



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



Newsletter

Volume 39 No. 5 May 2018

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

CHUCK and MARLISA PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD

SECURITY SERVICE

WILEY and BETH GREER in memory of BENJAMIN 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

The April meeting there were 25 persons present. Our chapter leader, Marcia Lefteroff, welcomed everyone. The special days were read by Albert and Shelly Hinson.

Our facilitator was David Morgan, the topic "Dreams" about our children. David's daughter, age 20 months, along with his wife, died in 1985 in an auto accident. David said he has had a dream about his daughter, but she was about age five in the dream, he knew it was her (Katie).

Many agree that we are living a nightmare that you never wake up from, the death of your child! There are some parents that have no dreams about their child but many do and some have felt the presence and spirit of their children. One parent says her son would wash clothes at night, and he would use the dryer, and now at night she can still hear the sound of the dryer.

I have dreamed of my son Andrew, the first time in my dream, he was standing next to my bed, and he said I am okay mom. I cherish the dreams I have about him as do all the parents that have had dreams. I hope each parent has dreams about their child and feel their spirit with them, because we know they are in our hearts and minds every day.

Thanks to all who came to the meeting and shared their thoughts and love for their child. Your presence means so much.

Thanks to everyone for bringing the delicious snacks.

TCF/Jackson, MS
Virginia Horton, Treasurer



Since May 13 is Mother's Day, we would like to remember all of the mothers who cannot physically hold their child but oh, how that child will always be with us in our hearts, in our memories, and in the unending love that we have for all of our children. Through Compassionate Friends we have learned about the children of others through their loved ones and have come to love them as if we had known them also.



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.

TCF Meeting

Meeting: Tuesday, May 8, 2018 - 7:00 p.m.
Topic: TCF Guidelines.
Facilitator: Faye McCord
Our guest speaker will be Reverend Malcolm Pinion,
Pastor of Briar Hill Baptist Church in Florence,
Mississippi

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.

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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

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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

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**Our scheduled date for Newsletter Folding is:
Saturday, May 26, 2018.**



Recognize the Journey

If we want to heal from grief, we must go through it, we cannot go around it. The grieving process is a healing process. We cannot look at healing as a goal we can only attain at the end of the process. Each step we take is a part of our healing.

"Grief is a process that is better thought of as a journey," observes Dr. Tim Clinton. "It's just one foot in front of the other. It may seem that others have grieved very quickly, but those who have come through the process too fast have undone business in their lives."

Take a moment to try and identify where you are in your grief journey. If you have admitted you are grieving, then your journey has begun.



TAKING THE GOOD WITH THE BAD

Spring has always been my favorite time of the year: I love the budding trees, the chirping of the birds, the warm sunshine, the spring flowers, and the fresh green grass. Then there is also Easter. It has been something I look forward to every year. It just seems like after a bitter cold winter, everything comes alive again with the arrival of spring.

Yes, it was a time for me to be happy again, until my youngest son, Jerome Blair, had to have his life taken April 1996. It was Easter weekend that year, his body was found on Easter Sunday.

But now 25 years later, I have to take the good with the bad, I still look forward to spring, although it is sad at the same time. Grieving over my son is something I have to deal with every spring. I'll never get over it. Just getting through it. Jerome budded my earth that spring of 1996, but he also blossomed in heaven.

Having just memories to cherish with him being gone, is what makes spring time now sad. That is what I call "Taking the Good with the Bad."

*Written in loving memory of JEROME BLAIR
by his mother, Mary Ann Blair*



IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning we hurt so bad
 We can't think straight.
 Our days and nights run together,
 As we cry out for relief
 From the pain that has
 Seemed to swallow us whole.
 That pain now accompanies us everywhere.
 There is no place to hide.
 It has taken over our life.
 It knows our name.
 It knows where we live.
 It knows that our loved one has died
 And so do we
 Sort of but not really.
 We are still looking for them
 To walk in the door,
 To say our name,
 To reach over and give us a hug.
 With every day that passes
 Our longing for them grows.
 We do not want to believe that
 They died and are not coming back.
 That reality chases us relentlessly,
 Until one day their empty chair
 Speaks louder than our denial,
 And the wall begins to break
 Where we have hidden our heart.

*Deb Kosmer
TCF, Portland, OR*



A Mother's Love

A mother's love for her child may begin
 with the very dream of becoming a mother...
 A mother's love for her child may begin
 with the thought of maybe expecting the news...
 A mother's love for her child may begin
 with the verification of her expectations...
 A mother's love for her child may begin
 with the affirmation that the child lives within her...
 A mother's love for her child may begin
 with her first sight of the new life that
 she has delivered into the world...
 A mother's love for her child may begin...
 But it may never end...
 Not even death can steal away a mother's love for her
 child
 A mother's love for her child knows no end!

*Diana M. Rohrbaugh
TCF Anne Arundel County, MD*

A Simple Thing

“You don’t know how much I miss having someone to throw the football with...” Isn’t it odd how the simple things we say to one another can trigger deep, deep sadness, how our whole world can seem to come to a complete stop, when we have lost someone very important to our lives? Or is it? Actually it is a natural response. It has been six and one-half years since our son died, and we have spent that time studying and actively working through our grief. We knew instinctively from the beginning that we must face it squarely. We discussed that day he died how we must deal as best we could with each problem, each emotion, when they arose, no matter how strange it may be or how difficult.

Right away we purchased all the books we could find on grief. Our desire to learn about these strange feelings we were having was strong, our appetites insatiable. And we have come far in these years and in our dedication to know what was happening to us and why. We have only recently discussed that we felt that we are no longer actively grieving for our son. We feel we have recovered from grief. Intellectually we know there will be periods of sadness sparked by memories. Our studies have taught us this. We feel we can not only deal with this but welcome it as a reminder of him and his value to us. For his death represents so much more than merely a person leaving our lives. The shock waves of loss will probably go on forever when we have moments of need of him. Perhaps the simple things caused us to miss him the most—like preparing for homecoming at our university and having no one to toss a football with...

I often think of throwing the ball away—it often needs air even though it it’s only handled occasionally by my husband—but I know it would be a fruitless act because there are so many other reminders—musical instruments lying mute, the brown fedora collecting dust. We have learned to laugh again. To participate in life again. But today, oh today! How sad I felt. How quickly the tears came when my husband said, so sincerely, so quietly, you don’t know how much I miss having someone to throw the football around with...” I felt my heart break again.

Tomorrow we will teach the dog to catch a Frisbee, but it will never be the same. It won’t ever be the same again.

*Fay Harden
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL*



I Never Believed...

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on...that it can still have meaning...that even joy can touch your life once more.

*Don Hackett
TCF Hingham, MA*



WHY ME? - The Unanswerable Question

Most of us have pondered this question at some time in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grievers found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

*Polly Moore
TCF Nashville, TN*

You were on my mind . . .

When I woke up this morning...
You were on my mind. You were on my mind.

You with that genuine enthusiasm,
like a kid with his first bicycle.

You with the curiosity and excitement
that dads love to be there for.

There's so much of you still with me.
Still with us!

It's not fair that we feel cheated or
that we won't share your ways anymore.

But in reality, after all the tears and
inner feelings of pain and sadness pass

We will have joy and great happiness because
we shared your days. Your laughter. You.

And when I wake up each morning
It will be OK that you were on my mind...
You are on my mind.

That's a special place for you to be, because it will
be forever.

*Michael Tyler
TCF Lighthouse Chapter, Lewes, DE*



Shuddering

In Roger Rosenblatt's *Kayak Morning: Reflections on Love, Grief and Small Boats*, he writes, "Ginny tells me that I sigh a lot. I was not aware of it. I don't know what it means." Dennis Apple noticed the sighs of his wife. His book *Life after the Death of My Son* describes it this way: "from the other side of the bed, I would hear a sad sigh, like a weary mountain climber picking up her heavy backpack and preparing to climb Mount Everest after a sleepless night."

I don't sigh. I shudder. I looked it up. It means "to tremble with a sudden convulsive movement, as from horror, fear, or cold." Yes, that's it. I glimpse a photograph out of the corner of my eye, or notice the circle of tall holly trees in the front yard that my son used to call his "fort," or I'm attacked by an intrusive thought of the circumstances of his death. And I shudder. It's as though my body is trying to shake off the reality. It just can't be; it just can't be. My body is railing against this awful truth, this unspeakable still somehow new truth. My son is gone. I shudder to think of it.

*Peggi Johnson
TCF Arlington, VA*

A Visitor

Yesterday, an out of town acquaintance stopped by. We could easily be friends, if days were longer and our lives not so complicated. After small talk pleasantries, he grew silent and pensive. I knew then this was more than a social call. It was apparent his pain was deep, and he was struggling to start what would be a difficult conversation. He looked up from his lap, and he told me I was the first person he has talked to about this because he knew I would understand.

He spoke of his daughter who had recently attempted suicide, the details of which are unimportant here. His eyes welled up, and he unsuccessfully fought their overflowing. His lip trembled, and as I handed him a tissue, he asked me what he did wrong. He asked me how he could have missed his daughter's significant suffering. It is so apparent he loves his daughter unconditionally and supports her emotionally, academically, and socially. And yet, he feels as though he somehow let her down, causing her to take this drastic step.

As I looked at him through my own tears, I saw myself eleven months ago. In his voice, I heard my own asking those same questions. And just as I was told by so many, "It is not your fault," I know those words sounded hollow when I spoke them to him.

We carefully choose our children's school districts, teachers, classes, and extracurricular activities, to develop our children into caring, successful, intelligent beings. We monitor their media intake and their friendships. We provide quality family time to be sure we stay connected. We have those important and difficult conversations to help prepare them for adulthood. And yet, even if we do everything as "right" as we possibly can, something we can't yet understand happens in some of our children, leading them into a spiraling darkness, unable to ask even those who love them the most for help. And so many do such a good job of hiding their symptoms, we are unaware of their pain while sitting right beside it.

Through tears, my visitor asked me what happens next. The most painful part of the conversation was explaining his journey will likely be harder than mine, because Tom was successful on his first attempt, so my journey with my son is over. But his daughter survived her attempt, so his journey is just beginning. Just as he cannot imagine my pain, I cannot imagine his.

*Kimberly Starr
TCF Facebook Loss to Suicide Group
In Memory of my son Tom*

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
05/01	Jackie Worman McMullan	Dave/Kathy Worman	Auto Accident
05/03	Krishna “Krissey” M. Prestwood	Chuck/Marlise Prestwood	Meningitis
05/05	Shawn Marquis Smith	Lanissa A. (L.A.) Byrd	Vehicle Accident
05/09	Jason Eubanks	Barbara Eubanks	Asthma
05/10	Audie Tyson	Bob/Carolyn Stewart	Suicide
05/13	Drew Little	Greg Little	Enlarged heart
05/15	Amanda Hartley-McLauhlin	Ron/Terry Hartley	Drug Interaction
05/18	Joseph “Daniel” Medina	Patrick/Kris Medina	Suicide
05/19	Dallas Davis	Beth/Savannah Davis	Suicide
05/19	Dallas Davis	Kristi White	Suicide
05/20	Dylan Mane Johnson	Jade/Jake Johnson	Unknown
05/22	Jason Lee Moore	Emmit /Glenda Moore, Jr.	Drunk driver
05/23	Charles Tyler Lind	Marty Lind	Auto Accident
05/23	Mathew James Eldridge	Debbie Eldridge	Traumatic Asphyxia tic
05/25	Gussie Knox	Mary Ann Adams	Murder
05/28	Ethan Lee Davis	Jim/Shelia Davis	Suicide

A Word About Closure

I don’t use the word “closure” anymore. For years I thought it was a good way to express what happens tous at various times during our grief journey. I would often tell about the importance of viewing the loved one by saying viewing gives reality and closure.

I live in Oklahoma City. The general feeling here was that the survivors of the bombing would find closure when the trial was over. The ending of the trial was supposed to be some kind of magical day that would bring relief to the pain. The survivors walked out of the courtroom saying, “Don’t mention the word closure to us. This does not close anything.”

Closure conjures up the idea of healing or moving past. It sounds like some magic moment that happens and the grieving is over. A moment that closes the door to a bad time in our lives and we do not have to think about it anymore. I no longer think there are any magic moments in grief. Grief is a process—a long slow process. There are events that are memorable, but they don’t take the pain away. There are times of healing, but the process must still go on.

Closure also sounds like getting well. We do not “get well.” A chunk has been bitten out of our hearts and it is not going to grow back. We do not get well. We move toward turning the corner in the way we cope. We live again, but we live again because we learn to cope with the chunk of our hearts that is gone.

We don’t have closure. We have times of growing reality. Reality does not come all at once. We must gradually come to grips with our loss. We go through a time of “real but not real.” We know it has happened, but we still think it is a dream and we will soon awaken. Reality develops gradually through many experiences.

It grows in those times when we face a little bit more of our loss, and reality becomes more vivid. Viewing a loved one, the funeral, the first visit to the cemetery, cleaning out the closets, cleaning out the room, all of these are steps toward reality and toward coping.

They are not some final step. They are not the closing of a door nor opening of a new door. They are just tiny steps toward deciding to live again and learning to cope

Doug Manning
Author of “Please Don’t Take my Grief Away”

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We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.

OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
05/01	James Neal May	J.H./Peggy May	Homicide
05/01	Colten M. Pigott	Patrick Pigott	Accidental
05/05	Preston C. Lind	Marty Lind	Suicide
05/06	Eric Dean Dungan	Gerald/Carolyn Dungan	Auto Accident
05/12	Shawn Marquis Smith	Lanissa A. (L.A.) Byrd	Auto Accident
05/13	John Charles Russel IV	Jack Russel	Drug Overdose
05/23	Jessica Rainey	Sandra Grice	Suicide
05/23	Robert (Bob) Hester	Bill/Cherlyn Hester	Suicide
05/28	Billy Jack May Jr.	Jack/Helen May	Heart Attack
05/29	Dylan Mane Johnson	Jade/Jake Johnson	Unknown

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