



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

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OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2008

BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

They say butterflies are free...

I once knew a butterfly.
She was a beautiful caterpillar when she was born.
So small, delicate and vulnerable, amazing everyone
around her.
So agile, so coordinated, so entrancing.

As she aged, a cocoon grew around her.
While in the self induced protective shell, parts of her
regressed
But her physical self emerged forever
beautiful,
Forever radiant and yearning to fly.

Unable to detect or acknowledge danger,
the beautiful young butterfly was kept
safely in a gilded cage.
Unable to be free but yearning so desperately
to be so.

One cold winter morning the beautiful
young butterfly drifted into a deep sleep.
A sleep so deep and peaceful that she was never to
awake.
Beautiful butterfly forever sleeping.
At last free to fly.

They say butterflies are free...

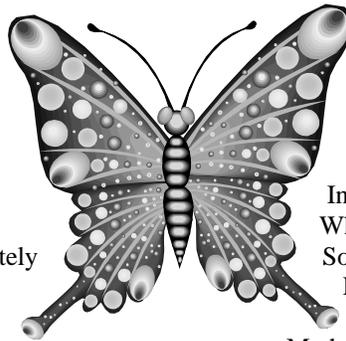
Jan Davis
TCF Alameda County Chapter, CA

*They say it takes a minute to find a special
person,
an hour to appreciate them,
a day to love them,
but then an entire life to forget them.*

5th ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP & COOKOUT THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2008

Make plans to attend The Compassionate Friends of
Northeast Louisiana 4th Annual Fellowship &
Cookout on Thursday, October 2, 2008. This event
will be our October meeting and will be held at St
Paul's United Methodist Church. All parents,
grandparents, and siblings are welcome.

Please call French Smith at 388-1660 if
you plan to attend.



AUTUMN

In the fall
When amber leaves are shed,
Softly—silently
Like tears that wait to flow,
I watch and grieve.
My heart beats sadly in the fall;
'Tis then I miss you most of all.

Lily de Lauder
TCF Van Nuys, CA

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, October 2

Thursday, November 6

**Due to the Candle Lighting Ceremony to be held
Sunday, December 14 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.

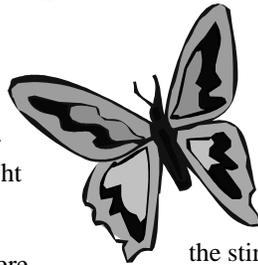
I watched your best friends file around you and looked into eyes that I had never seen shed tears until today.

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



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 special-ness. 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

THANKFUL VS. THANKLESS

This is the time of year when many bereaved parents start saying out loud what newly bereaved parents have been thinking for weeks and weeks—“I really am dreading the holidays.” And why not? When your grief is so new, you haven’t had the necessary time to accept life as it is for you now.

On the other hand, there are those of us who have had that necessary time and the proper support who are able to observe the holidays in a less painful way. We have kept some of the old traditions that warm our hearts and thrown out those that are either too painful or meaningless now. We have created a life that doesn’t include someone who was a vital part of who and what we were. We’re different now, doing different things because losing a child forces you into that position if you are to survive in an emotionally healthy way.

The words thankful and thankless follow one another in my dictionary; so close together in a book, yet so far apart in meaning. When you think about it, the difference between the two words is full and less. Though those of us who have had more time do, like the more newly bereaved, have less in the way of family, our lives still do have a fullness because we have learned to be thankful and appreciate that which we have left in the way of people and memories—more so than we ever thought possible.

As you approach this Thanksgiving, if you haven’t yet been able to make your adjustment, I hope you will feel what you must for now because whatever you are feeling is okay. It isn’t until you have reached the place in your grief where the ability to make good choices returns to your life that you can make some important changes in how you approach the holidays.

I hope the transition from thankless to thankful will be soon in coming for you, for that will mean some peace has returned to your life. Above all, I do wish you peace during this holiday season. I wish you more of the same in the new year.

Mary Cleckley
TCF Lawrenceville, GA

TCF LIBRARY

This is the time to inventory our TCF library. Please bring all books you have checked out to the next meeting, October 2, so that we can take inventory. If you cannot attend, please contact the librarians to arrange to return the books. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Dianne and Frank Bruscato
Librarians
318-387-2485



Our children were a part of our lives and no matter how brief or how long their life span, we shared in their lives as we anticipated their arrival, shared their entry into the world, or grew with them as they grew.

They existed, they were, and they will always live in our hearts and in our memories. No one can ever take away that specialness of having been allowed to give life to our children, who, in death, have given the miracle of life more meaning.

What if we had not had them at all?

*JoAnn McAliley
TCF Dothan, AL*

Chapter co-leaders

Marilyn & French Smith

Steering Committee

Henry Cole, Facilitator

Beverly & Charles Wall, Treasurer

Dianne & Frank Bruscato, Library

Ann Cole & Marilyn Smith, Hospitality

Frances & Jim Gregory, Outreach

Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

Betty Jean & Johnny James, Memorial Park

Sandy Chester, TCF Regional Coordinator

COMING UNWRAPPED

We wrap ourselves for the holidays much like the presents we give. The brightly colored paper hides what's within. When people look at us they only see the outside. We promise ourselves we will not come unwrapped. We'll make it through the family celebrations, the church services, and the big occasion. The paper and the ribbon will remain intact. But it is the small thing that manages to untie the bow. The little insignificant moment, the Christmas parade, the search for the tree, the discovered ornament, the special carol, the memory and the paper gets wrenched off. The true Christmas presence shows itself. The inevitable tide of feelings bursts out of the artificially decorated facade. The emotions pour out. The intense anger wells up. The tears are shed and the holidays come. These are as sure as the tides of the sea and the march of time.

Only a compassionate friend, a bereaved parent, knows of what I speak. Yet the answer isn't in fighting or in denying these feelings. We have paid the price. We have the right to grieve. The resolution of our grief is the grieving. Our hope for all who read this letter is that you will make it through the holidays. We cannot make the pain go away, but know there are others who suffer with you.

We have made it, and together will continue on.

Hank Hewett
TCF Scranton, PA

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 14, 2008
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>
Martha Mikel	10/05/53	Ruth Mikel
Martha Husmann	10/09/52	Betty & Harry Stone
Lance Thomas	10/13/87	Connie & Danny Thomas
Jeremy Barnhill	10/15/84	Kathi & Terry Barnhill
John Dobbs	10/23/89	Maggy & John Dobbs
Kenneth Wall	10/26/59	Beverly & Charles Wall

OUR CHILDREN'S OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Travis Lowery	10/03/94	Joyce & Dale Lowery
John Bruscato	10/05/96	Dianne & Frank Bruscato
Jake Raborn	10/05/06	Staci & Don Raborn
Jon Bowman	10/09/06	Jill Puckett
Corey Washington	10/18/07	Gracie Washington
Wendy Williams	10/19/99	Nell Williams
Dana Sallis	10/21/99	Joanna Sallis
Stephen Dupuy	10/22/05	Polly & Butch Dupuy
Aimee McIveene	10/26/01	Rhea & Danny McIveene

OUR CHILDREN'S NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Joe Block Barham	11/06/78	Janie & Andy Barham
Dawn Rose	11/13/79	Debbie & Danny Upshaw
Teresa Gentry	11/18/55	Lynn & Jim Walters
Steven Wisdom	11/20/48	Dee Wisdom
Justin Walker	11/22/85	Beverly Walker
Dustin Allbritton	11/22/78	Linda & Ronnie Allbritton
Corey Hayman	11/23/77	Linda & William Hayman
Brandon Dempsey	11/25/76	Belinda Enterkin
Clifton Scarborough	11/30/87	Tina Scarborough

OUR CHILDREN'S NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Dylan Smith	11/05/05	Joan Taylor
Stephen Smith	11/07/99	Marilyn & French Smith
Jason Farrell	11/08/02	Sandra Garrett
Bo Best	11/09/07	Charlene & Steve Best
Joe Block Barham	11/19/03	Janie & Andy Barham
Sean Hanemann	11/28/06	Susan Tingle

OUR CHILDREN'S DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Mica Lightsey	12/02/84	Karen & Larry McAdams
Stuart Morse	12/07/79	Tammy & James Morse
Wendy Williams	12/12/57	Nell Williams
Brandon McGehee	12/16/77	Teddi & James McGehee
Car Alexander	12/18/63	Valerie & Billy Matejowsky
Brian Perry	12/25/72	Clara & Don Perry
Beth Ann Smith	12/26/86	Judy & Randy Smith
Krista Corrent	12/28/64	Anna Ruth Hill
Cedrick Hotard	12/31/74	Sharon & Steven Hotard
Jake Raborn	12/31/01	Staci & Don Raborn
Michael Griggs	12/31/06	Michelle Murphy

OUR CHILDREN'S DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Mica Lightsey	12/09/06	Karen & Larry McAdams
Justin Walker	12/09/08	Beverly Walker
Kelly Chapman	12/12/03	Judy & Bennie Chapman
Norman Craig	12/28/02	Pat Craig
Seth Lowery	12/31/05	Joyce & Dale Lowery

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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Northeast Louisiana Chapter
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Return Service Requested