times.

Hurricane winds cause terrible destruction, but gentle breezes on the warm summer's evening can bring comfort and relief. Is there another side to death, too — something other than its devastating power? If I can become a gentler person, more understanding and compassionate; if I can "be there" to support someone else struggling through the storm of parental bereavement; and if I have learned to better appreciate and value the little things of life — then, yes, there can be something other than devastation in death.

My son used to say he enjoyed riding a motorcycle because he could "ride with the wind." I like that thought — to "ride with the winds" of life. There may be days when I'm down and hurting, but I know too there will be days when I can and will laugh and enjoy life. May the coming days of summer and the songs of the robins uplift your spirit and renew your strength!

Audrey Cain
TCF, Buffalo, NY

Whole

*When we were whole
I didn't know
That life could ever not be so.*

*This future in which we abide
Is it?
Reality?*

It cannot be. And yet ...

It is.

*We are not whole.
I miss you so.*

Stephen Aud
TCF, Nashville, TN



Another Summer

*Leaving another summer behind,
adding one more bouquet
to our stores of remembrance,
holding new images
summerwarm to your mind.*

*Leaving another summer behind,
with old, familiar mementos
of long-ago times in the sun.
And did you discover once more
how grief changes memories
to anniversaries?*

Sascha



My name is grief

My name is hope

My name is love

Sascha

CHAPTER INFORMATION

Are you Moving?

Each time a newsletter is returned to us with an incorrect address, we pay to retrieve it in order to find out where you've moved; then we pay again to mail it back to you. This is in addition to the original bulk mail cost. It would help a great deal in both time and money if you would notify us immediately of any address change so your newsletter can reach you right away. You may call, write or email the chapter leaders or the newsletter editor. Thanks for your help.

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

How You Can Help

Most people who attend TCF meetings never heard of TCF before they lost a child, and many bereaved parents still have not heard that there is an organization that exists to help them navigate their grief journey. If you know a family in the middle Tennessee area who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you think they would benefit from finding about TCF and possibly attending a TCF meeting, we will be happy to send you some information that you may share with them about what TCF is and what we do to support bereaved parents. If you have attended a TCF meeting, it might be helpful if you would invite them to attend their first TCF meeting with you. We also have a monthly newsletter that they can receive free of charge simply by asking for it.



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, 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

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August 2023



Newly Bereaved...

What Now?

Even those of us with steadfast faith find our belief system shaken after the death of a child. We seek, in various ways, to make sense of an often-senseless tragedy. Whether our loss was a result of illness, accident, suicide, or murder, the questions are the same: “Why? Was it God’s will? Is my family being punished for some (probably imaginary) sin? Could it be that there is no God (for the loving God of our religious training would not allow such a terrible thing to happen)?”

I agonized over these, and many other unanswerable questions in my grief following the death of our daughter Susan last year. My faith in God was not sufficient—I could not accept her death as part of some “Master Plan.” A long-held belief in reincarnation, karma, and reunion in the afterlife became much less certain and reassuring, for it became much more important and I was afraid to believe. Some of us will, over a period of time, find either a new belief system or a return to the old that allows us to be at peace with our loss. Others will acknowledge there are no acceptable answers for now, and let the issues rest. It does not matter which path we follow, but it is vital that, no matter how long it takes, we find a way to cease investing all our emotional energy in a quest that has no end. We must, in my opinion, learn to concentrate upon ourselves—some of us for the first time in our lives. We, the survivors, have a duty to ourselves, our families, and to the memory of our children not to dwell in the world of what was or what might have been, but to re-enter, as soon as we are able, the world of reality; to do the very best we can with the rest of our lives. The question we must really ask is not “Why?” but “What now?”

Carol Babush
TCF, Atlanta, GA