**July 2015 The Compassionate Friends Volume 29● Number 7**

***THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

**P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org**

Chapter Leaders: Roy and Barbara Davies, (615) 863-2052, email: tcfroyandbarbara@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: [melanierladd@gmail.com](mailto:melanierladd@gmail.com) Treasurer: Mike Childers, (615) 646-1333, email: [michaelc1333@gmail.com](mailto:michaelc1333@gmail.com)

Outreach: David Gibson, (615) 356-1351, email: davidg14@bellsouth.net

Regional Coordinator: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: [lolly39@aol.com](mailto:lolly39@aol.com)

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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.

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*Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month in the activities room of Blakemore United Methodist Church, 3601 West End Avenue, Nashville, TN 37205. Enter on the Bowling Avenue side. We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.*

***TCF Video to Be Shown***

**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

615-356-1351

**Infant**…………………..……………..…Jayne Head

615-264-8184

**SIDS**………….…………..…….……KrisThompson

931-486-9088

**Suicide**…….………………..………....Ruth Edwards

615-353-8547

**Small Child**….……........Kenneth and Kathy Hensley

615-237-9972

**Alcohol/Drug Overdose**......…...............……Ed Pyle

615-712-3245

***July 12 Meeting***

T

he 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.

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***ATTENTION! WE'RE MOVING!***

***BEGINNING AUGUST 9***

***OUR TCF MEETING WILL BE HELD AT OUR NEW HOME,***

***THE AMERICAN BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS (ABC) BUILDING,***

***1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville,TN (see map on page 4)***

***The July 12 meeting will be the last one at Blakemore United Methodist Church***

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National Office P. O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696—Phone 630 990-0010 or Toll free: 1-877 969-0010

TCF Website: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) National Office email:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

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**We are grateful to Blakemore United Methodist Church for graciously providing our temporary meeting home these past few months. Be sure to join us there for our July meeting, but plan to come to our new home in August (see map below). **

Love Him, Love Yourself

“I don’t want to talk about it,” says the TV husband, and we smile because it seems ludicrous that an apparently long-married couple cannot discuss a common, if unpleasant, subject.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” says the real-life husband, and it’s no smiling matter because the subject at hand is the death of their child.

It’s a common problem, one that adds to an already unbearably painful time for parents. One partner needs to discuss and read and visit with others in the same pain. The other, usually the husband, absolutely refuses to read about death, to attend The Compassionate Friends meetings, to go to the cemetery, or to even mention the child’s name. Both parents are hurting, but they cannot share their mutual pain.

As half of such a couple, I know who will read this. The rest of this essay is reserved for you, the one who reads and talks, trying desperately to work through the unbelievable loss you have both suffered.

You are feeling abandoned. It seems that you have lost your spouse as well as your child. You wince every time

Someone asks, “Has your grief brought you closer together?”

My advice may seem simplistic, but remember that you need everything simpler these days.

You need to LOVE. You must love that seemingly uncaring spouse of yours because he is hurting as much as you are. You must also love yourself. If you need to read books and newsletters, then read them, but don’t insist that he read them too. If you want to attend The Compassionate Friends meetings, then attend. “I wish you wouldn’t go there,” my husband says. “It helps me,” I say with a smile as I leave. When I read something particularly good, I recommend it and then I say no more.

Remember that you are not alone. Call a Compassionate Friend when the silence becomes too much to bear. Try to understand that it is pain, not lack of love that is coming between you now.

Love him. Love yourself. Maybe someday, when you least expect it, he will say, “I really want to talk about it.”

Linn Ball

TCF, Broken Arrow, OK

A

ttending 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.

**July 2015 TCF Nashville, TN 3**

Did You Know?

*Did you know:*

*you need to rip up sheets*

*to make a kite that flies.*

*That you cannot build a fort*

*without a tree with Y’s.*

*That matchbox cars run better*

*if they are full of paint.*

*Or, if you hold your breath too long,*

*you probably will faint.*

*Did you know:*

*a baseball bat*

*makes a terrific gun.*

*And, yes, an egg can really fry*

*when left out in the sun.*

*And cardboard boxes seem to make*

*the most terrific trains.*

*And you can swim in puddles*

*after gentle summer rains.*

*Did you know:*

*that baseball cards*

*clipped upon your bike*

*will make the awful clicking noise*

*that parents never like.*

*A crab trap can be used to catch*

*the most exquisite birds.*

*And pig Latin*

*serves to provide*

*a private world of words.*

*And did you know my brothers?*

*They died a few years back.*

*They taught me all these marvelous things*

*that sometimes sisters lack.*

Kathi Guthrie

TCF, Cape may County, NJ

“The most wonderful things in life are neither seen nor touched, but are only felt with the heart.”

Helen Keller

***Playing in the Shadows***

Playing in the Shadows

*We grew up together,*

*Big sister, little brother.*

*I took care of you*

*Until you were old enough to care for yourself*

*Though you didn’t say it,*

*I knew you loved me.*

*We played in the sunlight, you and I;*

*Remember the games of Mother May I and*

*Hide-and-Seek?*

*Sure we had our fights*

*As all siblings do.*

*But through it all we never lost*

*Our love for each other.*

*Now you’re gone.*

*I’ll never see you again*

*Except in the memories*

*Of those sunny days.*

*You will forever be sixteen…*

*Far too young to die.*

*You had your whole life to live.*

*I’ll always grieve, but I must go on.*

*Still, without you,*

*I play alone in the shadows.*

Cheryl Larson

TCF, Pikes Peak

***Footprints***

*How very softly*

*You tiptoed into my world*

*Almost silently.*

*Only a moment you stayed.*

*But what an imprint*

*Your footsteps have left*

*Upon the heart.*

*Thanks.*

D. Ferguson

TCF, Pocatello, ID

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**Summer Thoughts**

S

ummer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives

to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it. Seeing children,

babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, and we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches. Everyone is out

living, loving, enjoying carefree activities with their children, and we want to scream, “It’s not fair!” I was sitting on my

patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children playing, and I was crying as I remembered the

sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be.

In my reverie, I was reminded of a recent comment that I had heard at a TCF meeting: “My child was such a loving,

giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter.” I also remembered a good friend telling me to

“count my blessings” and naming all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at the time. Nothing that I had to

be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I was determined that this

summer would not be an eternity; I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do

if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure,

like working in my garden, and flowers. I then decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my

husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course, I still have

times of sadness. I know I always will, but I have decided that in the process of grieving, we close so many doors that

the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same person I was before the death of my child but I hope eventually in some ways I will

be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn and grow through it. A year ago I didn’t feel this way,

and I know I still have a long way to go, but in the meantime, I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy this

summer as he would have done.

Libby Gonzalez

TCF Huntsville, AL

**Grief and Vacation Time**

B

e gentle with yourself. Don’t expect too much on your first vacation. Remember, as bereaved parents, the first time we do anything without our kids is tough, whether it is going to the movies, shopping or on a vacation.

Plan to do some grief work because you will, planned or not. Give yourself the freedom to change your plans if you had a bad day.

Know that your child will be on your mind just as if you were at home.

Plan a vacation that is restful. You need all the rest you can get. An exhausted body will depress you.

If you have surviving children, plan some activities especially for them. Remember that vacation time is difficult for them too.

Allow yourself to enjoy your vacation. You are not being disloyal to your child if you do. New experiences in new places with new people can refresh you. However, when you do something that your child would have enjoyed, you will probably still hurt.

Going away and coming home can be especially difficult for the newly bereaved. Know that this is normal, but keep in mind that it will be better in time.

Anne Baklarz

TCF Pittsburg,PA

For some moments in life there are no words. ~ David Seltzer, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory

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**CHAPTER INFORMATION**

**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.

**What is the Yellow Slip?**

Please return your yellow renewal slip. After a year on the newsletter mailing list, those names that were added in that month of a previous year, may receive a yellow half-sheet asking that their subscription be renewed. This is simply to keep our mailing list and the information in it current. If you do not send the yellow slip back, we must assume that you no longer want the newsletter. Although you are given an opportunity to make a voluntary donation, there is no cost involved in your subscription. The newsletter is our gift to you for as long as you wish to receive it. You may request that your name be returned to the active list at any time simply by calling 615-356-4TCF (4823).

**Religion and TCF**

The Principles of The Compassionate Friends state that TCF reaches out to all bereaved parents across the artificial barriers of religion, race, economic class, or ethnic group. Further, TCF espouses no specific religious or philosophical ideology. Despite our nondenominational status, many writers indicate that they have found comfort in their faith, and some have shared their anger and loss of faith. The opinions and beliefs expressed in letters, articles and poetry are those of the contributors.

**Newsletter Deadline**

All donations and original poems or articles for the TCF Nashville newsletter must be received by the meeting day of the month preceding the publication month. All donations and submissions are greatly appreciated.

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**BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES**

**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.

**Sharing**

SHARING is a community organization interested in helping parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a newborn infant. Call 615 342-8899 to confirm dates and times of meetings. See www.nationalshare.org.

**Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents**

For general information about Grief Support Services at Alive Hospice, please call the main number: [615 963-4732](tel:615%20963-4732) or email [griefsupport@alivehospice.org](mailto:griefsupport@alivehospice.org). Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at 615-346-8554. Contact John Baker at 615-346-8364 for bereaved parent support or individual counseling.

**Other TCF Chapters**

There are several other chapters of The Compassionate Friends you might want to know about. Anytime you are in their vicinity or feel the need to talk with other bereaved parents, feel free to attend their meetings. Also, when you personally know a newly bereaved family in one of these towns, please call the chapter number and give them the information so they can make contact with the family. To locate a chapter, you may call the TCF National Office at 1-877 969-0010, or go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on chapter locator.

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When I grieve, when I stand by others as they grieve, even in the midst of seemingly unbearable sorrow, grief becomes a way to honor life — a way to cling to every fleeting, precious moment of joy.

Cortney Davis, Nurse Practitioner

**an04235_**

**bd06374_**

**bd06374_**

***Catching Butterflies***

*It often hurt to come upon*

*reminders of my son*

*Tho’ often since I lost him I would*

*search around for one*

*Which always brought on sadness and*

*the tears that I would shed*

*Were caused by names or faces, all*

*things that I would dread.*

*But then one day I came upon a man*

*who'd lost his son*

*I found that things I ran from, he*

*wouldn't even shun.*

*But rather he would treasure and I said*

*I wondered why*

*He told me that he called them "Catching*

*Butterflies."*

*This view of his intrigued me; I wanted*

*to hear more*

*And learned that he took all of them and*

*carefully would store*

*All of the reminders that I chose to push*

*away*

*He would tuck deep down inside his*

*heart each and every day.*

*Now a name or likeness when catching*

*me off guard*

*Does not upset me as it did and I don't*

*find it hard*

*For now instead I see these times as*

*opportunities*

*To see my son awakened in these new*

*fresh memories.*

Dottie Williams

TCF, Pittsburg, PA