

# 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.

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*Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 P.M. on the second Sunday of each month in the HCA building on Park Plaza just north of Centennial Park off of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, North. Inside, you will see our sign and someone will greet you. We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.*

## *Candlelight Memorial Service*

### *Come Light a Candle with Us*

*December 9, 2012– 3:00 p.m.  
HCA Building*

*Your family is cordially invited to join us as we honor our children who have died.*

*Each family is asked to bring a picture 5"x7" or smaller, or other small memento of your child to place at the front of the auditorium. This will be in addition to the slides already received for the slide presentation.*

*We will have a time of refreshments and fellowship following the service. We ask that families bring a dish of small pick-up foods to share following the service. Please put your name on the bottom of your container.*

*The Birthday Table will be set up for those who wish to share their child's December birthday.*

*Share the Love As We Remember Them*

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*May the memories of this season  
come on gentle wings to touch you with peace.*



## Holiday Gifts for Children Needed

Each year, our chapter donates holiday gifts to children at a worthy establishment that works with children who are not living at home and are under care for the holidays. Since things went so well with Youth Villages in years past, it has been decided to provide gifts to them again this year. The children range in age from 6 to 18. For many of these children, these will be the only gifts they receive this holiday season. If you would like to help this year, you may participate by bringing new UNWRAPPED gifts to the TCF December 9 Memorial Service. Below is a list of the most requested items.

### Gifts:

CD Players/ MP3 Players  
 Art Supplies  
 Gameboy/Playstation games (teen rated)  
 Make up for Teens  
 Costume Jewelry (like that found in the malls at Claire's)  
 Remote control cars and planes  
 Girly things like journals, gel pens and scrapbooking items  
 Model cars  
 Board Games  
 Baby and Barbie dolls and accessories  
 Lego sets  
 Trucks  
 Disney movies  
 Watches (boys and girls)  
 Gift cards

### Stocking Stuffers:

Matchbox cars  
 Small notepads  
 Pens and pencils  
 Candy  
 Jewelry  
 Hygiene products  
 Billfolds and wallets  
 Cute little change purses for girls  
 Makeup items  
 Socks  
 Gift cards for fast food restaurants

*Once again, remember, these items may be brought in gift bags with tissue paper, but DO NOT WRAP the gifts. Youth Villages staff does the wrapping as it helps them to more evenly distribute the donated items.*

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## THINGS TO DO WHEN DESPERATE

1. Breathe.
2. Get my teddy bear.
3. Call other bereaved people (keep their phone numbers easily available).
4. Call close friends (keep their phone numbers easily available, too).
5. Call a counselor.
6. Call a hot-line.
7. Get in my rocking chair. Get in any chair and let it support me.
8. Take a hot bath.
9. Run around the block three times.
10. Listen to soothing music.
11. Put on a relaxation tape.
12. Ask someone to hold me.
13. Cry.
14. Yell into my pillow
15. Join a support group.
16. Say to myself, "Others love me," or, "I have the right to survive," or, "Others have gotten through this, I can too."
17. Stroke the dog or cat.
18. Watch an old movie on TV or read a book.
19. Hug a tree.
20. Stand or lie on the floor and feel the floor support me.
21. Pray
22. Start again at the top.

## A Candle for My Child

Each night as darkness settles over our home, a little candle begins flickering in the east window of our stair case landing. The tiny light burns until dawn and then silently is quenched with the rising sun. This is my son's light. About a year after Todd died, the leader of our chapter suggested a candle in the window for the holidays, as I had no inclination to decorate. I placed a candle there, and I have now replaced that candle with yet another candle. This is Todd's candle.....this is Todd's light.

Todd's candle has a Victorian appearance and will burn steady or flicker. When the darkness comes forth, Todd's candle begins its nightly vigil.....a vigil that will not end until I am dead. Although this is a small gesture, it has deep meaning for me. Sometimes I awaken in the middle of the night and walk into the atrium at the foot of the steps by the light of Todd's candle. I'll grab a glass of water and watch the candle flicker. Other times in the early evening, when only a reading lamp is lit in the living room, I will look into the atrium. Todd's light shines. I feel as if he is with me somehow, in the light of this little candle. I think about him, his life, his joys, his sorrows, his immense capacity to love and to laugh. I feel a deep closeness to my son that cannot be explained to anyone but those who have lost a child. I understand that there is much peace and solace in keeping my child in my heart and life and in establishing my own private rituals of remembrance.

Leaving a candle in the window has been an American tradition since the Colonial Era. The candle symbolizes the warmth and security of the family home and its message is loyalty to a family member who is not present. So, it is fitting that Todd's candle shines each night.....reminding all that he is absent from our home, but not our hearts.

Each of us has a ritual of remembrance of our child. Some of us have consciously established this. Others have unconsciously done so. But there is a ritual that brings our child close to us, only to us. Our rituals are a very personal choice. I chose not to share my ritual for 2 ½ years. Then one day a child who lives across the street asked me about the candle. I told her that it is my son's candle. She asked if he was in Iraq. "No, I said, he's in heaven."

A momentary look of fright passed over her face, and then she smiled. "I thought you had kids. You act like a mom."

Her innocent comment about me "acting like a mom" once again reinforced the fact that we will always be parents. Those of us who have children who have died will always be parents to those children. That role has shaped who we are, and intensified it more with the death of our precious child.

This is one element of losing a child that escapes the general population. If you have not lost a child, you don't understand, you can't understand the feelings and emotions that run so deeply in our psyches and our souls.

Our Compassionate Friends understand those emotions and our need to speak of our children, to deal with our overwhelming loss. Whether for a season or the rest of our lives, we have been good friends for each other. When I see Todd's candle, I think of my child, other parents, their children, their loss, my loss, the totality of the sorrow that enters our meeting room every month, and yet, I also think of the joy. There is a peaceful joy, a sense of serenity in knowing you are not alone and isolated in your unique grief. Others are walking with you on the road of life after the death of their children.

So now, when I gaze at Todd's candle, I remember his life, the security he felt within these walls, the growing up years, the love, loyalty and emotional stability he experienced as a child which enabled him to become a man of courage, self confidence and gentleness in the face of life's worst and best. I think of the other children and the parents left behind.....the sons and daughters of my Compassionate Friends. These children are missed, they are loved and they, too, are kept forever in a parent's heart. Their parents share a common bond with me that will follow each of us to our last day. We have lost our precious, beautiful children. We know what pure and overwhelming grief really is. We walk this road together as Compassionate Friends. And we remember, each of us in our own way. Todd's candle is one way to tell him that I love him as only a mother can love....unconditionally and forever. And I will always remember. I'm will always be Todd's mom. I have found that being a parent is a lifetime journey....even when our children are not with us on life's road. As parents, we define ourselves as interwoven with the fabric of our children's lives. We always remember. There is comfort in that.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my son, Todd

### *Season's Greeting*

*Leave your life open  
to the memories  
and to the promises  
of Christmas.*

Sascha

## **CHAPTER INFORMATION**

### **The “Children Remembered” Listings**

If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed on page 2 in The Children Remembered, 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. You may call the database manager at 615 356-1351, drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 50833, Nashville, TN 37205, or email us at davidg14@bellsouth.net. We'll be glad to include them. You need to contact us only once, unless any of your information changes.

### **Picture Name Tags**

If you will bring a clear picture of your child, wallet size or larger, to a TCF meeting, Lamar Bradley will make a beautiful permanent name tag with your child's picture on it for you to use each month. You will also have an opportunity to select your own butterfly to accompany the photograph. The original photo will be completely safe with Lamar and will be returned to you at the following meeting. The best part of this is that there is no charge. A big thank you goes to Lamar for unselfishly giving his time and talent.

### **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. There will be no demands made upon the parents, and the information you provide is strictly confidential.



## **BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES**

### **Survivors of Suicide**

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings, you may call the Crisis Center at 615 244-7444.

### **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.

### **Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents**

A support group for bereaved parents meets at Alive Hospice. For details, please call John Baker at 615 963-4674.

### **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).

### **TCF Web site —A Treasure for You**

When you log onto the TCF Web site at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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. Check it out.



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all  
children who have died

## Worldwide Candle Lighting®

*... that their light  
may always shine.*

**Sunday, December 9, 2012  
7 PM Around the Globe**



In the evening following our December 9 Memorial, join The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting that unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries. Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone.

### 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.

<b>Accidental Death</b> .....	Mike and Paula Childers 615-646-1333
<b>AIDS</b> .....	Joyce Soward 615-754-5210
<b>Illness</b> .....	David and Peggy Gibson 615-356-1351
<b>Infant</b> .....	Jayne Head 615-264-8184
<b>SIDS</b> .....	Kris Thompson 931-486-9088
<b>Suicide</b> .....	Ruth Edwards 615-353-8547
<b>Small Child</b> .....	Kenneth and Kathy Hensley 615-237-9972
<b>Alcohol/Drug Overdose</b> .....	Ed Pyle 615-712-3245