**September 2016 The Compassionate Friends Volume 30● Number 9**

 ***THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

 **P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •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.

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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.*

**September 11 Meeting:**

**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

 **How Men, Women and Siblings**

 **Grieve Differently**

G

rief is handled differently by each one of us and it is very

hard work. Many bereaved families have found that our

 grief differs greatly from the same process in our spouse,

significant other and remaining children. It is a fact that men

and women grieve differently and that the experience of grief

as well as the expression of our grief differs greatly according

to the age and maturity of siblings. At our September meeting,

we will address this important issue 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 don’t they do this?”

Our regular sharing groups will follow. We hope you will be with us.

As we grieve the loss of our children and one another’s,

We begin to find a different kind of love than we expected to experience.

 Rosalie Baker

 TCF, Rochester, NY

Where grief is still very fresh, the most important resolution

may be the dedication to survive each new day.

 Bruce H. Conley

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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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*Save the date:* 40th National Conference

July 28-30, 2017 Orlando, FL

***Celebrating Life***

*At your conception, a ray of sunshine touched the heart*

*Love had been planted.*

*At your conception, a ray of sunshine brightened the womb*

*Life had been shared.*

*At your conception, a gift had been given*

*Your story began.*

*At your conception, a ray of sunshine entered the earth*

*A spirit, a soul lay quiet within.*

*Like beautiful waves—love, life, a spirit, a soul, a story of you…*

*Oceans of hope*

*At your conception.*

Pamela Hagens

TCF Nashville

Inspired by The Compassionate Friends

40th National Conference

**Despair and Hope**

I

 find myself thinking a great deal about despair. I think about it often enough that I actually looked it up. It means “to lose hope.”

I don’t have a great deal of previous experience with despair. But now I belong to a new group. This group knows a great deal about despair. My previous group really didn’t.

When I try to think of times I’ve felt despair before, it mostly takes me back to much younger days and failed romances. In the scheme of things, those problems (and others) no longer seem worthy of despair.

In our bereavement, I believe a big challenge is to cling to our hope...to hope that may be small and quiet and fragile.

Like Pandora, the figure in Greek mythology, as the world’s unleashed trials and troubles swirl around us, we struggle to shut the lid on the box and preserve that one last potential comfort: hope. It’s not easy.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Arlington, VA

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**Grandparent’s Day**

(September 11, 2016)

I

n our involvement in the grief over the death of our child, we fail to realize that grandparents also grieve. Although not in the same way we do, they do grieve. Their grief is two-sided, one for the child who is dear to them and the other for their own child who is suffering. Just as the parent does, the grandparent loses his future. One of the joys of grandparenthood is the knowledge that through grandchildren they achieve immortality. It is expected that their name will be carried on through them. At the death of their grandchild, that branch of their family tree is cut off. What should have been will not be. In cases of an only child, there will be no future generation. Just as for the parent, the family of the grandparent will never be complete again. They, too, feel the empty place at family gatherings. We bereaved parents must consider the needs of grandparents and at the same time be open and honest with them about our needs. We must let them know how they can help us, but at the same time, we must be aware that they, too, need help. Mutual sharing of feelings between bereaved parents and grandparents will be helpful to both in the recovery process. The sharing not only of painful feelings but also happy memories of the child with grandparents can be helpful for both and it can also create a deeper relationship in the family.

Margaret Gerner

TCF, St. Louis, MO

***A Friend***

*I need a friend to sit with me,*

*To help me struggle through*

*The sadness and the anger,*

*The crying I will do.*

*I need a friend to sit with me,*

*To help me work this out,*

*The guilt and all the anguish,*

*The times I’ll want to shout.*

*I need a friend to sit with me,*

*To help me through my pain,*

*The longing and the emptiness,*

*The need to speak his name.*

 Lilly Barstow

 TCF, Abbotsford, BC, Canada

**If I Had Only Known**

I

f had only known that you would be gone, what would I have said, what would I have done?

Would I have spent hours watching your sleeping face? How many thousands more kisses would I have given? How many more times would I have squeezed you tight? So many memories that have yet to be, stolen away.

So many lives left untouched because of your absence. What would our first fight be about? What kind of student would you be; what kind of brother, son, husband, father would you be? How many lives will your absence affect? Like a stone that was never thrown into the water. Did you really know we love you?

Did you know you were going to go? Could I have made your life any better? What would I change, what could I have done differently?

Would I have stayed awake all the time so as not to waste one precious moment of time with you, looking at you, listening to you, memorizing the sound of your voice, the shape of your face, the weight of you in my arms, the warmth of you?

The shape your blankets were in when you climbed out of them, the sound of your feet and how warm they were when they were just out of your shoes. Every memory every moment of your life, would I somehow have cataloged it better in my own mind? Would they seem more vivid, would I have paid more attention? Would they have been more than memories? Would they somehow have become moments etched physically in my mind like some kind of film that I could replay at will?

How many more times would I have touched you just to remember the smoothness of your skin or the smell of your breath or hair, the way your small hand felt in mine?

The quirky ways you did or said certain things that were just so unique to you. Would I have tried to imagine the ache in my chest that your absence would bring?

Would it have been enough if I had only known; would things be any different if…I had only known?

Dawn Lyons

 TCF, Bakersfield, CA

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TCF "Online Support Community" Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing

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he Compassionate Friends national website offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" listed under the Find Support menu.

***It’s the Music That Bonds the Soul***

*The room you once lived in*

*Doesn’t look the same.*

*The people who used to call you*

*Never mention your name*

*The car you used to drive*

*They may not make anymore;*

*And all the things you treasured*

*Are boxed behind closed doors.*

*The clothes you set the trends by*

*Are surely out of date.*

*The people you owed money to*

*Have wiped away the slate.*

*Things have changed and changed*

*Since you went away.*

*But some things remain the same*

*Each and every day.*

*Like the aching in my heart—*

*A scar that just won’t heal.*

*Or the way a special song*

*Can change the way I feel.*

*Brother, you must know that the music*

*Bonds us and will keep us close;*

*Because secretly I know in my heart*

*It’s the music you miss the most.*

*So let the world keep turning,*

*Time can take its toll.*

*As long as the music is playing*

*You’ll be dancing in my soul.*

 *Stacey Gilliam*

*TCF, N. Oklahoma City, OK*

**On Pain and Healing...**

I

n pain management used for patients with chronic pain, it is taught not to tighten around the pain but to relax and allow the pain to be present. The idea is that when pain is resisted, it intensifies. When we breathe deeply and acknowledge the presence of pain, it has room to move and can dissipate more readily. Pain is there to tell us something, to warn us of possible danger.

This is as true for emotional, spiritual and mental pain as it is for physical pain. When pain speaks, we need to listen. All it takes is paying attention to our pain so that when it comes we remember to breathe and get soft. We don’t want to fight with our pain. We want to learn from it.

Time does not heal. But healing does take time. Give yourself the gift of time. To become whole means that as we open to the pain, we open to the loss. We break open and, as a consequence, we get bigger and include more of life. We include what would have been “lost” to us if our hearts and minds had closed against the pain, we include what would have been lost if we had not taken the time to heal. As singer/songwriter Carly Simon tells us: “There’s more room in a broken heart.”

From the chapter, “Time Does Not Heal All Wounds,”

of the book, “Good Grief,” by Deborah Morris Coryell

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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.

**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.

**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 or email 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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***On Seeing Orange Colored Butterflies in September***

*Time between summer and winter.*

*Time under changing skies.*

*Muted and heavy with foresight, or endless blue, smiling at butterflies.*

*Time between summer and winter.*

*Time between laughter and tear.*

*Harvest of beauty remembered, and voices (where are you?) to hear.*

*Time between summer and winter.*

*Thoughtful and painful and wise.*

*Muted and heavy with losing, but also smiling at butterflies.*

Sascha

***A Friend***

*I need a friend to sit with me,*

*To help me struggle through*

*The sadness and the anger,*

*The crying I will do.*

*I need a friend to sit with me,*

*To help me work this out,*

*The guilt and all the anguish,*

*The times I’ll want to shout.*

*I need a friend to sit with me,*

*To help me through my pain,*

*The longing and the emptiness,*

*The need to speak his name.*

Lilly Barstow

TCF, Abbotsford, BC, Canada

***Bereaved Parents***

*Different ages*

*Different stages*

*Different issues*

*Same pain*

*Daily strain*

*Occasional tissues*

*Our children have died*

*Often is all we know*

*A fact we fear to hide*

*Despite our ever-present woe*

*We live with pride*

*Though broken-hearted*

*To love, remember, and grow*

Victor Montemurro

TCF Medford, NY

*You once did something for me more meaningful*

*than the greatest of deeds; you held me in your*

*arms and let me cry.”*

Bonnie Jison

TCF Topeka, KS