



Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, April 15, 6:30 p.m.
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

Contact

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Web Site: www.TylerTCF.org
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Newsletter/Web SiteMary Lingle
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Tina Loper, Pat Settle, Sam Smith,
Mary Ann Girard, Carol Johnson,
Carol Thompson, Patricia Miller,
David & Teresa Terrell,
Charisse Smith, 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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We will be holding our 5th Annual Butterfly Release on May 17 at 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church south campus, 2813 and Hwy. 69 W.

Monarch butterflies are available if you would like to release your own butterfly in memory of your child. The deadline to preorder is May 10th, and your payment of \$10 must be received prior to the butterfly release. You may purchase butterflies the day of the release until 12 noon for \$15.



Please let us know if you would like to help this year in honor and in loving memory of your child. (See announcements on page 3 for more information, or call (903) 258-2547.)

Photos from last year's Butterfly Release



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.

“Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don’t expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.” —*Evelyn B.*

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.”

When A Child Dies

When the thing that one only imagines—actually happens, you discover very quickly that you have a difficult time speaking about it. People who have lost a child, including myself, act in all kinds of weird ways in order to deny the awful truth—not just because of the awful pain of losing a person they loved—many of us have lost parents, mates and friends, and no matter how painful, it’s just not the same. But because what has happened is so unnatural, so against the necessary order of things, that we cannot accept it—it is almost beyond our comprehension that children should die before the adults. It contradicts history, violates basic physics, and so, when we lose a child or children, life seems to lose all meaning. We are changed forever.

Anne D. ~ TCF, Oklahoma City, OK

Remember

When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I died, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.

Frederick B. ~ TCF, "Whistling in the Dark" Houston West Chapter

When a Sibling Dies

When a sibling dies, the world changes in a heartbeat. Oftentimes when such a loss occurs, others fail to recognize that the surviving sibling faces emotional battles on many fronts while working through the loss. Largely ignored, surviving siblings are often referred to as the “forgotten mourners.”

Please visit www.compassionatefriends.org for sibling support including:

TCF Sibling Chat Room
TCF Sibling Newsletters
TCF Sibling Pen Pal Program
TCF Sibling Web Sites

This month’s printing of our newsletter sponsored by:

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Call (903) 258-2547 to sponsor a monthly newsletter.



We need not walk alone.

“He that conceals his grief finds no remedy for it.”
—Turkish Proverb

Love Gifts



Sam Smith in memory of Stacey Smith

Bonnie Lepelley in memory of Trey Lepelley

Christina Ramirez in memory of Bryce Ramirez-Cooksey

Mike & Joan Dover in memory of Justin Dover

Shane & Carol Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets

Dale & Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad Cavazos

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Bridges in memory of Cory Blackmon

Cece Brotton in memory of Missy

Bill & Betty Wilkinson in memory of
James Nathaniel Wilkinson

Dave & Jeanelle Maland in memory of
Joe Maland & Sarah Thompson

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



Special Thank Yous!

A special thanks to Don Dixon, in memory of Austin Dixon, for donating wood and cutting out the butterflies for the butterfly release.

A special thanks to Mary Ann Girard, in memory of Joe Maland, for donating TCF fans for the butterfly release.

A special thanks to Nora Hubbard, (Teresa Terrell's Aunt), for hand-quilting the beautiful TCF memorial quilts.

A special thanks to Ms. Henderson's class, who assembled the March newsletter, in memory of Ben Smith.

A special thanks to Claudette Brown, in memory of Terry Brown, for pledging a monthly donation. Claudette lives too far away to make it to the TCF meetings, but appreciates the newsletter and TCF events.



Announcements

We will be holding our 5th Annual Butterfly Release on May 17 at 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church south campus, 2813 and Hwy. 69 W.

Monarch butterflies will be available if you would like to release your own butterfly in memory of your child. The deadline to preorder is May 10th, and your payment of \$10 must be received prior to the butterfly release. You may purchase butterflies the day of the release until 12 noon for \$15.

We are also personalizing the wood butterflies for an additional charge this year. If you want a butterfly designed specifically for your child, please let us know. Football, baseball, softball, cheerleading, military, etc., are a few of the designs available. Personalized butterflies are \$20 and need to be paid for in advance.

If you are interested in donating refreshments this year, or would like to help with the set up, in honor and in loving memory of your child, please contact us at info@tylertcf.org, or call (903) 258-2547.

Athen's TCF Meeting: We are planning to hold a meeting in the Athen's area in the future. If you are in the Athen's area and would like to attend or help, please contact us.

Our Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony is Dec. 14, 2008. Watch future newsletters for more information.

Bonfire September 27, 2008: We will have a bonfire at Carol Johnson's home in September. More details to come.

Sponsor a Newsletter! If you would like to sponsor a monthly newsletter by contributing funds, or by copying at your business or organization, please call (903) 258-2547. Businesses, church groups, organizations or individuals are welcome. We will highlight your sponsorship with an ad or photo and text.

TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt

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

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.





We need not walk alone.

“Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief. But may I never forget it is the place where I grew my wings, becoming a new person because of my loss.” —*Janice H.*

April Birthdays



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



Jarren 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
Granddaughter of Gracie Farris



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



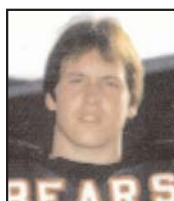
Russell McGilvray
4-15-59 ~ 4-29-07
Son of Fran McGilvray



Deanna Holcomb
3-31-73 ~ 4-19-05
Daughter of Pat Smith



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



Joe Maland
4-2-83 ~ 8-17-05
Son of MaryAnn Girard



Jeremy Kersh
4-30-86 ~ 3-25-07
Son of
Brad & Debbie Kersh



Joshua Walker
4-29-83 ~ 6-25-06
Son of Crystal Walker





We need not walk alone.

"But eventually we must seek balance, finds ways of coping with our soul-shattering loss and ground ourselves in our new reality. The Compassionate Friends has done all of that for me. But, I had to take the first step." —Annette Mennen Baldwin

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
Grandson of Joe & Patsy Murray



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



Deanna Holcomb
3-31-73 ~ 4-19-05
Daughter of Pat Smith



Joshua Carl Tucker
5-17-76 ~ 4-15-92
Son of Judy C. Googins



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



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



Russell McGilvray
4-15-59 ~ 4-29-07
Son of Fran McGilvray



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

"Relevant to the paucity of English to describe certain terms, we have a name for a child who has lost a parent—*orphan*; *widow* describes a woman whose husband has died, and *widower* for the male counterpart. But there is no term to describe a parent who has lost a child—there are no words adequate for that pain."
—*Author Unknown*





We need not walk alone.

“Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very glad I loved.” —*Darcie D. Sims*

Grief and Marriage

When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for twenty years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise.

We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge. I felt like a time bomb about to explode. I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate. This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger overwhelmed me as I literally realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings, and then I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of others who had lost children permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique; many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulties after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm. We weren't going crazy; and just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart. My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband. Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

Much later, the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends if I had only asked for it saddened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help.

I will be forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms. We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other smoothed over many rough moments.

Time spent alone or together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try harder. Some days, we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

As I look back, I see that ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, both of you will be inevitably changed from the experience of losing a child. Back then, understanding these simple facts would have immeasurably helped us.

Pat Retzloff ~ TCF, Oshkosh, WI

The Wounded Heart

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, nor will we be the last to enter the realm of "Bereaved Parents." But for now—right now—it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending. Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss, to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt and anger, and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life. A wounded heart not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be an abscess—to swell and undermine—erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, it will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed. The wounded heart, encouraged and given time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

Nancy G. ~ TCF, Livonia, MI





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*

Are We Bitter? It's Our Choice

Marilyn H. ~ TCF, Redlands, CA

A few years ago I received a phone call telling me that a drunk driver had killed my friend's husband. The caller said I should go to see my friend. My first thought was, I don't really know the widow all that well. I'm sure she will have lots of friends to help her. What if she doesn't want to see me? What if she thinks I'm intruding?

After some internal struggle, I went to my friend's home. As I walked in, everyone became quiet, and then a whisper sort of rippled around the room, "Marilyn is here!" I saw my friend sitting on the couch. She motioned for me to come sit by her, and she whispered, "I've been hoping you would come. I have so many questions and I think you can answer my questions." My friend and I talked so easily that I nearly forgot anyone else was in the room.

That day I realized that I had gained a position of credibility because I had experienced the death of three of my four sons. Had I asked for that credibility? Absolutely not! But I got it anyway. The only choice I had in the matter was what I was going to do with my experience. Anna Quindlan stated, "Our lives are defined by those we have lost." I read that quote years ago, and it stuck with me. So what does it mean?

I think it means that once we have walked through the terrible trauma of the death of our precious child our lives are changed forever. How our lives have changed is totally up to us.

Because our child died:

- We can be more sensitive to others.
- We can be more observant and notice when others seem to feel sad.
- We can show up quickly when someone dies.
- We can answer the question, "Am I going crazy?"
- We can help someone know it is normal to want to see their deceased child.
- We can sit and hold someone's hand when they are afraid.
- We can remember the death date of a child.
- We can let others know they needn't fear they might forget their child. It won't happen.
- We can be the one to remember special days of our bereaved friends.
- We can be the one to help empty out a deceased child's room.
- We can be the one to understand because: we are different.
- We have let our lives be defined positively by those we have lost.
- Here are the other choices.

Because our child died:

- We can choose to be insensitive.
- We can choose to be indifferent to other's pain.
- We can stay away when a tragedy happens to someone else.
- We can refuse to offer comfort.
- We can refuse to talk about our pain.
- We can cause others to feel uncomfortable and afraid to mention our child's name.
- We can allow our lives to be negatively defined by those we have lost.
- It's up to us. We can be bitter or better. It is our choice.

Prayer for Spring

Like Springtime, let me unfold and grow fresh and anew, from this cocoon of grief that has been spun around me. Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and renewed life, as my bones still creak from the winter of my grief. Life has dared to go on around me, and as I recover from the insult of life's continuance, I readjust my focus to include recovery and growth as a possibility in my future. Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief. But may I never forget it is the place where I grew my wings, becoming a new person because of my loss.

Janice H. ~ TCF, Coquitlam, BC Canada/Portland, OR





We need not walk alone.

"The risk of love is loss, and the price of loss is grief. But the pain of grief is only a shadow when compared with the pain of never risking love."

—Hilary Stanton Zunin

Where Are You?

I missed you yesterday
and looked for you
among the artifacts of your life—
your room with pictures,
the clothes that still carried your scent,
your favorite tools and books,
the tapes you loved to hear.

The very walls echoed your vitality
and carried faint memories of riotous laughter.
And so I sat there, comforted for a while,
but forced at last to confess
that although beautiful memories lingered
you were not there,
not then and not ever again.

If I could not find you yesterday
where, then, can I look today?
Who can I talk to, implore, beg
to show me the way?
Where are the hidden doorways
to the signs and wonders
others claim to see?

My musings bring no answers
so I take a walk to clear my mind.
Ahead, I see children playing,
and their laughter floating on the wind
reminds me of your own carefree approach to life.
Their running mirrors your own abandon
and the way you always found joy in simple things.

Can this be the answer
to the riddle of finding you again?
Can it be that I will hear you
in every moment of laughter?
That I will see you
in the actions of a mischievous friend,
that I will feel you in every touch of compassion?

I've always heard
that if you seek, you will find.
Perhaps the corollary to that
is that you must seek in the right places.
I've been looking in the scrapbook
of all that used to be
and found only momentary solace.

So let me look for you anew
in all the wonders and blessings of life.
I believe you are reflected there
with every expression of happiness and joy,
in every Instance of fearless exploration
and with every act of unconditional love.

©Harold Hopkins, January, 2001
In loving memory of Lance Porter Hopkins
July 20, 1975 - November 30, 1999

A Message to My Wife

The years of our marriage are few
When measured against a lifetime.
We have encountered joy
And shared confidence in our future.
We have known hope's ending
And have borne the death of dreams.
We have, together, been diminished.
Even minor aspirations have eluded
our grasp in the Cruel shadow
Of the loss of our child.
Yet, we still share our lives, and though
The brightness we once knew has fled,
We have grown enough to sense
A return of laughter—
An uplifting to shatter the dimness,
To remind us that tomorrow will come
And dreams may again be born.

Don H. ~ TCF, South Shore Boston, MA

Dancing with Angels

Looking out the window, seeing the rays of sun
Shining down on the Earth,
Warming us with its love,
Causing new growth, changes of season.

With each raindrop that falls
The Earth is nourished
Drinking the water of life,
Becoming stronger, growing with love.

Listen to the wind soaring through the trees,
It has the strength to move mountains.
Leaves dance down to the Earth
Each a different color, a different beauty.

Soon it becomes cold, and the rain turns to snow.
Snowflakes dance down to the Earth
Blanketing each seed, protecting the Earth
From nature's harsh cold.

At night, when all seems dark,
The moon's light will guide us.
The Earth is watched from far above,
Stars glimmering, dancing with light.

Like changes in season the tides turn over.
It's the love of angels, reaching down upon the Earth,
Dancing for us, if we just stop for a moment
And look out the window of life.

Elizabeth Anne Gannon, Stormville, New York
Bereavement Magazine, Nov/Dec, 1998



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.

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



"I don't think you ever stop giving. I really don't. I think it's an on-going process. And it's not just about being able to write a check. It's being able to touch somebody's life." —Oprah Winfrey



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711



We need not walk alone.



www.TylerTCF.org