



The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Louisiana

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Apr / May / Jun 2014

AWKWARD SILENCE

I wish that someone would say his name.
I know my feelings they're trying to spare,
And so we go through the charade, the game,
Of dancing around the ghost that is
there,
Trying to avoid evoking a tear,
Or stirring emotions too painful to bear.
That he be forgotten is what I fear,
That no one will even his presence
miss,
As if there were no trace that he was
here.
Be referring to him, my purpose is
Not to stir pity or keep things the same,
But my heart will simply break if his
Memory will die like a flickering flame.
I just wish someone would say his name.

Richard Dew, M.D.
TCF Knoxville, TN

IF ONLY, ONE MORE TIME

To hear your voice loud and clear,
To see your image as if you're here,
To feel your warmth like you are near,
If only, one more time

To hear you call, "Mom, I'm home",
To keep me company when I'm alone,
To watch you run and grab the phone,
If only, one more time

To watch you sit quietly and read,
To buy you things you say you need,
To see you do a thoughtful deed,
If only, one more time

To find a note written by you,
To walk upstairs and trip over your shoe,
To comfort you when you're feeling blue,
If only, one more time



To feel your arms in a soft embrace,
To see the smile upon your face,
To understand when you needed "space",!
If only, one more time

If only, one more time

Vicki Richey
TCF Orange County, CA

*"I made a choice. I picked up the remains of my life,
my aching heart and wounded spirit, my broken
dreams and disbelief, and wrapped them carefully in
my blanket of grief. Holding them close to me, I
walked steadfastly ahead into the storm with faith in
the promise of peace on the other side".*

Sharron Cordaro

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, April 3

Thursday, May 1

Thursday, June 5

6:30 PM

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
1901 Lexington Ave.

Enter through the back parking lot off Milton St.

For Siblings

An outlet for siblings is the TCF Sibling Forum. It is available online and is a place where siblings from all over can share and help each other cope with the unique grief of losing a brother or sister. Siblings are able to ask questions, make a comment or leave a thought for others to respond.

Visit the Sibling Resources Page at www.compassionatefriends.org
Email tcfsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org for the password

EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, and the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me...NEVER.

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality.

Forget? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere—love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say—nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be: Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this.

People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer. "I am mad. Dave died at the age of 17. I'm angry that my parents have to go through this. I'm confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I'm fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be STRONG."

Lisa Ann Jones
TCF Avoca, PA



TO MY BROTHER

A laugh when I was crying
A giggle when I needed it
A good reality check when I was being dumb
The truth even when I didn't want to hear it
This is what you gave me
You gave me a person I could laugh with
A person that I could fight with
A person that could make anybody laugh
A person that could make the sun shine on a gloomy day
This is the person you gave me
Fear for where your life was going
Fear of what might happen to you
Fear of how deep you were getting into it
Fear that I might lose you
This is the fear you gave me
Hurt when you would tell a lie
Hurt when you would think I believed you
Hurt when you would blow off plans
Hurt when you would use me
This is the hurt you gave me
Sadness when you let the drugs take your life
Sadness when you left me here
Sadness when I realized I won't ever see your face again
Sadness when I realized you won't ever make me laugh again
This is the sadness you gave me
Memories of playing together when we were little
Memories of serious talks together
Memories of making each other laugh when we were down
Memories of hugs and comfort
These are the memories you left with me

*For Justin and others who've lost loved ones to
substance abuse*

RENEWAL

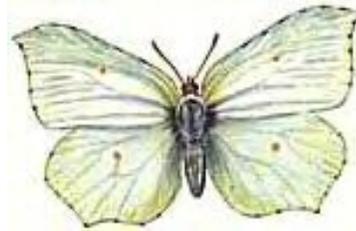
In the first warm days of springtime
When the winter chill is through,
Each waking thought & closing prayer
Begins and ends with you.

Like the daffodil and crocus
That survive the bitter snow,
My soul is gently lifted up
And is warmed by sunlight's glow.

It's a time of fresh renewal,
A beginning - not an end.
And oh how much I miss you,
My daughter and my friend.

So I'll take the warmth of springtime
And hold it close to me,
To help me through the winter storms
Till your face once more I'll see.

Priscilla Kenney
TCF North Shore/Boston, MA



MY COVER-UP MASK

I wake in the morning with tears in my eyes. I have to face another day without my child. I prepare to go to work and put on my "cover-up mask" as I go out to face the world.

I get my work done and even chat and sometimes smile at my co-workers. And they say, "My, how well she seems to be handling her loss." If they only knew what I am suffering under my "cover-up mask." My work day is over and I go home and remove my "cover-up mask," and the tears come again.

I go to bed, as the darkness of night envelopes me and sleep eludes me, the tears come again. I have gotten through another day without my child. I have learned I must take one day at a time for the rest of my life, since it will never be the same again.

Joan Watson
TCF Salisbury, MD

*May the world be kind to you, and may your
own thoughts be gentle upon yourself.
- Jonathan Lockwood Huie*

SHE IS NEAR

I will see her beauty in a garden;
Read her face upon a sunset;
Hear her voice in the laughter of children;
Feel her touch in a newborn baby's breath,
warm against my skin.

I will hear her song in the gentle waters of a bubbling
stream;
Sense her spirit every time my heart soars;

Know her presence in my prayers
And follow her footsteps, set in angel dust,
when it is time for us to meet again.

Lu Ann Michaelree
In memory of Dorothy Oleta Houk

Chapter co-leaders

Marilyn & French Smith

Steering Committee

Henry Cole, Facilitator

Johnny James, Treasurer

Dianne & Frank Bruscatto, Library

Frances & Jim Gregory, Outreach

Maggy & John Dobbs, Outreach

Luann & James Butler, Outreach

Ann Cole, Outreach

Betty Jean James, Outreach & Hospitality

Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE

The sounds of silence are everywhere-it is the silent pain of the loss of our son Andy, it is the silence of our home because one of our children is gone, and it is the silence of the sudden quiet that comes over people when we mention Andy.

We have become both better and worse in the six years since Andy died of cancer at the age of 22. We are better because we are able to get on with our lives and even enjoy ourselves occasionally. We have gotten worse because, as the years go by, we feel his loss more deeply.

We feel his loss every time we participate in a celebration marking some milestone of our friends and relatives or their children. We feel the loss because any celebrations of our own will always be incomplete-one person will always be absent and not there to celebrate with us or to enjoy his own milestones. The pain of his absence is always present at these events.

When Andy died, the pain of his loss was a sharp acute screaming pain that tore a hole inside of us. Now, the pain is a silent quiet steady pain. The hole is still inside us, covered by a scar, but it is still there. It doesn't scream out loud any more but instead just remains as a quiet steady and never-ending ache and sadness-a silent pain.

The silence of our home is a different kind of quiet. By now, if Andy had lived, he probably would have been out on his own. We would have been "empty nesters" anyway. But, when a home becomes empty because of the death of a child, it is a different kind of empty nest. Our daughter Lesley is married and out on her own, the way it should be. But, Andy is gone for a different reason.

So, the silence of our empty nest is not the silence of knowing we raised two children and now they are both out leading their own lives. Instead it is the silence of a home that is empty because one child is gone forever-of having to deal with the reality that phone calls only come from one child, not two; that only one child stops by for a visit, not two; that one child is forever gone from the nest. There is a silence in our home that often seems to pervade every space. It is a sad silence, not the temporary quiet of a happy home.

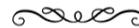
And then, there is the silence of relatives and friends when we talk about Andy-not about his death but about the things he did while alive. It is as if Andy has become a forbidden topic because he died, as if his death wiped out the 22 years he did live. It occurs when a relative whispers that our son died when someone asked how old he was-like his life and what happened to him was a big secret. It occurs when people suddenly get a funny look on their faces and don't know what to say next when you mention something about Andy. It occurs when you get the feeling that people want to avoid you because you remind them of a horror that could happen to anyone. It is a silence that reminds you that your emotions and feelings are different from that of others and that you will always have to live with the sounds of silence resulting from your son's death.

Mel Winer ~ In Memory of my son Andy ~ We Need Not Walk Alone, Copyright 1997

“Pain becomes bearable when we are able to trust that it won’t last forever, not when we pretend that it doesn’t exist.” —Alla Bozarth-Campbell



Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the newsletter to keep our chapter going strong. Please contact Julie Petty with your ideas.



Also, remember you can bring your child's favorite snack for refreshments to our monthly meeting or do a flower arrangement for the table. Please contact Marilyn Smith one month prior to the meeting.

Our Children Always Loved and Remembered



A special table is set up at our meetings to honor children whose special days are in that month. We invite you to bring a picture or memento of your child to share during that significant month.

OUR CHILDREN'S APRIL BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Jason Garrett	04/02/67	Sandra Garrett
Chris Pauley	04/02/77	Sharon & Gary Pauley
Chris Culpepper	04/04/69	Noel Culpepper
Shannon Scharf	04/06/62	Robert S. Green
Robby Jenkins	04/10/88	Beverly Jenkins
Thomas Stephens	04/12/95	Susan & Gray Stephens
Chris Travis	04/13/72	Gloria & Kenneth Travis
Rod Taliaferro	04/17/64	Shirley Taliaferro
Wendi Janway-Jones	04/23/78	Rosalyn & Tom Janway
Ashley Loflin	04/23/73	Katye Loflin

OUR CHILDREN'S APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Chris Pauley	04/05/95	Sharon & Gary Pauley
Michael Stephens	04/05/68	Maggie & John Stephens
Krista Corrent	04/08/00	Anna Ruth Hill
Pamela Ford	04/10/04	Leona Upton
Martha Mickel	04/13/84	Ruth Mickel
Michael Johns	04/19/06	Nell Book
Courtney Cole	04/22/12	Ann & Henry Cole
Mickey Loflin	04/23/73	Katye Loflin
Anne Barham	04/25/91	Pat Barham

OUR CHILDREN'S MAY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Bo Best	05/02/84	Charlene Best & Charles West
Tonya Bell	05/05/69	Ann Smith
Justin Petty	05/07/82	Julie & Danny Petty
Melissa Blankenship	05/08/65	Peaches Cathey
Jason Hutts	05/12/81	Carol & Greg Hutts
Mickey Chambers	05/13/62	Merrell & Mike Chambers
McKenzie Hudson	05/13/88	Dayna Hudson
Will Lensing	05/13/83	Cindy & Bill Lensing
Bobby Starnes, Jr.	05/13/86	Edwina Starnes
Barry Kirby	05/18/13	Lisa Kirby/Bridget Kirby
Hunter Carr	05/21/91	Juanita Carr
Derrick Sadberry	05/15/65	Belinda Sadberry
Jill Whitaker	05/21/82	Cynthia Machen
Timothy Smith	05/26/61	Mary & Buddy Smith
Brian Gregory	05/28/73	Frances & Jim Gregory
Kelly O'Neal	05/28/70	Nancy Oliver
Scott Thompson	05/29/78	Tammy Thompson

OUR CHILDREN'S MAY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Mickey Loflin	05/10/05	Katye Loflin
Ashley Loflin	05/10/06	Katye Loflin
Will Lensing	05/11/11	Cindy & Bill Lensing
Shontavious Foster	05/12/13	Sarah Foster
Leigh Ann White	05/15/05	Janet & Ken White
Lance Thomas	05/18/08	Connie & Danny Thomas
Bobby Starnes, Jr.	05/18/12	Edwina Starnes
John Dobbs	05/21/08	Maggy & John Dobbs
David Webb	05/22/05	Paula Webb
Justin Petty	05/26/01	Julie & Danny Petty

OUR CHILDREN'S JUNE BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Caroline Cole	06/11/70	Ann & Henry Cole
Debbie Pope	06/14/52	Jean Hamilton
Andrew Rinicker	06/16/72	Dale Rinicker
Jackson Kennedy	06/18/00	Jonann Layton
Mike Hayes	06/20/63	Margaret & George Hayes
Kelly Chapman	06/23/78	Judy & Bennie Chapman
Walker Dayton	06/23/81	Vickie & Ed Dayton
CW2 Bryan Henderson	06/29/85	Kim Bryan Henderson

OUR CHILDREN'S JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Melissa Blankenship	06/13/04	Peaches Cathey
Kody Spann	06/14/07	Cindy Spann
Wesley Canterbury	06/15/07	Dewanna Canterbury
Terry Watson	06/21/13	Henrietta/Paul Watson

TO OUR LONG TIME MEMBERS:

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting when new parents arrive with a fresh hurt and frightened eyes, I remember how we felt at our first meeting. Think back ... what would it have been like for you if there had not been any "oldies" to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, "your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer." They were the ones who wanted to really listen when you talked about your child. Can you be an "oldie" for someone else? By helping someone else, you help yourself and share your child with someone who never got to know them. Come out and share with newly bereaved parents to help them heal. Our own healing happens when we are reaching out to others.

**WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE;
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

OUR CREDO

We need not walk alone.
We are The Compassionate Friends.
We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope.
Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes,
but our love for our children unites us.
Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope.
We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.
We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds.
We are young, and we are old.
Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh
and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope.
Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength;
some of us are struggling to find answers.
Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression;
others radiate an inner peace.
But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,
it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children.
We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,
but we are committed to building a future together
as we reach out to each other in love
and share the pain as well as the joy,
share the anger as well as the peace,
share the faith as well as the doubts
and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

www.tcfnortheastla.org

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Northeast Louisiana Chapter
P.O. Box 6114
Monroe, Louisiana 71211

Return Service Requested