



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

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JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2013

GIFTS FROM ABOVE

They came from different places,
they came from different homes.
These gifts of children from above,
that we claimed as our own.

These precious gifts were given
with love from God above.
Because He thought us worthy
to care for these gifts with love.

These priceless gifts were welcomed
by parents around the world.
Celebrating the joys they brought,
these tiny boys and girls.

It amazes us and gives us pause
that we were chosen to receive,
These cherished gifts from above
-what an honor we believe.

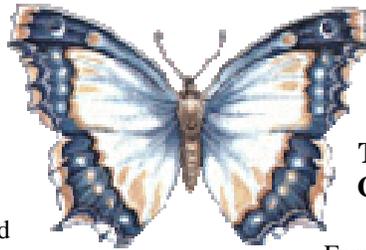
We wonder why our gifts could not stay.
Could it be they were much too loved?
These precious gifts of our children –
Loved, missed and remembered
-These precious gifts from above.

They left us much too soon, we think.
And we continue to question, "Why?"
It does not seem fair to us,
That our children had to die.

We are left with empty arms and shattered dreams.
Grief and pain now fill our lives.
Our homes that once were filled with laughter,
Now harbor our anguished cries.

When finally we emerge from
the quicksand of fresh raw grief,
We start to search for reasons left
to live so we can find relief.

We long to hear from others like us
with hearts that understand.



Then someone may tell us of a place where people
meet called The Compassionate Friends.

There we find a group of people like us
joined by the bond of grief and love.
Where we can share together about our children,
These precious "Gifts From Above".

Faye McCord
TCF Co-Chapter Leader, Jackson, MS

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL

Families and friends gathered Sunday; April 11,
2013 at St. Paul's United Methodist Church located
at 1901 Lexington Avenue for the dedication of The
Compassionate Friends Children's Memorial. Prior
to the balloon release, attendees enjoyed singing and
the reading of poems.

The memorial is a dedication to our children, as
symbolized by the beautiful bronze statue. The park
is paved with bricks engraved with the names of our
children who "Forever Live In Our Hearts". Crepe
myrtles and benches outline the park and hold
plaques engraved with the names of our children.

It is with heartfelt thanks to St. Paul's United
Methodist Church for the donation of the property for
the children's memorial.

The memorial park is the compassionate dedication
and dream of French and Marilyn Smith, chapter co-
leaders.

Monthly Meetings

**Thursday, July 4 – Due to the holiday, we will not
have our regularly scheduled meeting.**

Thursday, August 1

Thursday, September 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

I BELIEVE IN TOMORROW

I believe in tomorrow
Because of today,
Because my brother
Just slipped away.

I believe that tomorrow,
After the storm has passed,
I will once again find him,
Once again at last.

He made tomorrow,
Because tomorrow is another day,
And tomorrow I will find him,
Because he just slipped away.

Sally Grimes
TCF Rogers, AR

A LETTER TO MY BROTHER

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer. How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near?

Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always. Whatever the reason for you leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness. I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

Robin Holeman
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

SOMETIMES

Sometimes, something clicks,
And with a tear
Remembrance of the pain
And the loneliness
Flood the heart.

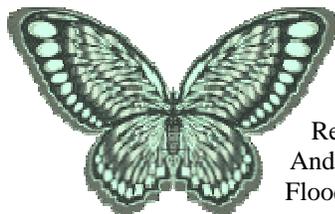
Sometimes, something clicks
And with a smile
Remembrance of the love
And the laughter
Flood the senses.

And there are times
Where nothing clicks at all
And a voice echoes
Through the emptiness
And numbness
Never finding the person
Who used to fill that space.

And sometimes
The most special times of all,
A feeling ripples through your
Body, heart, and soul
That tells you
That person never left you
And he's right there with you
Through it all.

Kirsten Hansen
Bereaved Sibling

"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself." —*Ralph Waldo Emerson*



LITTLE DITTY FOR A SUPPORT GROUP "JUNKIE"

Chat rooms, grief books, support emails,
some heavy and some light,
have kept me from feeling isolated
especially late into the night.

As I sit at my computer by the window reading
and responding to my "new kin,"
passerby neighbors who may see me
have no idea what lies within.

Outward appearances are so deceptive,
I have to give a smile,
but I get such comfort here in this transparent
world,
if only for a while.

My new unseen friends are a lot like me,
and they span across the globe,
It's amazing how comfortable I am "chatting" with
them as I sit here in my robe!

Inventions may come and go and we all have our
favorite one,
For me it's the Internet which I use to help me deal
with the loss of my son..

I'll send this little ditty to all my friends who I'll
never get to meet but on whom I lean,
And I'd like to say thank you and God bless us all,
who read this on their screen.

Alice Stephens
Colin Stephens mum, United Kingdom

Where do they go when the moon fades away
And the music can no longer be?

Far, far away to a wandering star
That only the heart can see

Kelly Marston
TCF Grand Junction, CO



EMPTY PLACES

I drove the old way yesterday.
It'd been a while, you see.
And there, without a warning,
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday
and sadness came on strong,
taken back by so much feeling,
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait
to summon up the tears,
to say remember yesterday,
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played
are places where I cry.
These places hold the memories
that will live as long as I.

Genesse Gentry
TCF Marin County, CA

MEMORIES

Tonight I saw your silhouette
Against a harvest moon...

Tonight I heard a sweet refrain
of some long remembered tune.

Could it be you know somehow
How many hearts remember you?

In harvest moons and heartfelt tunes
The memories ever true.

Chapter co-leaders

Marilyn & French Smith

Steering Committee

Henry Cole, Facilitator

Johnny James, Treasurer

Dianne & Frank Bruscato, Library

Frances & Jim Gregory, Outreach

Maggy & John Dobbs, Outreach

Lou Ann & James Butler, Outreach

Ann Cole, Outreach

Betty Jean James, Outreach & Hospitality

Gracie Washington, Hospitality

Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

Betty Jean & Johnny James, Memorial Park

AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

After the first year; the pain changes from a crushing weight to a wickedly sharp cutting edge. Time speeds up from a grinding plodding to a more normal routine. And sometimes you can forget, for a moment that your whole life was destroyed last year.

After the first year; you start to remember the good times, and you can tell a funny story about your child and save the crying for later. But sometimes it seems like you're the only one left who mourns. "What's the matter with you anyway; it's been a whole year."

After the first year; your child seems a little closer and yet still so far away. Miracle of miracles, you haven't forgotten how he walks, her voice, the shape of his head, or the solid warmth of her finger curving around yours.

After the first year; your heart begins to thaw. You remember that you once loved your surviving children and you love them again. You remember that life used to hold joy, and you rediscover some small enjoyment in living. You learn to piece your life back together in a different pattern.

After the first year; you pick up your burdens and go on. Amazingly, you've survived a blow more painful than anything you ever imagined. Even though you wished you could have died too, it slowly dawns on you that you must still live. Because after the first year, comes the second year.

Liz Ford
TCF Madison, WI



"A SIGN OF HOPE"

Since the times, the butterfly has symbolized renewed life. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and freer existence. Frequently, the butterfly is seen with the word "Nika," which means victory. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of the children's dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since Elisabeth believes in the innate intuitiveness of children, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us a message. Many members of The Compassionate Friends embrace the butterfly as a symbol--a sign of hope to them that their children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom-- a comforting thought to many.



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 JULY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>	
Don Shlosman	07/04/78
Bobby Starnes, Sr.	07/25/56
Michael Stephens	07/06/51
Amiee McIlveene	07/07/78
Greg Dennis	07/08/60
Jill Whitaker	07/21/02
Fred Page	07/22/62
Scottie McLarrin	07/30/87

Parent(s)

Margie Godwin
Edwina Starnes
Maggie & John Stephens
Rhea & Danny McIlveene
Camille Dennis
Cynthia Machen
Gloria Roye
Mary McLarrin

OUR CHILDREN'S JULY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>	
Leigh Ann Carlton	07/01/01
Andrew Rinicker	07/03/04
Hunter Carr	07/08/09
Derrick Sadberry	07/15/06
Steven Wisdom	07/15/06
Mike Hayes	07/19/97
Michael Hollier	07/21/09
Chris Culpepper	07/24/93
Allison Butler	07/30/11

Parent(s)

Gail Dupuy
Dale Rinicker
Juanita Carr
Belinda Sadberry
Dee Wisdom
Margaret & George Hayes
Lyn Hollier
Noel Culpepper
LuAnn & James Butler

OUR CHILDREN'S AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>	
Heather Greer	08/01/83
Kim Smith	08/02/75
Adam McKenzie	08/04/68
Aaron McKenzie	08/04/68
Curtis Thigpen	08/07/78
Chad Byrd	08/13/79
Shontavious Foster	08/13/87
Robert Harrison	08/15/59
John Bruscato	08/19/74
Michele Perry	08/25/66
Dominique Bruscato	09/28/79
Benjamin Box	08/30/63

Parent(s)

Kim & Heath Greer
Jackie Bailey
Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie
Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie
Mary Jo & Art Thigpen
Janice & Randy Byrd
Sarah Foster
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Harrison
Dianne & Frank Bruscato
Don & Clara Perry
Gene Bruscato
Erlene & Jack Box

OUR CHILDREN'S AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>	
Don Shlosman	08/01/00
Chad Byrd	08/01/05
Hope Johnson	08/02/05
Joel Rundell	08/09/90
Brittany Braxton	08/11/09
Heather Greer	08/13/03
Paul Hayes	08/14/03
Scott Thompson	08/16/03
Stephen Sivils	08/19/03
Jeffrey Carter	08/22/10
Jason Hutts	08/22/99
Brian Perry	08/22/02
Greg Gilstrap	08/24/07
Debbie Pope	08/24/08
Alice Rains	08/28/94
Brandon McGehee	08/30/02
Robert Harrison	08/31/06

Parent(s)

Margie Godwin
Janice & Randy Byrd
Fran Johnson
Sharon & Jim Rundell
Ursula Braxton
Kim & Heath Greer
Patty & Paul Hayes
Tammy Thompson
Veda Sivils
Dianne & Tim Carter
Carol & Greg Hutts
Clara & Don Perry
Jean Gilstrap
Jean Hamilton
Marie Rains
Teddi & James McGehee
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Harrison

OUR CHILDREN'S SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>	
Mario Lambert	09/04/77
Fred Page	09/08/58
Pamela Ford	09/08/74
Glenn Snider	09/10/80
Leigh Ann Carlton	09/13/83
Anne Barham	09/14/77
Rodney Hubbard	09/15/64
Donald Acree	09/20/64
Paul Johnston	09/20/59
Michael Woods	09/20/95
Wesley Canterbury	09/23/84
Jeffrey Carter	09/24/82
Joel Rundell	09/26/65
Kody Spann	09/27/84
Richard Bryan	09/28/79

Parent(s)

Helma Lambert
Charlotte Colquette
Leona Upton
Glenn Snider
Gail Dupuy
Pat Barham
Claudina Vega
Fran Acree
Gloria & Paul Johnston
China Telano
Dewanna Canterbury
Dianne & Tim Carter
Sharon & Jim Rundell
Cindy Spann
Linda & James Bryan

OUR CHILDREN'S SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>	
Amanda Maxwell	09/01/02
Kenneth Wall	09/06/99
Kaye Shields	09/06/04
Timothy Smith	09/25/76
Aaron McKenzie	09/29/10
Kim Smith	09/29/97

Parent(s)

Angie Maxwell
Beverly & Charles Wall
Lila & R.L. Hargrove
Mary & Buddy Smith
Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie
Jackie Bailey

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