



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



# Newsletter

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**Volume 41 No. 9 September 2020**

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## POSTAGE

**PAUL BROOME in memory of CYNTHIA BROOME**

**ED and CAROLYN BUCHANAN in memory of ASHLEY BUCHANAN**

**REX and FAYE MCCORD in memory of LANE EDWARD MCCORD (Heaven date 09/13)**

**JERRY and CINDY WIGGLESWORTH in memory of LEE WIGGLESWORTH**

## LOVE GIFT

**SAM AND RITA LATHAM in memory of JOSEPH LATHAM (meant for August - Heaven date 08/12)**

**CHUCK and MARLISE PRESTWOOD in memory of KRISSY PRESTWOOD**

**The Compassionate Friends THANK YOU for your donations**

**They are tax deductible and deeply appreciated.**

**TCF JACKSON CHAPTER NEWS**

**SEASONS OF THE HEART**

Your special days are unchanging  
Seasons of the heart I celebrate.  
Your birth, forever spring,  
Tender memories relate,  
New and green, a dream  
From which too soon I awake.

The summer of your life was bright  
Laughter needed no reason,  
Seemingly endless days of sharing.  
Sixteen summers. Short in season.

Your death brought winter without warning,  
What sense in all this can be found?  
Summer dreams replaced with mourning.  
Where is hope now?

But the heart knows what  
The mind cannot accept  
That when all is lost,  
It is love that is left.  
Love knows no barriers  
Time or distance recognize.  
Love does not diminish,  
But is constant in our lives.  
And like a summer breeze  
Uplifts and inspires us  
With healing memories.

*Peggy Walls  
TCF Alexander City, AL  
In Memory of my son, Eddie*



**A Name for My Pain**

I have given a name to my pain—  
it's called "Longing."  
I long for what was,  
and what might have been  
I long for his touch and smell of sweat;  
I long to hold him one more time.  
I long to look on his beautiful face  
and impress it upon my memories and heart.  
I long to return to the day before  
and protect him from his death.  
I long to take his place,  
so he may live and have sons too.  
I long for time to pass much faster,  
so my longing and pain will lessen.  
Will they?

*June Williams-Muecke  
TCF Houston West, TX*

**TCF MEETINGS**

2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> traffic light.  
Fondren parking lot is on the right.



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*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**

*\*1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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



### Waiting for Answers

Years ago, I left my first meeting of Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul.

But when I walked out into the spring, air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory?

During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared *were* true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed.

My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise?

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said, "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too."

Sometimes the best advice is none at all.

*Mary Clark  
In memory of Max  
TCF, Sugar Land-SW Houston Chapter, TX*

Dear TCF friends,

*I've placed the above article in the Newsletter just to remind all of us that this difficult time will come to an end. We will return to what we understand to be a normal life. It will happen, and it will include TCF meetings where we can come together and share our stories and welcome those who need us most. But meanwhile, please stay safe. Don't let your guard down. Wear the mask and keep the social distance. Flu season is bearing down on us, so be sure to "mask-up" and get your flu shot and any other shot that might serve as protection.*

*Take care.  
Your editor, Paul*



### Relationships Do Change

Does it seem to you as if relationships with your family and friends have changed since the death of your child or sibling? You are not alone. In her book *When the Bough Breaks*, Judith Bernstein selects these expressive quotations from other writers' works to introduce the chapters on "Family Relationships" and "Social Relationships," respectively:

Death of a child member becomes an important identifying piece of information about the family. It is woven into its history and into the everyday operation of members' lives. The child who has died continues to be a family member after death. Parents are forever parents of a dead child as well as of the surviving children. The dead child lives in memory. The family grieves for him and remembers him with little comfort and support from the society around them.

Joan H. Arnold and Penelope B. Gemma  
*A Child Dies: A Portrait of Family Grief*

When people outside the immediate family are encountered who do not allow ... expressions of emotions and thoughts about deceased children, it creates a resentment that is difficult to control. Subsequently, the time comes when parents begin to separate themselves from insensitive and uncaring people in their environments who insist on keeping channels of communication closed.

Many times, a wedge is driven between those suffering the loss and very dear and close friends. We can refer to this as a "wedge of ignorance"—ignorance about the great importance of open communication.

Ronald J. Knapp,  
*Beyond Endura*



**There is no death. Only a change of worlds.**

*Chief Seattle, 1855*

**Reflections**

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations: that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness.

Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time – time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

*Cathy Schanberger*  
 from ***This Healing Journey – An Anthology for Bereaved Siblings***  
 ©The Compassionate Friends



**WEE SMALL HOURS**

“In the wee small hours of the morning...” is a good way to describe the loneliness of grief. When death visits our homes, our families, or our friends, it leaves grief, loneliness, and desolation in its wake. How do we survive? Is continuing worth the pain? How do we face another day, or hour, or minute? Why should this have happened to me? What can I do to stop the pain?

“In the wee small hours...is the time I miss you most of all.” During that time no ray of light or relief from grief seems possible. Nothing seems to work right. However, we can find our way into a sunlight both bright and warm, both invigorating and encompassing. The help we so urgently need to find our way out may be the unexpected phone call, the hand reaching out to assist, the letter or card sent in sympathy, or the friend who encourages us to talk and talk some more. We need not question how that help finds us. It is enough that it is there when it is most needed. It is enough that we can reach out and find a compassionate friend. And when we do, we begin to fill the wee small hours...with large and wonderful memories of our loved ones.

*Roy P. Peterson*  
 March 22, 1994  
 TCF Lexington, KY

**TO MY FRIENDS**

This is my pain.  
 Let me feel it.  
 Don't tell me not to cry.  
 I know you mean well, dear friend.  
 But telling me not to cry,  
 Tells me you don't understand.  
 But, how could you, really?  
 Have you lost a child?  
 Have you given birth, loved and laughed,  
 And then watched him die?  
 This is my pain.  
 Let me feel it.  
 Be patient with me when I want to scream  
 to cry  
 or be crabby  
 or talk about him  
 or be alone.  
 This is my pain.  
 Let me feel it.  
 I know you'd take it all away,  
 if you could.  
 But you can't.  
 I can't avoid it,  
 Or stuff it down somewhere,  
 Or run away from it  
 Because it always finds me again.  
 The cold, hard fact is,  
 That I had a child that died,  
 and it hurts.  
 So I know, that this is my pain,  
 And I have to feel it.  
 To get through it.

*Carolyn Johnson*  
 TCF Yuba City, CA  
 From *We Need Not Walk Alone, Summer 1994*



**What I Need**

A lot of time!  
 A little space,  
 A kind of quiet  
 Resting place,  
 Are what I need  
 At times like these  
 A special spot  
 Where I can grieve.

*Beth Pinion*  
 TCF Andalusia, AL

## The Myth of Closure

“When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure?” grievors often ask. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievors hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one’s room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual. Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes—“surely then, we will have closure,” we think. We pray.

The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to nearly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us.

Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain—turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course.

Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings or for people we love.

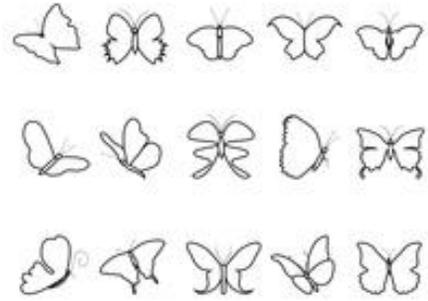
Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn’t exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us—the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again.

But let’s not ever think that we’ll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

*Ashley Davis Prend,  
ACSW, Hospice of North Idaho*



## Donald’s Trail

Our son Donald died on November 15, 1989, from depression which led to suicide. One asks many times what causes a handsome, intelligent, and sensitive young man to take his life. What could be so bad he saw no other way out of this emotional pain?

Of course, our son experienced teen peer pressures; he had to face alcohol and drugs. He also took on the world’s problems. The environment concerned him greatly — the ozone layer fading away, the disappearance of rain forests, and the greenhouse effect. Donald was also concerned about earthquakes, like the one in San Francisco in 1989, months before he died. He took on the problems of his friends, his family and the world. That’s too tall an order for anyone to fill.

Out there in nature, we feel a oneness with Donald. No, we cannot physically see him, but we can definitely feel his presence.

A gentle breeze blows there, and the softness of a pine branch embraces my arm. I see the babbling brook, so much in a rush — like Donald was. I feel the warmth of his smile. The rocky ground reminds me of his struggle with things that became obstacles for him. It also reminds me how difficult our lives are trying to trudge the rocky ground without him. Yet, it’s not all sadness, it’s more like a trail map of Donald’s life. Sometimes the trail is smooth and paved with soft pine needles, and sometimes it’s rocky, winding and steep. At the top though are gorgeous views to take your breath away.

I believe Donald cares for this trail also and walks it many times. I’m sure his view is one of even greater beauty than we can see — and one of greater peace than we can know on this side.

*Linda Trimmer  
TCF York, PA  
In Memory of my son, Donald*



**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.”

<b>Birth Date</b>	<b>Child's name</b>	<b>Parent's name(s)</b>	<b>Cause</b>
09/04	Matthew Omerza	Michelle/Eric Omerza	Suicide
09/08	Marilyn Yvonne Bennett-Roberts	Walterine Bennett	
09/09	James Shannon Bennett	James/Anita Bennett	Cancer
09/10	Michael Alan McNally	Ann/Robert McNally	Suicide
09/11	Travis Casey Macoy	Mary Pierce	
09/12	Jamel Jackson (relation)	Rosie Martin	Drowning
09/12	Jamel Dequan Jackson	Doris Martin Jackson	Drowning
09/12	Sid Wesley Champion	Sid/Janet Champion	Respiratory Arrest
09/13	Larkin Powers Honea	Dickey/Breck Honea	Suicide
09/15	John E. Brown, Jr.	Vincent/Dawn Venturini	Auto accident
09/16	Lauren Ann Clement	Bill/Hallie Clement	Complications/Crohn's
09/21	Alan Ebersole	Bruce/Story Ebersole	
09/22	Kim Corban	Mickey/Pauline Corban	Heart Attack
09/23	Kyle Horn	Julie Diaz	Drug Overdose
09/26	Destiny McDonald	Pamela Hall	
09/26	Mattie Carroll	Lauren Carroll	Still Birth
09/26	Tina Shipworth	Faye Pope	Cancer
09/26	Eric McLaughlin	Ethel Duke	Automobile Accident
09/28	Debra Fortier	Earl/Trudy Dawson	Cardiac Arrest
09/29	John Charles Russel, IV	Jack Russel	Drug Overdose

### With Whom Can We Share our Feelings?

For many of us, there are few people with whom we can share our innermost feelings; yet these very feelings may be nearly exploding to get out! Perhaps for the first time in your life you are really angry—angry at God?—at your dead child?—just angry?!

Are any of you bereaved parents going about your daily routines, appearing to those around you to be “doing well”? Yet in your “alone moments” you hurt so badly you think you may never feel better again? Or perhaps you’re not even resuming a routine, lack motivation, are barely functioning. Many bereaved parents have shared these feelings with each other.

Who would understand if you told them you started sobbing when you passed your dead child’s favorite food in the grocery store?...Or that you want to yell at the crowds nonchalantly walking in the shopping center, “Don’t you know my child has died?” Another bereaved parent probably would understand.

To how many of your friends could you tell that you kept some of your child’s clothing “handy” and experienced a bittersweet feeling when you smelled these clothes? Another bereaved parent would probably not think this unusual.

How fortunate you are if you can share these and other feelings with your spouse, family members, your minister, or good friends. However, many times, these people from who you would expect the most support aren’t equipped or can’t handle your normal feelings of grief.

One of the benefits mentioned most often of Compassionate Friends, whether it’s by attending the meetings, using the available listeners by phone or through the newsletter, is hearing that your feelings are not unusual after all. It is also most comforting to hear from bereaved parents for whom it has been 3, 6, or 7 years since their child died that they experienced many of these same feelings, worked their way through their grief and can now say, “I don’t feel that way anymore. I really laugh and don’t feel guilty.

“I’m leading a productive life again. I may think of my child almost every day, and still miss him/her, but I no longer review details of the accident or illness, or circumstances surrounding their death. I’m no longer angry or feel guilty. Most memories are pleasant memories.”

This is why we “old-timers” continue to attend meetings, remain available by the telephone and try to meet peoples’ needs through the newsletter.

Carolyn Reineke  
TCF of Fort Wayne, IN

**OUR CHILDREN—LOVED, MISSED & REMEMBERED**

Heaven Date	Child's name	Parent's name(s)	Cause
09/04	Aerica (Nikki) Robnett	Brandi Robnett	Unknown
09/06	Ryan DeWayne Thomas	Dwayne/Linda Thomas	Auto accident
09/06	Carl Gustave "Gus" Evers	Jan Evers	Suicide
09/08	Tyler Allen (T-Bug) Hinson	Albert/Shelly Hinson	Suicide
09/10	Daniel Merritt Fisher	Wiley/Wanda Fisher	Tractor rollover
09/13	Lane McCord	Rex/Faye McCord	Accidental drowning
09/17	Joshua Chase Taylor	Tina Taylor	Suicide
09/18	Timothy Lance "Tim" Rooker	Sylvia Little	Hit on Motorcycle
09/19	Sid Wesley Champion	Sid/Janet Champion	Respiratory arrest
09/26	Mattie Carroll	Lauren Carroll	Still birth
09/27	Patti Lynn Gary	Ms. Lynda F. Gary	Automobile 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

