



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

Jan / Feb / Mar 2015

## MEMORIES LIKE A ROSE

When a child dies our memories are held tightly with lots of pain, just like the tightly folded petals of the rose bud with the many thorns to stick and prick causing pain.

As we talk about our child and share memories with others, we begin to open ourselves to healing as the rose petals start to open ever so gradually.

Just as a rose becomes more beautiful as it blossoms, so do the memories of our child!

Yes, the thorns are still there and will hurt when touched, but oh how beautiful the rose and oh, how beautiful the memory of our children!

Share the memory of your child so that memory can start to bloom to become as beautiful as a rose.

Julie Timmerman  
TCF Tulsa OK

## LOVE LIVES ON

Those we love are never really lost to us.  
We feel them in so many special ways.

Through friends they always cared about and dreams they left behind.  
In beauty that they added to our days,  
In words of wisdom we still carry with us.  
And memories that never will be gone.

Those we love are never really lost to us.  
For everywhere their special love lives on.

Amanda Bradley  
TCF Valley Forge, PA

## LAST MOMENTS

Last moments,  
Snatches of conversation  
That echo across all decades...

Priceless words  
Indelibly etched on the heart.

Sometimes  
Thoughts were never spoken  
But unexpected sentiment

A quick embrace, a silly smirk,  
Or joyous laughter  
Reaches through the pain  
And warms the heart.

We came too soon to understand  
The folly of harsh words  
Or neglected touch,

For who can know which  
Taken-for-granted event  
Will become  
A last moment.

Diane Fields  
TCF Westmoreland, PA



## Monthly Meetings

**Thursday, January 1 – no meeting**

**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.

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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

## YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

### Yesterday

You were here and I took it for granted that you would always be here. Telling you I loved you and was proud of you seemed unimportant. There would be time for that when we were older, when we fought less and talked more.

### Today

I know that time will never come, and I will never have the chance to say these things face-to-face. So I write them and think them and how you know I mean them now and have always felt them.

### Tomorrow

Each day the pain and regrets of things left unsaid get easier to deal with. I have begun to realize that you knew how I felt because you felt the same way. And as more tomorrows turn into yesterdays, I will find peace in that knowledge. Someday, somewhere, we will meet again and I will have my chance then.

Shannon Odessa Stiener  
TCF Lowell, IN

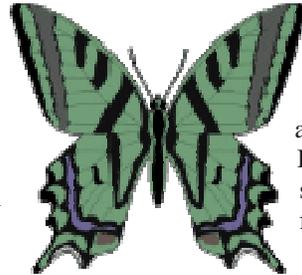
## TO MY SISTER

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 Heights, IL

## 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 years I never knew whether the twilight was the  
ending of the day  
or the beginning of the night  
and then, suddenly one day,  
I understood that this did not matter at all,  
for time is but a circle,  
and so there can be no beginning and no ending,  
and this is how I came to know that birth and death  
are one,  
and it is neither the coming or the going that is of  
consequence.  
What is of consequence is the beauty that one gathers  
in this interlude called life."*

*From "Come Walk Among the Stars,"  
by Winston Abbott*

## SUICIDE

Once you were rich with life,  
you were self-confident  
and filled with beauty.

Until a darkness came  
to seize your mind,  
a force from out of silence,  
an ache without a reason,  
a pain without a name.

What was this darkness that  
would not be conquered?  
What force, what reason,  
What pain without a name  
would use your hands  
to take your life away.

Once you were rich with life,  
you were self-confident  
and filled with beauty.  
Now we are left alone  
without an answer.

Sascha Wagner  
TCF Des Moines, IA

## THE BUMPY ROAD

The other day I sat alone and realized my heart was  
not as heavy. Oh, there are still times when I miss  
my child desperately, but I seem to rebound sooner  
now.

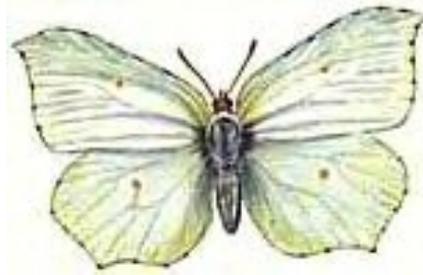
Then the phone rang; another mother called to lean  
on me. She must have known that I was ready. I  
listened, she shared and oh how I felt for her. When  
we said good-bye, I sat again but not as alone this  
time. New strength and pride came in knowing I had  
lent a helping hand.

My child's death has taught me so much new, a lot I  
wished I had never known. But since I do now know  
what others face, perhaps the bumpy road I've  
traveled can be made a little smoother for another.

A Bereaved Mother

## REMINISCING

I thought about you today,  
As I bade farewell for school.



I thought about you today,  
When I heard a certain song.

I thought about you today,  
As the teacher passed the test.

I thought about you today,  
When the kids jumped in the leaves.

I thought about you today,  
as a stranger passed my way.

I thought about you today,  
When I got drenched in the rain.

I thought about you today,  
As I sat in church and prayed.

I thought about you today,  
When I embraced an old friend.

I thought about you today,  
As the day turned into night.

I will think of you again,  
When I close my eyes and dream.

Lori Phillip  
TCF Scranton, PA

### 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 VALENTINES OF YESTERDAY

In my lifetime I have received many Valentines. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, school friends, boyfriends, good friends, acquaintances and my husband have showered me over the years with lovely Valentines which I have so appreciated.

The tradition of declaring friendship and love on Valentine's Day is a very fond memory. However, the sweetest Valentines I have ever received are from my son. From the first days in nursery school when my son made a hand plaque and a drawing on construction paper to the final Valentine in 2002, I have cherished these gifts of love from my only child. I have kept every Valentine my son ever made for me or bought for me. I have every Valentine gift he ever gave me. These are the treasures that remind me how special a parent's love truly is.

There is no love to compare with the unconditional love we give our children. I think my son knew that nobody in the world would love him as much as his mother did. Yet, he also knew that he would love his children in just this same way. This unconditional parent's love that we give our children is the most precious love in life. It is always our hope that they, too, will find the joy of this love with their children.

When our child dies, we cling to our unconditional love as we feel the anguish of a final separation on this earthly plane and a tsunami of betrayal as the devastation of this incomprehensible loss sweeps over us. The pain is real. It is physical, emotional, psychological and forever embedded on our psyche. Yet, without that unconditional love, there would be no pain. Who among us would trade the most infinitely rewarding love and the subsequent pain of loss for a life of lukewarm relationships?

And so, as Valentine's Day once again comes into my life, I will look back at this love, at the good times, the wonderful handmade childhood Valentine cards and gifts and the carefully selected cards of adulthood that my son gave to me. His words, his love, his appreciation for all that we had shared as mother and child will be reflected in these treasures. There will be tears, certainly, but these are tempered with the many wonderful, sweet memories of my son and his life. It is these sweet memories which sustain me, give me hope, and bring me gratitude for all that was given to me

My son is forever in my heart. He is with me every day and every night, and especially, he is with me on Valentine's Day.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF Katy, TX



*"The tragedy we have experienced somehow enables us to establish new and more meaningful priorities, to love and to value those who are close with a renewed sense of appreciation and awareness. If any meaning is ever again to exist in our lives, it will develop as a result of newly found sensitivity, love and compassion for others."*

*Chris Moon*



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 Colegate
David Dayton	01/06/81	Pat Dayton
Paul Johnston	01/06/06	Gloria & Paul Johnston
Tricia Smith	01/08/74	Brenda & Randy Smith
Stephen Smith	01/08/76	Marilyn & French Smith
Cody Allen	01/12/92	Regina Kenney
Bryan Gibbens	01/12/75	Dianne & Mike Gibbens
Mario Lambert	01/15/10	Helma Lambert
Amanda Maxwell	01/17/86	Angie Maxwell
Mickey Loflin	01/18/71	Katy Loflin
Hope Johnson	01/18/94	Fran Johnson
Kimball James	01/24/71	Betty Jean & Johnny James
Stephen Sivils	01/25/77	Veda Sivils
Norman Craig	01/28/64	Pat Craig
Maaliyanh Fletcher	01/30/02	Jeanette Fletcher

## OUR CHILDREN'S FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Leigh Ann White	02/02/82	Janet & Ken White
Cecilia Mouser	02/04/59	Kathryn Hutchinson
Matt Mouser	02/05/53	Kathryn Hutchinson
Corey Washington	02/14/69	Gracie Washington
Jacob Causey	02/21/89	Christy Causey
Courtney Cole	02/25/65	Ann & Henry Cole

## OUR CHILDREN'S MARCH BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Allison Butler	03/03/88	LuAnn & James Butler
Kaye Shields	03/04/62	Lila & R.L. Hargrove
Tyrone Edwards	03/10/81	Sheila Edwards
Greg Gilstrap	03/12/70	Jean Gilstrap
Hope Bruscato	03/24/72	Gene Bruscato
Ryan Clark	03/24/74	Linda Clark
Ben Caldwell	03/26/83	Emily & Douglas Caldwell
Jon Bowman	03/27/85	Jill Puckett
Danny Washington	03/27/92	Dorothy Washington
Michael Johns	03/28/75	Nell Book
Ryan Simon	03/31/81	Sandra & Rene' Simon

## OUR CHILDREN'S JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
David Dayton	01/02/02	Pat Dayton
Kelly O'Neal	01/03/09	Nancy Oliver
David Moore	01/06/84	Barbara Moore
Scottie McLarrin	01/09/99	Mary McLarrin
Jackson Kennedy	01/11/02	Jonann Layton
Trent Weaver	01/11/13	Donna VanVeckhoven
Benjamin Box	01/13/06	Erlene & Jack Box
Janey Kight	01/20/83	Sandra Casteel
Bryan Gibbens	01/21/75	Dianne & Mike Gibbens
Richard Bryan	01/25/02	Linda & James Bryan
Teresa Gentry	01/25/06	Lynn Walters
Fred Page	01/26/98	Charlotte Colquette
Carl Alexander	01/26/04	Valerie & Billy Matejowsky
Dominque Bruscato	01/26/88	Gene Bruscato
Chris Travis	01/26/13	Gloria & Kenneth Travis
Caroline Cole	01/30/88	Ann & Henry Cole

## OUR CHILDREN'S FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Jacob Causey	02/01/12	Christy Causey
Deborah Smith	02/01/11	Mary & Buddy Smith
Ryan Clark	02/04/04	Linda Clark
Walker Dayton	02/04/09	Vickie & Ed Dayton
Cecilia Mouser	02/04/59	Kathryn Hutchinson
Tricia Smith	02/05/06	Brenda & Randy Smith
Thomas Stephens	02/05/11	Susan & Gray Stephens
Greg Dennis	02/06/05	Camille Dennis
Bobby Starnes, Sr.	02/11/94	Edwina Starnes
Eddie Foreman	02/15/99	Jimmie Sue Reeves
Jayden Ward	02/23/14	Alicia Hill
Curtis Thigpen	02/26/04	Mary Jo & Art Thigpen
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>
Mickey Chambers	03/04/11	Merrell & Mike Chambers
Jeremy Barnhill	03/08/02	Kathi & Terry Barnhill
Donald Acree	03/10/10	Fran Acree
Brian Gregory	03/10/98	Frances & Jim Gregory
CW2 Bryan Henderson	03/11/13	Kim Bryan Henderson
Duston Albritton	03/14/98	Linda & Ronnie Albritton
Raymond Scott	03/16/12	Pam Lavender
Maaliyah Fletcher	03/20/06	Jeanette Fletcher
Brandi Spradlin	03/22/98	Rita & Terry Colegate
Danny Washington	03/26/12	Dorothy Washington
Michele Perry	03/29/72	Clara & Don Perry
Ryan Simon	03/29/13	Sandra & Rene' Simon
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.

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