



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



Newsletter

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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
FREDDY and SARA ABRAHAM in memory of JULIE JABOUR ABRAHAM (Heaven date
12/25)**

SECURITY SERVICE

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

CHILDRENS MEMORAIL

CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD

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 NEWS	TCF MEETINGS
<p>Some of you have asked where you can get picture buttons of your child that some of us wear to meetings. A member of our group is nice enough to make these for anyone who wants one. Please call or email Joan Wells McDaniel at: Phone: 601-825-7253 or email: mjwells9@bellsouth.net. Please put on subject line: Picture Button. Joan makes these free of charge and we appreciate her doing this so much.</p> <p>On behalf of our steering committee, I would like to wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous, safe, and Happy New Year. We sincerely hope your sweet memories of past holidays will help to bring you comfort and strength to face each new day with a new sense of purpose and fulfillment. We want to thank each of you for your investment of time and memories of your children that you continue to share with us. May each new day be a source of comfort as you continue to reach out to others. May each of us strive to push past the hurt, the grief, and the pain to give encouragement to each other. As we each gather in our own homes to celebrate or to cope with the holidays the best we can, may we remember that "We Need Not Walk Alone." Thanks to each of you for your continued commitment to TCF. We appreciate each of you and cherish your friendship so much. You have been our strength when we had none left. Thank you for offering a shoulder to lean on. Thank you for your listening and caring hearts. Thank each of you for being our Compassionate Friend.</p> <p>MERRY CHRISTMAS! <i>Faye McCord</i> <i>TCF/Jackson, MS</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;">From the Director</p> <p>We have heard it said a thousand times before "Time heals all Wounds." I don't know if that is true, but it is certainly not true when the wound is the death of a child. Especially during the family-oriented Holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Those wounds tend to resurface since our children are missing from these family get togethers. My hope is that those whom we love will remember to include our child in these gatherings, either by talking about our children or in some other way that will let us, as parents know, that our child is still a part of things even though not physically. So many times, as in my family, my child is not mentioned because my loved ones think that if he is talked about it will remind me that he is gone, and I will be sad. I will be sad, but I don't need to be reminded because there is not a day that goes by that I don't think of Kevin and remember him as a big part of my life. The best present that anyone can give me is to remember my child.</p> <p><i>Marcia Lefteroff, Director</i> <i>TCF/Jackson, MS</i></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/> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Meeting</u></p> <p>Meeting: Tuesday, December 11 - 7:00 p.m. Topic: Annual Charlie Brown Christmas Facilitator: David Morgan Please bring a special ornament to hang on our tree in memory of your child. This can be an ornament your child made, or one bought in memory of your child.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please Come!</p> <p>*****</p> <p><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> <p style="text-align: center;">-</p> <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> <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> <p>.....</p> <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. Cathy Files – 601-955-1057 Leslie Threadgill – 601-573-1458</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter folding: Saturday, December 15th @ 4:00 pm at the Church.</p>

First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas
without her being here.
Yet the world is singing round me,
joyful tidings and good cheer.

Though I try to put on armor
and brave the sights and sounds,
a few moments worth of shopping,
and the tears are spilling down.

I pray for strength to do it,
find a path through holidays,
look for shortcuts, good ideas,
some directions through the maze.

Then I find at last the answer:
I'll include her symbolically.
And the giving becomes perfect;
her love's flowing down, through me.

*Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Stars in the Deepest – After the Death of a Child*



Seasons

The change of seasons is difficult. It reminds me that I must change if I am to live again. We can become stuck in our grief, full of self-pity and overwhelmed with pain. I do not believe our children would want us to live the rest of our lives in pain and misery. It is so easy to fall into the "black pit" and never have the strength or courage to crawl out – because crawl out we must...on our bellies.

We are different now, with different priorities and goals. We must find a new purpose for going on, and we must accept the changes in our lives – including ourselves, for we are different now. We cannot go backward, though there are times we yearn to. We must go forward. If we don't, we stay stuck at the point our world changed. I used to say "ended."

Change is difficult. To accept the loss of our child is the most difficult of all. Our comfort comes from believing that the love we share will go on for all eternity and that we will be reunited again – and each day brings us closer. We must learn to live again, love again, feel joy and peace again – or our survival will be without value to ourselves or others.

*Renee Little
TCF, Fort Collins, CO*



JEROMES' BIRTHDAY MEMORIES

One night a beautiful baby boy was born at the University Medical Center. Little did I know this baby's death years later would become a nightmare for me. His death has been like a bad dream, wishing it could have only been a dream instead, unfortunately this is reality. His death has brought me a lot of pain and sorrow; therefore, grief will remain a constant part of my life. Things have never been the same.

Day by day I just get through it - never getting over it. My son was murdered, and his case has never been solved. I will say this "what right does another person have taking someone's life, they did not give it to him." The Lord did. I want to say "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" to Jerome, on November 20TH

I still make the cake in his memory, which I share with my other son and his family and I share it with Jerome's daughter and her children, who are Jerome's grandchildren.

I love you Jerome.
*Your mom,
Mary Ann Blair*



Winter Memories

The days are getting colder,
and the first snow's not too far off.

It used to be so pretty
gently falling from aloft.

But the snow won't be as pretty,
as it gathers on the ground,
'cause there'll be a snowman missing,
my son is not around.

The playing children's laughter,
used to be a special song,
but this year will be different,
without my son to sing along.

The song has lost its music,
and it'll be just another day,
as I gaze down from my window
and watch the children play.

But the snow will again be pretty,
in a far off distant time,
and we'll build snowmen together
and we'll never look behind.

For now, I'll remain with memories,
and the melting snow will fade,
but he builds snowmen to his heart's content,
because he now lives where snow is made.

*Jeremiah Sundown
TCF/Nashville, TN*

Heavenly Snow

I thought you might like to know
And I have it on good authority,
That in heaven there is snow.
God, Himself, ordered it to be.

Snow swept by gentle winds,
That drifts by the stirring,
Of gossamer angels' wings,
That sound like kittens purring.

Snow forever crystal clean,
Just waiting to be molded
By little angel hands unseen
By those whose arms they once enfolded.

Snow angels are a common sight
And snowmen of every size...
They're all there beyond the light,
Where nothing ever dies.

Where our angels play,
There is no pain or tears.
Only joy fills their days,
Only laughter fills their ears.

High above the azure skies
A glorious wonderland gleams.
This beautiful Heavenly spot...
Created to fulfill our angels' dreams.

*Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
In Memory of My Angels...
Michelle, Jerry & Danny
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A Season of Many Feelings

Fall is a season of many feelings
Autumn is here once again
As it comes every year.
And with the leaves
My falling tears.
This time of year
is the hardest of all
My heart is still breaking,
Once again it is fall.
Memories once so vivid
Are seeming to fade.
My time spent with you
Seems some other age.
This season reminds me
Of grief and of pain.
But yet teaches hope
And joy once again.
For trees are still living
Beneath their gray bark,
And you my sweet child
Are alive in my heart.

*Cinda Schake
TCF, Butler, PA*



Frost

On a cold winter's day,
Frost etches a beautiful artistry
On every thing it touches, every blade of grass
It glitters and sparkles, and for moments
Before the sun comes out and the master piece
evaporates before our eyes, we stand memorized
cherishing the wondrous sight.
Like frost, our children were only here for a brief
moment

But, while they were here
Whether it was moments in the womb
Days, months or many years
They etched their beautiful artistry of love
On our hearts and lives and all of those
They touched.

Unlike frost, what they etched is forever,
It is something that we can cherish and hold onto
always.

We stand here tonight lighting a candle to
remember children we will never forget.
Their light, their spirits, their artistry lives on and
like the flame of the candle gives warmth on a
cold winter's night

And light in the darkness
The love our children gave us still remains.
It keeps us warm when the cold winds of grief
blow.

It lights our way through the darkness and
loneliness
That we feel,
And it gives us hope!

*Julie Short
2007 Southeastern TCF
Candle Lighting Ceremony
In Memory of Kyra*

*A friend is one who knows you as you are...
Understands where you've been...
Accepts who you've become*

A Holiday To Do List

As a reflection back on the past 13 (Wow! has it really been that long?!) Christmases, I would like to share some ways that I have handled the holidays, as well as some additional thoughts. This time of the year is bittersweet for me now, as opposed to the first Christmas without my older brother, David. That was the worst.

At any rate, I can handle November and December much better now. I suppose I've learned a little along the way, and gained strength each year. Nonetheless, the anniversary of his death always gets to me. Unfortunately, it falls between Thanksgiving and Christmas on December 9th. Here's my list of suggestions for honoring a sibling whom you have lost, and on simply making it through yourself:

1. Hang that stocking. Go ahead. Put up your sibling's stocking. It isn't as though your brother or sister never existed and isn't still a part of your life.
2. Write a poem or letter to your sibling and put it in the stocking.
3. Put up a tree or continue with your holiday traditions. Yes, this is VERY difficult. But for most of our siblings, this was their favorite time of year. Celebrate how blessed you have been to have had your sister or brother for holidays past. Decorate the way THEY would have wanted to, instead of the way you would do it.
4. Create a "memory" box. This is simply a box of belongings from your sibling, or pictures of your sibling, etc. Wrap it in festive holiday paper and put it under your tree if you have one.
5. Buy a gift for your sibling. Maybe it is something they truly would have wanted for the holidays, maybe it's something the two of you would have enjoyed together or gotten a good laugh out of. This can be VERY therapeutic.
6. Go somewhere that your sibling would have wanted to go--the beach, a movie they would have liked, a favorite restaurant, wherever. "Share" this time with your sibling. This is also good on their birthday. Celebrate that they had a life and that they are a part of yours!
7. Bake a favorite holiday goody of your sibling's.
8. Get together with your family and cry (and LAUGH – it's OK to do this) at some great family memories from years past that involved your sibling. Share thoughts on great places you may have visited for the holidays, or anecdotes of you and your sibling trying to peek at what your gifts were ahead of time.
9. Put together a photo album of your sibling. This could be of your sibling's life in general, or of a specific subject, like the sport your sibling played, or holidays past.
10. Give your album to your parents. Cry (and LAUGH!) at the pictures and the memories they generate.

I hope that you are blessed this holiday season, and that my suggestions are helpful. Please know that the holidays get easier with time, and that you WILL make it through, even though it may seem impossible.

*Amy Baker Ferry
TCF Heart of Florida Chapter
In loving memory of my brother, David*

A Christmas "Moment"

December 20: The tree is up, even if there are no ornaments on it. Its small size fit snugly on top of a small table; tiny colored lights shining from its bare branches. My heart is not "up" for decorating – and, in fact, I will probably leave the tree with nothing but lights again this year. There's something soothing about sitting in a darkened room, the tree lights shining softly; music and memories blending in the quiet.

It's hard to lose a child . . . harder still to continue with the "normal" stuff of life; and Christmastime is certainly one of the hard times. I've always loved Christmas; the lights, the music, the sharing with loved ones. It's just that when one or more of those loved ones are out of reach, the holiday loses some of its charm.

So it is that I sit in my small living room, lights off, soft Christmas music playing, pondering the unanswerable. I take off my glasses, my nearsightedness diffusing the tree lights across the room into soft pools of color. Don't ask me why, but I close my left eye and looked at the tree. The lights keep some of their diffused definition. Then I close my right eye and look only with my left – the eye I call my "shingles eye," ever since my head and the shingles virus intersected three years ago, leaving my left eye plagued with irritation, requiring daily doses of some unpronounceable drops and a generally deteriorated eyesight.

As I look with that left eye that had given me so much grief, I am struck by what I see. Somehow, probably because of the poor vision, the tree lights diffuse differently than with the other eye, each one turning from a small pool of undefined light into an angel. An angel. It is as if my small tree is covered with tiny angels – red, blue, yellow, green – shining forth their special message of comfort and joy. It was comfort and joy, was it not, that the angels sang about on that Bethlehem hillside so many centuries ago?

Comfort and joy . . . a strange combination perhaps, but one I find just right for this Christmas season. Comfort for the losses that have occurred; joy for the containers filled with that comfort: the short notes from friends and loved ones, the memories that spread across my heart at the oddest moment, reminding me of so many good times with my daughter, and the knowledge that I do not walk alone: not today, not tomorrow, not ever. Comfort and joy. The message of the angels, brought to me once again all because of my "shingles eye." Who would have thought?

*Sally Cowell
TCF Salem Oregon Chapter*



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
12/01	Jason Walters	Brenda Crumbley	Auto accident
12/02	Jason Davis	Jackie Rutland	Cancer
12/03	Eric Hegwood	Janice Berlin	
12/05	Jason Keen	Cirie Keen	Auto accident
12/06	Susan Michelle Ware Canoy	Ted/Mary Joe Ware	Clot/Lung/pregnancy
12/08	Mike Fox, Jr.	Mr. Mike Fox, Sr.	Drugs
12/09	John David Gray-Lewis	Vic/Gerry Gray-Lewis	Still Birth
12/09	Germain Dawson	Barbara Dawson Willow	Natural causes
12/10	Scott Lee Kitchens	Bobbie Garrett	Suicide/Jumped MS
12/17	Parker Rodenbaugh	Rick/Cordie Rodenbaugh	Accidental overdose
12/18	Amber Noelle Smith	Sandy Boteler	Homocide
12/18	Amber Smith	Lindsey Crutcher	
12/21	Jeff Pritchett	Paul/Rita Pritchett	Auto accident
12/22	James Arnold (Arnie) Ball	Mr./Mrs. Raymond Ball	Heart Defect
12/23	Keith Richardson	Donna Dubosh	Suicide
12/27	Price Harper	Alicia Harper Ball	Seizures/handicapped

Candles in December

My sadness seems reflected in the music that I hear...
 Every young one’s glowing face reminds me you’re not here.
 Shoppers crowd the festive stores; emotions all run high
 This world I was a part of once, before that sad July.
 This season’s meant for happy times; for love, warm hearts, and cheer.
 But grieving families ‘round the world remember those not here.
 We struggle through the season, lighting candles to proclaim
 Our children aren’t forgotten, ‘round the world our candles flame.

I slowly pass through gates thrown wide one clear, cold Christmas Day.
 No toys or playthings do I bring - those gifts of yesterday.
 I carry with me just a polished heart of granite made
 And walk with grief to where she lies in a silent, silvered glade.

“Merry Christmas, love,” I whisper — the quiet words seem so forlorn.
 “I’ve brought my heart for you to keep, my gift this Christmas morn.
 It is filled with all my love, though this one’s carved of stone...
 I’ll place it here — it will be near — you’ll never be alone.”

We parents don’t forget, my love; this month we will unite
 To honor all we’ll light a wall of candles through the night.
 The world will know our memories glow with love that’s deep and true
 We’ll stand as one, and ‘fore it’s done the Heavens will know, too.

Please keep my gift, beloved child, close to where you lie,
 And know my love surrounds you ‘til the day I too shall die.
 On the tenth of December my candle’s flame will light
 I pray you’ll see the love we’ll free into the starry night.

Sally Migliaccio



OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
12/01	Robert Lee Hopper, Jr.	Robert/Bea Hopper	Cancer
12/01	Brantley Clark	Jeanette Browder	SIDS
12/04	Kevin Lefteroff	Marcia Lefteroff	Car wreck
12/05	Bryan Demond Hollins	Hattie Hollands	killed
12/06	Richard Thompson	Wayne/Ramee Thompson	Car accident
12/06	Terrance Contrell Stewart	Barbara Stewart	Sick
12/07	Keandra Jaree McMorris	Kornella S. McMorris	Suicide
12/09	John David Gray-Lewis	Vic/Gerry Gray-Lewis	Still Birth
12/10	Jackie Worman	Dave/Kathy Worman	Auto Accident
12/14	Larry Lefteroff	Corinne Hudson	Heart attack
12/18	Liam Leslie Galaty	Grace Newkirk	Suicide
12/18	Liam Leslie Galaty	Tanya Newkirk	Suicide
12/19	Debra Fortier	Earl/Trudy Dawson	Cardiac Arrest
12/20	Kim Corban	Mickey/Pauline Corban	Heart attack
12/25	Julie Jabour Abraham	Mr./Mrs. Freddy Abraham	Gangrene
12/26	Matthew James Eldridge	Debbie Eldridge	Traumatic asphyxiation
12/27	James Arnold (Arnie) Ball	Mr./Mrs. Raymond Ball	Heart defect
12/27	Wynn McAllister	Susan McAllister	Auto accident
12/27	Scott Lee Kitchens	Bobbie Garrett	Suicide/Jumped MS
12/27	James Arnold Ball	Mr./Mrs. Raymond Ball	Heart Defect
12/28	Tyler Thompson	Wayne/Ramee Thompson	Leukemia
12/28	Justin Lloyd Hartley	Ron/Terry Hartley	Cardiac arrest
12/31	Kurt McCurdy	Ms Christina McCurdy	Car 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