

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NEW MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 8283 • Hermitage, TN 37076 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •

Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org



Chapter Leaders: Justin and Tracy Brewer, (615) 812-1504, e-mail: tbrewer395@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: melanierladd@gmail.com

Treasurer: Ed Pyle, (615) 712-3245, email: edpyletaxlaw@gmail.com

Regional Coordinators: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: lolly39@aol.com

Dana Young (931) 581-7090

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.

July 9th Meeting:

Sharing Mementos of Our Children

We all have things that are precious to us, that either belonged to or remind us of our beloved children. At this month's meeting, we invite you to bring any one thing that can be shared briefly with the rest of the group. This memento can be something that your child treasured, something your child gave you or you gave to him, or something that simply reminds you that your child lived and was loved, even if his or her life was very short (a footprint, baby blanket, hospital bracelet, etc.) Please join us July 9 as we share sweet remembrances of our dear children. Small sharing groups will follow this program.



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.

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

Friends

*When our special sadness comes to call,
when we remember more than we can bear,
when courage falters—
shadows everywhere:
Then let us reach
and touch and share,
we, who are friends.*

Sascha

*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—



Daniel Matthew Bledsoe (Matt) July 26 Son of Dan and Barbara Bledsoe Brother of Jason and Kaci	Kelsee Nicole Corbitt (Princess) July 26 Granddaughter of Cheryl Carney	Katara Dillard July 18 Granddaughter of Stacy Atkins	Michael Dorman (Mikey) July 8 Son of Daniel and Michelle Clark
Caroline Elizabeth Enright July 26 Daughter of Patrick and Stephanie Enright	Stephen Christopher Gould July 20 Son of Herb and Susan Gould	Terri Lynn Heath July 18 Daughter of Bill and Linda Heath	Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom July 20 Daughter of Charlie and Kris Foust
Rylee Grace Honeycutt (Roo) July 3 Daughter of Anthony and Magen Honeycutt	Michael Scott Jones July 4 Son of Warren and Donna Jones and Betty D. Jones Brother of David, Jennifer, and Becky	Joshua Allen Kebert July 7 Son of Greg Kebert and Susan Whitaker	Dwayne Moore July 7 Son of Clara McClain
Robert Bryan Parrish (Bryan) July 7 Son of Marvin and Debbie Hampton	Brandon Allen Payne July 21 Son of Terry and Kimberly Payne	Megan Emily Rotella July 12 Daughter of Patti Kelly	Isaac Schujahn July 15 Son of Derek and Linda Schujahn
David George Shriver July 15 Son of Warren and Donna Jones and George Shriver Brother of Bekki, Bonnie, and Laurie	Lindsay Smith-Thistle July 2 Daughter of Wendy Smith and Greg Thistle	Matthew James Truman July 7 Son of Cathy McMorrow	



And in the month of their deaths

Christopher William Black July 8 Son of Ray and Linda Black	Jonathan Lee Collins July 31 Son of Charity Collins Grandson of Jennie Reeves Nephew of Kristanna	Aaron Garner July 30 Son of Don and Vicki Garner	Samuel Christopher Hagens July 5 Son of Christopher and Pamela Hagens Brother of Luke and Caleb Hagens
Terri Lynn Heath July 23 Daughter of Bill and Linda Heath	Matthew Kent Hensley July 15 Son of Kenneth and Kathy Hensley	Daniel Lee Henson July 21 Son of Ronnie and Darlene Henson	James Thomas King (J.T.) July 14 Son of Tom and Jere King

And in the month of their deaths (continued)

Shawn Patrick Martin
July 22
Son of
Annie and Michael Martin
Brother of Austin

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 of
Phillip and Linda King

Michael Reeves
July 6
Son of
Jennie Reeves
Brother of
Sheila, Michael, and Mark

Mark Ryman
(Brutus)
July 24
Son of
Charlie and Gay Ryman

Christian Thompson
July 14
Son of
Chris Thompson

Alex Watson Tuttle
July 25
Son of
Ron & Betty Tuttle

***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.

Linda Black
*in Loving Memory of her son,
Christopher William Black*

Hannah Dennison
*in Loving Memory of
Jason Rice*

Mike and Kay Duncan
*in Loving Memory of their sons,
Jon Ashley Duncan and
Jamie Michael Duncan*

Don and Sherry Eakes
*in Loving Memory of their grandson,
Taylor Christian Brewer,
Son of
Justin and Tracy Brewer*

Anthony and Magen Honeycutt
*in Loving Memory of their
daughter,
Rylee Grace Honeycutt (Roo)*

Jennie Collins Reeves
*in Loving Memory of her
daughter,
Sheila Rochelle,
sister of Charity Collins*

Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 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.

Reflections

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations: that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness.

Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time – time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger
from *This Healing Journey – An Anthology for Bereaved Siblings*
©The Compassionate Friends

What About Vacations?

When your heart is hurting after the loss of a loved one, you wonder if you will ever be able to “take a vacation” from grief. There are many answers to this question. The secret is to find the right one for you.

After my 19-year-old daughter, Peggy, and my 21-year-old son, Denis, died in the same automobile accident, I never planned a vacation to “get away” from my surroundings. My home was my “nest” and the source of great comfort to me. Not everybody feels this.

Staying with the familiar made me comfortable. Having my support circle nearby was important to me. Enjoying the pleasures that I had shared with Peggy and Denis kept them close to my heart. Even though tears could accompany these pleasures, the tears were healing. Whether it was simply walking along the beach where we had many family outings, or sitting by the pool where we had spent so many hours with the swim team, or watching a soccer game which took so much of our time with three teams in the family, or noticing their favorite colors, flowers, TV programs, or foods. These things helped reinforce their presence forever in my mind, never to be erased.

Some families agonize whether to go away for a vacation after losing a loved one and some families can't get away fast enough! So, you see how different we all are. It's tough for husbands and wives who disagree about vacation plans to find a reasonable compromise to give relief to their individual styles of grieving.

The rule of thumb is: Do what helps you. If taking a cruise, or flying to a distant sunny haven, or visiting a mountain or seaside retreat, or just relaxing at a nearby resort helps you gain a moment of peace, do it. But one thing I must caution you about, don't go alone. There is time to reflect or quietly meditate wherever you are, but when you are hurting so terribly, it is not wise to be alone for long periods of time.



*I still remember
when I could not sleep
at three a.m.
Awake and dark,
I did not want forgetting,
night after night.
Night after night.*

*I still remember
when I could not sleep
at three a.m.
Alone and mute
I sobbed the same old questions
into my mind.
Out of my mind.*

*I still remember
when I could not sleep
at three a.m.
And yet, today,
I find us new with laughter
here in the sun.
Here in the sun.*

However, it is good to have someone to share your thoughts with, releasing some of those feelings that are haunting you. Having a good listener with you is wonderful medicine for you.

It's also good to have someone to hug. Remember, you need 4 hugs a day for survival, 8 hugs a day for maintenance and 12 hugs a day for growth. Therefore, make sure you vacation with the right person!

Many grieving families that I have met have found solace in a trip “away” from their home base. Sometimes, just the change is what they need. Other times, it's leaving work or that “empty chair” behind. A little sunshine can warm our souls, so the warmer climates appeal to us and seem to bring an inner cheer. I know I am a “sunshine” person and can accomplish ten times as much on a sunny day. So, a sunny vacation would be productive for me.

In my early days of bereavement, I found that taking a little photo album like a “grandma's brag book” with me, filled with my favorite pictures of my Peggy and Denis, made it feel as if they were with me.

Other bereaved friends could not bear to stay home for major holidays and off they flew to far-away vacation spots. That worked for them, getting away from the hoopla of the holidays and the family gatherings that they did not feel strong enough yet to attend. Some of these bereaved families said they found a respite from their grief while “on vacation,” but that coming home was the hardest, causing feelings of depression when they returned. So, we all have to find the balance that fits our lives. It doesn't happen overnight. It's something that requires “trial and error” by us to find the blend that lifts our spirits.

Vacations can be a time of “renewal” for us. We all know that we need a vacation “from grief.” We just have to figure out what kind of vacation our own hearts need. Good luck!

Elaine E. Stilwell
TCF, Rockville Center, NY

Vacation

Sascha

The Broken Pieces

"If I am what I do, and I don't, then I'm not."

These words have been spinning around in my head ever since I heard someone comment on how we tend to define ourselves by what we do rather than by who we are. I thought about those words incessantly, almost to the point where they became nonsensical. But they weren't.

Until the day of my son Bryan's death, I'm afraid I was guilty of defining myself by my roles in life: computer marketer, husband, father, most often in that order, and without really being aware of it. I was caught up in "bringing home the bacon," "making a name for myself," and the tunnel vision that goes along with all of that. My sense of self-worth was wrapped up in these things. One of my colleagues used to call me "Rapid Robert" because of my pace in going places — or was I on a treadmill? I was a workaholic, and only too often by the time I got to family matters, I'd have run out of steam.

Then my son Bryan died. The superficiality of my life smashed headlong into a brick wall. For months I felt I was sitting in the middle of a field scattered with pieces of my life: job pieces askew here, family relationships trailing off there, dreams piled akimbo over here, hopes rent asunder over there.



As I listened to my son's friends at the two remembrances for him, it dawned on me that at nineteen, a young man doesn't have a long list of credits and accomplishments. Bryan hadn't "made a name for himself." Bryan was Bryan, no more, no less. His friends loved him for who he was, not what he was.

Strange the lessons
Fathers learn from sons—
To care
To share
To be there—

I wrote these words blinded by pain, and I could sense what it was that brought together people from all over in a common bond of shared grief—Bryan cared about them. I wonder if I were to die suddenly but after more than fifty years of life, how would I be eulogized? "A real professional, a true marketer, a dedicated employee..." I'd settle for two words: "He cared." I've tried to put the pieces of my life back together again, but I've tried to be selective. I've left many pieces lying in that field because they don't fit anymore. And I've fashioned new pieces. As bereaved parents, we have a choice. We can fixate on the death or we can confirm life. I know which my son would have wanted for me.

Bob Rosenburger
TCF, Burke, VA

Dear Friend

Dear family member, friend, colleague, stranger,

*I want you to know that I am torn.
Torn between maintaining the silence
versus forever changing your perception of me.
Torn into innumerable pieces which I'm trying to mend.
Torn beyond imagination.*

*I won't always be as torn as I am right now,
and I hope you won't think of me as fragile,*

*but,
sometimes ...*

I will be overwhelmed with grief, and loss.

I will recover.

I will be stronger.

I will be more compassionate.

*I will be a better person, friend, colleague, random
stranger.*

But today, tomorrow, and forever, I will always be torn.

*I need you to know, even though I didn't want to burden
you.*

*I'm certain that all around me, there are others who are
torn,
who have suffered an irrecoverable loss.*

To you I say - take my hand - let us mend together.

For others, I pray you never suffer so.

I am torn, mi manchi cosi tanto, mia figlia.

Stephen Aud
TCF, Nashville, TN



**There's still time to register for the 2023 TCF National Conference
in Denver, Colorado!**
Registration ends July 5, 2023 at 11:45 PM.

What Do You Say?

What do you say when a baby dies and someone says ...

"At least you didn't bring it home."

*What do you say when a baby is stillborn
and someone says ...*

"At least it never lived."

What do you say when a mother of three says ...

"Think of all the time you'll have."

What do you say when so many say ...

"You can always have another..."

"At least you never knew it..."

"You have your whole life ahead of you..."

"You have an angel in heaven."

What do you say when someone says ...Nothing?

What do you say when someone says ...

"I'm sorry."

You say, with grateful tears and warm embrace,

"Thank you!"



Rana Limbo and Sara Wheeler
from *When a Baby Dies:*
A Handbook for Healing and Helping

Having Another Baby

When you plan for the first baby, you wonder if you'll be a good parent, what he or she will look like, if you will deliver before or after your due date, even what color to paint the nursery.

The next pregnancy, after your baby has died, you don't plan. You wonder if he or she will live and whether to paint the nursery at all. That was the hardest part for me -- never, even for a minute, really believing I was going to bring this baby home.

Though I won't be the one to tell you that subsequent pregnancies are good, I will tell you they are worth it. It's wonderful to have new life in the house, to have this tiny thing to hold and love. Oh - he smells so good, and he looks so cute when he gets mad!

There have been a lot of sad moments since Samuel's birth, looking at him and missing this time with Zachary. When Samuel was about a week old, if he slept just right, he looked a lot like Zachary. I could smooth back his face so his cheekbones weren't so full; it was almost magical. With a little imagination I was holding Zachary again.

Now Samuel is six weeks old and he is just Samuel - our wonderful new baby. I feel happy, more satisfied with life. There is still Zachary, we are still bereaved, but life is better, easier. He is a good thing and it's been a long time coming.

Laura House
TCF, St. Louis, MO



You Know You're Making Progress When...

You can remember your child with a smile.

You realize the painful comments others make are made in ignorance.

You can reach out to help someone else.

You stop dreading holidays.

You can concentrate on something besides your child.

You can be alone in your house without it bothering you.

You can talk about what happened to your child without falling apart.

You can tolerate the sound of a baby crying.

You don't have to turn off the radio when his or her favorite music comes on.

You can find something to laugh about.

You can drive past the hospital or that intersection without screaming.

You no longer feel exhausted all the time.

You can appreciate a sunset, the smell of newly mown grass, and the pattern on a butterfly's wing.

Judy Osgood
TCF, Indianapolis, IN

Grief is like weeding a flower garden in the summer.

You have to do it over and over again till the season changes.

Fay Harden
Songs from the Edge

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. It's a free and easy way to support TCF.

How You Can Help

Most people who attend TCF meetings never heard of TCF before they lost a child, and many bereaved parents still have not heard that there is an organization that exists to help them navigate their grief journey. If you know a family in the middle Tennessee area who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you think they would benefit from finding about TCF and possibly attending a TCF meeting, we will be happy to send you some information that you may share with them about what TCF is and what we do to support bereaved parents. If you have attended a TCF meeting, it might be helpful if you would invite them to attend their first TCF meeting with you. We also have a monthly newsletter that they can receive free of charge simply by asking for it.



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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July 2023

*At times, the pain of separation
seems more than we can bear;
but love and understanding
can help us pass through the darkness toward the light.
And in truth, grief is a great teacher,
when it sends us back to serve and bless the living.
Thus, even when they are gone, the departed are with us,
moving us to live as, in their higher moments,
they themselves wished to live.
We remember them now;
they live in our hearts;
they are an abiding blessing.*

Jewish mourners' Kaddish