



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



We need not walk alone.

Volume 8, Issue 3

Tyler, Texas

March 2007

Monthly Group Meeting

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

Contact

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Margie Newman, Mary Lingle

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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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Escape?

It is not the intent of The Compassionate Friends to impose rules upon you, nor do we assume the right to determine your moral values or life styles. What we do try to do is point out potential problem areas during the most painful part of your grief so that you can, hopefully, recognize and avoid some of these pitfalls.

When a child dies, the pain of the loss is so deep and ever present that the people who are grieving for the child sometimes seek ways to escape that pain. If you have been to our meetings, read our newsletter, or talked to our telephone friends, you know that we encourage you to face the fact that there is no real way for you to escape permanently from the pain of losing a child. You loved; therefore, you grieve. You may succeed in postponing your grief for a time, but it will resurface some day in some way. You are encouraged to deal with it now so that it won't be waiting ten or fifteen years down the road for you.

One of the most obvious ways for some to attempt to postpone or escape the pain is to turn to drugs, such as excessive amounts of alcohol, tranquilizers, mood elevators, and sleeping pills. You may even find that your physician will prescribe some of these things for you in an effort to make you "better." We do not speak, of course, about those who have medical or emotional problems that are separate and apart from the normal pain of grief. We speak, instead, of the process that normally follows the death of a child, and in this instance, these drugs do not cure or make you better; they simply postpone the grieving process. They may even make it worse. Alcohol, for instance, is a depressant, as are tranquilizers for some people. What can happen then is you go from the normal depression of grief to an even more depressed state. The mood elevators give you the false impression that you have things under control. When you finish with all these things, guess what is waiting for you? Your unresolved grief, and it may then be complicated by a drug dependency or disguised as mental or physical ailments.

I am simply suggesting here that you recognize that grief is normal and necessary when you have lost something or somebody important to you. The pain, depression, hopelessness, inability to sleep, frustration, anger, guilt, loss of your goals and aims, loss of the ability to maintain an organized pattern in your life, and confusion are all a part of the symptoms of grief. You can't have softening of these symptoms until you have allowed yourself to feel whatever is necessary and normal for you under these circumstances. When you do allow yourself to hurt and feel these things, it hastens the day when you can emerge on the other side of the most painful part of grief, having survived in an emotionally healthy way. There no shortcuts, only postponements, and you will do yourself and your doctor a favor if you resist asking for prescriptions to relieve these normal symptoms.

The hurt you are feeling is a sign that your are dealing with your grief, and that means you are making progress. It takes time and patience. If you have already tried to escape and found that it doesn't work, please seek help from organizations that work with drug dependencies.

IT WILL BE BETTER! But you have to hurt before you reach that place. Truly this is a time when the kindest thing you can do for yourself is allow yourself to feel the normal symptoms of grief. Running and hiding doesn't work, but patience does.

Mary Cleckley ~ TCF, Stone Mountain, GA

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.

“For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.” —*Dory Rooker*

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.”

Grief’s Array of Emotions

by Carrie Kears

I think the most frustrating thing about grief is that it is more than just sadness or the persistent feeling of emptiness I feel. Grief spans a wide array of feelings and emotions including, but not limited to sorrow, anger, jealousy, and helplessness. Lately, I have been struggling with coming to grips with my life as it continues along a path I would never have imagined. If Carl were still alive, I imagine he would be married and I would be an aunt to his children. He would have been there for my wedding and would be anxiously awaiting, along with my parents, the arrival of his future nieces and nephews. He would have been a great uncle. He was always great with kids and reveled in the part of himself which never grew up; the same trait which inexplicably drew kids to him.

Losing a brother is not just losing a companion, a best friend, a confidant, someone to pave the way for a little sister as she follows eagerly behind. When Carl died I not only lost those things, but I lost the future we would have had. I wish I would have had a chance to see how great he would have been with the children I hope to someday have. I wish I would have had the chance to see his sparkle, his amazing smile passed on to his children. But my reality is that these things will never come to pass. As each year turns into the next I struggle to reconcile the life I had imagined with the life I live today. It’s hard to keep moving forward when I no longer have a big brother to do things first so I know, more or less, what to expect.

Maybe dealing with Carl’s death and the loss of the future I had imagined would be easier if grief were merely a matter of dealing with the ensuing sadness. However, as my life continues to move forward I come across new struggles. I find myself getting jealous of my husband of three months, relationship with his brother and angry at him for having one when mine is gone. Is it rational? No, but grief isn’t always rational. I can’t fault him for having a close relationship with his brother, nor can I fault him for Carl’s death. I have no real reason to be angry with him when he is on the phone with his brother. I can’t be angry with him because it’s not me. No matter how much I wish, it will never be me again. I have no real reason to be jealous of his niece and nephew and the relationship he has with them. It is not his fault that I will never hold my brother’s children.

It isn’t fair for me to take my anger out on him or brood silently while he continues to nurture relationships with his family. I know, too well, the importance of family. One of the things I love most about him is that he is very close to his family and places great importance on maintaining strong familial ties. But, my grief inevitably creeps in and weaves its way through our relationship. Not only do I have to deal with my grief, but I have to be careful in how I channel it, if I want to have a successful marriage. Yet, even as I try to channel my grief, more anger creeps in because I have to concentrate harder on my actions because I am grieving my brother’s death—and that doesn’t feel very fair either.

I try to tell my husband and try to help him understand when I am feeling angry or jealous because he has something I long to have, but I am afraid. I fear that there will come a day when I tell him the reason I am acting irrationally is because I am struggling with my grief and he sees my explanation merely as an excuse or something I should learn to control. I fear he will tire of being patient with me, or expect that one day I won’t cry “over nothing” or that one day I won’t feel sad on the Fourth of July because it was one of Carl’s favorite holidays.

Is my fear irrational, or am I assuming he will react to me the way others in the past have reacted? I guess I am bound to find out sooner or later. Just as I learn to live with my grief I will have to learn how to manage my grief while maintaining a marriage. I sure wish grief was just about feeling sad. No, I really wish I didn’t have to deal with it all.

Carrie’s brother, Carl Pueschel, died January 19, 1996



We need not walk alone.

"I don't think of him every day; I think of him every hour of every day."
—Gregory Peck, in an interview many years after his son's death

Love Gifts



- Charlotte Nelson in memory of Wade Goetze
- Bonnie LePelley in memory of Trey LePelley
- Christina Ramirez in memory of Bryce Cooksey
- Carol Sheets Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets
- Ike & Diana Weatherly in memory of Brandon
- Pam Johnson in memory of Lori Campbell
- David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy Terrell -
use of a storage building
- College-Bound Solutions for allowing TCF of Tyler
to use their facilities as our meeting place -
in memory of Nathaniel Peter Bolom



Newsletter Submissions

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

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

We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content. Deadline for submissions is the 3rd Tuesday of each month. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source. Errors and Omissions: Please notify us if any of your information is incorrect.

TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt

If you would like to have your child's photo included on the third memorial quilt, please mail a \$25 donation to P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711. For more information contact us at (903) 258-2547, or email us at info@TylerTCF.org.

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



Announcements

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

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

TCF of Tyler Cookbook

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

Wish You Were Here

By Steve Tutt ~ TCF, Tyler, TX

You'd be nineteen if you were here
 But why you're gone still isn't clear.
 Your things are still all in your room
 As if you'd be returning soon.
 Spongebob waits there by the door.
 Your shoes are still there on the floor.
 Your friends are all young women now.
 They're working jobs or college bound.
 Sometimes we see them and they say
 We miss her so, wish she had stayed.
 Your boyfriend's in the Army too
 And by the way, he still loves you.
 You thought his love was not so true
 And that some other girl he'd choose.
 But near two years have passed on by
 Still to your grave he goes to cry.
 Your niece and nephews miss you too,
 And talk of the things you used to do.
 Your Mother's going to be alright
 And doesn't cry so much at night.
 She puts the flowers on your grave,
 And scrapbook pictures tries to save.
 And me, I'm still the same old Dad,
 The same old routine like I had.
 I work real hard to make a way
 To pay some bills and pass the day.
 I'm not as funny as before
 My world's not happy anymore.
 I don't let on the pain I feel
 But deep inside the hurt is real.
 Time passes by year after year,
 Life goes on with seldom a tear.
 One wish I have, a wish so clear
 My wish most of all, I wish you were here.

~Dad





We need not walk alone.

"Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. Love still stands when all else has fallen."

—Author unknown

March Birthdays



Roozbeh Arianpour
3-25-80 ~ 6-6-03
Son of Farideh Arianpour



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



Amanda Kay Stone
3-25-85 ~ 9-7-03
Daughter of
Mary Kay & Glenn Stone



Colton Allen France
3-8-06 ~ 3-08-06
Son of Carla Howard



Lisa Tutt
3-20-87 ~ 7-30-04
Daughter of Steve & Sherri Tutt



Jill Rozell
3-14-84 ~ 8-2-02
Daughter of Peggy Rozell



Cathy Key
3-26 ~ 8-19-05
Daughter of Cindy Murray



Ben Smith
3-01-88 ~ 7-21-06
Son of Charisse Smith



Toni Wood
3-10-79 ~ 9-29-03
Daughter of Tami Woolridge



Jodi Lynn Attaway
3-8-72 ~ 6-5-94
Daughter of Cindi Attaway-Gill



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



Kenny Ivy
3-10-65 ~ 5-12-85
Son of Jo Anne Ivy



Kathy Jo Tumminello
3-19-59 ~ 7-20-04
Sister of Susie Gorman



Timothy Andrew Lever
3-23-69 ~ 6-3-04
Son of Elsie Ford

I Am Spring

I am the beginning.
I am budding promise.
I spill cleansing tears of life
from cloudy vessels
creating muddy puddles
where single cell creatures abide
and splashing children play.

I am new green growth.
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.
With compassion, we feather nests
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream
I whisper truth – life is change.

I am spring.
I bless long, dark wintry days.
I crown mankind's pain
with starry skies
in deepest night
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.

By Carol Clum

(Written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox, author of Finding What You Didn't Lose and Poetic Medicine.)



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

March Anniversaries



Adam Knott
12-29-79 ~ 3-20-03
Son of Virginia & Bobby Knott



Neil Defenbaugh
10-20-81 ~ 3-27-04
Son of James & Dina Defenbaugh



Colton Allen Frances
3-08-06 ~ 3-08-06
Son of Carla Howard



Blythe Madison Harper
5-02-03 ~ 3-08-06
Daughter of
Stephanie Joshua Harper



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



Kayla Smith
11-7-89 ~ 3-5-04
Daughter of Debbie Smith



Robert McMahon
7-18-72 ~ 3-6-92
Son of Dana Wright



Gary Dean Arnold
9-17-57 ~ 3-7-04
Son of Betty & Harold Arnold



Phillip Kuhn
12-28-73 ~ 3-27-03
Son of Carolyn R. Kuhn



Joshua Andrews
6-21-88 ~ 3-14-04
Son of Tawna Andrews



Douglas Johnson
9-24-97 ~ 3-18-05
Son of Doug & Shelly Johnson



Trey LePelley
6-10-82 ~ 3-13-05
Son of Jack & Julie LePelley

I Don't Know Why

I don't know why.
I'll never know why.
I don't have to know why.
I don't like it.
I don't have to like it.
What I have to do is make a choice about my living.
What I do want to do is accept it and go on living.
The choice is mine.
I can go on living, valuing every moment
in a way I never did before,
or I can be destroyed by it and,
in turn, destroy others.
I thought I was immortal.
That my family and my children were also.
That tragedy happened only to others.
But I know now that life is tenuous
and valuable.
So I am choosing to go on living,
making the most of the time I have,
valuing my family and friends
in a way never possible before.

From the book, My Son, My Son, by Iris Bolton, whose son Mitch died by suicide.



Visit us online at www.TylerTCF.org



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“Truly this is a time when the kindest thing you can do for yourself is allow yourself to feel the normal symptoms of grief. Running and hiding doesn't work, but patience does.” —*Mary Cleckley*

The Wake-Up Call

The bride (my daughter Nina's best friend) was radiant; the groom nervous but excited; the flower girl and ring bearer adorable; the parents' shedding joyful tears; the weather near perfect—by appearances to all involved, it looked like the ideal wedding; all was progressing smoothly, things were coming together as planned.

Not a thing looked out of place—that is, to most everyone present; that is, to everyone but me, the mother of a forever 15-year-old beautiful brunette with a dazzling smile. This mother who tried desperately to mask her quivering lip, ignore the lump in her throat and knot in her stomach, yet lost that battle to a flood of tears that streamed down her face relentlessly. This mother who watched the bridesmaids as they proceeded down the aisle, longing to see the face of someone who should have been physically present, yet knowing the impossibility—that Nina, though should be if her life were not cut short, would not be in the procession. She was relegated to a small mention at the back of the program along with the couple's grandparents: "Here with us in spirit..."

I weathered the reception until it came time for the wedding party to take to the dance floor. They all had a particular dance and a song that apparently was their group of friend's "song." They all participated in this dance and song loudly with obvious delight. I watched and realized that this was something Nina who had died eight years earlier, had never been a part of—it was as if a hand had reached down and plucked her out of the loop. At that very moment I have never felt so profoundly Nina's nonexistence in the lives of her friends.

The few years following Nina's death, her friends (while they were still high-school students) were still closely connected to her. Since then they have graduated from college, now many have married or are on the career track. Some even have children of their own. A lot of time and a lot of distance and events have taken place in that time frame. And all of it without Nina's physical presence; to them now a distant memory.

After a night of insomnia and much self-analysis, I came to some conclusions, that I hope will help those of you who may find yourself in a similar situation someday.

The wedding really became a wake-up call for me. A lot of realizations became clear. Though others (even some bereaved parents included) seemed to understand that this would be the outcome and had forewarned me—I was blind to it.

They seemed to grasp the inevitable; that is, that though Nina was paramount in my thoughts, no one else could possibly be able to think of her with the same magnitude as I. In my desperation that she not be forgotten I seemed to delude myself into believing that that should be the case for everyone. As all bereaved parents are aware, one of our greatest fears is that our children will be forgotten. But after this wedding and the opinions voiced by others who know, I think this needs to be amended. That though we, as their parents, remember our children in much more visible and personal ways (such as memorial gardens and scholarships, remembrance services and balloon releases, photo buttons and pictures here, there and everywhere, and speak of them often, with laughter and tears), that others may do their remembering in much more subtle and private ways. That though we do not always see it outwardly, as we might prefer, they remember internally, carried forever in their minds and their hearts.

Life marches on. We are thankful (and, if truth be told, maybe a little envious) that our children's friends are happy or in love or successful and would want nothing else for them. But when all is said and done, even with our most valiant efforts at managing the milestones of graduations and marriages and grandchildren, and more – all of those major happenings we will never experience with our child - no matter the amount of time that goes by, their absence still hurts. We love them and always will with every fiber of our being. How could it not?

I write this not to sadden anyone; I tell you of my experience so that if or when it happens to you somewhere in your grief journey you will perhaps see it in a different, less painful light. I know that I will try to remember this when I don't hear from her friends for a long time (or maybe not at all). But when I go to her grave site and see a bouquet of her favorite daisies, I know were left by her best friend, or a note written in the journal I leave there written by a classmate that I never even met, that they haven't forgotten; that Nina had an impact on their lives and that they continue to and always will remember, but in their own way.

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy Seehuetter ~ TCF, St. Paul, MN



The Compassionate Friends of Tyler

P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, TX 75711

We are happy to send our newsletter to you. We hope that it is helpful to you to be kept informed of chapter resources and activities and that you still wish to receive our newsletters that contain excellent material relating to grief issues.

To keep our mailing list current, we do ask to hear from you each year making sure that our information is correct and that you still wish to receive our mailings. If we did not hear from you in the last year please indicate any appropriate choices below and return the form to the address at the bottom of this page.

Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please check any of following that apply.

Please continue sending the newsletter.

No thank you, I'd prefer to stop receiving the newsletter.

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

Please include my child's picture and information on the TCF-Tyler Web site. (www.TylerTCF.org)

I am enclosing a memorial to support The Compassionate Friends in the amount of _____
Please make check payable to TCF

In memory of _____

The continuation of this chapter's work depends on donations. If you have not taken the opportunity to give a donation in memory of your child please consider taking this time to give a gift that will help reach out to other newly bereaved parents.

We must have your written permission on file to use your child's name and/or picture in the newsletter, Web site, Candle Lighting Ceremony or any other TCF event. Permission may be withdrawn at any time by written request. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only utilized for Chapter activities such as the newsletter.

(Signature) _____ Date: _____

Please return completed form to:
The Compassionate Friends of Tyler
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Tyler, TX 75711



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