



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



Newsletter

Volume 40 No. 7 July 2019

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

JERRY and CINDY WIGGLESWORTH in memory of LEE WIGGLESWORTH

LOVE GIFT

BETTY WALKER in memory of JONATHAN J. WALKER (Birthday May 24th)

CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD

ED and CAROLYN BUCHANAN in memory of ASHLEY BUCHANAN (Birthday June 25th)

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

There were twenty-one persons present. Our chapter leader, Marcia Lefteroff, welcomed everyone and made announcements.

Our special days was read by Marcia and Virginia. The facilitator tonight was Shelly Hinson, Shelly and Albert lost their son Tyler, (T-Bug). Tyler was 14 years old. Shelly spoke on how she copes with her loss of Tyler. She stated that "she still has not read the suicide note that her son wrote." It's been four years since Tyler has been gone. Shelly and Albert said this is the year he would have graduated from high school.

All parents that have lost a child of any age think about the milestones their child would have experienced: marriage, children, and even grandchildren. Shelly did scrap booking for many years while her children were growing up. It has been difficult to look back on the photos after their loss. Now she scrapbooks again and journals to help her cope. Shelly read a story in a newsletter that suggests writing a letter to your child who is gone. This is good therapy.

Write what you think your child would say to you in this time of grieving. When you journal, write about the good and the bad your child did and might do, things you know they got in trouble for and things they would do now that would be trouble too.

Shelly thank you for sharing your story about your precious child Tyler, GONE TO SOON. But never forgotten.

Thanks to all that came tonight and for the delicious food you brought.



NO VACATION

There is no vacation from your absence.
Every morning I awake I am a bereaved parent.
Every noon I feel the hole in my heart.
Every evening my arms are empty.
My life is busy now, but not quite full.
My heart is mended, but not quite healed.
For the rest of my life
Every moment will be lived without you.
There is no vacation from your absence.

*Kathy Boyette
TCF, Gulf Coast, MS*

*~Tears are the silent language of grief~
Voltaire*

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

Meeting: Tuesday, July 9th - 7:00 p.m.
Topic: Group Questions
Facilitator: Marcia Lefteroff

Please Come!

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



**Newsletter folding: Saturday, July 27th
@ 4:00 pm at the Church.**



My Secret

Within days of my son's tragic death helicopter crash, it became my sad duty to remove his belongings from his apartment. In the numbing fog of shock and denial, I sifted through every drawer, cabinet, and closet. The wrenching decisions of what to with his clothes, his video tapes—even his toothbrush—made my head swim.

Although I gave away many of the things to his roommate, other friends and family, and to "Goodwill," I kept the "special" things for myself—school yearbooks, pictures, certain articles of clothing, and his collection of crazy T-shirts. I put this strange assortment of things in his footlocker, a remnant of his boarding school days.

What I didn't tell anyone was that I never laundered the T-shirts I found in the dirty clothes hamper. I just folded them and put them in the footlocker with my other memories. And from time to time during those first months of agonizing pain, I would sit on the floor, open the footlocker and sort through the treasured remnants of a life that had been such a large part of mine.

Then I would take the unwashed T-shirts and bury my face in them, inhaling the combined scents of his cologne, deodorant, and perspiration, mixed with the wetness of my tears. It made me feel, for just moment that he wasn't really so far away. "What a perverse thing to do!" I thought. I'm sure no one else would understand my doing such a thing—they would surely think I'd gone off the deep end. So I never told anyone about this strange behavior—and the odd comfort it gave to me.

Months later at a National Conference, I heard a speaker tell hundreds of bereaved parents assembled about a mother whose son had died suddenly and how she had refused to wash the soiled shirt he had been wearing, but found comfort in holding it close to her and smelling it. "My gosh," I thought, "maybe I'm not so crazy after all."

Since this experience I have discovered this is not as uncommon as I had once thought. The scents of a loved one are as much a part of them as the sound of a voice, the touch of a hand, or the tenderness of a kiss.

There is nothing "perverse" in wanting to cling to these precious memories. Memories are what remain after the death of our child and there is comfort to be found in them.

Carole Ragland
TCF Houston-West Chapter, TX

July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month
And she chose this month to die.
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was she
Having been and left her mark.
A glorious incandescent life,
A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.
The July birth, the July death of
my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
With love that never dies.

Sally Migliaccio
TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY

Uncharacteristic Behaviors

When Junior, the National Zoo's resident ape went on his escape travels a few months ago, the story was recorded in the local papers. This was probably because he came close to hopping over his barrier and into the laps of his human observers, many of them children. The press called this "uncharacteristic behavior" and, in a side note, added that his long time mate, Pency had recently died. Now you and I would put all of this into proper perspective and agree, "Of course!" And then we would reflect upon our own "uncharacteristic behaviors" following the death of our beloved (grand) child (ren).

Many times these behaviors confound and confuse those close to us. How far will we go beyond our barriers? And will we return and be "ourselves" again? I was amazed at emotions I had never felt so strongly before. I thought that anger would become a permanent part of my reactions and I welcomed any kind of release from it. Confronting it and dealing with it was difficult. Sadness settled upon me like a soggy fleece and I thought that I might never shrug it off! And the apathy with which I met each day was very concerning, indeed! Junior's escapade brought all of my own "uncharacteristic behaviors" up from the not so distant past. Amusing?...a little; but more than that I wanted to shout with the children who watched him that late summer day, and encourage him to run and run, shaking off the grief and sadness of losing his beloved Pency.

Lorie Hartsig
TCF St. Mary's County, MD



River Reflections

I just got back from a river rafting trip, where I found myself thinking about my brother a lot. He died 16 months ago of an overdose of morphine. I don't know why it happened; it happened. I didn't see the beginning of his life—he was three years older, but I saw the end. I can look at it now and see it in its entirety—his 33 years of living that I so much counted on and expected to last another 70 or 80 years. I thought I would always have him to talk to—about life, about family, and about ourselves. The river was a meditative place for me. The rhythm of the oars, the gentle motion of the raft, the shore gliding by, the gurgle of the water as it seeped into and back out of our raft—all of this provided just enough stimulation and was hypnotic enough that I didn't want to do anything but sit and think. For a few days on the river, I floated without any of my day-to-day concerns, without the usual level of tension standing behind me. What rose to the surface, visible in the clear water of my mind after the silt of all my worries sank to the bottom, were thoughts of my brother. Nat would have liked this trip. The rough beauty of the terrain and the quiet power of the water would not have been lost on him. He would have noticed the beauty of the full moon and the light on the canyon walls as the sun rose and set. I have felt a lot of anger at him for dying, for taking his own life, for engaging in an activity so dangerous, for playing Russian roulette, for committing suicide. He left no note, he didn't say good-bye; he left a wife and two sons whom he loved very much but who, like me, were not enough to keep him alive. It wasn't the anger, though, that I felt on the river. I just remembered him. Grief is at its sharpest when, after a death, he, all of a sudden, flashes into focus so real and so present that I can hear his voice as if he has just spoken to me. I can imagine the scent of his hair, remember the texture of his face as I touch it, and I can see him walking and talking as if he were only there a moment ago. At these times, the grief flares up; the wound feels fresh and sharp with memories of the love, the charm, and the grace. I realize both with gratitude and with anguish for the wound this reality carries, that he is not someone I can let go. These memories will come to me for the rest of my life. He is truly a part of me. He is mixed up in my blood and my bones and the electrical impulses of my brain. And in whatever way all of these things go together to form a soul, he is a part of that too. There is no escaping him. This is the gift and the price of love--it doesn't end.

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My brother was there in the river's sand and mud, in the full moon, the constantly flowing cold water, the clear dry air, the red canyon walls, and the blue sky. And he was there in me. And I was there, alive and more appreciative than I would have been before he died. I was more aware of my connection to my surroundings—that one day my body will be river mud, water, and bones like driftwood. What form my love will take then, I don't know. Maybe if there is a river and desert light offering delight to someone's senses, that will be enough. I don't know.

*Emily Moore
TCF Los Angeles, CA
In Memory of my brother, Nat*



YOUR COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

I can tell from that look, friend that you need to talk
So come, take my hand and let's go for a walk.
See, I'm not like the others, I won't shy away,
Because I want to hear what you've got to say.

Your child has died and you need to be heard
But they don't want to hear a single word.
They tell you your child's "with God" and "be
strong"...

They say all the "right" things that somehow sound
wrong.

They're just hurting for you and trying to say
They'd give anything to help take your pain away,
But they're struggling with feelings they don't
understand
So forgive them for not offering a helping hand.

I'll walk in your shoes for more than a mile...
I'll wait while you cry...and be glad if you smile.
I won't criticize you or judge you or scorn
I'll just stay and listen 'till your night turns to morn.

Yes, the journey is hard and unbearably long
And I know that you think that you're not quite that
strong
So just take my hand, 'cause I've got time to
spare...
And I know how it hurts friend...for I have been
there.

See, I owe a debt you can help me repay,
For not long ago, I was helped the same way
As I stumbled and fell, thru a world so unreal...
So believe when I say that I know how you feel.

I don't look for praise or financial gain,
And I'm sure not the kind who gets joy out of pain,
I'm just a strong shoulder who'll be here till the end
I'll be your Compassionate Friend

*Steve Channing
TCF Winnipeg
In Memory of my daughter, Kimberly Susanne
Channing 1973-1987*

Healing and Hope

For a long time after the death of a child, bereaved parents are convinced that healing will never occur, and that the loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, which control life so completely, will never change. This feeling is so strong that when others try to reassure the grieving one, the response is usually, "It's different with me! You don't understand!" This is the "normal" response to what is probably the most severe stress a human will ever face.

Fortunately, there are compassionate friends who once felt this same way who have learned that, out of this morass of loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, there finally arises a ray of hope. Though small and fleeting at first, this hope becomes the light which leads the wounded parents through the dark valley and into acceptance of their child's death. And this healing will occur even though there is still no understanding of "Why?"

It is by working through our guilt (both real and imagined), facing our anger including anger at God and even at the dead child, crying our way through our despair (with carefully chosen professional help if necessary), that the loneliness will lessen, and hope will be seen as surviving when it was thought gone forever. Each one must use one's spiritual beliefs in his or her own way to assist in this process.

Full recovery—in the sense that the effects of grief will finally disappear never to return—return not occur, although the term "recovery" is used. I prefer the term "healing," a process whereby our lives come to a new "normal." Healing implies (a) our accepting the unacceptable (the death of our child), and (b) our slowly learning to resume productive relationships with others. This is done all while we continue to love and miss the dead child.

Since we still love the children who have died, we will still experience grief, but it will no longer control our lives. Just as we cannot stop the flashbacks which occur so suddenly and unexpectedly during grief, neither can we prevent healing from occurring. We may slow the process by failing to do our grief work, but we cannot stop it!! One of the greatest hindrances to our healing is the fear that our dead children will be forgotten. We will not forget them, nor will they be forgotten by others, even though we may not realize it at the time! Perhaps the greatest obstacle to healing is the failure to forgive—ourselves, the dead child, others involved with the child's death, even God if we hold Him responsible. For only through forgiveness and forgiving are we truly able to handle our guilt and the anger that comes from the guilt we presume in others.

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Cont.

We enhance the healing process when we do our grief work, when we have gratitude for the time we had with our child, when we recall the happy times we experienced with our child (or during pregnancy, if that's all we had), and when we pick up the shattered pieces of our existence (as our child would want us to do), slowly resuming productive living.

No matter where you are in your journey toward healing, bolster the hope that arises within you. Your healing is probably the best memorial you may erect to your dead child!

*Robert Gloor
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL*



Emergence

There is no magic here
Pain in longing
Sorrow to the top
But wishes don't come true
Gone stays gone

Hope remains shattered
Shards at feet
Step lightly, small cuts in the soul
But onward walk
There is finality only

Then slowly
A butterfly emerging
Memories bring joy
And not just pain
Lives on in our heart

*Melissa Anne Schroeter
TCF Rockland County, NY
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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
07/03	Charles Randolph Weatherly	Ruth Ellen Germany	Homicide
07/07	Jimmy Shamburger	Vicki Shamburger	Suicide
07/08	Cynthia M. Broome	Paul A. Broome	Homicide
07/10	David T. Gentry (Brother)	Dr. Glenn/Betty Gentry	Stroke
07/13	Drew Browning	Carolyn/Larry Browning	Unknown
0713	Keith Searcy	Dale Sims	Fall at Home
0713	Keith Searcy	Brenda Knight	Fall at Home
07/14	Joseph Latham	Sam/Rita Latham	Cancer
07/16	Cheyenne-Elizabeth Greer	Samantha Yowell	Pneumonia
07/17	Sherri Lynn Smith	Odie/Patsy Smith	Thrown from truck
07/22	Brandon Bailey Bennett	James/Anita Bennett	Suicide
07/26	Stephen Todd Watts	Corinne Watts	Motorcycle accident
07/27	Jessica Leigh Ann Windmiller	Robert/Donna Windmiller	Automobile accident
07/29	Jason Douglas Beard	Mary Pierce	
07/29	Justin Thomas Beard	Mary Pierce	
07/30	Nathan Shane Moak	April Moak	Suicide
07/31	Brantley Clark	Jeanette Browder	SIDS

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I was reading an article about professionals working with bereaved parents and some interesting suggestions were:

Focus on being a companion on the journey. Unless the professional has lost a child they cannot truly understand the pain but they can be a friend who can acknowledge the parents' pain. In fact, in my opinion, the parents are the professional in this situation.

Reserve judgement and listen. A bereaved parent may express or question if their children have communicated with them in various ways, maybe through a visit from a redbird, butterfly, smell, sighting or whatever would have significance to them which signifies that a loved one is there.

Recognize each bereaved parent's right to grieve as he/she feels fit. Each parent's expression of pain is unique and determined in part by the relationship that they had with their children when they were alive.

Emphasize the importance of ongoing support. As we realize in Compassionate Friends no one can truly understand unless they have experienced the loss of a child/ren.

Avoid using solution-focused approaches. When we are dealing with the death of our child, our world is forever changed. Statements like "Things will get better", "You will be ok" undermines the pain that is being experienced and implies that there is a solution to that pain. Things may or may not get better, it is a personal journey.

Avoid using the term closure. There is no true closure when our child is no longer with us. We will always miss them physically and there will always be an empty spot in our heart and lives.

Understand that the grief journey is circular and not linear. The normal stages of grief do not apply when we are dealing with the death of our child. There is no timeline for everyone as to where we should be in our grief.

Remember that sadness is normal and is not the same as clinical depression. Sadness will always be with us, we will just learn to manage it as time goes on. For a lot of us, sadness is how we hold on to our children.

Forgetting is not a requirement for a bereaved parent. Let us talk about our children and process our ongoing adjustment.

*Marcia Lefteroff, Director
TCF/Jackson, MS*

OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
07/01	Jonathan Lazich	Gary/Cindy Lazich	Drowning
07/02	Gina Hawthorne Sumrall	Ed/Susie Hawthorne	Car accident
07/04	George "Eddie" Chapman, Jr.	George/Emma Chapman	Auto accident
07/06	Mike Fox, Jr.	Mr. Mike Fox, Sr.	Drugs
07/09	Lance Darryl Wroten	Bruce Wroten	Auto accident
07/10	Michael Ward	Melody Vaughn	Cancer
07/11	Albert Alan Ball, Jr.	Pamela K. Williams-Shelton	Suicide
07/13	Zy Keenan Rae	Lee Speed	Motorcycle accident
07/15	Stephen Todd Watts	Corinne Watts	Motorcycle accident
07/15	Herb Rothman	Marie Rothman (sibling)	Heart problem
07/15	Chad Aaron Pigg	Rick/Mary C. Pickens	Accidental gunshot
07/16	Matthew Omerza	Michelle/Eric Omerza	Suicide
07/21	Bryan "Keith" Barr	Deborah Barr Holden	Cardiac arrest
07/23	Dillon Ross Fredrick	Debbie Burkes	Auto accident
07/23	Jason Eubanks	Barbara Eubanks	asthma
07/24	Audie Tyson	Bob/Carolyn Stewart	Suicide
07/26	Michael Medlock	Rosemary Medlock	Cancer
07/27	Tyler Lind	Jennifer Lind	Auto Accident
07/29	Lucius Andrew Tyson, III	Judy S. Tyson	Heart condition
07/30	Colton Wayne Hall	Lisa Dewayne Hall	Hit by train
07/30	Destiny McDonald	Pamela Hall	
07/30	Morgan Aaron Rodgers	Dennis/Darline Rodgers	Accidental shooting
07/31	Angela Nicole Smith	Brenda/Bobby Smith	Auto 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