



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



# Newsletter

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## Volume 40 No. 2 February 2019

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### POSTAGE

**PAUL BROOME** in memory of **CYNTHIA BROOME**  
**ED and CAROLYN BUCHANAN** in memory of **ASHLEY BUCHANAN**  
**JERRY and CINDY WIGGGLESWORTH** in memory of **LEE WIGGGLESWORTH**  
**MARY ELLEN ALBRITTON** in memory of **DOUGLAS NEIL ALBRITTON**

### CHILDRENS MEMORAIL

**SANDRA MOFETT** in memory of **DONVAN THOMAS (Heaven date 02/08)**  
**CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD** in memory of **KRISSY PRESTWOOD**

### LOVE GIFT

**LARRY and MARY KILLBREW** in memory of **KEVIN KILLBREW (Birthday 01/14)**  
**LYNDA F. GRAY** in memory of **PATTI LYN GARY**  
**DON and GAYE STANCEL** in memory of **MARK R. STANCEL (Birthday 02/25)**  
**RONALD and TERRY HARTLEY** in memory of **JUSTIN HARTLEY**  
**RONALD and TERRY HARTLEY** in memory of **AMANDA LEY-MCLAUHLINS**

**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>At our January meeting there were twenty-three present and two new parents. Marcia our chapter leader welcomed everyone and read the birthdays and heaven days for January. The topic for our meeting was just a general sharing time, which was helpful the new parents that are in the state of grieving that we have all gone through, the pain is so raw that you don't think you can go on, or how? New parents want to know how to make it? Many of our members shared their way to cope, each person has their own way. One parent said they journal, it's good to get all those thoughts and emotions out of your head and down on paper. Keeping a journal can help you gain control of your emotions. Some use bible verses for comfort, one I like is DEUTERONOMY 31:8 " It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."</p> <p>We have two ladies that have a sister that is their support system, I can see this as a life line for them. One family for Christmas in honor of their son feed a needy family in their home to honor him, how proud their child would be! One couple has tattoos with their child's name and his hand writing. Parents buy dog tag necklaces with their child's photo on them. (ONE SITE TO CHECK ON THIS IS PICTURES ON GOLD.) All the parents that have been coming to TCF meetings for 20 years and the ones that come often, they state " this group has saved their life " we all have the love for each other because we are living with the pain they feel.</p> <p>There is one book a parent recommends that she read after the loss of her son " HEALING AFTER LOSS. "</p> <p>DAILY MEDITATION WORKING THROUGH GRIEF by MARTHA WHITMORE HICKMAN.</p> <p># ONE EAR OUT is a important message to people that have ear plugs in their ears. COLTEN HALL son of Wayne and Lisa Hall age 20 was hit by a train and killed in Picayune, MS. Colten had his ear buds in both ears listening to music close to the railroad tracks and he could not hear the train that hit him. July 30, 2018. We live in a world of distractions. It's easier to be distracted now than any other time in history. If you can't hear your surroundings, you are deaf to what is happening around you. Our loved ones are being injured and killed from distracted headphone use way too often.</p> <p>Share this some you know who wears ear buds, while running, biking and walking outside.</p> <p>Thanks to all who came and shared, this helps everyone present. And thanks for the snacks you brought.</p> <p>Virginia Horton/Treasurer TCF/Jackson, MS</p> 	<p>2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> traffic light. Fondren parking lot is on the right.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Meeting: Tuesday, February 12 - 7:00 p.m. Topic: General Discussion Facilitator: Marcia Lefteroff 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;">*1<sup>st</sup> 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;"><b><u>For Children Grieving the Death of a Loved One</u></b></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;"><b><u>MS SIDS ALLIANCE INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monthly 1<sup>st</sup> 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;"><b>Newsletter folding: Saturday, February 23 @ 4:00 pm at the Church.</b></p>

**My Jumbled Thoughts**

Christmas was very hard this year. I know that it is harder when you are going through a hard time with a family member who can't seem to get it together. Anyhow, my favorite saying, and I truly do try to live by this is "It is what it is and that's usually never what I wish it could be". Our surviving children or grandchildren may be going through a heartbreak or a tough time in another way and of course that brings it all back home to us because we want so badly for them to be happy. I read recently that we are all responsible for our own happiness and I really used to believe that too before I lost my child and other things started going bad. I have found that I can't be truly happy if those that I love aren't. Again, I am trying to live with: "It is what it is."

My Daily Affirmation for today goes along with that.



*The View from Where You Are*

When it's hard to look forward and it's painful to look back, we need to find or at least search for a new perspective, a new focus. And that focus is in the moment. Right now.

Notice the weather (even those dreary rainy days that we are having now.) If they are depressing, cry and let your body release some of that grief.

Nurture your passions, if you can. Reading, journaling, whatever it is, think about it or plan when you will do it even if you can't manage to do it in the moment.

But, whatever you do, stay in the NOW. Try not to look back, and definitely don't What If or Why didn't I. Don't focus too far into the future. As we all know, life is fragile and changes in an instant.

My friend Virginia has the most positive attitude and I really try to live by it. Start right now, don't worry about what happened even a few minutes ago and start living life your life as you want it right now.

"And you would accept the seasons of your heart just as you have always accepted that season that passes over your fields and you would watch with serenity through the winters of your grief." - *Kahlil Gibran*

*Marcia Lefteroff, Director  
TCF/Jackson, MS*

**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  
In Memory of my son Mark Edler  
As published in We Need Not Walk Alone, 1999  
Anniversary Issue*

## Count on Grief

### Count on grief to increase vulnerability.

Human beings are most comfortable when they are in control of their lives and circumstances. Death, even when it's expected, represents the ultimate "change in plans." When a loved one dies, our former safety and security no longer seem to exist. Instead, we may experience feelings of helplessness and vulnerability that are frightening, as well as disarming. Yet it is precisely this vulnerability that can break down walls of resistance to new thought processes and open the way for new perspectives.

### Count on grief to create change.

Grieving is a walk through unknown territory. Familiar internal and external stabilities disappear in a whirlwind of changing thoughts, feelings, and emotional flux. We are reminded of our pain at odd times and in unexpected ways. Emotions hover near the surface and tears are hard to control. The stress of daily living taxes our protective defenses to the limit. Depression seems to slip in from nowhere, and anger erupts without warning. Because grief requires so much emotional energy, our finesse for social game-playing is greatly diminished. The bereaved meet the world at a disadvantage, continually surprising themselves and others with unpredictable responses to familiar situations.

### Count on grief to change social structure.

The bereaved find their social networks changing and transforming around them. Disappointment with family and friends is a common theme. Those we expected to "be there for us" may not be able to meet our needs, and friends we didn't know we had appeared "out of nowhere" to fill the void. As we come to terms with whatever limitations and expectations, we have for ourselves, we also become aware of the limitations of others. Not everyone we care about will receive what they need from us while we're grieving. Not everyone who cares about us will be able to fully share our pain.

### Count on grief to stress marital bonds.

Grief, like any other stress, complicates relationships. One grieving partner taxes a relationship—two grieving partners find their pain doubled. Because grieving is an unpredictable, moment-to-moment process, couples must be prepared to build flexibility into their union. Marriages are challenged when each expects too much from the other, and neither receives adequate support from social or extended family networks. Marriages are strengthened when each partner feels supported and is allowed individuality and freedom from expectations.

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### Count on grief to define priorities.

The bereaved often find themselves realigning their goals and objectives. For most of us, nothing is easily taken for granted after the death of a loved one. We understand that "now" is the only time there is, and that tomorrow may never come. Relationships are more precious than ever, and we are less comfortable with "unfinished business" relating to those we care about. Because the cares and concerns built into our busy lives pale in comparison to our loss, the emphasis on people versus things takes on far greater meaning.

### Count on grief to increase spiritual awareness.

The pain of grief prompts spiritual investigation into both the known and the unknown. Answers we were sure of before are not always satisfying in the context of our present reality. God is questioned and religion is held up for examination. Typically, there are many stages of distancing, moving toward, and moving within old and new spiritual concepts and beliefs. Our struggle for inner peace and unity seizes many priorities. In the majority of cases, our connection to ourselves and the universe becomes far more defined.

### Count on grief to strengthen compassion.

Grief tears down the boundaries between ourselves and others. Bereavement enhances our humanness and strengthens our ties to the world around us. Our loss is a life-changing event; we will never again be the people we were before. Pain somehow opens us to greater levels of awareness and a greater capacity for compassion and understanding. Bereavement provides the catalyst to become more giving, more loving, and more fully aware.

### Count on grief to define the past and open doors to the future.

For the bereaved, the world is completely new. The death of a loved one becomes a reference point around which we define where we've been and how we structure a path for tomorrow. Grief provides a "crash course" in some of the most profound lessons life has to offer. As bereaved individuals, we find ourselves with fewer answers but far more insights. In time, we learn there is no loss without gain and no sorrow without joy. As death closes doors behind us, new doors open before us.

*Joanetta Hendel*



# LOVE

## The First Meeting

I first heard of The Compassionate Friends at the Grief and Grieving Seminar at Sacramento City College in 1989. I sat in the auditorium in the very last row, in the very last seat, sobbing, hoping to muffle the sounds by holding a bandana to my mouth.

My only child, Joe, 21, was killed on December 6, 1988 in a truck/auto accident at 11:49 a.m. (from the police report). He was coming back to work from lunch. A rock truck made a sudden left turn and my son, my best friend, was dead. Two minutes, that's all it took to find myself crying in the dark at Sac City. I wasn't ready to reach out yet, but I took the brochures home.

A year and a half later, I thought I was ready. I arrived at the church on H Street. I sat in my car, asking myself what I was doing here. Talking about Joe's death was so painful, even with friends who loved me. How could I talk about to death to strangers? And why should I? I stood by my car for two minutes and took a deep breath. I walked to an open door and announced to a dance class I was here for The Compassionate Friends meeting. Four couples turned around, the music stopped and so did I.

I finally found the right door and walked in and introduced myself to the woman by the guest book. She said the meeting was beginning for the "new" members and showed me to the room. Darlene Johnson was there, talking about the cards we were to fill out, with our names, the name of our child and/or children who had died and when they died. I looked at the blank card and lines erased themselves with my tears. My hand shook and I felt the familiar anxiety attack symptoms and I glanced across the table and my eyes were met with another pair of tear-filled eyes. In that second-long time span, pain recognized pain and I felt kinship with him and my attack drifted away, not to claim me that night again.

I relaxed a little and listened to women and men communicating the loss and agony—and the fearful topsy-turvy roller coaster ride of emotions that battered us day and night. We shared our losses, if we chose to do so. When it was my turn, though, I said, "Pass." And it was fine—no questions, no pushing. And then we talked, cried, admitted to anger, confusion, outrage, sadness, depression and sobbing in public. I talked and I listened. I hugged and I let people give me a hug. The agony was real within us, but together we told it to step back a little that night. The meeting ending with our standing in a circle, holding each other's hands, a circle of courage, relief and strength.

I walked to my car and thought what a difference those four hours made. I found solace and relief. The Compassionate Friends meeting won't make the pain go away, but it is a place where you can honestly and truly believe when someone says, "I know how you feel." They mean it and their eyes prove it.

*Janice Lopez  
TCF Sacramento Valley Chapter, CA*

## 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*



## The Shadows of the Night

I sit alone in the shadows of the night.  
Looking up at the stars that shine so bright  
I think of you somewhere far up above  
I remember all the laughter, happiness, and love.  
The full moon shines bright in the sky  
Staring at the fall moon, I start to cry  
From the face of the moon above the tree  
I see your face staring back at me.  
Then it starts to rain and the sky turns gray  
I remember what happened two years ago in May  
It continued to rain the whole night through  
I think the rain meant that you were crying too.

*Lisa Johnson  
TCF, Baltimore, MD*



## The Dream

In my dream  
your small hands  
cradled my cheeks.  
You looked into my eyes  
and your sweet voice  
whispered the words I needed to hear.  
"Mommy loves me"  
you said.  
Mommy loves you  
More than words can ever convey.

*Maria Kubitz  
TCF, Contra Costa County, CA  
In Memory of Margareta Sol Kubitz*

**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.”

<b>Birth Date</b>	<b>Child's name</b>	<b>Parent's name(s)</b>	<b>Cause</b>
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	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	
02/21	Kimberly Breanna Copelan	Stacy Coplan	Auto accident
02/21	Larry Lefteroff	Corrine Hudson	Heart Attack
02/23	John Horton, Jr.	Mary Horton	
02/24	Brandi Denise Hill	Jo Bagley	Accidental overdose
02/25	Mark R. Stancel	Don/Gaye Stancel	Brain tumor
02/26	Frances Anne Fortner	Tom/ Laurilyn Fortner	Auto accident
02/27	Joshua Chase Taylor	Tina Taylor	Suicide
02/27	Zachery Powell	Jackie S. Stanford	Overdose
02/28	Rebekah Kirubai Abraham	Ashley Elizabeth Abraham	Liver
02/29	Alex Caraway	Jes Jerrett Carraway	Car accident

**Beyond Surviving: "Twenty-Five Commandments"**

Hundreds of books have been written about loss and grief. Few have addressed the aftermath of suicide for survivors. Here again, there are no answers; only suggestions from those who have lived through and beyond the event. I've compiled their thoughts.

1. Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
2. Struggle with "why" it happened until you no longer need to know "why," or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
3. Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but all your feelings are normal.
4. Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy – you are in mourning.
5. Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself.
6. You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
7. Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will have to act on these thoughts.
8. Remember to take one day at a time.
9. Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
10. Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
11. Give yourself time to heal.
12. Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
13. Expect setbacks. Don't panic if emotions return like a tidal wave. You may only be experiencing a remnant of grief; an unfinished piece.
14. Try to put off major decisions.
15. Give yourself permission to get professional help.
16. Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
17. Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
18. Set your own limits and learn to say no.
19. Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
20. Know that there are support groups that can be helpful, such as The Compassionate Friends, or Survivors of Suicide groups. If not, ask a professional to help start one.
21. Call on your personal faith to help you through.
22. It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, i.e., headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep, etc.
23. The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
24. Wear out your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go.
25. Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and go beyond just surviving.

*Iris Bolton, author of My Son, My Son*

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

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
02/01	Cynthia M. Broome	Paul 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/ Beth Savannah Davis	Suicide
02/08	Christopher Guzman	Barbara Sanders	Accidental drug overdose
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	Hunter McDaniel	Leianna Ishler	Accidental overdose
02/14	Jason Keen	Cirie Keen	Auto accident
02/15	Ashley Curt Buchanan	Ed/Carolyn Buchanan	Suicide
02/18	Brandi Denise Hill	Jo Bagley	Accidental
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	Keith Searcy	Brenda Knight/Dale Sims	Fall at home
02/23	Aaron Brown	Juanita Brown	Automobile accident
02/25	Krishna "Krissy" M. Prestwood	Chuck/Marlise Prestwood	Meningitis
02/29	Ronnie Strickland	Kaye Toney/Daisy Strickland	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