



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



*We need not walk alone.*

Volume 7, Issue 1

Tyler, Texas

January 2006

## Monthly Group Meeting

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

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Margie Newman, Mary Lingle

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[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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## Resolutions

Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this new year shouldn't be better.

Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what our meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you can become more involved in our chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs.

Have a happier New Year!

*Pat Akery ~ TCF, Medford, OR*

## Last Moments

Last moments  
Snatches of conversation  
That echo across all decades...  
Priceless words  
Indelibly etched on the heart.  
Sometimes  
Thoughts were never spoken  
But unexpected sentiment—  
A quick embrace, a silly smirk,  
Or joyous laughter—  
Reaches through the pain  
And warms the heart.  
We came too soon to understand  
The folly of harsh words  
Or neglected touch,  
For who can know which  
Taken-for-granted event  
Will become  
A last moment.

*Diane Fields ~ TCF, Westmoreland, PA*

## Bereaved Parents

Different ages  
Different stages  
Different issues  
  
Same pain  
Daily strain  
Occasional tissues  
  
Our children have died  
Often is all we know  
A fact we fear to hide  
  
Despite our ever-present woe  
We live with pride  
Though broken-hearted  
To love, remember, and grow

*Victor Montemurro ~ TCF, Medford, NY*

**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.*

"I am grateful to my father for showing me I am not alone in my grief. Only time can lessen the pain of grief, but my pain is more bearable when I share my grief. I have grown up with the knowledge of people who believe real men don't cry. Maybe they haven't lost a son. Maybe they haven't had a chance to be an example to the daughters who share their grief." —*Carrie Kears*

## 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.”

## Shared Thoughts: Resolving to Care for Ourselves

Marie Hofmockel ~ TCF, Valley Forge, PA

We all approach the New Year very differently. Many cannot wait for the year our child or sibling died to pass, while others feel it separates them further from that person. But, the one thing most newly bereaved agree on, is that they are glad the holidays are over. For some the anticipation was far greater than the holiday itself. When pain and stress control our lives it is very difficult to be optimistic.

We must try to face the New Year with the thought that we will not always be in this much pain. As difficult as it is for us to believe, the pain does soften. One day you will find a tolerable life again. It will not be the same as it was, but in many ways our lives can be richer, for we don't fret over the trivial things we used to. We have learned the real values in life. January is the time of year we struggle to put all our trying events behind us, and begin the year with new expectations. Unfortunately, that does not apply to our grief. We cannot “get on with our life” until we have spent sufficient time resolving our grief. All too often, we choose to repress the most painful emotions. They are too difficult to share with others, and we feel too fragile to deal with them. Once unresolved issues become delayed grief, it can be very damaging, and much harder to resolve.

Perhaps, one of our New Year resolutions should be allowing ourselves freedom to grieve. We need to take time to read,, attend meetings, phone a friend, cry, walk, eat healthier, and in general remove our name from the bottom of the list of people to care for, we need to place ourselves at the top of the list, making ourselves number one. We cannot always be a reservoir of strength; this may be the time to let others care for us.

We can't expect this to be a good year if our grief is fresh. But, we should expect good things as well as bad. We have survived the impossible ordeal of the death and funeral. We have learned to take one day at a time, and not to set our expectations too high. If a good day comes, cherish it. Many times we have problems with the most important ingredient of recovery, and that is to learn to laugh and be happy again. We feel guilty for that moment of pleasure, and sometimes even feel it disrespectful. This is not a sign of forgetting, or a lack of love, it is a very healthy sign of hope. I would like to share the last stanza of one of Sascha Wagner's poems, “The New Year,” with you.

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.**



*We need not walk alone.*

"Each of us finds an escape from the world after the death of our child...something to revise our history and help us survive. But eventually we must seek balance, find 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



### Love Gifts

Bonnie LePelley in memory of Trey LePelley

Tammy Wallace in memory of Brooke Wallace

David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy Terrell

Victor & Margie Newman in memory of Jeremy Newman

Carolyn Kuhn in memory of Phillip Kuhn

Teri Clakley in memory of Justin Clakley

Brian & Lisa Harvey in memory of Sarah Harvey

Sam Smith in memory of Stacey Smith

Carolyn Love in memory of Kathy Robertson

**Thanks to David & Teresa Terrell for donating the use of a storage building.**



### Announcements

We will be holding our **Third Annual Butterfly Release** in May. Details will be provided when we have more information. Please let us know if you would like to help this year in honor and in loving memory of your child.

#### Newsletter Submissions

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

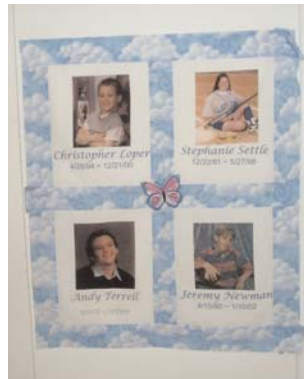
TCF Tyler • 5401 Hollytree Drive, 1204 • Tyler, Texas 75703  
Or e-mail text and photos to: [info@TylerTCF.org](mailto:info@TylerTCF.org)

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.

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

### 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](mailto: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.

 **I brake for butterflies!**  
[www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org)

Our bumper stickers are available for a \$2 donation. You may get them at our monthly meetings or by sending a request to: TCF of Tyler, P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711.

### It Will be Another Birthday Without You

The sun will shine  
roses bloom, geese fly  
throughout the sky  
stocks will trade,  
the weatherman predict  
politicians debate  
it'll seem like another day  
just a day, same 24 hours  
not a special holiday  
But to this mother  
who will stand at the grave  
lifting balloons into the sky  
serving angelfood cupcakes  
with rainbow icing  
coated with tears  
fluctuating between emotions:  
the grief over death  
the celebration over birth  
For this mother  
it will be yet  
another birthday without you.

In Memory of Daniel

Alice J. Wisler ~ TCF, Wake County, NC



*We need not walk alone.*

"Mourning delayed is just mourning denied, and, it will not be denied! Left untreated, it wreaks havoc emotionally and physically. Unresolved mourning probably takes its toll on many marriages. The road to recovery is a journey going through childloss survival in all of its stages."  
—Aaron Pueschel

### January Birthdays



**Michael Rucker**  
1-18-93 ~ 6-10-02  
Grandson of Shelba Putnam



**Amber Glasco**  
Daughter of Chris & Julie Glasco  
Grandaughter of Sandie Glasco-Fenton



**Jocelyn McCormick**  
1-11-04 ~ 12-7-04  
Grandaughter of June McCormick



**Brooke Wallace**  
1-16-81 ~ 11-24-98  
Daughter of Charles & Tammy Wallace

### January Anniversaries



**Brittany Butler**  
10-4-84 ~ 1-21-01  
Daughter of Shelly Butler



**Brennen Applegate**  
8-10-69 ~ 1-22-01  
Son of C.R. & Kathryn Applegate



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



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



**Charles "Bryan" Meadows**  
3-18-80 ~ 1-19-03  
Son of Charles & Lynda Meadows



**Rusty Welch**  
11-29-57 ~ 1-1-67  
Son of Travis & Martha Welch

### Bent But Not Broken

The beautiful flowering tree planted in Nina's memory on Memorial Day a year short of a decade ago (by her favorite cousins) looked so regal and smelled so delicious yesterday. I like to think it flowers this time of year as a special birthday message from my "baby girl." However, with the vicious storm we had last evening I watched the soft white petals drift and swirl to the ground, as if a deluge of tears from a breaking heart. Today, it sits almost bare—a few petals still hanging on for dear life, unable to let go, desperate to regain its former beauty.

I can't help but see a symbolism in that tree that I can associate with. It is as if it stands as a monument to my grief, the ebb and flow of emotions that I have felt for the past nine years since Nina no longer walks this earth. When the tree is in full flower it seems much like family life "before." Of course there were short-term crises, that now seem insignificant in comparison, and life's speed bumps along the way, but all in all, pretty good. I mean, at least our family was intact. When the leaves were suddenly stripped of their branches and thrown to the ground in the furious hailstorm, it was like our lives after Nina's sudden death; thrown suddenly into a world of intense pain and sorrow, trying desperately to survive the unthinkable.

But, yet this morning, the tree stands, more barren and most definitely battered, but still hanging in there. Nine years later, those who love her, have weathered the tornado-like force of grief and loss. And nine years later, much like Nina's tree, though the storm has taken its toll, we will still manage to be upright; definitely bent, but still standing. And somehow, life roars on...

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



**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

**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!

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





*We need not walk alone.*

"'Why me?' is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the 'Why me?' will answer itself." —*Polly Moore*

### **A First-Timer's Perspective:**

Thoughts on the 2005 National Conference

When my father began going to the national Compassionate Friends meetings several years ago, I thought it was wonderful. When my mother joined him a few years later, I was ecstatic. The idea of the two of them being surrounded by other bereaved parents in an environment that allowed them to share their experiences seemed nothing short of brilliant. My sister Lynn and I agreed that it showed definite progress on their part in dealing with the loss of our older brother Rich. We were their cheerleaders, taking care of the house and the dogs while they did their thing in Atlanta, Salt Lake City, and Hollywood, CA. For our part, we wanted nothing to do with it. We always managed to find an excuse not to attend...the meetings were too far away. We had to work that weekend. We just weren't ready to go yet. Last summer we learned that the 2005 National Conference was to be held in Boston...a mere twenty minutes from our house. We were stuck; we had to go.

If I had been hesitant to attend the other conferences, the sudden death of my sister this past November did nothing to increase my desire to go. I had no problem helping in preparation for the conference, but I tried to think of every possible way out of actually going. However, the bottom line was that Lynn and I had agreed to go—if for no other reason than to support our parents—and so I went. Alone. And it was scary.

Having had literally no exposure to Compassionate Friends meetings, I didn't know quite what to expect. I knew that the men and women who flocked to our house in late November were extraordinary. They felt the pain of my parents as we stumbled blindly through Thanksgiving night and Christmas morning; they looked at me saw the pain of their surviving sons and daughters who had lost their brothers and sisters. I could take them in small doses, but disregarded them in part because they were there for my parents. No one really knew what it was like to lose a brother or a sister...let alone both. I dreaded going to the conference because I didn't want to deal with the consequences of opening the door. I worried that once I started dealing with all my grief I wouldn't be able to stop. And I was right. From the outset of the conference, I was overcome with sorrow and sadness for all the people who had suffered losses as bad, if not worse than my own. I couldn't see past the sadness and senselessness of all the loved ones who had been lost.

As the weekend progressed, however, I came to see that while it is indeed overwhelming, the very essence of this beautiful support system is found in its awe-inspiring numbers. While the workshops I attended ranged from slightly boring to extremely stirring and inspiring, no part of the weekend moved me as much as the Candle Lighting ceremony and the Walk to Remember. These two events embodied the TCF belief "We need not walk alone." Looking around the room at the hundreds and hundreds of candles that were lit in honor of those we have lost roused a feeling like no other I have ever experienced. It was sad and tragic, yet beautiful in the communality of the pain we all shared. Walking among the mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters, down the beautiful streets of Boston on Sunday morning was amazing. Each person displayed names and pictures of those they had lost, proud to have their loved ones be known. Perhaps most satisfying of all was to take part in this walk, not as the lonely trio my parents and I have become, but as part of a larger family. To see my father walking with his new friends, my mother a short distance behind with others she had recently met, and even me—walking not with my sister and brother as I would've liked, but rather for them, beside my new friend as well.

Throughout the weekend, I heard it said many times that TCF is a family, and though it's a family no one would ever choose to be part of, it is remarkable nonetheless. Are the conferences for everyone? No. I didn't want to go because I was scared and it was inconvenient. The truth is, there is no convenient time to fall apart. You will always be able to come up with an excuse that prevents you from dealing with things. While the weekend was hard at times and left me utterly exhausted, at the end it was worth it. For those of you who are too busy/too tired/too anxious to go to a conference, I hope for your sake you "get stuck" going like I did. It's an experience you'll never forget and one that cannot be conveyed through words.

*Libby Mirabile*

**Please detach and return completed donation form to:  
The Compassionate Friends of Tyler • P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711**

We rely entirely on voluntary donations to support our group. With your help we can continue to provide our valuable services to everyone affected by the loss of a child.

Yes, I would like to make a donation in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ . (Please make check payable to TCF)

My donation is made in honor and in memory of \_\_\_\_\_ .

Tyler TCF greatly appreciates your support. These 'love gifts' are used to provide our monthly newsletter, printed materials, website, special events, our library and more.



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 of Tyler

PO 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 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check any of following that apply.

Please continue sending the newsletter.

Please include my child's name and picture in the slide presentation at the Candle Lighting Ceremony.

Please do not send the newsletter.

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 and/or at the Candle Lighting. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only utilized for Chapter activities such as the newsletter. Permission may be withdrawn at any time with your written request.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed form by March 31, 2006 to:

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



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**

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