



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Newsletter

Volume 39 No. 6 June 2017

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POSTAGE

**PAUL BROOME in memory of CYNTHIA BROOME
ED and CAROLYN BUCHANAN in memory of ASHLEY BUCHANAN
JERRY and CINDY WIGGLESWORTH in memory of LEE WIGGLESWORTH**

CHILDRENS MEMORAIL

CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD

LOVE GIFT

**HELEN and JACK MAY in memory of BILLY JACK MAY, JR.
LAYLA REESE in memory of (SCOTTY) SCOTT AUSTIN REESE**

SECURITY SERVICE

WILEY and BETH GREER in memory of BENJAMIN QUIN (BEN) GREER

The Compassionate Friends THANK YOU for your donations

They are tax deductible and deeply appreciated.

Printing of TCF Monthly Newsletter: Courtesy of BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD OF MS

TCF JACKSON CHAPTER	TCF MEETINGS
<p style="text-align: center;">TCF JACKSON CHAPTER NEWS</p> <p>Please remember all fathers during the month of June who have lost children. This is a very difficult time for them and we would appreciate your concern.</p> <p>Our chapter would like to give a special thanks to those who send donations in memory of your child or of someone you love and miss. We continue to need donations and would appreciate any amount. Please remember all donations are tax deductible and are deeply appreciated.</p> <p>For those who may not know, our chapter is one of the longest running chapters in the U.S.A. and one of the few chapters which continues to print and mail a monthly newsletter as well as send some online. Our newsletter is in its 39th year of publication and our chapter has been meeting at its present location since 1980. A special note of thanks to Chuck Prestwood for founding our Chapter and continuing to inspire and support us. Thank you to those who help get the newsletters out each month. Thanks to Paul Broome, our newsletter editor who does an excellent job each month and puts so much time and effort into the selection of articles and getting it to our printers by the deadline. Thanks also to Carolyn Stewart who picks the newsletters up from the printers and to those who gather each month to fold, tape and label them. Also, thanks to Joy Gates who takes the newsletters to the post office each month to be mailed. Appreciation also to Virginia Horton, our treasurer, who picks up our mail from the post office, deposits the donations, and keeps our check book balanced. A special thanks to Marcia Lefteroff, our chapter leader who does a great job leading our group and to those who facilitate our programs. Also, thanks to Jerry Wigglesworth and Carolyn Buchanan who write and mail the blue remembrance cards each month. We also appreciate those who bring refreshments each month and to those who participate by attending and sharing special memories of your precious children. Each person is sincerely appreciated for all you do in remembrance of your child. We would not be here as a chapter without those who fill each vital role that is so necessary. A personal note of thanks for your encouragement, compassion and support.</p> <p>Your communication, sharing, hugs, and personal commitment to each other and to our group does not go overlooked. We are so grateful to each one of you who have helped in so many ways over the years!</p> <p><i>Submitted by Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS Regional Coordinator</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter Folding - Saturday, 24th - 3:00 p.m. Fondren Presbyterian Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2nd Tuesdays monthly at 7:00 p.m. Fondren Presbyterian Church – Fellowship Hall 3220 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS</p> <p>Directions: Take West Lakeland Drive exit off I-55 North until it dead ends into Old Canton Road. Turn right, go to 2nd traffic light. Fondren parking lot is on the right.</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Meeting: Tuesday, June 13, 7:00 p.m. Topic: "Making It One Moment At A Time" Facilitator: Shelly Hinson Please join us as Shelly shares some of the ways she has learned to cope with her grief. *****</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Although our meetings are held in donated church facilities, The Compassionate Friends is not a religious organization, and espouses no religion affiliation or doctrines. Persons of all faiths (or no faith), creeds, color, and race are welcome.</i></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Prenatal Bereavement Support Group</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">*1st Wednesday/ Noon UMC Cong. Ctr. Jackson Medical Mall For more information, call Kelly Hinson @ 601-815-7096</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>*If the meeting date falls on a holiday—the following Wednesday</i></p> <hr style="border-top: 3px double black;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>For Children Grieving the Death of a Loved One</u></p> <p>The McClean Fletcher Center—12 Northtown Drive, Jackson, MS offers peer support groups for children ages 4-18. This includes the child’s family and meets every other week. For more information call: Jennifer at 601-206-5525</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>MS SIDS ALLIANCE INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monthly 1st Tuesday – 7:00 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">River Oaks Hospital Lobby Classroom MS SIDS ALLIANCE offers education to the public and professionals on risk reduction of SIDS and bereavement support.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cathy Files - 601 955- 1057 Leslie Threadgill – 601-573-1458</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>

(The following is submitted by Rex McCord in honor of all grieving fathers for Father's Day.)

“THE NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT”

“The names have been changed to protect the innocent.” How many times have we heard that sentence used on an old TV show and sometimes still aired as reruns? We know what it means but do we know how effective it was? Of course, that was TV, not real, made up, scripted. Now I am thinking that nothing like that would help us in our journey of grief. Change your name, change your address, or try to change your situation. Nothing changes the impact on my journey of grief. No answers have been given and we have turned the subject over every which way but loose. Others may ask about our child, “Where does he live? Where does he work?” These questions hit hard - and sometimes they cause me to ask deeper questions. So many questions that I still can't answer - but some things I know: We had a child and his name will always be Lane.

Faye and I were married five years when Lane came along and filled our lives with joy. Last year we moved closer to town and in that move we lost a large picture of Lane when he was about five or six years old. I cannot tell you how devastating that was to us, especially to Faye. Lane grew up to be a loveable man in many ways. He was here thirty-three years and now we miss so much of who he is. Lane had his beginning and his end on this earth. We have the beginning of our journey of grief but it will not end this side of Heaven. I continue to ponder about how we can honor and respect the man named Lane, our son. What affects me now? Almost everything. What brings tears? Many things - good and bad.

Faye and I watch lots of movies. It is just a way to get into someone else's story, whether true or not. Recently we saw a true movie called, “Taking Chance”. It is about a Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strobl, who volunteered to be on escort service to accompany the body of Chance Phelps, a fallen Marine in Ramadi, Iraq. The 19-year-old soldier was killed when his convoy was hit. He stayed to the last moment so the others could get out safely. He was shot before he could escape. The entire movie is about the life-changing experiences Colonel Strobl encountered while escorting Chance Phelps back home - only this time in a casket. Chance's parents were conferred with about making the movie and they gave their consent as long as it was truthful and respectful. What affected me about this movie was how strongly it portrayed the honor and respect given to the fallen soldier; right down to the colonel's dress uniform, his salutes, the methodical movement of the casket, the colonel's obvious emotional reactions, the reactions of flight personnel and passengers when they knew what his mission was. These stories move me and bring tears. I just cannot help but think about our children who are fallen soldiers in the battle of life. What some of them have gone through, wow!

Continued next col.

Some of the last words in the movie from a Korean War veteran to Colonel Strobl were, “You brought Chance home. You are his witness now. Without a witness, they just disappear.”

The point: we are all bearing witness, for all of them, our children. Some words paraphrased from the Bible tell us, “Whatever is true, pure, lovely, of good report, of any virtue, worthy of any praise, to think on these things” (Phil 4:8) and to “not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Phil 2:4). That is what the colonel did, and that is what we do. All these things could be summed up in one word - LOVE. And the names have not been changed.

*By Rex McCord-
In memory of our fallen hero, or son, Lane Edward McCord
1965-1998)*



May Meeting Notes

There were 20 people attending our meeting, including two newcomers. We hope they found a warm welcome.

Chapter leader, Marcia Lefteroff welcomed everyone and made announcements and special days were read by Joy Gates and Wanda Fisher. Our facilitator was Julia McFarland and the topic was, "A Mother's Grief". Julia began by sharing some of her personal story and she read a poem/song that her precious son, Little John had written, both music and words, titled, "Under His Wings." It is a beautiful song with a moving message which led Julia to start a ministry called "Under His Wings Ministries" in which she can speak publicly about her experiences of losing Little John. She also shared how Mother's Day is one of her hardest days and asked others to share. Sharing about our experiences of losing our children and about how we cope is always a therapeutic experience.

The pain of our grief is REAL and HARD, especially on Mother's Day. It's hard to go to the grocery store, to go to places where our children used to go, it's ALL HARD. This was a wonderful meeting and we appreciate Julia for her compassionate and thoughtful presentation and all those who brought the delicious refreshments and those who came and shared.

*Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS
Regional Coordinator*



Treasured

What I love most is
Waking to the dew of
The grass upon my boots

What I love most is
Smelling the end of
The day upon
My shirt, holding
My child

What I love most is
Something I don't see
Every day or smell or
Touch

What I do love most is
The memories of those
Moments if only buried in
My dreams

*Scott Newport
Royal Oak, MI
Permission to reprint granted*



WHY ME? - The Unanswerable Question

Most of us have pondered this question at some time in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grievers found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

*Polly Moore
TCF Nashville, TN*

A Father's View of The Compassionate Friends: Courage, Surprise, and Understanding

Attendance Requirement: Courage.

I don't think I am unique. I did not want to attend a meeting of Compassionate Friends.

I was coerced by my wife. It was subtle but effective. My son, on the other hand, made a devil's deal; he agreed to go to the next meeting in exchange for a favor—his debt some weeks away.

The thought of discussing death nauseates me. We, my son and I, had made a bad deal.

The Meeting: A Surprise.

I was surprised to find I was not the only man to have lost a child. There was a reality to that recognition.

My loss, not unlike yours, is a personal matter. No one can tell me how I feel or how I ought to feel. Yet, the group never made me feel guilty about my selfishness; they understood.

The Result: An Understanding.

Compassionate Friends is not an efficient organization. There are no systems, no quick easy cures.

Grief is a catharsis. Most of what you hear here you will dismiss; it will not apply to you. But, there are nuggets—small ideas you will want to try or things you will want to think about. Some you will try. Many you will discard. Only a few will help the pain. These, you will treasure.

Your friends and associates may try to understand your grief and try to help. They can do neither. They don't understand. The people at the meetings do understand. And they try to help.

My son felt he had gained little from the meeting. Yet, he left feeling he had helped someone else deal with his grief. What a marvelous satisfaction for a 15-year-old.

What's in it for you? Compassionate Friends is here to help—to listen, to suggest, to understand.

If you handle your grief well, you do not need Compassionate Friends. But we need you. Your approach or method of dealing with grief could help one or more of us. Please share it.

*Bob Watts
TCF Stamford, CT*



OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED

“They may be deceased by a few days or years, but we still miss them so much and still shed our tears.”

Birth Date	Child’s name	Parent’s name(s)	Cause
06/01	Carrick Johnson	Thomas/Brigitte Johnson	
06/02	Angela Nicole Smith	Brenda/Bobby Smith	Auto accident
06/03	Christina (Cris) Mann	Peggy Phillips	Cancer
06/05	Ted Jensen	David/Marilyn Jensen	Septicemia
06/11	Kathleen M. Peck	John/Pat Schnell	Cancer
06/11	Bryan “Keith” Barr	Deborah Barr Holden	Cardiac arrest
06/13	Russell “Rusty” Wilkins	Jimmy/Barbara Wilkins	Heart Disease
06/14	Robert (Bob) Hester	Bill/Cherlyn Hester	Suicide
06/15	Baby Johnson	Marquita W. Johnson	Miscarriage
06/20	Christopher Idowu	Micheline Idowu	Stillborn
06/20	Christopher Emmanuel Idowu	Phyllis Stringer	Stillborn
06/22	Kristi Kay Brandon	Gary/Wanda Brandon	Auto accident
06/22	Tommy Levine	Karen L. Thomas	Auto accident
06/23	Tyler Allen (T-Bug) Hinson	Albert/Shelly Hinson	Suicide
06/24	Gina Hawthorne Sumrall	Ed/Susie Hawthorne	Car accident
06/24	Maxine Elizabeth Melichar	Scott/Emily Melichar	Stillborn
06/24	Kassidy Hope Kyles	Clara S. Carman	Aplastic Anemia
06/25	Ashley Curt Buchanan	Ed/Carolyn Buchanan	Suicide
06/26	Morgan Aaron Rodgers	Dennis/Darline Rodgers	Accidental shooting
06/28	Timothy Lance “Tim” Rooker	Sylvia Little	Hit on motorcycle
06/28	Reed Hickman	Jan Lemmons	Suicide
06/30	Benjamin Quin (Ben) Greer	Wiley/Beth Greer	Auto accident

Father’s Day

I just finished watching another miserable cologne commercial on TV. For some reason these are the first signs of the upcoming holiday, commercials that are only shown at Christmas and Father’s Day to give wives and kids some idea of what to get Dad to celebrate a gift-oriented holiday.

Like the other fathers who read this newsletter, I know the gift I’d like to get this Father’s Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen. My son’s life. An opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are the age my son should be now. A chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that’s not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called and wished my father a happy day the night before, and go to the florist for the flowers I will place on my son’s grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time, then return home to my wife and our infant son. This year will have a greater measure of peace due to young Dan’s arrival, but I shall always have that Alex-sized hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I too die.

Like many bereaved fathers I have felt the lack of understanding of the non-bereaved on how a father should mourn his child’s death, and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such belief in the strength of maternal love, and do such a good job of ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at Alex’s memorial service was on how my wife was dealing with this tragedy, to the long-time friend who didn’t understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark Card commercial last year, the majority of people around us seem to have difficulty with the thought that a father may need to grieve for his deceased child just as much as a mother might.

So that is where some support and love is needed, and needed badly. Of course we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. In a recent newsletter there was a note from a bereaved mother from New Jersey asking fathers and siblings to be understanding of a grieving mother’s needs on Mother’s Day. I agree, but I would also hope that you ladies will not forget your husband’s this Father’s Day as well. It is frequently said that we males don’t often talk of our emotional needs, and are reluctant to show our pain, but we need love and ‘warm fuzzies’ when we hurt also. Please remember us on June 18, and please remember also that those cute little sentimental commercials that hurt you in May, take their toll on us in June. There are definitely times when I can do without Old Spice, McDonalds, Hallmark, and AT&T.

Brothers, I wish you peace, comfort, and love.

*Doug Hughes/TCF Cincinnati, OH
In Memory of my son, Alex*

OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
06/04	William Armstead Tate	Eleanor Tate Crowell	
06/05	Jennifer Shelby Clark	Bette Clark	Auto accident
06/07	Britton Grant	Alma Lewis	Accidental overdose
06/10	Corenelius L. Rice	Willie "Bill" Rice	
06/12	Eric Hegwood	Janice Berlin	
06/15	Baby Johnson	Marquita W. Johnson	Miscarriage
06/15	Cole Richardson	Rick Richardson	Auto accident
06/17	Matthew Carson Pounders	Dustin Kenneth Pounders	Auto accident
06/19	Andrew C. "Andy" Franklin	Mr./Mrs. Homer C. Franklin	Jeep accident
06/20	Christopher Emmanuel Idowu	Phyllis Stringer	Stillborn
06/20	Christopher Idowu	Micheline Idowu	Stillborn
06/21	John Robert "Robby" Barnette	Donna Barnette	Motorcycle accident
06/21	David T. (Brother) Gentry	Dr. Glen/Betty Gentry	Stroke
06/23	Sandy Moak	Jake/Frances Moak	Hypertension
06/23	Michael Alan McNally	Ann/Robert McNally	Suicide
06/24	Maxine Elizabeth Melichar	Scott/Emily Melichar	Stillborn
06/27	Michael Ellis Blount	Ellis/Lynda Blount	Leukemia



REPLY FORM—IMPORTANT

It is important for our children to be remembered. Please understand that in order for your child to be on the "special days" list, you must fill out this form, which gives us permission to list this information.

I/We are bereaved Parents grandparents siblings step-parents friends relatives professional
 Please add remove keep me on the mailing list.

Remember my Child Sibling Grandchild on Special Days. Please have someone call me.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Name of Child _____

Age when deceased _____ Cause* _____

Child's Birthday _____ Child's Heaven Date _____

*You need not list cause of death. We ask this only so that parents whose children have died in similar ways may reach one another.

Optional: Your donations are tax deductible and allow us to reach to other bereaved parents.

Enclosed is \$ _____ given in memory of _____

I would like my contribution used to fund: Check one: Postage Children's Memorial Love Gift

Mail to: The Compassionate Friends; P.O. Box 1396; Jackson, Mississippi; 39215-1396