

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 in the HCA building on Park Plaza just north of Centennial Park off of 25th 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.

Ask-It Basket Scheduled for Meeting March 13

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. We invite our old-timers to come and lend a hand.



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**.....Kris Thompson
931-486-9088
- Suicide**.....Ruth Edwards
615-353-8547
- Small Child**.....Kenneth and Kathy Hensley
615-237-9972
- Alcohol/Drug Overdose**.....Ed Pyle
615-712-3245
- Murder**.....Joe Ladd
615-727-3284

Good memories are the perennials that bloom again after the hard winter of grief begins to yield hope.

Sascha

Please Let Me Mourn

I've never lost a child before, and I don't understand all these emotions I am feeling.

Will you try to understand and help me?

Please let me mourn.

*I may act and appear together, but I am not.
Oftentimes it hurts so much I can hardly bear it.*

Please let me mourn.

Let me talk about my child. I need to talk. It's part of the healing. Don't pretend nothing has happened. It hurts terribly when you do. I love my child very much, and my memories are all I have now. They are very precious to me.

Please let me mourn.

Sometimes I cry and act differently, but it's all part of the grieving. My tears are necessary and needed and should not be held back. It even helps when you cry with me.

Please don't fear my tears.

Please let me mourn.

What I need most is your friendship, your sympathy, your prayers, your support, and your understanding love. I am not the same person I was before my child died, and I never will be. Hopefully, we can all grow from this shared tragedy.

Please let me mourn

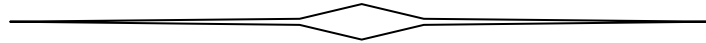
God gives me the strength to face each day and the hope that I will survive with his help and yours. Time will heal some of the pain, but there will always be an empty place in my heart.

Please let me mourn.

Please let me mourn

And thank you for helping me through the most difficult time of my life.

Lonnie Forland
TCF, Northwood, IA



Oracle

Your child has died

*and only this is certain:
that you will never be
the same again –
not what you were –
not what you might have been.*

*Your child has died and grief may touch your vision
with new and restless lights,
with want and pain
where once your life
found reason, strength and peace.*

Your child has died.

*The face of god is changing.
It may be closer
and more careful now
or may seem cold
and cruel, far away.*

So trust your soul

*(however bright or somber
however calm or fierce).*

Trust in your soul:

– it will declare

your answer and your hope.

In time...

Sascha

2011 Regional and National Conferences:

TCF regional conferences offer a rewarding opportunity to share an intimate time with families that have also experienced the death of a child and are seeking ways to learn more about the common path on which we walk. Regional conferences are generally held three to four times a year around the country by local chapters, or groups of TCF chapters. The *Frankfort, Kentucky Regional Conference*: March 25-26, 2011 is in easy driving distance of Nashville. The theme will be "Words of Wisdom, Hearts of Love." Speakers will include: Compassionate Friends Executive Director Patricia Loder, past TCF Board President Patrick Malone; Singer, entertainer Alan Pedersen, grief expert and popular TCF workshop presenter Mitch Carmody, and Two Star General Mark Graham. There will be a number of workshops including: *First 2 Years, Reinvesting in Life, For Men Only, For Women Only, How Have I Changed, Anger & Guilt, Depression vs. Grief*, and *Sudden Death*. Our own chapter leader, Joe Ladd, will lead a workshop titled *Death by Violent Crime*. For more information, go to www.compassionatefriends.org, and click on Regional Conferences under News and Events.

Plan now to attend TCF's 34th National Conference to be held in Minneapolis/St. Paul July 15-17, 2011 at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel. You will find it to be another great conference with around 100 workshops, sharing sessions, special keynote speakers at the opening, closing and Friday noon and Saturday evening banquets, Hospitality Room, Butterfly Boutique, Reflection Room, a completely stocked bookstore, special Friday evening entertainment and the Remembrance Candle Lighting. TCF's Walk to Remember will be held Sunday morning. Registration and hotel information can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org under News and Events.

That Old Blue Cup

It sits there on the shelf, stained from years of holding early morning coffee. It was my son's cup and he always drank from it. Now, every morning I drink my coffee from that same blue cup. Not a thing of beauty, but certainly a thing of value. It is special, as he was special, and it makes the coffee taste special, as well. Some of the warmth that comes from that cup is from the heat of the coffee, but mostly the warmth is from the memories that it holds. Valuable things these memories. I hold them tight for they are really all I have left of my son and I cherish them, as I do that old blue cup.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

*The stars are like my memories of you;
They seem so small and frail up in the blue,
Yet they may each be greater than the sun.
And now as faint as they appear to be,
The dimmest star, the smallest memory
Are full of shining beauty, every one.*

Sascha

TEARS

Tears are much more than the outpouring of sorrow, for they may also start forth in the presence of beauty, in moments of great joy, at times of sudden relief from worry. In such situations, they seem unreasonable and inappropriate. Yet a significant lesson of contemporary psychology is that most unexpected actions stem from the most powerful but best hidden needs and secrets of our own hearts. Only when tears burst forth in spite of ourselves do we realize the universal need of all human beings to pity and sympathize with each other.

Anger, fear, or the shock of sudden sorrow bring physical changes in our bodies. The digestion is shut down, the blood pressure is raised, the heart speeds up, and the skin becomes cold. Maintained over a prolonged period, this emergency status makes the body, and the personality, tight, dry, and rigid. In people who are afraid to let themselves pour forth their painful emotions, doctors find that the suppressed tears can trigger such ailments as asthma, migraine headache, and many others.

Weeping, on the other hand, comes as part of the reversal of conditions of alarm, shock, and anger. Tears do not mark a breakdown or low point, but a transition to warmth and hope and health.

The point of view that we should not express ourselves through weeping is a denial of a law of nature. Tears are a gift of God. Nowhere is this more eloquently expressed in the shortest verse of the Bible: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). There is a genuine wisdom in tears: in the tears of grief, of remembrance, of sympathy, of aesthetic pleasures, of the appreciation of grandeur, of poignant joy. They all express deep-seated needs: the need to love and be loved, the need to cast out anger and hate, the need to wash away troubles and tension. In permitting ourselves to weep instead of manfully repressing the impulse, we help ourselves to health and wisdom, for in the state of physical release which tears bring, our thoughts can flow freely and bring insight and understanding we never knew were within our grasp.

Morton M. Hunt
TCF, Millwood, NY

Take the Time...to Hurt, to Cry...

Wordless and wordless, endless and forever grief goes on. It takes the best, and leaves the rest an empty shell. Life is Hell.” David was dead four months when I wrote that in my journal. Time was my enemy. As I envisioned the future of my life, I saw only a vast expanse of desert—dry, parched and empty.

It is now a year and a half since David’s death, and I recognize that time has become my friend. Now when I look to the future, I see hills and valleys—struggles, to be sure, but also moments spent at the summit. What has happened? Time is healing.

Take the time—

To hurt...The pain is great and the temptation to run away is great. But there is no avoiding, no escaping the hard feelings. If you cover them over, they only re-surface later in a potentially more destructive way.

To cry...It may feel like once started, you can never stop. But you have every reason to cry, and when you have cried enough, you will stop.

To “fall apart”...If you have a broken leg, you would not expect yourself to function at full capacity right away. Your wound is much greater—you have a broken heart. Confusion, inability to concentrate, lethargy, imagined glimpses of your dead child are normal parts of the grieving process and do not mean that you are going crazy.

To be “selfish”...Mourning is an egocentric time, a time for turning inward and for introspection.

To “identify”...and seek out resources in your environment that can help: friends, clergy, Compassionate Friends, a counselor. Talk to them.

Having done all that—having lingered in the valley of the shadow—it is time to begin to climb out.

Take the time—

To engage again in activities that were once pleasurable. They may hold no joy the first few times; someday they will and that will be all right.

To laugh without guilt. Savor the good moments in the day, brief though they may be. Through your child, you can rediscover the beauty of a sunset.

To care for your health. Grieving causes physiological as well as psychological stress. Your body needs protection.

To be patient. Wanting to live again and learning to live again take time. The path out the other side of the valley is steep, and we all often stumble. But with time—time spent doing the work of grief—you can find the path to a world made richer by your love.

Broona Romanoff, Ph.D.
TCF, Albany, NY

In this universe nothing is ever wholly lost. That which is excellent remains forever a part of this universe. Human hearts are dust. But the love which moves the human heart, abides to bless the last generation.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens, but it's never gone.

Rose Kennedy

TCF "Online Support Community" Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing

The 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 who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under," "Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "No Surviving Children," and "Survivors of Suicide." There are also sessions for surviving siblings.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.

Second Anniversary

*Yes, I'm an adult over 40
And Tom, little brother, was 25
When he died returning from his bar exam.*

*So what? Does grief have an end age?
Does someone 40+ not die too losing a
sweet small playmate?*

*I see him learning to roller skate
I'm running beside the bike;
First game of the Cardinals' season
And, scared, in the stands,
A "gorilla" running wild.*

*Sleepy, at a drive-in, running around the zoo -
All that, and as an adult, I knew him too.*

*At graduations,
Proud in his own pad
Pouring Spanish champagne.*

*Tireless breaking wood feeding a hungry campfire
Cooking eggs for all, sharing dreams.
This sibling remembers and grieves.*

Jeanne Brady
TCF, Olathe, KS

For Mimi... and all Beloved Grandmothers

*Mimi, I knew you well.
I spent my last second summer
Trailing behind you,
Slipping into the soft cocoon of your arms,
With sweet love eyes.*

*Mimi, you were my best of all friends.
You had the clearest of smiles for me,
Your lap was my finest haven,
You said yes to all of my most mad wonderings.*

*Mimi, I loved you most proudly.
I gave you the baby-pat of my hand,
I ran toward your voice,
I sat with you on the porch swing,
Swaying with you, a love rhyme.
I danced in the glow of your delight.*

*Mimi, I remember you well.
I am the echo of your heart,
The memory of your future,
Your forever child.
Mimi, I love you.*

Mary Butenas
TCF Atlanta, GA

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me

*I remember how I used to watch over you,
Tried to teach you the things you should do.
I can remember the things I would say
As I tried to guide you along the way.*

*But since you've gone, and our lives have changed,
It seems the roles have been rearranged.
Sometimes it feels like it used to be,
Only you're the one watching over me.*

*I know in my mind that you're not here;
Yet there are times when you feel so near.
I've learned if I let the love flow through,
I'll get to keep a part of you.*

*For though death comes – the love never goes away.
Your presence is with me every day.
For my guardian angel you now will be,
And you're the one who'll watch over me.*

Carolyn Bryan
TCF, Orange Park, FL

Spring

*Where has my son gone?
Where is the blue of his big blue eyes,
The gold of his freshly washed hair,
And the warmth of his laughter?*

*Then I notice that in the spring, it seems
The sky is a little bluer, the sun a little
More golden and the breezes a little warmer,
And it's then that I know.*

*For a few days in the spring when I see
The sun rise, glance at the sky and enjoy
The warm breezes,
I feel his presence and not his absence.*

How I wish those days would last forever.

Kenneth Hensley
TCF, Nashville, TN

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 3 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 and receiving their helpful newsletter, 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. SHARING meets the second and fourth Thursday evenings of each month at 7 p.m. in the Administrative Board Room at The Women's Hospital at Centennial Medical Center located at 2221 Murphy Avenue (between 22nd and 23rd Ave). 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.

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. Check it out.