



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

*Apr / May / Jun 2018*

## **MOTHERS DAY**

Even in my sorrow I feel special for I know the true meaning of the word  
-Mother.

I have reached the Ultimate, from the joy of birth, to the sorrow of death. I belong to a special group who truly know the meaning of the word  
-Mother

Would I have not accepted the gift if I had known the terrible loss I would feel by having it taken away from me? I would still hold out my hands and accept such a precious gift, for to love and to cherish, even for a short while, is worth every tear.

This year on Mother's Day, I'll shed my tears, but let them be as a soft summer's rain. A rain that nourishes the earth, tears that heal and cleanse my heart.

Vera Babb  
TCF St. Louis, MO

## **THEIR SONG OF LOVE**

Remembering on this Mother's Day the melody your child etched in your heart.

The sweet song of love that only your child could place there.

As this special day brings their song to you, may the warmth of their eternal love fill your heart once again.

For their song is never ending.

Patty Erdman  
TCF Longview, WA

## **MY SPRING BOUQUET**

The rain poured so often,  
The bulbs I planted bloomed in profusion.  
I cut them all to take to your grave,

Leaving my yard as empty of blooms  
As your death left our life and our hearts.

It was a grand bouquet of flowers,  
Like our lives when you were here, son.  
From the bulbs new flowers will soon bloom again.

I was sad, but also hopeful.  
I know harsh lessons of nature are true.  
Cut like flowers, I will again bloom too.

Marilyn Arvizo,  
TCF S Bay LA, CA

## **MEMORIAL DAY**

For each grave where a soldier lies at his rest  
For each prayer that is said today out of love  
For each sigh of remembering someone who died  
Let us also give thought to the mothers and fathers,  
the brothers and sisters, the friends and the lovers  
whom death left behind.

Sascha

### Monthly Meetings

**Thursday, April 5**

**Thursday, May 3**

**Thursday, June 7**

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

## A DEATH HAS OCCURRED

A death has occurred,  
and everything is changed by this event.  
We are painfully aware that life  
can never be the same,  
that yesterday is over,  
that relationships once rich have ended.  
But there is another way to look upon this  
truth.  
If life went on the same without the  
presence  
of the one who died,  
we could only conclude that the life we  
here remember  
made no contribution,  
filled no space,  
meant nothing.  
The fact that this person left behind a place  
that cannot be filled  
is a high tribute to this individual.  
Life can be the same  
after a trinket has been lost,  
but never the same  
after the loss  
of a treasure.

Paul Iron  
TCF Savannah, GA



the age that he was when he died, 18, in the beginning of my senior year of high school. That year was difficult for me, as I felt that I was getting to move past where he had been cut short. Graduation day was no exception. I was happy to be getting out of high school, and looking forward to that coming August when I would go to college. But why was I getting to do these things, and not David? What made me so special that I got to stay here and experience these things? I still am not quite sure of the answer to those questions.

Graduation from high school was really just the first of many events which I have gotten to experience that David never will. College graduation, my wedding, and the birth of my two children are examples. And for me, each event has been a bit bittersweet.

The good news is this: that while time does make it easier to bear day-to-day activities without your sibling, each major event in your life presents itself as a new opportunity to remember your brother or sister, as well. For me, figuring that out was a huge relief, as it meant that my fear of forgetting David was not something I needed to worry about any more. His memory is just as alive for me today, 15-1/2 years later, as it was when I took that walk across the stage to accept my high school diploma.

Amy Baker Ferry  
Heart of Florida TCF Longwood, FL  
June 2004

## GRADUATION—A TIME TO REMEMBER

I was driving down the road the other day, thinking of how the retail market makes any event an opportunity for revenue. Graduation seems to fall into that category, with cards and gifts for every Graduate. This time of year reminds me that my graduation from high school was a bittersweet time.

Really, it was the first time I had “surpassed” my older brother, David, in anything significant. I turned

*Never apologize for showing feeling.  
When you do so, you apologize for the truth.*

*Benjamin Disraeli*

## FATHER'S DAY

Every father believes his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong – must not cry. But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving, and protecting has been able to stop our child's death. And, inside, we must ask ourselves about our failure, and we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father it is a poignant reminder of bitter sweetness; sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost, child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of inability to stop what happened.

Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Often times they are unable to do so, a remnant of childhood learnings about the strength and stoicism of "big boys." A father may even be uncomfortable opening up to his wife, and the wife who pushes him to talk may be pushing too hard.

Father's Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, "I'm sorry we haven't talked, Let's do it now." But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug, does something special, helps with the chores, and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. It is some of these things that he has lost with the death of a child. And, like Mother's Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to a Sunday in June. It can be any day and every day.

Fathers often show their hurts differently, often internally, BUT THEY DO HURT.

Gerry Hunt  
TCF White River Junction, VT

*What we have once enjoyed we can never lose.  
All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.*

*Helen Keller*



## THE OLD YELLOW TRUCK

Several weeks ago, I sold my old, rusty, yellow pickup truck. I placed an ad in the Baltimore Sunday paper which read:

*For Sale—1978 Toyota pickup truck, 119 K miles— as is \$450. Call.*

Someone called, paid me \$400, and drove away — all in the same day. I should have been happy to get rid of it, but instead I ended up feeling depressed. If I could have advertised the truck in our TCF newsletter, the ad would have read:

*For sale (regretfully) 1978 Toyota pickup truck used by college student when he was home for weekends or semester breaks. Provided safe transportation through a snowstorm for his last New Year's Eve. Four-speaker stereo radio with rock music stations pre-selected. Ashtray clean except for old bank receipts. Truck used by father for hauling things while thinking about son. Priceless. Don't call.*

It has been eighteen months since my son died, and yet it is still difficult to part with certain things — even things that did not belong to him. This is a problem with which we are all faced. What to keep? What to let go? The practical side of us says these things are no longer needed, so we should get rid of them. The heart says my son owned these things or used them; they bring back memories, so we should keep them. There is not a right or wrong answer as to what we keep or what we let go. I reassure myself by noting that these memories of my son didn't leave with that old yellow truck. They will remain locked in my heart forever.

Gary Piepenbring  
TCF Penn, MD

### Chapter co-leaders

Marilyn & French Smith  
Luann & James Butler

### Steering Committee

Henry Cole, Facilitator  
Johnny James, Treasurer  
Dianne & Frank Bruscatto, Library  
Maggy & John Dobbs, Outreach  
Ann Cole, Outreach  
Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

## HOPE

HOPE can stand for many things. Hope is like a scout that goes out ahead into that unknown territory known as grief. That scout lets you know that you can travel there, you can survive this “landscape without gravity.” Let’s take a brief look at some of the possibilities of what TCF members offer when they lend us some hope.

### H—

- 1) TCF offers us **help** in learning how to **heal** when we don’t know where to begin.
- 2) TCF offers us a **hand to hold** when we feel lost and a reassuring **hug** when times are tough.
- 3) TCF offers us an opportunity to be **honest** about our feelings without fear of judgment or censure.
- 4) TCF shows us that **happiness** can again be possible as we move once again into life **honoring** our child’s memory as we go.

### O—

- 1) TCF gives us an **opportunity** to be **open** and forthright in expressing our deepest emotions.
- 2) TCF gives us an **outlet** for our anger, frustration and guilt.
- 3) TCF provides ongoing **outreach** and support when those in our other support systems may have receded or disappeared altogether as our grief journey moves from days and weeks into months and years.
- 4) TCF offers us a sense of **optimism** that life can be good again and that the intense pain of early grief will not last forever.

### P—

- 1) TCF helps us gain **perspective** on what we are experiencing, yet has the **patience** to listen to our story as many times as we need to tell it.
- 2) TCF offers us a **place** where we may feel safe and **protected** as we share our pain and our memories.
- 3) TCF offers us the **promise** of more inner **peace** as we move toward a **place** of remembering more about our child’s life and dwelling less on the circumstances of the death.
- 4) TCF helps us understand the need to **pardon** ourselves for any mistakes we may feel we made as **parents** and not to blame ourselves for our child’s death.

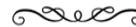
### E—

- 1) TCF provides **education** about the grief process so we can better understand and cope with what is happening to us.
- 2) TCF offers **encouragement** that our pain will not always be so great and that we will survive.
- 3) TCF members provide the true **empathy** which only those who have walked our path can know.
- 4) TCF offers us a chance to **express** what is in our hearts and **embraces** us with understanding.

From the keynote address by Susan Chan at the Jefferson City, Missouri Regional TCF Conference, September 21, 2002



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 | Katy Loflin             |
| Ethan Massey       | 04/25/01 | Michelle Massey         |

## OUR CHILDREN'S APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

| <u>Child</u>       |          | <u>Parent(s)</u>       |
|--------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Holly M. Robertson | 04/01/17 | Nancy & Joe Mulhearn   |
| 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            |
| Pamela Wimbish     | 04/14/16 | Pam Wimbish            |
| Danny Morgan       | 04/18/16 | Jeanie Morgan          |
| Michael Johns      | 04/19/06 | Nell Book              |
| Courtney Cole      | 04/22/12 | Ann & Henry Cole       |
| Mickey Loflin      | 04/23/73 | Katy 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               |
| Derrick Sadberry    | 05/15/65 | Belinda Sadberry             |
| Elizabeth Vaughan   | 05/19/65 | Marilyn Stern                |
| Hunter Carr         | 05/21/91 | Juanita Carr                 |
| 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 | Katy Loflin           |
| Ashley Loflin          | 05/10/06 | Katy Loflin           |
| Will Lensing           | 05/11/11 | Cindy & Bill Lensing  |
| Shontavious Foster     | 05/12/13 | Sarah Foster          |
| Ethan Massey-Rydi      | 05/13/10 | Michelle Massey       |
| Lisa Giovingo          | 05/15/15 | Frances Giovingo      |
| Leigh Ann White        | 05/15/05 | Janet & Ken White     |
| Barry Kirby            | 05/18/13 | Lisa Kirby            |
| Lance Thomas           | 05/18/08 | Connie & Danny Thomas |
| Bobby Starnes, Jr.     | 05/18/12 | Edwina Starnes        |
| John Dobbs             | 05/21/08 | Maggy & John Dobbs    |
| Stacey Gentry Morrison | 05/22/15 | Sandy Kendrick        |
| 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>         |
|---------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Justice Farrar      | 06/05/98 | Martha Anderson          |
| Lauren Lang         | 06/08/93 | Lisa Lang                |
| Caroline Cole       | 06/11/70 | Ann & Henry Cole         |
| Jenna Johnson       | 06/12/88 | Sandy Johnson            |
| Katie Joyce         | 06/25/08 | Kathryn & Jeff Joyce     |
| Blade Gilbreath     | 06/13/05 | Dawn & Brandon Gilbreath |
| Debbie Pope         | 06/14/52 | Jean Hamilton            |
| Andrew Rinicker     | 06/16/72 | Dale Rinicker            |
| Jackson Kennedy     | 06/18/00 | Jonann Layton            |
| Jeremiah Bynum      | 06/19/92 | Darnita Peeler Williams  |
| Mike Hayes          | 06/20/63 | Margaret & George Hayes  |
| Kelly Chapman       | 06/23/78 | Judy & Bennie Chapman    |
| Walker Dayton       | 06/23/81 | Vickie & Ed Dayton       |
| Katie Joyce         | 06/25/08 | Kathryn & Jeff Joyce     |
| 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 Canterberry  | 06/15/07 | Dewanna Canterberry   |
| 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](http://www.tcfnortheastla.org)

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

Return Service Requested