



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



# Newsletter

**Volume 41 No. 4 April 2020**

**Jackson, MS Chapter:** P.O. Box 1396; Jackson, MS 39215-1396; 601-713-4357

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## POSTAGE

**PAUL BROOME in memory of CYNTHIA BROOME**  
**ED and CAROLYN BUCHANAN in memory of ASHLEY BUCHANAN**  
**WILEY and WANDA FISHER in memory of RYAN FISHER KNIGHT (birthday 04/30)**  
**WILEY and WANDA FISHER in memory of DANIEL FISHER (Birthday 04/10)**  
**VIRGINIA HORTON in memory of ANDREW THOMAS STANLEY (Heaven day 04/16)**  
**GREG LITTLE in memory of DREW LITTLE**  
**ERIC and LISA LUCAS in memory of ERIC CORTEZ LUCAS**  
**ERIC and LISA LUCAS in memory of LEVELL BLANCHERD**  
**CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD**  
**JERRY and CINDY WIGGLESWORTH in memory of LEE WIGGLESWORTH**

## LOVE GIFT CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL

**(SPECIAL NOTE: We had asked for donations to go toward POSTAGE  
and we appreciate the positive response. Donations still needed for Postage.  
THANK YOU TO ALL WHO DONATED TOWARD POSTAGE. IT IS APPRECIATED!**

**The Compassionate Friends THANK YOU for your donations**

**They are tax deductible and deeply appreciated.**

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**TCF JACKSON CHAPTER NEWS**

Our meeting was held March 10, 2020 and this was our special anniversary celebration meeting where we all brought a covered dish to share.

Since Fondren Presbyterian Church is a voting precinct, we had our initial meeting in the sanctuary where chapter leader, Marcia Lefteroff welcomed everyone and made announcements. Special days were read by Marcia Lefteroff and Tanya Newkirk.

There were fourteen people present, and after the preliminaries were over in the sanctuary and the voting people left, we went to the fellowship hall where we enjoyed all the delicious food. Everyone brought for our anniversary celebration. Some people brought their child's favorite food and there was plenty for everything to share and enjoy. We appreciate everyone bringing the food and we had a great time just eating, visiting, and sharing together.

*Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS*

**HELP NEEDED!**

**We are low on funds in our postage account. Please help us by sending in a donation in memory of your child and designate it to go toward postage. We have plenty right now in our Children's Memorial account and look forward to a dedication of our new fountain/statue to be planned soon. WE WILL TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERATION IN SENDING IN A DONATION GOING TOWARD OUR POSTAGE ACCOUNT SOON! THANK YOU SO MUCH!**



Dear Friends,

These are difficult times. I spoke with my sister this evening, and she told me her neighbor, a young woman, was so terrified of the virus that she found it almost impossible to leave her house. Neighbors got together and placed care packages on her porch. When my sister told me that—I almost cried. It reminded me of the time my neighbors brought me food after Cynthia's death.

We must work together. We of TCF have known this for many years. So, let this be a time to connect with friends and loved ones—via our excellent technology. Stay home. Read books. Take care of yourself and those who share your home life.

Sit outside on the porch, tell stories of your child, listen to others who have a story to tell. Let's provide light in this very dark hour.

I love you all.

Your editor,  
Paul

**TCF MEETINGS**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays monthly at 7:00 p.m.  
Fondren Presbyterian Church – Fellowship Hall  
3220 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS

Directions: Take West Lakeland Drive exit off I-55 North until it dead ends into Old Canton Road.  
Turn right, go to 2<sup>nd</sup> traffic light.  
Fondren parking lot is on the right.

**April Meeting**

Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Fondren Presbyterian Church. David Morgan usually facilitates this meeting and he always does a great job. Although we do not know the topic yet, you will not want to miss this meeting where we will listen, learn, and share our precious memories of our children. Please come and bring a refreshment if you can.

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*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.*

Prenatal Bereavement Support Group

\*1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday/ Noon  
UMC Cong. Ctr. Jackson Medical Mall  
For more information, call  
Kelly Hinson @ 601-815-7096

*\*If the meeting date falls on a holiday—the following Wednesday*

For Children Grieving the Death of a Loved One

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

MS SIDS ALLIANCE INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Monthly 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday – 7:00 p.m.

River Oaks Hospital Lobby Classroom  
MS SIDS ALLIANCE offers education to the public and professionals on risk reduction of SIDS and bereavement support.

Cathy Files - 601-955-1057  
Leslie Threadgill – 601-573-1458



**Newsletter Folding will be  
Saturday,  
April 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.  
Fondren Presbyterian Church**

**MY BATTLE WITH GRIEF**

Some people may say we have to be strong, that we must not grieve for very long. I do not feel strong. In fact, I feel very weak and vulnerable. When you lose a child, you have to endure so many emotions that you are unprepared for. There is such an upheaval in your life, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. You may feel like you're on stage where all your friends and family are watching and waiting to see how you are going to react. Some of them may reach out to try to help - others may avoid you, talk about you, betray you. We, who have lost children may feel confused, angry, completely lost! our emotions may reach a boiling point and we may lash out at everything and everyone. It takes a long time to even come to admit that we may need help and most of the time we can only find that help from others who have also lost children.

We are wounded soldiers in a battle for our own sanity and emotional well-being. Our wounds are not physically visible, but they are there just the same. Truly, we are MIA (missing in action) from our former selves. We have become strangers in a strange land that's so foreign to us with a foreign language and culture that we have to learn to navigate through many hurdles with unknown artillery shooting at us from every side. We may have to dig our own foxholes of protection which may include seclusion or prayer or grief therapy until we are ready to face the possible intolerance and misunderstanding of those who can't possibly relate to us or to our world.

Where can we go to learn how to live in this foreign land of grief? May I suggest and recommend getting involved with The Compassionate Friends? That's where I found my help. I tell people I feel like I'm on a railroad track with two tracks running parallel to each other. One track is my faith and the other is TCF and if I lost either one, I would surely de-rail. Our TCF group is here to listen, to understand and to help where and when we can. Come join our family of caring and compassionate hearts at TCF.

*Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS*



*What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?  
~ George Eliot*

**I Am Spring**

I am the beginning.  
I am budding promise.  
I spill cleansing tears of life  
from cloudy vessels  
creating muddy puddles  
where single cell creatures abide  
and splashing children play.

I am new green growth.  
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.  
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.  
With compassion, we feather nests  
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.  
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream  
I whisper truth – life is change.

I am spring.  
I bless long, dark wintry days.  
I crown mankind's pain  
with starry skies  
in deepest night  
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy  
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.  
(written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox,  
author of 'Finding What You Didn't Lose' and 'Poetic Medicine'.)

*Carol Clum*

**You were on my mind . . .**

When I woke up this morning...  
You were on my mind. You were on my mind.

You with that genuine enthusiasm,  
like a kid with his first bicycle.

You with the curiosity and excitement  
that dads love to be there for.

There's so much of you still with me.  
Still with us!

It's not fair that we feel cheated or  
that we won't share your ways anymore.

But in reality, after all the tears and  
inner feelings of pain and sadness pass

We will have joy and great happiness because  
we shared your days. Your laughter. You.

And when I wake up each morning  
It will be OK that you were on my mind...  
You are on my mind.

That's a special place for you to be, because it will be  
forever.

*Michael Tyler  
TCF Lighthouse Chapter, Lewes, DE*

**I wish someone had told me . . .**

- 1.No matter how prepared you think you are for a death, you can never be fully prepared for the loss and the grief.
2. You can plan for death, but death does not always comply with our wishes or plans.
3. “Stop avoiding and be present”.
4. “Dying is not like you see on TV or in the movies. It is not peaceful or prepared. You may not have a spiritual or meaningful moment . . . It’s too real”.
5. A hospital death is not always a bad death.
6. A home death/hospice death is not always a good death.
7. “There will be pressure from others to move on, even minutes or hours after a death, and this can lead to regrets”.
8. Death is not an emergency—there is always time to step back take a moment to say goodbye
9. Death and grief make people uncomfortable, so be prepared for awkward encounters.
10. You will plan the funeral while in a haze. If you aren’t happy with the funeral you had, have another memorial service later.
11. When people offer support, take it.
12. People will bring you food because they don’t know what else to do. Don’t feel bad throwing it away.
13. People will say stupid, hurtful things without even realizing it.
14. People will tell you things that aren’t true about your grief.
15. Death brings out the best and the worst in families, so be prepared.
16. There is no such thing as closure.
17. There is no timeline for grieving. You can’t rush it. You will grieve, in some form, forever.
18. “There will always be regrets. No matter how much time you had, you’ll always want more”.
19. Guilt is a normal part of grief.
20. Anger is normal part of grief.
21. “The pain of a loss is a reflection of love, but you never regret loving as hard as you can”.
22. Grief can make you question your faith.
23. “Grief doesn’t come in 5 neat stages. Grief is messy and confusing”.
24. Grief makes you feel like you’re going crazy.
25. Grief can make you question your life, your purpose, and your goals. And that isn’t always a bad thing.
26. We all grieve differently, which can create strain and confusion between family members and friends.
27. “However badly you think it is going to hurt, it is going to be a million times worse”.
28. You may find comfort in unexpected places.
29. “You should go somewhere to debrief after caregiving”.
30. “The last 24 hours of their lives will replay in your mind”.
31. Trying to protect children from death and the emotions of grief isn’t helpful.
32. “It’s sometimes necessary to seek out new ways to grieve on your own, find new guidance if the people who are supposed to be supportive simply haven’t learned how”.

33. “You grieve your past, present, and future with that person”.
34. Big life events and milestones will forever be bittersweet.
35. Grief triggers are everywhere – you will see things that remind you of your loved one all over the place, and it may lead to sudden outbursts of emotion.
36. “You lose yourself, your identity, meaning, purpose, values, your trust”.
37. Holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays will be hard forever.
38. People will tell you what you should and shouldn’t feel and how you should and shouldn’t grieve. Ignore them.
39. “The grief process is about not only mourning the loss, but getting to know yourself as a different person”.
40. There is no normal when it comes to grieving.
41. Sometimes it gets worse before it gets better.
42. “It is normal to feel numb after it happens. The tears will come. They come in waves”.
43. Grief can make you feel selfish and entitled, and that’s okay (at least for a while).
44. **Meeting new people, who never knew the person who died, can be hard and sad.** But eventually it can be nice to “introduce” them through stories and photographs.
45. The practice of sending thank you notes after a funeral is a cruel and unusual tradition.
46. “People love to judge how you are doing. Watch out for those people”.
47. You can’t compare grief or compare losses, though people will try.
48. Any loss you grieve is a valid loss, though people will sometimes make you feel otherwise.
49. “Just because you feel pretty good one day it doesn’t mean you are cured of your grief”.
50. There are many days when you will feel totally and completely alone, whether you are or not.
51. Grief can make you do stupid, crazy things. They may be what you need at the time time, but you may regret them later. Cut yourself some slack.
52. Grief can make you a stronger person than you were before.
53. Grief counseling doesn’t mean you’re crazy or weak.
54. It is okay to cry sometimes.
55. It is okay NOT to cry sometimes.
56. “Time does NOT heal all wounds”.
57. “Grief re-writes your address book”. Sometimes the people you think will be there for you are not. People you never expect become your biggest supporters.
58. “You don’t get over it, you just get used to it”.
59. It is okay to tell people when they are not being helpful.
60. Watch your drinking– alcohol can quickly become an unhealthy friend.
61. You will have to face your emotions eventually – you can avoid them for a while, but they will catch up with you in the end.
62. **Talking isn’t the only way to express and process emotions**
63. You will never go back to being your “old self”. Grief changes you and you are never the same.
64. Nothing you do in the future will change your love for the person who died. Eventually, you will begin to enjoy life again, date again, have another child, seek new experiences, or whatever. None of these things will diminish your love for the person you lost.

*Thank you, Marcia Lefteroff, for forwarding this excellent article.*

**The Piano Sits Silent**



**SPRING'S TEARS**

When the sun's sharp brilliance echoes in the  
luminescent blue  
A grim, oppressive darkness stabs my aching heart  
anew.  
Its golden glow upon my face, the warmth of  
winter's sun  
Holds the promise of renewal when the icy months  
are done.

It is this vow of nature's of resurgence in the spring  
That bows my head, and breaks my heart; unlocks  
my suffering.  
For you will miss again the beauty of this time of  
year  
The growing warmth, the sunny days when life will  
reappear.

For nature has no power over death that holds you  
still,  
And though I know, I still resent spring's early  
daffodil.  
Oh, would that I could speak to Mother Nature face  
to face!  
To beg she work her magic on your lonely resting  
place.

Why can't it be YOUR rebirth when the gray, cold  
days are done?  
Why mightn't YOU not live again to see spring's  
fresh new dawn  
and feel the warmth of sunshine  
relish in the greening earth...  
to open arms, embracing life  
why can't it be YOUR birth?

You were so young, your life so new when death  
crept in the door,  
And in my grief, beloved child, I'll ask forever more  
The reason why the earth's renewed when spring  
comes 'round each year  
Yet in your grave you're silent still,  
and I  
condemned  
am here.

*Sally Migliaccio  
TCF Babylon, NY  
In Memory of Tracey*

**Bereaved Parents**

Different ages  
Different stages  
Different issues  
Same pain  
Daily strain  
Occasional tissues  
Our children have died  
Often is all we know  
A fact we fear to hide  
Despite our ever-present woe  
We live with pride  
Though broken-hearted  
To love, remember, and grow

*Victor Montemurro  
TCF/ Medford, NY*

I etch her name in the dust.  
Run my hands over the keyboard,  
too long untouched  
by the pianist;  
The one no longer  
physically here,  
who played the songs,  
badly at times,  
yet unstoppable in  
her need to make music.  
As if it was her mission  
to get it right.  
As if she knew there was little time  
to master the melody.  
So she played and played.  
Melancholy tunes  
that spoke of lives gone too soon.  
I would call to her,  
"You're playing too loud,  
I can't hear myself think."  
If I could just take back those words,  
for I long to hear my  
beloved child play the music,  
that once rang through these halls.  
Those uneven strains would be  
the sweetest music to my ears.  
I touch the ivories and hear  
the foreign sound of this long  
silent instrument.  
And remember my precious child,  
remember the joy  
her efforts brought her...  
Remembering, remembering....  
Though my tears fall gently,  
my heart smiles as I  
recall the sweet sounds of her life.  
And even as the piano sits silent,  
My memories resound  
and I recall the love, always the love.

*Cathy L. Seehuetter  
TCF St. Paul, MN*

**AN EMPTY CHAIR**

The first wedding was two years after Alan, my twin-brother, passed away. My second oldest brother was getting married. I was waiting for the question, "When was I going to get married?" I was never asked so I couldn't use my prepared response, "When Alan could be my best man."

I thought if I did get married I would have an empty chair next to me. If Alan couldn't be my best man, I didn't want anyone. My brother's name would appear in the program (that he would have designed) as honorary best man.

This year I turned thirty-six, it was my sixth birthday without Alan. At the restaurant we had made a mistake, the reservation had been made for one too many. I had ended up sitting next to an empty chair.

Although I thought, I was doing better, no longer crying at family events. I now realize that I will not have an empty chair at my wedding, if I can ever bring myself to get married without Alan being there. The loss I feel will always be there but it's much worse seeing an empty chair

*Daniel Yoffee  
In Memory of my brother, Alan*

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

<b>Birth Date</b>	<b>Child's name</b>	<b>Parent's name(s)</b>	<b>Cause</b>
04/01	Jack Johnson	Thomas/Brigette Johnson	
04/02	Ryan Dewayne Thomas	Dwayne/Linda Thomas	Auto accident
04/05	Vincent Ronald Norwood	Helen C Griffin	Brain cancer
04/05	Doug Albritton	Mary Ellen Albritton	Auto accident
04/05	Christopher Scott Brandies	Martha T. Wiggins	Suicide
04/07	David Vantrease, Jr.	Leah Wheelless	Suicide
04/08	Houston Wells, Jr.	Mrs. Jean Wells	Gunshot wound
04/10	Daniel Merritt Fisher	Wiley/Wanda Fisher	Tractor Rollover
04/12	Mitch Dickens	Nancy/Bill Dickens	Automobile accident
04/12	Andrea Santana Brown	Pamela Brown	
04/13	Marjorie Mae Bowen	Gerald/Norma Jean Kimbel	Accidental drowning
04/13	Ronnie Strickland	Kaye Toney	Steven Johnson Syndrome
04/13	Ronnie Strickland	Daisy Strickland	Steven Johnson Syndrome
04/14	Jasen Nathaniel Rodgers	Shanna/Chuck Rodgers	Motorcycle Accident
04/15	Daniel “Dan” Yates	Harry Larue/Marilyn Yates	Homicide
04/16	Tyler Thompson	Wayne/Ramee Thompson	Leukemia
04/17	Christopher Guzman	Barbara Sanders	Accidental drug overdose
04/18	Christopher Bryan Burton	Elizabeth Burton	Suicide
04/19	Robert Anderson (Bob)Dugan	Robert/Betsy Dugan	Accidental Drugs
04/19	Colten M. Pigott	Patrick Pigott	Accidental
04/22	Michael Trey Upchurch	Ralph/Sheila Bradshaw	Auto accident
04/23	James Daniel Bruce	Knight/Patricia Bruce	Accidental gunshot
04/23	Matthew Carson Pounders	Dustin Kenneth Pounders	Auto accident
04/25	Ethan Boyd McKelvain	Shelby McKelvain	Birth defect
04/26	Kathy “Krystine” Harris	Ms. Kathy Whitehead	Homicide
04/30	Conner Lind	Jennifer Lind	Heart defect
04/30	Richard Thompson	Wayne/Ramee Thompson	Auto accident
04/30	Ryan Fisher Knight	Wiley/Wanda Fisher	Auto accident

### Ways I Know that Life Goes On

I know my life is moving forward because...

Today I moved the waterproof mascara  
to the back of my makeup drawer.

I didn't make any mistakes at work all day.

I slept all night through.

I remember her smile...and smile.

I drove home and didn't expect to see  
my little girl greeting me at the door.

I remembered where I left my car keys.

Someone asked me today if we were going to have  
another child, and I didn't get angry and  
change the subject.

The first holidays have passed, and I'm still here.

I haven't taken a pill to help me sleep in 12 days,

We've started talking about another baby.

The knife in my stomach eases up sometimes.

Morgan's baby brother is due in July;  
she's finally going to be a big sister!

It's June 23rd, the day after Morgan's  
second birthday; I guess I made it through.

Our little boy was born today, and I cried  
tears of joy not sadness.

He has his sister's little pudgy nose.

*Kimberly L. Rhodus*

*Bereaved Parent of Morgan Louise Hope Rhodus*

*June 22, 1996 to February 25, 1998*

**OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED**

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
04/01	Reed Hickman	Steve/Jan Lemmons	Suicide
04/01	Jack Johnson	Thomas/Brigette Johnson	
04/01	Eric McLaughlin	Ethel Duke	Automobile accident
04/03	Ross Allan Hailey	Ben/Charlotte Hailey	Suicide
04/03	Jarrold Gray	Sharon LaBatte Williams	Automobile accident
04/05	Mitch Dickens	Nancy/Bill Dickens	Automobile accident
04/05	Anthony Jerome Blair	Mary Ann Blair	Homicide
04/06	Walter A. Booker	Tom/Gretel Ekbaum	Hit &run/Easter Sunday
04/07	Michael Scott Eldridge	Debbie Eldridge	
04/07	Kristi Diaz	Julie Diaz	Cancer
04/09	Kevin Killebrew	Larry/Mary Killebrew	Car accident
04/09	Travis Casey Macoy	Mary Pierce	
04/12	Robert Anderson (Bob) Dugan	Robert/Betsy Dugan	Accidental Drugs
04/14	Christopher Bryan Burton	Elizabeth Burton	Suicide
04/14	Hunter Micheal Baker	Stephanie Baker	Accidental Electrocuton
04/15	Cristina (Cris) Mann	Peggy Phillips	Cancer
04/16	Andrew Thomas Stanley	Virginia Horton	Suicide
04/20	Emmanuel D. Ealy	Mary Horton	
04/21	Brendan Chase Roberts	Deborah Roberts	Auto accident
04/23	Amber Noelle Smith	Sandy Boteler	Homicide
04/23	Amber Smith	Lindsey Crutcher	
04/25	Katherine Graves Morgan	David Morgan	Auto fire (died with mom)
04/28	Nathan Myers	Gaye Myers	Suicide
04/28	Kathleen M. Peck	John/Pat Schnell	Cancer
04/30	Hunter (GC) Baker	Paulette Strayham	Accident

**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