**July 2017 The Compassionate Friends Volume 31● Number 7**

 ***THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

 **P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (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.

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*Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month in the American Builders & Contractors (ABC) Building, 1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210 . 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.*

**July 9 Meeting:**

**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**…….……………….Ron and Darlene Henson

 615-789-3613

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

 615-237-9972

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

 615-712-3245

 **Preserving Mementos:**

 **Tangible and Digital**

T

om Mitchell will make a presentation on Preserving

Memories, Digital and Tangible.  Many of us treasure

things like voice mail messages, videos, clothing, and artwork

that can never be replaced and help keep the memory of our

child, grandchild or sibling alive. Tom will show us how to

preserve these precious mementos and share them with others.

Bring your questions on this topic too. Our regular sharing

groups will follow Tom’s program. Come join us and support

one another on this long journey.



**Memories**

I

f you have memories, and if your memories are beautiful, you have a gift that is the most worthy of all. For when your morning finally comes after the darkness has lifted, you can look back and see that the darkness was not as complete as you thought. For there in the darkness will wink and glimmer the light of your memories—like fireflies on a summer night.

Judy Dickey

TCF, Greenwood, IN

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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 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--***

**Christopher Matthew Anderson**

July 20

Son of Suzy Anderson

**Daniel Matthew Bledsoe**

July 26

Son of

Dan and Barbara Bledsoe

**Joshua Steven Cannon**

July 6

Son of Steve Cannon and

Janet Cannon

**Kelsee Nicole Corbitt**

**(Princess Kelsee)**

July 26

Granddaughter of Cheryl Carney

**Connor John Gawaluck**

July 9

Son of

John and Lorelee Gawaluck

**Stephen Gould**

July 20

Son of

Herb and Susan Gould

**Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom**

July 20

Daughter of

Charlie and Kris Foust

**Natasha Brook Johnson**

July 30

Daughter of

David and Christina Johnson



**Michael Scott Jones**

July 4

Son of

 Warren and Donna Jones and Betty Jones

Brother of

David, Jennifer and Becky

**Joshua Blane Pewitt**

July 29

Son of Diane Coppock

**Paul Rodgers**

July 13

Son of Bonnie Gay

**Billy Gene Rosson, II**

July 25

Son of Bill and Elaine Rosson

**David George Shriver**

July 15

Son of Warren and Donna Jones and George Shriver

Brother of

Bekki, Bonnie and Laurie

**Justin Terrence Smith**

July 14

Son of Terry and Pamela Smith

**Michael Story**

July 3

Son of Joyce Story

**Amanda Jo White**

July 18

Daughter of

Jerry and Peggy Nolan

***In the month of their deaths—***

**Jacob Taylor Akers**

July 7

Son of Jim and Carol Akers

**Christopher William Black**

July 8

Son of Ray and Linda Black

**Dan Michael Bland, Jr.**

July 13

Son of Dan and Martha Bland

**Jonathan Michael Bourne**

July 20

Son of John and Patricia Bourne

Grandson of

Robert and Anne Bourne

**Adam Blake Brooks**

July 19

Son of Danny Brooks and

Dawn Armstrong

**Lucas Dawson (Luke)**

July 8

Son of

Bob and Genevia Graham

**Allison Ann Fitzhugh**

July 24

Daughter of

Bob and Debbie Fitzhugh

**Patrick Eli Froehling**

July 15

Son of Keith and Erin Froehling

**Samuel Christopher Hagens**

July 5

Son of

Christopher and Pamela Hagens

Brother of Luke and Caleb

**Eva Renee Hartman**

July 14

Daughter of Kay Hartman

**Matthew Kent Hensley**

July 15

Son of

Kenneth and Kathy Hensley

**Daniel Lee Henson**

July 21

Son of

Ronnie and Darlene Henson

**John Allen Hundt**

July 20

Son of Victor and Susan Hundt

**James Thomas King (J.T.)**

July 14

Son of Tom and Jere King

**Christopher Lin Kingsborough (Chris)**

July 20

Son of

Paul and Lydia Kingsborough

**Damon Martin**

July 1

Son of David and Auline Martin

**Madison Allen Mays**

July 8

Son of Allen and Rachel Mays

Grandson of

Roy and Carole Renfro

**Allen Glenn Mays**

July 8

Son-in-law of

Roy and Carole Renfro

**Jeremy Russell Powers**

July 13

Son Phillip and Linda King and Ricky Powers, Sr.

**Loren Carnell Ross**

July 31

Son of Lorita Ross

Brother of

Rita Phillips and Vershon Ross

**Corey Ray Smith**

July 1

Son of

David and Dana Clark and

Clint Smith

**Tyler Scott Trumble**

July 16

Son of Ed Amatrudo and

Luckie Westlund

**Andrew Van Horn**

July 13

Son of

John and Amy Peterson

***and always....***

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***Promises of Rainbows***

*I promise not to offer*

*Rainbows after storms*

*Or silver linings beyond the clouds,*

*But if you have tears of sorrow,*

*I will share them.*

*If you have words of anger,*

*I will hear them.*

*If you have moments of confusion,*

*I will help you through them.*

*Perhaps*

*Your tears of sorrow today*

*Will water the seeds*

*Of tomorrow’s garden*

*Of spiritual growth, of worthy priorities,*

*Of loving relationships*

*And genuine understanding and compassion.*

*My sad friend, your weeping is not fruitless.*

 Nancy Williams

 TCF Marlbor, NJ

**The Tree in Our Backyard**

M

y daughter Lesa was a free spirited child who always had something to say, who enjoyed school and loved life. One day, as part of a school project, she planted a tree in our back yard and announced that she had named the tree Angella. Lesa watered the tree daily, fertilized it, talked to it, and finally placed stakes in the ground to give it more support to help the tree grow straight. Lesa watched over this tree she named Angella with determination and a certain amount of pride that she was able to nurture a spindly, leafless tree into a blossoming life-giving part of nature.

One day our daughter Leslie was mowing the lawn and accidentally hit the tree. Lesa witnessed this event from an upstairs window and immediately flew down the steps to confront her sister. A confrontation followed between the two girls, with Lesa demanding an apology. Leslie told me later that she did, in fact, go over to Lesa’s tree, pat it on the trunk and apologize. Laughing, she told me it was not only the first time she had spoken to a tree but also the first time she had apologized to one.

Angella the tree continued to flourish and grow, watched over and nurtured by my daughter. Lesa, however, became ill with cancer. As her cancer worsened, she was unable to watch over Angella. Before our last trip to the hospital, Lesa visited the tree and discovered bumps on the leaves. We delayed our trip to spray the tree to reassure Lesa that her tree would be safe while she was in the hospital.

Lesa died on a hot summer day in August, two days before her eighth birthday. We moved away from that house, hoping to find some peace in a new environment and we transplanted Lesa’s tree Angella to the back yard of our new home. We watched it closely, wondering if the tree would survive the transplant. Our special friends who knew the story of Lesa’s tree shared its progress with us.

Several years later we sold our home, but this time Lesa’s tree was too big to transplant. I wrote the story of Lesa’s tree and how she named it Angella and how Lesa had died of cancer and I left it on the kitchen counter for the new owners, hoping they would take care of the tree.

Several months passed while I considered contacting the owners, and then one day I met the daughter of the family that now lives in our old home. She stopped to tell me that the story of Lesa’s tree had been passed on to them and that they would guard Lesa’s legacy for us. She described how her family had been touched by this story and they were planning to pass on the story should they move in the future.

So, the legacy of a child’s love of nature and determination to take care of a special tree goes on. My daughter did not survive her cancer but the story of Angella the tree has touched the lives of every family that has lived in our house.

Pat Langford

TCF North Platte, NE

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***Memories***

*Memories are flowers growing in the heart.*

*Flowers picked on happy days*

*That time arranges in bouquets*

*To warm the hearts in tender ways*

*By feelings they impart…*

*Memories are pictures taken through the years.*

*Pictures of a smiling face,*

*A happy time, a favorite place…*

*These pleasures time cannot erase.*

*They are kept as souvenirs.*

 Laura Rogers

 TCF, Northfield, NJ

***Our Act of Love***

G

rief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will ever do. While we all wish for the pain

to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved so intensely. It is unrealistic to expect the grief to ever totally go away because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed.

 Elaine Grier

 TCF, Atlanta, GA

**When Healing Hurts—Do We Really Want to Get Well?**

T

he physiological process of healing within the human body can be very painful, depending on the severity of the illness. In an attempt to relieve the symptoms of disease, various procedures create their own amount of discomfort.

 Psychological healing, on the other hand, is vastly different: as broken hearts mend slowly, as one attempts to put the pieces of his life back together after a crisis, he may discover that most of the pieces are missing, while others are fragmented and scarred beyond recognition. These “pieces” will no longer “fall into place.”

 The battle within the human psyche is an all-consuming one: the pain is intense, leaving ugly scars etched deeply into the soul and invisible to the eye. In the face of adversity one must battle the enemy with a fierce determination to survive at all costs. Hence the mind will seek ways to shield itself from further onslaught.

 The dictionary defines defense mechanisms as those reactions which serve to protect the self against something harmful, whether the threat is real or imagined. These defense mechanisms are often unconscious behaviors used to resolve or conceal conflicts. They are normal responses to painful and often abnormal problems which occur; but in excess, these defense mechanisms can become unhealthy and pathological.

 Defense mechanisms provide a safety net for our sanity. They “cushion” the blow between actual crisis and continuation of life. They permit us to slowly absorb the reality of the situation or loss and the changes within us that the crisis will require. In this healthy and God-given way, pain is confronted, dealt with and dissolved without overwhelming us.

 When a person refuses to confront his pain and allow its expression, then the normal use of defense mechanisms break

down and become unhealthy. Pain does not cease to exist. It will not lie hidden within the ruins of a broken heart indefinitely; eventually it will demand release. The explosion of that original pain and grief may not be in any logical or recognizable form when it finally surfaces.

 Pain, when not confronted, changes over the years and may resurface in numerous ways. Grief unattended may later disguise itself in the form of anger, resentments, or chronic depression.

 The loss of a loved one and the cherished dreams of their future may develop into very real physical illnesses, such as migraine headaches, ulcers, diverticulitis, or other maladies. In order to remain healthy, we must choose to deal with our pain and not ignore it or push it away. We cannot, physically or emotionally, afford to pretend that our grief does not exist.

 We must allow the tears to flow and provide healing. We must verbalize disappointments and anger in order to prevent the inner rage. We must allow our minds the freedom to “remember” and give our hearts permission to break. There can be no release unless we “feel” the loneliness and isolation, the confusion and the pain. It is only when we embrace the nightmares that they will disappear. Sometimes we have to hurt in order to be healed—but the choice is ours and the question remains: do we really want to be well?

 Debby Grogan, R.N.

TCF, Atlanta, GA

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.

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**On “Picking up the Pieces”**

H

ad someone say to me not too long ago that she was glad to see that I was “picking up the pieces and going on.” Well, I am picking up the pieces all right – but what she doesn’t know is that they’re almost a whole set of new pieces! I haven’t been able to go on as though nothing about me has changed since my child died. I’m a different me, and I am still learning about how the new me reacts to old situations.

I am finding that this new set of pieces doesn’t exactly fit together all nice and neat like a jigsaw puzzle. Some of the old pieces are still hanging in there, but they don’t quite mesh with some of the new pieces. I am in the process of grinding off the rough edges now, hoping eventually for a better fit, one that I can live with more comfortably. Time, patience and hard work are helping me accomplish this.

How are the rough edges on your new pieces coming along?

Mary Cleckley

TCF, Decautre, GA

***Your Face***

*I woke up this morning*

*Finding everything in a haze.*

*Wiping tears from my eyes*

*I saw your smiling face.*

*I reached out and touched you*

*Yet all I could feel was pain.*

*You felt nothing*

*From your life within a frame.*

*I spoke—receiving no reply*

*I told you that I loved you*

*And then I asked you, “Why?”*

*I’ll never have another.*

*No one to take your place.*

*All I have, little brother, are memories*

*And the picture of your face.*

Lisa Angel

 TCF, Citrus County, FL

***Grief is Like a River***

*My grief is like a river –*

*I have to let it flow,*

*But I myself determine*

*Just where the banks will go.*

*Some days the current takes me*

*In waves of guilt and pain,*

*But there are always quiet pools*

*Where I can rest again.*

*I crash on rocks of anger –*

*My faith seems faint indeed,*

*But there are other swimmers*

*Who know that what I need*

*Are loving hands to hold me*

*When the waters are too swift,*

*And someone kind to listen*

*When I just seem to drift.*

*Grief’s river is a process*

*Of relinquishing the past,*

*By swimming in Hope’s channels*

*I’ll reach the shore at last!*

 Cynthia G. Kelley

TCF, Cincinnati, OH

**Is It Easing?**

I

 heard your name today and my heart did not skip a beat, nor was my mind flooded with the emotion of losing you. I heard your name today and it did not bring back the terrible hurt feelings of when you first left me. I heard your name today with a calmness that surprised me. Many another child carries your name, and it had been torture hearing it and seeing the smiling faces on those little girls.

But today I knew–I found out–what others in my footsteps found out and tried to tell me. The hurt will ease; but the memories, the love, the good times will never go away.

Phoebe C. Redman

TCF Bradenton, FL

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***Sometimes***

*Sometimes, something clicks, and with a tear*

*Remembrance of the pain and the loneliness*

*Floods the heart.*

*Sometimes, something clicks, and with a smile*

*Remembrance of the love and the laughter*

*Floods the senses.*

*And there are times when nothing clicks at all*

*And a voice echoes through the emptiness*

*And numbness, never finding the person*

*Who used to fill that space.*

*And sometimes the most special times of all*

*A feeling ripples through your body, heart, and soul*

*That tells you that person never left you*

*And he’s right there with you through it all.*

Kirsten Hansen

Bereaved Sibling

TCF, Kenifield, CA

***Once…Forever was Forever***

*Once…forever was forever,*

*A wisp of happiness once known*

*And held so gently at a mother’s breast,*

*A tiny hand curled tightly into mine at dusk*

*A tear that falls onto a quivering mouth*

*While a sensitive heart lies broken,*

*And all who watch will see*

*A smile so brave beneath*

*The glistening eyes.*

*Such a few short years,*

*Filled with dreams of things to come,*

*Yet nothing changed*

*In all the years of dreaming.*

*The tear, the smile,*

*The tender heart,*

*The shoulders squared beneath*

*The cruelty of the times,*

*A birth…a life cut short…*

*And forever lasted but a moment.*

Cathryn Haywood

 TCF, Nova Scotia, Canada

**The Magic Light of Day**

O

ften, when I think of you it's in the morning light. Or other times, I find that it is in the soft twilight. Somehow in those early hours or in the dusk of day – I feel our connection soundly, from your place so far away.

There's something very special about soft and dim sunlight that lets me know you're by my side and everything's alright. Not many would believe it's true, for heaven is far away. But all I know is – there you are, with me every day. You walk with me and comfort me, and somehow let me know. You'll guide the way along my life and meet me when I go.

Kathie Winkler
TCF Middleburg Heights, OH

#### Grief and Vacation Time

V

acation time, like holidays, can be especially painful for bereaved parents. Vacations, especially the “take it easy” kind which release the mind to think, are sometimes very hard. For the first few years, you may find fast-paced vacations to be best. Places you have never been before, new experiences, new places, new people may refresh you and prepare you to pick up your grief work when you return. Our memories do travel with us, but somehow they seem less painful than at home. Remember to allow enough time for rest—an exhausted body will often lead to depression.

 Some couples have even found an occasional separate vacation or weekend to be helpful. Allow space, since you are not grieving at the same rate. When you go alone, you do not take your mate’s memories, only your own. It can be a time of sorting out and straightening priorities. The bottom line is, you must find your own way. Don’t be afraid of change.

Leona Dooley

TCF, Amarillo, Texas

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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 or email 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.