

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

September 8th Meeting: Suicide Awareness Month

Nashville TCF chapter member, Ron Henson, will speak in memory of his son, Daniel. Ron will bring to light questions and stigmas surrounding suicide with his journey since the death of Daniel.

Our regular sharing groups will follow this program.

Please join us.



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 615-294-4959
Illness	David and Peggy Gibson 615-308-2520 or 615-504-4307
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

From our poet laureate, Sascha Wagner:

*Grief is the ceremony
of lost treasure.
Grief is the homage
you pay to the love
you were once blessed to share.
Grief is not an enemy.*

*Grief is a darkness
that answers no questions.
But love will give you
light on the path
of leaving your questions
behind.*

Sascha Wagner emigrated to the United States from Germany in 1947. She had two children, Eve and Nino. Nino drowned at age three-and-a-half, then on the eve of the 15th anniversary of Nino's death, Eve died by suicide. When Sasha passed away in 2003, the executor of her estate awarded the copyrights to Sascha's writings to The Compassionate Friends, so that her eloquent verse might continue to motivate and encourage grieving families. Each of her poems is shared with great admiration and appreciation for Sascha's life, wisdom, and the legacy of her words.

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM--**In the month of their births**

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

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



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

Gary Lee Durichek
September 2
Son of
Jimmy and Barbara
Hayes

Coleton Harris Banniza
September 5
Son of
Robert and Tiffany Banniza

Morgan Langham
September 27
Daughter of
Mark and Gini Langham

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

John Mallard, Jr.
(Jay)
September 15
Son of
Mary Mallard

Giovanni Mikhail Gilis
September 7
Son of
Karrie Robb

Nicole Danielle Mayes
September 20
Daughter of
Cannon Mayes

Andrew Morris Pack
September 8
Son of
Wayne and Kassandra Pack

Bert Rich
September 11
Son of
Shirley Rich-Brinegar



Camdyn Elijah Woods
September 7
Son of
Steven and Alicia Frankenfield
Brother of
Brooklyn and Daxtyn



Nathan Young
September 19
Son of
Dana Young

**Nostalgia**

*The school bells ring, young voices sing,
And small ones shout with glee.
The autumn air beckons school to start
And left alone is me.*

*What makes me feel so down and blue,
And boggled down with thoughts of you?
I see the school bus passing by
And find myself with a tear in my eye.*

*Is it the clothes that we can't buy
While others grab the jeans to try
Or is it autumn in the air
That pulls at heartstrings—already bare?*

*Maybe it's falling leaves and dying grass
Bringing reflections like a looking glass.
Whatever the reason that stirs my heart
Every year when school must start
Reminds me how much I miss you.*

Barb Williams
TCF Ft. Wayne, IN

Pain...

...is watching the little boy your child played with last year board the school bus on his very first day of school.

Barbara Augustine
TCF Lancaster, PA

And in the month of their deaths, we remember them-



**James Michael Bolton
(Mikey)**
September 11
Son of
Jim and Loretta Bolton

Pamela Sue Chaiken
September 29
Daughter of
Lionel and Sandra
Chaiken
Sister of Stephanie

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

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

Christopher Miller Harris
September 11
Son of
Bill Harris and Judy Harris

**Elizabeth Harrison
Jackson**
September 24
Daughter of
Bennet and Jane Harrison

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

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 Carole Swayze

Isaac Schujahn
September 27
Son of
Derek and Linda Schujahn

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

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

Keanan Thompson
September 15
Son of
Chris Thompson

Don Bruce Winters
September 8
Son of
Jerry and Loretta Winters



Ryan Lee Wiseman
September 5
Son of
Roger and Deborah Wiseman

Grandparent's Day

In 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 parents, the family of the grandparents 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 can be helpful for both and it can also create a deeper relationship in the family.

Margaret Gerner
TCF St. Louis, MO

Death ends a life, not a relationship.

Mitch Albom

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.

Linda Black
in Loving Memory
of her son,
Christopher William Black

Don and Sherry Eakes
in Loving Memory
of their grandson,
Taylor Christian Brewer;
Son of
Justin and Tracy Brewer

Becky Harris and Will Harris
in Loving Memory
of her son, and his brother,
Max Hillman Harris

Jerry and Loretta Winters
in Loving Memory
of their son,
Don Bruce Winters

Mike and Kay Duncan
in Loving Memory
of their sons,
Jon Ashley Duncan and
Jamie Michael Duncan

Shirley Rich-Brinegar
in Loving Memory
of her son,
Bert Rich



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



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.

Each month, Price Printing, 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.

Comparisons

*It is useless to wonder
what grief is larger
or what grief is smaller.
The death of children
fills to ultimate endurance
every human dimension
for pain.*



*There is no need
to give rank to death.
We only have to recognize
that grief has filled
a whole life
to its ultimate boundaries.*

Sascha

*Tears are God’s gift to us. Our holy
water. They heal us as they flow.*

Rita Schiano

SUICIDE: How Do We Say It?

From the moment we learned of our daughter's death, I knew that the word "suicide" had the power to erase her life while emblazoning her death in neon letters in the minds of her friends and colleagues. During the unremitting misery of those early days, I even toyed with the idea of telling no one she was gone, willing her to stay alive in the thoughts of those who knew her, forgetting that I'd already notified our family and closest friends. It was a fairy tale wish I contrived as a way of allowing myself a momentary escape from the unthinkable reality of her death. If her death were never acknowledged, would she still be here?

My fantasy vanished in the cold light of the days that followed. I knew that we could never dishonor Rhonda's memory by concealing her suicide. I wrote a letter to friends and relatives, informing them of the events leading up to her death. I hoped my letter would quell the inevitable whispers by openly acknowledging her depression and her decision to end her own life. I implored them to speak often and openly about her to us; to do otherwise would deny her existence.

I never intended to embark on a campaign to confront, let alone eradicate, the stigma of suicide. What mattered the most was that we who loved Rhonda must not let the circumstances of her death diminish her memory or her accomplishments. I explained that she had "taken her own life" or that "she died of suicide." An expression I refused to use then and refuse to use to this day, is the despicable "committed suicide," with its implications of criminality. Historically, that term was an instrument of retaliation against the survivors, and it has no place in today's enlightened society.

Many people prefer to say, "completed suicide," but as a parent who witnessed my child's twenty-year struggle against the demons of clinical depression, I don't care much for that, either. "Died of suicide" or "died by suicide" are accurate, emotionally neutral ways to explain my child's death. My first encounter with suicide occurred many years ago when my dentist, a gentle family man in his mid-thirties, took his own life. Since that time, I have known neighbors, relatives, friends and other hard-working, highly respected individuals who died this way. I've facilitated meetings in which grieving parents declined to speak about their children because they couldn't handle the group's reaction.

Rhonda was a gifted scholar, writer and archaeologist who, like my mother, suffered from adult-onset manic depression (also called bipolar disorder). She made a lasting contribution in her field, and a wonderful tribute to her life and her work appeared in *American Antiquity*, *Journal of the Society for American Archaeology* (October, 1994).

Both my daughter and my mother suffered tremendously in their struggles to conceal their illness. Neither of them won that battle, but my mother responded to medications that minimized the highs and lows, and she died of cancer at eighty-seven. Sadly, doctors never discovered a magic formula that could offer Rhonda the same relief. She ended her own life at age thirty-six, after a year of severe depression that was triggered by life stresses beyond her control. I saw her battle firsthand, and I witnessed her valiant struggle to survive. She wanted desperately to live; she died because she thought she had no alternative.

In his revealing book, *Telling Secrets*, the great theologian Frederick Buechner describes his father's suicide, which occurred when Buechner was just a boy. The conspiracy of silence that was imposed on Buechner and his brother had a profound effect on their development and their relationships with other family members. "We are as sick as our secrets," he concludes.

We whose children have taken their own lives must do all that we can to help eradicate the secrecy and stigma that surround their deaths. If we allow these to persist, we allow their lives to be diminished. We owe our children more than that.

Joyce Andrews
TCF Sugar Land, TX

The National Board of Directors of The Compassionate Friends has officially adopted the terms "died by suicide" or "died of suicide" to replace the commonly used "committed suicide" or "completed suicide." All TCF publications have been updated to reflect the new language, and TCF chapters and the community at large are being asked to use the new terminology when the topic is discussed.

Pictures From the Heart

Since we have lost our children, part of what remains of them are pictures from the heart, which are those mental images we hold so dear. For some of us these pictures are memories of what had been, and for others these pictures are dreams of what might have been. And for some of us these pictures are a little of both. For us, dreams and memories are really the same. It is the dimension where our children now reside. In a sense, dreams are nothing more than memories of the future, because we remember our children by the dreams we had for them; and memories are nothing more than dreams of the past, because to remember them is certainly to dream of them. I believe it is incorrect to think that someone will not hurt as much because they only had their child for a little while or to think that someone will not hurt as much because their child had the chance to grow up. In these dreams and memories, these pictures from the heart, all of our children are infants and all of our children have grown up. The sadness and pain come from the broken heart, the memories and the dreams from the pieces that remain.

Kenneth Hensley
TCF Nashville, TN

For a Time

So, our son Jacob came to stay with us for a time, twenty years. Like we all have come to stay for a time. Like the earth will stay for a time. And from what the astronomers are saying, our galaxy has come to stay for a time.

The Buddhists use the term “impermanence” to describe the nature of all things on the planet. Although I find the meaning true, it is clinical and scientific. I believe “Staying for a time” honors a person’s life more, no matter how lengthy or brief that life is.

And with Jacob, what a time it was! A happy birth, a healthy toddler learning how to walk, wobbling up and down the gentle hill in the backyard. A helpful boy eager to help dad with nailing toy shelves together, or folding laundry. A smart, funny, talented teenager playing trombone in the school band, and guitar in his garage band, and loved by his classmates. Or playing Bach on the piano at home and at recitals. And then he graduated; a fine young man with so much potential for whatever he chose to do with his life.

But sadly, his mental illness manifested at twenty, ultimately taking his life. Thirty of his classmates came to the service and spoke so highly of him. How he was there for them with their troubles, gave them a laugh when they needed it, or just talked with them about the things that matter.

Father John said Jacob’s life was complete after hearing me repeat Jake’s last words written in his note, “Friends and family I love you all. Enjoy life!” I was shocked and confused. How could a life of only twenty years be complete?

He said, “Jacob was a kind, loving soul with compassion for everyone. Some people live into their nineties and never get there!” Looking deeply at this over time, it changed my attitude and softened my anger.

So, Jacob came to stay with us for a time. And after every cry for missing him, I downshift to such gratitude for having him for those wonderful, love-filled, twenty years.

Mike Bell
TCF Nashville, TN

The Death of the Young

People ask: “Why do children or young people die, when they have lived so little?” How do you know that they have lived little? This crude measure of yours is TIME, but life is not measured in time. This is just the same as to say: “Why is this saying, this poem, this picture, this piece of music, so short? Why was it broken off and not drawn out to the size of the longest speech or piece of music, the largest picture?” As the measure of length is inapplicable to the meaning or greatness of productions of wisdom or poetry, so — even more evidently — it is inapplicable to life. How do you know what inner growth this soul accomplished in its short span, and what influence it had upon others?

Spiritual Life cannot be measured by a physical measure.

Tolstoy

Forever 13

*He would have been a junior
He should have been on the football team
He could have been a wrestler
He might have been. . .*

*He would have been 17 this year
He should have been laughing and running about
He could have been chasing girls
He might have been. . .*

*He would have been blowing his French horn
He should have been giving his teachers a hard time
He could have been driving himself to all school activities
He might have been. . .*

Except now he is forever 13

Lorrie Beyl
TCF Colorado Springs, CO

The Unfinished Path

*When we were young, under your wing I was kept.
As I grew older, on your shoulder I wept.
With a problem I could come to you, day or night.
Just knowing your answers would always be right.
You joined the Marines and "Semper Fidelis" you barked.
I could see right then my path was marked.
It was a path to perfection or so I thought.
To be like you is what I sought.
Since your prints have ended, I don't know where to go.
I've asked Mom and Dad, but they don't quite know.
So I ask your advice just one more time.
Because your prints have ended,
The rest must be mine.*

Tim Maloney, USMC
TCF Hingham, MA

CHAPTER INFORMATION

Are you Moving?

Each time a newsletter is returned to us with an incorrect address, we pay to retrieve it in order to find out where you've moved; then we pay again to mail it back to you. This is in addition to the original bulk mail cost. It would help a great deal in both time and money if you would notify us immediately of any address change so your newsletter can reach you right away. You may call, write or email the chapter leaders or the newsletter editor. Thanks for your help.

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.

How You Can Help

Most people who attend TCF meetings never heard of TCF before they lost a child, and many bereaved parents still have not heard that there is an organization that exists to help them navigate their grief journey. If you know a family in the middle Tennessee area who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you think they would benefit from finding out about TCF and possibly attending a TCF meeting, we will be happy to send you some information that you may share with them about what TCF is and what we do to support bereaved parents. If you have attended a TCF meeting, it might be helpful if you would invite them to attend their first TCF meeting with you. We also have a monthly newsletter that they can receive free of charge simply by asking for it.



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, or go to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network at TSPN.org, and you will find a list of all Tennessee SOS locations.

TCF Website —A Treasure for You

When you log onto the TCF Website 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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September 2024

Reflections on TCF

While at a gathering of long-time friends I was asked about my work with Compassionate Friends and if, after all these years, I still needed the group. I responded that I really didn't need to go anymore since it had been over 13 years since Tracy died, but I really felt I wanted to pay back and help those that follow as others had helped us. One friend said, "Does it really ever go away?", to which I confirmed that it does not.

I was actually taking the easy way out of the conversation, which we often do. The room was crowded and noisy and I didn't feel like going into great detail due to the surroundings and also because of the person who asked. On the way home, thinking about this, I became upset with myself and also with my friend for her remarks since this had happened before. She had compared my loss of Tracy to how she felt when her son had polio when young; however, he made a complete recovery. I should have seized the opportunity and answered more thoroughly—really telling in more detail how life is after the death of one's child.

Telling that it still hurts, a hurt that will always be in my heart. Telling of the many reminders that pop up from everywhere verifying that our children have died. Telling that we can only imagine how big they would be now and what they would be doing with their lives, who would they marry, and how many grandchildren would they give us. Telling how seeing their friends graduating, being married, or having a baby makes us realize what we have missed. Telling even though I don't want to, I envy those who have all their children living with them and how hard it is to listen when they brag about the family get-togethers and celebrations, especially in their Christmas letters. The list could go on and on with how, who, and what, for there are so many more.

Yes, I still need you, my Compassionate Friends. You are as much a part of me as my immediate family and you ARE family. I need to know you are there to support me when I slip back in my grief, just as I will always be there to support you in your need. Life is good again and we want it to be. I can never return to others all the love and help received from Compassionate Friends, but I try.

Jo Saulsberry
TCF North Nevada Chapter, Carson City, NV