



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



Newsletter

Volume 42 No. 1 January 2021

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

Web Site: <http://www.tcfjacksonms.com>

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/groups/JacksonTCF

National Office: P.O. Box 3696; Oak Brook, IL 60522; 630-990-0010; 877-969-0010

Web Site: www.compassionatefriends.org

Editor: Paul A. Broome, paulabroome427@gmail.com

Chapter Board of Directors

Chapter Leader: Marcia Lefteroff 601-937-1940

Treasurer: Virginia Horton [601-500-1851](tel:601-500-1851)

Children's Memorial Maintenance: John Kessler

Newly Bereaved Support Coordinator: Carolyn Stewart

Chapter Web Master: Carolyn Stewart

Long-term Support Coordinator: Corinne Watts 601-992-0642

Librarian: Tina Taylor

Bereavement Secretaries: Carolyn Buchanan &
Jerry Wigglesworth

Infant Support Coordinator: Sid Champion 601-925-0242

Regional Coordinators: Faye & Rex McCord
lanesmemory1998@att.net

Steering Committee: Wiley & Wanda Fisher, Albert and Shelly Hinson, Greg Little, John & Julia McFarland, Sandra Moffett, Bob and Carolyn Stewart, Ken & Trisha Zingery (Vicksburg Contacts)

Professional Advisory Board: Bill Chancellor, Funeral Director; Chuck Prestwood, Founder Jackson Chapter; Rex & Faye McCord, Regional Coordinators

POSTAGE

PAUL BROOME in memory of CYNTHIA BROOME

ED and CAROLYN BUCHANAN in memory of ASHLEY BUCHANAN

REX and FAYE MCCORD in memory of LANE EDWARD MCCORD (birthday 01/26)

JERRY and CINDY WIGGLESWORTH in memory of LEE WIGGLESWORTH

LOVE GIFTS

GRETEL EKBAUM in "HONOR OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE KEPT THE CHAPTER MOVING FORWARD"

CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD

The Compassionate Friends THANK YOU for your donations
They are tax deductible and deeply appreciated.

TCF JACKSON CHAPTER NEWS



What is New about the New Year?

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hurrahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So, we give the New Year's Eve party a try.

But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

Dory Rooker
TCF Upper Valley, VT



TCF MEETINGS

2nd 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 2nd traffic light.
Fondren parking lot is on the right.

Meeting

Our meetings are still on hold, but we are hopeful that by spring or summer of this year, we will once again be able to meet together and share our thoughts with and feelings for each other. Until then, please take care and stay safe.



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

**1st 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 1st 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



Tom Spray
TCF Ventura, CA



HOLIDAY HOPE

I have now survived over a decade of Thanksgivings and Christmases since my daughter Nina's death in 1995. It feels surreal that it has been that long since my dark-haired angel has not been present to share her infectious enthusiasm for the holidays. Admittedly, if not for my journaling, I have little recollection of the first two. Writing allows me to see how far I have come since the bleakness of my soul those first early holidays. In the midst of a "grief storm", when I feel that I have taken one step forward and two steps back, I only need to read what I have written to see that I have made much progress, something that in early grief I did not believe was possible. When in such a dark abyss, it is almost impossible to imagine that there is even a glimmer of hope and light.

The first Thanksgiving is a blur. Whether we went out for dinner or spent it with family or nuked a frozen dinner, I haven't a clue. As no one else seems to remember, I would surmise that it was the same for everyone else as well. The first Christmas without Nina was spent trying desperately to make sure that nothing was going to change. The trees would be decorated, cards would be sent, gifts bought—I believed that my daughter would not want us to be sad and that the holiday should and would play out as usual. It almost worked. But the effort of trying to achieve such an impossible task took its toll; coming home from my parents' home Christmas Day evening, the sight from the rearview mirror of the empty spot in the back seat next to my son where Nina should have been playfully sparring with her brother, was too much to bear. I spent weeks recovering from such an exhausting charade.

I learned a lesson that first Christmas because the second Christmas "after" I gave into the emptiness and pain that I felt. The artificial tree sat forlornly unadorned right where it was assembled in the middle of the living room; it seemed to symbolize the somber mood of that second holiday season. I vocalized to my family and friends that year about what I could and could not do, would and would not do, I used what I called the "five-minute rule", which meant however I felt five minutes before a holiday happening would be the deciding factor whether I attended or not. The respect for my feelings they showed me that year was the best gift they could ever have given me.

However, Christmas #3 seemed to mark a turning point. The visible evidence involved my Christmas Village. Though an inexpensive Department 59 wannabe, it was loved by my children, especially Nina. From the time she was very young, she imaginatively played with the

I'm his mom and he's my angel...forever
Reprinted by permission of author

Cont. from Col 1

The first two Christmases, I made a decision to never put up our Christmas Village again. The memory of Nina's interactions with the Village was too painful to comprehend. However, that third Christmas, as I was unpacking the few holiday items that I would display, I came upon the boxes holding the Village. I slowly opened the containers of precious memories and one by one removed and unwrapped each piece. Visions of Christmas past raced through my mind. This year, the images of Nina's wide-eyed childlike wonder and excitement each time the Village came out of its yearlong resting place brought a genuine smile to my face.

I brought the Village upstairs and arranged it on the ledge of the bay window, where it always had been. I sat in the dark next to the lit village houses and watched the mechanical skaters on the make-believe pond twirl and glide on the mirrored "ice". Even through my tears, I felt the warm glow of beautiful one-of-a-kind memories resurface. I realized at that moment that a corner had been turned. Whereas the first two Christmases I was unable to setup the Christmas Village because of the memories, I was now setting it up for the same reason—the memories! But with a twist this year—what I had once perceived as a painful memory, with time had become a precious memory as I remembered the delight and joy the Village brought to Nina each Christmas of her life.

Each holiday season following the third one has been gentler. We have gradually brought back some of our old traditions intermingled with the new. Though we are sadly aware that someone so loved is missing from our family gatherings, the beauty of the season can now overshadow some of the sorrow. We will never forget Nina and she will forever be included in our holiday celebrations. I put up a special little tree to exclusively hold the ornaments I bought each of the 15 years of her life; mixed in with the angel and butterfly ornaments I have since bought symbolizing her "eternal life". We light a candle and set her picture beside it, and we speak freely of our memories of her. The TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting program our chapter has each year is an especially important time for us to step away from the hubbub of the season, to reflect, remember, and bring Nina's spirit with us into the holidays.

Though the holidays can never be as they were, we who are further along in our grief journey can offer the gift of hope with the knowledge that with time, patience, support and compassionate friendship, you will find new ways (when you are ready) to bring a measure of joy and light back into the holiday season again. Wishing you peace, hope, solace and understanding...

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy L. Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN

ceramic people for hours at a time. Even as a teenager, she wanted to know when I would be putting up the Village, as it was her favorite part of our holiday décor.

For the New Year

Where there is pain,
 Let there be softening
 Where there is bitterness,
 Let there be acceptance
 Where there is silence,
 Let there be communication
 Where there is loneliness,
 Let there be friendships
 Where there is despair,
 Let there be hope.

*Ruth Eiseman
 TCF Louisville, KY*

A Memory I Did Not Have

Many things have stepped off into half visibility
 Since my son was born, but images of his handsome
 Features, the smile that seemed always to be there
 Even In the midst of great pain and sorrow,
 The sound of his laughter that could brighten
 Any day, are not numbered among them.

After he died I insisted that everything be left just as
 He'd disarranged it...right down to the last conductor,
 Piece of duct tape, wire and connector. I move very
 Slowly within the spaces he left....if eternity should
 move
 Even half so slowly as this day, it would be endless
 enough
 To shadow and transform any mother's face.

Sometimes he visits me in my dreams but occasionally
 He returns to me in a fragrant memory that
 I did not actually have, but cherish all the same.
 There are times I hear his voice so clearly I cry, and
 other
 Times I see him standing tall and still, smiling but
 mute....
 One minute short of telling me who he really was.

*Sharon Peeples
 TCF Longmont, CO
 In Memory of Rodney Alan Peeples*

In Memory of my daughter, Nina



Some Days Are Like This

Some days are like this:
 Loss shows up and takes over.
 It snares and envelopes my soul
 A leaden net draping over me, heavy and
 relentless
 Every part of my body pulled down, every limb,
 every digit, every organ
 Dulled
 Slow to move
 Immobilized
 With heavy arms, and still body I feel the pull of
 loss
 Quietly I sit, not sure if I own it, or if it owns me
 My racing pace of circling thoughts winds down
 Gradually spinning slower and slower
 Time stretches out, almost to a stop.

Why is loss such an oppressor, squeezing breath
 and life away?
 Why does this oppressor possess me when I know
 only too well how precious life's spark is
 And how limited my time is to have it?
 Of course there are other days, too, when loss has
 melted away
 And the leaden net has lifted just magically, or so it
 seems
 On those days my feet walk lightly
 And laughter comes easily.

Today is Christmas
 So we gather with our loved ones, embracing each
 other
 Maybe warmly, maybe tentatively
 Yet each embrace is shadowed by who is missing
 And what has been lost
 And all that we miss.

The shadows never leave us
 Such loss cannot be outrun or outwitted
 It only can be held and felt, merged and
 submerged in a deep pool of wisdom
 And so we gather, we hold, we wonder, we ache.

Some days are like this.
*Charles Eadie
 TCF, Santa Cruz, CA
 In Memory of my son, Austin*



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
01/04	Casey Anne Gatewood	Larry/Fran Gatewood	Stillbirth
01/06	Jarrold Gray	Sharron LaBatte Williams	Auto accident
01/07	Bailey Claire Wilson	Hannah Clark	Auto accident
01/07	Robert Lee Hopper, Jr.	Robert/Bea Hopper	Cancer
01/08	Eleanor Koeppel	Chris/Sarah Koeppel	Congenital Heart
01/08	Robert Abide Malouf, Jr.	Lee Malouf	Accidental overdose
01/09	Andre’ Conway	Sigrid Conway	Suicide/Depression
01/13	Nelson Crump	Charlie/Julie Crump	Congenital heart failure
01/13	DeMarqus Dobson	Michael/Stephenia Dobson	Murdered
01/14	Kevin Killebrew	Larry/Mary Killebrew	Car accident
01/16	(Scotty) Scott Reese	Layla Reese	Overdose
01/17	James Neal May	J.H/Peggy May	Homicide
01/17	Carrie Lee Elliott	Dottie D. Elliott	Suicide
01/22	Michael Pham	Gerry Victor Gray-Lewis	Homicide
01/22	Michael Pham	Hal Linsey Pham	Homicide
01/24	Dalton Proctor	Michael/Tammy Proctor	Suicide
01/24	Frank “Will” Johnson	Shirley Johnson Sarris	Auto accident
01/25	Janet Susan Johnston	Aron/Barbara Johnston	Suicide/depression
01/26	Andrew Carroll	Tammy Smith	Heart attack
01/26	Lane McCord	Rex/Faye McCord	Accidental drowning
01/27	Stuart Clark	Clark Rai Smith	Suicide
01/31	Taylor Claire Guy	Shekinah Guy	Stillborn
01/31	Kimberly Ann Kessler	John Kessler	Murder

One Little Candle

I lit a candle tonight, in honor of you.
 Remembering your life, and all the times we'd been through.
 Such a small little light the candle made until
 I realized how much in darkness it lit the way.
 All of the tears I've cried in all my grief and pain.
 What a garden they grew, watered with human rain.
 I sometimes can't see beyond the moment, in hopeless despair.
 But then your memory sustains me, in heartaches repair.
 I can wait for the tomorrow, when my sorrows ease.
 Until then, I'll light this candle and let my memories run free.

*Sheila Simmons
 TCF Atlanta, GA*



OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
01/03	Robert Abide Malouf, Jr.	Lee Malouf	Accidental overdose
01/04	Casey Anne Gatewood	Larry/Fran Gatewood	Stillbirth
01/07	Melissa Lisa Pigg	Rick/Mary C. Pickens	Cancer
01/08	Rebekah Abraham	Ashley Elizabeth Abraham	Liver
01/10	Germain Dawson	Barbara Dawson Willow	Natural causes
01/14	Nelson Crump	Charlie/Julie Crump	Congenital heart
01/14	Eleanor Koepfel	Chris/ Sarah Koepfel	Congenital heart
01/14	Gussie Knox	Mary Ann Adams	Homocide
01/14	Tommy Levine	Karen Thomas	Auto accident
01/15	Sean Michael Thomas	Denise Douglas	Seizure
01/20	Clayton Marble	Frances Marble	Cancer
01/21	Cory Zingery	Ken/Trisha Zingery	Viral Pneumonia
01/26	Michael Trey Upchurch	Ralph/Sheila Bradshaw	Auto accident
01/29	Shannon Bennett	James/Anita Bennett	Cancer
01/29	Maura Anne Gray-Lewis	Vic/Gerry Gray-Lewis	Natural Causes
01/31	Taylor Claire Guy	Shekinah Guy	Stillborn

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

January 2021

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. Jackson, MS Chapter Newsletter

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