



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY / MARCH 2009

TRAIN OF LIFE

Some folks ride the train of life
Looking out the rear,
Watching miles of life roll by,
And marking every year.

They sit in sad remembrance,
Of wasted days gone by,
And curse their life for what it was,
And hang their head and cry.

But I don't concern myself with that,
I took a different vent,
I look forward to what life holds,
And not what has been spent.

So strap me to the engine,
As securely as I can be,
I want to be out on the front,
To see what I can see.

I want to feel the winds of change,
Blowing in my face,
I want to see what life unfolds,
As I move from place to place.

I want to see what's coming up,
Not looking at the past,
Life's too short for yesterdays,
It moves along too fast.

So if the ride gets bumpy,
While you are looking back,
Go up front, and you may find,
Your life has jumped the track.

It's all right to remember,
That's part of history,
But up front's where it's happening,
There's so much mystery.

The enjoyment of living,
Is not where we have been,
It's looking ever forward,
To another year and ten.

It's searching all the byways,
Never should you refrain,
For if you want to live your life,
You gotta drive the train!

~author unknown~

Submitted by: Johnny & Betty Jean James



JANUARY MEETING

The Compassionate Friends of
Northeast Louisiana will not have a
meeting in January since New Year's
Day is on the first Thursday of the
month. Make plans to attend the first meeting of
2009 on February 5.

*When tragedy strikes,
Loving words from a dear friend
Heal the wounded soul.*

By Diantha Ain

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, February 5

Thursday, March 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 tcsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org for the password

FOREVER CHANGED

Can you see the change in me?
It may not be obvious to you.
I participate in family activities.
I attend family reunions.
I help plan holiday meals.

You tell me you're glad to see that I don't cry anymore.
But I do cry!
When everyone has gone - when it is safe - the tears fall.
I cry in privacy so my family won't worry.
I cry until I'm exhausted and can finally sleep.

You tell me you admire my strength and my positive attitude.
But I am not strong.
I feel that I have lost control,
and I panic when I think about tomorrow...next week...next year.
I go about the routine of my job.
I complete my assigned tasks.
I drink coffee and smile.

You tell me you're glad to see I'm "over" the death of my loved one.
But I am not "over" it.
If I get over it, I will be the same as before my loved one died.
I will never be the same.
At times, I think I am beginning to heal,
but the pain of losing someone I loved so much has left a permanent scar on my heart.
I visit my neighbors.

You tell me you're glad to see I'm holding up so well.
But I'm not holding up well.
Sometimes I want to lock the door and hide from the world.

I spend time with my friends.
I appear calm and collected.
I smile when appropriate.

You tell me it's good to see me back to my "old-self".
But I will never be back to my "old-self".
Death and grief have touched my life,
And I am forever changed.

~author unknown~



TO MY SISTER

You touched us all, you loved us all,
Forever giving, forever caring,
Forever forgiving.
Never wanting in return.
Blessed are those who shared your life
Rich are those who carry your memories.
Please rest now; your chores we will finish.

'Til we meet again...

Cindy Keltz
TCF Arlington Hts, IL

*"Time can bring you down
Time can bend your knees
Time can break your heart
Have you begging please
...beyond the door
There's peace I'm sure
And I know there'll be
No more tears in heaven"*

By Eric Clapton

THE SHARING OF GRIEF

I cannot carry this burden alone, the road is too steep
and the pain too great.

I shall only get to the top of the hill if I am able to
lean on a firm shoulder whose strength lies in the
reality of the feet which bear its weight.

The sharing of grief is the only solution
to the crisis that surrounds bereavement
in our age.

To share a person's sorrow is to accept
their reality and to acknowledge the fact
that none of us is immune from death.

Rev. Dr. Simon Stephens
Founder of The Compassionate Friends



Perhaps...your tears of sorrow today will water the
seeds of tomorrow's garden of spiritual growth,

Of worthy priorities, of loving relationships, and
genuine understanding and compassion.

My sad friend your weeping is not fruitless.

Nancy Williams
TCF Central NJ

MEMORIES

Time can never erase,
The memory of your face;
Nor the passage of the years,
Stem the volume of my tears.

You are with me for always,
In my heart throughout all days;
Then in my dreams nightly,
Your star shines ever so brightly.

I want your spirit to remain,
Inside of me, despite the pain.
To forget you would be a curse,
Because no memories would be much worse.

You were born a part of me,
Now you live within the heart of me;
Forever precious, forever young,
My beautiful, darling little ones.

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

FOR THE NEW YEAR

Where there is pain,
let there be softening

Where there is bitterness,
let there be acceptance

Where there is silence,
let there be communication

Where there is loneliness,
let there be friendships

Where there is despair,
let there be hope

Ruth Eiseman
TCF Louisville, KY

RAINBOWS

I promise not to offer rainbows after storms or silver
linings beyond the clouds.

But if you have tears of sorrow, I will share them.

If you have words of anger, I will hear them.

If you have moments of confusion, I will help you
through them.

[Chapter co-leaders](#)

Marilyn & French Smith

[Steering Committee](#)

Henry Cole, Facilitator

Beverly & Charles Wall, Treasurer

Dianne & Frank Bruscato, Library

Ann Cole & Marilyn Smith, Hospitality

Frances & Jim Gregory, Outreach

Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

Betty Jean & Johnny James, Memorial Park

Sandy Chester, TCF Regional Coordinator

THOUGHTS ON WINTER

January...February...so cold, so crisp, so leafless. Beginning a year...a new year...A NEW BEGINNING. You never lived in this year, and that is new. Sometimes new is painful. January is also the month of resolutions and the only resolution we must make is that we must learn to live without our child. What a profound sadness that is! To love them so deeply, so passionately, so completely...only to have us part.

My child, did I ever tell you enough how much I loved you? I've wondered. Do we tell those we love how very much their life has meant to us? Probably we do not. Somehow we just arrogantly believe that time goes on forever. It does. It's just the people do not. We fail to recognize how entirely too brief some lives can be. You were not supposed to die. Death is reserved for others. How could you have disappointed me? Didn't you know that I had such plans for you? I didn't want to face my own mortality. How cruel life was...using you to prove to me that we do indeed come to an end.

I don't want to accept your death...but what choice have I left? Have you any idea how angry that makes me? Oh, I'll mend...although mending sometimes means forgetting. I cannot put you aside, but already memories of you are fading.

You know what I like best? When I'm given little tidbits of your life by those that knew you. What a bittersweet delight!

Each piece of my jigsaw puzzle life will eventually fit together. You will be the only missing piece.

Dorothy Worrel
TCF Palo Alto, CA

IT IS A TIME FOR LOVE

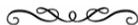
February has fewer days than most months, and that may be of special significance to us, as our children had fewer days than most. When we think of this month, the most outstanding day, perhaps, is St. Valentine's Day. It is a time for love. When we were school aged, we had a special chance to give and receive cards in those decorated boxes in our primary classrooms. Perhaps it is the one holiday that children can really do something for everyone.

Addressing a card to each and every classmate made you think of how you felt about each one and wonder about how they felt about you. Love is found in every day of every year, but February and Valentine's Day is very special. I wish I could remember just how it felt to get a "nicer" Valentine from someone I had sent a "nicer" one to.

It is so long ago, and there have been so many much more significant happenings in my life. But sometimes, I'd like to remember just how it felt. I am sending along this Valentine Love Note to each of you right now, and hope that you know it is one of the "nicer" ones, because each of you is very special to me. Somehow I don't wonder how you feel, somehow, I know!

As we grieve the loss of our children and one another's, we begin to find a different kind of love than we ever expected to experience.

Rosalie Baker
TCF Rochester, NY



Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the newsletter to keep our chapter going strong. Please contact Julie Petty with your ideas. Phone: 559-1762



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. Phone: 388-1660

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 JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Eddie Foreman	01/03/60	Jenny Rodgers
Brandi Spradlin	01/05/78	Rita & Terry Colgate
Tricia Smith	01/08/74	Brenda & Randy Smith
Stephen Smith	01/08/76	Marilyn & French Smith
Dana Sallis	01/12/78	Joanna Sallis (sister)
Amanda Maxwell	01/17/86	Angie Maxwell
Patrick Loflin	01/18/71	Katie & Pat Loflin
Hope Johnson	01/18/94	Fran Johnson
Kimball James	01/24/71	Betty Jean & Johnny James
Stephen Sivils	01/25/77	Veda & Leon Sivils
Seth Lowery	01/26/84	Joyce & Dale Lowery
Norman Craig	01/28/64	Pat Craig
Timothy Maurer	01/29/72	Shirley & Nick Maurer

OUR CHILDREN'S FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Corey Washington	02/14/69	Gracie Washington
Todd Bates	02/26/72	Sheila Bates

OUR CHILDREN'S MARCH BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Kaye Shields	03/04/62	Lila & R.L. Hargrove
Tyrone Edwards	03/10/81	Sheila Edwards
Greg Gilstrap	03/12/70	Jean Gilstrap
Ben Caldwell	03/26/83	Emily & Douglas Caldwell
Jon Bowman	03/27/85	Jill Puckett
Michael Johns	03/28/75	Nell Book

OUR CHILDREN'S JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Austin Williams	01/01/02	Loretta & Larry Williams
Martha Husmann	01/09/90	Betty & Harry Stone
Scottie McLarrin	01/09/99	Mary McLarrin
Ashley Taylor	01/10/06	Valerie & Doug Taylor
Jackson Kennedy	01/11/02	Jonann & Jeff Kennedy
Benjamin Box	01/13/06	Erlene & Jack Box
Timothy Maurer	01/16/06	Shirley & Nick Maurer
Richard Bryan	01/25/02	Linda & James Bryan
Teresa Gentry	01/25/06	Jlynn & Jim Walters
Fred Page	01/26/98	Charlotte Colquette
Carl Alexander	01/26/04	Valerie & Billy Matejowsky
Caroline Cole	01/30/88	Ann & Henry Cole

OUR CHILDREN'S FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Tricia Smith	02/05/06	Brenda & Randy Smith
Greg Dennis	02/06/05	Camille Dennis
Eddie Foreman	02/15/99	Jenny Rodgers
Kelly Boies	02/18/07	Paula Gilliam
Jesse Chilton	02/23/07	Cheryl & Ronnie Chilton
Cedrick Hotard	02/28/07	Sharon & Stephen Hotard
Adam McKenzie	02/28/03	Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie

OUR CHILDREN'S MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Michael Hoyem	03/01/06	Dorothy & Don Hoyem
Jeremy Barnhill	03/08/02	Kathi & Terry Barnhill
Stuart Morse	03/09/06	Tammy & James Morse
Brian Gregory	03/10/98	Frances & Jim Gregory
Duston Albritton	03/14/98	Linda & Ronnie Albritton
Brandi Spradlin	03/22/98	Rita & Terry Colegate
Todd Bates	02/24/04	Sheila Bates
Tyrone Edwards	03/30/02	Sheila Edwards
Kimball James	03/31/01	Betty Jean & Johnny James

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.

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Return Service Requested