



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

Oct / Nov / Dec 2019

DAYS OF THANKS

In a year when much was given,
Much was taken, too.
So we pause and give our
Thanks for what now is.
Think, too, of what once was,
And we are grateful for
The threads of lives gone by.
Threads that enrich the fabric
Of this, the life we know.

Lois Wyse
TCF St. Paul, MN

TO START A NEW YEAR

If I can concentrate on the moral and spiritual side of
the holidays
I can make it through

If I can absorb the love and warmth that was the
beginning
I can give love back

If I can share the grief and love that is in me through
these holidays
I can start a new year.

Tom Spray
TCF Ventura CA

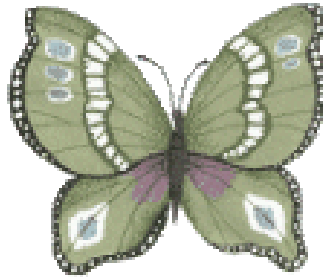
THE EVERLASTING LIGHT

Those we love must someday
Pass beyond our present sight...
Must leave us and the world we know
Without their radiant light.

But we know that like a candle
Their lovely light will shine
To brighten up another place,
More perfect...more divine.

And in the realm of Heaven
Where they shine so warm and bright,
Our loved ones live forevermore
In God's eternal light.

Hilda McLeod
TCF Augusta, GA



OUR LOVE

We created you, With our love...
We cared for you, With our love...
We nurtured you, With our love....

We honored you, With our love...
We buried you, With our love...
We remember you, With our love.

Alice & Otto Weening
TCF Cincinnati, OH

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, October 3

Thursday, November 7

**Due to the Candle Lighting Ceremony to be held
Sunday, December 8, we will not have our regular
monthly meeting in December.**

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

A THOUSAND FACES

I walked in wearing your jacket, my arms linked
between Mom and Dad.

My hand trembled around the
folded pages of my speech.

I could barely breathe as we sat
down in front of your coffin.

I had asked to speak first. One
thousand sets of eyes watched every
step of my careful pace to the podium.

My heart pounded, my hands shook the unfolded
pages, and tears began to stream down my cheeks.

I stood beside your silence. And listened to the echo
of my grief into the sobbing crowd.

I wanted to fall to my knees, pound the wooden floor
and scream for answers. I wanted to lay down into
the madness that your death brought me to. But you
had always taught me to be strong.

I took a deep breath and continued as if you were
standing beside me—

I spoke of your sarcasm, your love for chicks, our
childhood fights, and our developed friendship. And
my memories were joined by a laughter that
reminded me to remember your smile and not this
day.

I wiped my eyes and folded the pages that said
goodbye to the sixteen years that I spent looking up
to you.

Your favorite song began and echoed from the walls
of the same gymnasium that used to chant your name
on game day.

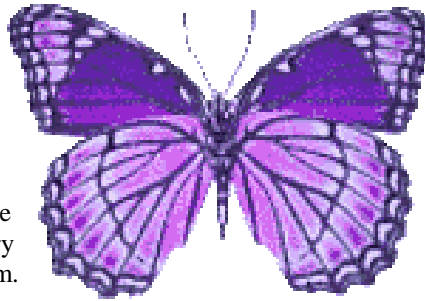
I watched your best friends file around you and
looked into eyes that I had never seen shed tears until
today.

A thousand hearts broke for the shaken spirits of the
boys that led your procession.

My hand trembled around the folded pages of my
speech.

And I followed your lead for the last
time.

Alexandra
TCF Portland, OR



MY THOUGHTS OF YOU

Another holiday without you
Another wedding without you
Another birthday without you
Another graduation without you

I miss your goofy laugh
I miss your temper tantrums
I miss your punches in my arm

So I will remember
Our good and bad times
And share them with others
So that I can keep you
Alive in my heart.

DeAnne Krouse
TCF Putnam County

“I do not believe that sheer suffering teaches. If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers. To suffering must be added mourning, understanding, patience, love, openness, and the willingness to remain vulnerable.”

—Anne Morrow Lindbergh

THE HOLIDAY ARMY

Here it comes again — the Holiday Army — in its annual march against us. Some of its generals are called “Thanksgiving,” “Christmas,” “Hanukkah,” “New Year’s Eve” and “New Year’s Day.” They are no respecters of the heartbroken and emotionally wounded, and their troops are merciless. They take no prisoners! They demand that we participate in their joy and nostalgia or they will mow us down with their militant tanks of holiday spirit.

Sometimes they declare their war on us openly — without shame or remorse. Sometimes, they wait for us in ambush. Their intelligence operators have been working diligently all year, waiting for the Thanksgiving Day (or sometimes Halloween!) trumpet signal to begin their attack. They just don’t seem satisfied to have their celebrations and parties and dinners and festivities unless they can recruit ALL of us into their ranks.

Actually, we wish them well. All we really want is for them to leave us alone and let us mourn in peace and quiet. We prefer our “Silent Nights” to their “Deck the Halls” and Jingle Bells.” We don’t intentionally spoil their fun; it’s just that our pain makes them uncomfortable. They’ve been conditioned to believe that “The Holiday Season” should have no blemish of suffering or lack of frivolity. We must not only bandage our wounds while in their presence, but cover them with taffeta and sequins besides. They are convinced that all we need is to “put on a happy face” and all our sorrows will magically evaporate.

In their mad pursuit of happiness, they shoot us with the bullets of shopping, piped-in music, special holiday foods and fragrances, gift wrapping, decorations (especially the angels!), joyous children with happy smiles, cards, invitations, parties and gift exchanges. Any other time of the year, snow is considered a nuisance to shovel and plow through. At the holiday season, though, it is touted as romantic and is linked to sleighs and starry nights in front of fireplaces, snuggled close to those we love.

The most devastating bombs they drop into our lives are the images of reunion — times of greeting and hugging folks who are much loved and sometimes not often seen for a while. They may only be separated by geography; our absent loved ones cannot cross the chasm of loss that looms before our tear-filled eyes. They remind us of things we should be thankful for (and we are more thankful for many of those things than they can ever imagine). They prod us with their spears of delightful togetherness, never realizing that what they celebrate is what we cannot now enjoy. We would not dream of attacking them in these battles for holiday survival. With our noses pressed against the glass that divides us, we actually long to be able to be part of their happiness. We remember the times we joined in their fun and we, too, were part of their army of nostalgia and joy.

Our broken hearts and bleeding wounds do not excuse us from being gracious, however. While grief does not give us permission to be rude and selfish, and we take no overt action against their aggression, we are not without defenses in these battles. We can shield ourselves with the armor of dignity with kind but direct and simple explanations: “We understand your need for celebration, but this year we prefer quiet and private reflection and meditation.” “Right now it’s hard for us to function in large groups and to appreciate laughter and high spirits.” “Our energy is so limited; we’d appreciate some quiet one-on-one time with you in a more spiritual atmosphere.” We can gently remind them of how important it is for us to remember those we love who are gone. These are statements that clarify our position without judging or criticizing them for theirs. In kind and non-threatening ways, we need to tell them what’s good for us, because they won’t think of it on their own, and they can use the education.

We also can exercise the muscles of our sense of humor. It will take some effort on our part, but so does anything that is worthwhile and good for us. We can teach ourselves not to fall into the trap of thinking that our grief makes us the center of the universe. We can limit our demands that others treat us in “special” and “deferential” ways because of our pain. We can cut them a little slack and remember that once upon a time, we were just like they are now. It’s good and healthy for us to review our perspectives now and then and decide if we’re being fair and reasonable.

We can express our love in simple and unhurried ways without all the frenetic, expensive and often hysterical hype that the holidays can generate. And we must exercise the expression of our love. Grief does not rob us of our ability to love; it reminds us ever more dramatically of our need to both give and receive love while we are here.

Whenever we can take some control in our situations, we empower ourselves, and then we feel less like victims in what seems like a war of “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” Anytime we can educate and inform with mercy and compassion, we have given a truly spiritual holiday gift of love that will keep on giving forever.

May your season be filled with genuine blessings of peace.

Andrea Gambill

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

RECIPE FOR RECOVERY

As many of us go about preparing our Holiday dinners, don't we wish we had a "Recipe for Recovery?" "Just add a cup of boiling water, stir well and drink," and our grieving would be over. Our society seems to crave "instant answers," but bereavement is a long process, and there are no easy solutions. Yet, I couldn't help imagining what I would put in my own "Recipe for Recovery,"

* Start with one cup of the MILK OF HUMAN KINDNESS - all those dear friends who did not turn away from me when they heard of Steve's suicide; but helped in many practical, caring ways to make the first months easier.

* Add several GOOD EGGS - helping professionals like my minister, the counselor who suggested TCF and the young funeral director couple who organized the TCF Chapter I attended in New York.

* Throw in a few heaping tablespoons of READING MATERIALS - Books and pamphlets from the TCF Library that started my thoughts going in a positive direction.

* Add THE SALT OF THE EARTH - wonderful new friends I met through TCF and other support groups. Maybe we should call them THE CREAM OF THE CROP, because eventually they rise to the top.

Sprinkle liberally with TEARS - because it's okay to cry and generously with LAUGHTER - because we can learn to smile again.

Bake in a warm oven of TENDER LOVING CARE. Be sure to make enough to share with others and freeze some for later.

That's my recipe - what's yours?

Cynthia Kelley
TCF Cincinnati, Ohio

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS Northeast Louisiana Chapter

CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

*Join with us as we honor the memories of our
children.*

In loving memory of our children who are no longer with us, The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Louisiana extends an invitation for you, your family, and friends to join us for our annual Candle Lighting Ceremony.



**When: Sunday, December 8, 2019
at 6:30 pm**

**Location: Grace Episcopal Church
1400 North 4th St. at the corner of
Glenmore Ave.**

We do this . . . that their light may always shine!

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting® is held every year on the second Sunday in December at 7pm for one hour local time in each time zone around the globe – a 24-hour wave of light in memory of all children who have died.

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 OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Jeffrey H. Crawley	10/01/68	Ruby Crawley
Martha Mikel	10/05/53	Ruth Mikel
Jennifer Hale	10/05/84	Sheila Hale
Danny Morgan	10/09/67	Jeanie Morgan
Alyssa Neitz	10/10/00	Jennifer & Joey Neitz
Brandi Pearson	10/11/72	Layne Pearson
Trent Weaver	10/11/12	Donna VanVeckhoven
Lance Thomas	10/13/87	Connie & Danny Thomas
Jeremy Barnhill	10/15/84	Kathi & Terry Barnhill
Deborah Smith	10/22/58	Mary & Buddy Smith
John Dobbs	10/23/89	Maggy & John Dobbs
Kenneth Wall	10/26/59	Beverly & Charles Wall
Lance Ulibarri	10/29/79	Connie & Richard Ulibarri
Stephen Dupuy	10/30/68	Polly & Butch Dupuy, Jr.
Raymond Scott	10/30/80	Pam Lavender

OUR CHILDREN'S OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Shannon Scharf	10/01/98	Robert S. Green
Lance Ulibarri	10/02/10	Connie & Richard Ulibarri
John Bruscato	10/05/96	Dianne & Frank Bruscato
Emerson Johnson	10/05/14	Sandy Johnson
Jenna Johnson	10/05/14	Sandy Johnson
Michael Woods	10/06/12	China Woods
Jon Bowman	10/09/06	Jill Puckett
Cole Brooks Hamilton	10/08/14	Laurie & Britt Hamilton
Wendi Janway-Jones	10/09/09	Rosalyn & Tom Janway
Wendy Williams	10/15/99	Nell Williams
Hope Bruscato	10/16/98	Gene Bruscato
Brady Hairston	10/16/11	Cindy & Lee Hairston
Corey Washington	10/18/07	Gracie Washington
Wendy Williams	10/19/99	Nell Williams
Stephen Dupuy	10/22/05	Polly & Butch Dupuy
Fred Page	10/24/03	Gloria Roye
Aimee McIlveene	10/26/01	Rhea & Danny McIlveene

OUR CHILDREN'S NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Joe Block Barham	11/06/78	Janie & Andy Barham
Ben Brubaker	11/09/75	Jena & Ron Brubaker
David Moore	11/12/58	Barbara Moore
Brady Hairston	11/16/96	Cindy & Lee Hairston
Teresa Gentry	11/18/55	Lynn Walters
Amanda Moulle	11/18/77	Fae & Nolan Moulle'
Steven Wisdom	11/20/48	Dee Wisdom
Tonya Bell	11/21/97	Ann Smith
Justin Walker	11/22/85	Beverly Walker
Dustin Allbritton	11/22/78	Linda & Ronnie Allbritton
Corey Hayman	11/23/77	Linda & William Hayman
Autumn Henderson	11/27/82	Janet & Daniel Wyatt

OUR CHILDREN'S NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Stephen Smith	11/07/99	Marilyn & French Smith
Jeffrey H. Crawley	11/08/16	Ruby Crawley
Jason Farrell	11/09/02	Sandra Garrett
Bo Best	11/09/07	Charlene & Steve Best
Michael Moreau	11/12/13	Bonnie & Ron Nay
Tytianna Jenkins	11/16/11	Beverly Jenkins
Joe Block Barham	11/19/03	Janie & Andy Barham
Amanda Moulle'	11/20/77	Fae & Nolan Moulle'
Justice Farrar	11/21/16	Martha Anderson
Kerry Alex	11/24/14	Regina Kenney
Matt Mouser	11/25/79	Kathryn Hutchinson

OUR CHILDREN'S DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Mica Lightsey	12/09/70	Karen McAdams
Trey Watson	12/09/70	Henrietta/Paul Watson
Michael Hollier	12/12/66	Lyn Hollier
Wendy Williams	12/12/53	Nell Williams
Janey Knight	12/16/59	Sandy Casteel
Brandon McGehee	12/16/77	Teddi & James McGehee
Carl Alexander	12/18/63	Valerie & Billy Matejowsky
Brittany Braxton	12/21/85	Ursula Braxton
Brian Perry	12/25/72	Clara & Don Perry
Kerry Alex	12/28/61	Joseph Alex
Krista Corrent	12/28/64	Anna Ruth Hill
Cedrick Hotard	12/31/74	Sharon & Steven Hotard

OUR CHILDREN'S DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Rodney Hubbard	12/08/15	Claudine Vega
Katie Joyce	12/08/15	Kathryn & Jeff Joyce
Mica Lightsey	12/09/08	Karen Ada,s
Justin Walker	12/12/03	Beverly Walker
Kelly Chapman	12/19/10	Judy & Bennie Chapman
Autumn Henderson	12/20/10	Janet & Daniel Wyatt
McKenzie Hudson	12/23/14	Danya Hudson
Jennifer Hale	12/23/12	Sheila Hale
Michelle Putman	12/24/10	Gaye Laing
Randy Foote	12/27/16	Linda Foote
Robby Jenkins	12/27/16	Beverly Jenkins
Norman Craig	12/28/02	Pat Craig
Ben Brubaker	12/30/13	Jena & Ron Brubaker

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