

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 8283 • Hermitage, TN 37076 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823)

Nashville Website: www.tcfnashville.com



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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.*

September 13th Meeting Program:

Suicide Awareness Month

Nashville TCF chapter member, Ron Henson, will speak in memory of his son, Daniel. Ron will bring to light questions and stigmas surrounding suicide with his journey since the death of Daniel.

Our regular sharing groups will follow this program.

Please join us.



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
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

If you attended a TCF Nashville meeting in the past and haven't been back, make the effort to come again. Every meeting is different, and every combination of the group is different. And remember this always and foremost—by coming to a meeting and sharing yourself and your experiences, your child or sibling becomes known to others who never had the opportunity of knowing them. How much more special a gift can we give ourselves than that?

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****Coleton Harris Banniza**

September 5

Son of
Robert and Tiffany
Banniza**Jon Ashley Duncan**

September 11

Son of
Mike and Kay Duncan
Brother of Jamie**Emily Michelle Childers**

September 30

Daughter of
Michael and Paula Childers
Sister of Sarah and Julie**Gary Lee Durichek**

September 2

Son of
Jimmy and Barbara
Hayes**Danielle Dedja Carter**

September 23

Daughter of
Jeff Carter**Tiffany Lenee Eastep**

September 10

Daughter of
Wayne and Penny
Crafton**Charles Michael Brown
(Charlie)**

September 15

Son of
Dan and June Brown
Brother of
Katherine Brown**Danielle Haven**

September 10

Neice of
Teresa Umphrey**Giovanni Mikhail Gilis**

September 7

Son of
Karrie Robb**Ashley Yacoub Hana**

September 22

Daughter of
Kenneth and Kathy
Hensley**Nicole Danielle Mayes**

September 20

Daughter of
Cannon Mayes**Morgan Langham**

September 27

Daughter of
Mark and Gini
Langham**John Mallard, Jr.
(Jay)**

September 15

Son of
Mary Mallard**Andrew Morris Pack**

September 8

Son of
Wayne and Kassandra
Pack**Cleburne Adam Reynolds**

September 3

Son of
Pam Reynolds**Bert Rich**

September 11

Son of
Shirley Rich-Brinegar**Camdyn Elijah Woods**

September 7

Son of
Steven and Alicia Frankenfield
Brother of
Brooklyn and Daxtyn**Nathan Young**

September 19

Son of
Dana Young

We quickly find there are no words to describe the experience of 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



And in the month of their deaths

James Michael Bolton
(Mikey)
September 11
Son of
Jim and Loretta Bolton

Pamela Sue Chaiken
September 29
Daughter of
Lionel and Sandra
Chaiken
Sister of Stephanie

Kaitlyn Kimberly Cook
September 15
Daughter of
Jim Cook and Sylvia Bosma
Sister of
Aaron and Zander

Darby Felts
September 9
Son of
Deanie Gregory
Nephew of
Jean Porch

Christopher Miller Harris
September 11
Son of
Bill Harris and Judy Harris

Elizabeth Harrison
Jackson
September 24
Daughter of
Bennet and Jane
Harrison

Michael Scott Jones
September 16
Son of
Warren and Donna Jones
and Betty D. Jones
Brother of
David, Jennifer, and Becky

Lindsay Carole Miller
September 11
Daughter of
David and Rebecca
Miller
Granddaughter of
Roy and Carole Renfro

Christopher Michael
Swayze
September 24
Son of
Michael and Carole Swayze

Isaac Schujahn
September 27
Son of
Derek and Linda
Schujahn

Maxim Siesov
September 11
Lindsey Carole Miller's
"Other Half"

Philip G. Sanders
September 20
Son of
Jean Porch
Nephew of
Deanie Gregory

Keanan Thompson
September 15
Son of
Chris Thompson

Don Bruce Winters
September 8
Son of
Jerry and Loretta Winters

Ryan Lee Wiseman
September 5
Son of
Roger and Deborah
Wiseman

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*

*Becky Harris and Will Harris
in Loving Memory
of her son, and his brother,
Max Hillman Harris*

*Mike and Kay Duncan
in Memory of
Peggy Gibson*

*Jon and Cynthia Grimson
in Memory of
David and Peggy Gibson*

*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.*

What Would He Tell Me... About His First Day of School?

OK, I didn't think it was going to bother me this much. I've been saying for weeks that I couldn't wait till school started to get Scott and Ashley out of my hair. (They couldn't wait to get me out of theirs, either.)

So here it is, the eve of the first day of school, and I'm thinking, "What would tomorrow be like if Nicholas were here?" His turn finally comes to stand outside with backpack and new shoes, waiting for the big yellow school bus. Or would he have wanted Mom to take him his first day of kindergarten? What would he come home and tell me about his first day of school?

And what about the kids—"his class?" Will I forever look at these kids (and their parents) and wonder "what if?" They don't even know they're missing a classmate.

Here it's been almost six years, and I feel compelled to hang around the school and grab every kindergarten parent I see and say, "I would have had a child in this class." I surprise myself because I don't usually have those urges anymore.

But this is harder than I thought it would be. Another milestone of life—first day of school—that Nicholas (and I) missed.

The thing is nobody will think of this. It's not a birthday or Mother's Day or Christmas. It goes by unnoticed except by a mother with kids too excited to sleep tonight—one starting fifth grade, one starting second, and one....

Linda Moffatt
TCF, St. Louis, MO

September and a New School Year

To most people school means:

*The kids out from under foot, caps on.
Buying a new lunch box, new clothes
and the usual school supplies.
Fixing breakfast and trying to get it eaten.
Getting to a school bus on time.*

*What does school mean to a mother
who has lost a child?*

*Watching other children filled with excitement.
A little boy who should be in kindergarten.
A brother who must go off to school by himself.
A teacher who must reach out to a class,
when her little one won't be in school this year.
A mother sending two children off,
when there should be three.
Many tears, behind smiling faces!*

Patsy Hedges
TCF, Frederick Co., MD

Findings

*The greatest comfort
at time of grieving
comes, quietly,
from the love that lives
within ourselves.*

Sascha

Closure

Definition of Closure—"the act or process of closing—a closed condition" (Oxford American Dictionary)

*How can closure
and my daughter
or her death
be contained
in the same sentence or paragraph?*

*I will never close
the door on my daughter, her life,
her death and all that
they have left in me.*

*Our bond will never be cut.
Our love will never be broken.*



*She has gone through a doorway
but I will never close it.*

*Through the doorway of her death
came emptiness and pain
and seeds to start a new life
amidst the ashes.*

*And as the door stays open
blessings can float in
because the doorway of her life
made me her mother.*

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
Catching the Light

A Single Parent's Experience

My only child, Aaron, died at age 19. Aaron and I had always been very close. I had raised him by myself since he was three. His death was a devastating shock. The following issues and dilemmas are among those I encountered that were different from those faced by bereaved parents who are not alone.

- A Strong Sense of Isolation. When your child dies, the world seems to tumble around you. It feels particularly frightening to a single parent. We need others to help us balance our upside-down world, to encourage us to keep hanging on when it seems to be unbearable.
- Inconsistency. As every hour of every day seemed like a challenge to “get through,” the only person I knew I could depend on was me! Needing to be strong for myself at times seemed just too much. I longed for someone I could depend on to reassure me when I was feeling emotionally distraught.
- Sharing Emotions. Research shows that 25 percent of the stress from the loss of a loved one can be relieved by simply sharing with another person your thoughts, feelings and ideas. But every time we, as singles, feel the need to express what’s going on inside our minds and bodies, we must seek someone out. We dread finding that all our friends are busy or not home, knowing we may end up feeling more rejected than when we began.
- Sharing the Work. A single parent who has other children at home has a special burden. Not only is the parent grieving over the loss of a child, he or she must also go back to work for a living, try to maintain stability at home for the remaining children, and handle the normal, everyday household problems. Additionally, that parent must devote attention to the remaining children.
- Sharing the Special Memories. As a single parent, you have no one who remembers that child as you do and who can share those memories with you. If you have other children, you will be able to reminisce with them. I continue to share with others my son’s unique qualities, so he won’t be forgotten, but it requires so much explaining to those who didn’t know him that the joys of sharing such memories are often lost.
- Support From the Opposite Sex. As we’ve learned, getting emotional support from a non-bereaved person is difficult; dating and seeking emotional support adds another level of stress.
- Making Decisions and Facing Major Events Alone. I was left with all the decisions. I sorted all his possessions. I decided how and where to bury the ashes. Such tasks were grueling to face alone. I wanted someone to share the responsibility.
- The Need for Touch. My personal observation is that bereaved people have a strong need for touching and hugging. The contact not only feels good but can have a healing quality. Being single means there’s no spouse nearby to provide that gentle touch on the back or that consoling hug when the pain erupts.
- Grieving At Your Own Pace. The only benefit to grieving alone is that single parents do not have to worry about disturbing another’s sleep as we cry during the night or hold back our tears when a spouse’s spirits are high.
- Special Strengths. One of the assets is the strength we’ve gained during our struggles as single parents. We might never have discovered that inner strength if we had not been alone.

Excerpted from an article by Kelly Osmont
TCF, Portland, OR

Those Anniversaries – What Do I Do?

The anniversary of a child’s death often is anticipated with the fear of having to relive the horrors of that day when it happened. Birthdays remind us of happier days, of hopes and dreams and aspirations—now moot. What do we do with these days? How can we make them meaningful? Members of our TCF chapter were asked what they do to commemorate their children’s special days. Perhaps their responses will give you some helpful ideas.

1. I donate a book, written by my son’s favorite author, to the public library.
2. For our son’s last birthday, we took him to Gatlinburg. Now the whole family returns there each year on his birthday.
3. We release balloons (biodegradable, of course) with messages to him.
4. We have a special family dinner with her favorite food and cake and share memories of her with each other.
5. We donate to TCF or another charity in his memory.
6. My husband and I spend the day together just talking about his birth—remembering the small things.
7. We send flowers for our church altar in our child’s memory. (Also, lilies at Easter and a poinsettia at Christmas.
8. We eat at her favorite restaurant.
9. We take flowers to the cemetery.
10. We plant flowers at his grave.
11. We light a candle and let it burn all day beside his picture.
12. Chicken Nuggets (her term—actually Chicken Nuggets are at a different fast-food chain) at Burger King were her special birthday treat, so we go there each year on her birthday.
13. Since we can’t give our little boy a toy, we give one to another child—preferably a stranger.
14. We write letters to her and read what each other has written.
15. I publish a poem in my local paper.
16. We put a memorial in the paper.
17. I watch a video of my child, look at photographs—and remember, with love.

The Visit Home

There once was an old man who journeyed back to his hometown with the intent of reminiscing about the good times, as well as the sorrows he had experienced as a young father. High on the list of places he intended to visit was the elementary school his daughter had attended.

First, he would walk around the huge playground where he so often had brought his daughter to play. He would stop at the slide, then the swings, and finally the monkey bars, remembering the joy on his daughter's face as she had moved happy and carefree from one adventure to another.

Then he would enter the school building. His first stop there would be the kindergarten room. He could still see in his mind that memorable day years before, his daughter's outstretched hand enclosed in his firm, yet tender grip. As they searched for her classroom, their loving touch finally ended as she walked through the open door to a new stage in her life.

The old man's next stop would be the tiny gymnasium where his daughter had performed in the holiday pageant. How beautiful she had appeared, dressed in soft white as she sang *Silent Night, Holy Night*.

Finally, he would stop at his daughter's third grade classroom. The old man clearly remembered the day he and his wife had stood outside the closed classroom door, tears streaming down their cheeks. Finally, gathering their courage they entered the room to comfort and talk with their daughter's classmates who, as yet, failed to comprehend why they would never again see alive the little girl they all considered their best friend.

The anticipation grew strong as he neared the street where the school stood. Arriving at the spot, the old man wept at what he saw. The plain white concrete structure he expected was no longer there. A sleek modern building stood in its place. An asphalt parking lot now covered the old grassy playground.

Now understanding that he would never be able to fulfill his mission, the old man started thinking about the transient nature of life—how nothing ever remains the same. Communities change. Buildings are here today and gone tomorrow. Loved ones live—and die. Even nations rise and fall.

But then the old man had another thought: The love his daughter had passed on to him remained within his heart so many years after she had died. He realized that it truly didn't matter if a day, a year, a decade, or a century were to pass. The candle of love would continue to burn brightly in his heart. Even an eternity from now the love he carried for his daughter would have transcended his own death and been returned to her a thousand-fold.

The old man turned his car around to head back toward the highway. There was no need to stop elsewhere. Taking one last glance in the rear-view mirror at the new school, he understood that memories live on not because of a building, or a classroom, or a playground. They remain alive inside each of us because love outlasts even the sands of time.

A smile crossed his lips.
His mission had been completed!

Wayne Loder
TCF Fort Wayne, IN

*Normal day,
let me be aware of the treasure you are.
Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you before you depart.
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.
Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.
One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my face in the pillow,
or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky,
and want more than all the world for your return.*

Mary Jean Irion



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 groups 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

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Time

*The time has passed when I would awake
in the middle of the night and relive
the death of my child.*

*The time has passed when I would sit
patiently waiting to hear his footsteps
on the front porch, just one more time.*

*The time has passed when I would find
myself curled up in the middle
of the night with his favorite shirt and
cry myself to sleep.*

*The time has passed when I would look at
other kids his age and wonder why God
had to choose to take mine.*

*Time has a way of healing the broken heart,
but time can never take the memories
that I cherish in my heart.*

*The memories of my child, his smile, his walk,
the way he talked, his smell, his touch,
the way he said my name.*

*These are the things, as time goes by,
that I will hold onto and cherish.*

The times of my child.

Janice O'Neal
TCF, Nashville, TN