**October 2015 The Compassionate Friends Volume 29● Number 10**

***THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

**P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •Nashville Website:** [**www.tcfnashville.org**](http://www.tcfnashville.org/)

Chapter Leaders: Roy and Barbara Davies, (615) 863-2052, email: tcfroyandbarbara@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: [melanierladd@gmail.com](mailto:melanierladd@gmail.com) Treasurer: Mike Childers, (615) 646-1333, email: [michaelc1333@gmail.com](mailto:michaelc1333@gmail.com)

Outreach: David Gibson, (615) 356-1351, email: davidg14@bellsouth.net

Regional Coordinator: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: [lolly39@aol.com](mailto:lolly39@aol.com)

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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.*

**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

**October 11 Program:**

***Tips for Handling the Holidays***

E

nd of the year Holidays can be a traumatic time following

the loss of a child. Much of the focus of these holidays is

on children, family and giving and many times one’s sense of

loss is so overwhelming that the joy of the season is lost.

Some parents have said, "I would just rather do without the

holidays, but I don’t have that option." Others have said,

"I just want some way to survive the holidays." So how do

grieving families cope with the holidays?

Join us at 3:00 for a panel discussion on tips for handling

what can be a very difficult time of the year for grieving

families.

Our regular sharing groups will follow. We hope you will

be with us.



***Remember! TCF NASHVILLE HAS MOVED!***

ALL MONTHLY TCF MEETINGS ARE NOW HELD AT OUR NEW HOME,

THE AMERICAN BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS (ABC) BUILDING,

1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210

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

**2 TCF Nashville, TN October 2015**

**Questions and Answers**

**Q:** How long will it take to get over this feeling of sorrow?

**A:** A lifetime.

**Q:** How long will I continue to feel guilty?

**A:** As long as it takes you to realize that you did nothing wrong.

**Q:** How long will it take me to get over my anger?

**A:** As long as it will take you to drop the blame on yourself and others and realize that it was the combination

of unpredictable happenings that occur in one’s lifetime.

**Q:** Why do friends give such horrid advice?

**A:** To cover up their own inability to handle the situation.

**Q:** Will I ever be happy again and be able to laugh?

**A:** An emphatic YES.

**Q:** How long is long?

**A:** As long as it takes you to go through the process.

Each has his/her own time schedule, but you must make

the decision to start healing.

Irv Schwartzberg Ft. Lauderdale, FL

***Time***

*The time has passed when I would awake*

*in the middle of the night and relive*

*the death of my child.*

*The time has passed when I would sit*

*patiently waiting to hear his footsteps*

*on the front porch, just one more time.*

*The time has passed when I would find myself*

*curled up in the middle of the night*

*with his picture or his favorite shirt*

*and cry myself to sleep.*

*The time has passed when I would look at other*

*kids his age and wonder why God*

*had to choose to take mine.*

*Time has a way of healing the broken heart,*

*but time can never take the memories*

*that I cherish in my heart.*

*The memories of my child, his smile, his walk,*

*the way he talked, his smell, his touch,*

*the way he said my name.*

*These are the things, as time goes by,*

*that I will hold onto and cherish.*

*The times of my child.*

Janice O’Neal

TCF, Nashville, TN

**Candlelight Memorial Service**

T

he December 13 memorial service will take place at our new regular meeting home, the ABC Building on Elm Hill Pike and will be here before we know it. It is important that **everyone** wishing to have their child’s photo in the memorial service follow very carefully the instructions on page 3 of this newsletter.  **THERE IS A SUBMISSION DEADLINE THAT MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.** We invite all of you to enjoy this opportunity to see your child on the big screen! If you have not attended the candlelight memorial service, we encourage you to do so. This is a very moving and powerful program. All family members, siblings and friends are invited.

***HEY…TCF Nashville! Let’s get together!***

*New! Watch our website and Facebook page, ‘The Compassionate Friends, Nashville TN’ for the location of upcoming Social Events.  We will have something different each month and will try to find locations all around middle Tennessee to accommodate everyone.*

***Block your calendars for the 4th Sunday of each month, 3:00 to 5:00PM.***

**October 2015 TCF Nashville, TN 3**

**CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 13, 2015**

R

egardless of past participation, **EVERY FAMILY WISHING TO TAKE PART IN THE MEMORIAL SERVICE MUST RETURN THIS FORM.** We need to receive it no later than Saturday, December 4, 2015. Do not send photos to the TCF P.O. box—they might get bent or

damaged.

**Mail to:**

**Steve & Paige Czirr**

**1623 Fair House Road**

**Spring Hill, TN 37174**

**Instructions:** A computerized process (Power Point) is being used to display our children’s pictures on the big screen. An original 5x7 photo (no copies, please) may be used. If a 5x7 is not available, any size will do; however, the 5x7 or larger is easier to process. The original photo will be returned to you at the memorial service while the image will be stored for use next year.

**Place a sticky note on the back of the photo with the child’s name clearly printed. Do not write on the photo itself.**

**Child’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Please print the name as you wish it to be read at the service along with phonetic pronunciation, if needed.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and am enclosing an original photo of my child. (First time in the memorial service.)**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and am enclosing a different photo of my child to be used in place of the photo you have from last year’s service.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and would like for you to use the photo you have saved from last year.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and would like for my child’s name to be called and I’ll light a candle, but I will not have a picture shown.**

**Your name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**You may alternatively e-mail your child’s picture to Steve Czirr at czirrs@gmail.com**

**Be sure to include your child’s name in the e-mail**

**You Know You’re Making**

**Progress When…**

You can remember your child with a smile.

You realize the painful comments others make are made

in ignorance.

You can reach out to help someone else.

You stop dreading holidays.

You can concentrate on something besides your child.

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

You can talk about what happened to your child without

falling apart.

You can tolerate the sound of a baby crying.

You don’t have to turn off the radio when his or her

favorite music comes on.

You can find something to laugh about.

You can drive past the hospital or that intersection

without screaming.

You no longer feel exhausted all the time.

You can appreciate a sunset, the smell of newly mown

grass, and the pattern on a butterfly’s wing.

Judy Osgood

TCF, Indianapolis, IN

**Grief is OK**

Grief is normal, grief is OK

Grief is they way that your body has to say

that you love the son, daughter, brother, sister

or even a friend.

But sometimes it makes you cry.

Steve Horn, age 10

TCF, Hinsdale, IL

*Watch the sunrise*

*Remember the laughter*

*Celebrate what was*

Sascha

**4 TCF Nashville, TN October 2015**

**An Employment Agency Named Grief**

D

id you know that the minute your child died, you immediately joined the ranks of the employed? Never mind that you already had a job, or that your every moment was taken up by your role as wife/mother or husband/father, or that you had more than you could handle on a volunteer basis. You now have another job that carries with it no title of importance, but it is important nonetheless.

This new job involves the sad, but necessary task of creating a new life that does not include your dead child, and you don’t even want to do it. For most, it is full time employment for the next couple of years, if you are newly bereaved. It seems impossible in the beginning when your every waking moment is filled with thoughts of your old life with your child, but even the reliving of memories is a start toward the rebuilding of your life. You can’t move forward until you have revisited these old memories enough times. Eventually, you learn by process of experiencing all those special family times how it is you get on with the business of surviving without your child, how to start new traditions.

The job description for your new position calls for abilities you may not feel you qualify for at this time, things such as: an ability to be consumed by anger, and yet you let go of it once you have dealt with it honestly, An ability to acknowledge feelings of guilt and yet be able to eventually forgive yourself because you did the best you could under the circumstances, and a capacity for inordinate amounts of patience with yourself and others around you as you make your way through pain-filled days. You also learn to maintain some hope for better days ahead. All of these are prerequisites to succeeding at your new job. By bravely reaching out in the days and months ahead, you’ll find that you are slowly learning how to build one day upon the other until finally you realize you are maintaining a balance you once thought impossible.

You’ll look back and discover you’re going on with life and that a new life does go on without your lost child. You will note that I did not say a better life—just a new life. Then you’ll find you need not continue full time at your job of grief. Maintaining the status quo of your new life will require some attention from time to time. That’s when you become employed on a part-time basis. Look forward to that time.

Mary Cleckley TCF Atlanta

***Now Autumn***

*What a strange time is autumn.*

*More than a season,*

*autumn can be like a mood.*

*Softness and warmth and abundance*

*drift from the sky like a smile.*

*And you remember the seasons*

*before the children died.*

*They do seem far away sometimes,*

*Those seasons, now.*

*But not the children—*

*they are always here*

*in this strange time, this autumn,*

*when the softness*

*and the warmth*

*and the abundance of unseen children*

*drift from the sky like a smile.*

Sascha Wagner



***A Grandfather’s Remembering***

*“I get up each morning, sit down*

*At my desk*

*And open the drawer where I have*

*A picture of Nick.*

*I say, ‘you bugger.’*

*I think of how much I miss him,*

*How grateful I am for him,*

*And then*

*I give him into God’s hands*

*Every day.”*

The words of Alvin Johnson, Sr. to his son when asked “Dad, how do you deal with Nick’s death. Quoted from the article “The Choice to heal,” by Alvin Johnson, Jr., National TCF Magazine, Spring, 2000.

**I cleaned out the garage after he died and I found our beach ball…**

**I couldn’t let the air out of it. It’s his breath in there.**

**Carol Burnett**

**In the film *Laundromat***

**October 2015 TCF Nashville, TN 5**

**WRITING YOUR CHILD'S STORY**

The possibility of forgetting even the smallest detail of our child's life is a fear most of us have. In truth, over the months and years, many of these details do dim. Writing them down is a way to keep from losing these memories. This way, we will not only have a permanent remembrance of our child for ourselves, but this will also be a legacy for other family members. Here are some suggestions.

--Write in a spiral notebook. This way nothing you write will be lost.

--Begin at the beginning. Write all the details of your child's life from his birth to his death day.

--Use your child's pictures to help remind you of occasions and happenings over the years. Ask friends and relatives to tell you anything they remember about your child. (This may make them a little uncomfortable at first, but let them know how important it is to you.) Also, write any thoughts and feelings you remember having at the time.

--Record the bad things your child did and said in his life as well as the good things. It is important to write both the child's

good and bad sides so we can remember him as the real person he was.

--Write about your child's death. Record as many details surrounding it as you care to retell. Write about the days before his burial, the funeral, the day after, two weeks, a month, and so on. Record how others helped.

--Write a letter to your child. Include: What I wish I had said to you. What I wish I had not said to you. What I wish I had done. What I wish I had not done. What I wish you had done. What I wish you had not done. What I wish I could ask you. What I would like to tell you. Pour out your feelings to your child. Tell him of your anger, your guilt. Tell your child how you love him. Tell your child goodbye.

Don't worry about whether you write well. Don't worry about form or grammar. Just write. If you want to submit part of your writing for publication, you can always edit it later or ask a friend to help you polish it.

Keep your notebook handy. Write anytime you feel you want to say something to him, or when you remember some detail that suddenly comes to mind. When you have trouble sleeping, write down the things that keep coming into your mind.

Writing about your child or to your child will be emotional. It will probably make you cry. Don't let this stop you. Crying can be extremely helpful in releasing your tensions and will help you with your grief work.

***REMEMBER--WRITING IS JUST***

***TALKING WRITTEN DOWN.***

Margaret Gerner

TCF, St. Louis, MO

**SOME TIPS ON WRITING AS THERAPY**

**Write for yourself**. You need never show your writing to anyone else unless you just want to.

**Writing is talking written down**. It can relieve all the pent-up emotions that, if not released, can fester and hinder healing, causing even greater pain.

**Write what you are feeling at the moment**. Forget about sentence structure, spelling, grammar, etc. Just write.

**Don't hesitate to write your confusion, your anger, your** **daily questions and moments of sheer misery**. Let the tears fall. (If you write by hand, pencil won’t be smudged by tears like ink will.)

**Don't throw anything away**; file it and take another look at it in six months or a year. It will tell you where you have

been in your grief, will give you some sense of having made progress; then you may want to take it from there.

**Make two lists:** Using only one or two words, list all the things your child liked; then list all the things your child didn’t like. This will provide a surprisingly good profile of your child.

**Write letters to your child**. Say the things you’d like to say if he were still living. Say the things that frustrate you because he is not still living. Explain to your child that you could not keep him from dying – that even though he has died, and you must go on living, you will always love and miss him.

**Try Poetry.** One suggestion is to write your child’s name vertically on a page; then use the letter on each line as a beginning of a sentence about the child. Don’t worry about rhyme, rhythm, or form. **Always date your material.** This will give you a frame of reference in the future when you read what you have written – and very likely, you’ll see how very far you’ve come in your healing.

**6 TCF Nashville, TN October 2015**

**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.

**The “Children Remembered” Listings**

At your first TCF meeting you are asked to sign a registration card that gives us permission to add your child to the We Remember Them list on pages 2 and 3 in the monthly newsletter. If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed, 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.



**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/).

**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](http://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.