

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) • 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.

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.

## March 10 Program:

### Taking Care of Self

Kim Harmon will speak at our March 10 meeting. She is a bereaved sibling and author of the book *Fall Forward*, a story about her family's tragic loss of her brother and the events that followed. Kim will share her personal experience as well as offer words of hope and wisdom about self-care after being kicked in the gut with the worst of life. Join us for Kim's program and for our regular sharing groups that will follow.



*There may be crocus blooming by now, but the chance of inclement weather is still a consideration. In case the weather threatens safe travel, please check our website, Facebook page or call the chapter leaders at the numbers above for possible meeting cancellation.*

### 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**.....Kris Thompson  
931-486-9088
- Suicide**.....Ron Henson  
615-789-3613
- Small Child**.....Kenneth and Kathy Hensley  
615-237-9972
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose**.....Ed Pyle  
615-712-3245

*"A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out."*

Walter Winchell


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—*

<b>Jessica Bloom</b> March 19 Daughter of Elisabeth Small	<b>Christine Michelle Haile</b> March 21 Daughter of Ron and Jayme Summers	<b>Kevin Moncrief</b> March 17 Son of Sandra Merkel	<b>Claire Aven Shelburne</b> March 29 Daughter of Terry and Laura Shelburne Granddaughter of Ray and Neva Nanney Niece of Shari Tipton Sister of William John Shelburne
<b>David James Boss</b> March 29 Son of Jeff and Peggy Brown	<b>Justin Scott Heath</b> March 28 Son of Earl and Betsy Branson	<b>Samuel James Moore</b> March 28 Son of Darrell and Dianne Moore Grandson of Mac and Polly Moore Great grandson of Paul Trainor	<b>Trinity Rhodes Steagall</b> March 18 Son of Rose Steagall
<b>Bonнита Brown (“Nee Nee”)</b> March 18 Daughter of Elaine Frey	<b>Wendy Evon Kauffman</b> March 10 Daughter of Richard and Donna Green	<b>Christopher James Pewitt</b> March 29 Son of Mike Pewitt	<b>Dylan Lee Upchurch</b> March 16 Brother of Anastasia Wayne
<b>Brian Tyler Brown</b> March 23 Son of Carl and Shannon Brown	<b>Tiffanie Louise McClendon</b> March 31 Daughter of John and Nancy McClendon	<b>Sheila Rochelle</b> March 17 Daughter of Jennie Reeves Sister of Charity Collins Aunt of Kristanna	<b>Jason Brandon Warf</b> March 30 Son of Ronald and Clada Warf
<b>Lucas Dawson (Luke)</b> March 16 Son of Bob and Genevia Graham	<b>Nathan John McDade</b> March 13 Son of Dennis and Rebecca McDade	<b>Michael Anthony Sewell</b> March 12 Son of Mark Sewell and Tracy Ball	
<b>Marvin Lee Edwards</b> March 23 Son of Charles and Ruth Edwards			

*And in the month of their deaths—*

<b>David James Boss</b> March 9 Son of Jeff and Peggy Brown	<b>Rahmir Scott Kendrick</b> March 23 Son of DeMille Brown and Felicia Brown	<b>Samuel James Moore</b> March 29 Son of Darrell and Dianne Moore Grandson of Mac and Polly Moore Great Grandson of Paul Trainor	<b>Drew Michael Tipton</b> March 24 Son of Bobby and Shari Tipton
<b>Adam Bryan Cook</b> March 14 Son of Jay and Patricia Blount and Tony Cook	<b>Christian Lewis</b> March 27 Son of Christian Harrison and Paschale Lewis	<b>Adam Nicholson Pappas</b> March 2 Son of Gust and Jane Pappas Brother of Andrew, Alex, and Erin	<b>Kevin Trostel</b> March 24 Son of Debra Trostel
<b>Kenneth Elberson</b> March 15 Son of Harry and Winnie Elberson	<b>David Benton Lowe</b> March 5 Son of Charles and Teresa Lowe	<b>David George Shriver</b> March 2 Son of Warren and Donna Jones and George Shriver Brother of Bekki, Bonnie, and Laurie	<b>Gavin Garrett Vaughn</b> March 22 Son of Linda Vaughn
<b>Greg Gutzeit</b> March 8 Son of Doug Gutzeit and Carolyn O’Neil	<b>Tiffanie Louise McClendon</b> March 8 Daughter of John and Nancy McClendon		<b>Antonio Lynn Scott Winslett  (“Chunky”)</b> March 2 Grandson of Keith and Wanda Winslett
<b>Mary Grace Hodsdon</b> March 14 Daughter of John and Mary Hodsdon	<b>Wade Hampton Morgan</b> March 3 Son of David and Barbara Morgan		

## 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.*

<p><i>Jerry and Bonnie Buckner In loving memory of their grandson, Brock Wyatt Blick Son of Mark and Jeri Kay Blick</i></p>	<p><i>John and Mary Hodsdon In loving memory of their daughter, Mary Grace Hodsdon  Linda Vaughn In loving memory of her son, Gavin Garrett Vaughn</i></p>	<p><i>Ronald and Clada Warf In loving memory of their son, Jason Brandon Warf</i></p>
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*Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, 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.*



*This day  
This dreaded day  
Before highly anticipated,  
I wake up cataloging the others  
Wearing your first cake,  
Cookie cakes and steak dinners,  
Dalmatian cakes, skating, pancake breakfasts.  
Carloads of boys going to the park  
The last...family, and best friends, celebrating a milestone.  
"18"  
The world holds promise, the golden age of independence,  
future, and choice. We are so proud.*



*A year later, we are in another world, one without you.  
Now, what do we do? We grieve the  
lost hope and possibilities.  
We ask why?  
We make bouquets of festive flowers, and take  
green balloons to where you lay.  
Your precious sister and I sit on the ground  
arranging flowers and talking.  
Your friends join us. You are remembered. You are loved.  
We scream silently, wanting you back, and wondering how,  
and even why we are standing here, why you are gone.*



*The world keeps turning, and we keep  
looking back, wishing.  
Daily, we miss you our darling boy.  
Happy Birthday my baby.*



Charisse Smith  
TCF Tyler, TX

## A Personal Evolution Through Grief

I have been a bereaved parent now for three and half years. I have learned a few things during that time, and I have much to learn in the future. I am evolving. Evolving from what I once was, a person who had reasonable expectations of a life that included my son, his children, graduations, holidays, birthdays and special occasions. Now I have become a person who has virtually no expectations that are similar to the ones I had before my son died.

I have evolved into a more sensitive person. I know what some people are thinking before they even say the words. I feel others' joy as if it were my own. I cheer for the success of others. I feel their sorrow, their failures, their missteps. I watch children play and remember my childhood, my son's childhood and I think of the joy that is childhood. I sit for hours watching birds at our feeders, marveling at the beauty of the natural world.

I have slowed down the pace. I no longer feel the pressure to be here or there, to do this or that, to call this one or that one, to wear certain clothes, to "put on the best face" for strangers. I have liberated myself from the mundane and the materialistic. Instead, I simply feel deeply about others. I have become extremely sensitive to all that surrounds me.

I believe the loss of my child has changed me in many different ways. I see this in the attitudes of those who are in the Compassionate Friends as well. While few of us will broach no nonsense in our lives because it is meaningless compared with our experiences, we will listen intently for long periods to the weeping, hysterical cries of a newly bereaved mother. Or we will nod quietly as a parent who is far into grief has a sudden flash of sorrow that is overwhelming. We have a heightened sensitivity to others through no choice of our own. It came with the loss of our beautiful children.

I wonder about what my son would think of events that have unfolded since his death. I have come to conclusions about others that aren't, quite frankly, flattering. Yet, he had come to these conclusions before he died. While I tried to mollify his perception of the dysfunctional people with whom he was burdened, he just said, "that's how it is, mom." And he was right. That's how it is. I have learned to accept people for what they are. If I can help, I will certainly do so. If I can't help, I accept that some things can't be changed, and some people won't change. There is no magic here. It's a simple fact of life. "That's how it is, mom."

I volunteer more these days. I give of myself, my knowledge, any wisdom I may have acquired on life's path to others who are in need. I give of my time, my talents and my labors to those who don't ask as well as those who do. I am comfortable with this.

I have less appreciation for money than I once had. Perhaps that is the best thing to come out of this. What was I chasing? What was my son chasing? What was the point? Bigger, better, faster, farther, more, more, more. It's a shallow existence when one is so focused on the material things that one is defined by materialism. I have learned to let go of preconceptions, and in that letting go, I have been pleasantly surprised by many people.

How did I get to this place? One minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month at a time. It is a slow journey from crawling through the pits of hell in deep grief to coming back to the reality of here and now. It's as close to a near death experience as I can imagine. Instead of great epiphanies, there are moments of clarity. Instead of instant gratification, there is much work to achieve tiny steps forward. But the effort is well worth making. When I came out from the pits of hell, I realized that my reality was changed; I realized that I was a different person. I discovered that the world doesn't run on the dollar. I found that all people have a capacity for goodness, but that many will never use this capacity.

But most importantly, I discovered that after leaving the pits of hell, there is a road toward hope that is traveled by each of us. Some walk more quickly, some more slowly. But we each walk that road to hope. Hope represents a life that is tolerable once again. Hope represents the acceptance of our child's death and the acknowledgement that we will keep our children alive in our hearts for all eternity as we continue into our tomorrows. Hope is reconciling those two elements: yesterday and tomorrow.

I have learned to adjust to change, because change is inevitable. I have learned to stand up for what is right because that is our duty as human beings. I have learned much about the fears of others and even more about my own fears. I have conquered my phobias as a result of my son's death. Nothing my imagination could conjure would equal that gripping pain, the ache that hangs in my heart forever because my child has died.

But most of all, I have learned that my son was right. "That's the way it is, mom." Shortly before he died, he said he wanted to give me a copy of *Who Moved My Cheese?* He never had the opportunity. But I will read it. I have a feeling I know what it will say. Perhaps Todd gave me the plot line when he died. I'd like to think that he was subconsciously preparing me.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF, Katy, TX



If we don't help each other,  
who will?

Barbara Mandrell



## *The Keepers of Memories*



*You make friends because you have things in common.  
 We are friends because of our children.  
 The older ones, the younger ones,  
 the ones who never even had a chance to breathe.  
 They are our reason for being.  
 Our heartbeat, our life's blood.  
 Whether we have lots of memories or only a few,  
 we are joined by an unbreakable bond.  
 We are the ones left behind, to remember  
 and carry the torch for those we remember so lovingly.  
 We are there for ourselves and each other.  
 Because we understand the pain of loss.  
 We must also be there for those  
 who unfortunately join our ranks.  
 Because we are the parents of lost children,  
 the bruised hearts,  
 the keepers of memories.*



Cheryl Pelletier TCF, Concord, NC

## **An Only Child**

Parents and the only child learn to adapt in the multi-child culture. Family members, friends, school and the community at large assume that an only child is not normal therefore, something must be wrong or at least could be improved.

The years of Kari's life taught us to do the best we could each day. All of her life, we encouraged her to do her best, because it is important to have a deep self-satisfaction of a job well done.

After the sudden auto accident that claimed her life and in our deepest grief we received some strength from the values we had seen in her life. I did not feel that I was alone in the world without my only child. I felt as if I did not want to live without my child, not that she was my only child. Perhaps the fact that parents of other children who have also died and had other surviving children felt they were not able to live without their precious children either, helped us to understand no child can be replaced.

Again, the community came assuming that you could not survive the death of an only child, just as you could not have normalcy with an only child in life. Many freely gave suggestions ranging from you should move, to adoption (had we been younger, I am sure the advice would have been to have another baby) and other well meaning, misguided advice.

We remembered our numerous encouragements that we had given Kari, we do not live alone in the world: our pain is no greater, we are no different from any parent whose child has died.

There are actually some blessings to not having other children in the household. What little energy you have can be spent on your own grief work and not worrying about what you need to do to help surviving children. Parents with surviving children have a blessing. They also have the awesome task of helping surviving siblings understand issues of life and death. Not a topic most parents plan on teaching. Without this distraction parents grieving the death of an only child can spend uninterrupted time toward healing.

The death of an only child does tend to exclude the parents from most family events. They will never experience grand parenting, weddings, holidays and all the other family-oriented gatherings. This leaves a very "left-out" feeling in conversations, knowing they will never get to experience these special times.

Each parent that experiences the death of a child, no matter the age or cause, has not had a choice in the event. It does not matter if we have multiple children or only the one child, we love each one and could not make a choice. We each have a difficult time in learning to live again after the death of our child.

We do heal. We do learn to live again. We are not the same person as we were before but in time each will find a new normal. Patience to let time and grief work to help us heal is the path to knowing we will survive.

Gerry Hall  
 TCF South Central, MO

## TCF 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year!

The 50th anniversary of The Compassionate Friends is January 28, 2019! Several of you have heard the story many times over of how our beloved organization began. However, for those who have not, it is very noteworthy; and for those who have, it most definitely bears repeating, especially at such a momentous milestone in TCF's history.

In early 1968, Reverend Simon Stephens was the young assistant chaplain at the Coventry & Warwickshire Hospital in Coventry, England. On May 23, 1968, 11-year-old Kenneth, the son of Joe and Iris Lawley, died following severe head injuries when he was struck by a car while riding his bicycle. In the same hospital, Billy, the son of Bill and Joan Henderson, died a few days later from cancer. When the Lawleys heard of Billy's death, they sent flowers to the Hendersons. Joe Lawley stated, "We did not then know the significance of that act, but, looking back, it might be said that The Compassionate Friends started there."

The Hendersons were so touched by the Lawleys' kind gesture, the two grieving couples met for a cup of tea. Through this, they found a place where they could speak openly about their sons and their lives, and their own shattered hopes for the future. They found, in each other, someone who truly did understand their devastating losses. Their shared experiences brought them a measure of comfort that they could not get from anyone or anywhere else. Upon watching how much their friendship and sharing helped them on their grief journeys, Reverend Stephens suggested that what they were doing together was far more beneficial than anything he could help them with. He wondered if this might also help other parents suffering the loss of a child.

Therefore, in January of 1969, six people came together, including Simon Stephens, where they talked about developing an organization that would help bereaved parents. And thus began "The Society of The Compassionate Friends", eventually shortened to The Compassionate Friends. From a handful of people meeting around a kitchen table to what the organization is today – a lifesaver for those whose precious daughters, sons, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren died much too soon. A place where bereaved families can find understanding listeners and sharers, friendships with others walking on a similar journey of grief as they learn to cope together, and, in time, find hope for renewed meaning in life again.

In 1970, Arnold and Paula Shamres of Florida lost their 10-year-old daughter, Gabrielle, in a tragic car-train accident. In 1971, they learned of the British Society of The Compassionate Friends from a *Time* magazine article. Recognizing the tremendous value such an organization would have in the U.S., they contacted Simon Stephens. Gratefully, he came from Great Britain to Florida, and following that, TCF came to the USA.

How grateful we are to our founders, Simon Stephens, the Lawleys, and the Hendersons, who began this amazing organization 50 year ago, and to the Shamres for bringing TCF to the United States.



TCF National Office

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### Open Up

*Each of us  
Is on our own journey,  
Starting out with a sharp shock of pain,  
Descend into a dark cave of grief;  
Swallowed up in sorrow...*

*Open up  
The possibilities are endless,  
In sorrow and in pain.  
I know that now,  
And I know  
That while the worst can happen  
Somehow we go on.*

*Open up  
To the limits of blue sky.  
Starting in the dark cave of grief,  
The beast uncoils.  
Let it roar,*

*Let it whimper,  
Let it go.*

*Open up  
To the acknowledgment of pain.  
To the knowing that  
We are not in control.  
We move in and out from darkness  
To possibilities.*

*Open up  
Like spring flowers pushing  
Up through the snow.  
Knowledge that while sorrow remains,  
And the beast of grief lives on,  
So too does memory.*

Melissa Anne Schroeter  
TCF Rockland County, NY

## **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. You may call the database manager at 615 356-1351, 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.

### **Picture Name Tags**

If you will bring a clear picture of your child, wallet size or larger, to a TCF meeting, Lamar Bradley will make a beautiful permanent name tag with your child's picture on it for you to use each month. You will also have an opportunity to select your own butterfly to accompany the photograph. The original photo will be completely safe with Lamar and will be returned to you at the following meeting. The best part of this is that there is no charge. A big thank you goes to Lamar for unselfishly giving his time and talent.

### **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 demands made upon the parents, and the information you provide is strictly 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](http://www.alivealone.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:615-963-4732) or email [GriefSupportIntake@alivehospice.org](mailto:GriefSupportIntake@alivehospice.org). Katherine Reynolds is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at 615-346-8554.

### **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](tel: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 Web site —A Treasure for You**

When you log onto the TCF Web site 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.

# *The Compassionate Friends*

P.O. Box 50833

Nashville, TN  
Nashville,  
TN 37205

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**March 2019**

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## **THE TCF 42ND NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**T**he 42nd TCF National Conference will be held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019. “Hope Rings in Philadelphia” is the theme of next year’s event, which promises a great National Conference experience. Stay updated with details on the national website, [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org), as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) and in this newsletter as they become available. Plan to be a part of this heartwarming experience.



42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE



**RINGS OUT IN  
PHILADELPHIA**

**JULY 19-21, 2019**