

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://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.

*Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 P.M. on the second Sunday of each month in the HCA building at 2501 Park Plaza 37203, 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.*

## July 13 Meeting:

### *Tying up 'Loose Ends'*

### *Following the Death of an Adult Child*

Following the death of a child, parents need only to grieve, but society calls upon us to make many important decisions. In this month's program our own Ed Pyle will address the handling of creditors, wills, and the disposition of assets to some degree, but will also address intangible memorials, from the very simple to the more sophisticated. Ed is an attorney in private practice in Nashville with a regional law firm focused on tax, business, and estate planning matters. He has been a member of TCF Nashville for some nine years and serves as a Steering Committee member and Phone Friend in loving memory of his son, Stobie.

### 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> .....	Ron and Darlene Henson 615-789-3613
<b>Small Child</b> .....	Kenneth and Kathy Hensley 615-237-9972
<b>Alcohol/Drug Overdose</b> .....	Ed Pyle 615-712-3245



**ATTENTION! WE'RE MOVING!**

**BEGINNING AUGUST 10**

**WE WILL NO LONGER MEET AT 2501 PARK PLAZA...**  
**OUR 3:00 P.M. MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE DOWN THE**  
**STREET AT HCA BUILDING #3!**

***IMPORTANT: Please see page 4 for specific directions.***

## *Wings Take Flight*

*Feathered bodies pass demurely,  
Webbed feet paddle furiously,  
Perfect patterns forming in their wake.*

*All is well, my friends, the Geese;  
I, like you, with poise and peace  
Glide on the surface of this Grief.*

*If my feet stop, will I drown?  
Will onlookers rush in from all around  
As so they gawked at my little child?*

*Honk! Honk! I want to say,  
Make a noise! Do something  
My feelings to betray.*

*Let not my feathers unruffled remain  
While wrestling the waters of boundless pain  
That webbed foot could never dare contain.*

*The water is cold...Could I be so bold?*

*Feathers unfold  
For stories untold  
As weeping, Wings take Flight.*

I wrote this poem while on retreat after the death of my daughter. I was struggling with the vast deception of my outward composure, – the graceful gliding through social circumstances – achieved only by “furious paddling” on the inside, as I grappled with the vast body of water that was my grief. Grief completely surrounded me; it was an entire lake much larger than myself, a lake in which I swam tirelessly in order to keep from drowning.

Eventually, I remembered my wings. I remembered there is always the sky. Ultimately, this poem is about moving on in the midst of grief. Even as we remain weeping, we must, at some point, spread our wings – dripping with the waters of grief, our tears – and open ourselves to new flight, new stories of hope and healing in our lives. For a goose, the water will always be there; thus so the grief for me. But I have my wings, too. And the sky.

Lisa DeBoer Tuggle  
TCF, We Need Not Walk Alone



Grief is like weeding a flower garden in the summer.  
You have to do it over and over again till the season changes.

Fay Harden  
*Songs from the Edge*

## **Another successful Balloon Release and Picnic!**

Lamar and Joy want to thank everyone who attended and those who pitched in to make our June 8 Balloon Release and Picnic at Centennial Park another wonderful day. There was so much fabulous food as well as fellowship getting to know one another and our families better. We especially appreciated the abundant and delicious barbeque cooked especially for us and donated by Roy and Barb Davies in loving memory of their sons, Roy and Taylor.



## What the TCF Veterans Know

Are you new to The Compassionate Friends? We want to welcome you, but somehow that word isn't right—this is not a group anyone wants to join. All of us wish no one ever had to walk through that door or receive this newsletter. So, when we say welcome, perhaps what we really mean is we're so sorry—but we are glad you've found us and hope you will find support at TCF.

Many members of TCF were hesitant to attend that first meeting. We didn't know what to expect. Would we be forced to talk about our child? Did we have to make a donation or commit to anything? The answer to all those questions is no. We'll listen if you wish to talk; we are members of all faiths and none; there is no cost; and you may attend as often as you wish and stay for as long as you wish. Just come.

Our few rules are simple ones and designed to ensure that TCF is a safe and comfortable place for those grieving a child's death. We request that members maintain confidentiality within the group, and we ask that you respect everyone's right to their individual beliefs. We don't tell each other how to grieve; we just walk together along this most painful of journeys.

Having made the difficult decision to attend, some of us old-timers remember being surprised or disappointed at what we found there. Perhaps we were hoping our grief would begin to ease but instead we woke the next morning feeling even worse. Already overwhelmed with our own pain, now the grief of others weighed on our mind. The parent who was sadly remembering a daughter's death ten years ago frightened us: would we still feel so sad after all those years? And what about those folks laughing and drinking coffee? How can they seem so carefree?

Perhaps talking about the death of a child isn't such a good idea after all. But thousands of TCF members would say it is a good idea, just not an easy one. Many forced themselves to

attend at first, remembering the leader's recommendation that it takes three meetings before a new member should make a decision about TCF. Others wished there were a meeting every week. Everyone is different.

Those of us who continue to participate, sometimes for a year, sometimes forever, slowly discover what makes TCF work for us. First, it is good to know you're not losing your mind even though it may feel like it. It's strangely comforting to know that others understand your confusion and face similar difficulties. Sharing our own stories and listening to the stories of others eases the isolation that many bereaved families experience.

As the months pass, we learn that while the experience of grief has some universal components, each of us will grieve as individuals with our own timetable. Many of us who thought grieving had a distinct beginning and end, with definable stages along the way, find that our theory doesn't make much sense in the real world. Grief is more like love; loud at times, quiet at others, with a truth that can and will live on forever.

One day we look at the parent who cries for the daughter who died ten years ago with new understanding. His everyday life is no longer eclipsed by pain; we visit with him regularly at the coffee table. But TCF is the place he can bring his memories and his grief and talk about the child he will always miss and love. The thought that we, too, may want to be involved with TCF for many years does not seem so frightening as it did those first months we hesitated before walking in the door.

It isn't easy getting here, of course. But we don't hesitate anymore. We unlock the door and stand there, hoping that the newly bereaved family arriving will know that they—and we—need not walk alone.

Mary Clark  
TCF Sugar Land, TX

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### What Do You Say?

*What do you say when a baby dies and someone says ...*

*"At least you didn't bring it home."*

*What do you say when a baby is stillborn  
and someone says...*

*"At least it never lived."*

*What do you say when a mother of three says ...*

*"Think of all the time you'll have."*

*What do you say when so many say ...*

*"You can always have another..."*

*"At least you never knew it..."*

*"You have your whole life ahead of you..."*

*"You have an angel in heaven."*

*What do you say when someone says ...Nothing?*

*What do you say when someone says ...*

*"I'm sorry."*

*You say, with grateful tears and warm embrace,*

*"Thank you!"*

Rana Limbo and Sara Wheeler  
from *When a Baby Dies:  
A Handbook for Healing and Helping.*

# WE ARE MOVING TO A NEW MEETING PLACE BEGINNING AUGUST 10!

*We will continue to meet on the second Sunday of each month at 3:00 p.m.*

*You will even enter the parking lot at the same entrance,  
the entrance to Building #1 at 2501 Park Plaza, but...*

to reach our new building continue driving through the parking lots, past Building #1 (our old building), past the next building and on down to the third HCA building. The exterior is a dark brown color with dark tinted windows. (You cannot enter the lot for the new building from the street because there will be a chain across the entrance there.) Once you arrive at Building #3, you will see the main entrance facing the parking lot. So just come on in and you will see the signs to direct you to room 110.

HCA is undergoing extensive renovation in Building #1, but the folks there have graciously invited us to use Building #3 during this time.

**Join us July 13 for our last gathering in Building #1,  
our home for the last 27 years!**

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## *To Caring Family and Friends*



*You cried for me when I had  
No more tears to shed.  
And quietly did the everyday things  
I no longer cared about,  
Because you wisely knew that  
Someday I would care again.*

*You pulled me gently  
From the darkness of despair  
And reminded me that  
The sun is still shining.  
And, when I was ready,  
I would feel its warmth again...  
That laughter and joy, though now  
Muted, were still possible.*

*When grief and anger  
Seemed overwhelming,  
You shared your serenity.  
And depression and anger faded.*

*When my candle burned so very low,  
You lit another and another and another.  
Until you gave me the strength and will  
To again strike a flame for myself.*

*All of this, and for your love, I thank you.*

Elizabeth Lorber  
From *Bereavement Magazine*

## **CHAPTER INFORMATION**

### **Are you Moving?**

Each time a newsletter is returned to us with an incorrect address, it costs us 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.

### **Children at TCF Meetings**

It is always painful for newly bereaved parents to be with babies and small children, but it is even more difficult to see them at a TCF meeting where grief is heightened. The presence of a baby can be very disturbing and distracting to others, especially to those who have themselves lost one, and a TCF meeting is not an appropriate place for youngsters where they see visible pain in their parents and other members. We want you to be with us, but since we promise each parent who has lost a child a safe place at our meetings, we urge you to make other arrangements for your little ones.

### **Newsletter Deadlines**

In order for donations, articles, poems and other material to be included in the newsletter, we must receive them by the second Sunday of the month prior to publication. We welcome original material as well as copyrighted pieces; however, no material may be used without giving complete credit to the author. Please keep in mind the fact that space is limited. Also, since TCF espouses no specific religious or philosophical ideology, we ask that in your writing, you show respect for others whose beliefs might be different from your own.



## **BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES**

### **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.

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

A support group for bereaved parents meets at Alive Hospice. For details, please call John Baker at [615-346-8364](tel:615-346-8364). Diane Castellano, LCSW is a grief counselor there for children and their families. Call her at [615-346-8554](tel:615-346-8554). For general information about Grief Support Services at Alive Hospice, please call our main number 963-4732 or email [griefsupport@alivehospice.org](mailto:griefsupport@alivehospice.org).

### **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.

*Registration is now open for this year's TCF National Conference.*

*Go to*



[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) for more information.

## Vacation Tips

Summer is the time of the year when families think of vacation. Whether a long trip or a short time spent near home, vacations are a pleasant change of pace and a time to have fun. For many bereaved parents, especially in the first year or two of grief, even the idea of a vacation may cause a devastation of emotions. Some cannot even use the term vacation. Remembering the fun times with their now-dead child is more than can be borne. However, if you are planning a vacation, here are some suggestions that may help:

- Be kind to yourself. Don't expect too much. The first time we do anything without our children is tough no matter what the activity.
- Be patient with yourself. You will have feelings of guilt, anger, and all the other emotions associated with grief. Let those emotions come and go as they will.
- Rest and have a good time if at all possible. Give yourself time to have a bad day.
- Be aware that your child will be on your mind most of the time just the same as he or she would be if you were at home. Grief travels along with us.
- If you plan to visit relatives, remember they mean well even if they seem insensitive with their remarks. They have not lost a child and can't see through your eyes.
- Remember your other children. They are also having a hard time coping on this vacation. Plan some activities that they especially choose.
- Communicate with your spouse and other family members.

Philip Hall  
TCF, South Central Missouri