



# *The Compassionate Friends* *of Northeast Louisiana* Supporting Family After a Child Dies

*Apr / May / Jun 2015*

Easter bunnies, brand new clothes, egg hunts, candy and baskets - the start of Spring. How exciting is this time of the year: a new beginning, everything so fresh and so invigorating! But unfortunately only painful and sorrowful memories are here for those of us who are bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Gone is the laughter, the excitement in a special child's eyes, the feeling of a whole new aspect in life.

Spring is here and the world appears ready to be born again with new life, new hope, new wonders. How can we view life in this way when part of ourselves is now gone, forever lost to us? How can our lives continue to go on when one of us is missing, no longer able to share in this "newness" of life? It seems so unfair! And yet, out of our "darkness" comes the first signs of hope, a "bud" of survival, a moment of laughter, a memory of a happier time.

The Easter season usually represents rebirth; let this season be the "birth!" of your finding your way back to life again, of finding the ability to heal, and of being able to resolve your grief so that hope and comfort is once again in your lives, Let this time of the year show you can make it through this deepest, most difficult, and sorrowful time of your lives.

Chris Gilbert  
TCF Tampa, FL

## **MISSING YOU**

I just can't believe it...  
The sun still rises and sets,  
The moon and stars still shine,  
The flowers still bloom, the birds still sing.  
I expected a change in everything

I just can't believe it...  
It still gets dark and light,  
The ocean still has waves,  
The rain still rains, the wind still blows,  
Is it because they do not know?

I just can't believe it...  
I thought the world would stop  
When in my house I found  
an empty chair, a missing smile  
I thought it would stop for just a while.

I just can't believe it...

Gretta Viney  
TCF Yakima, WA



## **I NEVER BELIEVED...**

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on...that it can still have meaning...that even joy can touch your life once more.

Don Hackett  
TCF Hingham, MA

## Monthly Meetings

**Thursday, April 9**

**Thursday, May 7**

**Thursday, June 4**

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.

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Visit the Sibling Resources Page at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
Email [tcsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:tcsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org) for the password

## HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Today is Father's Day, Daddy.

This is your special day.  
I realize this is hard for you since your son went away.

Today should be a happy day for fathers far and near.  
But for you it's not that way because not everyone is here.

Along with the joy you feel because you are a Dad comes the hurt you have for the son you once had.

The rest of us kids realize that Wade is on your mind.  
The card looks so strange without his name signed.

We all miss him a lot, and we really hurt for you.  
Even though he is gone now, his Dad is still you.

Although he can't tell you, the rest of us can.  
"Happy Father's Day, Daddy!" We do understand.

Delaine Reindel  
TCF, Houston, TX



An ill child often receives more attention from parents than a well sibling. The surviving child often believes he or she will get more attention from the parents after the death of the sibling, and then he or she is disappointed when those expectations are not met. The surviving child also may grapple with identity and role issues after the loss. "Am I still a little brother?" "Who's going to take out the garbage now?"

Grieving parents sometimes are overprotective of the remaining siblings, concerned that they may die or become ill as well. Other parents place expectations or unreasonable demands on the remaining siblings to take on the responsibilities and roles or to have the attributes of the deceased sibling.

It is important that parents avoid being either overprotective or over permissive with a grieving sibling— despite the temptation. Care should be taken not to make comparisons between the deceased child and the siblings, as it may lead to the surviving children feeling inadequate. Care also should be taken not to assign inappropriate responsibilities to a child that the deceased sibling used to have— especially responsibilities that are not developmentally appropriate.

For all these reasons, grieving siblings need a lot of reassurance from their parents that they are loved for who they are and that they will be cared for and supported. They need to be reminded that they did not cause their brother's or sister's death. They also should be encouraged to share memories and hold keepsakes of their deceased sibling and to participate in family rituals related to the deceased child.

Robin Fiorelli

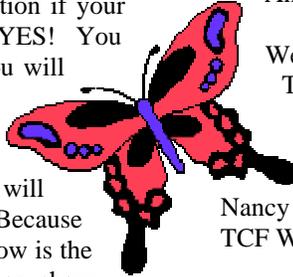
## DEATH OF A SIBLING: ISSUES FOR THE GRIEVING CHILD

When a sibling dies, the surviving child reacts both to the loss of his or her sibling and to the change in behavior and grief process of his or her parents. A sibling's grief response may be longer or shorter than the parents', and the sibling may have a different understanding of the death. Siblings often are asked numerous questions about their brother or sister's death by their peers and other adults. This can feel overwhelming to a child.

## MOTHER'S DAY

Since Mother's Day is approaching there is a lot of talk about, Mother's Day. This is a hard time for bereaved parents. So many ask the question if your only child died, are you still a mother? YES! You are a mother and a very special one. You will always be the mother of your child. You may no longer enjoy their laughter or the dirty finger prints on the walls, but that mother's love is still there and will always be deep in your heart and soul. Because we loved our children the pain we have now is the price we pay. As bereaved parents we can share our children's love with others. The love our children gave us will live in our hearts forever. So, yes indeed you are a mother.

Linda Delk  
TCF Tampa



Think of the friends who quietly sat  
And held our hands in theirs  
The ones who let us talk and talk  
And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember  
That more than the words we speak,  
It's the gift of someone who listens  
That most of us desperately seek.

Nancy Myerholtz  
TCF Waterville/Toledo, OH

## I REMEMBER ANOTHER SPRING

Each year when azaleas bloom,  
I remember another spring.  
That one wore a pall.  
The rain would not stop.  
It poured into the open grave of my son.  
It poured deep into my heart.  
I was sure it would never stop.  
It did, though I sometimes wished it hadn't.  
I was stuck between forgetting and remembering.  
Remembering won.  
Now I see his face in the azaleas.  
They bloomed that spring while he died.  
I no longer hold it against them.

Fay Harden  
TCF Atlanta, GA

"The heart hath its own memory, like the mind. And in it are enshrined the precious keepsakes into which is wrought the givers' loving thoughts."

H. W. Longfellow

## PRAYER FOR SPRING

Like Spring time, let me unfold and grow fresh and new from this cocoon of grief that has been spun around me. Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and renewed life as my bones still creak from the winter of my grief. Life has dared to go on around me. As I recover from the insult of life's continuance, I readjust my focus to include recovery and growth as a possibility in my future. Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief. But may I never forget it as the place where I grew my wings; becoming a new person because of my loss.

Janice Heil  
Coquitlam, BC Canada

## THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

Those of us who have travelled a while  
Along this path called grief  
Need to stop and remember that mile,  
That first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers  
Who told us of ways to deal  
It wasn't the one who talked and talked  
That helped us start to heal.

### 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

## IN THE SPRINGTIME OF YOUR GRIEF

Spring has fragile beginnings; a tiny shoot of green that emerges from the cold earth, a hint of pastel against the brownish grass, a bud that awakens with the morning sun. Sometimes spring comes so quietly we almost miss it, but once it begins, it is impossible to ignore the daily growth and change. The morning sun brings sounds that were not there before. The breeze carries warmth that invites us to venture outside of ourselves. A promise is released with the budding and blossoming surrounding us. Hope emerges for the beginning of a new season; change is in the air.

What we experience in the springtime of the year is what we experience in the springtime of our grief. There begins to be a glowing radiance. The radiance is not just around us; it is within us. A gradual warming of the heart silences the chill of intense pain. The natural unfolding of the grief process moves gently to remind us that we will survive. Life is changing and growth emerges through the changes. The song of our hearts that seemed off key begins to experience a harmonious blend of the past and the present. The songs of the birds invite us to join them in a celebration of new life. In the springtime of our grief, there can be a new song for us to sing. It will be a song we have composed through the heartache of loss.

Optimism for a better day may awaken us one morning. Hearing laughter and realizing that it is coming from ourselves gives us promise for today. Dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow shine brightly with the morning sun. Surviving the winter of our grief with the openness to embrace change is a decision to embrace loss and integrate its impact into the fabric of our lives. It can be a willingness to explore new possibilities that create a different landscape to behold. We can make a decision that we will begin to appreciate what we still have, not focus on what is missing.

We will know when we have made that decision. Something buds; something opens. The harshness of winter is softened with new life and new growth. It is not something we can force; it is something that unfolds when the time is right. The springtime of grief arrives with no dramatic entrance, no flashing lights. The stillness of the beauty unfolds and captures our attention. It is happening around us, but it is also happening in us.

If spring has already crossed the path of your personal journey of grief, rejoice! But if the chill of winter remains in your heart, be encouraged; spring is on its way. Look for it, expect it, and it will be yours to experience around you and in you!

Judi Fisher  
Cleveland, Ohio



“For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.”

Dory Rooker



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>	
Jason Garrett	04/02/67
Chris Pauley	04/02/77
Chris Culpepper	04/04/69
Shannon Scharf	04/06/62
Robby Jenkins	04/10/88
Thomas Stephens	04/12/95
Chris Travis	04/13/72
Rod Taliaferro	04/17/64
Wendi Janway-Jones	04/23/78
Ashley Loflin	04/23/73

<u>Parent(s)</u>
Sandra Garrett
Sharon & Gary Pauley
Noel Culpepper
Robert S. Green
Beverly Jenkins
Susan & Gray Stephens
Gloria & Kenneth Travis
Shirley Taliaferro
Rosalyn & Tom Janway
Katy Loflin

## OUR CHILDREN'S APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>	
Chris Pauley	04/05/95
Michael Stephens	04/05/68
Krista Corrent	04/08/00
Pamela Ford	04/10/04
Martha Mickel	04/13/84
Michael Johns	04/19/06
Courtney Cole	04/22/12
Mickey Loflin	04/23/73
Anne Barham	04/25/91

<u>Parent(s)</u>
Sharon & Gary Pauley
Maggie & John Stephens
Anna Ruth Hill
Leona Upton
Ruth Mickel
Nell Book
Ann & Henry Cole
Katy Loflin
Pat Barham

## OUR CHILDREN'S MAY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>	
Bo Best	05/02/84
Tonya Bell	05/05/69
Justin Petty	05/07/82
Melissa Blankenship	05/08/65
Jason Hutts	05/12/81
Mickey Chambers	05/13/62
McKenzie Hudson	05/13/88
Will Lensing	05/13/83
Bobby Starnes, Jr.	05/13/86
Derrick Sadberry	05/15/65
Hunter Carr	05/21/91
Jill Whitaker	05/21/82
Timothy Smith	05/26/61
Brian Gregory	05/28/73
Kelly O'Neal	05/28/70
Scott Thompson	05/29/78

<u>Parent(s)</u>
Charlene Best & Charles West
Ann Smith
Julie & Danny Petty
Peaches Cathey
Carol & Greg Hutts
Merrell & Mike Chambers
Dayna Hudson
Cindy & Bill Lensing
Edwina Starnes
Belinda Sadberry
Juanita Carr
Cynthia Machen
Mary & Buddy Smith
Frances & Jim Gregory
Nancy Oliver
Tammy Thompson

## OUR CHILDREN'S MAY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>	
Mickey Loflin	05/10/05
Ashley Loflin	05/10/06
Will Lensing	05/11/11
Shontavious Foster	05/12/13
Leigh Ann White	05/15/05
Barry Kirby	05/18/13
Lance Thomas	05/18/08
Bobby Starnes, Jr.	05/18/12
John Dobbs	05/21/08
David Webb	05/22/05
Justin Petty	05/26/01

<u>Parent(s)</u>
Katy Loflin
Katy Loflin
Cindy & Bill Lensing
Sarah Foster
Janet & Ken White
Lisa Kirby
Connie & Danny Thomas
Edwina Starnes
Maggy & John Dobbs
Paula Webb
Julie & Danny Petty

## OUR CHILDREN'S JUNE BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>	
Caroline Cole	06/11/70
Debbie Pope	06/14/52
Andrew Rinicker	06/16/72
Jackson Kennedy	06/18/00
Mike Hayes	06/20/63
Kelly Chapman	06/23/78
Walker Dayton	06/23/81
CW2 Bryan Henderson	06/29/85

<u>Parent(s)</u>
Ann & Henry Cole
Jean Hamilton
Dale Rinicker
Jonann Layton
Margaret & George Hayes
Judy & Bennie Chapman
Vickie & Ed Dayton
Kim Bryan Henderson

## OUR CHILDREN'S JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>	
Melissa Blankenship	06/13/04
Kody Spann	06/14/07
Wesley Canterbury	06/15/07
Terry Watson	06/21/13

<u>Parent(s)</u>
Peaches Cathey
Cindy Spann
Dewanna Canterbury
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](http://www.tcfnortheastla.org)

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

Return Service Requested