

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org



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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. (See Mailing address above.) 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 10 Program:



How Men and Women Grieve Differently



Many bereaved parents have found that our grief differs greatly from the same process in our spouse or significant other. It is a fact that men and women grieve differently. Certainly, the bereaved siblings have a difficult journey of their own quite different from their parents. At our October meeting, we will address these important issues in the form of a unique panel. Please join us as we learn from each other. You might just be enlightened as to “why they do that,” or “why they don’t do this.” Come join us.



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.

December Candlelight Memorial Service Plans To Be Announced



Our Candlelight Memorial Service is a beloved tradition for our December meeting. However, since the Coronavirus Pandemic is continuing to create uncertain times, our plans for the service are also uncertain at this time.

Please watch our November newsletter, as well as our Facebook page and our TCF Nashville website, tcfnashville.org. The goal of the steering committee is to make a decision as soon as possible while supporting our families in the tradition of remembering our dear children and siblings with a meaningful service in December—whether in-person or virtual as we did last year.

Thank you for your support and patience.

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—



Jacob Sylvester James Bell
October 30
Son of Mike Bell and
Michelle Dodrill

Marieke de Jager
October 6
Daughter of
Jan and Betsy de Jager

James Thomas King (J.T.)
October 18
Son of
Tom and Jere King

Jacob Allen Mathis
October 30
Son of
Mark and Debora Mathis

Preston Chauncey Birdsong
October 13
Son of
Preston Birdsong and
Janice Birdsong

Laura Paige Gibson
October 16
Daughter of
David and Peggy Gibson
Sister of Kay and Claire

Benjamin Bedell Koomen
(Ben)
October 9
Son of
John and Betsy Koomen

Madison Allen Mays
October 31
Son of
Allen and Rachel Mays
Grandson of
Roy and Carole Renfro

Roy James Davies
October 19
Son of
Roy and Barbara Davies

Joshua Hovies
October 19
Son of Alicia Hovies

Lee Leggett
October 1
Son of Patricia Perry

Keith Pringle
October 31
Son of Jim and Margaret Pringle

And in the month of their deaths



Emily Michelle Childers
October 31
Daughter of
Mike and Paula Childers
Sister of Sarah and Julie

Buck Allen Dawson
October 26
Son of
Bob and Genevia Graham

Jon Ashley Duncan
October 6
Son of Mike and Kay Duncan
Brother of Jamie

Chase Lee Harris
October 25
Son of Kirk and Shayne Harris
and Paul and Stacey Fish
Grandson of Rose H. Bartlett

James Edwin Hinesley
October 7
Son of Steven and Sue Hinesley



Matthew H. Woods
October 22
Son of
Vaughn Woods and
Mickie Woods

Disenfranchised Grief

There is a particular type of grief that sadly more and more parents are suffering from today called “disenfranchised grief.” Counselors and therapists also refer to it as “stigmatized grief.” The children of these parents died from suicide, drug related overdose, and aids. These bereaved parents are often scorned, ostracized and denigrated. Many receive little or no support from family, friends, co-workers and society in general. With unspoken words, the world casts a pall of blame and shame on these individuals with the unspoken implication that if they had been better parents they could have somehow prevented such a tragedy from occurring. Many people never hear their friends or loved ones mention their precious child’s name again. They generally do not receive the same level

of support that accidental and natural cause deaths do. This exacerbates the grief process. This ever increasing phenomenon has very little literature or research available at this time to aid these parents in their journey through grief. As members of TCF we need to be especially tender with these parents. We can embrace them and welcome them to share the stories about their children. The heartbreaking circumstances under which these children died do not define their lives as a whole. We all loved our children dearly and were the best parents that we knew how to be. If it were otherwise we would not need TCF and the support it gives.

Janet Reyes TCF/AAC

Who cares that you hurt, that you are sad, that things are bad right now? I do, dear friend, I do.

Fay H. Smith Hardin

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.

*Jeffrey and Jeanne Bradford
In loving memory
of their son,
Thomas Clayton Walker
(Clayton)*

*June Brown
In loving memory of
Her husband,
Dan Brown and their son,
Charles Michael Brown (Charlie)*



*Barbara Davies
Through Nationwide
Workplace Giving Program
In loving memory of
her stepsons,
Roy James Davies and
Taylor Davies
Sons of Roy Davies*

*Sandra M. Chaiken
In loving memory of
her daughter,
Pamela Sue Chaiken

Don and Sherry Eakes
In loving memory of
their grandson,
Taylor Christian Brewer
Son of
Justin and Tracy Brewer*

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.

Some Special Ways to give



*To benefit TCF, go to the [Kroger website](#) and click on “Community Rewards”; then follow the instructions on that page. 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 TCF. It’s a free and easy way to support your chapter.

If your employer supports the [United Way](#), you might have the option to “designate” your donation. Every dollar you contribute through your payroll deductions goes to the organization you designate. TCF Nashville is an approved organization with the United Way. Please consider designating your United Way donation to TCF Nashville.

Tread Gently

*Tread gently near
The tender souls
Who've lost a child,
Whose hearts are
Bruised and bleeding
For healing comes slowly,
With pain in every
Forward step
Tears in every
Backward look,
So much love still flows
For that special one—*

*Arms reach out to hold
And back to cling,
But reach forward
Only numbly,
Fearful of forgetting
Or being disloyal
By going on.
There is guilt
In laughing,
Feeling pleasure,
Even being alive.
There are questions,
Longings, heartaches.*

*But slowly, surely,
Strength and healing come
In God's own time—
Not as an answer,
Not as forgetting,
But as acceptance
That this pain, this loss,
Is ours to live with
And somehow,
By God's grace,
To use to bless.*

*Joan Splettstoesser
TCF, Monte Vista, CO*

Our Heirloom Quilt

Quilts tell stories. The stories quilts tell are often of family, at least they were in the days when quilts were hand stitched. I remember my aunts in the 1940s sitting around a large quilting frame that rested on the backs of straight chairs. The quilt top had been pieced together from the cloth of discarded clothes torn into strips. With utmost patience they sewed with tiny stitches the outline of the pattern they chose-- patterns like "Double Wedding Ring" or "Lovers Knot." Occasionally a neighbor would come to join in, sewing and talking for an hour or two.

Some of the old hand-sewn quilts became family heirlooms handed down from generation to generation. We have two of these that Peggy's Grandmother Jones made in the early 1900s. We also have an heirloom quilt of a more recent vintage.

We were amused when our oldest daughter, Paige, told us that she and one of her college classmates had joined a quilting class made up mostly of middle-age women. Paige developed a real talent for quilt making. She enjoyed sitting with a large quilting hoop in her lap carefully stitching away. The design she chose for her first quilt was "Log Cabin" and we were amazed that she did such a good job. She was very proud of that quilt. It now hangs as a backdrop on the wall over her sister's bed.

For her second quilt she chose a "Double Four Patch" pattern with earth tones of brown and tan squares. She pieced together the quilt top her last semester of college and she began quilting on it during the summer following graduation while living at home and working in a department store. That fall she left for graduate school in Memphis but didn't take her quilt with her.

In early November, home for a weekend visit, she suffered a brain hemorrhage and underwent emergency surgery that removed the right frontal lobe of her brain and most, but not all, of a malignant brain tumor. During the few months of life she had left, she tried again to stitch her quilt but where the previous stitches had been small and all in straight lines, they were now large and in lines that wandered off at an angle. Paige was never able to finish that quilt. Today it is folded over a quilt rack in our bedroom, those last irregular stitches displayed on top. It is our beautiful heirloom quilt and we treasure the story it tells us.

David Gibson
TCF Nashville, TN



Close By

*When the morning dew sparkles
I'll be near by your side
When the afternoon sun fades
My love I won't hide
When the autumn leaves change
And fall is in the air
I'll always be close to you
I'm around you everywhere
When the winter snows come
And covers the earth all white
I'll be watching you Mom
Everything's going to be all right
When Christmas time arrives
And you feel saddened missing me
I'll not be far away
For your heart is where I'll be
I'll be there when you're saddened
On lonely nights when you feel alone
I'm never far away mom
I'm in my Father's home
I'm ok mom, I really am
So please don't cry*

*I'm never far from you or dad
I'm the angel at your side
So when you look around you
And see beauty everywhere
Just remember I'm beside you
In your heart, I'm always there
The beauty that surrounds me
Is something you will one day see
I can't wait until you share
This wondrous beauty with me
God promised us eternity
And that promise was kept
I've made it to His home
I have no regrets
So please don't worry mom
I'm happy and I'm fine
One day you will understand
When you cross that thin line*

*Love,
Your child*



Sharon J. Bryant
Reprinted by permission of author

August 10, 1914 "I watch the wife of my friend gathering poppies in the wheat. There is a sadness in her face, for it is only a year ago they lost their little one. Often I see her steal away to the village graveyard, sitting silent for long and long."

The Comforter

*As I sat by my baby's bed
That's open to the sky,
There fluttered round and round my head
A radiant butterfly*



*And as I wept—of hearts that ache
The saddest in the land—
It left a lily for my sake,
And lighted on my hand*

*I watched it, oh, so quietly,
And though it rose and flew,
As if it fain would comfort me
It came and came anew.*



*Now, where my darling lies at rest,
I do not dare to sigh,
For look! there gleams upon my breast
A snow-white butterfly.*

Robert Service
from *Complete Poems*
(Dodd, Mead & Company)

Living Life Is Still An Effort

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when it came time to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year.

I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted....such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic". What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see the sorrow in each parent. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well-balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
Todd Mennen TCF, Katy, TX

When hope is all that is left, you have just enough.

Pamela Hagens—TCF Nashville, TN.

The Storms of Grief

I've often thought about how differently grief affects those left behind when someone has died. To me there are three groups of bereaved. There are those that lose someone they loved very much and are most affected. The middle group are those that cared about the person and will miss them, but their death doesn't change their lives. The third group are sorry that the person has died, but are largely unaffected by their death.

Now envision those groups on a mountain. When my son died, I felt like I was on a mountaintop, alone with a storm raging around me. Thunder and lightning filled the sky, thick clouds enveloped me, and a cold hard rain fell upon me. Winds buffeted my body from every side. There was no shelter, no place to sit or lie down. Others who were suffering as much as I (my husband and daughters) were on their own Mountaintop, and we could derive no comfort from each other. I stood there, sometimes railing against God, sometimes feeling as if my heart had been ripped out, sometimes just feeling an emptiness so deep, I feared I would drown in it. Days, weeks, months passed.

The middle group of people stood on the side of the mountain (close friends and relatives). They also were caught in the storm, but they had some shelter and each other. They wanted to comfort me but the path upward was winding and rocky and I could find no path down to them.

The last group of people were at the bottom of the mountain in the valley. There, the sun was shining and the breeze was gentle. They could see the storm I was caught in, but could do nothing to help me.

Sometimes the storm would subside and I could see something besides dismal gray and I had respite from the wind and rain. But this would be followed by another raging storm. Back and forth, I never knew what to expect.

Eventually the sky would clear and I was able to find a path to those that cared and could offer me hugs and a shoulder to cry on. The storm was still there, but there was also shelter and I wasn't alone.

It has been 12 years since Todd died and I have been able to come completely down off that desolate mountaintop and live in the valley of sunshine. Sometimes I stay there quite a while. Sometimes I climb that mountain and experience that same emptiness and sadness.

We all know that this kind of storm may brew on those special days - birthdays, holidays, family events. We are also blindsided by those times that just take our breath away. . .being in a place they loved, hearing their music, smells, movies, ballgames, seeing their friends. We really have no control over these unexpected, sudden storms.

I have learned to give into them and let the tears fall. I can live with these storms and accept them as part of my life because my child lived and I loved him with all my heart. I cannot change the fact that my child has died and I will not change my love.

Barb Seth
TCF Madison, WI

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**.....Kris Thompson
931-486-9088
- Suicide**.....Ron Henson
615-789-3613
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose**.....Ed Pyle
615-712-3245

The "Veteran" Bereaved Parent

Have you ever attended a TCF meeting to see a "veteran" bereaved parent shed a tear or openly show grief, and have wondered why after all that time?

Please don't get the wrong idea—the wrong idea being:

1. You won't ever cry after ten years.
2. You won't feel a need to still attend TCF meetings.
3. You won't feel like sticking with TCF in case a newly bereaved parent needs you.
4. You won't care enough to stay and help organize future meetings.
5. You won't feel compassionate enough to hear a newly bereaved parent talk of their grief.

Yes, some veteran bereaved parents move on and I wish them peace. But I am personally grateful for veteran bereaved parents who stay with TCF. What would newly bereaved parents do if they attended their first meeting and no one was there?

Sandy Smith

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 (and phone number) 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

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Winds of Time

*Already I have shed the leaves of youth,
Stripped by the wind of time down to the truth
Of winter branches. Linear and alone
I stand, a lens for lives beyond my own,
A frame through which another's fire may glow,
A harp on which another's passions blow.*

*The pattern of my boughs, and open chart
Spread on the sky, to others may impart
Its leafless mysteries that once I prized,
Before bare roots and branches equalized;*

*Tendrils that tap the rain or twigs the sun
Are all the same; shadow and substance one.
Now that my vulnerable leaves are cast aside,
There's nothing left to shield, nothing to hide.*



*Blow through me, Life,
pared down at least to bone,
So fragile and so fearless have I grown!*

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

“I thought I could describe a state; make a map of sorrow.
Sorrow, however, turns out to be not a state but a process.”

C. S. Lewis, 'A Grief Observed'