**May 2017 The Compassionate Friends Volume 31● Number 5**

***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.

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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.*

***May 14* Meeting: Honoring Our Memories**

**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

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he May meeting is an especially poignant one because it always

falls on Mother’s Day, and since the June meeting is not on

Father’s Day, we like to give special attention to the role of both

mothers and fathers in the lives of their children. If you have a

special memory of a particular Mother’s Day or Father’s Day,

we hope you will come prepared to share it with the group. We

will honor all mothers with special readings and there will be

a picture board to display your child’s photo. (Please bring a

photo 5”x7” or smaller.)

This has always proved to be a very meaningful meeting—a safe

place to be on a day filled with memories. We’d like to share it

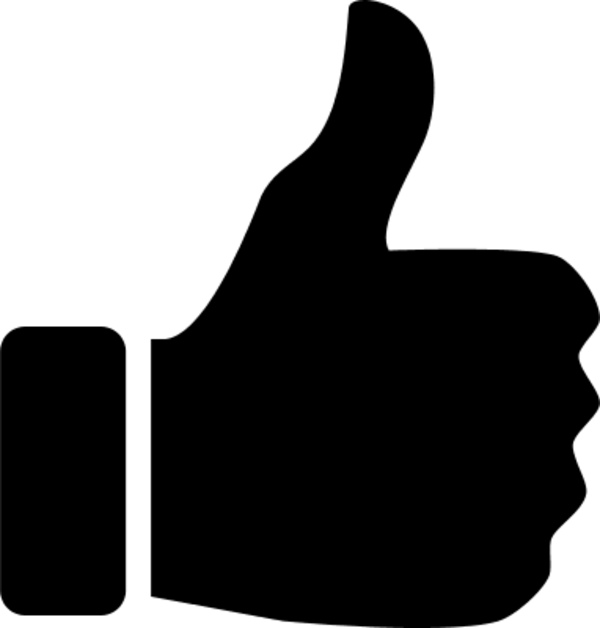
with you.

Keeping our tradition, each person in attendance will be given a

mini-carnation to wear in memory of their children.

Regular sharing groups will follow the program.



* Join The Compassionate Friends, Nashville, TN on Facebook. Let’s share our memories there too.*

*The*[*carnation*](http://www.proflowers.com/carnations-car)*’s scientific name is Dianthus.*

*‘Dianthus’, roughly translated, means “flower of love”*

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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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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**A Native American Lesson in Grief**

O

ne of the most common questions that family and friends ask is how long does it take to “get over” the death of a loved one. Native American culture holds many lessons about grief and its duration. The Native American legend of the Caterpillar people holds lessons for us all in grief. This legend is traditionally told during funeral services of the Shoshone.

"Long ago, there were two caterpillar people who loved each other very much. When the caterpillar man died

the caterpillar woman was overcome by her grief. In her remorse she withdrew into herself and pulled her sorrow

around her like a shawl. She walked and mourned for a year and because the world is a circle she ended up where

she had started. The Creator looked down upon her and told her that she had suffered too long. ‘Now,’ he told her,

‘is the time for you to step into a new world of beauty.’ He clapped his hands and the caterpillar woman burst

forth as a butterfly. Her world was now full of beauty and color.” \*

Many Native American tribes see the butterfly as a symbol of everlasting life. The Wilik-wilikwaashaashut or the Butterfly Dance enacts this legend. Young women line up single file and pull their shawls over their heads to cover them. This represents the caterpillar in the cocoon. The drummers sing and drum sadly. After the head dancer returns where she begun the dancers open their arms and display the brightly colored shawls. The song becomes more upbeat and the women dance to represent the fluttering of the wings.

Another saying of the Warm Spring Native American tribe is to compare the death of a loved one to a landslide. "When your road is blocked by a landslide, you clear it by taking away one rock at a time." In a time, when we want definite answers or a quick fix we should heed the wisdom these legends impart and let us work through grief at our own pace.

Trudy Weathersby, RN, M.Ed. is an active licensed Registered Nurse and the

Death and Dying Online Guide for [about.com](http://about.com) at <http://dying>. [about.com/health/dying/mbody.htm](http://about.com/health/dying/mbody.htm)

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**Kroger Rewards**

Kroger will donate real dollars to TCF Nashville through the

Kroger Community Rewards program every time you shop there!

To create an account to benefit TCF, go to the Kroger website and click on "Community Rewards," then follow the instructions on that page.

After that, all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Plus Card. It’s an easy way to support our chapter.

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## Of Parent and Child

B

etween Alexander and me was an unspoken arrangement. My job was to teach the lessons of the world, his

was to grow and learn. In the two and a half years that we were together, we utilized this system to the fullest.

From my accumulated wisdom and experience, Alexander was taught all that a growing child needed to know.

Together we studied the mysteries of the universe—the softness of kitten fur and how rain makes mud.

He learned the social graces, table manners, and bathroom etiquette. He was taught care and consideration for

himself, his sibling, and other human beings. Under my gentle tutelage, Alexander learned of love and life.

As his mother, I took the responsibility for protecting him from all hurt and harm. It was my job to go before, to



pave the way for the child that follows. But somewhere in the stillness of a February night, Alexander and I reversed

roles. He died quietly in his sleep, making his journey to the other side alone, without me.

I was left as the child—he as the parent. I am the child who must struggle, stumble, and falter, unsure of my way.

Alex is the parent, possessing spiritual completeness for which I am still searching. He has jumped ahead and now

he turns to hold out his tiny hand to me. “Come, Mother, do not be afraid. The path ahead has been paved by me and

I will not let you fall.” Through Alexander’s gentle tutelage, I have learned of love and life…and death.

Joanetta Hendel

TCF, Naples, FL

**A Mother’s Tear**

*A single tear trickles down my cheek.*

*It tells a tale I cannot speak*

*Of days gone by that have been stilled.*

*It tells of dreams left unfulfilled.*

*Its wetness holds “what might have been.”*

*Not going to the Senior Prom.*

*No more “I love you, Mom.”*

*No cap and gown on graduation day.*

*No wedding bells in the month of May.*

*No more family birthday celebration,*

*No voting for the leader of our nation.*

*Gone, the dream of horse and farm,*

*Never mine, to hold her babes in arm.*

*You’ve followed the path of my lonely tear,*

*It speaks of one that I hold most dear.*

*Now, you’ll hear this mother cry, “Why God,*

*Why did my daughter die?”*

*Karen Bell*

*Bereavement Magazine*

***Save the date: June 11, 2017***

Our 25th Annual Balloon Release in memory of our children

Family members and friends are invited to participate and enjoy the picnic

and games afterward.



Watch for details on our chapter website, our Facebook page

and the June newsletter.

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# https://www.compassionatefriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2017-conference-bg-800x533.jpgPLAN NOW TO ATTEND:

# THE 40TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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he Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Orlando, Florida, will be the site of the 40th TCF National Conference on July 28-30, 2017. “Rays of Sunshine, Oceans of Hope” is the theme of this year’s event. The 2017 Conference will be held at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek. Details will be updated on the national website, www.compassionatefriends.org, as well as on our TCF/USA Facebook Page as they become available.

Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

***Progress***

*On better days*

*I fill my life with laughter,*

*enjoy the charm of other people’s children,*

*and think about new flowers for my garden.*

*On better days,*

*I start the morning proudly.*

*I disregard*

*the forecast of bad weather,*

*and look ahead*

*to possible adventures.*

*On better days,*

*I look at faded pictures,*

*recall vacation*

*in the rainy season,*

*remember kissing*

*baby-powdered feet.*

**

*On better days,*

*I hardly cry at all.*

Sascha

***About Feeling Guilty***

*Do you blame yourself?*

*Are you strangled by the burden*

*of things you think you “should have done,”*

*as if these were the things*

*that killed him?*

*Dear Griever,*

*take time to realize*

*that death is not in your hands,*

*and blame is not the answer.*

*Try to relinquish*

*this relentless torment.*

*Hold your heart now*

*with the tenderness*

*that human grief deserves.*

Sascha

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# *Mother’s Day Memories*

*Sometimes, now,*

*In the early days of spring, when the chirping birds’*

*morning melodies echo beyond the trees,*

*When the bright daffodils burst forth with their*

*announcement of new life,*

*When the morning chill of winter has finally*

*faded away,*

*My body remembers,*

*And then, my heart remembers.*

*I start to remember a spring long ago that held*

*great hopes and wonder—*

*the happiest spring of my life.*

*A Mother’s Day more joyful than any other,*

*A Mother’s Day of mothers’ days—*

*As I gazed into the eyes of my newborn daughter,*

*and the innocence of life was still with me*

*And I remember what happiness was.*

*I remember Lauren.*

*And then, I can remember another happy*

*Mother’s Day.*

*And, I remember a little more of Lauren—*

*on her first birthday.*

*I remember her happy smile and her huge dark eyes*

*And how she loved to discover the life around her,*

*And what a gift it was to be her mother.*

*And I remember what happiness was.*

*I remember Lauren.*

*And then, I remember a different Mother’s Day.*

*It was Lauren’s second birthday,*

*A Mother’s Day of hope,*

*But mixed with too much fear.*

*Would it be my last?*

*After her eight-month battle with cancer,*

*We were fighting for more life for her*

*In the midst of spring’s new life around us.*

*But, we still had her and that was our gift.*

*I remember Lauren.*

*And then I remember all the Mother’s Days since.*

*The height of my joy on that first Mother’s Day*

*was brought to the lowest point of sadness*

*with my grief*

*Over her death on my first Mother’s Day*

*without her.*

*I had no other children.*

*Was I still a mother?*

*And, I remember sadness.*

*And, I remember Lauren.*

*I survived those other Mother’s Days.*

*I learned that it was okay to do what was*

*necessary to ease my pain on a date*

*so closely linked with her birthday.*

*It was okay to stay home from church to avoid*

*seeing all the happy mothers and their children.*

*It was okay to make my own plans, and to*

*avoid family gatherings if I felt too much pressure.*

*But it was not okay to forget Lauren.*

*This spring brings my ninth Mother’s Day since*

*Lauren’s birth.*

*And the pain of those early Mother’s Days has eased.*

*And, now it will soon again be her birthday.*

*And, I’m beginning to remember a little bit*

*of what happiness is.*

*And, that is a gift, because*

*I can still remember Lauren.*

Shirley O’Donnell

TCF, Nashville, TN

### It’s Okay

**It’s Okay to Grieve:** The death of a child is a reluctant and dramatic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned. **Such hurt! It’s okay to grieve.**

**It’s Okay to Cry:** Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to “level off” and continue our cruise along the stream of life. **It’s okay to cry.**

**It’s Okay to Heal:** We do not need to “prove” we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel “guilty,” for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don’t like it, we are learning to accept death. It’s a healthy sign of healing. **It’s okay to heal.**

**It’s Okay to Laugh:** Laughter is not a sign of “less” grief. Laughter is not a sign of “less” love. It’s a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It’s a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh. **It’s okay to laugh.**

Marianne Waite

TCF, El Paso, TX

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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, will 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**

In order to meet printing deadlines, all donations and original poems or articles must be received by the meeting day of the preceding month to be published in the next issue of the TCF Nashville newsletter. All donations and submissions are greatly appreciated.

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**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.

**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.