



Monthly Group Meeting

Tyler Area Meeting

Monday, Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m.
3600 Old Bullard Rd., Bldg. 1,
Ste. 101B, Tyler

Jacksonville Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 1, 6:30 p.m.
Sam Smith's office, 1401 E. Rusk

Lufkin/Nacogdoches Area Meeting

Thursday, Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m.
Southside Baptist Church
1615 Tulane Drive in Lufkin

Contact

Phone: (903) 258-2547

www.TylerTCF.org • info@TylerTCF.org
P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711

Chapter LeaderTina Loper
Meeting Facilitators Tyler
Don & Leslie Dixon, Cheri Zucca
Meeting Facilitators Lufkin
Lauri Maner, Bill Otteson
Newsletter/Web SiteMary Lingle
Steering Committee: Sam Smith,
Carol Johnson, Carol Thompson,
Mary Ann Girard, Cheri Zucca, Mary
Lingle, David & Teresa Terrell, Janet
Majors, Don & Leslie Dixon, Kathy
McKinney, Margie Newman,
Pat Settle, Lisa Schoonover

Joan & Bill Campbell, Regional
Coordinators: (972) 935-0673
TCF National: (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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December Candle Lighting

More than 160 family and friends turned out for the Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony this year. The slideshow included over 400 children and the event was covered by local media.

Gatherers lit candles in memory of their loved ones and received a long-stemmed rose. Special music was played by Sam Smith and Scotty Garrison, and several volunteers read poems.

The evening concluded with food and fellowship. You could see tears of sadness and hear joyous laughter, all comingled in this heart-felt ceremony where parents looked with pride and longing at their child's photo represented on our overhead slideshow, beautiful TCF quilts and lovely Christmas tree.

TCF of Tyler would like to thank all who attended and all who took time to make this annual event a reality.

If you have not attended a TCF Candle Lighting, we hope you'll consider joining us next year. We'd also like to encourage you to volunteer your time for this special event that can help so much with healing.

Mary Lingle, Newsletter Editor, TCF Tyler, TX



Photo above:
Christmas tree with each child's photo topped with a red bow.



Photo at left: Four of our TCF quilts made with love by David and Teresa Terrell in memory of their son, Andy.

See more photos on page 8.

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.

“When it seems that our sorrow is too great to be borne, let us think of the great family of the heavy-hearted into which our grief has given us entrance, and inevitably, we will feel about us, their arms and their understanding.”
—Helen Keller

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 (held the third Monday 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.”

Grief Resources

Note: Some resources are based on individual opinion and experience and are not officially endorsed by the organization. The hope is that you may find a grief resource helpful to you and your family. We will continue to build on our resources column. Please let us know of any of your personal recommendations. Thank you.

Compassionate Friends of Tyler, Texas
<http://www.tylertcf.org>

Compassionate Friends (national home page)
Also offers grief support for **siblings** and **grandparents**
<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

Children Are A Gift Foundation
<http://www.childrenareagift.com>

GriefShare
<http://www.griefshare.org>

MADD East Texas (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)
<http://www.madd.org/local-offices/tx/east-texas>

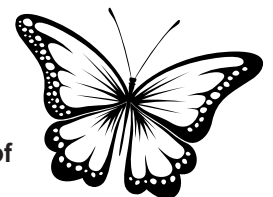
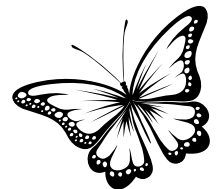
Smith County Victim Services Division
<http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs/counties/smith.html>

The Hospice of East Texas
<http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org>

**The University of Texas at Tyler
Psychology and Counseling Training Clinic**
Located at the Bethesda Health Clinic
409 W. Ferguson
Tyler, Texas 75702
903-592-2348

Touched by Suicide (local)
<http://www.touchedbysuicideeasttexas.org>

**Victim Services Division - Texas Department of
Criminal Justice - Online Resource Directory**
<http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs>



This month's printing of our newsletter sponsored by Carol Thompson.

**In loving memory of
Sarah Thompson
1-3-81 ~ 9-8-05
Daughter of
Carol Thompson**



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



We need not walk alone.

“With the passing of years, I have learned that if I can hang on for just a little longer, these emotions—strong as they are—will pass and I can live again with the longing hidden deep inside my breast.” —*Shirley Muller*

Love Gifts



Tommy & Marla Plocheck in memory of Sara Ann
Elisa Erwin in memory Lauren Campbell
Glenda Mitchum in memory of Ron

Thanks to the following members who have made a rent donation for our meeting place this month:

Merri Walsh in memory of Chris O’Leary
Martha Lewis in memory of Burke
Tina, Johnathan & Heather Loper
in memory of Christopher
Carol & Shane Johnson & Touched By Suicide
in memory of Jared Sheets



Thanks to the following people who make a MONTHLY LOVE GIFT to TCF of Tyler:

Claudette Brown in memory of Terry Wayne
Dale & Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad
Sam Smith in memory of Stacey -
use of his office for the Jacksonville meeting
David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy -
use of a storage building

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 5th 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.

Steering Committee Meeting: If you are interested in participating in our chapter by serving on the steering committee, please plan to attend a steering committee meeting. Anyone who would like to become more involved in TCF and serve on the steering committee is welcome to come! For more information about our next meeting, call 903-258-2547.

Email Addresses: If we do not have your email address or it has changed, please email it to Tina or Pat so that we may email you announcements and updates about TCF of Tyler. Tina’s email: lilbluebutterfly6@gmail.com ~ Pat’s email: beachbum2201@gmail.com

Announcements

Tyler TCF Meeting: The meeting in Tyler is held on the third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m., at 3600 Old Bullard Rd., Bldg. 1, Ste. 101B in Tyler. For more information, please call 903-258-2547 or email beachbum2201@gmail.com or lilbluebutterfly6@gmail.com.

Jacksonville TCF Meeting: The meeting in Jacksonville is held on the first Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m., at Sam Smith’s office, 1401 E. Rusk, Jacksonville. For more information, please email beachbum2201@gmail.com or lilbluebutterfly6@gmail.com, or call 903-258-2547.

Lufkin/Nacogdoches Area TCF Meeting: The meeting for the Lufkin and Nacogdoches area is held on the third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m., at the Southside Baptist Church, 1615 Tulane Dr. in Lufkin across from the LiveWell Fitness. Contact Bill Ottesen at 936-634-6422 or Lauri Maner at 936-854-2002. You may also email them at CompassionateFriends4lufkinnac@yahoo.com.

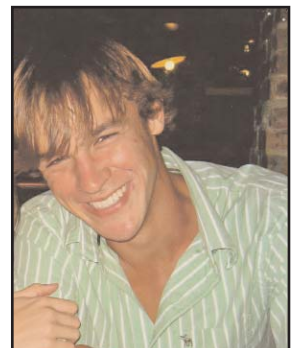
The Touched by Suicide meeting is held the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the same, new location as TCF, 3600 Old Bullard Rd., Bldg. 1, Ste. 101B in Tyler. Anyone who has lost someone they love to suicide is welcome to attend this peer support group. For more info please call 903-330-0678 or visit www.touchedbysuicideeasttexas.org.

Steering Committee Meeting: If you are interested in participating in our chapter by serving on the steering committee, please plan to attend a steering committee meeting. Anyone who would like to become more involved in TCF and serve on the steering committee is welcome to come! For more information about our next meeting, call 903-258-2547.

MADD Heart meets 2nd Tuesday of the month at the MADD office, 215 Winchester Dr. Ste., 100, Tyler, TX 75701. For more info call 888-665-6233 or email Melissa at melissa.granberry@madd.org.

General Assembly: Join us each month to assemble the newsletter and mail out cards. We hope to get some new volunteers to help with this monthly project. Call 903-258-2547 for details.

Special thanks to Merri Walsh for her generous donation in memory of her son, Chris O’Leary.





We need not walk alone.

"The pain of grief is still there, but I am living life one-day-at-a-time, enriched because my son came through my body into my life." —*Helen Godwin*

January Birthdays



Joshua Paul Renaud
1-18-86 ~ 6-9-06
Son of Christi
Renaud McMillan



Sarah Thompson
1-3-81 ~ 9-8-05
Daughter of Ted &
Carol Thompson



Carolyn Love
1-4-38 ~ 11-25-06
Mom of Kathy
Robertson



Cameron Robinson
1-4-02 ~ 8-9-10
Son of Julie
Robinson



Alexander Johnson
1-5-06 ~ 10-30-08
Son of Candice
Johnson



Michael Rucker
1-18-93 ~ 6-1-02
Son of Brandy Rucker
Pearson; Grandson of
Shelba Putman



Amber Glasco
1-30-91 ~ 6-15-05
Daughter of
Chris & Julie Glasco



Erika Stafford
1-4-79 ~ 11-10-05
Daughter of Marilyn
Stafford



Benjamin Gilpin
1-25-98 ~ 1-13-10
Son of Stuart
& Mary Gilpin



Jocelyn McCormick
1-11-04 ~ 12-7-04
Granddaughter of
June McCormick



Jonathan Sanders
1-4-87 ~ 9-8-06
Son of Lisa Dunford &
Donald Sanders; Grd-son
of Dorothy Rawlinson



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



Travis Carpenter
1-21-74 ~ 1-25-06
Son of Glenna
& Troy Nicolls



Matthew Skinner
1-5-66 ~ 8-13-09
Son of Kay
Skinner



Jacob Mikel Burrell
1-16-96 ~ 10-5-11
Son of Jamie
Johnson



Tripp Barton
1-18-08 ~ 4-6-11
Son of Jenifer
Barton



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



Kimberly Pryor
1-2-73 ~ 5-30-07
Daughter of
Jerry & Judy Olson



Kelynn J'Davion Pinson
1-23-06 ~ 6-1-08
Son of Kelvin
Arterberry



Daron Adam Lee
1-10-88 ~ 1-1-08
Son of Daron
& Lisa Lee



Janet Florey
1-7-79 ~ 12-28-11
Daughter of
Peggy Cooper



Paul Ragsdale
1-14-45 ~ 8-14-11
Son of Deborah
Ragsdale



Tyler Roberts
1-6-97 ~ 3-7-08
Son of Peggy
Cunningham



James E. Abbie, Jr.
1-31-60 ~ 7-15-91
Son of
Bettie Abbie



Amanda Michelle Valadez
1-29-82 ~ 3-16-10
Daughter of Charlene
& Tony Spivey



Andy Hall
1-19-66 ~ 4-8-12
Son of Billy &
Sue Hall



Daryn Keith Selman
1-19-92 ~ 9-27-12
Son of Shannon &
Rebecca Selman



Leo Cook
1-20-89 ~ 3-12-06
Cecil & Cindy
Cook



We need not walk alone.

"We must embrace pain and burn it as fuel for our journey." —Kenji Miyazawa

January Anniversaries



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



Ashley McCaa
12-22-82 ~ 1-2-00
Daughter of
Pat McCaa



Bonnie Lee Benson
10-28-68 ~ 1-23-11
Daughter of
Cheri Oswald



Jason Brown
2-7-69 ~ 1-7-03
Son of Pam
Pickett



Taylor Davis
12-31-85 ~ 1-21-06
Son of
Diane Ecker



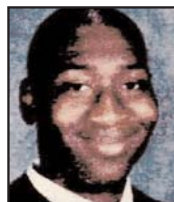
Jana Lauren Shearer
3-26-86 ~ 1-5-08
Daughter of
Stephanie Shearer



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



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



David LaTrell Milton
12-28-87 ~ 1-20-08
Son of
Bernice Milton



**Makenzie Shyanne
Morehead**
3-7-02 ~ 1-11-06
Daughter of Brian
& Sheila Morehead



Benjamin Gilpin
1-25-98 ~ 1-13-10
Son of Stuart &
Mary Gilpin



Lauren Campbell
12-30-91 ~ 1-1-10
Daughter of Mark &
Kathy Campbell



Michael R. Peymon
9-18-79 ~ 1-2-06
Son of Tom &
Sharon Peymon



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



Blake Alexander King
5-14-63 ~ 1-6-94
Son of DeeAnn
Seawright



Haylee Lee
11-23 ~ 1-23-02



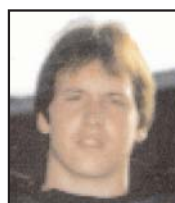
Danielle Celeste Yura
3-22-89 ~ 1-15-08
Daughter of Susie
Hughes Fincher



Logan Alexander
12-9-94 ~ 1-30-95
Son of Joyce Horton



Daron Adam Lee
1-10-88 ~ 1-1-08
Son of Daron
& Lisa Lee



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



Mary Adams
11-28 ~ 1-28-06
Daughter of
Vicki Adams



Susie Gorman
10-9-51 ~ 1-14-07
Spouse of
Onie Gorman



Betsi Marie Wyatt
9-4-02 ~ 1-3-08
Daughter of Ricky
& Linda Wyatt



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



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



Clayton Norton
10-17-75 ~ 1-1-76
Son of Ronnie &
Dottie Norton



Gaaron Hicks
11-8-91 ~ 1-08
Son of
Diane Richardson



Shellae Vicknair
10-13-82 ~ 1-18-09
Daughter of
Vera Vicknair



Loren Saunders
10-4-94 ~ 1-18-11
Son of
George Saunders

Cont. on next page





We need not walk alone.

“Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts.” —*Charles Dickens*

January Anniversaries Continued



Eric Branch
4-4-90 ~ 1-15-09
Son of Richard &
Tammi Branch



Brytnie Leah Stithem
11-3-94 ~ -1-18-12
Daughter of Gary &
Tracy Stithem



**Derek Nolan
Simoneaux**
4-7-86 ~ 1-23-12
Son of Carolyn
Jo Simoneaux



Haven Grace Davis
8-4-08 ~ 1-24-12
Daughter of Brandon
& Lacy Davis



Travis Carpenter
1-21-74 ~ 1-25-06
Son of Glenna
& Troy Nicolls



Ryan Glasco
6-22-89 ~ 1-27-08
Son of Jeff Glasco
& Charlotte Pena

Reflections on a New Year

We begin a new year, one that many of us enter with reluctance. After all, it means another year away from our child and another year to be lived without the physical presence of the one we have lost. Apprehensive about any new challenges that we may be called upon to face in our broken condition, we call out, “Wait, I’m not ready yet!”

The death of our child changed the course of our life; nothing will be the same again. But it also has shaped us into who we are today. And it will continue to do so as we learn to incorporate this loss into who we are to become.

Have you found that you have already begun to live differently? Compassion toward others is more profound. Trivial things are no longer important. Appreciation for life, and those in our lives, is paramount. We’re living the same life—differently.

Tragedies, disappointments, and heartaches combine with beauty, love, and joy to fashion our life. These are all a part of life, and our challenge is to incorporate them into our world. The difference that our child’s life has had upon the world continues through us.

So, rather than being fearful of the challenges that lie ahead, perhaps a better question to consider at this time might be: What opportunities will present themselves in the coming year to honor this loss that is already a part of our life? Our child has become more integrally entwined into our being than ever before. We bring him or her to every situation that we encounter. How can we make that situation better because of this bond?

The start of a new calendar year is a good time to remember that we are in the midst of life. It is not perfect. Nor is it one that we might have chosen. But, our struggles do not put life “on hold.” Rather they are a part of life itself! Our life is ours to make the most of, with many gifts that we can share with others. There is no better time than the present to gather up the pieces and recognize the uniqueness that we each call “me”—a uniqueness made more wonderful because of our child’s presence in the life we choose to live.

Paula Staisiunas Schultz, In Memory of Melissa and Jeff

Author biography, 2002: Paula and her husband Bob live in Chicago, Illinois., where Paula serves as co-editor of the South Suburban Chapter newsletter. Their son, Jeff Schultz, is currently a student at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Their daughter, Melissa Schultz Cleaves, and her husband, Jeff Cleaves, had been married seven weeks when they died in a car accident on Thanksgiving weekend, 1999.

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We need not walk alone.

"I do not believe that sheer suffering teaches. If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers. To suffering must be added mourning, understanding, patience, love, openness, and the willingness to remain vulnerable." —*Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

Memories—A Time for Smiles—A Time for Tears

As I wondered in my mind why the ache in my heart was worse than it had been for a while, I suddenly remembered. In my memory I went back to September 20, 1991. It was the last time Greg would be in the hospital. He was five months into his illness.

When Greg's doctor examined him at the clinic, he told Greg that he would have to go into the hospital again. We had long ago lost count of the times he had been in the hospital. When his doctor left the examining room, Greg looked at me with tears in his eyes and said, "When is this going to end?" As I put my arms out to him, with tears in my eyes and my heart breaking, I said "I don't know, Greg." He hugged me so tight.

While at work on September 24th, I got a call from Greg's doctor. He said Greg was ready to come home from the hospital. He told me in these exact words, "Greg's heart is failing fast, he is going to die." I will never forget those words for as long as I live. I felt like a knife had been put in my heart.

When I went to the hospital to get Greg, he was sitting in a chair in his room. We looked at each other and I said, "I need a hug!" As my son was hugging me, he said that he didn't want anyone feeling sorry for him. And he wanted to live as normal a life as possible in the time he had left.

Greg chose to die at home. It was his last wish. He was afraid to die alone, but he was never afraid to die. There were many times over the next few months that he said he was ready to die. I promised him that he would not die alone. We were with him day and night.

When I spoke with Greg's doctor a few days later, he told me that when he told Greg he was dying, the most peaceful look came over Greg's face. Greg knew it wouldn't be long and he would be free. He would be at peace and he would no longer be ill.

Three and a half months later, on January 4, 1992, Greg was at last set free. He died peacefully and we had kept our promise. He did not die alone. Our lives changed forever. As I held our son, who was now in God's hands, I didn't think our lives would ever be normal again. Our hearts were broken and part of our future was gone. Though our hearts may never be mended, we have picked up the pieces of our shattered lives and we struggle on. Our life is as normal as it will ever be.

Then there are times like these. A memory bringing me to the brink of tears. Then I wonder if I will ever get through the memories of Greg's illness without tears. There are so many memories of those 8½ months. Some memories make me smile, but most make me cry.

This grief business is a strange thing. It can creep up on me and bring tears, sometimes before I realize why those tears are there. But then I remember, and once again I work my way through it. The ache in my heart isn't as sharp as it used to be, but it isn't gone. It probably never will be.

But our child is gone. How thankful we are to have been Greg's parents. How thankful we are that Greg gave us 20 years of memories. Twenty years of love.

*Jean Van Ruth
TCF of Madison, WI
In Memory of my son, Greg*

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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. (Newsletters are posted monthly on our Web site.)

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 _____

Please use this gift for: TCF Newsletter Butterfly Release Candle Lighting TCF Events

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

**Thanks to Skillern's Business
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(903) 561-5591 • www.skillerns.com