

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (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
Outreach: David Gibson, (615) 308-2520, email: davidg14@bellsouth.net
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 37214 (See Mailing address above.)

We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

May 8th Program:



Honoring Our Memories

The 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 card, note your child wrote, or memory of a particular Mother's Day or Father's Day, we hope you will come prepared to share it with the group. 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.

Regular sharing groups will follow the program.

NEW PERMANENT MEETING LOCATION!

NOTICE:

On May 8th we will begin meeting at our new permanent location at the ABC Building (Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Tennessee). The new address is:

*560 Royal Parkway,
Nashville, TN 37214,
directly across from Park N Fly.*

See ya' there!



PLAN TO ATTEND ON JUNE 12: ANNUAL BALLOON RELEASE AND PICNIC

*Location: Citipointe Church,
7533 Lords Chapel Drive, Nashville 37211*

SEE DETAILS IN THE JUNE NEWSLETTER





*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 Jay Bradley
May 31
Son of Lamar and Joy Bradley

Kamden Joseph Hayes
May 6
Grandson of Laura Buchanan

Robert Jason Heflin
May 30
Son of Edward and Kay Heflin

Joseph V. Ladd, III (Joey)
May 14
Son of Joe and Melanie Ladd

Stetson Taylor McFarland
May 27
Son of
Nathan and Alisha McFarland

Lauren O'Donnell
May 8
Daughter of
Denny and Shirley O'Donnell

Ed Pyle (Stobie)
May 17
Son of
Ed and Dorothy Pyle

Keanan Thompson
May 22
Son of
Chris Thompson

Alex Watson Tuttle
May 19
Son of Sister of Sean and Katie

Bramdon Frederick Weller
May 14
Son of
Freddy and Pippy Weller

Joseph Tanner Wray
May 19
Son of
Bobby and Amy Schisler and
Keith Wray



And in the month of their deaths—

Logan Stratton Brumit
May 14
Son of Charles and Kathy Brumit

John Roaten Cheadle, III (Ro)
May 16
Son of
John R. and Nancy Cheadle

Jeffrey Glenn Eakes
May 13
Son of Don and Sherry Eakes

Charles Courtney Edwards
May 3
Son of Charles and Ruth Edwards

Laura Paige Gibson
May 15
Daughter of
David and Peggy Gibson
Sister of Kay and Claire

Jacob Alexander Griffin
May 1
Son of Karen Griffin

Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom
May 16
Daughter of
Charlie and Kris Foust

Sherry Hooten
May 31
Daughter of Ann Flatt

Stacy Leigh Kraft
May 18
Daughter of
Keith and Meryl Kraft
And Terry Kornman



Jeremy Seth Lunceford
May 12
Son of
Jane Mance Lunceford
Brother of
Aubrey, Shelby and Brittney

Jacob Allen Mathis
May 26
Son of
Mark and Debora Mathis

Lauren Paige Moore
May 3
Daughter of
Mac and Polly Moore
Sister of Darrell and Paul

Ed Pyle (Stobie)
May 31
Son of
Ed and Dorothy Pyle

Sheila Rochelle
May 20
Daughter of Jennie Reeves
Sister of
Charity, Michael, and Mark
Aunt of Kristanna

Scotty Lee Rumble
May 15
Son of
Kimberly Rumble

Tony Scott
May 26
Son of
Eldon and Margi Scott

Ryan James Tropauer
May 9
Son of
David and Debbie Tropauer

The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you'll learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler

Some Ways To Help A Grieving Spouse

- Assign top priority to your marriage relationship.
- Cultivate transparency, openness, and honesty.
- Accept the pain that you feel. Be willing to share it and to listen to your spouse's expression of the pain he or she is feeling.
- Be patient with your spouse and with yourself. Recognize that your spouse is probably not at the same place in the grief process as you, and that is okay.
- Don't expect your spouse to be your only source of healing.
- Keep working at communicating. Give special attention to your affection for each other. Learn and practice the gestures of love. Remember to stay in touch physically; the importance of human touching and hugging is hard to overestimate.
- Allow or create space in your relationship. Everyone is entitled to a degree of privacy with their feelings, including their grief.
- Allow yourselves to enjoy life and each other. Be willing to laugh together, as well as to cry together. Work at finding some fun things to do together.
- Help each other to remember that life is more than this child who has died. As important as this child is to you, as much as you feel pain over his or her death, your marriage relationship involved far more than this child.

Howard Cupp



WANTED

*I wanted to see you graduate
And marry a nice girl one day
I wanted to see you happy
But the angels called you away*

*I wanted to be grandma
To children of yours through the years
Instead I sat and thought about
What I've missed with misty tears*

*I wanted to see you happy
And call me daily on the phone
Instead I stood in an empty house
Feeling so alone*

*I wanted to have so many things
To do in your life through the years
Instead I look at photos
And wipe away the tears*

*I wanted you with me forever
I wanted you with me when I grew old
I wanted your love my child
To cherish, love and hold*

*But what I wanted
And what I got instead
Are memories from long ago
As they run through my head*

*Now I want you to be happy
And wait for the day that I get there
And remember the good times on earth
And all the love that we shared*

*I love you my child forever
I wanted things to be different for us
But I know you're with God and are happy
So I'll try not to make a big fuss*

*Be waiting for me when my name's called
And let me see your face and your smile
I wanted to see you before this
But I can wait a little while*

*Lead me down the path you walk
Take me to God's throne
For when I get to hug you again
I know then that I'll be Home*



Sharon J. Bryant
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Month of May Brings Tears, Fond Memories

The month of May is a time of many memories and many tears for mothers who have lost a child to death. The memories are tied to our natural association of May as being the “Mother’s Day” month. We can’t escape the reminders. Second only to the Christmas season in commercialization, Mother’s Day is thrust at us in television commercials, billboards, radio spots, magazine and newspaper ads and special features, local and national news shows and each store we enter. Heart breaking, emotional, touching movies or television shows are aired in May in big part because of Mother’s Day. The reminders are endless. Our emotions build and build until we think we will snap.

Most of us have memories of happier Mother’s Days, time spent with our children opening their gifts and reading their special cards, talking, laughing and enjoying the moment. The counterpoint to our memories is that Mother’s Day intensifies the deep void that will always remain in our lives. In the words of one mother, “One day after my son had been gone for several months, I realized that this nightmare life is my life forever.” May is doubly difficult for this mother because of Mother’s Day and because her son died in May. May is doubly difficult for me as my son was born in May.

Even without a birth or death anniversary, May can be extremely stressful and sad. We enter the countdown on the first day of May. Some of us begin to improve after Mother’s Day passes, some of us can’t let go until the month ends. Some of us suffer lingering effects for several weeks or months. My first Mother’s Day without my son was a horrifying time. No gifts, no cards, no call. I took all the cards he had given me for Mother’s Day and put them on my piano...the time honored place in our home for special occasion cards. My second Mother’s Day was different. I simply refused to acknowledge it. My husband gave me a card and a small gift, and we left it at that. A few tears, but we decided to relax and do things that would keep us away from the Mother’s Day celebrations.

This will be my third Mother’s Day without my son. I do miss him terribly; there will be no replacement for that relationship in my life. Unlike losing a parent, a spouse, a grandparent, a sibling or a friend, the loss of our child means the loss of a big part of ourselves. That is our new reality.

What will I do this Mother’s Day? I don’t really know, but it will dawn on me that I should do one thing or another. What you do this Mother’s Day is your choice. You owe no explanation to anyone. As we walk through this grief of losing our children, we owe no explanations. Our love for our dead children lingers, and in that love is a goodness and purity that allows us to gently be ourselves. Our emotions are not intended to offend; but sometimes the pain is so overpowering that we must block out the world. And sometimes, we are able to overcome it. I will handle it the best way I can. So will you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX

A Mother’s Touch

My husband Jeff grew up in a family of hugging, kissing, foot-rubbing, back scratchers. Affectionate folks! In my family, on the other hand, we only scratched mosquito bites, and certainly not each other’s. Although we loved one another fiercely, we weren’t very demonstrative. A wink, a squeeze, a peck on the cheek, a poke in the ribs — that was mushy stuff for us. Touching another person was not something that came easily to me; that is, until my first child was born. When the nurse placed that chubby cherub in my arms, the floodgates of my heart opened, and a torrent of overwhelming love poured out. I couldn’t keep my hands off the little dumpling! I learned first-hand what it means to “smother with kisses.” Caressing my precious baby came as naturally as breathing.

Other children came along, and I was reborn a certified, card-carrying cuddler. I learned how many of a mother’s day-to-day interactions with her children require her touch. Touching became a way of life for me as I fed, bathed, dressed, tamed cowlicks, and kissed ouchies. It’s funny, but one of the things I missed most after my son Blake died was tying his shoes. When he was alive, that chore was the bane of my existence. Blake’s shoes were perpetually untied or hopelessly tangled in knots that would have defied Houdini himself. I rejoiced when the shoe designers came up with velcro closures, seeing an end to my nemesis. But would Blake wear those simple, convenient shoes? No way! Big boys wore shoes with laces, and most of all, he wanted to be like the big boys. So I armed my teeth, and kept tying and bending every fork in the house de-knotting. After Blake died, how my fingers ached to tie those little shoes one more time!

For most bereaved mothers I know, not being able to touch, to hold, to embrace our child is the most painful reality we have to face. The emptiness of our arms, the indescribable longing to have those arms filled again with our precious child, are almost more than we can bear.

At first, when our grief is fresh, it may be hard for us to touch anyone. We may close ourselves off emotionally, unwilling to touch or be touched, or to run the risk of being hurt so badly again. But mothers are touchers. With time, when the pain isn’t so intense, we may want to reach out once more. None of us ever outgrows the need to be touched, no matter how old we are. And what can be so comforting as a mother’s touch! Today, if you can, touch someone. Do it in the memory of your beloved child.

Patricia Dyson
TCF, Beaumont, TX

*Give encouragement, and you give nutrients
to a hungry and deprived spirit.*

Pamela Hagens
TCF Nashville, TN



Spring

*I'm afraid of the spring
I'm afraid you might say
Of other children's voices
As they come out to play.*

*I'm afraid of the feelings
Deep down in my heart;
With all the pain and the hurt
I may fall apart.*

*Shall I shut all the windows
So I don't hear a thing?
Shall I shut my eyes
So I can't see the spring?*

*Shall I let winter live
The whole year through?
And feel safer inside
And a lot colder too?*

Penny Leneham
TCF, Brookside, NJ

Thoughts for Springtime

*Would it be easier,
if spring were not so lonely?*

*Would it be easier,
if robins did not sing?*

*Would I be stronger,
if the trees were barren
or if a cloak of grey
hid everything?*

*Could I be braver,
if the days were faded
and if the sun remained
remote and cold?*

*I hear the whispers
of a new beginning.
The earth is new.
Why is my grief so old?*

Sascha



The Penny Jar

During a recent local TCF meeting, one man said that he has developed some “quirks” since his son’s death, and one of them is to save pennies. He refuses to use his pocket change to pay for things, giving instead whatever larger denomination he may have and waiting for change. He says people wonder sometimes what’s wrong with him, but it’s only this: his son used to save pennies in a jar. Now the father puts pennies in that same jar. His wife explained further that the jar is emptied and refilled, and the accumulated money goes to a fund they’ve established to send boys to summer camp.

I like to hear stories like that because they illustrate the many ways people have found to memorialize their own child. Last summer our family went to Ontario, and at a campground on the outskirts of Brantford, I met a woman who lives in Brantford but spends much of her summer in her motor home at the park. We struck up a conversation over morning coffee, during which I mentioned my involvement with TCF, resulting from the deaths of my two little girls; and she told me that she had quite recently lost a grandchild. In fact, she said the family had had a tree planted in that very park as a memorial to that child. It was a project meant to encourage reforestation, and as we sat enjoying the beautiful morning in that lovely place, I was pleased and grateful that someone had established the project.

Another family regularly sends a contribution in their late child’s name to a children’s charity drive. And more than one family of our acquaintance supports a child through Foster Parents Plan, or a similar organization, that sends the family a picture and periodic progress reports on the health and education of one child in a disadvantaged area.

I know there are many ways of memorializing our children, and when we set out to do something, we needn’t mean to build a university. A simple jar of pennies growing into a sum of a camp tuition is just as real as a memorial, even though it begins with just a handful of change.

Faith Murray Ewald
TCF, Hinsdale, IL

Deep grief sometimes is almost like a specific location, a coordinate on a map of time. When you are standing in that forest of sorrow, you cannot imagine that you could ever find your way to a better place. But if someone can assure you that they themselves have stood in that same place, and now have moved on, sometimes this will bring hope.

Elizabeth Gilbert

When a Sibling Dies

The death of a child is a family crisis no less for the siblings than for the parents. Surviving siblings may feel abandoned because grieving parents no longer have the emotional energy to care for them. They may feel unloved as they experience family friends putting the deceased child on a pedestal. They may feel incredibly guilty, remembering every bout of sibling rivalry, every unkind word and every slammed door. They may feel unworthy to be alive, longing for answers to explain why their brother or sister died and they didn't. And they may, therefore, seek conscious or unconscious ways to self-destruct: running away from home, using alcohol and other drugs, taking on characteristics of the dead sibling and thus diminishing their own image.

Following are suggestions children have shared about how parents can help them when a brother or sister has died:

- Let them choose whether or not they want to see their sibling at the funeral home. Let them choose some of the music, write or read a memorial to their brother or sister, go with you or alone to the cemetery visits.
- Share with the siblings all factual information as it becomes known. Being "left out" only enhances a growing sense of not being important to the family.
- When you see children who remind you of your child, point them out to the siblings and explain the grief spasm it has caused. Mysterious behavior enhances the siblings' fear of being left out.
- Ask the siblings to be with you occasionally as you grieve. If you always grieve in private, the emotional distance between you will widen.
- Talk with siblings both about pleasant memories and unpleasant memories of the dead child. This prevents pedestal placing.
- Don't tell siblings to "be strong" for someone else. That is too great a burden to carry.
- Understand that it may be easier for siblings to talk to friends, or another trusted adult, than to parents. They desperately do not want to add to their parents' devastation so may seek counsel and understanding elsewhere.

Janice Lord
TCF, Anne Arundel City, MD

A Mother's Lament

*If I had known
The pain I'd bear
The sadness and the great despair
Would I have chosen the path I did
To have this child
Who so briefly lived?*

*Yes, I am certain
That I would
For all the laughter
All the good.*

*He taught us all
So much you see
Through his kindness,
Love and generosity.*

*Though he's gone
From us physically
He lives on in our hearts
Eternally.*

Sandy Roush
TCF Lakes Area, MI



Bereaved Parents

*Different ages
Different stages
Different issues*

*Same pain
Daily strain
Occasional tissues*

*Our children have died
Often is all we know
A fact we fear to hide*

*Despite our ever-present woe
We live with pride
Though broken-hearted
To love, remember, and grow*

Victor Montemurro
TCF Medford, NY

*Sometimes, only one person is missing,
and the whole world seems depopulated.*

Alphonse de Lamartine

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. Drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205. 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. Also, when going to Amazon, type in “Amazon Smile” and designate The Compassionate Friends; then, each time you go on Amazon Smile a small contribution will be made by Amazon to our organization—It's a free and easy way to support TCF.

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 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. We do not phone the family and all information you provide is 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.

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](tel:6152447444), 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

**P.O. BOX 50833
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May 2022

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TCF 45th National Conference
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022

TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

We are pleased to announce that registration is open for the 45th TCF National Conference. After two years of not being able to meet in person, we are really looking forward to being together! Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Houston, Texas, during the weekend of August 5-7, 2022. This year's conference will be held at the Marriott Marquis Houston. Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated reservation link.

For more information and to register go online to www.compassionatefriends.org.