



Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, April 17, 6:30 p.m.
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

Contact

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Web Site: www.TylerTCF.org
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Chapter LeaderTina Loper
Chapter Co-LeaderPat Settle
Newsletter/Web SiteMary Lingle
Steering Committee: Tina Loper,
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 birth-days 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 Compassionate Friends is for Sharing

Many people may think that meetings of The Compassionate Friends consist of bereaved people who sit and cry most of the evening, but that is certainly a misconception. It is normal to shed tears as we talk about our child's death, and we would expect a newly bereaved person to cry. We understand that completely. But we don't just sit and cry. Would you believe that most of the time we spend in our sharing group circle we may enjoy hearing others' stories about their children, or even sharing our own? Our meetings are usually about our memories, our questions and also telling what has helped us to cope with it all. We all have ideas that we share with others in the hope that they may reach a point of "good memories" instead of bad memories of the child's death.

A support group should be very comforting and welcoming to those who attend and should always have non-judgmental members. We are less concerned at how the child died (even though we do care) and we are more concerned that we be there for the parents, siblings or grandparents who need us. They have a desire to talk and share about their loved one. We want to let them lean on us in their time of pain, just as we had others before us who let us lean on them. It does come full circle.

Jackie Wesley ~ TCF, East Central Indiana & Miami-Whitewater Chapters

We will be holding our 4th Annual Butterfly Release on May 19 at 1:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church south campus, 2813 and Hwy. 69 W.

Monarch butterflies will be available for a \$10 donation if you would like to release your own butterfly in memory of your child. The deadline to place your order is May 5th.

Contact Tina Loper at (903) 780-7104, (903) 570-8412 or Margie Newman at (903) 561-1447 to order butterflies or for more info and directions.

Please let us know if you would like to help this year in honor and in loving memory of your child.



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.

“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

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.”

Three Angels

By B. Walker

Three angels came in a dream one night
Standing in a row.

I looked upon the first of them
and my tears began to flow.

"I came for him," the angel said.

"I know it broke your heart.

The young and noble, fair of face—

They never should depart."

A glistening tear upon her cheek
that sparkled as the dew,

Showed me she understood my pain
as she added, "God loves you."

The second angel bowed her head,
repentant in her strife.

She said she'd been appointed
to guard him all his life.

"The Master had a different plan,
and He is in control.

The time had come, the hour arose,
When God would free his soul."

The pain pierced wildly in my heart
And crying with loud voice,

I screamed, "I prayed always for him!
So why was this God's choice?"

The third of angels raised his head,
A radiance all around...

I saw his face in change and form
and my heart began to pound!

There was my son, with the biggest smile!

He said, "Oh Mom, don't weep!

I see you in your tears and pain,

An angel's watch I keep.

I'm sorry its so hard for you

On earth without me there.

But my love is with you always
and God and I do care.

I'll help you take each tiny step

and lift you from your sorrow;

And very soon we'll get to hug!

It will seem just like tomorrow!

Please look for me in all the things

Of beauty that you see,

For I live on in love and peace—

I am forever free!"

I felt a calm, unlike before,

and wiped the tears away.

I said, "I love you" and woke up...
to face another day.





We need not walk alone.

“That’s what Compassionate Friends do—they help to bring our children into our lives even though our children are no longer alive. For a few hours each month, our children return to us.” —Annette Mennen Baldwin

Love Gifts



Charisse Smith in memory of Ben Smith - refreshments for the meeting

David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy Terrell

Misty Truester in memory of Jarren Moser

Charles & Billie Bridges in memory of Cory Blackmon

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

College-Bound Solutions for allowing TCF of Tyler to use their facilities as our meeting place - in memory of Nathaniel Peter Bolom



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.

TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt

If you would like to have your child's photo included on the third 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.

Thanks to Teresa and David Terrell for donating their talent and time on these beautiful quilts which will be displayed in our meeting room and at future special events.



Announcements

Our 4th Annual Butterfly Release will be held May 19, 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church South Campus. Call (903) 258-2547 for more information.

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

TCF of Tyler Cookbook

Would you like to submit a recipe for inclusion in our first TCF of Tyler cookbook? Send your child’s favorite recipe to the contact info on the front page of our newsletter.

Grief and Anger

In our chapter meeting this month we will be discussing anger in our grief. Many experience anger after their child or loved one dies. A description of anger is “A feeling of rage, an emotional agitation to what is viewed as unfair, unjust and sometimes even shameful.”

When we are angry we need a target. Sometimes the target may be God. (He understands.) Some may even feel anger at their child or loved one, thinking, “How could he/she leave me like this? Why? Doesn’t he/she know I’m hurting and in pain?” Some people are angry at the doctors, some at the funeral directors, some even feel anger toward themselves, thinking they could have done something to prevent the death.

We may even be angry at our spouse. He/she may not grieve the same way and we may misunderstand their feelings that are just as deep as our own. Maybe our clergyman is not as compassionate as we believe they should be, or maybe they were not available to us at all. We are angry because we feel abandoned and that life is unfair. We also feel very alone and no longer in control of our emotions. We may also think nothing will ever be the same, and it won’t. But as time goes on, it does get somewhat easier as you work through your grief.

We all try at times to not let this anger show to others, but suppressing it can only lead to sickness and withdrawal. Masking anger will often hurt the ones around you and may even drive them away from you. You may even risk losing your closest support system.

Dealing with your anger and admitting it and also seeking help from others who have experienced this feeling is always the healthy thing to do. Personally, talking has been the best help for me. Attending a Compassionate Friends meeting and talking to others who have “been there” has helped many.

Jackie Wesley ~ TCF, East Central Indiana & Miami-Whitewater Chapters



We need not walk alone.

"Perhaps laughter is also the beginning of Nature's way of mending, of healing us." —*Dave Ziv*

April Birthdays



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



Ricky Edmiston
4-26-90 ~ 6-29-06
Son of
Woody & Barbara Edmiston



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



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



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



Jarren Hendickson
4-28-00 ~ 5-31-05
Son of Robert Hendickson



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



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

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



We need not walk alone.

"Each of us has the same opportunities now as we had before. We can permit time to simply pass, or we can work to mold its passage into constructive growth." —Don Hackett

April Anniversaries



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



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



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



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



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



Kody Maner
02-10-87 ~ 04-16-06
Son of Lauri Maner



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



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



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



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

Spring Thaws The Wounded Heart

Alice J. Wisler
Inspired by the life of Daniel Paul Wisler
8-25-92 ~ 2-2-97

That first spring
came too soon
why did daffodils
show sunny faces
around the grave stone
why did warm breezes blow
clouds away
my world, a gray dismal
had no room
for this season.
Now years later
the blossoms of love,
hope and healing
have broken through
grounds of utter despair
warmed by memories of you
I join the daffodils
bringing my own smile.

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



We need not walk alone.

“To spare oneself from grief at all cost can be achieved only at the price of total detachment, which excludes the ability to experience happiness.”
—Erich Fromm

We're Only Human

“Guilt Days”: There is neither rhyme nor reason to when they will occur, even eight and a half years after my daughter Nina’s death. I had one just the other day. I suppose it didn’t help that it was a dreary stereotypical Minnesota day in February with depressingly gray skies and temperatures outside registering teeth-chattering, sub-zero cold with just enough snow fall to make venturing out problematic. These surroundings made it quite easy, even without any apparent good reason, to plummet into a “blue funk”. My state of mind then heads in a negative direction ultimately sliding into a bottomless pit of senseless guilt.

In my experience with my friends who are bereaved parents, most admit that they experience this same phenomenon. I don’t think there is anyone among us who can say after the death of their child that they don’t regret something that they did or didn’t do, said or didn’t say to that child while they were living. It doesn’t matter that the reasons for our feelings of guilt may be unfounded or even seem foolish, the fact remains that we have them.

For example, on birthdays or holidays where I would customarily give a gift, if inexplicably I recall the “toy cash register incident,” I am guaranteed an instant “guilt day.” In explanation, year after year Nina requested a toy cash register for a present; even to an age that I thought was unreasonable to want such a thing. For some reason, unbeknownst to even me, in my eyes it was a silly gift; something that she couldn’t possibly really want or even use once she got it. Needless to say, I never bought it for her. I can tell you, though, that even to this day when I walk through the toy department and I see a toy cash register I feel a deep sadness and tears come to my eyes because I didn’t buy her the so-called “silly” present that she obviously really wanted.

Just innocently strolling through a toy department and seeing a toy cash register can begin a domino effect of guilt feelings, a chain reaction of remembering even the tiniest self-perceived slight or any incident that I wish I could take back where Nina is concerned. Such as the time she wanted me to give her a ride to Girl Scouts, which was only four blocks away from our house. I had a migraine headache and could barely lift my head off the pillow and therefore couldn’t give her one. So she hopped on her bike and about a block from our house hit a bump in the road and was thrown over the handlebars breaking her collarbone! Even though I know realistically that I couldn’t have done anything different considering the circumstances, when I am in the throes of a “guilt day,” the thought of that particular occurrence can send me in a downward spiral of culpability.

In actuality, chances are pretty good that if my daughter were alive today and I brought up these two happenings from the past she would probably tell me that I was correct in thinking she would have tired quickly of the toy cash register, and that she knows I couldn’t physically have driven her to Girl Scouts with a migraine; that she never blamed me for the collarbone fracture in the first place. But because our child who died cannot give us confirmation that they understood our reasoning and that our actions were “okay” with them, we are left to wonder what they were thinking and feeling regarding the particular situation that makes us feel guilty. Therefore, when we are having a “guilt day” our tendency is to blow it out of proportion and thereby imagine the worst.

Expressing those feelings of guilt to a trusted friend or family member can be helpful. Talking about your feelings may also help you to let some of it go. That person may even remind you of something you had forgotten about on those days when you are sucked into a vortex of guilt and rendered incapable of remembering any of the positives. For example, a dear friend reminded me—one time when I was bushwhacked by a “guilt day”—of something she thought was extra special I had done for my daughter; something that she thought went above and beyond the call of duty as a mother. Nina had called me from school to sweetly beg me to pick up a Valentine’s gift for her boyfriend. One of the gifts was glow-in-the-dark stars like she had on her bedroom ceiling. She told me where to get them (a specialty store at a mall about 30 minutes away). I could tell by her voice how important it was to her, so I dropped everything and off I went to the mall. Little did I know that it would take three trips to three separate malls in different parts of town before I found a store that had any left in stock! Luckily, I made it home just minutes before she and her boyfriend arrived. I recall her exquisite smile and hugs of genuine thanks for my efforts. I remembered how gloriously radiant and pleased she looked when she came upstairs to show me the red shirt with the Tweety-Bird (her favorite) insignia on the turtleneck collar that her boyfriend had given her. Thankfully my friend steered me in the direction of these happy memories and positive reflections of Nina’s last Valentine’s Day and thereby broke the cycle of more negative thinking.

I believe that no one is harder on themselves than bereaved parents. Even as irrational as it is, we feel that we failed as our children’s guardians, that we should have been super-human and able to protect them from cancer, drunk drivers, criminals, drugs, depression, congenital illnesses, and a host of other unspeakable evils with the potential to take away their precious lives.

The bottom line is that we are not invincible or perfect; we are only human. We did the best that we could with what we had to deal with at the time. Our children know this; they love and forgive us for our own humanness and associated imperfections, and I believe would want us to forgive ourselves as well.

*With gentle thoughts,
Cathy L. Seehuetter ~ TCF, St. Paul, MN Chapter*



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



We need not walk alone.



www.TylerTCF.org