



**Monthly Group Meeting**

Tuesday, February 20, 6:30 p.m.  
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

**Contact**

Phone: (903) 258-2547  
Web Site: [www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org)  
E-mail: [info@TylerTCF.org](mailto:info@TylerTCF.org)  
Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711

Chapter Leader .....Tina Loper  
Chapter Co-Leader.....Pat Settle  
Newsletter/Web Site .....Mary 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](http://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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**February Meeting Notice**

**Due to a family emergency, Alan Pedersen will not be our special guest at the February meeting. Alan's music and story are at [www.everashleymusic.com](http://www.everashleymusic.com).**

**Butterfly Wings, Bricks and Lead**

When I saw her load of grief, it looked to me to be merely a light load of butterfly wings, as compared to my full load of heavy bricks. Then I saw another man, and he seemed to be carrying a small load of lead. But as I watched her step on the scales bearing her load of butterfly wings, the scales read "one ton." When he stepped on the scales with his load of lead, the scales also read "one ton." I knew my grief-load of bricks would weigh more, but those scales read for me, "one ton." Our loads of butterfly wings, lead and bricks weighed exactly the same to the one carrying that particular load of grief.

We bereaved parents often feel resentment when a non-bereaved person speaks about our child's death. HOW can THAT PERSON know or even dream of how I feel or what I am going through? These feelings may be justified. But when we begin to feel resentment toward another bereaved parent—"That child's death was easy compared to my child's death," "I have suffered more than she/he ever did"—we should remember that each of our grief-loads weighs two thousand pounds to the one under it. Compared to Rose Kennedy, who had one child in a mental institution, and lost one daughter and three sons in violent deaths, my grief-load begins to look as if it were made of gossamer soap bubbles, but when I again step on that scale, it still reads, "one ton."

Our grief-loads may appear to weigh less because we who are under them have grown stronger through time and grief process maturation. The load actually weighs no less; it is we who have grown stronger and can carry it more easily. Sometimes we can even completely ignore the weight that is still there. Always be careful in judging another's grief-load. Remember the lead, butterfly wings and those bricks, and how they all weigh the same to the one under that load of grief.

*Tom Crouthamel ~ TCF, Sarasota, FL*

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

**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.*

“But let us not forget that this may be the year when love and hope and courage find each other somewhere in the darkness to lift their voice and speak: ‘Let there be light.’” —*Marie Hofmoeckel*

## 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 Piano Sits Silent

I etch her name in the dust.  
Run my hands over the keyboard,  
too long untouched by the pianist;  
The one no longer physically here,  
who played the songs,  
badly at times,  
yet unstoppable in  
her need to make music.  
As if it was her mission  
to get it right.  
As if she knew there was little time  
to master the melody.  
So she played and played.  
Melancholy tunes  
that spoke of lives gone too soon.  
I would call to her,  
"You're playing too loud,  
I can't hear myself think."  
If I could just take back those words,  
for I long to hear my  
beloved child play the music,  
that once rang through these halls.  
Those uneven strains would be  
the sweetest music to my ears.  
I touch the ivories and hear  
the foreign sound of this long  
silent instrument.  
And remember my precious child,  
remember the joy  
her efforts brought her...  
Remembering, remembering...  
Though my tears fall gently,  
my heart smiles as I  
recall the sweet sounds of her life.  
And even as the piano sits silent,  
My memories resound  
and I recall the love, always the love.

*Cathy Seehuetter ~ TCF, St. Paul, MN*



Visit us online at [www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org)



*We need not walk alone.*

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

### Love Gifts



Phyliss Cavazos in memory of Chad Cavazos #52

Melton Brown in memory of Terry Brown

Mary & Erin Lingle in memory of Candice Lingle

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](mailto: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.

### 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 and Miami-Whitewater Chapters*

### Announcements

**Due to a family emergency, Alan Pederson will not be our special guest at the February meeting.** Alan's music and story are at [www.everashleymusic.com](http://www.everashleymusic.com).

**Volunteer needed!** We have many TCF articles available in print and need someone who has access to a computer to type them. Call Mary at (903) 581-4566, or email her at [info@TylerTCF.org](mailto:info@TylerTCF.org) if you would like to help.

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

**Our 4th Annual Butterfly Release will be held in May.** Watch our newsletter and Web site for details as they become available.

### 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](mailto: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.



### 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.

**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.*

"In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love." —Mother Theresa

### February Birthdays



**Justin Clakley**  
2-25-83 ~ 5-15-03  
Son of Teri Clakley



**Michelle "Missy" Green**  
2-09-69 ~ 1-30-93  
Daughter of Elena Glasscock



**Dylan Corey**  
2-21-97 ~ 1-24-01  
Son of Christy Corey



**Colleen Herriage**  
2-23-67 ~ 5-14-83  
Daughter of Ruth Herriage



**Caleb Scott Jones**  
2-27-86 ~ 7-24-03  
Son of Lee Ann Colwell



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



**Walter "Skipper" Dale**  
2-23-68 ~ 7-02-85  
Son of Lucy Winningham



**Kody Maner**  
2-10-87 ~ 4-16-06  
Son of Lauri Maner



**Sean Smith**  
2-2-87 ~ 10-27-01  
Son of Randy & Judy Smith



**Mary Jennifer Stone**  
2-22-81 ~ 9-21-96  
Daughter of Dick & Denise Stone



**Chasen Sean Shirley**  
2-13-82 ~ 7-3-06  
Son of Debbie Shirley

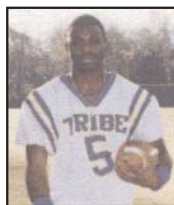


**John Andy Terrell**  
2-11-72 ~ 11-25-03  
Son of David & Teresa Terrell



**Cheryl Heerd**  
2-22-71 ~ 2-22-81  
Granddaughter of Larry Batte

Whitni Danielle Ray, 11-16-86 ~ 12-22-04, was inadvertently omitted from the November and December newsletters. Whitni's mother is Rachelle Threadgill Brooks.



**Ijuan Deshaun Simms**  
2-20-79 ~ 11-7-01  
Son of Sharon Simms



**Candice Lingle**  
2-21-91 ~ 11-8-93  
Daughter of Mary Lingle

### The Long Forever

You left us so quickly;  
there were no goodbyes.  
How long this forever,  
your death and our lives.  
The sadness, the anger,  
the loneliness of three,  
preferring four always,  
how small, this new we.

*Genesse Bourdeau Gentry  
From Stars in the Deepest Night  
—After the Death of a Child*



*We need not walk alone.*

"The world loves closure, loves a thing that can, as they say, be gotten through. This is why it comes as a great surprise to find that loss is forever, that two decades after the event there are those occasions when something in you cries out at the continual presence of an absence." —*Anna Quindlen*

## February Anniversaries



**Cheryl Heerd**  
2-22-71 ~ 2-22-81  
Granddaughter of Larry Batte



**Richard Heerd**  
10-31-76 ~ 2-22-81  
Grandson of Larry Batte



**Jackie Heerd**  
6-30-1946 ~ 2-22-1981  
Daughter of Larry Batte



**Darell Bolton**  
7-21-61 ~ 2-22-2003  
Brother of Kathy Bolton-Polk



**Ryszard Spakovsky**  
12-2-80 ~ 2-20-98  
Sherrell & Greg Smith, Foreign  
Exchange Parents



**Tiffany Johnston**  
12-29-81 ~ 2-20-98  
Daughter of Sherrell & Greg Smith



**Michael Schmidt**  
3-11-83 ~ 2-10-03  
Son of Patricia Jeffery



**James Brady Langston**  
10-13-96 ~ 2-15-01  
Son of Jamie Langston Dacus



**John Wallace**  
7-1-80 ~ 2-2-99  
Son of Barbara Wallace



**Adam Thomas Pritchard**  
9-21-82 ~ 2-21-04  
Son of  
Thomas & Ginger Pritchard

## Support from Family and Friends

There are many things that a newly bereaved person needs during the first few weeks. One of the most important is support from their family and friends, who should be there to let them talk and to really listen, to give hugs, and to help with any chores the bereaved are not able to accomplish yet. It's hard for them to even think ahead to what should be done—washing clothes, cleaning, even answering the telephone may seem impossible. Many families have found it hard to go shopping for just basic groceries. They need someone to lend some thoughtful ideas and maybe see to some of these tasks a few times until their numbness has lightened a little.

Family and friends need to realize that the person who is grieving may never be the same. They will always be without their loved one and their lives will never be the same as before the death.

Since my daughter Teresa died I too have changed a lot; I have many new friends; I do things I'd have never done before, such as becoming a chapter leader, a newsletter editor and just recently writing articles on grief in these newspapers. I have more compassion towards others than before, and my interests are so very different now. If there were gifts resulting from a death, I'd say I have received many. Some people may think what I do is depressing. I feel it is helping others and at the same time helping me with my own healing.

*Jackie Wesley ~ The Compassionate Friends, East Central Indiana and Miami-Whitewater Chapters*

## 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*



*We need not walk alone.*

“We each choose different ways to reach for hope, to live our lives as well as we possibly can without our precious children. But eventually we all awaken to hope.” —Annette Mennen Baldwin

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## And Then There Was Hope

Once, in what is now another life, I thought support groups were for someone else. I felt that with research, personal work, discussions with the elders in my family and wise friends, I would find all the answers I needed. This worked well until December of 2002. My son died. The death of my only child changed everything. My standard methods of “self help” were not going to get me through this. I needed more than even Solomon could give me. And I desperately needed hope.

My first meeting at Compassionate Friends was in March of 2003. My son had been gone almost three months; I was traumatized, I could not speak and I was doubtful that I would ever find even an obscure hint of peace in my life. April’s meeting was somewhat better. I spoke a few words. In May I was rocked by the dual anticipation of Mother’s Day and my son’s birthday. In June I participated in the balloon liftoff; I sprained my ankle as we were walking back from the park. That night, as I set at home with ice on my ankle, I thought about the past five months. I realized that I was a different person than I had been earlier in the year. I was no longer the woman who walked into her first Compassionate Friends meeting because I was no longer walking alone. There were others at my side, in front of me, behind me, encouraging me, offering gentle suggestions, understanding and listening as I told my child’s story over and over and over again.

I discovered that those who had walked this road before me were holding the lanterns of hope to cast light on my life path. It was these people and only these people who could reach me, who could teach me, whose voices could penetrate my fog, whose hearts could help me to begin the healing process.

By the time I marked the first anniversary of my son’s death, I was beginning to discover that I had been transformed into a different person. Like my child whose body had died but whose spirit lived on symbolically in the butterfly, I had become a different person. I physically felt the pain of other parents. The first time I offered advice I sat in wonder at the realization that this very effort brought a little more light into my soul. Part of my healing process became the helping process.

Healing is what we seek, but we will never be “cured.” As parents who have lost our children, we will never be the same people we were before our child died. I came to accept this fact. But I also found that we can live with this wound which, despite our initial certainty to the contrary, is not usually fatal. It is forever, it is painful, it is the worst wound a human can feel, but it is not fatal. Even when I was wracked with physical pain in my grief, the light of my Compassionate Friends gave me a new perspective, one of hope. Yes, a part of me died with my son, but the part that remains is constantly changing, continually evolving and always reaching for the light of hope. We each choose different ways to reach for hope, to live our lives as well as we possibly can without our precious children. But eventually we all awaken to hope.

My hope did not come as an epiphany out of the blue, but rather, it was more like a false dawn followed by true, muted rays of the morning sun. My hope was a process. I engaged the process by reaching out to others, listening, learning. I learned that the quick answer is rarely the right answer. I learned that silence often says more than words. I made peace with my pain, and I began to reach out to others with words of hope. For words were my gift to those who had given me so much.

At Compassionate Friends we see many new faces each year. Most parents continue their relationship with the group for at least a year, some for even two years. A few stay three years. The good news is that those who do not choose to come to meetings have chosen to go forward with their lives in a different way. Going forward with their lives is a very positive step and the goal of each bereaved parent. Not all of us stay; not all of us should stay. But for some of us, the hope continues to rekindle at each meeting. As we meet the newly bereaved and listen to their story, to their child’s story, to the outpouring of pure agony and heartbreak, we hold the lantern. These parents will not know exactly what it is that we are doing as they are lost in the fog, as we all once were. Yet, we quietly hold the lantern, we keep the chapter moving forward, we meet parents and talk about their children, about our children, about grief, about life, about death, about pain and about hope. I have chosen to stay and hold the lantern for those who have followed me. For this gives me hope and peace and it keeps my child close to me in even the darkest of nights.

As grief is our companion, time moves forward; the pain becomes less searing, less encompassing. We learn to co-exist with our loss. We treasure our memories, we love our children and our hearts ache with our terrible loss. Yet, we have moved forward on the path. We are holding the lantern for others who find themselves on this path in life. We give this gift of hope with our presence which symbolizes the future of every newly bereaved parent. I remember my child as I walk this road with you.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin ~ TCF, Katy, TX  
October 24, 2006 ~ In memory of my son, Todd Mennen*



# 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](http://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](http://www.TylerTCF.org)