



# *The Compassionate Friends* of Northeast Louisiana

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies

*Apr / May / Jun 2023*

### VALLEY OF THE BUTTERFLIES

There is a green, sun-drenched valley  
Light with the scent of clover and lilacs  
Where the butterflies dance.  
Leaping and swooping, they reflect colors  
Of every hue and dimension.

There are monarchs and skippers,  
Swallowtails and delicate spring azures.  
Each dances its unique pattern  
Of flits, circles, and dives,  
Stretching its  
fragile wings  
toward the clouds  
Or brushing its feet  
on the succulent  
grass.

There are no roads,  
paths, or gates  
To broach the  
valley's entrance,  
Yet it is visited  
often in thoughts  
and dreams.

Every parent who has sent forth a child  
And vainly waited for its return  
Comes seeking in the valley of the butterflies,  
And there finds a beautiful spirit,  
Stretching its wings to the clouds and  
brushing its feet on the grass,  
Dancing in swoops, flits, and dives,  
Drying its dewy wings in the warm sunshine of  
forever.

Marcia F. Alig  
TCF Mercer Area Chapter



### DAFFODILS

In the spring, I will bring  
daffodils to you with a prayer—  
after the cold, snowy winter is over and gone.

I will sit on the grass and sing the songs that we  
shared, knowing that your boundless spirit still lives  
on.

I've walked the path of sorrow; It's helped me to  
grow.

Through the tears have come my  
strength and my healing.

My heart, once wounded and broken,  
Is mended and filled with deep love  
for everyone in all that I do.

And every warm, sunny spring,  
I will bring yellow daffodils—and  
cherish the memories of you.

Sharon Cordaro  
TCF Inland Empire, CA

### Monthly Meetings

**Thursday, April 6**

**Thursday, May 4**

**Thursday, June 1**

6:30 PM  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
1901 Lexington Ave.  
Enter through the back parking lot off Milton St.

Mother's Day will soon be upon us and we mothers will be remembering our children who are absent but yet so much a part of us, filling our hearts and renewing memories. I wish for each of you a peaceful day. Yes, it will be very poignant and for the recently bereaved, more painful, but believe me, it does get better. We remember them with gratitude for having given us that most precious of all gifts—their love.

Helen Prokop  
TCF Bridgeport, CT



There's no problem that a child may have which a father cannot cure.

A parent's love for children is a never-ending thing. It lasts from day to day and year to year, through summer, winter, fall, and spring.

That special love continues still when someone's child has died, For the feelings that a parent has are impossible to hide.

Jean Hotopp  
TCF Fox Valley, IL

## FATHER'S DAY

As the day approaches, I wonder how I will react.  
Am I still a father?

I will sit quietly, never allowing friends and family to see how I feel.  
I miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break."  
I must remain strong and always be the "rock."  
I wish I could just let someone know how much I miss my little angel.

How much I cry and how much I miss hearing, "Dad, I love you."  
I am a father, but I wonder, "will I just pretend, as usual, that it doesn't bother me?"  
Remember me, for I hurt, too, on this special day.

TCF Tampa, FL

## MOTHERS AND FATHERS

A mother's love for children is a very special thing,  
Filled with all the many days that motherhood can bring.

Days when children misbehave and try your patience so,  
Days when they are sweet and kind and let their loving feelings show.

A father's love for children is very strong and pure.

## REMEMBERING

Go ahead and mention my child,  
The one that died, you know.  
Don't worry about hurting me further.  
The depth of my pain doesn't show.

Don't worry about making me cry.  
I'm already crying inside.  
Help me to heal by releasing  
The tears that I try to hide.

I'm hurt when you just keep silent,  
Pretending he didn't exist.  
I'd rather you mention my child,  
Knowing that he has been missed.

You asked me how I was doing.  
I say "pretty good" or "fine".  
But healing is something ongoing  
I know it will take a lifetime.

Elizabeth D.  
TCF McMinnville, OR

**"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

## LIKE THE BUTTERFLY

It fluttered there, above my head,  
Weightless in the soft breeze  
I reached up my hand,  
It lit upon my finger.  
Waving glistening wings gently,  
It looked at me for timeless moments.  
I smiled, reaching deep, and  
Finding all those cherished memories  
As it flitted off through the sunlit morn,  
I knew we had said hello  
Once more.

Lezlie Langfort  
TCF North Platte, NE

## PRAYER FOR SPRING

Like springtime, let me  
unfold  
And grow fresh and new  
From this cocoon of grief  
That has been spun  
around me.

Help me face the harsh  
reality of  
Sunshine and renewed  
life  
As my bones still creak  
from  
The winter of my grief.

Life has dared to go on around me  
As I recover from the insult  
Of life's continuance.

I readjust my focus to  
Include recovery and growth  
As a possibility in my future.

Give me strength to break out of  
The cocoon of my grief.

But may I never forget it as  
The place where I grew my wings,



Becoming a new person  
Because of my loss.

Janice Heil  
TCF Vancouver, Canada

## YOU CAN GO ON

You can shed tears that they've gone, or you can  
smile because they've lived.

You can close your eyes and pray they'll come back,  
or you can open your eyes and see all they've left  
behind.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see them,  
or your heart can be full of love they've shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live  
yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because  
of yesterday.

You can remember them and  
only that they're gone, or you  
can cherish their memory and  
let it live on.

You can cry and close your  
mind, be empty and turn your  
back, or you can do what they'd  
want; smile, open your eyes,  
love and go on.

Donna Southworth  
TCF Denton, NC

### 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

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## **SPRING IS COMING**

If you are newly bereaved and looking toward your "first" spring, you may be surprised by some of the feelings you may experience during the next few weeks. We hear so much about the beauty of spring – the new life and the feelings of renewal that are supposed to accompany this lovely time of year. During my "first" year, I expected that spring would cheer me up, and make me feel lots better. How surprised and frustrated I was when, on one of those truly magnificent spring days as life seems to burst forth everywhere, I was "in the pits." When a friend said to me, "Doesn't a day like this really lift your spirits and make you feel better?" I had to reply honestly that I was having a really bad day --that the sense of loss and emptiness was greatly intensified.

Gradually, I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking for something to take away the pain and make our lives all right again. Unfortunately, there is no magical event or moment when this takes place. It does happen, but only with time and the grief work which we all must do before we can be healed.

The coming of spring cannot make everything okay again. What it can do, however, is remind us that regardless of what happens in our lives, nature's process will continue, and that can offer us hope.

I am looking forward to spring this year. I welcome the sun's warmth, the return of the birds from their winter in the south, and forsythia, the daffodils and the greening of the world. Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don't expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.

Evelyn Billings  
TCF Springfield, MA

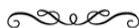
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## **FOREVER**

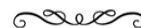
The seasons change and people change but the heart knows that love stays the same. What we wouldn't give to hear "Hey Mom and Dad, guess what?" We parents all have special moments. They stop our world. And for that moment we're with our child. We cherish the memories and whisper. . .

**WE LOVE YOU. . . FOREVER!**

TCF Seacoast NH Chapter



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 APRIL BIRTHDAYS

| <u>Child</u>       |          | <u>Parent(s)</u>        |
|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Jason Garrett      | 04/02/67 | Sandra Garrett          |
| Chris Pauley       | 04/02/77 | Sharon & Gary Pauley    |
| Chris Culpepper    | 04/04/69 | Noel Culpepper          |
| April Mizell       | 04/23/83 | Pam Spillers            |
| Shannon Scharf     | 04/06/62 | Robert S. Green         |
| Robby Jenkins      | 04/10/88 | Beverly Jenkins         |
| Thomas Stephens    | 04/12/95 | Susan & Gray Stephens   |
| Chris Travis       | 04/13/72 | Gloria & Kenneth Travis |
| Austin Thames      | 04/14/99 | Kim Thames              |
| Layton Patton      | 04/17/02 | Terri Miller            |
| Rod Taliaferro     | 04/17/64 | Shirley Taliaferro      |
| Wendi Janway-Jones | 04/23/78 | Rosalyn & Tom Janway    |
| Ashley Loflin      | 04/23/73 | Katy Loflin             |
| Ethan Massey       | 04/25/01 | Michelle Massey         |
| Vince Pardue       | 04/28/81 | Ann & Van Pardue        |

## OUR CHILDREN'S APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

| <u>Child</u>       |          | <u>Parent(s)</u>       |
|--------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Holly M. Robertson | 04/01/17 | Nancy & Joe Mulhearn   |
| Chris Pauley       | 04/05/95 | Sharon & Gary Pauley   |
| Michael Stephens   | 04/05/68 | Maggie & John Stephens |
| Krista Corrent     | 04/08/00 | Anna Ruth Hill         |
| Donna Venters      | 04/08/22 | Diana Venters          |
| Pamela Ford        | 04/10/04 | Leona Upton            |
| Tara Webber        | 04/10/22 | Janis & Bob Webber     |
| Martha Mickel      | 04/13/84 | Ruth Mickel            |
| Pamela Wimbish     | 04/14/16 | Pam Wimbish            |
| Danny Morgan       | 04/18/16 | Jeanie Morgan          |
| Michael Johns      | 04/19/06 | Nell Book              |
| Jeffrey Moore      | 04/19/22 | Tammi & David Moore    |
| Courtney Cole      | 04/22/12 | Ann & Henry Cole       |
| Mickey Loflin      | 04/23/73 | Katy Loflin            |
| Joe David Williams | 04/24/18 | Dolph Williams         |
| Anne Barham        | 04/25/91 | Pat Barham             |

## OUR CHILDREN'S MAY BIRTHDAYS

| <u>Child</u>        |          | <u>Parent(s)</u>             |
|---------------------|----------|------------------------------|
| Bo Best             | 05/02/84 | Charlene Best & Charles West |
| Tonya Bell          | 05/05/69 | Ann Smith                    |
| Kellie Falgout      | 05/06/82 | Patricia Falgout             |
| Justin Petty        | 05/07/82 | Julie & Danny Petty          |
| Melissa Blankenship | 05/08/65 | Peaches Cathey               |
| Will Bryan          | 05/08/91 | Beverly & David Bryan        |
| Jason Hutts         | 05/12/81 | Carol & Greg Hutts           |
| Mickey Chambers     | 05/13/62 | Merrell & Mike Chambers      |
| McKenzie Hudson     | 05/13/88 | Dayna Hudson                 |
| Derrick Sadberry    | 05/15/65 | Belinda Sadberry             |
| Elizabeth Vaughan   | 05/19/65 | Marilyn Stern                |
| Savannah Gray       | 05/20/90 | Stephanie Gray               |
| Hunter Carr         | 05/21/91 | Juanita Carr                 |
| Jill Whitaker       | 05/21/82 | Cynthia Machen               |
| Timothy Smith       | 05/26/61 | Mary & Buddy Smith           |
| Brian Gregory       | 05/28/73 | Frances & Jim Gregory        |
| Kelly O'Neal        | 05/28/70 | Nancy Oliver                 |
| Scott Thompson      | 05/29/78 | Tammy Thompson               |

## OUR CHILDREN'S MAY ANNIVERSARIES

| <u>Child</u>           |          | <u>Parent(s)</u>      |
|------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Mickey Loflin          | 05/10/05 | Katy Loflin           |
| Ashley Loflin          | 05/10/06 | Katy Loflin           |
| Shontavious Foster     | 05/12/13 | Sarah Foster          |
| Ethan Massey-Rydi      | 05/13/10 | Michelle Massey       |
| Lisa Giovingo          | 05/15/15 | Frances Giovingo      |
| Leigh Ann White        | 05/15/05 | Janet & Ken White     |
| Barry Kirby            | 05/18/13 | Lisa Kirby            |
| Lance Thomas           | 05/18/08 | Connie & Danny Thomas |
| John Dobbs             | 05/21/08 | Maggy & John Dobbs    |
| Stacey Gentry Morrison | 05/22/15 | Sandy Kendrick        |
| David Webb             | 05/22/05 | Paula Webb            |
| Justin Petty           | 05/26/01 | Julie & Danny Petty   |
| Kellie Falgout         | 05/28/02 | Patricia Falgout      |

# *Our Children Always Loved and Remembered*



## OUR CHILDREN'S JUNE BIRTHDAYS

| <u>Child</u>        |          | <u>Parent(s)</u>         |
|---------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Brant Surles        | 06/01/71 | Joy and Elvis Surles     |
| Justice Farrar      | 06/05/98 | Martha Anderson          |
| Lauren Lang         | 06/08/93 | Lisa Lang                |
| Caroline Cole       | 06/11/70 | Ann & Henry Cole         |
| Jenna Johnson       | 06/12/88 | Sandy Johnson            |
| Katie Joyce         | 06/25/08 | Kathryn & Jeff Joyce     |
| Blade Gilbreath     | 06/13/05 | Dawn & Brandon Gilbreath |
| Debbie Pope         | 06/14/52 | Jean Hamilton            |
| Andrew Rinicker     | 06/16/72 | Dale Rinicker            |
| Jackson Kennedy     | 06/18/00 | Jonann Layton            |
| Jeremiah Bynum      | 06/19/92 | Darnita Peeler Williams  |
| Mike Hayes          | 06/20/63 | Margaret & George Hayes  |
| Kelly Chapman       | 06/23/78 | Judy & Bennie Chapman    |
| Walker Dayton       | 06/23/81 | Vickie & Ed Dayton       |
| Katie Joyce         | 06/25/08 | Kathryn & Jeff Joyce     |
| Savannah Thornton   | 06/25/85 | Rhonda & Ronald Thornton |
| CW2 Bryan Henderson | 06/29/85 | Kim Bryan Henderson      |

## OUR CHILDREN'S JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

| <u>Child</u>        |          | <u>Parent(s)</u>      |
|---------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Joyce Powell        | 06/07/10 | Cynde Dubois          |
| Brant Surles        | 06/10/19 | Joy and Elvis Surles  |
| Melissa Blankenship | 06/13/04 | Peaches Cathey        |
| Kody Spann          | 06/14/07 | Cindy Spann           |
| Zoe Simpson         | 06/19/21 | Katie Masters         |
| Terry Watson        | 06/21/13 | Henrietta/Paul Watson |
| Brandi Pearson      | 06/22/17 | Layne Pearson         |
| William Tousignant  | 06/27/18 | Gregg Tousignant      |

### **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](http://www.tcfnortheastla.org)

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
Northeast Louisiana Chapter  
P.O. Box 6114  
Monroe, Louisiana 71211

Return Service Requested