



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

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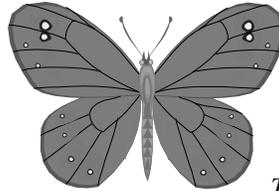
JANUARY/FEBRUARY / MARCH 2010

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

What does the new year mean to me?  
It's another year to be bereaved.  
365 days that I cannot see  
my child who meant so much to me.  
Sometimes while riding in our car  
I try to see into distances afar.  
I shut my eyes and shake my head  
and then I realize he's really dead.  
This child whom I have loved so much  
is nowhere close where I can touch.  
That in itself is a terrible feeling;  
it keeps my emotions rocking and reeling.  
I look at his picture and it's hard to believe  
that this is all the older he will ever be.  
No daughter-in-law will ever be mine,  
no grandchildren from him to take up my  
time.

*Happy New Year* I just can't say.  
It means different things from day-to-day.  
It should mean I'm glad my son is here  
to celebrate this brand new "year."  
But since I'm one of the parents bereaved, this is a  
fact that will never be.  
Another year has come upon us; I'll get thru it –  
simply must!

Pam Hamilton  
TCF Salina, KS



## JANUARY WARMTH

Like a tree in winter  
Which has lost its leaves,  
We look ahead to spring for new growth  
And the warmth of the sun  
To heal the pain in our hearts.

Let us make January  
A time to reach out to each other  
And give that warmth from our hearts,  
And in return -  
We will all show new growth

Pat Dodge

*This Winter of your life will pass, as all  
seasons do.  
Stay in your season of Winterness as long as need be,  
For everything you feel is appropriate.  
There is no right way to grieve.  
There is just your way.  
It will take as long as it takes.*

*Rusty Berkus  
from To Heal Again*

## IN THE COLD OF WINTER

In the cold of winter, and the dark of those nights,  
the heart remembers the laughs, the fights.  
In the warmth of the spring and the light of those  
days,  
the heart remembers –  
and loves...always.

Sondra Wright  
TCF Atlanta Chapter

### Monthly Meetings

**Thursday, January 7**

**Thursday, February 4**

**Thursday, March 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

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## REFLECTIONS

With the death of my sister come some painful realizations; that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness.

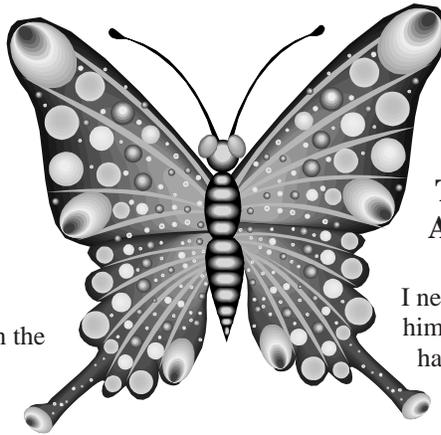
Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time—time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger

## FOR SIBLINGS: A TRIBUTE

I think of you in silence, my feelings seldom show,  
but how it hurt to lose you, no one will ever know.  
I hope there is eternal life, so we can meet again.  
I not only lost my brother, I lost my very best friend.  
The reason you left so early, I'll never understand why.  
I just wish I'd known you were never coming back,  
'cause I would have said, "Good-bye."

Martha K.  
TCF Concord, NH



## TO THOSE WHO COME AFTER

I never knew my brother, yet I knew him well through my Mother's eyes, I have seen him and love him still. I'll grow tall and strong like him, yet not like him at all. He'll be my guardian angel, and we'll grow through life together, as one. I have his clothes and his toys and his photos. I hold them dear to me. But most of all, I treasure the loving memories—the memories my Mother gave me.

Karen Holland  
TCF Brisbane, Australia

## I SAW YOU TODAY

I saw you today in the sunset.  
You were a beautiful mixture of pink and orange.  
I was amazed at your beauty.  
All I could do was stare.

I saw you today in the clouds.  
You floated and danced in the wind.  
You briefly covered up the sun,  
And I saw your shadow on the mountains.

I saw you today in a rainbow,  
Through a tiny window of the airplane.  
As we turned and you were gone,  
Your brother reminded me that you're always with us.

I saw you today everywhere I went.  
You were the little girl at the park,  
You looked at me through Daddy's eyes at dinner time,  
Your light burns brightly in the candle on our dinner table.

I saw you today.  
I'll see you tomorrow.  
I'll hold you in Heaven.

Kara Newland  
M.i.s.s.i.n.g Angels Sept/Oct 2004 Vol8 Iss 5  
In loving memory of Maia Grace Newland.  
January 17, 2004

## WINTER DREAMING

Winter sun slants down, no warmth in its rays  
Warm spring is sleeping, under the snow she lays.  
Barren tree branches dance in time to the cold winds

song

Nights are dark and oh so long.  
But your memories are my blanket of warmth  
And I pull them close to me, waiting for spring to  
come forth.

A time of warm breeze, to chase away the cold  
But now in the winter, warm memories I hold.

Sheila Simmons  
TCF, Atlanta, GA

## FOR THE NEW YEAR

Where there is pain,  
let there be softening.

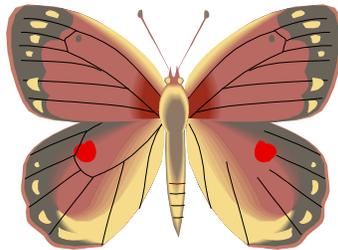
Where there is bitterness,  
let there be acceptance.

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



## THERE'S A VALENTINE WAITING FOR YOU

There's a Valentine waiting for you,  
That's different from all of the others.  
It's there every month at our meetings.  
Of heartbroken fathers and mothers.

Its envelope is made of caring.  
The glue of understanding seals it tight.  
This non-judgmental group who've "been there"  
Help to take away your fear and fright.

So, come join with us together,  
Read your living message printed clear.  
In not only this month's valentine,  
But all those throughout the year.

Mary C.

### 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

## IMAGE OF WINTER

When February comes there is finally an end in sight to the long winter. Sometimes, melting snow reveals the green tips of an early crocus or even the exquisite blossom itself, a soft flower of hope invading a harsh landscape of graying snow and biting wind and ominous sky. A small promise of life to come.

My heart, grieving for my son who died, was like that image of winter. For somehow even during the darkest, coldest moments, an unexpected sign of hope would intrude. And as the hours and days and months dragged on, my heart finally learned once again to be open to the promise of new life. Painful memories melted into loving ones. Life that seemed forever dormant once again sprang forth from my heart.

In living hopefully and lovingly, the seasons of the heart can change. The loving memories of your special child, like the flower in the snow, can be the beginning of the end of winter.

Maryann Kramer  
TCF Arlington Heights, IL



## THE NEW YEAR

With the holidays past, we're off on another 365 now. Some of you, I know, wonder if you can make it. That's such an enormous amount of time to contemplate all at once, isn't it? You may have some of your "firsts" coming in the months ahead, and the normal impulse seems to be to lump all those days together and start dreading them concurrently, like a prisoner serving several life sentences.

It's possible to do it that way, but that's the hard way. Getting through this day may take all the energy you can muster. Why try to handle March or May or July (or whenever your special days are) now? You can't really, and you end up by the trying only defeating yourself in your effort to effectively survive this day.

When this day is past, March or May or July will still be there, trying to defeat your tomorrow - but only if you let them!

Get past this day - and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. By the time March, May or July gets here you will have improved your coping skills. You can better handle your special days with more practice.

I encourage you to know you can and will be better. Use this New Year constructively to facilitate that end, and utilize the help that is available to you through your compassionate friends.

Mary Cleckly  
TCF Atlanta, GA



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 JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Eddie Foreman	01/03/60	Jimmie Sue Reeves
Brandi Spradlin	01/05/78	Rita & Terry Colgate
David Dayton	01/06/81	Pat Dayton
Tricia Smith	01/08/74	Brenda & Randy Smith
Stephen Smith	01/08/76	Marilyn & French Smith
Amanda Maxwell	01/17/86	Angie Maxwell
Patrick Loflin	01/18/71	Katie 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

## **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
Michael Johns	03/28/75	Nell Book

## **OUR CHILDREN'S JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Kelly O'Neal	01/03/09	Nancy Oliver
David Dayton	01/02/02	Pat Dayton
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 Layton & 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	Lynn & 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
Walker Dayton	02/04/09	Vickie & Ed Dayton
Greg Dennis	02/06/05	Camille Dennis
Eddie Foreman	02/15/99	Jimmie Sue Reeves
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
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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WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
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Return Service Requested