

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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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 temporarily in the Citipointe Church, 7533 Lords Chapel Drive, Nashville 37211 (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.

January 9 Meeting

to be held in our new temporary meeting place:

Citipointe Church, 7533 Lords Chapel Drive, Nashville 37211

The location is off Nolensville Road (Highway 31A) about a mile south of where Bell Road (Old Hickory Boulevard) crosses Nolensville Road.

Citipointe Church will be the temporary location of the 2022 monthly Nashville Chapter meetings until the new location is available sometime this spring. Regular monthly meetings will begin at 3:00 pm as usual.

TCF Video to Be Shown

The Compassionate Friends helps us to cope with the death of a child. It is a place where one can turn for support when the devastation of the loss seems overwhelming. The Compassionate Friends has produced a short video in which bereaved parents and siblings discuss their own grief experiences and what helped them. Among those who speak are the TCF national executive director, members of the board, chapter leaders and siblings. This video will be shown at this month's meeting, and regular sharing groups will follow. Please join us.

You may bring a snack to share and the birthday table for December and January birthdays or our children will be available.

Phone Friends

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

Accidental Death	Mike and Paula Childers 615-646-1333
AIDS	Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
Illness	David and Peggy Gibson 615-308-2520 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

*****Come meet our new Chapter Leaders, Justin and Tracy Brewer*****

This is Another Year Just Beginning

This is another year just beginning – afresh with new days, new opportunities, new challenges. It occurs to me, however, this is a very difficult task to keep from concentrating on past years and the sadnesses we endure just because it is a new year and the calendar has flipped the page.

Moving on to a brighter tomorrow and letting go of the pain of yesterday is a gradual process. We cross that threshold one step at a time – a small one at first, faltering and stumbling – but somehow getting there. With patience, effort, and persistence, once again we will be able to celebrate life as the year stretches on before us, putting behind us our sadness, our guilts, our failures and our pain.

We will be able to smile again. We will be able to remember our precious children in life rather than death. We will recognize in our days many little blessings and will be able to share our joys with others.

Whenever that "New Year" begins for you, I celebrate with you that marvelous accomplishment, and wish you great peace, courage, and comfort.

Alice Weening
TCF, Cincinnati, OH

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

Where grief is still very fresh, the most important resolution made may be
the dedication to survive each new day.

Bruce H. Conley

For The New Year

Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break, let's make some this year and really try to keep them.

1. Let's not try to image the future. Take one day at a time.
2. Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
3. Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share the difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
4. Try to be realistic about your expectations – of yourself, your spouse, other family members and
5. friends. Each of us is an entity, therefore different. So how can there be a perfect understanding?
6. When a good day comes, relish it; don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last. It WILL come again and multiply.
7. Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body only compounds your troubles. Drink lots of water and take stress-type multivitamins, rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body heal, as well as your mind.
8. Share your feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with you. As you find you are caring about the pain of others, you are starting to come out of your shell – a very healthy sign.

I know following these won't be easy, but what has been? It's worth a try, don't you think? Nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.

Mary Ehmann
TCF, Valley Forge, PA

The Miracle of You

Dear Jacob,

When I look back at your short life Jacob, which is often, I've come to celebrate the miracle of you rather than focus on the illness that took your life. I prefer to think of all the joy you experienced through the twenty years God gave you. After all, we were ready for you. From day one you felt the peace and contentment of being deeply loved by your mom and me, and by so many others who cared for you.

And through the years you returned all our love so beautifully. Happily, you experienced many of the joys of childhood, like marching around with your best friend Dylan, like toy soldiers, on your preschool's playground. And I seem to remember you holding little Anna's hand out there as well.

And how about the endless hours I spent watching you on the swings, and playing catch with you in the back yard, and our bike rides through the neighborhood and beyond. And then at your elementary school's aftercare, they said you played with much older kids at the Lego table because you were so skilled at constructing things.

And I remember how you loved listening to all those bedtime stories we'd read to you before you gently dozed off. You'd often ask for my off the cuff "Lousy Genie" stories. That poor genie would always screw up the wishes. You'd ask him for a palace and he'd reply, "If I could make a palace do you think I'd live in this crummy two-bit lamp!"

You were such a great kid! Always there to lend me a hand when I worked around the house. Hammering nails with what you called the "daddy hammer." How I smiled at your yelling, "Strawbabies!", at the breakfast table. And when you mentioned that when the man in the moon went behind a cloud, "He probably had to go potty."

Then there was that time after I tried to wake you up for Kindergarten, and you just closed the door after putting a "Do Not Disturb" on it. It cracked me up! As did, "Daddy, I just learned about the Periodic Table of the Elephants!"

And how could I possibly forget when you were four, and the doctor diagnosed cancer in my ear. And later, as I laid in bed exhausted after my last radiation treatment, you climbed up, hugged me and kissed my ear saying, "Don't worry daddy, that'll make it better!" You can't imagine how much that cheered me up

Jacob, and how it helped give me the strength I needed to heal. I couldn't have asked for a better son.

Years later I could see how proud you were in middle and high school of playing trombone in the concert and marching band. How well your bandmates spoke of you at your memorial service. About how much they appreciated your humor, intelligence, and your just being real with them. Of course, we all marveled at how well you played Bach and other pieces on the piano.

As an older dad I made plenty of room for you in my life. I delighted in teaching you how to ride a bike, drive a car, and taking you camping in the old growth forests of the Smokies.

Hey, I was your biggest fan at the little league games, your band concerts and piano recitals. And how proud I was at your high school graduation. Jake, all those days are precious to me now.

And when you became ill, I'm so glad I was here for you. And that our home could become a hospice for you and the mental illness that came out of nowhere in those last months. And now, along with storms of tears and grief, there comes some peaceful acceptance. And I ask, "How long can anyone stay angry at the random cruelty of biology gone wrong? What family hasn't dealt with this at one time or another?"

I have sought solace looking up at the stars at night. And I've come to think, "Who's to say what is the most miraculous thing in this dark, never-ending universe?" In my opinion, it is simply our daily lives—when we rise to our highest, God-given spirituality of loving kindness and compassion for others. Yes, unselfish love, freely given and received is more spectacular to me than all the stars, planets, and galaxies orbiting in the vast, loneliness of space! And of course, Jacob, this includes our love for each other. Love that we have shared, and still share.

No, I don't have to look to the stars for wonderment and inspiration. Jacob, I just gaze into my heart's remembrances of our years together. They come alive with the thought of your smile, your laugh, and our talks about the things that matter. And often now, my heart sings just thinking about the miracle of you! You are a gift from God for which I am so grateful. And I feel the arrows of grief slowly turning into the second blessings of our joyful, precious memories!

Love,
Dad

Mike Bell
TCF, Nashville, TN

January Warmth

Like a tree in winter which has lost its leaves, we look ahead to Spring for new growth and the warmth of the sun to heal the pain in our hearts. Let us make January a time to reach out to each other and give that warmth from our hearts, and in return, we will all show new growth.

Pat Dodge
TCF Sacramento Valley, CA

The Death of the Young

People ask: “Why do children or young people die, when they have lived so little? How do you know that they have lived so little? This crude measure of yours is time, but life is not measured in time. This is just the same as to say, “Why is this saying, this poem, this picture, this piece of music so short, why was it broken off and not drawn out to the size of the longest speech or piece of music, the largest picture?”

As the measure of length is inapplicable to the meaning (or greatness) of productions of wisdom or poetry, so—even more evidently—it is inapplicable to life. How do you know what inner growth this soul accomplished in its short span, and what influence it had upon others?

*from Spiritual Life Cannot
be Measured by Tolstoy*

Names

Our names mark our presence on the planet. They give credence to the reality of our existence. One of the great joys of becoming a parent is that we get to select the name for our child. We know that these little ones will be identified by their names all through their lives—and after they have died.

When I look at the *Our Children Remembered* pages each month, I often think about the children, how dearly they were wanted, how carefully they were named. I can imagine the discussions about the names, the choices, the final decision. Then the welcoming of the baby into the world. I am touched by the words of parents who write so movingly about their children, wanting so much to hear their beautiful names. Our fear is that these beloved names will be silenced and forgotten.

*The children
who were with us
in the rush of life,
let them now be with us
in the peace of spirit.*

*Memories are a legacy
of hope and courage,
left to help us go on
when the giver is gone.*

From *WINTERSUN*
by Sascha

My parents' first child, a nine-pound boy, died at birth. My mother decided not to name him; she wanted to save the name for a hoped-for future son. (My dad left the decision to her.) The baby was buried in an unmarked grave in a family cemetery. I have wondered, in the years since my own son died, if not naming the baby was an effort to stem the horrible pain of his death. My parents told my brother and me about the first baby, but, like most people of their generation, they did not discuss their feelings about his death.

The baby was present in our family, however, even though unnamed. For years in my childhood, I daydreamed about my older brother and what my life would have been like had he lived. It felt odd that he had no name. I made up names for him, gave him adventures, let him be a hero in my life. He may have been unnamed, he may never have breathed, but he influenced my life.

I think my mother erred in refusing to name the baby. I have the deepest respect and understanding of her decision and her pain, and I think much of it was due to her shock at the baby's death and the tenor of society those long years ago. But, oh! how important are our children's names. They are our songs, our music. We love their names; we love the souls who bear those names. We meet a baby with our child's name, and we feel connected. We compare spellings. We look at their hair, their coloring, their wonderful eyes. We remember....

Kitty Reeve
TCF, Marin and San Francisco, CA

*Hope is like the sun
which, as we journey toward it,
casts the shadow of our burden
behind us.*

TCF, Pikes Peak, CO

Wintersong

*Season of lights, season of love and peace
Season of shadow, season of memories
Season of warmth and joy,
season of secret tears*

*Give us the courage to laugh again
Give us the vision to hope again
Give us the power to love again*

*For all our new seasons
And all our new years*

From *WINTERSUN*
by Sascha

CHAPTER INFORMATION

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 50833, Nashville, TN 37205. 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.

TCF Nashville Sibling Support

We encourage siblings from teens to adults to come support one another at our monthly chapter meetings. Siblings face a unique and complicated grief journey and are finding hope and healing through our sharing groups.



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](tel:6152447444), 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

**P.O. BOX 50833
Nashville, TN
37205**

**Return Service
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January 2022

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When I am There

*When I get to the edge
When I get to the place where more of me is there than here
When I am there at that place
I will pause, I promise
I will pause at the edge of here, and think of the moments we
shared, the togetherness
I will not be afraid. Please don't fear, have no regret. Let the
tears cleanse, heal
Please don't fear, I am alright at the edge of here
I won't forget you; I won't stop loving you; I know I have a place
deep in your thoughts
Ever flowing kisses for me in your heart*

*When I get to the edge of my last step here
Feel my love, receive my love, and then let go of me
Let go of the 'me' that only eyes can see
Rest within—I am near; Rest within—my spirit is near
I am at the edge; but I feel that I am meeting the new 'me'
I am not leaving you, just going before you
I am stepping off the edge of here, into my wider tomorrow—my
longer stride
All of me, has stepped into the complete me
See you soon. I Love you. In our next place we will have more
time*

WE WILL HAVE SO MUCH MORE

Pamela Samuel Hagens
TCF Nashville, TN

