

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville Website: 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 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 10

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

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.



I Am Spring

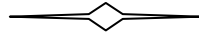
*I am the beginning.
I am budding promise.
I spill cleansing tears of life
from cloudy vessels
creating muddy puddles
where single cell creatures abide
and splashing children play.*

*I am new green growth.
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.
With compassion, we feather nests
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream
I whisper truth – life is change.*

*I am spring.
I bless long, dark wintry days.
I crown mankind's pain
with starry skies
in deepest night
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.*

Written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox, author of *Finding What You Didn't Lose* and *Poetic Medicine*.

Carol Clum



What makes our chapter tick?

Without the help of numerous individuals, the Nashville Chapter of TCF would not be the smooth-running organization that it is. These wonderful people contribute their time, their energy, and their love so that we all may find comfort and healing while we travel this sad journey together.

Chapter Leaders—Lamar and Joy Bradley
Newsletter Editor—Melanie Ladd
Newsletter mailing—Deanna Brown and her parents,
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul Burke
Website—Lamar Bradley
Treasurer—Jayne Head
Outreach—David Gibson
Sibling Coordinator—Melanie Ladd
Library—Carole Renfro; Cheryl Potts
Phone Team—Kathy and Henry Beeler; Robin Hunt;
 Ed Pyle; and Donna Reagan

Donation Acknowledgements—Patricia Law
Birthday Table—Ann Lewis; Peggy Gibson
Name Tags—Lamar Bradley
Meeting Greeters—Joy Bradley; Betsy Koomen
Table Assignments—Paula Childers
Refreshments—Henry and Kathy Beeler; Julie Lyle;
 and Cheryl Potts
Notes to parents on their child's first and second birthdays and
 death anniversaries—Joy Bradley; Sue Mather
Notes to new members—Jean Reischmann
Database maintenance—David and Peggy Gibson

A special thank you to each of you who willingly serve as sharing group facilitators when called upon, and to everyone who comes early or stays late to help with setting up and restoring the meeting room.

TCF 2013 National Conference

Save the date: July 5-7, 2013 in Boston, MA



Conference Keynoters Named!

TCF is always known for having great keynoters and many have been waiting anxiously to find out who they will hear speak at the conference. We now have that information! They are:

- Dr. Heidi Horsley, Dr. Gloria Horsley, founders of "Open to Hope" Foundation and Phil Horsley (Chair of TCF Foundation's Board of Trustees), a family united after the loss of sibling and son Scott, will combine to welcome you as Opening keynoters at the National Conference.
- Tina Chery who, after the murder of her son Louis, created the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute with a mission to create and support an environment where families can live in peace and unity.
- Ken Druck, bereaved parent, founder of the Jenna Druck Foundation, and one of the nation's pioneers in personal transformation including healing after loss.
- Bill Hancock, director of the Bowl Championship Series (college football), author of *Riding with the Blue Moth*, and father of Will, who was killed during the January 27, 2001 crash of an airplane carrying members of the Oklahoma State University men's basket team.

Plan to attend this year and hear some great speakers and participate in other activities.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING REGISTRATION: We are now anticipating that online registration for the national conference will begin within 2-4 weeks from today, Tuesday, February 5, 2013. Watch here for details as they become available!

Reserve Your Conference Hotel Rooms Now!

You can now make reservations for the 36th TCF National Conference host hotel, the Boston Sheraton, 39 Dalton St., Boston MA 02199. Reservations can be made through the Online Reservation Form or by calling the hotel at 888-627-7054.

Comments from Compassionate Friends who attended the 34th National Conference held in Minneapolis:

"This conference was life changing for me--my daughter died last year. Thank you to everyone that made my experience possible."

"Attending the conference was the best thing I could have done for myself. It's a vacation with my son that I will take every year!!!"

"I attended my first conference and it was one of the best things I have ever done. The friends I made were incredible and the feeling throughout the whole weekend was so healing. I never thought I would have to belong to such a club, but am grateful it is there to help. Thank you TCF!"

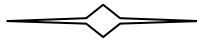
Visit the National TCF Website, <http://www.compassionatefriends.org>, for more information and to learn about the **Frankfort, Kentucky Regional Conference April 5-6, 2013**. Speakers include TCF Board Member Chuck Collins and special guest presenter Michael Nunley, who will conduct a workshop on grief/music and performance Friday evening. Registration fee is \$60 per person. Location is The Capital Plaza Hotel. Theme: Walking Towards Stars of Hope.

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 went to see 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 keep the radio on if “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 the 1990 TCF Conference), THAT was a milestone.
- For three Christmases after Dave died, I didn’t put up a tree in my condo. For Christmas, 1991, 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 in February 1993. Following my Dad’s father’s death in December, 1992, we were in Atlanta cleaning out my grandfather’s 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

Am I Still A Mom?

It has been more than three years since my only child, Todd, was killed in an automobile accident. The circumstances of the accident included my husband as the driver of the vehicle. Following the accident my former daughter-in-law filed a wrongful death suit against my husband and me. She has also terminated our relationship with Todd's children and eliminated any possibility of normal grandparent time spent with our three granddaughters. In the past two years we have seen our granddaughters for 5 hours and the time spent was meaningless. The message has been sent that we are no longer a part of Todd's children's lives.

My husband has held up remarkably well as long as he isn't forced to replay the accident in his mind over and over again. I don't want the details and have never looked at the pictures of the vehicle. To this day I do not want to know the extent of my child's injuries or the amount of suffering he underwent. I wonder about his last moments, his last thoughts. And then I wonder: am I still a mother?

I was a good mother to Todd; my life centered on raising him to persevere and be the kind, gentle, goal oriented, loving man that he became. My relationship with him as an adult was so rewarding, so full of joy. I enjoyed listening to my adult child and exchanging ideas with him. I shared the important facets of his family life, the birth of his children, babysitting on a moment's notice or when no one else would so that he and his wife could take some time off for a vacation. Discovering who my grandchildren were and how they perceived the world was enlightening and fulfilling. Watching his children grow and become individuals was a great joy to me. Watching him become a strong and gentle parent made my heart sing.

And so I wonder: am I still a mother? My son no longer lives. I defined myself as a mother for over 35 years. My finest accomplishment was raising my son to become the fine man that he was. Now the bond between mother and child is broken. Life's paradigm has shifted. Or has it?

Am I still someone's daughter and someone's granddaughter? Of course I am, even though I have lost my parents and grandparents. So, I am still a mother. I think of my son each day, and I remember the good and bad times, the tough decisions, the structure, the letting go, the building of ideals and sense of honor and duty to family. But most of all I remember my child's love and my love for my child and incredible journey of raising my child.

So when people ask me if I have any children, I say yes, I have one son and four grandchildren. I am a mother and a grandmother. Circumstances and the actions of others have altered my reality, of course. I realize, too, that my son's legacy and influence will have little impact on his children. But my son is my son forever. I am a mother. I am Todd's Mother.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

Love's Lasting Touch

*Don't weep for me when I'm gone,
Because I'll always be there.
My spirit will exist in all the earth,
In the water, trees, and air.*

*You'll hear me say, "I love you",
In the whisper of a breeze.
You'll know that I'm beside you,
With the rustling of the leaves.*

*You'll feel my arms caress you,
In the warmth of each sunrise.*

*The moon will be my goodnight kiss,
The stars my watchful eyes.*

*Your life will be my legacy,
Your memories my epitaph.
These ties will bind us together,
Till we meet on heaven's path.*

*I'll not ever desert you,
We'll never be far apart.
I'll live within you always,
Nestled deep inside your heart.*

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
In Memory of My Angels,
Michelle, Jerry & Danny
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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.

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 Sibling Sharing Groups.



BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents

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

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.

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 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.