

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NEW MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 8283 • Hermitage, TN 37076 • (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.

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.

February 11th Video: Out of Order: Dealing with the Death of a Child

In this video, you will hear how three couples have experienced their grief, what has helped them and how they honor and keep connections to the memories of their children. Our regular sharing groups will follow. We hope you will join us.



I Slept Like a Baby

For the first month after my daughter died,
I slept like a baby –
I really did!
Slept a couple of hours, woke up crying,
slept a couple of hours, woke up crying,
slept a couple of hours...

Tom Crouthamel
TCF, Sarasota, FL



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

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.

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

Glenn Thomas Allen, Jr. (Tommy) February 7 Son of Ann McKee and stepson of Wilson McKee	Taylor Christian Brewer February 11 Son of Justin and Tracy Brewer Grandson of Don and Sherry Eakes and Penny Waters	Marcus Dean Lynn Brown February 27 Son of Ricky Brown and Deanna Brown	Charles Michael Brown (Charlie) February 7 Son of Dan and June Brown Brother of Katherine Brown
Bonnita Brown (Nee Nee) February 3 Daughter of Elaine Frey	Kelsee Nicole Corbitt (Princess) February 7 Granddaughter of Cheryl Carney	Nicholas Ghassan DaaBoul February 2 Son of Laurie and Georges DaaBoul	Robert Black Faison, Jr. (Pete) February 16 Son of Robert Faison and Kimberlee Daus
Mark Bwyane French February 15 Son of Jennie Reeves	Giovanni Mikhail Gilis February 6 Son of Karrie Robb	Arianna Marie Mitchell February 19 Daughter of Christopher Mitchell and Heather Evans Granddaughter of Frank and Brenda Nelson	Selena Renee Potts February 5 Daughter of Timothy Potts and Nicole Wentzel-Potts
	Gregg Alan Swayze February 10 Son of Michael and Carole Swayze		

And in the month of their deaths

Brock Wyatt Blick February 8 Son of Mark and Jeri Blick Grandson of Jerry & Bonnie Buckner	Marcus Dean Lynn Brown February 27 Son of Ricky Brown and Deanna Brown	Logan Stratton Brumit February 24 Son of Charles and Kathy Brumit	Elizabeth Osborn Cheek February 8 Daughter of Ross and Libby Cheek
Kyle Edward Kemper February 15 Son of Vanessa and Edward Kemper	Abigail Rhea Little (Abbie) February 12 Daughter of Rhea and Marie Little	Heather Ann Willis February 26 Daughter of Tom and Margaret Loose	Tony Bruce Scott February 18 Son of Eldon and Margi Scott
	Heather Marie Robinson February 7 Daughter of Carol Green	Gregory Allen Totty, Jr. February 11 Son of Janie Totty	

GIFTS OF LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE

*Fred and Latresa Duke
in Loving Memory
of their son,
Nigel James Duke*

*Vicki Little
in Loving Memory
of her daughter,
Cam Mantle*

*Barbara Chazen
in Loving memory
of her son,
Dr. Geoffrey David Chazen*

*Thanks to you, Kroger Shoppers,
we received a gift of \$110.94
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.

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.

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.

Falling Apart

*I seem to be falling apart,
My attention span can be measured
in seconds,
My patience in minutes.
I cry at the drop of a hat.
I forget things constantly.
The morning toast burns daily.
I forget to sign checks.*

*Half of everything in the house is misplaced.
Anxiety and restlessness are my
constant companions.
Rainy days seem extra dreary;
Sunny days seem an outrage.
Other people's pain and frustration seem
insignificant.
Laughing, happy people seem out of place
in my world.
It has become routine to feel half crazy.
I am normal, I am told.
I am a newly grieving person.*

Eloise Cole
TCF, Phoenix, AZ

Oracle

*Your child has died
and only this is certain:
that you will never be
the same again –
not what you were –
not what you might have been.*

*Your child has died
and grief may touch your vision
with new and restless lights,
with want and pain
where once your life
found reason, strength and peace.*

*Your child has died,
The face of God is changing.
It may be closer
and more careful now
or may seem cold
and cruel, far away.*

*So, trust your soul
(however bright or somber
however calm or fierce).
Trust in your soul:
it will declare
your answer and your hope.*

In time...

Sascha

Alone

Alone in the dictionary means:

1. Without anybody else.
2. Without any others being included or involved.

But to me alone is something very different. Alone is losing a friend, a love, a brother.

On February 14, I was to go to my father's house alone, only to come back the very next day to find out that I would be alone for the rest of my life.

I don't need a dictionary to know what alone is.

Alone is February 14.

Marina Moore, Age 11
TCF Tucson, AZ

*An empty cradle
An infant son gone forever
Sadness comforts me.*

*His presence lingers
Warm tears ease my deep sorrow
He's safe and at peace.*

*My peace will come, too
My heart will keep him forever
For love endures all things.*

Rebecca Wisniewski
TCF, Lowell, MA

A Life Lost

*I have lost a life – not my own.
But it would have been easier
To have lost my own life
Than to have lost
The life I loved more than my own.*

Sascha



Interrupted Cycles

*She wanders somewhere
Between if and should
In the early morning hours
Before mist falls
When the air is
Poised for a breath.
She stares
At an empty bed
Covered by the red spread,
His favorite color,
to go with
The curtains she had
Sewn only weeks before
His final birthday.
Realities instead of wishes
Rest on the emptiness
Stretching before her
Where his strong,
Adolescent body used to lie.*

Susan Charles
TCF, Dallas, TX

The bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp.

Anne Lamott

Beyond Reality

Once I knew a young woman who had her goals and dreams set firmly in mind. She grew up in a loving family and imagined creating that kind of family of her own. She did not want to amass millions of dollars or become a beauty queen, movie star or executive. She did not dream of new cars or palaces or jewels. This young woman's main goal in life was to become a loving wife and mother. She talked about having children from a very early age. She chose names, filled a cedar chest with tiny handcrafted outfits and began a "Baby Album" years before a child ever blessed her life.

Then, reality struck. My friend married at a young age and after many miscarriages and the birth of a healthy son, the decision was made to sever the marriage relationship. After a painful divorce, and in the years that followed, tragedy upon tragedy beat her to a pulp: her father died from suicide, and two grandfathers died. Then a full-term daughter died after 44 hours of life from a congenital heart defect and finally her mother died of a rare blood disorder.

When the baby died, hope was nearly lost. I watched in dismay as she planned her own death, barely able to pull her back from the dark abyss she so longed to plunge into. Her twisted murmurings inundated my ears as she yearned for the mindless seclusion and security of some obscure mental institution.

She wandered through each day, a mere image of the person I once knew. She rarely smiled and, for a while, seemed unable to find little distinction between reality and fantasy. "Did my baby really die?" she would often ask. "Or is she still inside me somewhere, yet to be born?"

Guilt overshadowed her every waking moment: "Did I murder her?" she wondered. Everything she ever dreamed of and valued passed away.

Still, my friend hung on to even the smallest glimmer of hope. In a way, she amazed me and I was very proud of her. Somehow, some way, she continued to reach for the childhood dream that simply HAD to come true. Maybe next time. Maybe next time.

Amid the tragedies that beset her life, she married a man who resurrected her from the hell her life had become. Together, they have shared the joy of childbirth, the agony of child-death, and are now raising two healthy little girls. Time has moved on. Good things are beginning to happen again, and I am becoming reacquainted with that young woman I remember from so long ago.

Once upon a time, I knew her quite well, but we lost touch with one another. Somewhere along our friendship line she moved beyond the point of recognition. It has been a long, hard journey for her, but I believe she is going to make it! Her laughter is genuine now; she is playing the piano and singing again. She is dreaming of "family" again, much different than she ever expected, but there is hope again. I remember her so well from before because that woman used to be me. She is the girl I was before the tornadoes of death whirled through my life.

I am not sure whether I am a new person now or simply more of who I always was. Did these death experiences turn me into someone else? Or were hidden aspects of my former self merely brought out into the open with more purpose, more force, more focus? These are the things I wonder now. My goals have changed. I will never have the laughter of many children to fill my household, but I do have the joy of two. I don't want my experiences to negatively affect my surviving children, and yet they do have a healthy understanding of death, and I love them all the more for it. I have learned to be a more compassionate friend, although I wonder why it is sometimes easier for me to share another's sorrows rather than their joys. I have learned to accept certain realities in life, and yet I haven't forgotten the dreams of that young girl I knew so well in high school. I have decided NOT to let Lindsay's death or the miscarriages drive me to craziness, although I think a madness of sorts will be with me always. A very pure and beautiful madness.

My overwhelming feeling right now as I share these thoughts with you is not one of waiting for the nightmares to be repeated but of calm acceptance. It has been nearly seven years since death last took a child from our home. It surprises me to realize we have been lulled into a certain kind of comfort around here.

I do not wake up EVERY morning with the thought of Lindsay, or the miscarried babies, or death possibly snatching another one of my children. My nighttime dreams can be filled with colors and merriment again. I spend many waking hours inventing new traditions, new resolutions, new reinvestments and new directions for our family.

Some folks may view our decision to include our "Heavenly Children" along with our "Earthly Children" as a sign of mental instability. We who know understand this is not so. Perhaps this is the greatest lesson of all (a legacy beautifully exemplified by my own parents): to love ALL our children unconditionally as they are, wherever they are. My heart still beats for them.

Dana Gensler
TCF of South-Central Kentucky

If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever.

David Ellsworth

Anniversary Reaction

Every year there is an anniversary of your child's death, and every year you react to it. It doesn't make any difference if it's the first or the twenty-first. You *know* the date is approaching. Strangely, sometimes you will be deeply disturbed for weeks before the actual date. Other times the fact that an anniversary is nearing won't seem to bother you much at all. The only thing consistent in the anniversary reaction is that you *will* react.

For years after Arthur was killed, I would begin my anniversary reaction around Easter time. Easter Sunday, was the last "holiday" that we were together as a family. For many years, Easter Sunday was the starting date for reliving that terrible Friday and the days following. For a number of years, I experienced painful anniversary reactions, but generally, the farther I get from Arthur's death, the less painful it is.

But circumstances or events can make it painful, even years later. For example, on the eleventh anniversary, I was also grieving the death of my granddaughter. At that time Emily hadn't been dead a year yet. I saw the pain my daughter was experiencing and because I couldn't "kiss it and make it better" for *my* child, I hurt even more.



New Songs in a Strange Land

*In olden days some people asked,
In plaintive words we understand:
"How can we sing the songs of old
While captives in a foreign land?"
Their hearts were heavy, filled with care,
As they were taunted by their foes
To sing as in the former days,
Their former joys again to know.*

*We, too, are captives, not by choice,
In land determined by the deaths
Of our dear children, young and older,
Who have drawn their final breaths.
And we are taunted as we're told
That we to normal must return.
Oh, how we'd love to have them back
And for those happier times still yearn!*

*Yet normal ne'er can be the same,
We travel as a captive band.
But from the sadness that we know,
We'll somehow come to understand
That though our children can't come back,
We can't to those glad days return,
Through this sojourn in foreign land
we can triumphant new songs learn!*

*'Tis hard for now; with heavy hearts
Our tears so quickly start to flow!
In truthful bitterness we cry,
"Give back our children, now missed so!"
But we are learning through the tears;
Our harps again we'll choose to play
And gratitude will be the theme,
When joy, not sadness, rules the day!*

Margaret Gerner
TCF St. Louis, MO

Robert F. Gloor, M.D.
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories.

Leo Buscaglia

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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February 2024

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Long Hard Climb

*Numbness was the feeling
When the doctors came to me
Your son's no longer with us,
I thought, 'How can that be?'*

*There was that fog-like feeling
As I sat in disbelief.
I thought I'd soon be wakened
From that awful dream-like state.*

*I thought I'd hear him calling,
Come running down the hall.
My mind was playing tricks on me,
He hadn't died at all.*

*God, how could this thing happen?
I ached, I cried, I screamed.
My body quaked with anger
As I looked to place the blame.*

*I tried to look to others,
It's your fault, no, it's me.
I'm the one who let him die
Because I went to sleep.*

*Guilt—yes, guilt, it riddled me,
Until I came to see
Moms can't always make it better,
No matter what we think.*

*I did not choose for him to die
And no one could have known
That he would leave me on that
night
And I would be alone.*

*There was that time of darkness,
When I could not see the light.
My heart, it felt so heavy,
There was no end in sight.*

*But I've fought hard to clamber
back,
I'm heading toward the light.
My heart is feeling lighter now,
As I continue with my climb.*

*Still, I trip, I stumble,
Sometimes I even fall.
Then there are times when I slip
back,
But that's not bad at all.*

*It's lonely here without him,
And it's a hard thing that I do,
But I'm gonna make it up that hill,
And you, my friend, can too.*

*I'll extend my hand to you,
I'll help you gain some ground,
And step by step we'll take it slow,
We'll make that long, hard climb.*

Valerie Baltzer
TCF Ventura, CA