



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



Newsletter

Volume 39 No. 6 June 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

CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD

LOVE GIFT

TRUDY and EARL DAWSON in memory of DEBRA FORTIER

SECURITY SERVICES

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

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>Meeting note May 08, 2018 There were twenty persons present and three new parents.</p> <p>Our director, Marcia Lefteroff, welcomed everyone and made announcements. Special days were read by Tina and Sue. Faye McCord announced that the children's memorial will be moved to a site on the grounds of Fondren Presbyterian Church where our meetings are held each month, the memorial is a beautiful water fountain.</p> <p>The facilitator was Faye McCord, the subject: Mother's Day. Faye read a poem she had written many years ago about a child having a talk from heaven with his mother. It was very special. Several mothers shared cards they had received over the years from their child, such sweet and special memories. A great way to remember special thoughts and dreams of your child is to keep a journal. It's something you can look back on over the years.</p> <p>Most of all celebrate the life of your child. They are always in our thoughts. Thanks to all who came to the meeting and shared with us, it means so much to us and especially to new parents who are so desperate to know how to handle their grief and pain.</p> <p>Thank you for bringing refreshments. They were delicious.</p> <p><i>Virginia Horton, treasurer TCF Jackson, MS</i></p> <div data-bbox="357 1330 535 1491" style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Thoughts from Marcia</p> <p>Please remember all fathers who have lost children during the month of June. This is a very difficult month for them with the celebration of Father's Day with children physically missing from their lives. We know they miss their children very much.</p> <p>We would like to give a special thanks to those who give donations in memory of their child. We appreciate them very much and please continue to donate as you can.</p> <p>Newsletter folding is Saturday, June 23rd @ 4:00 pm at the Church. We need to have a quarterly Steering Committee Meeting so we are asking that those that can to come at 3:30 pm so this can be done before newsletter folding.</p> <p>We are also asking for those who would like to, to send articles, poems, thoughts, etc. to Paul to go in our monthly newsletter but reminding everyone that Paul, as our editor, has the option to omit those that do not follow TCF guidelines.</p> <p><i>Marcia Lefteroff, Director TCF/Jackson, MS</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2nd Tuesdays monthly at 7:00 p.m. Fondren Presbyterian Church – Fellowship Hall 3220 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">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;">Meeting: June 12, 2018 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Shelly Hinson will be facilitating this meeting. Her topic is unknown at this time. Please Come!)</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;"><u><i>Prenatal Bereavement Support Group</i></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> <hr/> <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> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">THANK YOU FROM CHUCK PRESTWOOD</p> <p>"I was overwhelmed when I got the card from my TCF family with all their signatures. You can't imagine how well it made me feel. I am recovering fast with no pain, gaining strength every day. Thank you all so much! God is good and I'm blessed beyond measure. Thank you again for your thoughtfulness."</p> <p>(Chuck had 4 heart procedures in 5 days, 2 ablations, 1 catheterization and a triple bypass surgery. He is now totally dependent on his pacemaker which was just a support prior to all this. PLEASE CONTINUE TO REMEMBER HIM IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS.)</p> <p><i>Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS</i></p>

Sometimes...

“Sometimes, I still don’t believe it,”
 My husband said to me.
 We had gone to bed, said our goodnights
 And were resting comfortably.
 My reply was short and to the point.
 I simply said, “I know,”
 Though it’s been eight years since you have died
 Chip, we miss you so.
 The memories of our life with you
 Are treasures that we share.
 For nineteen years we loved you well
 While you were in our care.
 So once again we said goodnight.
 But before this we did pray.
 This was a very poignant night.
 This night was Father’s Day.

*Nancy McKeaney
 TCF North Penn Chapter, PA
 In Memory of my son, Chip*



When Fathers Weep at Graves

I see them weep
 the fathers at the stones

 taking off the brave armor
 forced to wear in the work place

 clearing away the debris
 with gentle fingers

 inhaling the sorrow
 diminished by anguish

 their hearts desiring
 what they cannot have--

 to walk hand in hand
 with children no longer held--

 to all the fathers who leave a part
 of their hearts at the stones

 may breezes underneath trees of time
 ease their pain

 as they receive healing tears
 ...the gift the children give.

*Alice J. Wisler
 For David, in memory of our son Daniel*



Danny

Danny, our only child, passed away at the age of twelve. His death was unexpected, and the pain almost unbearable. Our pastor told us that yellow is the color of life. What then could be more fitting than yellow roses? To ensure these symbols of life for years to come, I bought a rose bush for my wife. After all, she was still Danny’s mom and needed more than ever to be reminded of that. I planted the bush on Mother’s Day. On the day before Father’s Day, the roses bloomed - three of them, to be exact. They were arranged in size order, just as our family had been in life. When I bought the bush, there was no way to know that there were to be only three roses. I have no doubt this was a sign from Danny. He wanted us to know that he still lives, and that there are still three roses.

*John W. Carlsen
 In memory of Danny
 Reprinted from Bereavement Magazine,
 5125 N. Union Blvd., Ste. 4
 Colorado Springs, Colorado 89018*



Father’s Love

Father weighed us once a month
 And totaled up the pounds
 Then he weighed the dog and cat
 (As silly as that sounds)
 He then included their weight, too,
 And with pride and joy he’d say,
 “Hmm. Yes. I do believe
 Here’s what we have today”
 There’s thirty-five and forty-eight
 And Jim weighs eighty-nine,
 Spot and Puss weigh twenty-four
 And all these pounds are mine!”
 Father loved us not by age
 Nor virtues that he found
 He gathered all his children in
 And loved us by the pound.

*Dee L. McCollum
 TCF Atlanta, GA
 1st Prize Light Verse Award
 North Carolina Poetry Society*

DO REAL MEN ATTEND TCF MEETINGS?

It has often bothered me that more men and persons of cultural minorities don't attend TCF meetings. I know there are societal and cultural restraints which inhibit many bereaved persons from seeking outside help or support. Being both a man and a member of an ethnic group, I know very well the false pride which often restrains us from admitting we are not as self-sufficient as we want others to believe. We are taught (men in particular) at a young age not to reveal when we are hurt. We must be strong and brave and silent.

Stoic endurance is really not unique in any culture. The British call it "keeping a stiff upper lip." The Japanese call it *gaman*. Hispanics pride themselves on their ability to *aguantar*. In the U.S. it is embodied in the Puritan ethic.

When I began attending TCF meetings regularly, I wondered for a long time whether I was a "real man." Was I less macho than my peers? Couldn't I handle my grief in solitary dignity? The answers, I finally decided, were yes, no, and maybe. Maybe I could have adjusted to my son's death all by myself. Maybe I could have shunned the possibilities of self-destructive behavior, drunkenness, drug abuse, wild living, or the unraveling of my family life without TCF. Maybe I could have dealt alone with all the anger, despair, and depression. Fortunately, I didn't have to.

I readily admit I wasn't very enthusiastic about going to my first TCF meeting. I imagined a group of people sitting around crying on each other's shoulders, bemoaning their cruel fate. Instead, I found people who were hurting as much as I; who, like me, were angry, who also often felt depressed—but who were working very hard to mend the tattered fabric of their lives! I soon discovered that this was a place where I could talk about my grief and still feel safe about it. Nobody was going to think me less of a man for not getting over my son's death in a few months.

TCF doesn't promise or offer any quick fixes. There are no magic words or formulas to take away your grief. Whatever "magic" takes place, I know now, happens slowly. I don't believe it is possible for a bereaved parent to "forget," but I think TCF's support and understanding help make it easier for us to go on with our lives. We need not become lifelong emotional cripples.

To all of you hurting people who have never attended a TCF meeting, I urge you to give it a try. Attend two or three meetings and see if some of the "magic" doesn't rub off on you. What have you got to lose? You can't hurt any worse than you already have. TCF is for any and all bereaved parents—men and women, minorities and gringos, people of any or no religious faith. The one thing everyone at TCF has in common is the death of a child—and how it feels.

Steve Perez
TCF Denver, CO



This Mixed-up Grief

Have you ever noticed the many mixed-up, confusing emotions involved in grieving?

On the one hand, you feel restless; on the other hand, you feel like you don't want to move at all. You feel desperately alone, yet you don't want anyone around. You feel scatterbrained, forgetful, and yet frantically meticulous. You feel like crying at nothing, and sometimes laughing at anything. (Or do I have that backwards?) Being in a crowd of people is fine as long as they don't talk to you. And yet, if they don't talk to you, you feel as if nobody cares. You want so desperately for someone to mention your child, to remember the life that once was. And yet it can make you furious if ALL they want to talk about is the dead one, and never even mention the living ones.

Grief settles over you like a hot blanket. You're as cold as the winter snow. Grief presses on you like a steamroller. You're floating in a bubble above yourself. Grief boxes you in on four sides and introduces you to a pain no one should have to know.

But then, once again, you begin to feel compassion. You relate to other parents who have had an experience similar to your own. And eventually, with a light as sharp as a sunburst, you hear yourself saying your child's name with an unfamiliar smile on your face. You remember some of the funny times and feel laughter building in your throat. One morning you notice the sun is shining. Many days, months, and possibly years have passed unnoticed ... and somehow, you are still here. Even though your child is still ... there. You feel your heart swell with a love you never even knew could exist. And you find a place in your life for something called (dare I say) peace.

And then, ever so gently, the memories enfold you in a warmth as soothing as a cool shower on a hot summer day, so you find you WANT to remember. And tender memories of Love lift you to unreachable heights, to the brightest of stars, to the loveliest touch of your child.

Dana Gensler
TCF Louisville, KY



Barbara Bush

I'm sure many of you are aware of the passing of Barbara Bush in April of this year. But what some may not know is that the former first lady was also a grieving parent. She lost her first daughter, Robin Bush, who died at the age of three in 1953, from Leukemia.

Gerry Gray-Lewis provides us with a link (see below) that reflects a heart-warming message that we of the TCF family can surely understand.

<https://www.gocomics.com/marshallramsey/2018/04/18>



This House and I

I think this house and I shall grow old together and fall down around one another.

How can I paint the walls when his breath has coated them?

How can I wash the door frames when the smudges of his fingerprints surely are still there?

How can I patch the hole I kicked in the wall in the weeks after he died?

How can I clean the carpets that still hold billions of his skin cells, his DNA?

How can I throw out the old, broken chair that he sat and slept in?

How can I clear the air that sometimes still carries his scent?

How can I ever fix the broken hearts of his mother, his sisters and I?

How long must I wait?

*Jack McPeck
TCF of Spokane, WA
In Memory of my son Zachary Ian McPeck*



I Felt I Was Healed

I felt I was healed, felt I was ok
Ten years had passed to make me this way.
Worked with others who were feeling the pain
So tears and the heartache would soon go away.
I make the newsletter and work on the slides
That we watch as we remember the better times.
But life has a way of throwing a curve
That rocks to the core and shatters the nerves.
My brother has died and though he was ill
A hole has re-opened once again I must fill.
I know all the steps that take me through grief
Of the traps to watch out for, oh what a relief.
Though same it is different, the hurt is still there
I miss my little brother and wish he were here.

*Stew Levett
TCF Pikes Peak Chapter*



To My Husband

Your tears flow within your heart,
Mine flow down my cheeks.
Your anger lies with thoughts and movements.
Mine gallops forward for all to see.
Your despair shows in your now dull eyes.
Mine shows in line after written line.
You grieve over the death of your son,
I grieve over the death of my baby.
But we're still the same, still one,
Only we grieve at different times,
Over different memories,
and at different lengths.
Yet we both realize the death of our child.

*Pam Burden
TCF, Augusta, GA*

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
06/01	Carrick Johnson	Thomas/Brigette Johnson	
06/02	Angela Nicole Smith	Brenda/Bobby Smith	Auto accident
06/03	Christina (Cris) Mann	Peggy Phillips	Cancer
06/05	Ted Jensen	David/Marilyn Jensen	Septicemia
06/11	Kathleen M. Peck	John/Pat Schnell	Cancer
06/11	Bryan “Keith” Barr	Deborah Barr Holden	Cardiac arrest
06/13	Russell “Rusty” Wilkins	Jimmy/Barbara Wilkins	Heart Disease
06/13	Ebony Jones	Mary West	Died in sleep
06/14	Robert (Bob) Hester	Bill/Cherlyn Hester	Suicide
06/15	Baby Johnson	Marquita W. Johnson	Miscarriage
06/20	Christopher Idowu	Micheline Idowu	Stillborn
06/20	Christopher Emmanuel Idowu	Phyllis Stringer	Stillborn
06/22	Kristi Kay Brandon	Gary/Wanda Brandon	Auto accident
06/22	Tommy Levine	Karen L. Thomas	Auto accident
06/23	Tyler Allen (T-Bug) Hinson	Albert/Shelly Hinson	Suicide
06/24	Gina Hawthorne Sumrall	Ed/Susie Hawthorne	Car accident
06/24	Maxine Elizabeth Melichar	Scott/Emily Melichar	Stillborn
06/25	Ashley Curt Buchanan	Ed/Carolyn Buchanan	Suicide
06/26	Morgan Aaron Rodgers	Dennis/Darline Rodgers	Accidental shooting
06/28	Timothy Lance “Tim” Rooker	Sylvia Little	Hit on motorcycle
06/30	Benjamin Quin (Ben) Greer	Wiley/Beth Greer	Auto accident

A FATHER RETURNS TO WORK

After Kathy died, I, of course, went back to work. Some of my co-workers made the stop at my desk to express their sympathy. I know I turned them off, as my pain and my denial were so great. I could not talk about what had happened and how I felt. I thanked them. Although nobody ever talked to me about it, that was okay as my pain was such, I thought, I could not bear to talk. I threw myself into my work and on occasion was confused because I could not make the kind of decisions I had been making for years. I never made the connection that this inability to concentrate was part of my grief and was normal.

Lunch was the worst time. My habit was to eat with my associates, but often in the middle of the meal I would just have to get up and walk away. Although nobody ever said anything to me about this odd behavior, I do thank them at least for their tolerance. Slowly I readjusted (I thought) and in time (a long time) I was able to perform well again. But I never really grieved until I found THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS and it was here that people helped me to talk. It was almost twelve years before I found TCF as there was no such organization in 1967. My friends, let TCF help you...don't wait twelve years to talk!

*Bill Ermatinger
TCF Baltimore, MD
In Memory of my daughter Kathy Ermatinger*



OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
06/04	William Armstead Tate	Eleanor Tate Crowell	
06/05	Jennifer Shelby Clark	Bette Clark	Auto accident
06/07	Britton Grant	Alma Lewis	Accidental overdose
06/10	Corenelius L. Rice	Willie "Bill" Rice	
06/12	Eric Hegwood	Janice Berlin	
06/15	Baby Johnson	Marquita W. Johnson	Miscarriage
06/17	Matthew Carson Pounders	Dustin Kenneth Pounders	Auto accident
06/18	Matthew Brandies	Martha T. Wiggins	Suicide
06/19	Andrew C. "Andy" Franklin	Mr./Mrs. Homer C. Franklin	Jeep accident
06/20	Christopher Emmanuel Idowu	Phyllis Stringer	Stillborn
06/20	Christopher Idowu	Micheline Idowu	Stillborn
06/21	John Robert "Robby" Barnette	Donna Barnette	Motorcycle accident
06/21	David T. (Brother) Gentry	Dr. Glen/Betty Gentry	Stroke
06/22	Stewart Tanner	Paul/Samantha King	
06/23	Sandy Moak	Jake/Frances Moak	Hypertension
06/23	Michael Alan McNally	Ann/Robert McNally	Suicide
06/24	Maxine Elizabeth Melichar	Scott/Emily Melichar	Stillborn
06/27	Michael Ellis Blount	Ellis/Lynda Blount	Leukemia
06/28	Jasen Nathaniel Rodgers	Shanna Chuck Rodgers	Motorcycle 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