



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



Newsletter

Volume 39 No. 2 February 2018

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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**

LOVE GIFT

**PAULINE CORBAN in memory of KIM CORBAN (Heaven date 12/29)
TRUDY and EARL DAWSON in memory of DEBRA FORTIER (Heaven date 12/19)
DON and GAYE STANCEL in memory of MARK STANCEL (Birthday 02/22)
MARY and LARRY KILLERBREW in memory of KEVIN KILLERBREW (Birthday 01/16)
CHUCK and MARLISE in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD**

**NANCY McGHEE in memory of DEAN ALLEN McGHEE (Birthday 02/03) and in
memory of CHICK McGHEE**

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 style="text-align: center;">Meeting Notes for January</p> <p>There were ten persons present with one new parent. Marcia welcomed everyone and made announcements.</p> <p>Special days were read, and we had a general sharing about how we coped during the holidays without our children. It's sad to celebrate when you have lost a child, after so many years of sharing that time with them. The family photos you take now at Christmas are not the same and every other day. The small things you remember through the day that make you cry and long for your child.</p> <p>I thank everyone that came to the meeting and for sharing, and thank you for snacks you bring they're delicious.</p> <p><i>Virginia Horton, Treasurer TCF/Jackson, MS</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter folding: Saturday, February 24, 2018 at 4:00 pm</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">A Poem</p> <p>You can shed a tear that he is gone Or you can smile because he lived You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left.</p> <p>Your heart can be empty because you can't see him or you can be full of the love that you shared you can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.</p> <p>You can remember him and only that he is gone or you can cherish his memory and let it live on, you can cry and close your mind to be empty And turn your back or you can do what he would want Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.</p> <p>-- Unknown</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;">Monthly Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, February 13, 2018 @ 7:00 pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Topic: Valentines for Our Children</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We are asking for everyone to bring a picture of their child, and we will make valentines for them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Facilitator: Tina Taylor</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+++++</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:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jennifer at 601-206-5525</p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>MS SIDS ALLIANCE INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Monthly 1st Tuesday – 7:00 p.m.</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>River Oaks Hospital Lobby Classroom</u> <u>MS SIDS ALLIANCE offers education to the public and professionals on risk reduction of SIDS and bereavement support.</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cathy Files – 601-955-1057</u> <u>Leslie Threadgill – 601-573-1458</u></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>

How To Comfort a Friend Who Is Grieving

No one wants to watch a friend suffering with grief, that natural emotional response to loss. It's a painful emotion to observe in anyone but even more so when it's our friend.

No one wants to see a friend who is sad. It's instinctual to want to ease their pain and sorrow and offer them comfort. Sometimes, because we cannot change the fact that someone has died, we feel inadequate; we feel we can't be helpful. While it's true we cannot bring back the deceased person to our grieving friend, we can ease our friend's distress and comfort them. Here are my thoughts on how to go about it.

First, be empathic by opening yourself up to the other person's pain and staying present to them. By that I mean be aware of their body language, their tears and sighs, their words or even their lack of words.

Second, make an effort to visit your friend as soon as you can after hearing of his or her loss, particularly if the person who has died was a significant part of your friend's life. Also, when possible and appropriate, make a concerted effort to attend the service or memorial because your bereaved friend will always remember those who took the time to come.

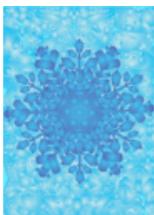
Third, remind your friend of some meaningful times you remember about their deceased loved one. For example, "Marilyn, your mom was so smart and funny. I remember when we were kids and how she dressed up during the holiday as Santa's elf. She always made people happy. I'm so sorry for your loss." Or, "Joe, your dad was the most patient man I ever knew. I remember his years of kindness and devotion to your mom after her stroke."

Fourth, take your friend's hand, touch them on the shoulder, hug them. Their body hurts now; it is aching with the absence of the lost person. Your compassionate touch will be merciful and comforting.

Fifth, tell them you will be there for them no matter how long they need to grieve. You see, the world wants us to hurry up and get on with things. This demand – whether from society or other people in your friend's life – doesn't work with the grieving process because loss, as love, is embedded deep in our souls and mourning cannot be rushed.

Sixth, send a note, card or email every few weeks telling your friend you are thinking about them.

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cont.

Seventh, remove from your speech this sentence: "I know how you feel." No one really knows how we feel even when the circumstances are similar; each person has his or her own unique experience of what losing that person means.

Eighth, comfort your friend with a few hopeful reminders that they, too, will be able to manage and survive this sad period. Comfort your friend by saying you will pray for them; that you grieve with them and that you are only a phone call, text or email away. That's what friends do for friends who are grieving. That's what friends are for.

*Mary Jane Hurley Brant, M.S., CGP - Grief Specialist
Psychotherapist Private Practice Newtown Square, PA
Founder Mothers Finding Meaning Again - Grief Support for Mothers*



Letting Go

Recently I received an award for volunteering in the community. I was honored to receive it. Some of the people in my life mentioned that it looked like I had "let go" of the pain of losing my child. "Let go?" Of course, they don't understand.

But when the award was mentioned at our monthly Compassionate Friends meeting, a bereaved mother made an interesting observation that touched my heart and reminded me why I need this special group to keep me centered and balanced.

"I remember that article you read to us last Mother's Day....the one your son wrote about how proud he was of you," she said. "Wouldn't it be great to put that article in our memory book with the newspaper article about your award? He was right about you. He was proud of you."

What a great idea! What a wonderful way to bring my son into my life even though he is no longer on this plane. That's what Compassionate Friends do.....they help to bring our children into our lives even though our children are no longer alive. For a few hours each month, our children return to us. We're proud parents who can share our children's stories and keep our children in our lives.....without explaining why we won't be "letting go."

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX*



Wounded Heart

*"Your broken heart requires at least as much care as a broken bone. With proper care you can be confident that you will heal. The same powerful forces that mend a broken bone will heal your emotional pain, but a wounded heart needs time and proper care to heal."
~Harold Bloomfield, MD~*

If someone fell and broke a leg, people would rush to their aid. They wouldn't stop to even think about it. Yet, when it's our hearts that are broken, few rush to our aid and even fewer understand. At first, we receive the cards and phone calls wishing us well and telling us "if there's anything I can do"...but they soon taper off to a trickle. Then we begin to hear that we must 'get on with our life,' 'we can't let it get us down,' and we're told just how soon we should be 'back to normal'... we're given a deadline of sorts. When we don't follow the acceptable standards for healing, we are thought to 'need help'...the professional kind... and we're told that we are 'in denial'. These same people, who seem to have all of the answers, not only have never experienced the loss of a child but also tend to not want to get too involved...too close to our pain. They would rather stand off to the side until we're back to our old selves...whatever that is! They're uncomfortable when we speak of why our hearts are broken and they don't mention it for fear of reminding us of how our hearts broke in the first place... as if we could ever forget. When they ask us, "How are you"...it's more a greeting than a question. They don't want to hear how we ache inside, how lonely and empty we feel, how desolate we feel. Why...because they can't fix it. They can't make us whole again. And unlike a broken bone that's healed, we will never be as good as new. We will forever be missing a part of what made us the person that we once were. When our child died, so did a part of our heart and where that piece was, now there is nothing...only a gaping hole that nothing and no one can ever fill. Unlike a broken bone, we will not mend in a few weeks...in fact, we will never fully mend. We learn to live without that piece of our hearts...to live with our loss, to survive...one day at a time!

*Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
In Loving Memory of My Angels...Michelle, Jerry & Danny
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SNOW

Every snowflake that falls is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each snowflake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again—even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder, each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike. Like the snowflake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always. At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time can never take away.

*Denise Falzon
TCF Lake Area, MI*

PICTURES FROM THE HEART

Since we have lost our children, part of what remains of them are pictures from the heart, which are those mental images we hold so dear. For some of us these pictures are memories of what had been, and for others these pictures are dreams of what might have been. And for some of us these pictures are a little of both. For us, dreams and memories are really the same. It is the dimension where our children now reside.

In a sense, dreams are nothing more than memories of the future, because we remember our children by the dreams we had for them; and memories are nothing more than dreams of the past, because to remember them is certainly to dream of them. I believe it is incorrect to think that someone will not hurt as much because they only had their child for a little while or to think that someone will not hurt as much because their child had the chance to grow up. In these dreams and memories, these pictures from the heart, all of our children are infants and all of our children have grown up. The sadness and pain comes from the broken heart, the memories and the dreams from the pieces that remain.

*Kenneth Hensley
TCF Nashville, TN*



Upon the Loss of His Daughter

She's dead—but in my grief
I forget,
and as though she were still alive,
I keep asking,
"Where's she gotten to!"

In this world
there are many kinds of longing,
but no longing to match
the longing for one's child.

Some, childless when they left,
return now with children—
and one who *had* a child
comes home in sorrow alone.

Born here, you never lived
to come home again—
it hurts to see
this little pine
that grows by my house.

*from the Tosa Diary
by Ki No Tsurayuki
935 A.D.*

CANDICE

When I look at my feet
 As I walk up the street
 I wish Candice could walk with me.
 When I meet a new face
 Or go to a new place,
 I wish Candice could be there then.
 I remember how she'd cheat
 When we played hide and go seek,
 Or she'd wrinkle up her nose
 And call me stupid.
 How she'd sing her favorite song
 But get some of the words wrong;
 It was too cute to make right
 So we didn't even try.
 So remember the fun we had
 And don't feel too sad
 Because Candice doesn't feel bad
 Right now in heaven.

Elizabeth Williams, Age 10

In Memory of my cousin, Candice Lingle

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

GRATITUDE.... THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

I am convinced that the real key to happiness is gratitude. I did not come upon this insight. I learned it from Dennis Prager, a wonderful and gifted man who is both author and talk show host for KNBC radio in Los Angeles. I give him all the credit. But I have thought a lot about this idea after my son, Mark, died five years ago tomorrow.

At first I was offended by people who smiled or even laughed during The Compassionate Friends meetings. These were the people who seemed to have somehow re-entered the land of the living. How dare they greet each other with hugs. How dare they laugh. How dare they appear normal when their children have died. But over the last seven years I have learned three valuable lessons:

- Life goes on and we must too. Gradually the pain eases and the warm memories replace the sadness. Gradually we return to life. One day we find that is 11:00 in the morning and we have not thought about our child yet. At first we feel guilt. But then we also realize we are going forward. We will never forget. But we decide that the loss of our child will not be the all-consuming factor in our life. We choose to enjoy friends again. We choose to go out to dinner again. We choose to laugh again. I am convinced that this is what our children would want for us. The pain does not bring our child back. It only makes us miserable without end.

- Become grateful for what we have, not focused on what we have lost. I see people in our chapter meetings who have gone through "every parent's nightmare" and want no part of life again. But, I ask that these compassionate friends also think about the ways they have been blessed, as well as hurt. In my experience, most people have more to be thankful for than they realize: health, other children, a loving family, a career they enjoy, financial security, life in a free country, a faith that works for them, a true best friend, a spouse who they love. Nobody has it all. But compared to most of the world, we have a lot.

- The life we now lead will be better than it would have been. That does not make our child's death a good thing. It just means that our child's life mattered, and it has changed us forever. It means that in some small way the world will be better because our child lived, and we are the ones who can make it so. We have a new sense of priorities. We don't "sweat the small stuff." We know what matters because we know what is irreplaceable. And we know how deeply other people hurt because we, too, have been there. We "know how they feel."

And when our life is different and better because our child lived, then that child is never forgotten. Each of us would do anything in the world to go back in time, but we can't. It is up to us now to go forward, and we can.

Richard Edler
TCF South Bay/LA, CA

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
02/03	Dean Allen McGhee	Chick/Nancy McGhee	Auto accident
02/07	Aaron Gerald Varner	Bill Varner	Cancer
02/09	Shelley Renee Baggett	Jo/ Meredith Baggett	Batten’s disease
02/09	Cory Zingery	Ken/Trisha Zingery	Viral Pneumonia
02/09	Sophia McGuffee	Emily Blake McGuffee	Premature
02/11	Cornelius L. Rice	Willie “Bill” Rice	
02/12	Julie Jabour Abraham	Mr./Mrs. Freddy Abraham	Gangrene
02/14	Michael Ellis Blount	Ellis/Lynda Blount	Leukemia
02/19	Andrew C. “Andy” Franklin	Mr./Mrs. Homer C. Franklin	Jeep accident
02/20	Michael Scott Eldridge	Debbie Eldridge	
02/20	Preston C. Lind	Marty Lind	Suicide
02/21	Kimberly Breanna Copelan	Stacy Coplan	Auto accident
02/21	Larry Lefteroff	Corrine Hudson	Heart Attack
02/23	John Horton, Jr.	Mary Horton	
02/25	Mark R. Stancel	Don/Gaye Stancel	Brain tumor
02/27	Joshua Chase Taylor	Tina Taylor	Suicide
02/28	Rebekah Kirubai Abraham	Ashley Elizabeth Abraham	Liver

A Box of Coins

My husband Bruce and my stepdaughter Jess drove to our son’s apartment to retrieve his things shortly after his death. They returned with clothing, bed linens, lots of CD’s, his backpack, and a computer desk that he and I assembled together at his new apartment. They brought back the computer, kitchen items, and a New Balance shoebox.

I recognized the box. We gave him shoes as a parting gift as he left for college that fall. His college expenses stressed our budget. I second guessed most purchases but not the shoes. He needed them. I wondered why he had kept the box.

It was filled with coins and a red cup. Jess said the cup had been on his desk. Apparently at day’s end our son Art emptied his pockets of loose change into the cup. Eventually Arthur poured the contents of the cup into the shoebox. The boy had a savings plan.

I saved the box of coins. I could not toss them into a change counter. He had touched each one. I stored the box under a bed that he had used as a youngster. After four years, I pulled out the box and spent a quiet evening counting coins. \$74.14. I wrote a note from Art to an anticipated nephew or niece that he would never met and slipped it in the box. “Use these coins for college.” From Art.

The box slid under the bed again. I would find the right place for those coins—maybe a charity, maybe the scholarship initiated in memory of Arthur. Not now.

Last month Jess called me with a funny story about her toddler son, my first grandchild. Jess and Brandon had taught their young son to drop coins into a big red piggybank. They were scrounging for coins because their son liked the game so much.

Perfect! Those shoebox coins just found a new home! That weekend I delivered the box of coins to them. The next time I babysat, I pulled a few coins from the shoebox and handed them to my grandson, one by one. Mason giggled as he touched each one and dropped it squarely into the piggybank. We both smiled at each other. The boy has a savings plan. Must be genetic!

I am grateful for the gift of time with my son’s possessions. TCF monthly meetings taught me to be patient with myself until I found my new balance. It took almost seven years. I gave away my son’s coins with no regrets.

*Monica Colberg
TCF Minneapolis, MN
In Memory of my son Art*

OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
02/01	Cynthia M. Broome	Paul/Ella Broome	Homicide
02/01	Nathan Allen Grice	Sandra Grice	Suicide
02/03	John Horton, Jr.	Mary Horton	
02/05	Justin Thomas Beard	Mary Pierce	
02/07	Cheyenne Elizabeth Greer	Samantha Yowell	Pneumonia
02/07	Dallas Davis	Kristi White	Suicide
02/07	Dallas Davis	Beth Savannah Davis	Suicide
02/08	Donovan Rashad Thomas	Sandra Moffett	Auto Accident
02/08	Gregory Stewart	Wendall/Lynn Stewart	Cancer
02/09	Keith Richardson	Donna Dubosh	Suicide
02/10	Shelley Renee Baggett	Jo/Meredith Baggett	Batten's disease
02/11	Sophia McGuffee	Emily/Blake McGuffee	Premature
02/14	Jason Keen	Cirie Keen	Auto accident
02/15	Ashley Curt Buchanan	Ed/Carolyn Buchanan	Suicide
02/16	Ronnie Strickland	Daisy Strickland	Steven Johnson
02/19	Kathy "Krystine" Harris	Ms Kathy Whitehead	Homicide
02/19	Lee Bailey Wigglesworth	Jerry/Cindy Wigglesworth	Drug Overdose
02/20	Stephen Michael Goode	Roy /Debbie Goode	Kidnapped /murdered
02/22	Matthew Greer	Dave/Charlotte Greer	
02/25	Krishna "Krissy" M. Prestwood	Chuck/Marlise Prestwood	Meningitis
02/25	Krishna "Krissy" M. Prestwood	Chuck Prestwood	Meningitis
02/29	Ronnie Strickland	Kaye Toney	Steven Johnson

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