**October 2016 The Compassionate Friends Volume 30● Number 10**

***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.*

**October 9 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

615-646-1333

**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

***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.



**Candlelight Memorial Service Scheduled for December 11 at the ABC Building**

T

he December memorial service 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 8 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.

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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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Two poems from *Catching the Light: Coming Back*

*to Life after the Death of a Child*

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

***Acceptance***

*How can there be acceptance*

*of a child’s death?*

*How could I possibly*

*“take willingly, to say yes to”*

*her death*

*or “treat as welcome” or*

*“be willing to agree to” it?*

*No—I can do none of the above.*

*Oh—here’s one more meaning*



*to the word acceptance:*

*“to take as true”—*

*to take as true.*

*Oh, yes. It took me quite a while,*

*but I now know it is true.*

*Yes. I do take as true*

*that she is no longer physically with us*

*and take as true*

*that my life has been changed*

*irreversibly.*

*I will never say yes to her death,*

*but I do accept it as true.*

***Acceptance***

***Part 2***

*Yes. It is true.*

*My child has died.*

*Yes. It is true.*

*I wish it were not so.*

*Yes. It is true.*



*I miss her terribly.*

*Yes. It is true.*

*I am filled with sorrow.*

*Yes. It is true.*

*It is true.*

*Yes. It is true.*

*She is now in spirit.*

*Yes. It is true.*

*Our love connects us.*

*Yes. It is true.*

*She shines light on my life.*

*Yes. It is true.*

*That gives me happiness.*

*Yes. It is true.*

*It is true.*

**Acceptance Means…**

That the events of this fine boy’s life really did take place and I was witness to them.

That life has moved on and will continue to move on with or without me.

That time does not stop when our world comes shattering down from the death of a child.

Looking back and embracing what happened in order to look forward and move on.

From “The Choice to Heal” by Alvin Johnson, Jr.

National TCF, Spring, 2000



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**Talking to Teachers About Grief**

**One Family’s Experience**

M

ichael Santoro’s twin sister Paula died from the complications of Cushings Syndrome while the two were still in elementary school. The teacher kept Paula’s picture up in the classroom and she encouraged others to talk with Michael about his sister. This would let Michael know that they had not forgotten his sister.

Moving up into middle school meant changes for Michael and he and his mother, along with their family grief therapist, decided on a way to help his teachers know about Paula’s death and that on her death anniversary he might not be quite what they were used to seeing so he wrote a letter.

In that letter he said: “Next Wednesday, when I come to school, I may feel upset or my temper might spark or I may not participate in class as much as I should. Last year nobody mentioned my sister to me all day at school and…it made me feel worse. When I talk about my sister, or when someone mentions her, it doesn’t hurt. It makes me feel better. It hurts when no one mentions her to me. Please mention her name to me any time you want, but next Wednesday especially.”

Mother and son met with the teachers and the school counselor. Michael read his letter to the teachers and they all let him know that if he needed to leave the classroom and go to the counselor’s office at any time, he could. Each of his teachers affirmed their support and were glad to know what he needed them to do.

When Michael returned home from school that anniversary day, he carried a star studded bag with a card from his teachers, star candles, and a note stating that money had been donated to the International Star Registry and that a star had been named in Paula’s memory. His school friends had also signed a card and presented it to him at lunch time. Sometimes we need to let people know what will help us on our grief journey.

Michael and Pam Bennett-Santoro

TCF National Magazine Spring, 2004

**A Little Girl Remembers**

C

helsea Carlson was five years old when her eight year old sister Sammie died in a riding accident. When she was eleven, one of her classmates experienced the loss of his eight year old brother.

She felt that the things her classmates were saying were not

helpful to him so she decided do something about it. She let her classmates know what helped and what did not help.

“I’m sorry,” “You can talk to me about it,” and “It’s O.K. to share your memories” are helpful.

“I know exactly how you feel,” “I don’t want to talk about it,” “Aren’t you over it by now?” are not helpful.

She explained that allowing her to share the memory of her sister was one of the best things that anyone had done and that it would help their school friend as well.

Her school friend could talk to her and know that she understood. Chelsea also shared her grief books with him and thinks that her sister Sammie would approve.

The TCF National Magazine

*We Need Not Walk Alone*

Spring, 2004

*When A Good Day Comes…Relish it.*

*Don’t Feel Guilty And*

*Don’t Be Discouraged*

*Because It Doesn’t Last*

*It Will Come Again And Multiply.*

Author from another

TCF Chapter Newsletter

We are going to heal and grow from this experience and embrace a new future.

Each day we can point ourselves towards the vision

and have faith that one day

we will get there.

Alvin Johnson Jr.

TCF Magazine, Spring, 2000

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### What a Strange Time is 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



Halloween Magic

H

alloween has always been a special time. I regret that our son only had a one-time experience at this magical time of year. I remember—as though it were yesterday—the wonder in his face, how he tried to eat the candy through his mask, how he said *thank you* without coaxing. Then I think of all the parents whose child never had the opportunity and I am grateful for that one time.

It’s hard watching all the children trick-or-treating, and yet there is something special about this season that comforts me, As I watch the trees around me, I am reminded that there is a beauty even in their dying leaves. There’s a special aroma, a breathtaking color scheme, and if you listen, a rustling in the air. I believe there is a message in fall. I believe God wants us to know that death is like a change of seasons, that our child now knows far more beauty than we can ever imagine, like the tree that lives on through the barren winter and comes alive again in spring, our children are not gone. They live!

Nancy Cassell

TCF, Monmouth Co, NJ



Fall

*Leaves so bright and golden in the sun,*

*Glistening in early morning with dew.*

*Another season has begun,*

*Another fall to see, without you.*

*Pumpkins so ripe and beautifully bright,*

*In the still of a frosty night.*

*An array of colors for us to enjoy*

*Their beauty only dulled by the thought*

*Of our emptiness without our little boy.*

*The wind, the cold the awesome dark skies,*

*Somehow disappear in the memory*

*of your beautiful brown eyes.*

*We see the beauty of fall colors so clear,*

*Oh how I wish you were here!*

*The harvest moon shining,*

*Through the barren trees,*

*As we prepare for the first hint of snow,*

*Reminds us of a child who only meant to please.*

*And all those memories, only you will know.*

*Life goes on, as the seasons do.*

*But there’s one thing that stays the same,*

*And that is—OUR LOVE FOR YOU!*

Jean Staicar

TCF, Central Iowa

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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.

**Kroger Rewards**

**It is time to renew your Kroger Community Rewards account and keep the contributions coming to our chapter as you shop.** Go to the Kroger website and click on "Community Rewards," then follow the instructions to update. If you need to create a new account, follow instructions on the same page.

**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.



**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.

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***Traveling Together***

*You found the strength to come*

*You will discover a hidden strength to continue on*

*While here we can travel together*

*You will find courage to connect*

*You can find a place to belong*

*For as long as you need a companion*

*We will be here for you*

*We are The Compassionate Friends*

*And when you find your new pace, renewed strength, and a little more courage*

*You can be that hope for someone else, that rest area for another weary traveler*

*And you become a Compassionate Friend.*

Pamela Hagens

TCF Nashville



**CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 11, 2016**

Regardless 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 3, 2016. 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**