***THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

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

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The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief

following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

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

*We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.*

***Candlelight Memorial Service***

***December 13, 2015— 3:00 p.m.***

***All family members are cordially invited to join us as***

***we honor our children during this beautiful***

***candle-lit service.***

***Each family is asked to bring a picture 5”x7”***

***or smaller, or other small memento of your***

***child to place on tables at the front of the auditorium. This will be in addition to the picture you have already sent in for the big screen.(See the form on page 7.)***

***This year’s service will be held in our new home, the ABC Building on Elm Hill Pike***

 ***at 3:00 p.m.***

 ***(See map on page 2 – Please arrive by 2:30)***

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 *May the memories of this season*

 *Come on gentle wings*

 *To bring you love and peace.*

It is important that **everyone** wishing to have their child’s photo in the memorial service follow very carefully the instructions on page 7 of this newsletter.  **THERE IS A SUBMISSION DEADLINE THAT MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.** We invite all of you to enjoy this opportunity to see your child on the big screen! If you have not attended the candlelight memorial service, we encourage you to do so. This is a very moving and powerful program. All family members, siblings and friends are invited.

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

TCF Website: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) National Office email:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org**2**

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**Directions to the ABC Building**

**1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210**

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

 I-40

Fesslers Lane

ELM HILL PIKE

Associated Builders & Contractors

1604 Elm Hill Pike 37210

Enter in rear of building

I-24

Briley Parkway

Spence Lane

Murfreesboro Road

I-40

**T**he death of a child is so painful, both emotionally and spiritually, that I truly wondered if my own heart

and spirit would ever heal…I soon learned that I could help myself best by helping others. It wasn’t until

Robin died that I truly threw myself into volunteer work. That precious little girl left our family a great

legacy: I know George and I care more for every living person because of her. We learned firsthand the

importance of reaching out to help because others had reached out to us during that crucial time.

 Barbara Bush, bereaved mother

**Phone Friends**

We have all experienced the pain of losing a child. We understand and would like to listen. If you can’t reach one of us, feel free to call another person on this list.

**Accidental Death** ………...Mike and Paula Childers

615-646-1333

**AIDS**………………….….…….….......Joyce Soward

615-754-5210

**Illness**………….…………..David and Peggy Gibson

615-356-1351

**Infant**…………………..……………..…Jayne Head

 615-264-8184

**SIDS**………….…………..…….……KrisThompson

 931-486-9088

**Suicide**…….……………….Ron and Darlene Henson

 615-789-3613

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

615-237-9972

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

 615-712-3245

***Remember***

*Light a quiet candle
Send a quiet kiss
Say a quiet fare-thee-well
To the one you miss.
Light a quiet candle
Shed a quiet tear
Sing a quiet lullaby . . . And the quiet
Christmas Star will hear.*

Sascha Wagner
TCF Des Moines

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What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?  George Eliot

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***First Christmas***

*It can’t possibly be Christmas*

*without her being here.*

*Yet the world is singing round me*

*joyful tidings and good cheer.*

*Though I try to put on armor*

*and brave the sights and sounds,*

*a few moments worth of shopping,*

 *and the tears are spilling down.*

*I pray for strength to do it,*

*Find a path through holidays,*

*Look for shortcuts, good ideas,*

*Some directions through the maze.*

*Then I find at last the answer:*

*I’ll include her symbolically.*

*And the giving becomes perfect;*

*Her love’s flowing down, through me.*

From Stars in the Deepest Night

After the Death of a Child

Genessee Bourdeau Gentry

**Holiday Gifts for Children Needed**

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ach year, our chapter donates holiday gifts to children at a worthy establishment that works with children who are not living at home and are under care for the holidays. Since things went so well with Youth Villages in years past, it has been decided to provide gifts for them again this year. The children range in age from 6 to 18. For many of these children, these will be the only gifts they receive this holiday season. If you would like to help this year, you may participate by bringing new UNWRAPPED gifts to the TCF December 13 Memorial Service. Below is a list of the most requested items.

**Most Requested Items:**

Art supplies

Toys from the movie Frozen

Pre-paid Cell Phones (and minutes)

DVD’s (PG-13 and Under)

DVD players

MP3 Player

Gift cards such as Game Stop, Wal-Mart, Target, Amazon

I tunes gift cards

Current Rap/ Pop CD’s

CD Players/ Boom Box

Game Boy Games (Teen Rated)

Xbox Play Station Games (Teen Rated)

Digital cameras

Remote Control Cars, Trucks or Planes

Girlie things like journals, gel pens, scrap booking items

Board Games (Monopoly, Life, Mouse Trap, Jenga, Uno etc.)

Barbie Dolls & Accessories for Barbie Matchbox/ Hot Wheels car playsets

Lego Sets

Books (Twilight, Harry Potter, Narnia, and current top sellers

Fashion Bracelets or kits

Action Figure Toys

Watches (Girls & Boys)

Puzzles for teenagers

Winter coats for teenagers

Hats/Gloves/Scarves

Hair accessories

Skateboards/helmets

Footballs, Basketballs, Soccer balls etc.

Nerf toys

Anything Spiderman or Spongebob

**Stocking Stuffers:**

Matchbox cars

Small notepads , Pens and pencils

Candy

Decks of Cards

Jewelry

Hygiene products

Billfolds and wallets, Cute little change purses for girls

Makeup items/nail polish

Socks

Gift cards for fast food restaurants

***Gift wrapping supplies appreciated, but please,***

***DO NOT WRAP THE GIFTS***

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**CANDLES IN THE NIGHT**

A

 heart broken by the death of a child can never be healed. As parents we try every way that can be thought of to cope with the loss, but the void will always be there. At first that emptiness seems to take your breath away and most times we wish it would.

This becomes different with the passage of time. It never goes away, but at some point we learn to live with it, and in fact this horrible feeling becomes a lifeline of sorts. One of our biggest fears is to forget our children. Forget how they looked or how their voices sounded. The smiles and tears that blur together to make a child. This emptiness in effect becomes a constant yearning to remember our children.

Our hearts force us to find ways to fill that void to maintain our role as parents. Some are as simple as visiting the cemetery and some are as complex as changing our entire lives, dedicated to the memory of our child. In between are the many rituals we create or borrow from others to honor the memories and to keep our child's name alive.

Lighting a candle and saying a child's name keeps their memory burning bright. It means we are struggling to cope with this unwanted role of bereaved parent in the only positive manner we can. We will most certainly shed tears every time and we will still miss our child, but we are doing something that allows the world to hear our child's name and for that one moment the candle means so much more than anyone else could ever understand.

For a fleeting second that is our universe and every memory we have comes flooding back to us as we see the flame through tears, distorting it into something magical. It's the only gift we can give our children. This is as close as we can get to our child now. A tiny, flickering flame that can warm the heart and it's nice to think that perhaps they can see it also. It's a beacon, our light in the window, our shining star in the darkness. It's an opening of our hearts and a way to share our grief.

Jim Lowery

TCF Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter, TX

**A Holiday To Do List:**

As a reflection back on the past 13 (Wow! has it really been that long?!) Christmases, I would like to share some ways that I have handled the holidays, as well as some additional thoughts. This time of the year is bittersweet for me now, as opposed to the first Christmas without my older brother, David. That was the worst.

At any rate, I can handle November and December much better now. Here’s my list of suggestions for honoring a sibling whom you have lost, and on simply making it through yourself:

1. Hang that stocking. Go ahead. Put up your sibling’s stocking. It isn’t as though your brother or sister never existed, and isn’t still a part of your life.
2. Write a poem or letter to your sibling and put it in the stocking.
3. Put up a tree, or continue with your holiday traditions. Yes, this is VERY difficult. But for

most of our siblings, this was their favorite time of year. Celebrate how blessed you have been to have had your sister or brother for holidays past. Decorate the way THEY would have wanted to, instead of the way you would do it.

1. Create a “memory” box. This is simply a box of belongings from your sibling, or pictures

of your sibling, etc. Wrap it in festive holiday paper, and put it under your tree if you have one.

1. Buy a gift for your sibling. Maybe it is something they truly would have wanted for the holidays, maybe it’s something the two of you would have enjoyed together or gotten a good laugh out of. This can be VERY therapeutic.
2. Go somewhere that your sibling would have wanted to go--the beach, a movie they would have liked, a favorite restaurant, wherever. “Share” this time with your sibling. This is also good on their birthday. Celebrate that they had a life and that they are a part of yours!
3. Bake a favorite holiday goody of your sibling’s.
4. Get together with your family and cry (and LAUGH – it’s OK to do this) at some great family memories from years past that involved your sibling. Share thoughts on great places you may have visited for the holidays, or anecdotes of you and your sibling trying to peek at what your gifts were ahead of time.
5. Put together a photo album of your sibling. This could be of your sibling’s life in general, or of a specific subject, like the sport your sibling played, or holidays past.
6. Give your album to your parents. Cry (and LAUGH!) at the pictures and the memories they generate.

Please know that the holidays get easier with time, and that you WILL make it through, even though it may seem impossible.

Amy Baker Ferry

TCF Heart of Florida Chapter

In loving memory of my brother, David

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**HOLIDAY THOUGHTS**

For those who think that Christmas and Chanukah are just nice days to give and get presents, bereaved parents have another message. Mixed with the joy is the knowledge of sadness. With the hope of birth comes the threat of death. We should not try to cover up our sadness in front of people, for we have a lesson to teach them.

But the holidays have a lesson for us, too. Yes, there is death. Yes, there is great bitterness in life. There is darkness. But there is hope. There is birth. There is light.

In a society which works so hard to deny death, perhaps only bereaved parents and a few others can truly understand the depths of these holidays.

Dennis Klass

TCF St. Louis, MO

**2015 Worldwide Candle Lighting**

**In Memory of All Children**

**Sunday, December 13**

**TCF invites you to join in this special day of remembrance**

 **by lighting a candle at 7:00 P.M.**

 **wherever you are.**

**CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 13, 2015**

R

egardless of past participation, **EVERY FAMILY WISHING TO TAKE PART IN THE MEMORIAL SERVICE MUST RETURN THIS FORM. *We need to receive it no later than Saturday, December 4, 2015***.

**Do NOT send photos to the TCF P.O. box—they might get bent or damaged.**

**Mail to:**

**Steve & Paige Czirr**

**1623 Fair House Road**

**Spring Hill, TN 37174**

**Instructions:** A computerized process (Power Point) is being used to display our children’s pictures on the big screen. An original 5x7 photo (no copies, please) may be used. If a 5x7 is not available, any size will do; however, the 5x7 or larger is easier to process. The original photo will be returned to you at the memorial service while the image will be stored for use next year.

**Place a sticky note on the back of the photo with the child’s name clearly printed. Do not write on the photo itself.**

**Child’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Please print the name as you wish it to be read at the service along with phonetic pronunciation, if needed.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and am enclosing an original photo of my child. (First time in the memorial service.)**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and am enclosing a different photo of my child to be used in place of the photo you have from last year’s service.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and would like for you to use the photo you have saved from last year.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and would like for my child’s name to be called and I’ll light a candle, but I will not have a picture shown.**

**Your name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**You may alternatively e-mail your child’s picture to Steve Czirr at** **sczirr@att.net****.**

**Be sure to include your child’s name in the e-mail.**

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To Our Family and Friends

T

he "Holiday Season" is a time of family – festive gatherings, worshiping together, sharing love and gifts, and cherished memories. For the bereaved parent, these aspects of the season are precisely what makes us dread its arrival.

The absence of our child when the "whole family" gathers seems to accentuate our incomplete family. We are sorely reminded of "how it used to be” and don't want to accept what is now. We need patience and understanding of our family and friends to help us through the holidays as best we can.

We may want to change the way we spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Hanukkah. If the family traditionally gathers at one house, perhaps the gathering place could be changed, especially if the gathering home is that of the bereaved. If we do prepare the meal, be aware that we may not have the energy we have had in the past and will need a lot of help.

Perhaps we'll try to avoid the holiday altogether by going away for a few days. Whatever our thoughts are for coping with the day, please take our feelings into consideration when you make your plans.

For some of us shopping for gifts is a painful experience. The stores' festive decorations and music belie our mood, as we feel forced into participating in the "season." We think longingly about that special gift we won't be buying this year. Again, our depression saps us of the energy to do the things we have done in the past, and we need your understanding for the things that remain undone.

Perhaps the single most helpful thing you can do for us is to include our child in the holidays. We want to hear his/her name, to have you recall fond memories of their lives, to know that you, too, are feeling their absence and remembering them with love.

Getting through the holidays is a rough task for bereaved parents. We need to handle them in a way that we feel is best for ourselves and our families. We ask for your love and support during this especially difficult time.

Marge Henning

TCF West Orange, NJ