

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 12 Program:

Out of Order

Our January program offers viewing of the video, *Out of Order: Dealing with the Death of a Child*. We will see three couples whose children have died from different causes, including suicide, courageously share how they experienced their grief, what has helped them, and how they honor and keep connections to the memories of their children. From feeling they have no heart to live, to searching for and finding meaning and understanding, this video of Dave and Debbie, Bill and Chris and M.J. and John sharing their experiences can help us as we travel our own grief journeys.

Our regular sharing groups will follow the program. We hope to see you there.



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

TCF and Religion

Bereaved parents have a wide variety of attitudes toward religion. In addition to those who are members of one of the world's Eastern or Western institutional churches, there are humanists, agnostics, and atheists. All need the help that TCF can give. Some will credit a major share of their recovery to a deep, personal faith, but others have temporarily or permanently rejected the theological views they held before the death of their children.

Faced with this diversity of opinion and belief, sometimes even husband and wife, and frequently accompanied by intense emotions, TCF has chosen to "espouse no specific religious or philosophical ideology" as an organization. Instead, it encourages its members to speak freely and openly about what helped or hindered them in coping with grief but to do so "with respect and consideration for those who may disagree" with them.

TCF National Newsletter

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
Mark and Jeri Blick

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

Abigail Rhea Little
(Abbie)
February 12
Daughter of
Rhea and Marie Little

Heather Marie Robinson
February 7
Daughter of
Carol Green

Tony Scott
February 18
Son of
Eldon and Margi Scott

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
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

Charles Michael Brown
(Charlie)
February 7
Son of
Dan and June Brown
Brother of Katherine Brown

Marcus Dean Lynn Brown
February 27
Son of
Ricky Brown and Deanna Brown

Kelsee Nicole Corbitt
(Princess)
February 7
Granddaughter of
Cheryl Carney

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

Gregg Alan Swayze
February 10
Son of Michael and Carole Swayze

Joseph Tanner Wray
February 23
Son of Bobby and Amy Schisler
and Keith Wray



Only a Cushion

There's only a cushion on the sofa now—a lonely small pillow. For a time, that sofa was transformed into a nest where a young woman, though very ill, spent many hours, nibbling on homemade vinegar taffy and reading, soaking up more knowledge.

No longer the vibrant graduate student, she was, nevertheless, a presence, a companion—someone to trade murmured comments with, to chuckle with, to watch television with, to be there as we moved about the room.

Now the sofa is empty again, the solitary little cushion the only thing there, but it takes only a glance at the photograph on the end table or the one on the mantle to sense her presence. She's just not on the sofa anymore. She's in our hearts—she's everywhere.

Peggy Gibson
TCF, Nashville, TN

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 "Abby" Czirr,
daughter of Steve and Paige Czirr*

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

*Deanie Gregory
in Loving Memory of her son,
Darby Felts
and her nephew, Phillip Sanders*

*Thanks to you, Kroger Shoppers, we received a gift of \$117.10 from the
Kroger Plus Community Rewards Program*

Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, 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.

Testament

But how can I live without you? – she cried

*I left all the world to you when I died:
Beauty of earth and air and sea;
Leap of a swallow or a tree;
Kiss of rain and wind's embrace;
Passion of storm and winter's face;
Touch of feather, flower and stone;
Chiseled line of branch of bone;
Flight of stars, night's caravan;
Son of crickets—and of man—
All these I put in my testament,
All these I bequeathed to you when I went.*

But how can I see them without your eyes
Or touch them without your hand?
How can I hear them without your ear,
Without your heart, understand?

*These too, these too
I leave to you!*

From *The Unicorn and other Poems* by Anne Morrow Lindbergh
Read at her funeral by her grandson Nat as reported in
No More Words by Reeve Lindbergh

Windows

*The breath of winter
painted fragile stars
on all the windows
of my quiet house.*

*And there I found
your face,
more fragile even
than the season's art,
a wonder to my eyes.*

*How can it be
that winter paints
such secret things
in white-and-silver sheen
for those who cry alone
at frosted windows?*

Sascha Wagner

*We must learn to let go as easily as we grasp
or we will find our hands full and our minds empty.*

Leo Buscaglia

FOR GRIEVING SIBLINGS

When an Adult Loses a Brother or Sister

The loss of a brother or sister is always an emotionally wrenching experience, but when adults lose a sibling they may face potentially debilitating emotional issues that are often unrecognized.

Adult sibling loss often falls into the category known as “disenfranchised grief,” where someone is denied the opportunity to grieve. Sympathy from family and friends is mainly directed toward the parents and/or the spouse of the deceased, not the surviving brothers and sisters. Adults losing a sibling may receive little emotional support and may subtly be made to feel guilty for grieving too long. They can feel forced to hide their emotions and lack the means to resolve their grief. The result can be a years-long struggle with low-grade depression unless several major tasks are undertaken to get through the necessary grieving process.

-Seeking a new identity. Siblings form a part of the background from which you live your life. They’re essential to your sense of who you are. It takes time to learn how to live your life again in a changed world. You don’t “get over” this as much as “grow through” it.

-Facing the loss of a future without your sibling. When a sibling dies you lose both the actual person, and the part he or she would have played in your future. Significant events in your life—marriage, the birth of children, job successes and failures—will all underline the reality that your brother or sister is not there to share them. Such events, no matter how wonderful, will have a bittersweet flavor.

-Overcoming compulsive care-giving. The desire to protect others—perhaps parents, a spouse, or their own children—can take the form of compulsive care-giving for some adults who lose a sibling, and can complicate their own grief process.

Putting your own grief process on hold can be carried too far. When bereaved siblings project their own sad feelings onto others, and then take care of those others, it becomes counter-productive. Compulsive caregivers focus so much energy outside themselves that they become empty inside and may become clinically depressed.

To help resolve this compulsive care-giving, you need to confront your own sadness and pain, own it, and feel it deeply in order to grow through the grief. You may need to talk about

every miniscule detail of the death, and express the associated feelings over and over until you wear out the pain.

-Dealing with trauma. Certain types of deaths, such as losing a brother or sister to an accident, suicide or homicide, can be especially traumatic for the surviving sibling. Our minds can process only so much information at one time. Sudden deaths can be an overwhelming, traumatic stimulus. Trauma may also occur if you helped nurse a brother or sister through a disfiguring disease, or witnessed their suffering.

Recovery from trauma involves working through the pain, and articulating thoughts and feelings about the loss to a trusted person. While this long process is going on, you can gain strength by working to increase your self-esteem. Each step that you take toward becoming your best self will create a corresponding rise in self-esteem. You will then be strong enough to handle another ‘piece’ of your grief.

-Overcoming guilt. The sibling relationship is by nature ambivalent—we both love and sometimes hate them. When they die, we often forget the nice things we did and remember the name-calling and hateful thoughts, setting ourselves up to feel guilty. In our memories of the relationship, we may feel that we failed to be as kind or generous as we should have.

Underneath these thoughts lies the fact that we, as humans, do not like to feel powerless or helpless. We could not prevent our sibling’s death, so we pretend to ourselves that if we had been there, or had taken some particular action, things would have been different. It usually takes another person to hear about our guilt, to help us bring it down to size.

When an adult sibling dies, you may feel as though a part of you died, too. Remember, however, that a part of your sibling also lives on in you. Instead of going into hiding with your feelings, meet them head-on. Talk to a counselor or share your feelings with someone who will listen. Don’t let your grief take over your whole life. You can enter fully into life again.

P. Gill White, Ph.D., L.P.C., N.C.C.

(Dr. White is a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice, and also the author of [Sibling Grief: Healing after the Death of a Sister or Brother](#)

A Sibling’s Point of View

*There are times
When I see a fiery sunset
Or the silver glow of the moon,
And I see my brother,
And feel the peace that he still exists.
But these times are few,
And most of what I see is
What he is missing.*

*Cry now, my silent tears,
Quietly so no one hears.
They don’t know the pain I go through
Day after day,
And through the years.*

Alissa Roeder
TCF, Pikes Peak, CO

Grief is Invisible, Help Others Understand It

Often the same holidays that once brought us much joy, can now compound our depression. Thanksgiving can be an abrasive time for the newly bereaved. We find it difficult to count our blessings, when such an integral person is gone from our lives, and with them went the sunshine of our tomorrows. Even those of us who are blessed with having surviving children find it difficult to express our thankfulness. We are so all consumed with such enormous feelings of love and loss, that we cannot think past our pain. It is important to forgive ourselves for our feelings, for they are human and normal. I believe they are acceptable with our Supreme Being, for He is probably the only one who genuinely knows the depth of our despair, how long and hard the journey of grief is, and how the pain penetrates our very soul.

Our support system ends about the same time the insulation of shock wears off. If we were an amputee, those around us could see not only do we have to adjust to making a new and different life for ourselves, but also live with the fact we are no longer whole. Our loss is not visible, so it is not fair to expect or blame our friends and family for not knowing what to do or say. They try to shield themselves from our pain and the discomfort. This leads to wanting to rush us through our grief so they can feel better faster. Many of us may have responded in the same manner prior to learning about grief first hand. We hurt ourselves when we cut off family and significant friends. It is much more helpful to express our needs in a

loving manner, and educate the world on grief of bereaved parents and siblings. Most will appreciate your telling them how to help you. But, if we express our needs in an abrasive manner, we cannot expect a positive response. One of the major difficulties is we don't know how to help ourselves, and are not honest about how we feel on a daily basis.

Many times we try to run away from our feelings, for they frighten us. We should not lay an issue aside until we have dealt with it. We need to intentionally plan time to talk about our child or sibling, our frustrated love, the shattering of our future dreams, and how this has reduced us to feeling nonproductive and a substandard human being. It can take a lot of sharing of feelings to learn to love ourselves again. Once we love ourselves, it is much easier to love others.

It took a lot of healing before I could be glad there was a tomorrow. It took a lot of guilt before I could realize a moment's rest, or a laugh, was not forgetting my child. We can learn to make the death less significant, the love for our child and the life they had be the purpose for remembering. Once we reach this plateau, memories are comforting, the gut-wrenching pain subsides, and we make life meaningful once again. We wish you the strength to bear your grief, and find a meaningful tomorrow.

Marie Hofmockel
TCF, Valley Forge

Tears

Tears are much more than the outpouring of sorrow, for they may also start forth in the presence of beauty, in moments of great joy, at times of sudden relief from worry. In such situations, they seem unreasonable and inappropriate. Yet a significant lesson of contemporary psychology is that most unexpected actions stem from the most powerful but best hidden needs and secrets of our own hearts. Only when tears burst forth in spite of ourselves do we realize the universal need of all human beings to pity and sympathize with each other.

Anger, fear, or the shock of sudden sorrow bring physical changes in our bodies. The digestion is shut down, the blood pressure is raised, the heart speeds up, and the skin becomes cold. Maintained over a prolonged period, this emergency status makes the body, and the personality, tight, dry, and rigid. In people who are afraid to let themselves pour forth their painful emotions, doctors find that the suppressed tears can trigger such ailments as asthma, migraine headache, and many others.

Weeping, on the other hand, comes as part of the reversal of conditions of alarm, shock, and anger. Tears do not mark a breakdown or low point, but a transition to warmth and hope and health.

The point of view that we should not express ourselves through weeping is a denial of a law of nature. Tears are a gift of God. Nowhere is this more eloquently expressed in the shortest verse of the Bible: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). There is a genuine wisdom in tears: in the tears of grief, of remembrance, of sympathy, of aesthetic pleasures, of the appreciation of grandeur, of poignant joy. They all express deep-seated needs: the need to love and be loved, the need to cast out anger and hate, the need to wash away troubles and tension. In permitting ourselves to weep instead of manfully repressing the impulse, we help ourselves to health and wisdom, for in the state of physical release which tears bring, our thoughts can flow freely and bring insight and understanding we never knew were within our grasp.

Morton M. Hunt
TCF, Millwood, NY

February

Let this cool and
gentle
month of the heart
remind you
not only of lost
treasure,
but also of riches
(past and present)
in your life.

Sascha



Valentine's Day

Did you know?

When we truly listen
to each other,
we are saying

~~I love you~~

Sascha

It is a Time for Love

February has fewer days than most months, and that may be of special significance to us, as our children had fewer days than most. When we think of this month, the most outstanding day, perhaps, is St. Valentine's Day. It is a time for love. When we were school aged, we had a special chance to give and receive cards in those decorated boxes in our primary classrooms. Perhaps it is the one holiday that children can really do something for everyone.

Addressing a card to each and every classmate made you think of how you felt about each one and wonder about how they felt about you. Love is found in every day of every year, but February and Valentine's Day is very special. I wish I could remember just how it felt to get a "nicer" Valentine from someone I had sent a "nicer" one to.

It is so long ago, and there have been so many much more significant happenings in my life. But sometimes, I'd like to remember just how it felt. I am sending along this Valentine Love Note to each of you right now, and hope that you know it is one of the "nicer" ones, because each of you is very special to me. Somehow I don't wonder how you feel, somehow, I know!

As we grieve the loss of our children and one another's, we begin to find a different kind of love than we ever expected to experience.

Rosalie Baker
TCF, Rochester, NY

Keeping Myself Close

I have to keep myself close
stay within myself
take time to gather inner resources.
I am depleted and sad
unable to reach out.
Even one phone call
is too much effort.
But it's not depression.

I'm choosing
to take care of me,
not pushing beyond what
I feel like doing,
gathering up my life,
knowing I will again feel
like calling, reaching out,
maybe soon.

From *Catching the Light: Coming Back
to Life after the Death of a Child*
Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

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. Also, when going to Amazon, type in “Amazon Smile” and designate The Compassionate Friends; then, each time you go on Amazon Smile a small contribution will be made by Amazon to our organization—It's a free and easy way to support TCF.

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. We do not phone the family and all information you provide is confidential.



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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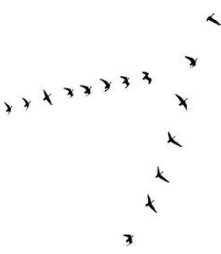
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February 2023

A Lesson From the Geese



Have you ever wondered why migrating geese fly in V formation? As with most animal behavior, there is a good reason from which we can learn a valuable principle of mutual aid.

- As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an *uplift* for the bird following. By flying in their V group formation, the whole flock adds 71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone.
- Whenever a goose falls out of the group formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the *lifting* power of the bird immediately in front.
- When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point position.
- The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep their speed.
- When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, with another group, or catch up with the flock.

And so it is with The Compassionate Friends.

From TCF, Malta