The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.
The Compassionate Friends of Tyler
P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, TX 75711

We are happy to send our newsletter to you. We hope that it is helpful to you to be kept informed of chapter resources and activities and that you still wish to receive our newsletters that contain excellent material relating to grief issues.

To keep our mailing list current, we do ask to hear from you each year making sure that our information is correct and that you still wish to receive our mailings. If we did not hear from you in the last year please indicate any appropriate choices below and return the form to the address at the bottom of this page.

Your Name: ____________________________________________________________
_________________________ ________________________________
Child’s Name: __________________________________________________________
_________________________ ________________________________
Relationship:
_________________________ ________________________________
Birth Date: ______________________ Death Date: ______________________ Cause of Death: ______________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________
City: __________________ State: _______ Zip: __________________________
Home Telephone: __________________________ E-mail: ____________________________

Please check any of following that apply:
☑ Due to the rising cost of postage, please send newsletters via email. My email address is ____________________________.
☑ I prefer not to receive the newsletter via email and would like to continue having a hard copy sent to the mailing address you have on file for me.
☑ Please update my mailing address:
☑ No thank you, I’d prefer to stop receiving the newsletter. (Newsletters are posted monthly on our website.)
☑ Please include my child’s name and picture in the slide presentation at the Candle Lighting Ceremony.
☑ Please include my child’s picture and information on the TCF Tyler Web site. (www.TylerTCF.org)
☑ I am enclosing a memorial to support The Compassionate Friends in the amount of ________________________________.
☑ In memory of ________________________________
☐ Please make check payable to TCF.

——— Albert Schweitzer
“Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into a flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who rekindle this light.”

Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to those who attended their first TCF meeting last month.

We deeply regret the circumstances that brought you to our TCF Chapter. The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, not-for-profit, self-help organization that offers support and understanding to families who have experienced the death of a child. You are cordially invited to attend our monthly meeting (held the third Monday of the month). The meeting is open to everyone and free of charge. You are free to talk, cry or to sit in silence; we respect the individuality of mourning. Comments shared in the meetings remain confidential.

Our chapter is operated entirely by volunteers dedicated to furthering the work of TCF. Your voluntary, tax deductible donations honor your loved one(s) in a meaningful way by enabling us to print and mail this newsletter and meet other expenses involved in reaching out to other grieving families (100% of funds are used for this outreach). Donations, along with the name of the person being honored, may be sent to:

The Compassionate Friends of Tyler
P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711

To Our New Members

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But, you have nothing to lose and much to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person—or just the right words spoken that will help you in your grief work.

To Our Old Members

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. Think back—what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldies” to welcome you, share your grief and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “Your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer.”

Grief Resources

Note: Some resources are based on individual opinion and experience and are not officially endorsed by the organization. The hope is that you may find a grief resource helpful to you and your family. We will continue to build on our resources column. Please let us know if any of your personal recommendations. Thank you.

- The Compassionate Friends (International Website) compassionatefriends.org
- Also offers grief support for siblings & grandparents
- Children Are A Gift Foundation: www.childrenareagift.com
- MADD East Texas (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) www.madd.org/local-offices/tx/east-texas
- Smith County Victim Services Division www.tcjc.state.tx.us/divisions/ks/counties/smith.html
- The Hospice of East Texas: www.hospiceofeasttexas.org
- Victim Services Division - Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Online Resource Directory www.tcjc.state.tx.us/divisions/vs
- Survivors of Suicide: www.allianceofhope.org
- Samaritan Counseling of Tyler: www.scctyler.org
- Tyler Counseling & Assessment, LLP: www.tyler-counseling.com
- Angel Layettes: www.angellayettes.org • 903-534-5212
- University of Texas at Tyler Psychology and Counseling and Training Clinic: 903-593-2348
- The Cope Foundation: www.copefoundation.org
- Grief Camps for Kids: www.moyerfoundation.org/programs
- WINGS was established through Hospice of East Texas in 1993 to help children navigate the grieving process. WINGS, “a comprehensive bereavement program that provides both emotional support and grief education,” offers a camp (Camp G – grieve, grow and go forward) twice a year. For more information or to register for a grief support program, contact the Hospice of East Texas Bereavement Department at 903-266-3400 (Extension 127) or call 1-800-777-9860.
- Group Meetings for Survivors of Trauma and Survivors of Suicide Loss, sponsored by Michael’s House of Hope at the New Life Worship Center, 18535 Hwy. 69 S., Tyler, room 620. Call Dr. Timothy M. Roddam at 903-681-3161 for more information. Survivors of Trauma meets the second Thursday of each month from 6-7 p.m.

Please return completed form to: The Compassionate Friends of Tyler, P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711
Continued on next page.
We need not walk alone.

"Lean on us, for we have been where you are today. We will walk with you on your journey toward hope, peace and resolution. It is in this place that the healing will begin. This is a new year." —Annette Mennen Baldwin

January Anniversaries

Brittany Butler  
Ashley McCaa  
Bonnie Lee Benson  
Taylor Davis  
Jason Brown  
Jana Lauren Shearer

Dylan Corey  
Michelle "Missy" Green  
David LaTrell Milton  
Benjamin Gilpin  
Makenzie Shyanne Morehead  
Lauren Campbell

Michael R. Peymon  
Brennen Applegate  
Blake Alexander King  
Haylee Lee  
Danielle Celeste Yura  
Logan Alexander

Daron Adam Lee  
Christopher Baggett  
Charles "Bryan" Meadows  
Mary Adams  
Susie Gorman  
Betsi Marie Wyatt

Rusty Welch  
Jeremy Newman  
Clayton Norton  
Gaaron Hicks  
Shellea Vicknair  
Loren Saunders

Eric Branch  
Brytnie Leah Stithem  
Derek Nolan Simonesaux  
Haven Grace Davis  
Travis Carpenter  
Ryan Glasco

Volunteers needed for our Annual Butterfly Release ceremony held in May!

Some People Say . . .

"I wouldn’t go to one of those grief meetings. It’s morbid—people sitting around talking about the dead." How wrong those people are!

In so many ways, those who attend are saying, "I am hurting now, but I want to go on with my life." They are saying, "I am crying now, but I want to laugh again." They are saying, "I am sick in body and soul; help me get well." I see these things as healthy, not morbid.

It is not easy to walk into a meeting of any kind alone, especially one where the subject is very emotional; but once there, it takes only a few minutes to find out we are not alone; that there are those who care about us and want to help us. We see others hurting and suddenly we want to help them. I don’t see that as morbid.

A grieving parent wants to talk about his beloved child who is no longer physically part of his life. That child has died with a tragic suddenness or as a result of an illness that usually takes older people. We want to know why or find a reason or some meaning in our child’s death. I don’t see any morbidity in trying to understand.

Memories of our child are all we have left. We have a driving need to hang on to those memories lest we lose that small bit of our child. It is not morbid to want to keep that small part alive forever, at least in our hearts and minds.

To walk into a bereaved parents’ meeting is a loud shout - “I want to live and be happy again.” It is a cry that “My child is dead, but I know he would want me to go on and be a better person for the suffering.” It is a confirmation that “Even though part of my life is gone, there is a reason to go on.” There is nothing morbid about doing what is necessary in order to re-enter the mainstream of life.

Margaret Gerner, TCF St. Louis, MO

January Anniversaries Cont.

Jonathan Russell Eubank  
Hailey Rose Martin

Enn Evans  
Aubreigh Yates  
Rayna Makynze Caldwell

Joshua Baker

Thanks to Susie Q’s Flower Patch in Brownsboro for donating roses, and Jon Knauss of Color Spot Nursery in Troup for donating poinsettias to our Candle Lighting Ceremony!

Continued on next page.
We need not walk alone.

"Who’s weep recover more quickly than those who smile." —Jean Giraudoux

Snow

Every snowflake that falls is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each snowflake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder, each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike. Like the snowflake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always. At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time can never take away.

Denise Falzon, TCF Lake Area, MI

Thanks for your donations and continued support of TCF of Tyler.

In loving memory of

Christopher Loper
by Tina Loper

In loving memory of

Knox Knight by
Andrea & Chris Knight

In loving memory of

Todd Erwin by
Jeanine and Todd

In loving memory of

Danny & Pat Settle by
Stephanie Settle

In loving memory of

Christina Morelli by
Wendy & Joe Morelli

In loving memory of

Jared Sheets by
Carol & Shane Johnson

In loving memory of

Chad Cavazos by
Dale Cavazos

In loving memory of

Sarah Thompson by
Carol Thompson

In loving memory of

Zack Bradley by
Cristal Rodriguez Stowe

In loving memory of

Andy Terrell by
David & Teresa Terrell

In loving memory of

Leah Zucca by
Jim & Cheri Zucca

In loving memory of

Zeb Eubanks by
Lori & Bill Eubanks

In loving memory of

Carol Thompson by
Sarah Thompson

In loving memory of

Bob & Carmen Bennefield
by Bennefield Family

In loving memory of

Brad & Cindy Eubanks by
Carol Thompson

In loving memory of

Robert & Trisha Taylor
by In loving memory of

Alex Conway by

Marilyn Byrd

In loving memory of

Michael & Carol Byrd
by In loving memory of

Stuart Gilpin, TCF Tyler, TX

Shoeprints

It has been nearly two years since our eleven-year-old Benjamin went to God’s space after a lifelong battle with epilepsy. On his funeral notice we asked people to donate puzzles in his honor. It was my wife’s idea to donate them to local schools and hospitals. We named it the ‘P’ is for Puzzle program: Benjamin was autistic and was fixated on the alphabet and would often ask ‘P’ is for...? ’, ‘what is the T for?’ He had a real love for puzzles. In fact—he could sit down and do them over and over again.

Where we live in East Texas outside our house the soil is very sandy. So after I first wore my new shoes I had to shake the sand off. Well, I looked down and all I could see was a trail of puzzle prints. Tears welled up in my eyes. I have always known Benjamin was still with me but this took me aback. I looked down at my shoes and turned them over and of all the thousands of shoes in the store I had bought one of the fifty pairs that had puzzle prints on the bottom of them. No one but God knew the significance of that swift and simple purchase. Today I rarely wear anything but those puzzle print shoes and I have returned to the store and now have a couple of extra pairs stored away.

I received a powerful message that day that even in the corners of a large cluttered shoe store God can have a message for you if you open your eyes and allow him to lead the way. It would have been so easy for me not to have even bought the shoes but now a simple pair of shoes reminded me to see the beauty in the simple things once again. I look at the tracks in the sand I am thankful for every moment I was able to spend with my sweet son. Each track was part of a remarkable picture and each was a blessing in itself. God bless you, Benjamin.

Stuart Gilpin, TCF Tyler, TX

Join us for crafts and more!

Carol Johnson is going to facilitate craft fun, January 27, 2018, from 10 a.m. till 12 noon at our meeting place. Light snacks will be provided. Bring your creative ideas or just attend for the fellowship. We are planning to have a journaling workshop soon! Watch for details. If anyone is interested in holding a grief share workshop, we would love to accommodate at our nice meeting place.

January Birthdays Cont.

Aubreigh Yates
John Miller
Kelbi Mathis
Richard Allen
Kim Wilgus
Kammon Gebe
Hudson Ayers
Brian Peel

"We quickly find there are no words to describe the experience of losing a child. For those who have not lost a child, no explanation will do. For those who have, no explanation is necessary." —Mary Lingle

"No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear." —C.S. Lewis

Madelyn Moore
I Don’t Know Why

I don’t know why,
I’ll never know why.
I don’t have to know why.
I don’t like it.
I don’t have to like it.
What I have to do is make a choice about my living.
What I do want to do is accept it and go on living.
The choice is mine.
I can go on living, valuing every moment
in a way I never did before,
or I can be destroyed by it and,
in turn, destroy others.
I thought I was immortal.
That my family and my children were also.
That tragedy happened only to others.
But I know now that life is tenuous
and valuable.
So I am choosing to go on living,
making the most of the time I have,
valuing my family and friends
in a way never possible before.

From the book, My Son, My Son, by Iris Bolton,
whose son Mitch died by suicide.

A Name for My Pain

I have given a name to my pain—
it’s called “Lonking.”
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 Chapter

To My Friends

“Grief is not an illness that needs to be cured. It’s not a task with definable, sequential steps. It’s not a bridge to cross, a mountain to climb, or an experience to ‘recover’ from. It is a normal, healthy and predictable response to loss.”
—Donna L. Schuurman

Love Gifts

Thanks to the following people who make a MONTHLY LOVE GIFT to TCF of Tyler:

- Merri Walsh in memory of Chris O’Leary - rent
- Carol & Shane Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets - rent
- Danny & Pat Settle in memory of Stephanie - rent
- Jim & Cheri Zucca in memory of Leah - rent
- Robert & Trisha Taylor in memory of Alex Conway - rent
- Barbara Barton in memory of Lindsey - rent
- Dale & Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad - newsletter
- Tina, Johnathan & Heather Loper in memory of Christopher - TCF Phone
- David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy - use of a storage building

See more love gifts on page 7.

Newsletter Submissions

TCF Tyler welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to: The Compassionate Friends of Tyler, P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, Texas 75711. Or e-mail test and photos to: info@tylertcf.org. We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content.

Deadline for submissions is the 5th of each month. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source.

Errors and Omissions: We try very hard to be sure that all of the names and dates of our children are correct. If you see an error in the newsletter, please contact TCF at 903-422-0358. We want to get it right and will correct the information for future use. Thanks very much.

Email Addresses: If we do not have your email address or it has changed, please email it to info@tylertcf.org so that we may email you announcements and updates about TCF of Tyler.

Sign up for email notifications of events and to be notified when the newsletter is posted online at: www.tylertcf.org