



The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Louisiana

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Jan / Feb / Mar 2018

CARRYING MEMORIES INTO THE NEW YEAR

With the church bells ringing the New Year enters - echoing the days of yesteryear, memories of happiness – the smiles of our children, the sunlight within each face.

Who will remember these dear ones far from our yearning arms? Who remembers all they were, the way she danced, the hat he wore? With the old year gone, will they no longer be known?

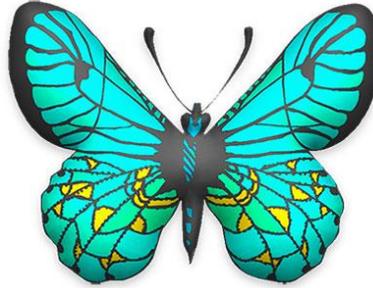
We will remember them, each one. We will hold them in our hearts as we carry memories into this New Year. We will allow the memories to make us laugh, to make us sing. Their lives will fill the air as the church bells ring.

Alice J. Wisler

ANOTHER YEAR

This is another year just beginning – afresh with new days, new opportunities, new challenges. It occurs to me, however, that it is a very difficult task to keep from concentrating on past years and the sadness we endure just because it is a new year and the calendar has flipped the page.

Moving on to a brighter tomorrow and letting go of the pain of yesterday is a gradual process. We cross that threshold one step at a time – a small step, at first, faltering and stumbling – but somehow getting there. With patience, effort and persistence, once again we will be able to celebrate life as the year stretches on before us, putting behind us our sadness, our guilt, our failures and our pain.



We will be able to smile again. We will be able to remember our precious children in life rather than death. We will recognize in our days many little blessings and will be able to share our joys with others.

Alice Weening
TCF Cincinnati, OH

"It has been said, 'time heals all wounds.' I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time, the mind, (protecting its sanity), covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens. But, it is never gone."

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, January 4

Thursday, February 1

Thursday, March 1

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

HAND IN HAND

Our times and memories spent together
Were meant to be cherished
They were burned in our hearts
Never to perish.

We walked unknowingly, on the same road
Hand in hand.
Now the road has divided
We are apart in this land.

We are separated now,
No longer together
The memories now hurt
There are no more to be made, it is forever.

Someday, along the way,
Our roads may meet again
And maybe, to love
Will no longer bring pain.

That is my dream,
That it might not hurt
To think of you
That this pain would desert.

As we grow farther and farther
Astray, it may seem
But those are mere illusions
To picture each other unseen.

But you are only on the other side
Of the mirror, reach through
And grasp my hand.
We'll run together, me and you.

Maybe we cannot see
Or talk face to face
But we are hand in hand
And we're winning this race.



By a 13 year old girl, whose brother died

BECAUSE

Because you can't feel me,
Doesn't mean I'm not there.

Because you can't see me,
doesn't mean I'm not near.

Because you can't hear me,
doesn't mean I don't speak.

Because you can't see me,
doesn't mean I'm out of reach.

Because I am dead,
doesn't mean I'm gone.

Beth Oldani
TCF Arlington Heights, IL

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.



“Although our greatest wish can’t come true, there are many things that we can do to honor our children’s lives. We can still hold them close to our hearts. As the keepers of their memory, we can

guarantee that, by sharing their lives with others, our children will never be forgotten.”

Cathy L. Seehuetter

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

THERE’S A VALENTINE WAITING FOR YOU

There’s a valentine waiting for you,
That’s different from all 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 loving message printed clear.
In not only this month’s valentine,
But all those throughout the year.

Mary Cleckley

I WILL BE

If you think of me as gone forever,
I will be.
If you think of me as sadness and tears,
I will be.
If you think of me as your broken heart,
I will be.
That’s not what I want to be, but
I will be.
If you think of me as memories to cherish,
I will be.
If you think of me as laughter and joy,
I will be.
If you think of me as your healing heart,
I will be.
That’s what I want to be, please, let me be.

Rob Anderson

“WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE”, autumn 2003

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

IN FEBRUARY

In February we celebrate the birthday of George Washington and Abe Lincoln. Lent begins. We wonder if the groundhog will see his shadow, and we have Valentine's Day in the middle of the month. Most people think of Valentine's Day as Sweetheart Day. Candy, flowers, and cards are often exchanged. Many time cards are given and received between parents and children as a way of showing love for one another. Valentine's Day is another holiday on which bereaved parents remember the drawings and cards and gifts received from their deceased child.

Take time out to be good to yourself. Take time out to remember the child who has died. Perhaps you could remember that child with a special flower, a rose or carnation; or perhaps you could do a kindness for someone in need in his or her memory; or send a special card to someone in need of help and understanding. Most of all, take time out to tell your living children and your spouse or that someone special how fortunate you are to have them and how much they mean to you.

Lorraine Bauman
TCF Fairmont, MN



IMAGE OF WINTER

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Maryann Kramer
TCF Arlington Heights, IL



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
Maaliyah Fletcher	01/30/02	Jeanette Fletcher
Matthew Elliott	01/31/99	Guina Elliott

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
Jeremiah Bynum	01/26/17	Darnita Williams
Dominque Bruscato	01/26/88	Gene Bruscato
Chris Travis	01/26/13	Gloria & Kenneth Travis
Elizabeth Vaughan	01/28/17	Marilyn Stern
Caroline Cole	01/30/88	Ann & Henry Cole
Lauren Lang	01/31/16	Lisa Lang

OUR CHILDREN'S FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Leigh Ann White	02/02/82	Janet & Ken White
Michael Moreau	02/03/69	Bonnie & Ron Nay
Cecilia Mouser	02/04/59	Kathryn Hutchinson
Matt Mouser	02/05/53	Kathryn Hutchinson
Corey Washington	02/14/69	Gracie Washington
Dean Keirse	02/14/76	Shirley Porter
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
Jayson C. Crawley	03/27/71	Ruby Crawley
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

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

Return Service Requested