



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



Newsletter

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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 Leteroff 601-937-1940

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

Children's Memorial Maintenance: John Kessler

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

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POSTAGE

**PAUL BROOME in memory of CYNTHIA BROOME
ED and CAROLYN BUCHANAN in memory of ASHELY BUCHANAN
JERRY and CINDY WIGGLESWORTH in memory of LEE WIGGLESWORTH
JACK and JERMAINE LECHLER in memory of JAY HELMUTH LECHLER**

CHILDRENS MEMORIAL

CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD

LOVE GIFT

**DAISY STRICKLAND and KAY TONEY in memory of RONNIE STRICKLAND (Birthday 04/13)
GRETEL EKBAUM in memory of WALTER BOOKER**

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>April 9, 2019 meeting. It was Marcia's birthday and we sang happy birthday to her. Marcia welcomed everyone and made announcements. There were 23 persons present. The facilitator was David Morgan and the topic was "Some help for coping with the grief process." David lost his daughter and wife in a car accident over 30 years ago, his daughter's name is Katie, wife Lucy. David started coming to TCF meeting a year after their loss. David said the years pass but it's not painless! David gave the group a sheet of paper with a list of ways that may help coping with grief, what helps one parent may not help another parent. David said coming to TCF meetings have been a great help for him. Second help is God, prayer and church. Journaling another, and one on the list is eating a healthy diet. Try anything else that you think will help, as long as it doesn't harm you or someone else. Most of all Go easy on yourself and remember that you are not going Crazy! David shared a book: GOD KNOWS YOU'RE GRIEVING by Joan Guntzelman. The book has at least twelve different statements like this one by John Chrysoston</p> <p>HE WHOM WE LOVE AND LOSE IS NO LONGER WHERE HE WAS BEFORE. HE IS NOW WHEREVER WE ARE.</p> <p>This book is in our library and is available to check out, Tina Taylor is our librarian. As i know each parent carries their child in their heart and mind each day. My son Andrew has been in heaven for seven years this month and I miss him and think of him every day. Thank you, David. Your time to share with us is always special. David also shares at Christmas with a discussion called A Charlie Brown Christmas, and we all look forward to this time. It's in December. Thanks to everyone that came and thank you for the food you brought.</p> <p>Virginia Horton TCF/Treasurer</p> <p>Picture Buttons</p> <p>Some of you have asked about the picture buttons you have seen some of us wear. For information on how you can get a picture button of your child made, call Joan Wells-McDaniel at 601-825-7253. If you do not reach her, you may leave her a message, or you may email her at: mjwells9@bellsouth.net.</p> <p>Children's Memorial Update</p> <p>We are looking forward to soon being able to have the foundation poured for our Children's Memorial statue/fountain to be moved & installed on the premises of Fondren Presbyterian Church. We have received a landscape plan and workers are busy having a tree cut to make room for our statue/fountain. Hopefully by the time for the June newsletter, plans will be well underway. Please remember, we are still taking donations for the moving & installation of our Children's Memorial. All donations are tax deductible and deeply appreciated!</p> <p>Faye McCord</p>	<p>2nd 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 2nd traffic light. Fondren parking lot is on the right.</p> <hr/> <p>Meeting</p> <p>Meeting: Tuesday, May 14, 2019 - 7:00 p.m. Topic: To Be Announced Facilitator: Greg Little</p> <p>Not sure what Greg's meeting will be, but we know something for sure, it won't be dull. He always has very informative meetings but puts some fun in them also. We never know what to expect from Greg.</p> <p>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>-</p> <p><u>Prenatal Bereavement Support Group</u></p> <p>*1st Wednesday/ Noon UMC Cong. Ctr. Jackson Medical Mall For more information, call Kelly Hinson @ 601-815-7096</p> <p><i>*If the meeting date falls on a holiday—the following Wednesday</i></p> <p><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: Jennifer at 601-206-5525</p> <p>.....</p> <p><u>MS SIDS ALLIANCE INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP</u></p> <p>Monthly 1st Tuesday – 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>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>  <p>Newsletter folding—Saturday, May 25th @ 4:00 pm at the Church.</p>

Thoughts about Mother's Day

As I think about Mother's Day this year, I become very nostalgic. Every spring during my elementary school days, I looked forward to the day the order form for our plants for Mother's Day came from our local florist. I always ordered pansies for my mom, the ones with purple and yellow or yellow and brown. I could hardly wait for the delivery day to come, so that I could present them to my mother. She always received them with much surprise and appreciation, as if it were a gift she had never received before or even expected.

As a child, Mother's Day was an important occasion to my family. My dad always insisted we wear the traditional carnations: white if one's mother was deceased, red if still living. He would make a special trip to the florist to purchase them. We would attend church, and then drive to a nearby city for lunch.

I remember clearly my first Mother's Day being "the mom." Our Anna was only about three weeks old, so I had a very limited idea of what it really meant to be "the mom." But I do remember being treated like a queen and enjoying every minute of it.

Over the next several years as we raised our two daughters, my husband continued to affirm the women of our family. On Mother's Day he always bought roses for each of his girls. Anna would get a yellow one. Debbie would get a peach-colored one. The red roses were for me. When the girls were young I would receive and treasure their hand-made cards. As they grew into young adults, their choices in purchased cards were just as significant. Every year as Mother's Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories... That was before...

Then the unthinkable happened. Our daughter, Anna, died. How could those special days of love and togetherness, laughter and fun become among the most dreaded days a mother must face? How could those days that we had once anticipated with joy and excitement bring such unbelievable heartache and confusion, loneliness and tears?

During those first few years we were simply lost. This was new, undesired, and certainly not requested, territory that we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away or stay in bed with the sheets over my head. The traditions we had come to love and enjoy became intensely painful. It became an impossible task to attend church services or go out for brunch. Seeing families enjoying their togetherness pierced my heart with an endless ache. My tear-filled eyes burned at the thought of being surrounded by "intact" families. Feelings of anger and resentment overwhelmed my heart. On the inside I wanted to lash out at all those mothers and fathers who were surrounded by all of their children and those sisters and brothers who had no clue what it

Continued next column

would be like to lose a sibling. As the day drew to a close, I felt tremendous relief that it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

The feelings that I have shared are not uncommon in the early years of grief with those who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling. If you or someone you care about has experienced the death of a child, I offer some suggestions from those who have been there to help you do to make it through this time.

- Realize this day is full of potential for a multitude of feelings to sneak up on you and catch you by surprise.
- Especially during those early years, do whatever works for you. This may be a time of being in "survival mode." Trying to please everyone else can cause undue stress.
- If you have surviving children who want to honor you, communicate your feelings to them. Let them know that while you are grieving the death of their brother or sister, you still love them.
- Try to keep things simple and uncomplicated.
- Visit the cemetery.
- You may choose to pretend the day just does not exist and do something completely unrelated to Mother's Day. Clean the house, take a nap, get out of town. One of my Compassionate Friends spends Mother's Day at Home Depot. No one bothers her there or mentions Mother's Day.
- Have a good cry. If you have trouble crying, just stop by a card shop and read a card or two. Maybe even buy the card that you believe your child would give you.
- Go to the recycle bin and break glass into the proper receptacle.
- Know that the days before the holiday may be worse than the actual day.

As with all holidays, be reassured that what you do this year does not have to be what you do next year. As my Compassionate Friends and I have found, with proper grief work over time, the intensity of our feelings has softened. This will happen for you, as well. In the meantime, be gentle with yourself. And remember, "you need not walk alone."

*Paula Funk
TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, MI
In loving memory of my daughter, Anna*



CHERISHING THE MEMORIES

Hanging on to the memories is at first almost too much to bear but at the same time we hang onto them, even the painful ones, because that means we are hanging onto our children. The pain is too intense, the absence of our loved ones too large. But we hang on to them because if we don't then that means (at least in our fragile, broken hearts) that we are going to have to let our loved ones go. Wallow in them for however long you need to, even if that is years or a lifetime. These memories will be so valuable to us, like precious gems. Take our memories out, enjoy them, not just on the anniversaries and birthdays, even every day if that is what we need or want to do. Our heart is large enough to carry our memories.

What is there to do when people die—people so dear and rare -- bring them back by remembering.
-- May Sarton

*Thanks to Marcia Lefteroff
TCF Director/Jackson, MS*



A Mother's Lament

If I had known
The pain I'd bear
The sadness and the great despair
Would I have chosen the path I did
To have this child
Who so briefly lived?

Yes, I am certain
That I would
For all the laughter
All the good.

He taught us all
So much you see
Through his kindness,
Love and generosity.

Though he's gone
From us physically
He lives on in our hearts
Eternally.

*Sandy Roush
TCF Lakes Area, MI
In Memory of Whit*

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*

Hands

Little handprints
in a frame,
Flashback of memories
days long gone,
yet still so fresh in my mind
as if only yesterday.

Tiny hand of my baby girl,
Fingers curled around my own,
Only a reflex to some,
But not in my mind,
For me only the purest
of loving connections.

Outstretched toddler hand
reaching out for mine.
trusting mother's protective grasp,
maneuvering the busy streets,
we skipped together,
hand-in-hand.

Slender-fingered teenage beauty,
polished nails, smooth scented hands.
Seeking independence,
Hands pushing me away,
Sensing somehow her reluctance,
Not really ready, not quite yet...

Hands of her adult years,
I thought would have held mine
as I navigated through the ageing years.
Hands to comfort and hold, but never to be,
I am left only with my memories,
and tiny handprints,
in a frame...

*Cathy Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN
In Memory of my daughter, Nina*

Take Your Time

One of the hardest things about grief is the so-called "time table." You are told you should be feeling one way or the other. You are given a time to mourn by the outside world, and then you must be "over it." "Get on with your life." "Count your blessings."

All of this can make you both angry and afraid. Angry because (a) you don't WANT to get over it," (b) you are "getting on" with your life in the best way you know how, and (c) your "blessings" have nothing whatsoever to do with the pain of your loss! Afraid because you are not having some of the feelings you think you should be having because you are not reacting "normally." There is a period of extreme shock that can last from a few weeks to several months; you may not feel anything except numbness for awhile. That's OK!

The best advice is...take your time. Be gentle with yourself. Do what you need to do, not what you think you should do. Don't clutter up your life with things that will exhaust you physically and weaken you emotionally. Remember, you are fighting the hardest battle you will ever have to face, so give yourself the best weapons you can.

Rest, get in touch with your feelings, and talk. Say your child's name to anyone who will listen...take time...your time...to heal.

*Sandra Young
TCF Knoxville, TN*



Thought for the Day

It is not easy returning to the world of normalcy when your world is so upside down. It is not easy to stop being a mother or father to your child that has died. The thought for the day is a word — **patience** — patience with yourself who suddenly and powerlessly has been thrown into this horrid nightmare; patience with your spouse who always seems to be having an up day when you are having a down day; patience with relatives and friends who wish to help but seem to hurt with hollow advice and logical words; and patience with time, for it takes time to adjust, and time can move so slowly. **PATIENCE!**

*Rose Moen
TCF Carmel-Indianapolis, IN*

Butterflies Make Me Happy

Sometimes in our grief we truly believe we are going crazy. We hurt so bad we don't think we can manage to go on living without our precious child here with us. Part of the grieving process is learning how to do just that. Some parents need the reassurance that their child is okay. I think the human mind can only take so much pain and jumps at the chance to see signs from their children, reassuring them that they are okay.

The way I look at it, if you get comfort from a dream or a sign...enjoy it. You've suffered enough, and believing in signs, butterflies, dreams or what ever else gives you comfort and hurts no one else, is your right as a bereaved person.

Are these signs real, or just in my imagination? Can I prove they are messages from my son? Does it even need to be proven? No, I can't scientifically prove it. But I know that dreams, butterflies, signs and enjoyment in nature makes me feel closer to Eric and therefore I will continue to enjoy them. It hurts no one, I'm not obsessive about it and anyone who chooses to think I'm nuts for believing in such things, can think I'm nuts.

We've all heard how the butterfly is a symbol of rebirth. Whether it's our child moving from this world onto a higher plane, or a bereaved parent emerging from the cocoon of grief into a world without our child here. With us, butterflies are a comfort for many. When I'm missing my son and see a butterfly flitting from flower to flower, I smile and feel better. When I'm in a happy mood and see a butterfly, I enjoy the beauty of such a delicate creature. Taking the time to slow down and watch such a fragile creature going about its business is calming and I don't think anyone should discount the benefits from having a calming moment.

About four months after Eric died, I had a dream about him. I woke myself up from tears of joy running down my face, I knew he was okay...what a relief that was. I still hurt terribly and missed him more than I thought I could endure, but I felt comforted by the dream. Some could say it was my subconscious trying to sort things out, but I choose to believe it was his way of trying to comfort me. Either way, it made me feel better.

Maybe it's because bereaved parents walk around in such a fog and function on automatic pilot that we are moving slow enough to notice the signs that are around us. Maybe dreams are one way for us to accept messages we need to hear and take into our hearts without logically trying to interpret them. Maybe faith is what we rely on when nothing else makes sense and we instinctively know we need something to hold on to. Whatever it is, just give me a second helping; I like feeling closer to my son!

*Lynn Vines
TCF South Bay/L.A., CA
In Memory of my son, Eric*

“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
05/17	Eric Lucas	Lisa Lucas	Unknown
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	Tyler Lind	Jennifer Lind	Auto Accident
05/23	Mathew James Eldridge	Debbie Eldridge	Traumatic Asphyxiatic
05/24	Jonathan J. Walker	Betty Walker	Four wheeler/accident
05/25	Gussie Knox	Mary Ann Adams	Homocide
05/28	Ethan Lee Davis	Jim/Shelia Davis	Suicide

Mother’s Day Again

It is Mother's Day again.
 The day that my first born son became an angel.
 Time for remembering Mothers
 Time to remember their love for their children
 For me it is a reminder of the day you became an angel
 And a piece of my heart went with you
 Yes it is Mother's Day again.

It is Mother's Day again.
 Time for me to put on my happy face
 Time to celebrate me
 Time to enjoy my daughter
 Tell her how much I love her
 Also time for me to remember
 My beautiful son who has gone too soon
 Pray he knows how much I love him
 Yes it is Mother's Day again.

It is Mother's Day again
 I will remember the good times with Kevin
 I will remember his smiles
 I will remember his hugs
 I will remember his firsts
 but I will remember most of all
 His love for me, his sister and his daddy.
 So yes it is Mother's Day again.

*Kathie Kelly
 TCF Fredericksburg, VA
 In Memory of my son Kevin*

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
05/06	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
05/14	Lucas Arthur	Yolanda Arthur	Auto Accident
05/17	Dallas Ervin Holt	Dana Holt	Farm Accident
05/17	Frances Ann Fortner	Tom/ Laurilyn Fortner	Auto Accident
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
05/30	Drew Browning	Carolyn/Larry Browning	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