

# 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.

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 13 Program: Tips for Handling the Holidays



End 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 parents 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 parents.



### Essence of TCF...

"I believe the greatest gift I can conceive of having from anyone is to be seen by them, heard by them, to be understood and touched by them."

Virginia Satir, Psychotherapist



## Candlelight Memorial Service Scheduled for December 9 at the ABC Building

*This is a very moving and powerful program. All family members, siblings and friends are invited to join us. Following the service, we invite you to remain for fellowship and refreshments.*

**It would be most appreciated if you would bring a pickup snack to share. Be sure to put your name on your container.**

It is important that **everyone** wishing to have their child's photo in the memorial service follow very carefully the instructions on page 4 of this newsletter.

**THERE IS A SUBMISSION DEADLINE THAT MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.**

We would like for all of you to enjoy this opportunity to see your child on the big screen! If you have not previously attended the candlelight memorial service, we encourage you to do so.

**Information and Photo Submission  
Form are on Page 4.**

*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—*



**Alexander Beatty (Alex)**

October 23

Son of  
Yarnell and Liz Beatty

**Preston Chauncey Birdsong**

October 13

Son of  
Preston Birdsong and  
Janice Birdsong

**Tyler Christian Bradley**

October 29

Son of David Bradley and  
Tanya Coleman

**Jacob Cooke (Drew)**

October 26

Son of  
Greg and Diane Cooke

**Kiara Cutting**

October 16

Daughter of  
David and Anne Cutting

**Roy James Davies**

October 10

Son of Roy and Barbara Davies

**Marieke de Jager**

October 6

Daughter of  
Jan and Betsy de Jager

**Geoffrey Edward deZevallos**

October 16

Son of  
George and Anne deZevallos

**Laura Paige Gibson (Paige)**

October 16

Daughter of  
David and Peggy Gibson  
Sister of Kay and Claire

**Zachary Gray Goodpaster  
(Zac)**

October 16

Son of  
David and Lauren Goodpaster  
Grandson of  
Morris and Martha Smith

**Valerie Ingham**

October 8

Daughter of  
Ron and Marci Lance

**James Thomas King (J.T.)**

October 18

Son of Tom and Jere King

**Benjamin Bedell Koomen**

October 9

Son of John and Betsy Koomen

**Lynette Loyd**

October 6

Daughter of Janette Pearson

**Madison Allen Mays**

October 31

Son of Allen and Rachel Mays  
Grandson of  
Carole and Roy Renfro

**Jason William Rice**

October 26

Son of Rosemarie Moore

*And in the month of their deaths—*



**Zachary Curtis Aldridge**

October 20

Son of David and Kim Campbell

**Bryan Tyler Brown**

October 24

Son of Carl and Shannon Brown

**Emily Michelle Childers**

October 31

Daughter of Mike and Paula  
Childers  
Sister of Sarah and Julie

**Richard Lee Crouse**

October 5

Son of Joel and Teresa Crouse  
Brother of Jennifer

**Buck Allen Dawson**

October 26

Son of  
Bob and Genevia Graham

**Jon Ashley Duncan**

October 6

Son of Mike and Kay Duncan

**Chase Lee Harris**

October 25

Son of Kirk and Shayne Harris;  
Paul and Stacey Fish  
Grandson of Rose H. Bartlett

**James Edwin Hinesley**

October 7

Son of Steven and Sue Hinesley

**Lynette Loyd**

October 14

Daughter of Janette Pearson

**Joy-Michelle Carter Mull**

October 16

Daughter of Brenda Carter

**Christopher James Pewitt**

October 29

Son of Mike Pewitt

**Matthew H. Woods**

October 22

Son of  
Vaughn Woods and  
Mickie Woods



The ultimate goal of the grief work is to be able to remember without emotional pain and to be able to reinvest emotional surpluses. While the experience of the grief work is difficult and slow and wearing, it is also enriching and fulfilling. The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss and have found their way out of depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.



Elizabeth Kubler-Ross  
From: *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*

## 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.*

**June Brown**

*In loving memory of her son,  
Charles Michael Brown (Charlie)*

*Debby Hood and Gary Cox  
In loving memory of her son,  
Cory Hood*

**Barbara Davies**

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

**Mike and Kay Duncan**

*In loving memory of their sons,  
James Michael Duncan  
(Jamie)  
And  
Jon Ashley Duncan*

**David and Peggy Gibson**

*Kay Howard and Claire Gibson  
In loving memory of  
their daughter and sister,  
Laura Paige Gibson*



**Carole Renfro**

*In loving memory of her  
granddaughter,  
Lindsay Carole Miller,  
Her son-in-law,  
Dr. Allen Glenn Mays, and  
Her grandson,  
Madison Allen Mays*

**Morris and Martha Smith**

*In loving memory of  
their grandson,  
Zachary Gray Goodpaster (Zac)  
Son of  
David and Lauren Goodpaster*

*Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, 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.*

## For the Newly Bereaved

**W**e welcome you, we are sorry for the cause that brings you to us and we know how devastated you are. We have all been there. Nothing is required of you and there are no dues or fees. You need not speak a word or you can share. Attending your first meeting does take courage, but our members who attend find a comforting network of support, friendship and understanding that only friends who have "been there" can give. Based on our experiences, we suggest you attend three or four meetings before evaluating the benefit of our group to you. Just come, be as comfortable as you can and let us walk with you.

Meetings are a place to talk about your child, a place to remember the joys of their life and the pain and struggle of living without them. It is a place to meet other parents who have in fact survived what may seem impossible to you right now.

Meetings are not "the answer." Grief is not a problem to be solved and meetings are not "pity parties" although there are tears and sadness, but there is also hope.

Meetings do not bring about closure. You close on a house, not the death of a child.

May you find your own peaceful solution to fit your individual needs for coping with special dates which are painful after losing your child. We are here to help.

Janet G. Reyes  
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

*At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person.  
Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.*

Albert Schweitzer

## CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 8, 2019

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 Wednesday, November 27.**

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND FORMS OR PHOTOS TO THE TCF P. O. BOX—they must go directly to Lamar.**

**MAIL TO:**

**Lamar Bradley  
4772 Cascade Drive  
Old Hickory, TN 37138**

or

You may e-mail your child's photo to [lamar.bradley@comcast.net](mailto:lamar.bradley@comcast.net)

Be sure to include your child's name in the e-mail.

**Instructions:** A computerized process (Power Point) is 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** \_\_\_\_\_



### *The Heart Remembers Always*

*And when we have remembered everything,  
We grow afraid of what we may forget.  
A face, a voice, a smile? A birthday? Anniversary?*

*No need to fear forgetting,  
Because The Heart Remembers Always.*

Sascha

### *Just Ten Weeks*

*For just 10 weeks  
I had you to myself.  
And 10 weeks seems too short a time  
For you to have changed me so profoundly.  
In just 10 weeks I came to know you...  
And to love you.  
You came to trust me with your life.  
Oh, what a life I had planned for you!  
Just 10 weeks.  
Then I lost you.  
I lost a lifetime of hopes,  
Plans, dreams, and aspirations.  
A slice of my future simply vanished overnight.  
Just 10 weeks.*



*It wasn't enough time to convince others how  
Special and important you were.  
How odd, a truly unique person has died recently  
And no one is mourning the passing.  
Just 10 weeks.  
And no "normal" person would cry all night over  
A tiny 10 week fetus, or get depressed and withdrawn  
Day after endless day.  
No one would, so why am I?  
You were just 10 weeks, my little one.  
But it seems you only needed 10 weeks  
To make my life so much richer and give  
Me a small glimpse of eternity.*

Susan Erling  
TCF, St. Paul, MN

## Autumn

*In the fall  
When amber leaves are shed,  
Softly—silently  
Like tears that wait to flow,  
I watch and grieve.  
My heart beats sadly in the fall;  
'Tis then I miss you most of all.*

Lily de Lauder  
TCF Van Nuys, CA



## After October

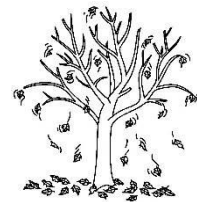
*and if there be a perfect month,  
for me, it is October...  
with days and nights like laughing fauns,  
with mornings bright and sober.  
when wind will dance in sudden glee  
to do the autumn-sweeping  
or cloud and fog and wistful rain  
can move a heart to weeping.  
and in October you were born,  
four days before November...  
and four years later you were gone,  
my little son, my only son,  
I love you.  
and remember. . .*

Sascha



*Love lives, in the secret place of the heart.*

Pamela Hagens  
TCF Nashville



## Anticipation and All Those "Days"

There have been several lately sharing their feelings of fall/autumn. Wow, there was a time that I, too, dreaded fall. Spring and fall are the most dramatic of the seasons and fall always represented to me as much beauty as spring. The changing colors, the flower bulbs maturing under the soil preparing for their entry into spring, and the anticipation of holidays were a delight. My birthday (11/03) and Robert's birthday (11/07/76) were also another highlight to fall. Birthdays were (and still are) always so special for our family.

After Robert's death on 11/24/91, I learned what the word "anticipation" meant, not as Webster states "pleasurable expectation," but the anticipation of a bereaved parent. There is little pleasure in anticipating their birthday, their death date anniversary, Mother's Day, Father's Day, holidays, etc. Planning for these days early on in our grief is like an albatross, we want to do something special for our child/sibling, but the grief is so heavy on our hearts, that we can barely think, much less make it a "memorable" occasion. Another Webster definition of anticipation "visualization of a future event or state" which in some ways is a more accurate way for us to understand the anticipation we feel. We spend a lot of time and energy trying to visualize those upcoming events and special days without our child/sibling that sometimes the reality of who and what they still are to us gets lost in the pain.

Many have talked about having so many holidays, anniversaries, etc. so close together time wise. This is true in my case also. My birthday, 11/03, Robert's birthday, 11/07, his heaven date, 11/24, Thanksgiving, and two other very close relatives have November birthdays. I have struggled with "November" for almost 10 years now. After Robert's death, celebrating my birthday has been pretty much non-existent. Thanks to my loving family, I was given a "new" birthday two years ago. I was given a rebirth of June 3 (any year, any age I want to be). We celebrate my birthday in June now which helps a lot and takes some of the pressure and anticipation off when November rolls around. I can also now celebrate Robert's birthday, a special meal out with his brother, Kevin, and a balloon lift-off just to let him know how much he is loved and missed.

Well, fall is here again and November is fast approaching. There was a time when I yearned to be a bear so I could hibernate from mid-October (when the anticipation begins) until the first of the year. That would get me thru all "those" days of November and the holidays. Now, even though I still feel the anticipation days, I look at them thru different eyes, thru the eyes of "mature" grief, seasoned by many autumns that have passed since Robert's death.

Barbara Parsons  
TCF Lawrenceville, GA

## Musings on Halloween, Past and Present

As I type this, the nip in the October air is a reminder that the major holidays are just around the corner. Halloween paraphernalia has been in the stores since July with Christmas decorations right behind them. For those of us who are bereaved parents, this means the sooner the décor is on the store shelves, the longer we have the constant reminders that we will be facing the holidays without our child present. Whether this is your first Halloween following their death or years down the road, such as in my situation, the holiday season stirs the emotions. For example, with Halloween, there could be the sorrow of no longer having to find that perfect costume or witnessing the delight in your child's eyes as they head out the door to trick-or-treat. If your child was an adult when they died, perhaps it is your old memories of Halloweens when they were youngsters. And there are those whose children died before they ever had the opportunity to create memories, the sadness that they were never able to experience even one holiday with that child.

Halloween can be particularly hard to get through. In the past, I always thought of it as innocuous enough; costume parties, children excitedly dashing door-to-door looking for treats, pumpkin carving, and the occasional harmless prank. However, after my daughter Nina died, I became acutely aware of things that I had never given a second thought. For instance, my neighbor made their whole front yard into a graveyard scene of fake headstones with scary or silly epitaphs on them, and terrifying creatures coming out of the earth. Before Nina died, I also found cemeteries "creepy", but now look at them differently, even with a sort of reverence. I no longer have a problem going out to my daughter's grave-site, even in the middle of the night. I find the solitude of the historic countryside graveyard where she lies peaceful, dignified and worthy of respect. I was hurt by what I felt was ridicule and disdain for the final resting place of our loved ones' physical bodies. In addition, some of the masks portrayed faces of death in a way that I found highly offensive, especially since I knew many who lost their children to some of the means depicted. I perceived it as a mockery of the tragedies that these families suffered.

Though I still don't pretend to understand the allure of the above-mentioned Halloween depictions, they aren't as painful to me as they were the first few years after Nina died. Especially in the early grief years, we become hypersensitive to our surroundings and more keenly aware of anything related to death. It is pretty hard to look past the non-bereaved population's seeming nonchalance about something we take so personally. Though we wish there was more understanding, we also know all too well that they cannot truly empathize unless they have walked in our shoes. It is easy to forget that, before our children's deaths, we too may have shown the same indifference. We'd like to think that we would not have been so callous because we now know firsthand how much this hurts those affected. However, before we lost our "innocence", truth be told, we probably didn't give any of it much thought.

On this 10th Halloween without Nina, I do my best to ignore all the ghoulishness surrounding this time of year. If I do find I am having difficulty, I try very hard to focus on positive memories of Halloweens past, such as her grade-school costume party where our basement became a makeshift haunted house where blindfolded "witches" and "fairy princesses" shrieked and giggled as they plunged their hands into bowls full of peeled grape "eyeballs" and wet macaroni "brains". Or the photos I have of her in different costumes over the years, from Care Bear to Punk Rocker. Then there is the photo taken of Nina on her last Halloween. No longer of trick-or-treat age, she stayed home to pass out the candy and carved her own Jack-O-Lantern that she is pictured proudly alongside, with her ever-present smile and that wonderful twinkle in her brown eyes; such precious memories...

For those with a missing trick-or-treater this Halloween, the first holidays are the most difficult. Though I find they are easier to bear as time marches on, there will always be the awareness that someone so loved is absent from the family gatherings. Remember that this roller-coaster grief-ride brings different feelings with each passing year. It is important to allow those feelings—whatever they may be—and let them happen. Try not to be waylaid by others' expectations of you. Trust your instincts. Truly, only you know what is best for you.

Cathy L. Seehuetter  
TCF St. Paul, MN

## Halloween

*It is here, this day of merriment and children's pleasure.  
Gremlins and goblins  
and ghosties at the door  
of your house.*

*And the other children  
come to the door of your mind.  
Faces out of the past,  
small ghosts with sweet, painted faces.*

*They do not shout.  
Those children  
who no longer march laughing  
on cold Halloween nights,  
they stand at the door of your mind*

*and you will let them in,  
so that you can give them  
the small gifts of Halloween,  
a smile and a tear.*

Sascha

## **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](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](http://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 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.

### **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.

# *The Compassionate Friends*

P.O. Box 50833



**Nashville, TN**

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**October 2019**

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## **WHY ME? —The Unanswerable Question**

**M**ost of us have pondered this question at some time in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grievers found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

Polly Moore  
TCF, Nashville, TN