

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

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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 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.

## May 14 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 memory or memento 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.

Regular sharing groups will follow the program.



#### 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

### Save the date: June 11, 2023

For our 31st 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 in the June newsletter.

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>Christopher Jay Bradley</b> May 31 Son of Lamar and Joy Bradley	<b>Jayce Montez Easley</b> (Bucky) May 5 Son of Heather Jarrett	<b>Kamden Joseph Hayes</b> May 6 Grandson of Laura Buchanan	<b>Robert Jason Heflin</b> (Jason) May 30 Son of Eddie and Kay Heflin
<b>Elizabeth Harrison Jackson</b> May 15 Daughter of Bennet and Jane Harrison	<b>Joseph V. Ladd III</b> (Joey) May 14 Son of Joe Ladd	<b>Lisa Michelle Lombardo</b> May 9 Daughter of Frank and Stacy Lombardo	<b>Stetson Taylor McFarland</b> May 27 Son of Nathan and Alisha McFarland
<b>Lauren O'Donnell</b> May 8 Daughter of Denny and Shirley O'Donnell Sister of Sean and Katie	<b>Adam Nicholas Pappas</b> May 19 Son of Gust and Jane Pappas Brother of Andrew, Alex, and Erin	<b>Ed Pyle</b> (Stobie) May 17 Son of Ed and Dorothy Pyle	<b>Keanan Thompson</b> May 22 Son of Chris Thompson
<b>Alex Watson Tuttle</b> May 19 Son of Ron and Betty Tuttle	<b>Matthew H. Woods</b> May 14 Son of Vaughn and Mickie Woods	<b>Joseph Tanner Wray</b> May 19 Son of Bobby and Amy Schisler and Keith Wray	

*And in the month of their deaths*

<b>Coleton Harris Banniza</b> May 23 Son of Robert and Tiffany Banniza	<b>Logan Stratton Brumit</b> May 14 Son of Charles and Kathy Brumit	<b>John Roaten Cheadle, III</b> (Ro) May 16 Son of John R. and Nancy Cheadle	<b>Michael Dorman</b> (Mikey) May 24 Son of Daniel and Michelle Clark
<b>Jeffrey Glenn Eakes</b> May 13 Son of Don and Sherry Eakes	<b>Charles Courtney Edwards</b> May 3 Son of Charles and Ruth Edwards	<b>Laura Paige Gibson</b> May 15 Daughter of David and Peggy Gibson Sister of Kay and Claire	<b>Jacob Alexander Griffin</b> May 1 Son of Karen Griffin
<b>Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom</b> May 16 Daughter of Charlie and Kris Foust	<b>Sherry Hooten</b> May 31 Daughter of James and Ann Flatt	<b>Tyler Ross Jeanneret</b> May 15 Son of D.J. and Pamela Jeanneret	<b>Stacy Leigh Kraft</b> May 18 Daughter of Keith and Meryl Kraft and Terry Kornman
<b>Jeremy Seth Lunceford</b> May 12 Son of Jane Lunceford Brother of Aubrey, Shelby, and Brittney	<b>Jacob Allen Mathis</b> May 26 Son of Mark and Debora Mathis	<b>Lauren Paige Moore</b> May 3 Daughter of Mac and Polly Moore Sister of Darrell and Paul	<b>Ed Pyle</b> (Stobie) May 31 Son of Ed and Dorothy Pyle
<b>Zi Daniel Rayne</b> May 27 Son of Rolin and Shannon Rayne	<b>Jason William Rice</b> May 24 Son of Rosemarie Moore	<b>Sheila Rochelle</b> May 20 Daughter of Jennie Reeves Sister of Charity Collins Aunt of Kristanna	<b>Scotty Lee Rumble</b> May 15 Son of Kimberly Rumble

*Children Remembered, continued*

**Tony Bruce Scott**  
May 26  
Son of Eldon and Margi Scott

**Logan Thomas Suggs**  
May 30  
Son of Marcus and Linda Suggs

**Ryan James Tropauer**  
May 9  
Son of David and Debbie Tropauer

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### *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.*

**Shirley Rich-Brinegar**  
*In Loving Memory of her son,  
Bert Rich*

**Marsha Vick**  
*in Loving Memory of  
Daniel Vick,  
son of Marsha and Wayne Vick*

**Kenneth and Kathy Hensley**  
*in Loving Memory  
of their son,  
Matthew Kent Hensley*

**Robert and Kassandra Pack**  
*In Loving Memory  
of their son,  
Andrew Pack*

**Ann and Wilson McKee**  
*in Loving memory  
of their son,  
Glenn Thomas "Tommy" Allen, Jr.*

**Charlie and Kris Foust**  
*in Loving Memory  
of their daughter,  
Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom*

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

**Miller Harris Foundation**  
*in Loving Memory of  
Christopher Miller Harris,  
son of Bill and Judy Harris*

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

*Thanks to you, Kroger Shoppers, we received a gift of \$116.06 from the Kroger Plus Community Rewards Program*

*Each month, Allegra Marketing (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.*

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### **The Secret of TCF**

**T**he secret of The Compassionate Friends' success is simple: There is no line between being a helper and being helped. In the early months of people's membership in TCF, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying, letting the grief flow, and learning the ropes of being a bereaved parent.

The next step is reaching out to others and helping them. Listening to another person sort out his life helps us to sort out our life too. It is not a big step, but it is an important step because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed.

All the energy had been going inward. We had been feeling so empty inside that we kept withdrawing deeper and deeper into ourselves.

At that point where we turn around and help another bereaved parent, when we first listen to another, speak the words of comfort and hope, share our pain instead of just feeling it...It is at that time that real healing has begun.

Dennis Klass, Ph.D  
TCF Advisor  
St. Louis, MO

## *Her Mother*

*Despite her death  
I'm still her mother.  
Through all my days  
This will be.*

*Now in my life  
Where there are shadows,  
Her love shines down...  
And so I see.*

Genessee Bourdeau Gentry  
From *Catching the Light*



## *Believe*

*Crocuses poke their heads through the crusted snow  
to let us know the long, bleak winter is ending  
and spring will come again.*

*So, too, the long bleak winter of your aching,  
breaking heart will end and spring will come  
again one day.*

*Be patient – but believe it.  
Your spring will come again.*

Betty Stevens  
TCF, Baltimore, MD

## **A Letter to Anderson**

**H**ow do I continue on my path? In reality, I was most happy with my role as mother. That was all I knew for the first 17 years of your life. I was joyous in that space and time. After the initial shock of losing a child, after walking around in a daze not remembering details of daily life, you reach an impasse where you remember with laughter times you shared that were funny and can actually bring a smile to your face. There are still those “dark night of the soul” moments when you curse the Universe and don’t know how to lift yourself out of this despair, but then I remember something you said or you dancing around the room, and my heart is lifted up with love and laughter.

So, there will be moments where we mourn the passing of that loved one, but can we deny them? My life is so much richer having spent 22 years with you than to have not had that space and time. What gifts I have received. Thank you, Anderson.

In closing, ‘why’ I ask? You are not my child. You are spirit that came to spread joy and love. It is now up to me to continue that task, that mission. You taught me that well, because I have experienced this so unconditionally. I know and understand in my heart what this feels like; therefore, because of it being forever etched there I can share this love and have great empathy with others. Anderson comes and speaks, “*Madre, you reach out with true empathy because you understand. I am the joy, compassion and love you share. I will be with you in all interactions with others; I am but a thought away.*”

Goodbye – But not so Goodbye: I mourn your nearness on the physical but who can know of the experience of life after death? I feel that I know your function was complete, and I marvel at the gifts you left us with on Planet Earth. It is these gifts, which I hold true to my heart, that allow me to move forward. The darkness is lifted as I embrace, with gratitude, your essence and luminous light.

Goodbye: Looking back over our last night together if I knew that I was to say goodbye, what would I say? So here goes... You were as close to God as I have come to experience on this physical plane. The joy and love that I felt with you has to be that all-encompassing Love of God. Certainly, a part of the God Essence living through you. You lived it every day, and I felt it. Thank you for enriching my days, and thank you for allowing me to be your mother. You chose me and I am blessed.

Lucy Skaggs  
Extracted from *Anderson Speaks*

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## **Why Attend a National TCF Conference?**

**T**he 2011 national conference is only three months away. You may be asking yourself why anyone should attend a conference for people whose children and siblings have died, but be assured, it is truly a wonderful experience. You will come away with an incredible sense of healing. It is an awesome fellowship that creates an instant bond between total strangers.

The feeling of love that permeates the hotel is difficult to describe; it ranges from riding in an elevator with people who talk to each other instead of watching the floors go by, to receiving help and comfort from other conference attendees, through a variety of beneficial workshops, and from inspirational speakers.

This year’s national conference will be held in Denver, Colorado July 7- 9. Registration information is available on the TCF Web site: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).

## There's Help—The Power of Positive Thinking

One of the most valuable things you can do is to talk it out with a good listener. We now know that the stress level of bereaved people can be cut in half when they talk about the death to someone who does not judge or advise them. Having someone as a backboard to hear your thoughts bounced off is the greatest gift you can receive. Too often, everyone wants to make you feel better, so they try to advise rather than listen.

Remember, repeating your story is healthy. Talking about your loved one, the illness and/or death, works like a sponge. Each time you talk, a little more of the pain is squeezed out and the need to talk about the incident becomes less. It's as if your story is being framed within your mind. Soon you can hang it on the wall. You'll always have it there to look at whenever you want, but you no longer have to carry the whole thing around with you and be burdened and controlled by the past.

There will be times when no one is around to listen. You'll need to do something different. Keep a journal to write down your thoughts and feelings. Buy a journal for this purpose. Select a color that you like and write when there's no one around and you need to talk. Talk out loud as you write if it makes you feel better.

Write a letter to your loved one who died. This can be a very powerful process. Share your thoughts and feelings. Pour them out on paper. You may feel emotionally drained afterwards. If so, nurture yourself. Examples: wrap yourself in a blanket and take a nap, watch a movie, or hold or pet the family pet. You

may even find it helpful to write a letter back from the person who died.

Others have found that just talking aloud or into a voice recorder was helpful. Some stand in front of the mirror to talk. As a friend once said to me, "Don't worry about talking out loud to yourself. It's good to have a conversation with an intelligent person."

However you do it, remember: "Talking it out is one of the best medicines of all."

While some people won't want to listen to you, you'll also find they can say some really stupid things. Offer them suggestions for kinder, more compassionate words they can use with bereaved people. It will help them to help you and others more effectively because some people really want to help, but just do not know how.

You will find others who understand when you go to a support group. You will meet other mourners with similar feelings and problems. They can provide tremendous emotional affirmations. Why not come to the next meeting? This group of bereaved parents listens, even to those who say nothing. Share if you want to, receive love and compassion. You do not have to walk alone. Come walk with us.

Kelly Osmont, MSW  
TCF, Portland, OR

Extracted from More Than Surviving—  
Caring for Yourself While You Grieve

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## *Dove With a Broken Wing*

*While walking down a usual path  
to welcome in the spring  
I chanced upon a graceful dove  
who had a broken wing.  
She looked so out of place to me,  
helpless on the ground;  
And as I moved to where she lay,  
I heard her mournful sound.  
My heart was burdened by the thought  
that I could do no good;  
She seemed to sense that I would help,  
if I only could.  
I gently held her to my breast  
as minutes turned to hours;  
And knew her life was slipping past  
as we sat among the flowers.*



*I begged her to forgive me  
for the things I could not do;  
And promised her that "If I could,  
I'd give my wings to you."  
I glanced above and found her friends  
that circled in the skies;  
Then noticed that my wounded dove  
had closed her gentle eyes.  
One cannot change the way of things,  
I thought as I made her grave;  
Nor is a single moment yours  
to stop the clock and save.  
Then as I walked away from her,  
I heard an angel sing;  
And knew someday I'd meet again  
my dove with the broken wing.*

Larry Wood  
TCF, Edmond, OK

## *A Mother's Thoughts*

### YESTERDAY

*We dreamed of how our future would be,  
Of times we'd share, my child and me.  
Whether joy or pain, laughter or tears,  
We'd stand together throughout the years.  
A promise of what life should always be,  
Of a child so dear, ever loving me.*

### TODAY

*My heart sobs with uncontrollable grief  
I search for answers, but find no relief.  
The skies have darkened, no longer bright,  
For my child is gone forever from sight.  
The dreams we shared never can be,  
They're left to linger in my memory.*

### TOMORROW

*My heart will push aside this cloud  
That darkens my life like a heavy shroud.  
Once again, I'll see the dawning light  
And know my child's love still burns bright.  
I'll remember the moments we both shared;  
I'll remember our love and how we cared.  
I'll remember my child now lives in me,  
And his YESTERDAYS shall always be.*

Carol Chchella  
TCF, Rockford, IL

## *Mother's Day*

*Mother's Day is here  
And it is late and almost over—  
Today children give thanks for their mothers.  
You are gone and can't be thankful for me,  
But oh, how thankful I am I had you—*

*Each holiday is hard and I doubt they will  
Ever get easier—  
But I am so glad to have had you.  
Even now I can't bear the fact that  
You are gone.  
I look at the pictures of you so sweet and alive,  
And then look at pictures of you in  
That white tufted box—so still—so dead.*

*The Celeste I knew and loved, I give thanks for,  
Lives inside my head and heart.  
And so, on the first Mother's Day without you  
I'm missing you, grieving for you,  
Loving you still and oh, so very  
Thankful for you.*

*Happy Mother's Day to me for memories of you.*

Jo Hughes  
TCF, Gainesville, FL

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## **The Myth of Closure**

When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure?" grievers often ask. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievers hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one's room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual. Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes—surely then, we will have closure, we think. We pray.

The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us.

Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain—turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course. Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings for people we love.

Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn't exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that

person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us—the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again.

But let's not ever think that we'll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

Ashley Davis Prend, ACSW  
Hospice of North Idaho  
reprinted from TCF Southern Oregon Chapter Newsletter

## **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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](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

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May 2023



## *Entitled to Joy*

*This is grief. And it does soften over time.*

*It softens like water softens rock, in its flowing, gentle, rushing, mysterious way.*

*It softens like a sweet whisper of a memory that lulls you to sleep,*

*knowing that love knits the bones of despair together,  
tighter, stronger, more curious, more delicious than ever before.*

*Knowing that the fires of your being burn the dross of despair.*

*Knowing that the chamber of the heart is strong beyond measure  
and can take it and transform the pain into joy.*

*Joy for having known this person, for a day or ten years or two months.*

*Joy for having the courage to be.*

*For knowing yourself in many garments.*

*For taking a risk to love anyone again: a neighbor, a friend, a cat, a lover, a stranger, yourself.*

*The broken heart opens and mends itself.*

*In the middle of the night, when no one is there but many are listening.*

*Joy seeps into me.*

*After all, I'm entitled.*

*I'm a survivor.*



L. Nicole Dean