



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

Jan / Feb / Mar 2016

## CHILD AND MOTHER

O mother-my-love, if you'll give me your hand,  
And go where I ask you to wander,  
I will lead you away to a beautiful land,--  
The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder.  
We'll walk in a sweet posie-garden out there,  
Where moonlight and starlight are streaming,  
And the flowers and the birds are filling the air  
With the fragrance and music of dreaming.

There'll be no little tired-out boy to undress,  
No questions or cares to perplex you,  
There'll be no little bruises or bumps to caress,  
Nor patching of stockings to vex you;  
For I'll rock you away on a silver-dew stream  
And sing you asleep when you're weary,  
And no one shall know of our beautiful dream  
But you and your own little dearie.

And when I am tired I'll nestle my head  
In the bosom that's soothed me so often,  
And the wide-awake stars shall sing, in my stead,  
A song which our dreaming shall soften.  
So, Mother-my-Love, let me take your dear hand,  
And away through the starlight we'll wander,--  
Away through the mist to the beautiful land,--  
The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder.

Eugene Field

*In loving memory of*



**Betty Jean Campbell James**  
March 10, 1942 – December 23, 2015

*“When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand*



*between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.*

*For as long as you remember me, I am never entirely lost. When I'm feeling most ghost-like, it is your remembering me that helps remind me that I actually exist. When I'm feeling sad, it's my consolation. When I'm feeling happy, it's part of why I feel that way.*

*If you forget me, one of the ways I remember who I am will be gone. If you forget, part of who I am will be gone.”*

*Frederick Buechner*  
*Whistling in the Dark: A Doubter's Dictionary*

### Monthly Meetings

**Thursday, January 7**

**Thursday, February 4**

**Thursday, March 3**

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 [tcfsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:tcfsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org) for the password

## GRIEF'S ARRAY OF EMOTIONS

I think the most frustrating thing about grief is that it is more than just sadness or the persistent feeling of emptiness I feel. Grief spans a wide array of feelings and emotions including, but not limited to sorrow, anger, jealousy, and helplessness. Lately, I have been struggling with coming to grips with my life as it continues along a path I would never have imagined. If Carl were still alive, I imagine he would be married and I would be an aunt to his children. He would have been there for my wedding and would be anxiously awaiting, along with my parents, the arrival of his future nieces and nephews. He would have been a great uncle. He was always great with kids and reveled in the part of himself which never grew up; the same trait which inexplicably drew kids to him.

Losing a brother is not just losing a companion, a best friend, a confidant, someone to pave the way for a little sister as she follows eagerly behind. When Carl died I not only lost those things, but I lost the future we would have had. I wish I would have had a chance to see how great he would have been with the children I hope to someday have. I wish I would have had the chance to see his sparkle, his amazing smile passed on to his children. But my reality is that these things will never come to pass. As each year turns into the next I struggle to reconcile the life I had imagined with the life I live today. It's hard to keep moving forward when I no longer have a big brother to do things first so I know, more or less, what to expect.

Maybe dealing with Carl's death and the loss of the future I had imagined would be easier if grief were merely a matter of dealing with the ensuing sadness. However, as my life continues to move forward I come across new struggles. I find myself getting jealous of my husband of three months, relationship with his brother and angry at him for having one when mine is gone. Is it rational? No, but grief isn't always rational. I can't fault him for having a close relationship with his brother, nor can I fault him for

Carl's death. I have no real reason to be angry with him when he is on the phone with his brother. I can't

be angry with him because it's not me. No matter how much I wish, it will never be me again. I have no real reason to be jealous of his niece and nephew and the relationship he has with them. It is not his fault that I will never hold my brother's children.



It isn't fair for me to take my anger out on him or brood silently while he continues to nurture relationships with his family. I know, too well, the importance of family. One of the things I love most about him is that he is very close to his family and places great importance on maintaining strong familial ties. But, my grief inevitably creeps in and weaves its way through our relationship. Not only do I have to deal with my grief, but I have to be careful in how I channel it, if I want to have a successful marriage. Yet, even as I try to channel my grief, more anger creeps in because I have to concentrate harder on my actions because I am grieving my brother's death—and that doesn't feel very fair either.

I try to tell my husband and try to help him understand when I am feeling angry or jealous because he has something I long to have, but I am afraid. I fear that there will come a day when I tell him the reason I am acting irrationally is because I am struggling with my grief and he sees my explanation merely as an excuse or something I should learn to control. I fear he will tire of being patient with me, or expect that one day I won't cry "over nothing" or that one day I won't feel sad on the Fourth of July because it was one of Carl's favorite holidays.

Is my fear irrational, or am I assuming he will react to me the way others in the past have reacted? I guess I am bound to find out sooner or later. Just as I learn to live with my grief I will have to learn how to manage my grief while maintaining a marriage. I sure wish grief was just about feeling sad. No, I really wish I didn't have to deal with it all.

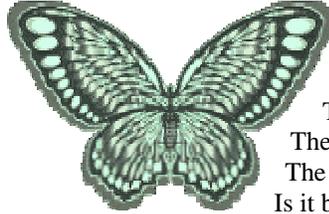
Carrie Kears

Carrie's brother, Carl Pueschel, died January 19, 1996

## 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



## 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

## AS LONG AS I CAN

As long as I can, I will look at the world for both of us.  
As long as I can, I will laugh with the bird, I will sing with flowers, I will play to the stars, for both of us.  
As long as I can, I will remember how many things on this earth were your joy.  
And I will live as well as you would want me to live, as long as I can.

Sascha

*"Each of us finds an escape from the world after the death of our child...something to revise our history and help us survive. But eventually we must seek balance, find ways of coping with our soul-shattering loss and ground ourselves in our new reality. The Compassionate Friends has done all of that for me. But I had to take the first step."*

Annette Mennen Baldwin

*"Grief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will ever do. While we all wish for the pain to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved intensely. It is unrealistic to expect that grief to ever totally go away, because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed."*

Elaine Grier

### Chapter co-leaders

Marilyn & French Smith

### Steering Committee

Henry Cole, Facilitator

Johnny James, Treasurer

Dianne & Frank Bruscato, Library

Maggy & John Dobbs, Outreach

Luann & James Butler, Outreach

Ann Cole, Outreach

Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

## WHAT IS NEW ABOUT THE NEW YEAR?

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hoorahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try.

But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. 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  
TCF Upper Valley, VT



## WHY ME?—THE UNANSWERABLE QUESTION

Most of us have pondered this question at some time in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grieverers found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

Polly Moore  
TCF Nashville, TN



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	Katye 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 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 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 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 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 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  
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Return Service Requested