

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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Nashville Website: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://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.

## January 10 Meeting:

For the health and safety of our members, we will gather for our **January 10 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](mailto: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 January virtual meeting will begin with sharing our TCF video. We will share January 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](http://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](http://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.

<b>Accidental Death</b> ...Mike and Paula Childers 615-646-1333	<b>SIDS</b> ...Kris Thompson 931-486-9088
<b>Suicide</b> ...Ron Henson 615-789-3613	<b>AIDS</b> ... Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
<b>Alcohol/Drug Overdose</b> ...Ed Pyle 615-712-3245	<b>Illness</b> ...David and Peggy Gibson 615-356-1351
<b>Infant</b> ...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.

*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—*

Lisa Allgood January 14 Daughter of Harold and Betty Allgood	John Calister Davidson (Buddy) January 4 Son of Steve and Telese Davidson	Mary Grace Hodsdon January 14 Daughter of John and Mary Hodsdon	David Pringle January 13 Son of Jim and Margaaret Pringle
Misty Whitney Ambrose January 14 Daughter of Michael and Treva Ambrose	Justin Townes Earle January 4 Son of Carol Earle	Bailie Ann Fudge Locke January 20 Daughter of Kile and Debbie Fudge	Laurie Lynn Shriver Robert January 15 Daughter of Warren and Donna Jones And George Shriver Sister of David, Bekki, and Bonnie
Matthew Johnson Brooks January 14 Son of Mike and Sherry Brooks	James Wesley Evans (Snowman) January 31 Son of Brenda Nelson Brother of Heather	William Q. Lyons January 1 Son of Lillie Lyons	Ethan Shaw January 11 Son of Will and Shavona Shaw
Pamela Sue Chaiken January 17 Daughter of Lionel and Sandra Chaiken	Aaron Thomas Gillespie January 1 Son of Donna Gillespie	Cam Mantle January 9 Daughter of Jack Mantle and Vicki Little	Cassidy Leigh Stuart January 29 Daughter of Thomas and Jennifer Stuart
Jonathan Lee Collins January 12 Son of Charity Collins Grandson of Jennie Reeves	Samuel Christopher Hagens January 14 Son of Christopher and Pamela Hagens Brother of Luke and Caleb	Shawn Patrick Martin January 4 Son of Annie and Michael Martin Brother of Austin	Steven Williams (Buck) January 26 Son of Ricky and Cherri Williams
Jeremy Wilson Christy January 20 Son of Wilson and Jenny Christy	Matthew Kent Hensley January 13 Son of Kenneth and Kathy Hensley	John Cole Neuhoff January 2 Son of John Neuhoff and Martha Houston	Lydia Amber Yahn January 27 Daughter of Jeremiah Yahn and Emily Freshour
Kaitlyn Kimberly Cook January 30 Daughter of Jim Cook and Sylvia Bosma	James Edwin Hinesley January 7 Son of Steven and Sue Hinesley	Lauren Kristina O'Saile January 23 Daughter of Don Davenport Granddaughter of Martha Davenport	




*And in the month of their deaths*

Carl William Anderson January 22 Son of Charles and Heidi Anderson	Juri Austin Bunetta January 9 Son of Al and Dawn Bunetta	Jeremy Wilson Christy January 4 Son of Wilson and Jenny Christy	Vontrekus Keon Lockett January 15 Son of Willie Sails and Bernita Lockett
Brock Wyatt Blick January 8 Son of Mark and Jeri Blick Grandson of Jerry and Bonnie Buckner	Matthew Lance Chitwood January 1 Son of Jim and Connie Chitwood Grandson of Margaret Chitwood-Watkins Brother of Clayton	Roy James Davies January 13 Son of Roy and Barbara Davies	Cam Mantle January 25 Daughter of Jack Mantle and Vicki Little
		Joseph V. Ladd, III (Joey) January 9 Son of Joe and Melanie Ladd	

*Continued on page 3*

*Children Remembered, Continued*

Stetson Taylor McFarland January 30 Son of Nathan and Alisha McFarland	Trinity Rhodes Steagall January 1 Son of Rose Steagall	Kevin Tolentino January 28 Son of Sarah Tolentino	Jason Brandon Warf January 21 Son of Ronald and Clada Warf
Shane Tanner Scruggs January 22 Son of Don and Joan Johnson and James and Lisa Scruggs	Stephanie Hardy Stephens January 10 Daughter of George and Thelma Hardy	Joe Vick (Joey) January 10 Son of Kay Bogle Brother of Angie	

**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.*

*Janice Birdsong  
In loving memory of  
Preston Chauncey Birdsong,  
Son of  
Preston Birdsong and  
Janice Birdsong*

*Ross and Libby Cheek  
In loving memory of their daughter,  
Elizabeth Osborn Cheek*

*Martha Davenport  
In loving memory of  
her granddaughter,  
Lauren Kristina O'Saile  
Daughter of Don Davenport*

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



*Don and Sherry Eakes  
In loving memory of their grandson,  
Taylor Christian Brewer  
Son of Justin and Tracy Brewer*

*Jack and Druanne Freeman  
In loving memory of Joyce Donlon,  
Mother of Patrick Donlon,*

*Hortense Gantt  
In loving memory of her son,  
Marque Dewayne Gantt*

*Herb and Susan Gould  
In loving memory of their son,  
Stephen Christopher Gould*

*Ron Henson  
In loving memory of his wife,  
Darlene Henson,  
And their son,  
Daniel Lee Henson*

*John and Betsy Koomen  
In loving memory of their son,  
Ben Koomen*

*Rhea and Marie Little  
In loving memory of  
their daughter,  
Abigail Rhea Little (Abbie)*

*Vicki C. Little  
In loving memory of  
her daughter,  
Cam Mantle*

*Mike and Jean Overcash  
In loving memory of their son,  
Michael Stanley Overcash*

*Jennie Reeves  
In loving memory of her children,  
Sheila Rochelle, Michael Reeves,  
and Mark Bwyane French,  
And her grandson,  
Jonathan Lee Collins  
Son of Charity Collins*

*Wayne and Marsha Vick  
In loving memory of their son,  
Daniel Wayne Vick*

*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.*

## Ways I Know that Life Goes On

I know my life is moving forward because...

Today I moved the waterproof mascara  
to the back of my makeup drawer.  
I didn't make any mistakes at work all day.  
I slept all night through.  
I remember her smile...and smile.  
I drove home and didn't expect to see  
my little girl greeting me at the door.  
I remembered where I left my car keys.  
Someone asked me today if we were going to have  
another child,  
and I didn't get angry and change the subject.



The first holidays have passed, and I'm still here.  
I haven't taken a pill to help me sleep in 12 days,  
We've starting talking about another baby.  
The knife in my stomach eases up sometimes.  
Morgan's baby brother is due in July;  
she's finally going to be a big sister!  
It's June 23rd, the day after Morgan's  
second birthday; I guess I made it through.  
Our little boy was born today, and I cried  
tears of joy not sadness.  
He has his sister's little pudgy nose.

Kimberly L. Rhodus

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## A Remnant

I am a wretched seamstress, although there have been numerous attempts on my part over the years to remedy that. At this point, I am fairly content with my ability to sew on a button. I can also, with help, produce a pretty snazzy pillowcase.

During those previous attempts to acquire some skill, I did have to occasionally venture into a fabric store. In most fabric stores, there is a "remnant table." Leftover pieces from bolts of fabric. Often not in sufficient quantity to make much of anything. Always sold at a discount. Sometimes a very steep discount.

These scraps may be from fabric that never was anything more than cheap. It may be a design or color that has gone out of fashion. In some cases, it may be a small fragment of something that was once a fine, valuable fabric. But what does one do with such a leftover?

I sometimes think of myself now as a remnant, a trace of the person I used to be before my son died. Whether the fabric that was my former self was cheap cotton, gaudy polyester, sturdy woven wool, or a finely made silk is up for debate. But here I am a remnant, wondering what to make of what is left. Or, indeed, sometimes wondering if it is even worth the effort.

I guess one option is to sort of throw myself in the proverbial trash heap. But I try...most of the time? some of the time?...to find ways to be useful and productive and engaged. I try to stay off the trash heap. I try to make something out of what is left.

Peggi Johnson  
TCF Piedmont, VA



## Helping is Healing:

a message from our members and previous Chapter Leaders, Roy and Barbara Davies

An inspiring video is available at the Compassionate Friends National Website, [www.compassionatefriends.org/end-of-year-appeal](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/end-of-year-appeal) in which Roy and Barbara Davies share their grief journeys following the deaths of their sons and step-sons, Roy and Taylor Davies. Roy was elected to the National TCF Board of Directors in 2017 and was elected President of the Board this past July. Barbara shares her grief journey as step-mom and how she has learned that helping is healing. She gives several suggestions of ways to help others that are inspiring as well as practical for anyone involved in a TCF chapter. Be sure to take a few moments to view their heart-warming message of hope and healing.

## A Sibling Dies

It is January first. My heart twinkles once again because the holidays are over. How can a season of light bring so much dark? Thirty years ago, on Christmas morning, my brother died in our home by suicide in a very violent manner. He was 23; my other brother was 24; and I was 19 years old. Our family of five was irretrievably shattered. Don, my brother who died, was so much a part of us. He brought so much joy in his living and then so much pain in his dying. Who am I to grieve him still? The memories well up every December like a deep dark night unbidden. Anger, sadness, rejection, guilt become my Christmas ornaments. "Give me back my family - give me back my Christmas, you creep, Give me back your laughter," I want to shout at him. Who am I to miss him? Who am I to rage when he was the one in the grips of a pain so untenable that he could not speak of it, but only act upon it? Who am I to cry? Well, I'm entitled. I'm a survivor after all. One doesn't get there on a water slide, if you know what I mean. When Christmas rolls around, I do my dance with grief once again. Some years, it's a waltz; other years a tango. It doesn't seem to matter if it's two, twenty or thirty years since my brother died, I get out my dancing shoes. I don't go looking for pain like some wacky masochist. It finds me. Some years I announce - around November 25th, "I'm over this." I act accordingly. I shop for Christmas Cards and don't go near my dancing shoes. It doesn't matter. They find me. It's not like I didn't have therapy. I've had dance therapy, art therapy, regular therapy, travel therapy, friendship therapy, biofeedback/hypnosis therapy, creampuff therapy, swimming therapy, forgiveness therapy, spiritual community therapy, law school therapy . . . Law School therapy? The fun had to end somewhere. Seriously, losing a sibling is heart wrenching and no laughing matter. It took me ten or fifteen years to truly laugh again, let alone make light of myself. That just happened this year. No doubt, because I am writing of it, rather than speaking of it, which I rarely do. It feels safer to write. Other than to therapists, I've spoken of his death to three people in thirty years. Who could understand, I felt, and why diminish his being or expose myself? I adored my brother Don - he made me laugh like a monkey. I adore both my

brothers; as a child they were my world. Not very healthy perhaps, but it worked for me. Home life was chaotic and quite frightening because my father was more than a little nuts. My mother's energy was spent containing his insanity and keeping our bodies and souls together. She was part steel, part angora. We never spoke of Don after his death. The community ostracized us; my father took a trip down devil's lane, and my mother mourned my brother until the day she died. I'm sad to say that we never had Don's picture in our home again, because the pain was too severe. It seems we could not get past it. We went to our separate corners and quietly mourned. It was different years ago; so much remained hidden. Self-healing groups were non-existent, shrinks were stigmas, and the Catholic Church unforgiving. I couldn't save him. I was the last person he talked with on Christmas Eve. For months, I barely spoke and relived the shock daily. I ate a lot. Death by mashed potatoes. That was sure to bring him back. I retreated into a private world for several years where if I wasn't dead, I'd sure like to be. This is grief. And it does soften over time. It softens like water softens rock, in its flowing, gentle, rushing, mysterious way. It softens like a sweet whisper of a memory that lulls you to sleep, knowing that love knits the bones of despair together, tighter, stronger, more curious, more delicious than ever before. Knowing that the fires of your being burn the dross of despair. Knowing that the chamber of the heart is strong beyond measure and can take it and transform the pain into joy. Joy for having known this person, for a day or ten years or two months. Joy for having the courage to be. For knowing yourself in many garments. For taking a risk to love anyone again: a neighbor, a friend, a cat, a lover, a stranger, yourself. The broken heart opens and mends itself. In the middle of the night, when no one is there but many are listening. Joy seeps into me. After all, I'm entitled. I'm a survivor.

By © L. Nicole Dean

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## Comparisons

*It is useless to wonder  
what grief is larger  
or what grief is smaller.  
The death of children  
fills to ultimate endurance  
every human dimension  
for pain.*

*There is no need  
to give rank to death.  
We only have to recognize  
that grief has filled  
a whole life  
to its ultimate boundaries.*

Sascha



*Grief is the ceremony  
of lost treasure.  
Grief is the homage  
you pay to the love  
you were once blessed to share.  
Grief is not an enemy.*

Sascha

## Accepting the Unacceptable

"I will never be able to accept the death of my child." Does that sound familiar? Have you said that? Not surprising. That is one, if not the most, difficult thing we have to do to get to the other side of the long dark tunnel of grief.

What does "accept" mean? One parent told me he would never accept his daughter's death, because he said "accept" means to "agree, approve, to consent to," Obviously, in that context no one in their right mind would "accept" their child's death. But there are other meanings to "accept": "believe to be true," "acknowledge." We do not like the sound of those words either, but at some point, accept them, in order to get on with our lives.

By stating we will not accept it, what is accomplished? ... Will it make it not true? If only it were that simple. Then I would be 100% in favor of denial. But it doesn't work that way. There are some things that cannot be changed, no matter how hard we may want them to be.

One example: My husband had a heart attack a little more than a year after Eric's death. He vehemently denied he had had a heart attack. ... He continued on with his HEAVY smoking. Then came his stroke. He is now badly paralyzed on his left side. He cannot deny his stroke. And he cannot go back, and accept his heart attack, change his way of living and perhaps avert the stroke. So what did his denial accomplish? It made things worse.

So it is with us. Denial won't work. At some point in time, we know it has happened. I realized for myself, it was when I could say "Eric died." I could say the word "dead." It took quite a long time. I could say "I lost a son" but not "he died." One day it just came out. It actually shocked and upset me. But afterwards, looking back, I realized that was a big step for me. Not a happy one, but it was one of my turning points.

All of the "stages" of grief that we go through are hard. There is nothing easy about it. As Darcie Sims said..."grief hurts." That almost seems like too mild a statement. The feeling is impossible to put in words. It's devastating!!

"Grief work" takes time and effort. I wish there was an easier way for all of you. I can only give you the hope and encouragement that you, too, can make it. Be kind to and patient with yourself. God Bless!

Mary Ehmann  
TCF Valley Forge, PA

### January One

#### *New Year*

*new life – new hope*

*new expectations – new beginnings*

#### *Old Times*

*old fears – old places*

*old disappointments – old dead ends*

*I am aware of my resistance to change*

*I am aware of how reality is and how*

**LIFE GOES ON**

*I am aware of how I feel vulnerable*

#### *Birthdays*

*death days – celebrations – anniversaries*

*Seeking a new future as the haunting*

*past returns*

**I AM ME**

*Change is possible and difficult, inevitable*

**I LIVE ON**

**NOW**

Cindy Bouman  
TCF, Hinsdale, IL

### The New Year Comes

#### *The New Year comes*

*When all the world is ready*

*For changes, resolutions—*

*Great beginnings.*

#### *For us, to whom*

*That stroke of midnight means*

*A missing child remembered,*

*For us, the New Year comes*

*More like another darkness.*

#### *But let us not forget*

*That this may be the year*

*When love and hope and courage*

*Find each other somewhere*

*In the darkness*

*To lift their voice and speak:*

*Let there be light.*

Sascha Wagner  
TCF, Des Moines, IA



*With every struggle, there is a story to be told;  
it will touch the ear of another.*

Pamela Hagens  
TCF, Nashville

## **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 database manager at 615 308-2520, drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205, or email us at [davidg14@bellsouth.net](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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*

**P.O. BOX 50833**

**Nashville, TN**

**37205**

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**January 2021**

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## **Waiting for Answers**

**Y**ears ago I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul.

But when I walked out into the spring air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory?

During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared *were* true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed.

My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise?

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said. "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too."

Sometimes the best advice is none at all.

Mary Clark  
TCF, Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter