

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NEW MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 8283 • Hermitage, TN 37076 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) •
Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.org



Chapter Leaders: Justin and Tracy Brewer, (615) 812-1504, e-mail: tbrewer395@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: melanierladd@gmail.com
Treasurer: Ed Pyle, (615) 712-3245, email: edpyletaxlaw@gmail.com
Outreach: David Gibson, (615) 308-2520, email: davidg14@bellsouth.net
Regional Coordinators: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: lolly39@aol.com
Dana Young (931)581-7090

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 at the ABC (Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Tennessee) Building, 560 Royal Parkway, Nashville, TN 37214 (**SEE NEW MAILING ADDRESS ABOVE.**)
We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

September 11th Meeting:

Ask It Basket

Bereaved parents are often plagued with questions regarding their grief. If there is something bothering you, bring your questions for the basket. This meeting will provide an especially good opportunity for those of us who are farther along in our grief to give the benefit of our experience to those who are just beginning their sad journey by addressing the questions. We invite our old-timers to come and lend a hand. Together we can find the support we need. Our regular sharing sessions will follow this program.



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.

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 DeathMike 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



*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—

Glenn Thomas Allen, Jr.
(Tommy)
September 2
Son of Ann McKee and
Stepson of Wilson McKee

Charles Michael Brown
(Charlie)
September 15
Son of Dan & June Brown
Brother of Katherine Brown

Gary Lee Durichek
September 2
Son of Jimmy and Barbara Hayes

Bert Rich
September 11
Son of
Shirley Rich-Brinegar

Coleton Harris Banniza
August 27
Son of Robert & Tiffany Banniza

Emily Michelle Childers
September 30
Daughter of
Michael & Paula Childers
Sister of Sarah and Julie

Giovanni Mikhail Gilis
September 7
Son of Karrie Robb

Scotty Lee Rumble
September 11
Son of Kimberly Rumble

Andrew Morris Pack
September 8
Son of
Wayne and Kassandra Pack

Nathan Young
September 19
Son of Dana Young



John Ashley Duncan
September 11
Son of Mike and Kay Duncan
Brother of Jamie



And in the month of their deaths—

Pamela Sue Chaiken
September 19
Daughter of
Lionel and Sandra Chaiken;
Sister of Stephanie

Tucker Jordan Griffin
(T.J.)
September 21
Son of Jason and Angela Griffin

Lindsay Carole Miller
September 11
Daughter of
David and Rebecca Miller
Granddaughter of
Roy and Carole Renfro

Christopher Michael Swayze
September 24
Son of
Michael and Carol Swayze

Kaitlyn Kimberly Cook
September 15
Daughter of
Jim Cook and Sylvia Bosma
Sister of Aaron and Zander

Christopher Miller Harris
September 11
Son of Bill and Judy Harris

Philip G. Sanders
September 20
Son of Jean Porch
Nephew of Deanie Gregory

Keenan Thompson
September 15
Son of Chris Thompson

Darby Felts
September 9
Son of Deanie Gregory
Nephew of Jean Porch

Elizabeth Harrison Jackson
September 24
Daughter of
Bennet and Jane Harrison

Don Bruce Winters
September 8
Son of Jerry and Loretta Winters

Michael Scott Jones
September 16
Son of Warren and Donna Jones
and Betty D Jones; Brother of
David, Jennifer, and Becky

Maxim Siesov
September 11
Lindsay Carole Miller's
"Other Half"

Ryan Lee Wiseman
September 5
Son of
Roger and Deborah Wiseman



*I'll be seeing you
In all the old familiar places
That this heart of mine embraces
All day through.*

Billie Holiday, "I'll Be Seeing You"

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.

*Michael and Treva Ambrose
In loving memory of their daughter,
Misty Whitney Ambrose*

*Martha Davenport in Loving Memory
of her granddaughter,
Lauren Kristina O'Saile
Daughter of Don Davenport*

*Shirley Rich-Brinegar
In loving memory of her son,
Bert Rich*

*Mike and Kay Duncan
In Loving Memory of their sons
Jon Ashley Duncan and Jamie Duncan*

*Danny and Sherri Garcia
In loving memory of their son,
James Austin Garcia*

*Jerry and Loretta Winters
In loving memory of their son
Don Bruce Winters*

*Robert and Cassandra Pack
In loving memory of their son,
Andrew Morris Pack*

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 our 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.

Healing Takes Time

*Did you wake up in the morning
with tears in your heart?
And did you say to yourself
"I should not feel like crying,
not like this, every morning?"*

*But you do know the truth, don't you?
When life deals us such a tragic blow,
such enormous damage,
we need many mornings to recover.
We need more than a few moments to heal.*

*Take for yourself the grace
of one quiet healing-step at a time.
Trying to rush the work of grief
will slow down your renewal.*

*You only need to remember
that you WILL recover some day.
You only need to remember
that we all have our own measure.
And we all heal at our own pace.*



Sascha

Guilt

*My child has died.
I must have done something wrong.
Otherwise, she'd still be alive.
Wouldn't she?*

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

The Guilt Box

On my long journey, I am carrying a large and heavy object. It is a guilt box. I set it down for a moment. After resting a while, I find an opening and climb inside. As my eyes adjust to the murky darkness, I realize it is very tight and uncomfortable in the box. My guilt is so large that there is barely room for me.

I look at my guilt and say, "I've been carrying you for a long, long time. You are getting heavier and heavier."

"Yes," guilt answers. "I am a heavy burden. It takes a lot of energy for you to carry me. But now that you have set me down and are here inside with me, maybe you can get to know me better."

"I thought I did know you," I say.

"No," guilt answers. "Not really. I am treated as a burdensome stranger, something to carry around, your cross to bear. Why not get to know me, learn to understand me? I deserve that, you know, since I am your creation after all.

I sigh and agree to stay here with guilt as long as it takes to get to really know this important feeling. After a while I realize I must know everything it has to tell me because I am now familiar with its sad and endless stories.

Bored, I look around. Surprised, I see that guilt is no longer taking up so much space and wonder if there is anything else in the box. I thank guilt for all it has taught me, give it a hug, and excuse myself to get up and look around.

Almost at once I see, almost hidden in a corner, something that looks familiar. As I get closer I realize it is my coat of perfection. This is where I lost it! This is where it is! When I look closely, I see with dismay that now it has holes in it. It is no longer perfect! As I look at the rips and tears, I see movement out of a corner of my eye. A dark shape comes towards me and says hello. I instinctively draw back, but it moves nearer, pleading, "Don't be afraid of me. I am only shame, the cousin of guilt. Please don't be afraid."

"I don't like to look at you," I say.

"But you must," shame answers, and begins to grow brighter.

As I stand still, letting it come towards me, something very comforting takes my hand. I look and without being introduced, because of the way it makes me feel, know that it is courage. With courage beside me, I stand taller and look into shame's face. I see myself reflected in its eyes. After gazing steadily a few moments I am surprised to see I am growing brighter too for having looked so bravely.

I sigh, hold my arms out and let shame embrace me. Now coming to embrace me too, is sadness.

Shame and sadness hold me for a long time and then they move back, revealing something else – regret. Regret takes my hand and tells me she is much lighter to carry than guilt, and that with her there is even room for joy.

Then regret, too, moves back and I see my coat of imperfection lying at my feet. I want to leave it there, but courage nudges me, bidding me pick it up, to look at the coat more closely. When I do, I realize it has changed once more.

Now where the rips and tears had been, there are stitches of tiny, gossamer threads and beads of colored glass. In a strange way it is very beautiful.

I try it on and find it is no longer tight and constricting, but lighter and roomier. It is warmer and more comfortable than when it only held perfection. While wearing it, I begin to grow until I no longer fit in the guilt box. Suddenly the walls break down and disappear. I look around. I am in a large and beautiful open space filled with all of life's possibilities. I take a big, deep breath, letting all my feelings fill me, then release them with a long, long sigh.

I look back and see where I have been. I turn, looking ahead at the path before me. Wrapped snugly in my coat of imperfection and with hope and courage leading the way, I step out once again on my journey.

From Catching the Light: Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child
Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

Reminders

A young mother strolling her baby through the mall or down the street
Reminds me of years ago, strolling you along, either shopping or just to be walking with you.
It also reminds me of times that can never be. I will not get to stroll my grandchildren for you or with you.



A mom helping her child shop for school clothes, and needed school supplies
Reminds me of the great times we had with this same chore, getting ready for the coming school year.
We can't ever do that again; there is no joy or laughter when shopping anymore without my "buddy."

A young lady buying her first car, getting her driver's license or driving down the highway
Reminds me of the day you received your privilege to drive and purchased your own car.
Your car had to be sold; your driver's license is in your photo album along with other memories.

Something as simple as a tree swaying in the wind at the first hint of autumn
Reminds me of how your blonde hair would still be lightened from the summer sun and blow into your face with each breeze.
Your September birthday is celebrated without you and the loneliness is felt as much as the cold of winter to come.

People talking about their children or a relative's child or even a sibling
Reminds me of something you said, did, wanted to do; an idea you had, or even a gesture of yours.
I have to speak of you now in the past tense, because there aren't any new tales to tell, only past actions and memories.

Your friends graduating, growing up, growing older, and moving on
Reminds me of your hopes and dreams of doing the same as they are. Maturity was becoming yours at a rapid pace.
Your life cut short of all of these things, to me you are frozen in time, never to grow any older than the 17 you were.

With each reminder comes the joy of just knowing you and a sadness of missing you so much.
Reminders are everywhere. We can't run away from them, but after the pain comes the pleasure of the memories.
There will always be pain at the loss, but the memories will see us through and each one will be cherished because that is all we have now.

Bonnie Harris-Tibbs

Indian Summer

*This may well be
the softest time of all.
Does mild September
still surprise your mind
with memories you thought
you would not have?*

*Believe me, friend, that
(after many tears)
this may well be
the softest time of all.*

Sascha

*When the sun sits down on the mountains
and the clouds turn purple and pink.
And golden rays send fingers out to touch me,
I stop breathing and inhale with my heart
Because I know
that along those glittering strands of light
Lies my connection to you.*

Sandy Goodman
TCF, Wind River WY

The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you'll learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered.

You will be whole again but you will never be the same.

Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.

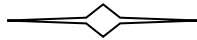
Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler

The Battle

*A battleground inside my heart,
A fierce tug of war,
Forced to move forward,
Yet clutching at the past,
hanging on desperately
Refusing to release my hold,
Fearing the memories,
your beautiful face will fade.
Terrified I might forget
Some small piece of you.
And in years gone by,
Truly blessed with blissful ignorance
Unknowing that pain could reach
Such a devastating magnitude.
The only solace to my soul:
I know you're God's angel now
And one day I will see you again.*

Charlotte Eatherly
TCF Nashville, TN

(Note: 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.)



Sibling Grief

A Journey to the “New Normal”

May 31 marked seven years since my only sibling Dave died from cancer at age 32. This June 28 we would have been celebrating Dave’s 40th birthday with a big party, and I’d be kidding him about going bald, just like all the Snepp men before him. Instead, I’ll be getting ready for the TCF National Conference, at which I’ll share memories of his brilliance, great smile, and sense of humor with those who will never have the pleasure of meeting him in person.

At this point in my grief journey, most will be good memories of how Dave lived, rather than bad memories of how he died. I can’t recall the moment when that shift of perspective occurred, but I would like to share a few memories and milestones that have marked the way:

- Months after Dave died, I saw the movie “Big”, starring Tom Hanks, and “lost it” when his mother stared out the window, wondering if she’d ever see him again. I watched the movie again recently and didn’t lose it.
- It was three months before I felt up to sharing with anyone the details of the day my brother died at his home in Bellevue, Washington, in the company of Mom, Dad, and me. On the way home from that emotional conversation, I drove the wrong way down a one-way street in downtown Chicago – it might be smart to have a friend drive you to your first few TCF meetings!
- I discovered that the grief path is not a straight line. A few good days can be followed by several bad ones. I’ve heard other TCF members call this their “roller coaster ride.”
- For a year, I couldn’t listen to the song “Wind Beneath My Wings” came on. For the next year, I kept it on but cried through it. Now, I can usually make it all the way through without any tears!
- With the help of TCF, I realized that despite friends expecting it to be possible, I’d never be “back to normal.” My focus instead shifted to finding my “new normal”. While I can’t point to a time when that happened (probably after attending a TCF Conference), THAT was a milestone.
- For three Christmases after Dave died, I didn’t put up a tree in my condo. As I was getting out ornaments for my first tree since his death, I came across a bunch of ornaments that he had had in his apartment. I came totally unglued then, but now I look forward to seeing those ornaments each Christmas.
- It was three years before I felt that I had enough emotional energy to pursue a relationship. Even now, I don’t have a lot of tolerance for guys I go out with that gripe about their brothers or sisters.

My most vivid “landmark” to date along my grief journey came following my grandfather’s death. We were in Atlanta cleaning out his apartment, and I came across a pile of post cards and letters that Dave had written to my grandparents through the years. Earlier in my journey, a “blind side” such as that would have sent me into a tailspin. In this case, though, my immediate reaction was one of happiness, for I had found a part of Dave that I didn’t know I still had! I saved a few of the post cards, sent a couple to my cousin who was referenced in some of the letters, and (amazingly) threw the rest away. It was fun to share the memories, but I didn’t feel the need to hang onto them. It was at that point, nearly five years after Dave’s death, that I truly felt as if I was closing in on that “new normal.”

Karen Snepp
Frisco, Texas

Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.

From *A Grief Observed*
by C. S. Lewis

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 8283, Hermitage, TN 37076. 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

P.O. BOX 8283

Hermitage, TN

37076

**Return Service
Requested**



September 2022

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nashville, TN
Permit No. 593

Your Child—Gift or Possession?

I had a choice to either view Laura Lou from the vantage point of entitlement, and that is to say, “She was mine. I had a right to her. She was my child, and therefore her death is tantamount to theft,” or to look on her from the vantage point of grace and gift ... that I’d ever had her for a single moment was more than I could claim was my “right.” I had a choice between which perspective I would put around her ten years as a part of my history, and I chose to regard her life as gift. I chose to regard her as someone that I had never deserved, as someone whose very presence in my existence was utterly beyond anything I could have created. That did not take the sadness out of it. It did not in any way diminish the grief, but it did keep me from being angry and resentful at God ... or at doctors who didn’t know how to save her, and I would say to you that you, too, have the same choice—you can either regard the people you have loved as your rightful possession and therefore their death as a kind of stealing of what rightfully belongs to you; or ... you can stop asking, “Why did she die?” and step back and ask a prior question, “Why did she live?” ... When you ask that question, you’re getting back to that mystery of grace that any of us exists for a single day, and the kind of gratitude that you feel in the presence of something that you know is a gift is something very different from what you feel when something that is rightfully yours has been stolen.

Dr. John Claypool—Author of *Tracks of a Fellow Struggler*
From the Keynote Address—Twelfth Annual TCF National Conference