

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 P.M. on the second Sunday of each month at the ABC (Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Tennessee) Building, 560 Royal Parkway, Nashville, TN 37214 (SEE MAILING ADDRESS ABOVE).

We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.

May 10th Meeting Program:

Parent's Day: Honoring Our Memories

The May meeting is an especially poignant one because it always falls on Mother's Day, and since the June meeting is not on Father's Day, we like to give special attention to the role of both mothers and fathers in the lives of their children during our May meeting.

If you have a special memory or memento of a particular Mother's Day or Father's Day, we hope you will come prepared to share it with the group. There will be a picture board to display your child's photo. Please bring a photo 5"x7" or smaller.

This has always proved to be a very meaningful meeting—a safe place to be on a day filled with memories. We'd like to share it with you.

Regular sharing groups will follow the program.



Phone Friends

We have all experienced the pain of losing a child. We understand and would like to listen. If you can't reach one of us, feel free to call another person on this list.

Accidental Death	Mike and Paula Childers 615-294-4959
Illness	 David and Peggy Gibson 615-308-2520 or 615-504-4307
Infant	 Jayne Head 615-264-8184
SIDS	Kris Thompson 931-486-9088
Suicide	Ron Henson 615-789-3613
Alcohol/Drug Overdose	Ed Pyle 615-712-3245

Save the date: June 14, 2026

for our 34TH Annual Balloon Release
in memory of our children.

Family members and friends
are invited to participate

and enjoy the picnic afterward.

Watch for details in the June newsletter.

Attending your first TCF meeting can be difficult. Feelings can be overwhelming. We have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Please attend two or three meetings before deciding if TCF is right for you. There are no dues or fees. If you choose, you need not speak a word at a meeting. We are an international, non-denominational group, offering support and information to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. We need not walk alone.

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM--**In the month of their births**

Matthew James Ahillen May 18 Son of Joe and Kathryn Ahillen	Brittany Athey May 13 Daughter of Marcus and Tracy Cushman	Christopher Jay Bradley May 31 Son of Lamar and Joy Bradley	Donald Gene Crafts, Jr. May 16 Son of Donna Kibler Brother of Bridgette Warren
Jayce Montez Easley (Bucky) May 5 Son of Heather Jarrett	Cindy Marie Gabrysiak May 30 Daughter of Terri Holsapple	Kamden Joseph Hayes May 6 Grandson of Laura Buchanan	Robert Jason Heflin (Jason) May 30 Son of Eddie and Kay Heflin
Elizabeth Harrison Jackson May 15 Daughter of Bennet and Jane Harrison	Clint Hunton May 30 Son of Teressa Hunton	Lisa Michelle Lombardo May 9 Daughter of Frank and Stacy Lombardo	Lauren O'Donnell May 8 Daughter of Denny and Shirley O'Donnell Sister of Sean and Katie
Christopher Javon Patterson May 17 Son of Stacy Patterson	Darius Lamont Patterson May 29 Son of Sylvia Patterson	Adam Nicholas Pappas May 19 Son of Gust and Jane Pappas Brother of Andrew, Alex, and Erin	Ed Pyle (Stobie) May 17 Son of Ed and Dorothy Pyle
Keanan Thompson May 22 Son of Chris Thompson	Alex Watson Tuttle May 19 Son of Ron and Betty Tuttle	Matthew H. Woods May 14 Son of Vaughn and Mickie Woods	

**And in the month of their deaths**

Matthew James Ahillen May 18 Son of Joe and Kathryn Ahillen	Coleton Harris Banniza May 23 Son of Robert and Tiffany Banniza	Logan Stratton Brumit May 14 Son of Charles and Kathy Brumit	John Roaten Cheadle, III (Ro) May 16 Son of John R. and Nancy Cheadle
Larry Donell Davis, Jr. (Lil' Larry) May 11 Son of Mary K. Davis	Michael Dorman (Mikey) May 24 Son of Daniel and Michelle Clark	Jeffrey Glenn Eakes May 13 Son of Don and Sherry Eakes	Laura Paige Gibson May 15 Daughter of David and Peggy Gibson Sister of Kay and Claire

And in the month of their deaths, continued



Jacob Alexander Griffin May 1 Son of Karen Griffin	Robin Nicole Henderson May 19 Daughter of Greg Henderson	Charles Courtney Edwards May 3 Son of Charles and Ruth Edwards	Sherry Hooten May 31 Daughter of James and Ann Flatt
Heidi Kathleen Hedstrom May 16 Daughter of Charlie and Kris Foust	Harrison Jones May 20 Son of Dana Jones	Tyler Ross Jeanneret May 15 Son of D.J. and Pamela Jeanneret	Stella Joy Key May 3 Daughter of Nick and Andrea Key
Stacy Leigh Kraft May 18 Daughter of Keith and Meryl Kraft and Terry Kornman	Jeremy Seth Lunceford May 12 Son of Jane Lunceford Brother of Aubrey, Shelby and Brittney	Jacob Allen Mathis May 26 Son of Mark and Debora Mathis	Nicole Danielle Mayes May 14 Daughter of Cannon Mayes
Carmen Davisson Provost May 24 Daughter of Donald and Jennifer Davisson	Lauren Paige Moore May 3 Daughter of Mac and Polly Moore Sister of Darrell and Paul	Ed Pyle (Stobie) May 31 Son of Ed and Dorothy Pyle	Jason William Rice May 24 Son of Rosemarie Moore
Cleburne Adam Reynolds May 23 Son of Pam Reynolds	Sheila Rochelle May 20 Daughter of Jennie Reeves Sister of Charity Collins Aunt of Kristanna	Jenna Leann Ruddy May 16 Daughter of Janet Riggan	Tony Bruce Scott May 26 Son of Eldon and Margi Scott
Camryn Makenzie Smith May 1 Daughter of Wendy Mallory	Logan Thomas Suggs May 30 Son of Marcus and Linda Suggs	Gregory Joseph Tramuta May 17 Son of Lisa Tramuta	Lia Usman May 9 Daughter of Zafar and Sana Usman
Mary Catherine Elizabeth Ricketts May 13 Daughter of John and Connie Ricketts			
			Ryan James Tropauer May 9 Son of David and Debbie Tropauer

“MY” CHILD—Several years ago, in a sharing group, I heard two men comment on the hurt they felt because their wives always referred to the child who had died as “my” child. This made quite an impression on me. It takes two people to conceive a child, and in many homes, two people have raised that child; therefore, two parents grieve the death of the same child. From that time on, the only child who died in our family has been “our” child.

Peggy Gibson
TCF, Nashville, TN

GIFTS OF LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE

We are deeply grateful for the voluntary gifts of love that make it possible for The Compassionate Friends to offer comfort to those families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

*Shirley Rich-Brinegar
in Loving Memory
of her son,
Bert Rich*

*Don and Sherry Eakes
in Loving Memory
of their grandson,
Taylor Christian Brewer,
Son of
Justin and Tracy Brewer*

*Thanks to you, Kroger Shoppers,
we received a gift of \$107.44
from the
Kroger Plus Community Rewards Program*

*Each month, Price Printing, 615.360.3339, donates the printing of this newsletter as a gift to the families of TCF.
Deanna Brown and her family assemble, label, sort, and mail the newsletter in loving memory of
her son, Marcus Dean Brown. We appreciate so much these people and their generosity to all of us.*

Survivors of Suicide

Time heals all wounds is not necessarily true for survivors of suicide. Time is necessary for healing, but time is not enough. Shared feelings enrich and lead to growth and healing.

From within the circle, we talk about the past. I hear cries for fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters and friendships we thought would last.

And we ache for the arms of a loved one, of a time too short lived and of questions left more piercing than a knife. Oh, the questions come hauntingly, pressing your mind, when a loved one takes their own life.

In the circle I dare reach out my hands. In the circle, help me see there's a plan for me.

And my story becomes yours as we struggle through the pain. In the circle, we remember their names. We have daydreams of the future, about how we thought it might be, with regrets of conversations that might have been the key.

We are angry and confused as we struggle for our breath. Our hearts cry out in anger in what has been labeled a senseless death.

We have good days and bad days, and without a trace, in the circle, tears and smiles meet as we gather strength together. Sons and daughters, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters and friendships felt deep in our souls, memories and moments left clinging to us, and questions of how to let go.

Donna Braddy (SOS)

*We survive the unthinkable. We survive for others. And then, very slowly, we survive for ourselves.
Because only through the good we do for others in her name
will the beauty of spirit, mind and body that was our daughter live forever.*

Kay Lokoff
TCF, Valley Forge, PA



Thoughts on the Month of May

*The spring flowers on your grave
Express the time of year.
It used to be a busy time...
Lots of happy days and cheer.*

*I still have all the Mother's Day cards
Made of construction paper and glue
Verses written on a slant
That said, "Mom, I love you."*

*I'll make no birthday cake this May
Nor see the graduation of your class.
The parades, ice cream social and such
Are all a part of the past.*

*And though these weeks bring sadness
When I remember them, I have to smile.
May was really very special
And I'm glad we had it for a while.*

Norma Herzog
TCF, Cincinnati, OH

A Mother's Love

*A mother's love is unique and special.
Nothing else can quite compare.
When you think she's given all she's got
You find she still has love to spare.*

*When the object of her love is taken
For whatever the reason be
An important part of her goes with him,
A part no one else can see.*

*You may understand her grief and sorrow,
You may feel a great loss too,
But what that child meant to her is different
From what that person meant to you.*

*She spent nine months with this life within her,
Growing and maturing day by day,
Truly depending on her for existence
In a very real and vital way.*

*A bond is shared between mother and son
The first moment of his birth.
Unspoken, unrehearsed, though it be,
No words can measure it's worth.*

*So though your cherished child has departed
From what we know life to be
That bond will keep the love you share alive
For now through all eternity.*

Robin Hunt
TCF, Portland, OR

I am Still a Mother



Mother's Day and Father's Day, two very difficult days to get through when you are a bereaved parent. For some of us, our only child has died; for the rest of us our remaining children seem to remind us of the one we no longer have.

Our only son, Jason, died a few weeks before Mother's Day last year. I remember dreading that holiday and wondering how I would survive all the reminders that I no longer had a child, was no longer a mother. I dreaded finding any cards in my mailbox, but I dreaded not finding any even more. That would be proof that I was no longer a mother.

When I picked up the mail, there was, indeed, a card from my mother-in-law. My first reaction was anger and hurt: "How could she be so cruel? How could she remind me of my loss this way?" When I finally calmed down and was able to read the card, I found a wonderful, warm message of love and concern. Mom realized how difficult that day would be and wanted to help in her own special way. She pointed out that once I had become a mother, it could never be taken away. Motherhood was in the heart and it was there to stay.

I still feel a little sad and nostalgic on Mother's Day, but I know that what has happened can never be undone. Jason lived and made me a mother as surely as he died. I am still a mother and will be in my heart forever.

Connie Eddy
TCF, Concord, NH

Getting to Know Our Children

We are starting a new tradition for our newsletter: a Getting to Know Our Children section. Each month, you are invited to submit a small article telling a memory of your child, sibling or grandchild that will help us get to know them better through sharing an anecdote that shows their personality, talents, or gifts, etc. Please email your articles by the first of each month for publication in the next month's edition (i.e. submit by the first of April to be included in the May issue.) to the editor, Melanie Bell at melaniebell2210@gmail.com and put 'Getting to Know Our Children' in the subject line.

Enjoy getting to know Daniel in his father's article below:

Daniel

Daniel was the youngest of our two children. He was a thinker at a young age. When he was thinking of something, he would be quiet, sitting off to himself.

Sometimes he would smack his lips. Then he would discuss with me things like precipitation and snow accumulation.

He was very generous. If he had a candy bar like the ones sold in the late 80s that were larger, he would break it into two and offer you the larger piece. I suggested to him to take the larger piece since the candy bar was his.

Oftentimes, especially with sheet cakes, he would take a bite and say, "That's too sweet" and offer the rest of it to someone else.

I miss him dearly. I love you, Daniel.

Ron Henson
TCF, Nashville, TN

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



Perennials

*Good memories are the perennials that bloom again
after the hard winter of grief—
begins to yield to hope.*

Sascha



CHAPTER INFORMATION

Are you Moving?

Each time a newsletter is returned to us with an incorrect address, we pay to retrieve it in order to find out where you've moved; then we pay again to mail it back to you. This is in addition to the original bulk mail cost. It would help a great deal in both time and money if you would notify us immediately of any address change so your newsletter can reach you right away. You may call, write or email the chapter leaders or the newsletter editor. Thanks for your help.

The “Children Remembered” Listings

If you are unable to attend TCF meetings and would like for your child to be listed on pages 2 and 3 in The Children Remembered list, please let us know, printing the exact way you'd like the child's name to appear, the child's birth and death dates, and the parents' names as they should be listed. Drop us a note at TCF, P.O. Box 8283, Hermitage, TN 37076. We'll be glad to include them. You need to contact us only once, unless any of your information changes.

Corporate Donations to TCF

To benefit TCF, go to the Kroger website and click on “Community Rewards”; then follow the instructions on that page and designate The Compassionate Friends Nashville Chapter. After that, when you shop at Kroger, swipe your Plus Card or key in your phone number when you check out, and Kroger will donate dollars to our chapter.

How You Can Help

Most people who attend TCF meetings never heard of TCF before they lost a child, and many bereaved parents still have not heard that there is an organization that exists to help them navigate their grief journey. If you know a family in the middle Tennessee area who has experienced the death of a child, regardless of age or cause of death, and you think they would benefit from finding out about TCF and possibly attending a TCF meeting, we will be happy to send you some information that you may share with them about what TCF is and what we do to support bereaved parents. If you have attended a TCF meeting, it might be helpful if you would invite them to attend their first TCF meeting with you. We also have a monthly newsletter that they can receive free of charge simply by asking for it.



BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

Alive Alone

Alive Alone is an organization to benefit parents whose only child or all children have died. Visit their website at www.alivealone.org.

Alive Hospice Support Group for Bereaved Parents

For general information about grief support services and groups at Alive, please call the Grief Line at: 615-963-4732 or email griefsupport@alivehospice.org. They offer eight-week groups, ongoing monthly groups, family group and Little Hearts Club for children who have experienced the death of a sibling. Services are in Franklin, Nashville, Hendersonville, Lebanon, and Murfreesboro.

Sharing

SHARING is a community organization for parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of an infant. The website is sharingmiddletn.org.

Survivors of Suicide

There is a caring SOS group in Nashville. For information about meetings, you may call (615) 244-7444, or go to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network at TSPN.org, and you will find a list of all Tennessee SOS locations.

TCF Website —A Treasure for You

When you log onto the TCF Website at www.compassionatefriends.org you will find a wealth of information about TCF and grief—poetry and articles, chat rooms, grief in the news, other chapter Web sites and numerous other resources.

The Compassionate Friends

**P. O. BOX 8283
Hermitage, TN
37076**

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Thoughts on Mother's Day

My friend stood staring at a picture of my son and daughter, and I joined her. Instinctively we put our arms around each other as we stood there together.

"Loving him was worth the pain of losing him, wasn't it," she said. It wasn't a question. It was a statement of fact and we both knew the answer was "yes, yes, a thousand times yes."

My friend is childless, but not by choice. I know how hard Mother's Day is for me, but I can only imagine how difficult and empty it must be for her. For me there are the memories of the months I nurtured that child beneath my heart. Will I ever forget the time he actually kicked the purse off that bump I called my lap? And the time he hiccupped? Even if he had died at birth, I would still have memories to treasure.

Then, there were those wonderful toddler days when he told the world all our family secrets and amused a whole airplane full of people when he said in his loudest three-year-old voice, "Tell the maid I want a coke!"

School brought a mixed bag of memories. Some good, some bad, but all a part of a boy growing up. How we loved him as a teenager. "I'm half kid and half adult," he said, "and the kid comes out on Saturday night." We lost him during those years, but sometimes I've consoled myself with the thought that 16 would be a magical age forever.

Yes, dear friend, loving him was worth all the pain of losing him and more. Much, much more.

Judy Osgood
TCF, Central Oregon