



The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Louisiana

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

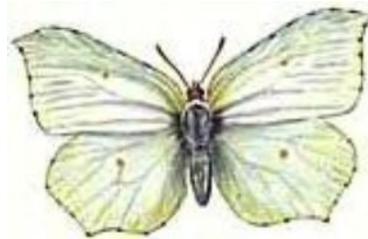
Jul / Aug / Sep 2015

TEARS

If tears could build a stairway,
and memories a lane,
I'd walk right up to Heaven
and bring you home again.
No farewell words were spoken
no time to say goodbye
you were gone before I knew it,
and only God knows why.
My heart still aches in sadness
and secret tears still flow,
what it meant to lose you,
no one will ever know.

Author Unknown

I have redefined my purpose, son,
Since you are no longer here.
With your death I faced a choice
To die, exist or to live free.



My life has changed forever, child,
I m redefined each week,
You would call these benchmarks
Of goals set and then achieved.

And so I set my benchmarks,
Achieving many, reshaping some...
But everything is different now
Except your mother s love.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen

A PROMISE

The colors of life change as we go through grief.
We begin black and white;
Then gray settles over us, seeping into our pores,
surrounding us,
Smothering us for a long period of time; then slowly
the colors change.
We may not even be aware of their changing til one
day we see a rainbow.
And know it was meant for us.

Faye Harden
TCF Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Be there, be there for me. Understand my
unspoken words. See my broken heart.
Understand. Listen to my story, a story of my child.
Remember his life, remember
his death.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

BENCHMARKS

Good bye would be too difficult,
Although I know you are gone.
Instead, I keep you in my heart
And your memory lives on.

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, July 2

Thursday, August 6

Thursday, September 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.

Visit the Sibling Resources Page at www.compassionatefriends.org
Email tcfsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org for the password

REFLECTIONS

With the death of my sister came 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 the priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger

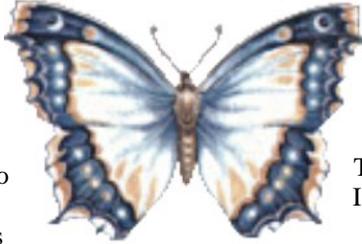
A LETTER TO MY BROTHER

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 your 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 Holemon
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

PLAYING IN THE SHADOWS

We grew up together,
Big sister, little brother.



I took care of you
Until you were old enough to care for
yourself.

Though you didn't say it,
I knew you loved me.

We played in the sunlight, you and I;
Remember the games of Mother-May-I and Hide-
and-Seek ?

Sure we had our fights
As all siblings do.

But through it all we never lost
Our love for each other.

Now you're gone.
I'll never see you again.

Except in the memories
Of those sunny days.

You will forever be sixteen
Far too young to die.

You had your whole life to live.
I'll always grieve, but I must go on.

Still, without you,
I play alone in the shadows.

Cheryl Larson
TCF Pikes Peak, CO

In this life we cannot do great things. We can only
do small things with great
love. *Mother Theresa*

SUMMERTIME

It sounds so easy. A soft, warm word time to run barefoot, time to leave windows open all night. Summertime. Somehow it seems, doesn't it, especially meant for children. Children on beaches, children on swings, children in large pools, children in tiny tubs.

We who do not have all of our children with us may feel the summertime in two ways. One is to remember shared events and adventures there are so many. Long rides in a hot car, a nap in the back seat. The famous question "Are we there yet?" Everything from a heat rash to ice cream cones and sand castles.



For us, another way to feel summertime is the special emptiness brought about by children who are no longer on this earth. They used to trot along on hikes in the hills; they used to gather wood for an evening fire. Now summer brings us again the melancholy awareness of their absence. Have you ever walked on some unfamiliar path, surprised about not having been there with the children? Even when there's nothing to remember, we are reminded of the children's absence.

We have been diminished by death. Some of us may still have living children. Other parents have no children left. They have lost an only child perhaps, or all of their children died. And here we are, grateful for the warmth of summer mornings, aware of the ripe beauty of nature, trying to deal with our children's absence with all the grace of which we are capable. Often we do not want to burden others with our grief. Or we may be convinced that others don't wish to share our distress. We have learned, after all, that the world around us is not always able to understand how we feel.

Besides, we are taught to be brave. Many of us will do everything we can to appear "normal" after our loss. But we were also taught to be honest. And when you feel the hurt, when you seem almost to be lost in the shadows of this golden summertime, don't hide

your sorrow. The grief of your spirit can perhaps be kept a secret on the outside. Yet, your deepest feelings, unexpressed, can burn into your existence with harmful force.

You can be both brave and honest. You know that it's brave to share grief, be it old grief or new grief. And revealing that sorrow is also honest. Of course, nothing can wipe away much of your pain, but sharing grief is helpful. You will know this after you have expressed the painful sorrow you once kept hidden, and you find yourself finally smiling at the memories and blessings of past summertimes.

Sascha Wagner

The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally.

With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again.

**Simon Stephens
Founder of The Compassionate Friends**

[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

Betty Jean James, Outreach & Hospitality

Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

FIREWORKS ARE LIKE THE LOVE IN OUR HEARTS

July brings Central Oregonians lingering blue skies, lazy afternoons and the Fourth of July celebration, complete with the grand fireworks finale bolting from the top of Pilot Butte. This was one of my son's favorite holidays. When he was six I asked him why fireworks were so special to him. He said, "The lights explode in the dark and make the whole sky light up!" That was obvious. I said "Hum?" He gave me one of his "Oh mom" looks, then went on to say, "The fireworks are like the love in our hearts, we should always try to spread our love out to others." I knew then and I still am aware today that profound wisdom comes from the lips of our children. From that summer on, in my mind, fireworks have been a triumphant testament of love's enduring power and wonder. I miss my son, Joshua, terribly. I comfort myself knowing that his wisdom and kindness were precious gifts in my life.

Wherever you are on the Fourth of July, I hope that the splendor of sparkling fireworks might comfort as you acknowledge that the love you hold dear for your child is the light that is able to shine through you. We all have known grief well, yet as compassionate friends we need not walk alone in the darkness. We can lighten the path for others.

Grief can cripple and destroy us, but as we gather to share each other's burden, we are able to gain strength. Love for our children is our common flame; sharing and caring keep the flames afire. I look forward to our next meeting and the opportunity to hug and listen to my comrades.

Jane Oja
TCF Central Oregon Chapter



THE WOUNDED HEART

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not first, nor will we be the last to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents . But for now, right now, it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending. Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss, to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt and anger, and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life. A wounded heart not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be an abscess, to swell and undermine; erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, it will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed. The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

Nancy Green
TCF Livonia, MI



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
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
Bobby Starnes, Sr.	07/25/56
Scottie McLarrin	07/30/87

<u>Parent(s)</u>
Margie Godwin
Maggie & John Stephens
Rhea & Danny McIlveene
Camille Dennis
Cynthia Machen
Gloria Roye
Edwina Starnes
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

<u>Parent(s)</u>
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	08/28/79
Tytianna Jenkins	08/28/98
Benjamin Box	08/30/63

<u>Parent(s)</u>
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
Beverly Jenkins
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
Brandon McGehee	08/30/02
Robert Harrison	08/31/06

<u>Parent(s)</u>
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
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
Leigh Ann Carlton	09/13/83
Anne Barham	09/14/77
Rodney Hubbard	09/15/64
Barry Kirby	09/18/89
Donald Acree	09/20/64
Paul Johnston	09/20/59
Michael Woods	09/20/95
Jayden Ward	09/21/09
Cole Brooks Hamilton	09/22/95
Wesley Canterbury	09/23/84
Emerson Johnson	09/23/14
Jeffrey Carter	09/24/82
Joel Rundell	09/26/65
Kody Spann	09/27/84
Richard Bryan	09/28/79

<u>Parent(s)</u>
Helma Lambert
Charlotte Colquette
Leona Upton
Gail Dupuy
Pat Barham
Claudina Vega
Lisa Kirby/Bridget Kirby
Fran Acree
Gloria & Paul Johnston
China Telano
Alicia Hill
Laurie & Britt Hamilton
Dewanna Canterbury
Sandy Johnson
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

<u>Parent(s)</u>
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.

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