



The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Louisiana

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Jul / Aug / Sep 2017

COMPASSION

A heavy silence falls over the room.

As I look up from my private sorrow
I notice each head is bowed;
Each parent lost in their own thoughts.
And we are all thinking about the same thing:
Our Precious Children.
Do they remember laughter,
Or a sweet tiny face?

Do they remember eyes that
twinkle,
Or eyes that are eternally closed?
Do they remember a warm
embrace,
Or a kiss on a too cool cheek?
Are they thinking about the first
time they
saw their child or the last?

Tears fall silently down a father's cheek
as a friend hands him a tissue.
Sobs tear through a mother's body, while
someone moves closer to hold her
Now I discover my tears are not only for
my child, but also for yours.
And as you weep for your child,
you also weep for mine.

Arms reaching out...
Hearts reaching out...
To those who mourn the death of a child.
This is compassion.
These are the friends.
This is where our healing begins.

Dana Gensler
TCF South Central, KY

MEMORIES

The certain special memories
That follow me each day,
Cast your shadow in my life
In a certain way.

Sometimes the blowing wind
Or the lyrics of a song
Make me stop and think of you
Sometimes all day long



Memories are good to have
To share and keep in my heart,
Just knowing that you're still inside
Makes sure we'll never part.

Collette Covington
TCF Lake Charles, LA

THE LASTING GIFT

The lasting gift that any loved one gives us is their
presence in our hearts.

It is up to us to dedicate ourselves to integrating that
loving spirit into our ongoing lives.

Carol Staudacher,
From A Time To Grieve

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, July 6

Thursday, August 3

Thursday, September 7

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

TODAY I DIDN'T CRY

Today I didn't cry. The pages of your scrapbook stayed dry. As I turned the pages, you came back to me, and we played in the park and I laughed at the ducks. I pushed your stroller down the sidewalk and we giggled at the birds. We had birthday cake and chased the fall leaves together. As I turned the pages, you and I lived again...we were brother and sister. I used to be afraid of closing the scrapbook. I thought the memories might fade if I didn't keep them fresh. But, I haven't opened your book in a long time, and today, when I did, you came back and I didn't cry.

I can't believe that it has been so long since you died, Austin. I was only a little girl then. And now, when I look at your pictures, it's like a very long time ago a whole different lifetime. I've grown up without you, little brother. You are pictures in the scrapbook, memories in my heart, and music in my flute. You are a part of me, and I don't need the scrapbook to remember you. Maybe that's why there aren't tears any more, I didn't lose you, baby brother. You really are a part of me. You are the part of love that never goes away.

Alicia Sims

From: Am I Still a Sister?

DEAR SIS,

I remember the day you got sick and not being able to talk to you. I remember the day the doctor told us your tumor was malignant, and the days you got sick from the radiation and chemotherapy. You didn't like staying at the hospital. The last time I saw you was the day before you died. You were fine one minute, and the next minute you almost died. I wasn't around on the day you died, for I wasn't able to handle it at the time. I became angry at you for dying and I became angry at God, but I thought I had to be strong

for the family, I thought I could not let my emotions show.

From time to time, I remember happy things. I remember your laughter and your smiles, which hinted at a bit of mischief, or of a joke you knew but wouldn't tell. I remember your wanting to put soap in one of those big fountains, and later, when I saw a fountain bubbling over with suds, I started laughing, looked up and said, "Paige, you got your wish." There were other days when we would go shopping, or you would take me on some adventure, and the time we got lost and wound up at the gates of the state penitentiary. You made me feel so special by telling me things that you wouldn't dare tell Mom and Dad.



How can I go on with life when you cannot? I know you are in Heaven, but I still hurt. My emotions struggle with my mind. Sometimes I am sad for me because I miss you so, but someday I will spend more time being happy for you and less time being sad for me.

Some people say that I commemorate your death when I go to the cemetery, but that isn't true. I go to the cemetery so that I can recall some of the emotions I felt when you were here. I don't want your memory to be dry and emotionless. Visiting the cemetery helps me focus on that emotion.

I know I cannot put this letter in a mailbox, but I hope that somehow, you can still read it.

Love always,
Your Sister
Claire Gibson
TCF Nashville, TN

*It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
- St. Francis of Assisi*

OUR MANY SPECIAL DAYS

The beginning of the school year each fall seems to signal the coming holidays. The commercial market starts stocking school supplies just after the Fourth of July; shortly thereafter, by late summer the school supplies are crowded out by all the paraphernalia of Halloween! A glimpse of Thanksgiving whizzes by and it is an all out affront on the Christmas season. After the death of our child we stumble around each year looking for the appropriate way of handling these seasons that once had so much joy to them.

But the calendar holidays are far from the only “Special Days” that bereaved parents face. Out child’s birthday and death date are especially hard days but also are the days relating to their illness or other events that relate to their death date and funeral or memorial. The most obvious days are not always the only hard days to live with. Rainy days, snowy days, starry nights can all trigger tugging emotions. Tuesday for laundry day may be the hardest day all year long.

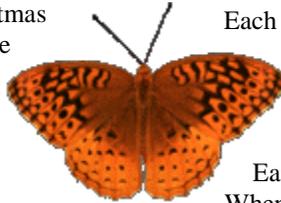
No bereaved parent will have the same feeling of a special day or have the same special day because our children were different people to each person. Because of this, like in everything else in our grief work, we have to allow space for each other’s “bad” days.

Each passing year after the death of our child finds us relating to special days differently each year. It is a continuing process never to return to that which used to be. As the years pass and we work hard at our “grief work” we will heal but that does not mean being like we were or doing the things we used to do. We are an evolving new person learning to live again.

Gerry Hall
TCF South Central, MO

“We quickly realize there are no words to describe the experience after losing a child. For those who have not lost a child, no explanation will do. For those who have, no explanation is necessary.”

—Mary Lingle



PRAYERS

Each morning
When I awake and rise
I thank the Lord above
For my time in the girls lives

Each day at noon
I take a moment alone
To thank the Lord above
For the strength to carry on

Each evening
When I get home
I thank the Lord above
That Loral and Macy are not alone

Each night at bedtime
I ask the Lord above
To please hear my prayers
Then send Macy and Loral my love

PawPaw, Donald Moyers
TCF Galveston County, TX
In Memory of Loral and Macy

“You can’t start healing until you’ve allowed yourself to feel the hurt of the loss of someone you loved better than yourself. So, if you have reached that place in your grief, see it as a positive, for it means you have forsaken unproductive things and have made a giant step forward in your journey to a place where your pain eases and you learn to live with your loss more comfortably.”

—Mary Cleckley

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

I NEVER BELIEVED...

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on ... that it can still have meaning ... that even joy can touch your life once more.

Don Hackett
TCF Hingham, MA



BUTTERFLIES AND VISIONS

The daughter of a friend of mine was killed in an auto crash a short time ago. In one of our telephone conversations she hesitantly told me that her surviving son had —a vision of his sister. I could tell the way she was telling the story that she wasn't sure just how I would react. She told me her son is an intelligent and stable person and wouldn't make up something like this. I could almost hear the relief in her voice when I told her that his experience is not an unusual one, a large number of grieving people report similar experiences.

Actually, nearly half of the grieving population have a sensory experience that involves their deceased loved one. Grievers report seeing, hearing, or strongly feeling their loved one's presence. Others report an event or occurrence that assures them that their loved one is safe and happy.

Various theories attempt to explain this phenomenon, but none are conclusive. For those of us who have had these experiences, the only important conclusion we need is that the experience was very real and very meaningful to us.

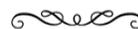
You may be able to explain the presence of a purple butterfly over the grave of my three year old granddaughter on a sunny afternoon, but for me it was a message from Emily saying: —Grandma, I'm okay. Coincidence might explain it, but it was certainly significant for me, considering that purple is a color I wear often and the butterflies are one of my favorite things.

These experiences may be hallucinations or coincidences, but nonetheless, a lot of us are having them. Personally, I'm glad of it.

By Margaret Gerner
TCF St. Louis, MO



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>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Don Shlosman	07/04/78	Margie Godwin
Michael Stephens	07/06/51	Maggie & John Stephens
Tonya Hurst	07/06/79	Pam Wimbish
Amiee McIlveene	07/07/78	Rhea & Danny McIlveene
Greg Dennis	07/08/60	Camille Dennis
Jill Whitaker	07/21/02	Cynthia Machen
Fred Page	07/22/62	Gloria Roye
Bobby Starnes, Sr.	07/25/56	Edwina Starnes
Randy Foote	07/25/75	Linda Foote
Scottie McLarrin	07/30/87	Mary McLarrin

OUR CHILDREN'S JULY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Leigh Ann Carlton	07/01/01	Gail Dupuy
Andrew Rinicker	07/03/04	Dale Rinicker
Hunter Carr	07/08/09	Juanita Carr
Derrick Sadberry	07/15/06	Belinda Sadberry
Steven Wisdom	07/15/06	Dee Wisdom
Mike Hayes	07/19/97	Margaret & George Hayes
Michael Hollier	07/21/09	Lyn Hollier
Chris Culpepper	07/24/93	Noel Culpepper
Allison Butler	07/30/11	LuAnn & James Butler

OUR CHILDREN'S AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Heather Greer	08/01/83	Kim & Heath Greer
Michelle Putman	08/03/83	Gaye Laing
Kim Smith	08/02/75	Jackie Bailey
Adam McKenzie	08/04/68	Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie
Aaron McKenzie	08/04/68	Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie
Lisa Giovingo	08/07/59	Frances Webb
Curtis Thippen	08/07/78	Mary Jo & Art Thippen
Chad Byrd	08/13/79	Janice & Randy Byrd
Shontavious Foster	08/13/87	Sarah Foster
Robert Harrison	08/15/59	Dr. & Mrs. Robert Harrison
John Bruscato	08/19/74	Dianne & Frank Bruscato
Michele Perry	08/25/66	Don & Clara Perry
Dominique Bruscato	08/28/79	Gene Bruscato
Tytianna Jenkins	08/28/98	Beverly Jenkins
Benjamin Box	08/30/63	Erlene & Jack Box

OUR CHILDREN'S AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Don Shlosman	08/01/00	Margie Godwin
Chad Byrd	08/01/05	Janice & Randy Byrd
Hope Johnson	08/02/05	Fran Johnson
Matthew Elliott	08/04/16	Guina Elliott
Joel Rundell	08/09/90	Sharon & Jim Rundell
Brittany Braxton	08/11/09	Ursula Braxton
Heather Greer	08/13/03	Kim & Heath Greer
Paul Hayes	08/14/03	Patty & Paul Hayes
Scott Thompson	08/16/03	Tammy Thompson
Stephen Sivils	08/19/03	Veda Sivils
Jeffrey Carter	08/22/10	Dianne & Tim Carter
Jason Hutts	08/22/99	Carol & Greg Hutts
Brian Perry	08/22/02	Clara & Don Perry
Greg Gilstrap	08/24/07	Jean Gilstrap
Debbie Pope	08/24/08	Jean Hamilton
Dean Keirseay	08/28/11	Shirley Porter
Brandon McGehee	08/30/02	Teddi & James McGehee
Robert Harrison	08/31/06	Dr. & Mrs. Robert Harrison

OUR CHILDREN'S SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Mario Lambert	09/04/77	Helma Lambert
Fred Page	09/08/58	Charlotte Colquette
Pamela Ford	09/08/74	Leona Upton
Leigh Ann Carlton	09/13/83	Gail Dupuy
Anne Barham	09/14/77	Pat Barham
Rodney Hubbard	09/15/64	Claudina Vega
Barry Kirby	09/18/89	Lisa Kirby/Bridget Kirby
Donald Acree	09/20/64	Fran Acree
Paul Johnston	09/20/59	Gloria & Paul Johnston
Michael Woods	09/20/95	China Telano
Jayden Ward	09/21/09	Alicia Hill
Cole Brooks Hamilton	09/22/95	Laurie & Britt Hamilton
Wesley Canterberry	09/23/84	Dewanna Canterberry
Emerson Johnson	09/23/14	Sandy Johnson
Jeffrey Carter	09/24/82	Dianne & Tim Carter
Joel Rundell	09/26/65	Sharon & Jim Rundell
Kody Spann	09/27/84	Cindy Spann
Richard Bryan	09/28/79	Linda & James Bryan

OUR CHILDREN'S SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Amanda Maxwell	09/01/02	Angie Maxwell
Blade Gilbreath	09/06/15	Dawn & Brandon Gilbreath
Kenneth Wall	09/06/99	Beverly & Charles Wall
Kaye Shields	09/06/04	Lila & R.L. Hargrove
Timothy Smith	09/25/76	Mary & Buddy Smith
Aaron McKenzie	09/29/10	Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie
Kim Smith	09/29/97	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