

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 P.M. on the second Sunday of each month at the ABC (Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Tennessee) Building, 560 Royal Parkway, Nashville, TN 37214 (**SEE MAILING ADDRESS ABOVE**). We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

August 11th Meeting:

How and Why You Should Talk to Bereaved Parents

Sharon Delaney McCloud—A Tedx Talks video

We have a word for a woman whose husband dies (WIDOW), or a child whose parents die (ORPHAN), but what is the word for a parent whose child has died? In the touching and deeply personal talk, Sharon Delaney McCloud introduces us to the word "vilomah". She invites us all to help give a voice to those who experience this unimaginable loss. As a mother and advocate, Sharon Delaney McCloud shares her experience giving a voice to vilomahs everywhere.

Sharon Delaney McCloud is an Emmy Award-winning broadcaster, cancer survivor, Olympic Torch Bearer, agency owner, and author who built her career telling other people's stories. But that path took a sharp turn when her daughter was diagnosed with cancer and Sharon's family embarked on the fight of their lives to save their little girl. Since then, Sharon started sharing her own story about grit, gratitude, and grace, even under the most crushing circumstances like the death of a child. She has discovered that human connection can breathe life into the deepest grief and uncover joy.



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
- 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

*All things grow with time,
except grief.*

Jewish proverb

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.

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM-**In the month of their births**

Kahlani Sage Brown-Cotton
August 31
Daughter of
Brionna Brown and Devon
Cotton

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 Bwayne French
August 2
Son of
Jennie Reeves

Morgan Priscilla Graves
August 9
Daughter of
Ginger Graves

Benjamin David Hardesty
August 20
Son of
Theresa Hardesty Heimer

Valerie Marie Magnan
August 26
Daughter of
Sheila Howarth

Harrison Jones
August 18
Son of
Dana Jones

Wade Hampton Morgan
August 5
Son of
David and
Barbara Morgan

Brittany Marie Hardesty
August 13
Daughter of
Theresa Hardesty Heimer

Selena Renee Potts
August 12
Daughter of
Timothy Potts and
Nicole Wentzel-Potts

Jacob Federman Smiley
August 24
Son of
Troy and Susan Smiley
Brother of Rachel

Jeremy Russell Powers
August 4
Son of
Phillip and Linda King

Blake Thomas Steen
August 29
Son of
Jennifer Anderson

The Gift of Someone Who Listens

*Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile
The first mile of no relief.*

*It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us of ways to deal
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.*

*Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs.
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.*

*We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.*



Nancy Myerholts
TCF Waterville Toledo

*What the caterpillar calls the end of the world,
the master calls a butterfly.*

Richard Bach

And in the month of their deaths, we remember them-



Alex Stephen Cook
August 13
Son of
Jean Cook



Preston Chauncey Birdsong
August 13
Son of
Preston 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
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

Evan Barrett Williamson
August 13
Son of
Beverly Williamson



Camdyn Elijah Woods
August 11
Son of
Steven and Alicia Frankenfield
Brother of
Brooklyn and Daxtyn



Should the sweet remembrances of those things which so delighted us when he was alive only afflict us now? Since he gave us so much pleasure while we had him, so we ought to cherish his memory, and make that memory a glad rather than a sorrowful one. Remember also how much good you still possess. Because one page of your book is blotted, do not forget all the other leaves whose reading is fair and whose pictures are beautiful. We should not be like the miser who never enjoys what he had, but only bewails what he loses.

Written by the Greek philosopher, Plutarch, 46AD-120AD, to his wife after the death of their son

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.

*Don and Sherry Eakes
in Loving Memory
of their grandson,
Taylor Christian Brewer,
Son of Justin and Tracy Brewer*



*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 received a gift of \$105.65
from the Kroger Plus Community Rewards Program***

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.

Each month, Price Printing, 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.

The Back-to-School Pressure Cooker

The end of summer can put siblings into their back-to-school pressure cooker. Whether this is the first year, or later, our kids may be dealing with comments or questions from peers, teachers, counselors, about their brother or sister. Or perhaps no one is talking, because no one knows what to say. Feelings of loneliness, being different, being left out, can surface—and sibling rivalry? Remember if you will how intense it could get between all your children. What kind of competition existed between them during the school year, or what kind of comparisons were made: athletics, grades, friendships, extra activities?

That kind of emotion is often forgotten when a child dies. But as your children go back to the classroom, to the athletic field, they may see those reminders each day. When they bring home these feelings, positive and negative, they need a place to express them without being judged or compared to their siblings.

We want to remember the good. But we have to remember that no child was always good! To forget that is to make a martyr of our dead child—possibly at the expense of our living children. Our surviving children need special support at this time of year, too. They need to be reassured that they are still lovable—that they can be forgiven for any anger or resentment they may feel toward their brother or sister—that perfection is not a requirement for loving. They need to be reassured that they are separate, unique individuals, not imperfect replacements for the child who has died. They need a safe place to talk, to let out their own concerns, anxieties and fears. They too are grieving and need a lot of support, especially during the back-to-school rush.

Cindy Cooper
TCF, St. Louis, MO



*The passage of time alone does not cause
our grief to end,
but its softening touch helps us to survive.*

Wayne Loder



Summer

On the beach, cool breezes blow across the water, but the sun's rays feel warm upon my face. The ocean laps gently at the shore. I see one golden-haired lad with a shovel and pail filling the moat around his carefully constructed sand castle. I remember another golden-haired boy of years long past, wearing his bright red swimsuit, busy at his task and oblivious to all around him. Carefully, patiently, he fills and empties his pail again and again, molding and shaping the sand until he has it just right until his perfect castle is completed. He runs to me, eyes aglow with pride, his dimpled smile stretched from ear to ear.

He dances around me. "Mommy, come see! It's finished! It's perfect!" We stand and admire it together. One bucket of sand turned upside down, a tiny trench encircling it. To us, it is a perfect castle. But then it happens. A wave, much bigger than the rest, washes away his labor of love. His green eyes fill, his lip quivers momentarily and then he squares his shoulders and announces, "Oh well, I'll begin again tomorrow." And now recalling that other sunny summer day, my own eyes brimming with tears, my own lip quivers until I remember that I, too, can square my shoulders and

"begin again tomorrow."

Betty Stevens
TCF, Baltimore, MD

Memories

*The certain special memories
That follow me each day,
Cast your shadow in my life
In a certain way.*

*Sometimes the blowing wind
Or the lyrics of a song
Make me stop and think of you
Sometimes all day long*

*Memories are good to have
To share and keep in my heart,
Just knowing that you're still inside
Makes sure we'll never part.*

Collette Covington
TCF Lake Charles, LA

Dear Sis,

I remember the day you got sick and not being able to talk to you. I remember the day the doctor told us your tumor was malignant, and the days you got sick from the radiation and chemotherapy. You didn't like staying at the hospital. The last time I saw you was the day before you died. You were fine one minute, and the next minute you almost died. I wasn't around on the day you died, for I wasn't able to handle it at the time. I became angry at you for dying and I became angry at God, but I thought I had to be strong for the family, I thought I could not let my emotions show.

From time to time, I remember happy things. I remember your laughter and your smiles, which hinted at a bit of mischief, or of a joke you knew but wouldn't tell. I remember your wanting to put soap in one of those big fountains, and later, when I saw a fountain bubbling over with suds, I started laughing, looked up and said, "Paige, you got your wish." There were other days when we would go shopping, or you would take me on some adventure, and the time we got lost and wound up at the gates of the state penitentiary. You made me feel so special by telling me things that you wouldn't dare tell Mom and Dad.

How can I go on with life when you cannot? I know you are in Heaven, but I still hurt. My emotions struggle with my mind. Sometimes I am sad for me because I miss you so, but someday I will spend more time being happy for you and less time being sad for me.

Some people say that I commemorate your death when I go to the cemetery, but that isn't true. I go to the cemetery so that I can recall some of the emotions I felt when you were here. I don't want your memory to be dry and emotionless. Visiting the cemetery helps me focus on that emotion.

I know I cannot put this letter in a mailbox, but I hope that somehow, you can still read it.

Love always,
Your Sister

Claire Gibson
Sibling, TCF, Nashville, TN



Compassion

A heavy silence falls over the room.

*As I look up from my private sorrow
I notice each head is bowed;
Each parent lost in their own thoughts.
And we are all thinking about the same thing:
Our Precious Children.
Do they remember laughter,
Or a sweet tiny face?*

*Do they remember eyes that twinkle,
Or eyes that are eternally closed?
Do they remember a warm embrace,
Or a kiss on a too-cool cheek?
Are they thinking about the first time they
saw their child or the last?*

*Tears fall silently down a father's cheek
as a friend hands him a tissue.
Sobs tear through a mother's body, while
someone moves closer to hold her.
Now I discover my tears are not only for
my child, but also for yours.
And as you weep for your child,
you also weep for mine.*

*Arms reaching out...
Hearts reaching out...
To those who mourn the death of a child.
This is compassion.
These are the friends.
This is where our healing begins.*

Dana Gensler
TCF, South Central, KY

Challenge and Change

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too, for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun-loving, but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the *old* us too, and their comments show it. “Don’t you think it’s time to return to normal?” “You don’t laugh as much as you used to.” They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar that shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when a child dies. We wonder, our families wonder—when will we come out of it? Will we make it through the long sleep? What hues will we show when we emerge? If you’ve ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of the cocoon, you’ll know that the change is not quick or easy—but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the *new* us. When our priorities become different and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from the cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge, then we can say proudly: “I have survived against overwhelming odds.” Even though my child’s death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and challenges give me hope that I can be happy. I can feel fulfilled again. I can love again.

Sherry Mutchier
TCF, Appleton, WI

Getting Better

*My tears feel warm on my cheeks now—
Not burning hot.
Is this a sign I’m “getting better”?
When I cry now, I am almost often alone.
In the car, in the shower.
Or sometimes taking a walk.
I do not cry in public or feel as much panic.
Is this a sign I’m “getting better”?*

*I sleep the night through sometimes
And awaken without tears—for awhile.
They come now while I’m brushing my teeth.
Or making coffee
And are always gone before I say “Good morning.”
Is this a sign “I’m getting better”?
Yes, I think so—but when does the pain end?
Perhaps when I no longer ask
Is this a sign I’m “getting better”?*

Shirley Blakely Curle
TCF Central Arkansas

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 out 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 Website —A Treasure for You

When you log onto the TCF Website 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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Who Would Understand...?

For many of us, there are few people with whom we can share our innermost feelings; yet these very feelings may be nearly exploding to get out! Perhaps for the first time in your life you are really angry. Angry at God? Angry at your dead child? Just angry?

Are any of you bereaved parents going about your daily routines, appearing to those around you to be “doing well?” Yet, in your “alone moments” you hurt so badly you think you may never feel better again? Or perhaps you’re not even resuming a routine, lack motivation, are barely functioning. Many bereaved parents have shared these feelings with each other.

Who would understand if you told them that you started sobbing when you passed your dead child’s favorite food in the grocery store? Or, that you had an urge to yell at the crowds nonchalantly walking in the shopping center, “Don’t you know my child has died?”

Another bereaved parent would probably understand.

How many of your friends could you tell, that you kept some of your child’s clothing “handy” and experienced a bittersweet feeling when you smelled these clothes?

Another bereaved parent would probably not think this unusual.

How fortunate you are if you can share these and other feelings with your spouse, family members, your minister, or good friends. However, many times, these people from whom you would expect the most support aren’t equipped or can’t handle your normal feelings of grief. One of the most often mentioned benefits of The Compassionate Friends, whether that be by attending the meetings, using the available listeners by phone or through the newsletter, is hearing that your feelings are not that unusual after all. It is also most comforting to hear from bereaved parents for whom it has been three, four, six, or seven years since their child died that they experienced many of these same feelings, worked their way through their grief and can now say, “I don’t feel that way anymore. I really laugh and not feel guilty. I’m leading a productive life again. I may think of my child almost every day, and still miss him/her, but I no longer review details of the accident or illness, or circumstances surrounding their death. I’m no longer angry or feel guilty. Now most memories are pleasant memories.”

Carolyn Roincke
TCF, Ft. Wayne, IN