



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



We need not walk alone.

Volume 7, Issue 4

Tyler, Texas

April 2006

Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, April 18, 6:30 p.m.
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

Topic: Suicide Changes Hearts; an informative CD we will listen to followed by our usual open discussion

Contact

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Newsletter/Web SiteMary Lingle
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Pat Settle, Sam Smith, Sherri Tutt
Margie Newman, Mary Lingle

Jim & Karen Roach, Regional
Coordinators, (817) 244-0116

TCF National Organization
Toll Free: (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

The Meeting Agenda

6:30 p.m.
Meeting will begin with refreshments followed by announcement of birthdays and anniversaries and reading of the Credo. We will then have open discussion.
8:00 p.m.
Meeting will close by recognizing our childrens' names. Feel free to visit after the meeting or check out books from our library.

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The First Meeting

I first heard of the Compassionate Friends at the Grief and Grieving Seminar at Sacramento City College in 1989. I sat in the auditorium in the very last row, in the very last seat, sobbing, hoping to muffle the sounds by holding a bandanna to my mouth.

My only child, Joe, 21, was killed on December 6, 1988 in a truck/auto accident at 11:49 a.m. (from the police report). He was coming back to work from lunch. A rock truck made a sudden left turn and my son, my best friend, was dead. Two minutes—that's all it took to find myself crying in the dark at Sac City. I wasn't ready to reach out yet, but I took the brochures home.

A year and a half later, I thought I was ready. I arrived at the church on H Street. I sat in my car, asking myself what I was doing here. Talking about Joe's death was so painful—even with friends who loved me. How could I talk about his death to strangers? And why should I? I stood by my car for two minutes and took a deep breath. I walked to an open door and announced to a dance class I was here for the Compassionate Friends meeting. Four couples turned around. The music stopped and so did I.

I finally found the right door and walked in and introduced myself to the woman by the guest book. She said the meeting was beginning for the "new" members and showed me to the room. Darlene Johnson was there, talking about the cards we were to fill out with our names, the name of our child and/or children who had died and when they died. I looked at the blank card and lines erased themselves with my tears. My hand shook and I felt the familiar anxiety attack symptoms and I glanced across the table and my eyes were met with another pair of tear-filled eyes. In that second, pain recognized pain and I felt kinship with him, and my attack drifted away, not to claim me that night again.

I relaxed a little and listened to women and men communicating the loss and agony—and the fearful topsy-turvy roller coaster ride of emotions that battered us day and night. We shared our losses, if we chose to do so. When it was my turn, though, I said, "Pass." And it was fine—no questions, no pushing. And then we talked, cried, admitted to anger, confusion, outrage, sadness, depression and sobbing in public. I talked and I listened. I hugged and I let people give me a hug. The agony was real within us, but together we told it to step back a little that night. The meeting ending with our standing in a circle, holding each other's hands, a circle of courage, relief and strength.

I walked to my car and thought what a difference those four hours made. I found solace and relief. The Compassionate Friends meeting won't make the pain go away, but it is a place where you can honestly and truly believe when someone says, "I know how you feel." They mean it and their eyes prove it.

Janice Lopez ~ TCF, Sacramento Valley Chapter

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.



We need not walk alone.

“In the art of losing we can choose who we will be. We break, but we break open so that we can include more of life, more of love. We get bigger in order to carry with us what we choose to continue loving.” —*Deborah Morris Coryell*

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 (always the third Tuesday 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.”

The Comfort My Heart Holds

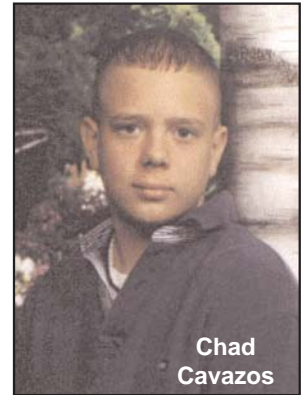
My heart is so very grateful
For the pictures in my mind.
The precious thoughts and memories
My grandson left behind.

The pain that grips my heart
Is quieted by the joy
Of things he said and did
While just a growing boy.

I long to have him here once more
And watch him as he grows.
Yet, the joyful life he has now
Is the comfort my heart holds.

Not one single day goes by
Without a thought of him.
In time and with God's loving grace
This pain will grow more dim.

*In memory of Chad Cavazos by his
grandmother, Patsy Murray ~ TCF, Tyler, TX*



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

TCF Library Hours

Mon, Tue, Thur: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Wed: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Fri: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Library is located in our meeting location, the College-Bound Solutions offices, at 707 W. Houston Street, Tyler.



Newsletter Submissions

TCF Tyler welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to:

TCF Tyler • 5401 Hollytree Drive, 1204 • Tyler, Texas 75703
Or e-mail text and photos to: info@TylerTCF.org

We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content. Deadline for submissions is the 3rd Tuesday 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: Please notify us if any of your information is incorrect.



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"The Compassionate Friends meeting won't make the pain go away, but it is a place where you can honestly and truly believe when someone says, 'I know how you feel.' They mean it and their eyes prove it." —*Janice Lopez*



Love Gifts

Joe & Patsy Murray in memory of Chad Cavazos, #52

David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy Terrell -
use of a storage building

Northland Cable - 2 months of advertising
on Channel 6 TV guide

Beverly Person, Gracie Farris & Keith Payne in memory of
Kaila McKinsey Payne - memorial quilt.

Janet St. Clair in memory of Brian St. Clair

Sharon & Patrick Riley in memory of Terry brown

Julie LePelley in memory of Trey Lepelley

Lena Hilbert in memory of Stephen Townsend

Sylvia Crooks in memory of Matthew Thomas Crooks

Victor & Margie Newman in memory of Jeremy Newman

Sam Smith in memory of Stacy Smith

Carolyn Kuhn in memory of Phillip Kuhn

Thanks to all who helped paint butterflies
for the Annual Butterfly Release!

Editor's Note: Beverly Person was listed as Beverly Payne in the March newsletter.

Special thanks to: Mary Delaney for donating a new printer in memory of Ryan Delaney; Teri Clakley for making the blankets to raffle at the Lasagna Dinner and Butterfly Release in memory of Justin Clakley; Shelley & Doug Johnson for donating all the wood butterflies (over 150) in memory of Douglas Johnson; Lisa & Brian Harvey for donating the proceeds from the Lasagna Dinner in memory of Sarah Harvey



Butterfly Work Day!

Every weekend in April until completed. Please call (903) 780-7104 or (903) 570-8412 for location and time. We have 160 to decorate and are about 1/3 of the way through. Thank you to the 9 volunteers who were able to help so far. You did an awesome job!

**Please share your stories,
poems or love messages for
inclusion in our newsletter.**

Announcements

We will be holding our **Third Annual Butterfly Release** on May 20th, 2006, at 1:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church south campus, 2813 and Hwy. 69 W. We will be painting the large wooden butterflies at Tina's house on Saturday, March 25th. For more info and directions, please contact Tina Loper at (903) 780-7104, (903) 570-8412 or Margie Newman at (903) 561-1447. Please let us know if you would like to help this year in honor and in loving memory of your child.

Our **Annual Candlelighting Ceremony** will be held on Dec. 10th, 6:30 p.m. at Carpenter's Cross Baptist Church, Hwy. 344 and 155 S. Please contact Tina Loper at (903) 594-2132 or Margie Newman at (903) 561-1447 for more information. The media is invited to attend. Please let us know if you would like to help this year in honor and in loving memory of your child.

Brian and Lisa Harvey, in memory of Sarah Harvey, will host a **Lasagna Dinner in Arp** on April 22nd at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and all proceeds will benefit TCF of Tyler. Directions will be provided soon.

We have a new discussion list for our group! By subscribing at www.TylerTCF.org, and clicking on Discussion List, users can connect with other TCF members.

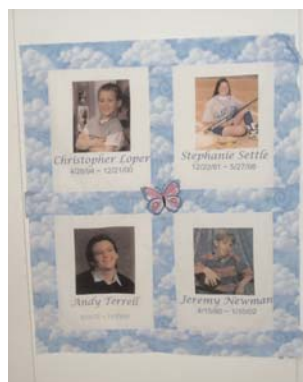
If you would like a phone friend, please call Margie Newman at (903) 561-1447 or Mary Lingle at (903) 581-4566.

Wings Children's Grief Workshop will be held on Saturday, April 22nd from 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. for bereaved children K-12th and their families. This is a community service of Hospice of East Texas. There is no charge for participation, and lunch is provided. Children are divided developmentally into groups, and the adults/parents are in a separate session. For more information or to register, please call Laura Mattheis, Manager of Support Programs, (903) 266-3447

National Crime Victims' Rights Week: The purpose of this planned activity is to unify organizations that serve those who have been victimized, and galvanize the community to support the rights of victims. Planned events include a proclamation from the Mayor of the City of Tyler designating April 23-29, 2006, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The week will close with a community walk that ends on the steps of the Smith County Courthouse in Tyler. Those wishing to participate and walk with TCF members are urged to call (903) 594-2132 for more information.

TCF meetings in Bryan College Station, Chapter #1381 have closed.

TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt



If you would like to have your child's photo included on our memorial quilt, please mail a \$25 donation to P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711. For more information contact us at (903) 258-2547, or email us at info@TylerTCF.org.

The first quilt is expected to be complete in time for the Butterfly Release in May 2006.

Thanks to Teresa Terrell for donating her talent and time on this beautiful quilt which will be displayed in our meeting room and at special events.





We need not walk alone.

"A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed." —Nancy Green

April Birthdays

April Anniversaries



Matthew Thomas Crooks
4-17-78 ~ 12-24-03
Son of
Sylvia Crooks



Christopher Loper
4-28-94 ~ 12-21-00
Son of
Tina Loper



John Patrick Carnahan
4-17-65 ~ 10-13-03
Son of Rod &
Shirley Carnahan



Sarah Harvey
12-12-89 ~ 4-26-04
Daughter of
Brian & Lisa Harvey



Jill Tompkins
11-3-77 ~ 4-24-99
Daughter of
Karen Tompkins



Tim Cole
4-15-69 ~ 9-15-97
Son of
Mary Miller



Kaila McKinsey Payne
4-6-03 ~ 5-28-03
Daughter of
Keith Payne



Cheryl Cook
4-25-73 ~ 12-10-02
Daughter of
Connie Graebner



Shane McDade
2-17-85 ~ 4-12-03
Son of
Lajeania Culligan



Quinn Martin Muirhead
8-12-82 ~ 4-30-05
Son of
Alice Fiedler



Jaren Moser
4-28-00 ~ 5-31-05
Son of Robert & Misty
Hendrickson



Christopher Baggett
4-23-69 ~ 1-8-89
Son of
Anita Demby



Kathy Robertson
4-23-57 ~ 10-23-01
Daughter of
Carolyn Love



Christal Murphy
8-14-72 ~ 4-22-03
Daughter of
Debbie Johnson



Jeremy Mark Lawler
10-25-73 ~ 4-19-97
Son of
Mark & Sue Lawler



Lindsey Stewart
11-6-87 ~ 4-2-04
Daughter of
Stephanie Stewart



Allen Price
4-11-77 ~ 3-29-04
Son of Deborah
& Floyd Holcomb



Timothy Treadwell
4-1-80 ~ 11-23-04
Son of
Tammy Treadwell



Jeremy Newman
4-15-80 ~ 1-10-02
Son of
Victor & Margie Newman



Ron Mitchum
8-3-70 ~ 4-15-00
Son of
Glenda Mitchum



Zackery Browne
12-14-89 ~ 4-13-02
Son of Tim & Kay Browne
Grandson of Lynda Hanna



Heath Hopson
12-8-87 ~ 4-23-01
Son of
Karen Hopson



Brady Bryant
4-30-01 ~ 5-2-01
Son of
Windy & Bradley Bryant



Brian St. Clair
4-24-60 ~ 7-26-97
Son of
Janet St. Clair



James Lee Lary, II
4-20-83 ~ 10-30-05
Son of Elgin L.
Lary, Sr. & Ann Lary



Stephanie Carol Hester
5-9-88 ~ 4-2-04
Daughter of
Troy & Glenna Nicolls



Bobby Knott
11-6-68 ~ 4-24-83
Son of
Bobby & Virginia Knott



Chad Cavazos
9-24-86 ~ 4-20-01
Son of
Phyllis & Dale Cavazos

Thank you for your generous donations to TCF of Tyler. These 'love gifts' allow us to provide our local chapter with special events, the TCF Newsletter, our Web site and more!





We need not walk alone.

"The hurt never goes away. We never forget. We never get over it. We don't want to. We hurt so much because we loved so much. But the focus on death and the event fades and the warmth of good memories replaces it."
—Richard Edler

Sanity

by Lisa Harvey ~ TCF, Tyler, TX



Sarah
Harvey

What is this . . . sanity?
Is it a dream or reality?
What is reality?

If reality is facing my loss,
Admitting that the joy-filled face of my baby is gone.
If reality is feeling that pain,
Admitting that truth.

Then why choose reality?
If insanity is still catching glimpses of those
sparkling blue eyes?
If insanity is waiting to hear her beautiful voice?
Then why not choose insanity?

I have always heard that there was a fine line,
Between insanity and sanity.
After losing my daughter,
I know the truth, The line is invisible.
Reality is hell.

New ways to donate to TCF of Tyler in honor and loving memory of your child:

- \$25 for a quilt square (More info on page 3)
- \$25 to sponsor one year with the Bullard Chamber of Commerce
- \$25 to sponsor one year with the Tyler Chamber of Commerce
- \$20 to sponsor one month of advertising on Northland Cable
- \$150 for artwork for a billboard
- Postage for mailing the newsletter one month
- Refreshments for monthly meeting
- Paper, print cartridges, etc.
- Library books
- Articles or poems for the newsletter
- Monthly phone bill - \$45
- P.O. Box rental - \$26 annual

Then . . . Now

by Tina Loper ~ TCF, Tyler, TX



Christopher
Loper

The start of the sixth year, has it been that long?
Still fight the tears because you are gone.
A playful six-year-old boy then
Now you would be twelve on the verge of becoming a young man
I look at your brother, almost 14
Trying to imagine how you would be.
Would you like the girls that used to chase you on the playground?
The ones you used to tell me about with a frown.
Would you fight with your sister over the toad she just found?
Or be way past that by now.
Your friends have all left the elementary school you attended
I can't picture you in front of the middle school,
Me honking the horn to get your attention . . .
Your sister now gets picked up in the big parking lot
It hurts when I realize you never made it that far.
I struggle daily to keep the sad thoughts at bay
It made you unhappy if you thought I was not okay.
I have my good and my bad days.
I can't wrap my brain around who you would be today
You stopped growing up that December day.
I wish it was different, I wish I could know
Not just wonder and speculate on your earthly growth.
I do not have to wonder if you are okay
The lone source of comfort, that gets me through my days.
Know, baby boy, how badly I want you back
There is nothing I would not give for that.
Having voiced that selfish wish
Know this too . . .
If given the choice, if able to see you there,
I could not do that to you.
I know you are waiting in perfect peace
Just talking to you my pain does ease.
The mommy in me wants to hold you so bad
The believer in me knows you are in the arms of God
Your heavenly "dad"

I love and miss you Christopher . . . always.

~Mommy



We need not walk alone.

“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 . . .’” —*Fay Harden*

My April Child

“In the midst of winter I found within myself an invincible summer.” —Albert Camus

When our daughters were growing up the arrival of springtime was a favorite time of the year, filled with anticipation of the coming of special days of family fun. The freshness of the air, the brilliant colors of springtime trees and flowers, and the song of the birds returned from their winter retreat resounded the message of hope and that life was good. We had survived another cold, snowy Michigan winter and were soon to be rewarded with blue sky, sunshine and temperatures well above freezing!

Birthdays in our family were a time of celebration together. Each year Larry, Anna, Debbie and I, and perhaps a friend or two, would celebrate Anna’s April birthday by dining at her favorite Mexican restaurant. There would be lots of silliness and laughter. During her teenage years, Anna would always forewarn us not to have the staff come to our table to sing their crazy birthday song. Of course, since we always insisted that our role as parents was to embarrass our children, her threats and warnings could not stop our tomfoolery. I believe she secretly enjoyed the attention.

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. My April child 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 on her birthday. For several years we did just that. With hearts filled with the numbness of fresh grief, our restructured family of three would hop in the car and head out-of-town. We would spend the day busying ourselves with whatever it took to survive. We would laugh half-heartedly, share memories, or cry together as we struggled to discover our new identity as a family without Anna’s physical presence.

As always, only a few short weeks following Anna’s birthday Mother’s Day would arrive right on schedule. 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 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.

It seems impossible that it has been nine birthdays and nine Mothers’ Days since Anna died. In my heart it was only yesterday. I can still see her smile and hear her laugh. I can feel the warmth of a quick hug as she heads out the door. With each passing year comes a new reality of what it means to be a bereaved parent, of what it means to find a new normal for our lives. The pain continues to occasionally catch me off guard, but it is softer now. The tears still come, but less frequently. Warm memories bring joyful moments to the emptiness. I smile quietly to myself, reassured that Anna lives on in our hearts and lives, as well as in the hearts and lives of those around us. Once again each April we celebrate the day of her birth, for her life has been a gift of unimaginable joy. Our traditional Mother’s day rituals have changed to new ones. There is more laughter now, fewer painful tears. I rejoice that I can celebrate that I am Debbie’s Mom, and now Scott’s mother-in-law, as well! Life is good.

The winter has been long and cold, as has been the winter of our grief. Springtime has arrived. The sunshine and blue sky, the purple crocus and yellow daffodils pushing through the warming earth bring hope of renewal and reassurance that life continues. Although there is an irreparable hole in my soul and an emptiness in my heart that will never leave, I am forever grateful that Anna lived with us for 23 years. I am eternally thankful that I am and I always will be Anna’s Mom. May the warmth and brilliance of springtime fill your hearts with times of peace and hope and love.

Paula Funk ~ TCF, Petoskey, MI

What Time Can Do

It has been 50 months since we last saw our Jeremy and time has done a lot for us. When our grief was so new and raw everyone told us that time would heal the wound, we thought they were crazy. No amount of time could ever heal this huge wound—ever. It took awhile before we realized what everyone said is true—time does help. We can now think of Jeremy and smile and remember the sweet memories, and we can actually laugh again and thank the Lord we have joy and peace in our lives again. We don’t mean to say that the pain is totally gone, I don’t think the pain ever totally goes away because we miss our child everyday and ache for what could have been. We are so thankful for the 21 years we did have Jeremy and for the memories we made. We could not say that in the beginning of our grief because we felt so cheated that our child was taken away. Time does help and heal but it’s a long process and time can be a friend or enemy in grief. We make the choice as to what it’s to be. We can use time to help us grieve and go through the process and become better people from what grief has taught us or we can use time to beat ourselves up and become bitter and negative. We miss our sweet Jeremy everyday and he forever lives in our hearts and one glorious day we will see him again—until then we go on. We hope time continues to be kind to us and that we continue to grow and learn in our grief and to help others.



Jeremy Newman

In memory of Jeremy Newman, 4-15-80 ~ 01-10-02
Happy Birthday son. We love you so much.
~ *Dad & Mom, Victor and Marjorie Newman*



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: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please check any of following that apply.

Please continue sending the newsletter.

No thank you, I'd prefer to stop receiving the newsletter.

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 _____
Please make check payable to TCF

In memory of _____

The continuation of this chapter's work depends on donations. If you have not taken the opportunity to give a donation in memory of your child please consider taking this time to give a gift that will help reach out to other newly bereaved parents.

We must have your written permission on file to use your child's name and/or picture in the newsletter, Web site, Candle Lighting Ceremony or any other TCF event. Permission may be withdrawn at any time by written request. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only utilized for Chapter activities such as the newsletter.

(Signature) Date: _____

Please return completed form to:
The Compassionate Friends of Tyler
P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, TX 75711



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711



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