

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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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.

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.

February 14 Meeting:

For the health and safety of our members, we will gather for our **February 14 meeting** using “Zoom” virtual meeting platform again. Our virtual meeting will begin at 3:00 PM, and run till about 4:30.

If you are interested in participating, send an email to TCFNashville@yahoo.com. Title the email “Zoom”. We will reply with a link to the meeting and some general instructions on how it works.

Our virtual meeting will begin with sharing our February birthdays. Depending upon the number of attendees, we will move folks to private sharing groups of less than 8 people where we can talk.

Ongoing online support is available at our national website: Compassionatefriends.org and you can connect via Facebook with our local chapter members at The Compassionate Friends, Nashville, TN and with other parents and families at The Compassionate Friends/USA, both private groups.

Check our chapter website for the status of future meetings, including the possibility of in-person meetings, please watch our Facebook page and our website: www.tcfnashville.org.

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	SIDS ...Kris Thompson 931-486-9088
Suicide ...Ron Henson 615-789-3613	AIDS ... Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
Alcohol/Drug Overdose ...Ed Pyle 615-712-3245	Illness ...David and Peggy Gibson 615-356-1351
Infant ...Jayne Head 615-264-8184	

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.

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National Office 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI 48393—Phone 877-969-0010

TCF Website: www.compassionatefriends.org National Office mail: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

*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—

Brock Wyatt Blick February 8 Son of Marc and Jeri Blick Grandson of Jerry and Bonnie Buckner	Buck Allen Dawson February 6 Son of Bob and Genevia Graham	Lee Edward Halker February 19 Son of Joe and Janene Halker	Tony Scott February 18 Son of Eldon and Margi Sckott
Marcus Dean Lynn Brown February 27 Son of Ricky Brown and Deanna Brown	Baby Edward Elberson February 28 Son of Harry E. and Winnie Elberson	Lauren Paige Dudney Harshaw February 18 Daughter of John and Dianne Dudney	Lauren Christen Thoresen February 18 Daughter of Doug Thoresen
Logan Stratton Brumit February 24 Son of Charles and Kathy Brumit	Austin Chadwell Fitzhugh February 28 Son of Chad and Gina Fitzhugh	Tanner Langford February 1 Son of Michele Langford	Ethan Way February 22 Son of Jimmy and Kimberly Way
Elizabeth Osborn Cheek February 8 Daughter of Ross and Libby Cheek	Tyrone Foxworth, II (T.J.) February 21 Son of Tyrone and Kelley Foxworth	Abigail Rhea Little (Abbie) February 12 Daughter of Rhea and Marie Little	Heather Ann Willis February 26 Daughter of Tom and Margaret Loose

And in the month of their deaths

Glenn Thomas Allen, Jr. (Tommy) February 7 Son of Ann McKee Stepson of Wilson McKee	Marcus Dean Lynn Brown February 27 Son of Ricky Brown and Deanna Brown	Austin Chadwell Fitzhugh February 13 Son of Chad and Gina Fitzhugh	Arianna Marie Mitchell February 19 Daughter of Christopher Mitchell and Heather Evans Granddaughter of Frank and Brenda L. Nelson
Hank Thomas Ashworth February 10 Son of Rick Ashworth	Kelsee Nicole Corbitt (Princess) February 7 Granddaughter of Cheryl Carney	Mark Bwayne French February 15 Son of Jennie Reeves	Keith Pringle February 2 Son of Jim and Margaret Pringle
Taylor Christian Brewer February 11 Son of Justin and Tracy Brewer Grandson of Don and Sherry Eakes and Penny Waters	Geoffrey Edward deZevallos February 17 Son of George and Anne deZevallos	Paula Lynn Groves Griffin February 15 Daughter of Sue Cooper Stepdaughter of Jim Cooper	Joseph Tanner Wray February 23 Son of Bob and Amy Schisler and Keith Wray
Charles Michael Brown (Charlie) February 7 Son of Dan and June Brown Brother of Katherine	Baby Edward Elberson February 28 Son of Harry E. and Winnie Elberson	Ashley Brooke Huffaker February 29 Daughter of Tim and Heather Cuff	



*The song is ended,
But the melody lingers on.*
Irving Berlin



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.

*Robert and Cynthia Daugherty
In loving memory of
their granddaughter,
Laura Abigail Czirr (Abby)
Daughter of Steve and Paige Czirr*

*John and Mary Hodsdon
In loving memory of
their daughter,
Mary Grace Hodsdon*

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

*Harry and Winnie Elbersen
In loving memory of their sons,
Ken Elbersen and
Baby Edward Elbersen*



*David and Peggy Gibson
Kay Howard and Claire Gibson
In loving memory of
Their daughter and sister,
Laura Paige Gibson*

*Rose Steagall
In loving memory of
her son,
Trinity Rhodes Steagal*

*Thanks to you Kroger shoppers, we have Received from the Kroger Plus Community Rewards Program
\$122.57 on 12/17/20**

*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.*

***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.**

When I think of death, and of late the idea has come with alarming frequency, I seem at peace with the idea that a day will dawn when I will no longer be among those living in this valley of strange humors. I can accept the idea of my own demise, but I am unable to accept the death of anyone else. I find it impossible to let a friend or relative go into that country of no return. Disbelief becomes my close companion, and anger follows in its wake.

I answer the heroic question “Death, where is thy sting?” with “It is here in my heart and mind and memories.” I find surcease from entanglement of questions only when I concede that I am not obliged to know everything. In a world where many desperately seek to know all the answers, it is not very popular to believe, and then state, I do not need to know all things. I remind myself that it is sufficient that I know what I know and know that without believing that I will always know what I know or that what I know will always be true.

Also, when I sense myself filling with rage at the absence of a beloved, I try as soon as possible to remember that my concerns and questions, my efforts and answers should be focused on what I did or can learn from my departed love. What legacy was left which can help me in the art of living a good life?

Maya Angelou

Dear Bubby, I Miss You...

*I never got a chance to say goodbye,
To tell you how much I love you
And needed you in my life.
Even though your body has left this Earth and my pain is rife,
I have no doubts you will be with me the rest of my life.
I miss you...*

*I am grateful to have so many joyful memories
Mostly I will miss you making me laugh until I cannot breathe,
Your intoxicating smile and charming personality,
Even your teasing,
Although somehow for you, I imagine it was much too
pleasing!
I miss you...*

*I will no longer be able to help you pick out an outfit or fix
your hair,
Be your best wingman
Or have you hold me in your arms when I need a hug.
You were my best friend for so long,
And in just one phone call, you were gone.
I miss you...*

*I know we didn't always get along
But somehow we always got past it
And our love for each other was undeniable.
I am proud to call you my big brother,
But it pains me to know I will never have another.
I miss you...*

*It rips me apart to think how much anguish you were in
And that, as your sister, there was nothing I could do.
I just wanted to be there, a shoulder to cry on
To ease your hurt, your pain, your ache
But there is nothing I can do now; you are never again to
wake.
I miss you...*

*I simply just want you back,
But I know this is a want that can never be fulfilled.
You will always be a part of me
No one, not even you, can take that away.
My body aches, and nothing I do seems to ease the pain,
which is lately all I can convey.
I miss you...*

*My heart is bleeding and I don't know how to make it stop,
I just want someone to wake me up and tell me this is all a
dream
But it is not.
I feel as though our family is missing a piece and is not whole
We are no longer five but only four.
I miss you...*

*I am angry and destroyed inside,
I feel pain, I feel sorrow, I feel empty.
I am mad at you for leaving me in this world without my big
Bubby,
For making me deal with this pain.
Sometimes it is too much and I cannot restrain.
I miss you...*

*But that is me being selfish because I know, deep down
That this is what you needed to do.
To end your suffering (which no one could have understood),
And finally you can be at peace with yourself and the world
and be happy,
You can finally sleep now, my big Bubby.
I miss you...*

*I will mourn your death until I can no longer breathe
And know the days will get easier (although I don't see how).
But know you have left an impact on my life, as well as many
others'
You have made me stronger
I couldn't have asked for a better big Brother.
I miss you...*

*I never doubted your love for me,
And I know you knew
That I never, nor will I ever, stop loving you.
My life will not be the same without you, so I must forge on
Goodbye does not mean that you are gone.
I miss you...*

*I wish I could have been there to hold your hand,
To comfort you
Your one last breathe
Go in peace, take a bow
Sleep, my Bubby, and rest now.
I will ALWAYS miss you...*

Kara Marie Sheehan
TCF Cincinnati-East, OH

*We cannot, after all, judge a biography by its length, by the number of pages in it;
we must judge it by the richness of the contents.
Sometimes the "un-finisheds"
are among the most beautiful symphonies.*

Victor Frankl

The Valentines of Yesterday

In my lifetime I have received many Valentines. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, school friends, boyfriends, good friends, acquaintances and my husband have showered me over the years with lovely Valentines which I have so appreciated. The tradition of declaring friendship and love on Valentine's Day is a very fond memory.

However, the sweetest Valentines I have ever received are from my son. From the first days in nursery school when my son made a hand plaque and a drawing on construction paper to the final Valentine in 2002, I have cherished these gifts of love from my only child. I have kept every Valentine my son ever made for me or bought for me. I have every Valentine gift he ever gave me. These are the treasures that remind me how special a parent's love truly is. There is no love to compare with the unconditional love we give our children. I think my son knew that nobody in the world would love him as much as his mother did. Yet, he also knew that he would love his children in just this same way. This unconditional parent's love that we give our children is the most precious love in life. It is always our hope that they, too, will find the joy of this love with their children.

When our child dies, we cling to our unconditional love as we feel the anguish of a final separation on this earthly plane and a tsunami of betrayal as the devastation of this incomprehensible loss sweeps over us. The pain is real. It is physical, emotional, psychological and forever embedded on our psyche. Yet, without that unconditional love, there would be no pain. Who among us would trade the most infinitely rewarding love and the subsequent pain of loss for a life of lukewarm relationships?

And so, as Valentine's Day once again comes into my life, I will look back at this love, at the good times, the wonderful handmade childhood Valentine cards and gifts and the carefully selected cards of adulthood that my son gave to me. His words, his love, his appreciation for all that we had shared as mother and child will be reflected in these treasures. There will be tears, certainly, but these are tempered with the many wonderful, sweet memories of my son and his life. It is these sweet memories which sustain me, give me hope, and bring me gratitude for all that was given to me. My son is forever in my heart. He is with me every day and every night, and especially, he is with me on Valentine's Day.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX



Footprints in the Sand

*There was a day of sunshine,
when you followed after me.
Bare feet in cool sand.
Small prints skipping
through swirls of foam upon the shore.*

*Even as we danced and laughed
The waves crashed against the rocks.
Yet when I looked behind us
Only smooth sand remained.*

*People have ceased to speak of you
and grow uncomfortable when I do.
But I refuse to let them, like the sea...
erase your memory.*

Karen Nelson
TCF, Box Elder County, UT



Beautiful Dream

*Eyes open wide
I awake from a beautiful dream
Within seconds the painful reality of my life sets in
I find myself wanting to scream*

*Grief so strong
Impossible to explain
Living with a broken heart
Struggling with the pain*

*Eyes closed tight
I pray for that beautiful dream
A short escape from the painful reality
That makes me want to scream*

Robert Willis
TCF, Frederick, MD

A Stepparent's Thoughts

I am a bereaved stepparent – *Stepfather* to be exact. Robin Ann Craney, my stepdaughter, was killed at the hands of a drunk driver on June 8, 2001. She was 17 years old.

I have a son named Greg. His Mom remarried so I saw him on weekends, did the trips, and long summer visits as many divorced parents do. I did not get the chance to be a part of his life and see him every day. I got to hear about his activities and accomplishments *all* after the fact. When you marry someone with kids, you get another chance.

After several months of dating my (now) wife Cindy, I finally met her kids, Chris and Robin. Robin was almost 7 years old at the time. I remember that first meeting clearly because she wasn't feeling so good. She ended up getting sick and had to go home. What a first meeting that was!

After that, I became totally involved in the lives and activities of both of the children. I remember one of those nights well! Cindy and I attended parent-teacher conferences for both kids, a Cub Scout Pack meeting and a Girl Scout Brownie meeting...not bad for a single guy, who had been unmarried for 13 years!

Over the years, I got to know Robin's likes, dislikes, and all of her friends – *and she had a lot of friends!* I attended and participated in all of Robin's activities, supporting her in her many endeavors – including gymnastics (her favorite). I was there when she had migraine headaches, running her to the doctor when her Mother couldn't, encouraging her, supporting her – all the things Dads do for their kids. I want to tell you in no uncertain terms, being a stepparent is so much harder. You get the responsibility and, often times it seems, none of the respect. "Mom said I could so I don't have to listen to you" or "You can't tell me what to do, you are not my dad" and so

forth. I tolerated and dealt with her emotional outbursts when she became incensed at anything (sometimes it seemed everything) during the teen years. All *Dads* know how trying those times can be!

Now I am a bereaved stepparent...the one in a kind of "no man's land." I am not biologically connected to Robin; I sometimes feel like an outsider around people who were *once* a family - Mother, Father, Son, and Daughter. Many of our friends have worried about Cindy and Chris. They often ask me "How is Cindy doing?" or "Is Chris OK?" Although I knew and lived with Robin for 10 years, very few ask, "How are *you* doing?" I am only the *stepparent*. The idea that this tragedy cannot be as devastating to me as it is to Robin's "real family" is incomprehensible.

One definition for the word father is "father figure: one often of particular power or influence who serves as an emotional substitute for a father." This is what I was for Robin. She loved to push my buttons – but that was part of our relationship – as frustrating as it could be. Robin is the only daughter I will ever have. I was every bit a *father* to her. I love her and I miss her.

We, the stepparents of children who have died, grieve for our children too. *Only* society puts the "Step" in the name. *Parent* is still the biggest part of who we are. We hurt because they were our children too - often without the support and understanding that is demonstrated towards the biologically connected parents. These beautiful children with whom we developed emotional bonds are now gone out of our lives; and we, too, endure the same feelings of loss and sadness.

Tony Cinocco
TCF, Denver, CO



Wee Small Hours

"*In the wee small hours of the morning...*" is a good way to describe the loneliness of grief. When death visits our homes, our families, or our friends, it leaves grief, loneliness, and desolation in its wake. How do we survive? Is continuing worth the pain? How do we face another day, or hour, or minute? Why should this have happened to me? What can I do to stop the pain?

"*In the wee small hours...is the time I miss you most of all.*" During that time no ray of light or relief from grief seems possible. Nothing seems to work right. However, we can find our way into a sunlight both bright and warm, both invigorating and encompassing. The help we so urgently need to find our way out may be the unexpected phone call, the hand reaching out to assist, the letter or card sent in sympathy, or the friend who encourages us to talk and talk some more. We need not question how that help finds us. It is enough that it is there when it is most needed. It is enough that we can reach out and find a compassionate friend. And when we do, we begin to fill the wee small hours...with large and wonderful memories of our loved ones.

Roy P. Peterson
TCF Lexington, KY

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

At your first TCF meeting you are asked to sign a registration card that gives us permission to add your child to the We Remember Them list on pages 2 and 3 in the monthly newsletter. If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed, 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. You may call the TCF chapter phone number: 615 356-4TCF (4823) and leave a message; or drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205; or email us at davidg14@bellsouth.net, We'll be glad to include them. You need to contact us only once, unless any of your information changes.

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. There will be no harassment, no phone calls, and no demands made upon the parents, and the information you provide is strictly confidential.

The Birthday Table

In the month of your child's birthday, a table will be provided at our meeting where you can share photographs, mementos, your child's favorite snack or a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers—anything you'd like to bring. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth and for us to become better acquainted.



BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

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 a newborn infant. They meet at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Administrative Board Room on the first floor at Tri-Star Centennial Women's and Children's Hospital, 2221 Murphy Avenue in Nashville. The meetings are “open” and free. You can drop by as often as you like. The website is sharingmiddletn.org. Their informative brochure is found under “Contact Us.”

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. Check it out.

The Compassionate Friends

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Valentines in Heaven

*Are there Valentines in Heaven?
Are there Red Hearts everywhere?
Do they line the golden streets,
Or is that very rare?*

*I wish that I could send you one,
Right through Heaven's Gate,
To say how much we miss you,
On this special date.*

*I'd like to send a Candy Heart,
That is printed, "I Luv U,"
And maybe you would whisper back,
"I know, I Luv U too."*



Marilyn Rollins
TCF Lake-Porter, IN

February

In February we celebrate the birth of George Washington and Abe Lincoln. Lent begins. We wonder if the groundhog will see his shadow, and we have Valentine's Day. Candy, flowers and cards are often exchanged. Many cards are given and received between parents and children as a way of showing love for one another. Valentine's Day is another holiday on which bereaved parents remember the drawings, cards and gifts received from their deceased children.

Take time out to be good to yourself. Perhaps you could remember your child with a special flower, or could do something kind in your child's memory for someone in need. Most of all, take time to tell your living children and your spouse or someone special how fortunate you are to have them and how much they mean to you.

Lorraine Bauman
TCF Fairmont, MN