



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



Newsletter

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Daisy Strickland in memory of RONNIE STRICKLAND

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

TCF JACKSON CHAPTER NEWS	TCF MEETINGS
<p style="text-align: center;">Mother's Day Again</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Kathie Kelly TCF Fredericksburg, VA In Memory of my son Kevin</i></p> <div data-bbox="316 1438 560 1680" data-label="Image"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">A Mother's Love</p> <p>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!</p> <p><i>Diana M. Rohrbaugh TCF Anne Arundel County, MD</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>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;"><u>Meeting</u></p> <p>Dear TCF Friends,</p> <p>Our meetings are still on hold for now. We miss you and look forward to renewing our regular meeting schedule at a safe time.</p> <p>But until then please stay in place and be careful of yourself and of others. *****</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>Prenatal Bereavement Support Group</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> <p style="text-align: center;">~~~~~</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>MS SIDS ALLIANCE INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monthly 1st Tuesday – 7:00 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">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> <div data-bbox="998 2123 1307 2352" data-label="Image"> </div>

Second Sunday of May

Many happy memories
 Linger in our hearts this day
 As we each remember our child
 Who has left this earthly plane.
 The day is bittersweet for us,
 The mothers who have lost so much,
 For to remove all pain could well
 Erase the precious life we touched.
 Tears will trace the memories of
 Other, happier Mother's Days,
 As we dwell in a quiet reverie
 This Second Sunday of May

Annette Mennen Baldwin
 TCF Katy, TX
 In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen



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 Letter to Everyone

It's a difficult time for all of us—the COVID-19 crisis has disrupted many different areas of our lives. Just recently, that hit home for me in a very personal way.

Right in the midst of all this, I got a phone call with some painful news: My uncle, whose health had been declining for several months, had passed away. He didn't have the coronavirus, but the pandemic has still had a major impact on our family during this time of loss.

My uncle's family is scattered across several states, and due to restrictions on gatherings and travel, we can't have a memorial service until sometime in the future. As hard as losing him is, it's even harder when we're all grieving and unable to come together to comfort each other. I know there are many others who are facing similar pain right now in the midst of their losses.

I'm thankful that I can still connect with my uncle's family through phone calls and video chats. It's not the same as actually being there, but it helps. Over the course of the next year, I'm also sending them copies of the four *Journeying through Grief* books, as I have done for many others who have lost loved ones. While I can't visit in person, these books are a way I can let them know that I care and offer tangible comfort.

If you know someone going through a loss during this challenging time, sending *Journeying through Grief* can be a great way to care for them, too. Give us a call at (314) 428-2600 or visit stephenministries.org/JTG to learn more.

I pray for you and your loved ones during this time, especially for those struggling with a loss. May God bring you comfort and peace, and may you share that comfort and peace with others.

In Christ,
 Rev. Justin M. Schlueter
 Pastoral Staff

(Thanks to David Morgan for forwarding this letter. It speaks to us all.)



In a World Filled With Loss, Who Gets to Grieve?

Learning about ambiguous loss and non-finite loss have taught me something that I find so helpful. It is that two seemingly opposite things can be true at once. An example we often see in grief, in general, is when a person feels happy and sad at the exact same time.

I think something many people are struggling with right now is a profound sense of sadness and loss, but also the feeling that it's selfish to grieve. Either because their sacrifices serve a higher purpose or because they know others are suffering much worse. But why can't these things be true at the same time as your grief and loss?

Life is seldom as either/or as we think it is; one reality does not take away from or erase the other. You can feel pain hope, and gratitude all at the same time. Losses can serve a higher purpose and be sad all at the same time. And your grief over a minor loss does not take away from your compassion towards those experiencing more devastating losses. It also doesn't take away from your deeper losses.

It's not wallowing or self-centered to grieve the loss of things like weddings, proms, graduations, sports seasons, parties, religious observance, funerals, togetherness, support, and connection. These things are an extension of individual values like family, friends, intimacy, parenting, spirituality, career, and community. So they are connected to your higher purpose. Considering the circumstances, you might even see your grief as having a higher purpose.

Right now, people are going through horrible, traumatic, earth-shattering things. And when this is all over, they're going to need to find support in a grieving world. So now, more than ever, we have to maximize our capacity for compassion – and this doesn't mean denying ourselves of it.

As prominent self-compassion researcher and author Kristen Neff has written,

“If you are continually judging and criticizing yourself while trying to be kind to others, you are drawing artificial boundaries and distinctions that only lead to feelings of separation and isolation.”

If your show compassion towards your struggles, you may be more likely to show compassion to others. So rather than minimizing other people's pain and anxiety because “Hey, we're all suffering here. It could be worse.” You might be more inclined to stop and think, “Though I don't know exactly how this person feels, I recognize their pain and I bet they could use some kindness and support.” Things are beyond upsetting. Let's face the pain. Let's hold each other up. Let's grow stronger together.

Thanks to Marcia Lefteroff for forwarding this article from www.whatsyourgrief.com

Spirit Gifts

Grief is such an individual journey. We are cast on its path without our consent, enveloped by a depth of pain we never dreamed existed. We all have times when despair and loneliness threaten to engulf us.

But we do have one companion on this lonely, unsought road: our child who died. I think there is never a moment in the day when a part of me is not connected to Philip, to our years together—and to our present relationship. Our journey through grief is a good-bye to the physical presence of our children, but it is never good-bye to their spirits and to the essence of their beings. Philip lives inside me now, and the same gifts he gave me when he was physically alive are still available to me through his spirit. In some ways, those "spirit gifts" are stronger, because they are contained and undiluted within me.

When the days get unbearably hard, when I think of all this wonderful young man missed by not getting to live out his life, I try to remember to focus on the present Philip, the one inside me. I try to integrate his gifts into my life, sometimes seeing through his eyes, thinking from his heart and mind. Often when I walk in the hills, I'll hear his voice: "Pay attention, Mom." (He noticed the details in nature so much more than I.)

No matter how old your child who died, the essence of this unique being remains within you forever. It is through us and others who knew them that our children continue to live and affect our present world. Though not in the way we hoped and expected, our beloved children are still alive.

...May the spirit of the child who lives so deep within your heart help you through this month and through every moment of the re-establishing of your life.

*Catharine (Kitty) Reeve Newsletter Editor, TCF Marin and San Francisco Chapters, CA
Reprint permission granted by author to TCF
In Memory of my son, Philip*

Wanting

I see him standing at the cross walk
books under his left arm
blue jeans, white Element T-shirt
white DC ball cap.

But it's not.

I see him walking
tall thin young man
with short almost shaved head.

But it's not.

I call his cell.

I hear his voice.

I wish his outgoing message was longer.

But it's not.

I sift through a black trash bag
of his unwashed laundry
wanting to smell his essence.

But it's not.

It never will be.

And I want.

*Wendy Richardson/ TCF Santa Cruz, CA
In Memory of my son, Tyler*

**GRIEF WRITING:
Some Ideas on Keeping a Journal**

Writing is a simple, yet powerful way to begin working through your grief. You will find it helps to relieve some of the physical, emotional and spiritual pain that many grieving folks are experiencing.

- It will help you work through many of the issues which are difficult to communicate in other ways.
- It is very personal and confidential - no one need share in your writings unless you specifically choose to permit it.
- It is simple to do spontaneously.
- It does not require making complicated plans; it can be accomplished at the moment your feelings and needs are strongest, even when you wake up at three in the morning.

Who are you writing for? Even though you intellectually know that it is for you and you alone, all your prior training has conditioned you differently. During school years we always wrote for others to see and usually judge, correct and grade. We have all written letters for others to read. Nearly all our prior writing has been to communicate with others.

JOURNAL WRITING IS DIFFERENT: IT IS ONLY FOR YOU TO READ!

While this sounds like such an obvious thought, you may be surprised at the difficulty in getting your inner self to grant you permission to write freely without ANY editorial judgment. As you progress in your writing, you will find that you are able to overcome the 'mind set' that you are writing for others, and you will concentrate on fully serving your needs for expression.

Since you are writing for yourself, you now have permission not to be a perfectionist. You can use an old wide lined school notebook or one of those expensive "designer journals," and you can give yourself permission to be as sloppy or as neat as you wish. Forget erasers – it is easier, quicker and more spontaneous to cross out words. Furthermore, there are no errors when writing for yourself - merely thoughts you wish to re-read and those you want to skip. Rather than erasing or tearing out pages in order to obliterate, try putting a big X through a page or crossing out a phrase. Pay attention to those thoughts you are inclined to obliterate – often they are rich sources of issues you need to work through in your grief work. For this reason, I always suggest a permanently bound notebook rather than a spiral bound or loose-leaf book.

As a new writer, I have certainly experienced a blank page staring me in the face, unable to think of anything to say. What a relief when I learned to write my "stream of consciousness". I set a time

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continued

limit – for starts, perhaps 5 or 10 minutes – and then write everything which comes into my mind, no matter how unconnected, scattered or inane it may seem. Since I am not judging myself, and no one else will read it, it doesn't matter that it isn't a well composed sentence or paragraph. I capture whatever thought or image comes to mind. Since I am not trying to write a story, I merely begin to document my internal images and feelings, my internal dialogue.

Not having the pressure of composing something which makes sense, I just have to be able to write fast enough to keep up with my internal activity. If my thoughts lead me to a particular issue, I may begin to elaborate on it. When the allotted time has passed, I may choose to continue or will allow myself to stop for the day, and start again fresh the next day.

You will surprise yourself at how quickly you have developed a new tool for making progress with your grief work. With the mechanics of writing now a comfortable routine, you can become more focused. In grief work, we are frequently writing for one or more of the following reasons:

- To capture our experience or progress
- To confront an issue
- To vent, explore or express a feeling or emotion
- To connect
- To atone
- To preserve a thought
- To memorialize our loss

While few people feel they want to share everything they have written, there is frequently added value in sharing some of what we have written. Some, in their writings, have discovered parts of themselves which they felt they wanted to share. If you find this to be the case, the sharing circle at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends provides that opportunity.

If writing has always been easy and comfortable, please continue to do it. If this is all new to you, please be encouraged as you begin to use this new and useful tool which will serve you well, even beyond your grief work.

This article was adapted from a handout prepared by Alan B. Taplow, of Plainfield, New Jersey, for use with his Bereavement Support Group. He created it from material inspired by Carol Staudacher in her book, Men & Grief (New Harbinger Publ., 1991)



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	Kathy/Dave Worman	Auto Accident
05/03	Krishna “Krissy” M. Prestwood	Chuck/Marlise Prestwood	Meningitis
05/03	Robert Thornton	Dave/Charlotte Greer	
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
05/20	Dylan Mane Johnson	Jake/Jade Johnson	Unknown
05/22	Jason Lee Moore	Glenda/Emmit 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

MY MOST CHERISHED MEMORY OF MY SON

ANTHONY JEROME BLAIR FOR HIS HEAVEN DATE, 04/05

My most cherished memory of JEROME was when I lived in the upstairs two-bedroom apartment from 1991 to 1995. JEROME had his own bedroom upstairs, and one night I happened to be walking by his bedroom the door, which was closed, I stopped. I heard him praying; I can't remember what he was saying, but I will never forget that he was praying. JEROME went to church, and he believed in God. This left a memory that will always be cherished. And a great impression of how I remembered him. JEROME never knew I was standing outside his door listening to him praying, and he will never know now since he is gone. He always kept several Bibles by his bed, and I can see where he did mark some verses in some of them. He always received a Christian magazine every month in the mail sent in his name. I still receive the magazine but in my name. I know he loved the Lord, and I can't picture him anywhere but in heaven. I went to church every Sunday and raised my two sons up in the church. I want to continue going to church. I can remember JEROME going down in front of the church and kneeling at the alter to pray when he was a young boy. This has left a good impact on my life to continue going to church, for I know JEROME would want me to do that. I plan to honor my child's memory into the New Year by going to church and to pray more often.

*Written in his memory by his mother,
Mary Ann Blair
JEROME died April 5th at age 20 and is very much missed.*



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
05/03	Ethan Boyd McKelvain	Shelby McKelvain	Birth Defect
05/03	Conner Lind	Jennifer Lind	Heart Defect
05/05	Preston Lind	Jennifer 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
05/14	Lucas Arthur	Basil/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
05/26	Andrew Carroll	Tammy Smith	Heart Attack
05/28	Billy Jack May Jr.	Helen/ Jack May	Heart Attack
05/29	Dylan Mane Johnson	Jake/Jade 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