



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



*We need not walk alone.*

Volume 16, Issue 3

Tyler, Texas

March 2015

## Monthly Group Meeting

### Tyler Area Meeting

3rd Monday of Each Month  
1901 Ricketty Ln., Tyler

### Contact

Phone: (903) 258-2547

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

Chapter Leader .....Tina Loper  
Secretary .....Pat Settle  
Newsletter/Web Site .....Mary Lingle  
Tyler Meeting Facilitators: Leslie & Don Dixon

Steering Committee: Pat Settle, Sam Smith, David & Teresa Terrell, Carol Johnson, Mary Lingle, Lisa Schoonover, Cheri Zucca, Ellen Jenkins, Pam Pickett, Don & Leslie Dixon, Janet Majors, Margaret Hall, Robin Mitchell, Jancy Lovelace, Stuart Gilpin, MaryAnn Girard, Trisha Mann Taylor

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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## Butterfly Release

**Butterflies will be released in memory of all our children at the 2015 Compassionate Friends Butterfly Release set for Saturday, May 16 at 1:00 p.m. The setting for this uplifting and peaceful event will be the Sharon Shrine Temple located on Highway 31 East.**

Live butterflies are for sale for \$10 each and must be reserved in plenty of time for ordering. Please send your check and reservation information to TCF at P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, Texas 75711. Reserved butterflies will be picked up for release the day of the event.

Colorful solid-painted wooden butterflies will be sold for \$20 each at the Butterfly Release; we are not taking special orders for personalized butterflies this year.

Silent auction items are being collected. If something catches your eye that you think those attending would enjoy bidding on, please consider donating. For donation information, please email us at info@tylertcf.org.

The Butterfly Release begins at 1 p.m. that Saturday but volunteers are needed and welcomed for either set-up work the Friday evening before, or beginning at 8 a.m. Saturday the day of the release. Please contact us at 903-258-2547 if you want to volunteer.

Enjoying refreshments and visiting with TCF friends and family after the butterflies are released is a special part of the day. If you would like to donate any finger food—cookies, chips/dips, small sandwiches, pickles, olives, cheese cubes, fruit chunks or veggies—any of your special favorites—please contact Carol Thompson at 903-539-0458! Cake will be served and bottled iced water will be available.

We look forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones at the Butterfly Release! Your presence means everything to this very special event!

**See page 6 for information about sponsoring a sign with your child's name on it.**

## Photos from a Previous Butterfly Release



**The mission of The Compassionate Friends** is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.



*We need not walk alone.*

"When one is pretending, the entire body revolts." —Anais Nin

## 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 (International Website)** [compassionatefriends.org](http://compassionatefriends.org)  
Also offers grief support for **siblings & grandparents**

**Children Are A Gift Foundation:** [www.childrenareagift.com](http://www.childrenareagift.com)

**GriefShare:** [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)

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

**Smith County Victim Services Division**  
[www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs/counties/smith.html](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs/counties/smith.html)

**The Hospice of East Texas:** [www.hospiceofeasttexas.org](http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org)

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

**Survivors of Suicide:** [www.allianceofhope.org](http://www.allianceofhope.org)

**Samaritan Counseling of Tyler:** [www.scctyler.org](http://www.scctyler.org)

**Tyler Counseling & Assessment, LLP:** [www.tyler-counseling.com](http://www.tyler-counseling.com)

**Angel Layettes** brings comfort to families grieving over the loss of an infant from miscarriage, stillbirth or death shortly after birth, and honor and dignity to the memory of the precious baby. Angel Layettes provides without charge custom designed burial layettes and keepsakes.  
[www.angellayettes.org](http://www.angellayettes.org) • 903-534-5212

**University of Texas at Tyler Psychology and Counseling and Training Clinic:** 903-593-2348

**The Cope Foundation:** [www.copefoundation.org](http://www.copefoundation.org)

**Grief Camps for Kids:** [www.moyerfoundation.org/programs](http://www.moyerfoundation.org/programs)

**WINGS** was established through Hospice of East Texas in 1993 to help children navigate the grieving process. WINGS, “a comprehensive bereavement program that provides both emotional support and grief education,” offers a camp (Camp G – grieve, grow and go forward) twice a year. For more information or to register for a grief support program, contact the Hospice of East Texas Bereavement Department at 903-266-3400 (Extension 127) or call 1-800-777-9860.



Join us for dinner at the  
Jalapeño Tree on the Loop in Tyler.

We will meet every 4th Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m.



*We need not walk alone.*

"The next time someone needs you—just be there—stay. We are not human beings going through a temporary spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings going through a temporary human experience." —*Author Unknown*

## Love Gifts



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

**(For monthly donors we will post photos of your children on their Birthday and Anniversary dates.)**

Victor & Margie Newman in memory of Jeremy - rent

Merri Walsh in memory of Chris O'Leary - rent

Martha Lewis in memory of Burke - rent

Carol Thompson in memory of Sarah - rent

Carol & Shane Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets - rent

Danny & Pat Settle in memory of Stephanie - rent

Claudette Brown in memory of Terry Wayne - rent

Sue Roberts in memory of Jake Schoonover - rent

Dale & Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad - newsletter

Tina, Johnathan & Heather Loper  
in memory of Christopher - TCF Phone

David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy -  
use of a storage building

**See more love gifts on page 6.**



## 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 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: We try very hard to be sure that all of the names and dates of our children are correct. If you see an error in the newsletter, please contact TCF at 903-258-2547. We want to get it right and will correct the information for future use. Thanks very much.

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](mailto:lilbluebutterfly6@gmail.com) ~ Pat's email: [beachbum2201@gmail.com](mailto:beachbum2201@gmail.com)

**Save the date! The 38th National  
Compassionate Friends Conference will be  
July 10-12, 2015 in Dallas.**

## Announcements

**Tyler TCF Meeting:** The meeting in Tyler is held on the third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m., at 1901 Rickety Lane in Tyler. For more information, please call 903-258-2547.

**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 Carol King at [carol.king@madd.org](mailto:carol.king@madd.org).

**Looking forward:** Dallas will host the Compassionate Friends National Conference in 2015. Our regional coordinators, Joan and Bill Campbell, are looking for volunteers who would like to help with this event. You can contact Joan and Bill at 972-935-0673 to let them know of your interest in participating. They are planning a great two-day conference and welcome help from all Texas chapters. This is a great opportunity to help others who are grieving and grow through your own grief as well! You can check the national Compassionate Friends website [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) for conference event planning details.

**News from National:** Compassionate Friends National offers webinars for the public on grief related topics. Upcoming public webinars will include Death of a Child By Suicide, Pregnancy and Infant Loss, The Death of a Special Needs Child and How Can I Help When A Child Dies? Check out [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) for dates and times.

## TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt

If you would like to have your child's photo included on a TCF 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 are displayed in our meeting room and special events.







*We need not walk alone.*

"The power of the mind to begin to see reason, to begin to seek hope, to climb this mountain of trauma and travail cannot be overstated. This power is pure courage, raw courage, desperate courage, but courage in its purest form."  
—Annette Mennen Baldwin

### March Birthdays



Roozbeh Arianpour



Michael Schmidt



Gary R. Gribble



Tiffany Sue Hightower



Joshua "Josh" Wilcox



Colton Allen France



Lisa Tutt



Randy Joe Cannon, Jr.



Andrea Young



Wadiya Adnan Bdah



Amanda Kay Stone



Ben Smith



Toni Wood



Jodi Lynn Attaway



Scott Bradshaw



Danielle Celeste Yura



Cathy Key



Adam Grabill



Charles Bryan Meadows



Kenny Ivy



Noah Boone Bridges



Jackson Huse



Jill Rozell



Jana Lauren Shearer



Kathy Jo Tumminello



Brandon Krpec



Jamye Marie Crawford



Sally Ryan Snodgrass



Deanna Holcomb



Makenzie Shyanne



Tommy Jack Burchfield



Robby Cano



Zi'lain Cummings



Daniel Thomas Khirallah



Ashley Elizabeth King



Rachel Wilder



*We need not walk alone.*

"You will miss your child; no magic potion can wipe the pain away. Enjoy what you can you deserve some pleasure. And may some measure of peace overtake you before this year ends." —Elizabeth B. Estes

### March Birthdays Cont.



Dustyn Blake Sandifer



Timothy Andrew Lever



Justin Bloxom



Colton Allen France



Blythe Madison Harper



Kyle James Horn



Neil Defenbaugh



Tyler Roberts



Kayla Smith



Amanda Valadez



Jeremy Kersh



Cory Blackmon



Allen Price



Robert McMahon



Gary Dean Arnold



Noah Boone Bridges



Randall Scott McDaniel



Jackson Huse



Leo Cook



Phillip Kuhn



Joshua Andrews



Joshua Washburn



Trey LePelley



Laura Wilkinson



David Matthew (Matt) Morris



James Wilkinson



Douglas Johnson



Wadiya Adnan Bdah



Rowdy Cunningham



Rico Gonzalez



Maryn McIntire



Irish Faye Haggerty



Jessica Spence



Dylan Prichard



Daniel Thomas Khirallah







*We need not walk alone.*

"Nothing will ever bring him back to me, but one day I will go to him. I can't ever say a final good-bye, only that 'I miss you so.'" —Carla Smith

To sponsor a Butterfly Release Sign with your child's name on it there will be a one-time fee of \$60 per sign. If you want the sign with your child's name placed at a particular business or location, written permission must be obtained by you from that business and sent to the TCF office to keep on file. The sign will be placed at that location about a month prior to the release and taken down the week after by a representative of TCF and remain the property of TCF Tyler to reuse yearly.

Make checks payable to Tyler TCF and in the memo location please note who the sign(s) is/are for.

The Compassionate Friends of Tyler  
**Butterfly Release**  
 Release a butterfly for all children who have died.  
**3rd Saturday in May**  
 www.TylerTCF.org • 903-258-2547  
*In Loving Memory of*  
**STEPHANIE SETTLE**



### Butterfly Release Sign Sponsors

*Deadline to order Butterfly Release sign is May 1.*

**In loving memory of  
Jessica Kirkpatrick  
by Barry & Christel  
Kirkpatrick**



Don & Leslie Dixon for Austin  
Jim & Cheri Zucca for Leah  
Tina Loper for Christopher  
Danny & Pat Settle for Steph  
Sam Smith for Stacey  
Margie & Victor Newman for Jeremy  
Charlotte Nelson for Wade  
Melissa Love for Payton  
Carol Thompson for Sarah  
Greg & MaryAnn Girard for Joe Maland

Lana Kaye Taylor for Reneé Seale  
Marlena Howerton for Alyssa  
Lee & Barbara Barton for Lindsey  
Carol Johnson for Jared  
Mary Delaney for Ryan  
Linda Porter for Seth  
Lisa Schoonover for Jake  
Trish Taylor for Alex Conway  
Janet Majors for Melissa  
Mary Lingle for Candice

**In loving memory of  
Margie Starkey &  
James Abbie by  
Betty Abbie**



**In loving memory of  
Cynthia Harper &  
Andrea Young by  
Roland & Jackie  
Young**



**3rd Annual  
For The Love of Alex...  
Stop Texting and Driving**  
race will be held at Lonestar  
Speedway on Sunday May 10, 2015.  
Races begin at 5 p.m.



### TCF Walking Group

Come join us for a walk, a stroll, a jog!  
Walking and talking is great therapy!

**When:** March 14, 2015, 9 a.m.

**Where:** Rose Rudman Trail—meet at the  
park pavilion off Shiloh Rd.

**Who:** Everyone is invited to join—there  
will be someone walking at your pace!





*We need not walk alone.*

"Some people come into our lives and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never ever the same." —*Flavia Weedn*

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## **My Child Died Today**

I double over from the pain in my midsection and heart. I sob. I cannot breathe. I count the minutes since my child was alive. Shock freezes my body, paralyzes my mind and permeates my soul. My sense of reality is now the deepest fog. I know I will not survive this. I am ready to die. I think I am dreaming, and I will wake up. My child will be here. But I am awake. My child is dead. My child has died. A primal scream begins deep within me and rushes upward, piercing the early morning air. I know I will perish, and I look forward to a quick end. Can I live without my child? Do I want to live?

My mantra becomes breathe deeply, hold and exhale. This is my only reality. I feel that I am fading into the fog. I force myself to drink water. I cannot eat. My mind wanders and then returns to this place; I am physically jolted into my body each time I grasp the finality of my child's death. The people around me are a blur. I aimlessly pace the floor. I cannot remain still. Anxiety has conquered my mind. I cannot think, talk, communicate, understand or comprehend. What are they saying? Why do I care? Where is my child? I want to be with my child. I must be with my child. Somebody medicates me. I fall into dreamless and fitful sleep, sliding, sinking, falling.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin ~ TCF, Katy, TX  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen, From "My Child," copyright 2005*

## **Being Public Takes Its Toll**

"When one is pretending, the entire body revolts." —*Anais Nin*

As we attempt to return to our jobs or our social life, or just to leave the house to do errands, we may feel that we must hold our heads up and keep acting brave. So we talk about things that don't interest us instead of talking about what plagues our heart and mind. We reluctantly agree to do things in which we do not have the slightest bit of interest.

All of this takes a tremendous amount of energy. But it does something else, too. Our bodies are under a great deal of stress as we work through our child's death. Trying to create and maintain an artificial front contributes to that stress. And stress, of course, manifests itself in many ways throughout the body -in headaches, rashes, insomnia, digestive disturbances, the inability to concentrate, and the impulse to fidget or be on the move. We may also have more colds and flus as well as unexplained pains in various parts of our bodies.

One of the kindest things we can do for ourselves is to behave, as much as is possible and reasonable, in accordance with our deepest needs and desires. We can greatly reduce the amount of time and effort we put into doing what only seems socially required.

*I will not push myself into false situations or require myself to perform in a way that differs significantly from my truest self. I will take care of myself by not forcing certain actions or responses, regardless of the pressure put on me to do so. My self, my body comes first, and I need to remember that my body will revolt against pretending.*

*By Carol Staudacher, from "A Time to Grieve"*

## **Please Be Gentle**

An Afterloss Creed by Jill Englar, Westminster, Maryland

Please be gentle with me, for I am grieving. The sea I swim in is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day. My heart is heavy with sorrow. I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path. Please, will you walk beside me?

Reprinted with permission from *Bereavement Magazine*





*We need not walk alone.*

“Be there, be there for me. Understand my unspoken words. See my broken heart. Understand. Listen to my story, a story of my child. Remember his life, remember his death.” —Annette Mennen Baldwin

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## Grandma Wanna-Be

By JoAnne Rademacher, TCF, Minot, North Dakota

Last fall, my son Darick and his wife, Jenny, announced that we would be grandparents this summer. At 47, I no longer had a desire to raise another child of my own and was already a self-confessed “grandma wanna-be.” Their news made my heart dance. My joy, however, was turned to anger when the pregnancy ended in miscarriage.

As a grandma wanna-be with that first grandchild on the way, I was picturing myself baby-sitting and cooing my way to old age with this child and those to follow cuddled around me. I bought patterns for sewing baby clothes and books filled with baby projects. Would the new parents want the crib my children had slept in? If not, where would I set it up for those visits to Grandma’s house? My thoughts were overflowing with being a grandma.

After a one o’clock a.m. call from Darick, I knew that Jenny was probably miscarrying. My knees hit the floor and I sobbed my prayers. “Please, God, don’t let this child die, too!” I implored. When it was confirmed that this child would never be born, all of my happy imaginings were replaced by anger. The raging thoughts of a protective mother quickly replaced those of the grandma-to-be.

In September of 1994, our only daughter, 13-year-old Melissa, died in a car accident. Our sons, Darick and Wade, were also in the car. At 15 and 11, respectively, they were devastated emotionally though they had only minor physical injuries. We have all worked hard at living without Melissa, but some days it seems that there is a dark cloud hanging over us determined to block the sunshine from our lives.

Darick blamed himself for the accident. He put himself in a world of self-induced guilt, a place from which we sometimes wondered if he would ever return. Retrieving his soul has been a long and arduous journey, Jenny beside him every step of the way. I knew immediately upon hearing the baby was lost that he would somehow go back there, which he did. In his mind, Melissa’s and his baby’s deaths were connected by his feelings of helplessness in the face of tragedy. The fact that this could happen, placing him back in that hell, made my blood boil. Those beautiful children had been through enough! Why couldn’t Darick and Jenny have just this one blessing free of heartache?

Many people reminded me of all the medical reasons for miscarriage, making it sound like some grand act of mercy. They said that the baby was very likely genetically damaged and, if brought to term and live birth, it may have been afflicted with any number of maladies. I know they were trying to make me feel better, and it is likely they were right, but their words only made me angrier. “There didn’t have to be anything wrong with this baby,” my mind screamed! Babies are carried to term and born every day. Why did this one have to be damaged? Darick and Jenny needed this joy. And we were already grieving the loss of the grand-children Melissa would never deliver. Wasn’t that enough?

I did not feel guilty or sorry for my anger. I have learned through grieving for Melissa that anger is a natural part of grief. Until now, I simply felt that it was unfinished business. I needed time to come to a place of peace in the face of another child lost to us.

When Melissa died, as deep as my grief was, I rejoiced in the lives of my sons. The fact that they survived that accident was declared a miracle, and it spun a web of protection around my broken heart. Then, in the summer of 2001, Wade was in another accident. The fact that he walked away from it only sore and bruised was declared another miracle. I remember the gratitude and grace I felt when I wrapped my arms around him and sobbed for the words I could not speak.

That memory began to emerge as my initial anger over being denied our first grandchild lost some of its steam. My gratitude for lives saved began to spin around in my head, seeking domination over the anger for lives lost. As much as I wanted to let go of the anger and embrace gratitude, I just couldn’t find the resolution I sought.

Until now. It is summer again, 2002. Wade was in a third accident, this time escaping the rolled vehicle only seconds before it burst into flames within sight of where Melissa had died. When I arrived at the scene, I walked past the incinerated mass of metal. Again, I could not speak, but only held Wade until I could peel my arms from his healthy, whole self. I was calm and in control until later that night when I was alone.

The mash of emotions in my head and heart were too great to hold inside. I was in my car so I opened the roof, cranked up the music, and sobbed for twenty miles. The mother of Melissa grieved yet again. The grandmother of an unborn child also grieved as the mother of Darick fought for rights to her anger. The mother of Wade wailed prayers of thanks. From this tangle of emotions, one truth emerged: As long as I choose to embrace the miracles around me, my heart will dance. Whether in the slow dance of grief or skipping to the beat as I cuddle and coo with grandbabies yet to come, hope and joy will emerge in the rhythms of the dance.

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*We need not walk alone.*

“Gradually, the pain subsides and the world becomes bearable again. Hope sneaks through the cracks in the walls built up as protection against hurt. Energy is regained. The process of rebuilding seems possible.”  
—Myrna Grandgenett, PhD

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## What’s in a Word?

By Sascha Wagner, TCF, Aurora, CO

I do not think that ‘handling’ grief is an accurate concept. I see grief as a force of nature, much like an avalanche or an earthquake or a tornado. That’s hardly the sort of thing human beings ‘handle’—such a force of nature handles us—and we can at best react to it, do damage control, maybe. There may even be limited ways in which to prepare for the impact of such a force of nature. We can construct buildings that are more earthquake proof, or we can blast overhanging snow masses. We can at least try to escape major injury by finding a safe place in a tornado. But we can hardly call that ‘handling’ the event, can we?

In a similar way, we may be able to do things about surviving tragedy, enduring great emotional disasters, outlasting enormous grief. The first step about preparing for grief is to be honest about it—fact is that grief comes everyone’s way at one time or another, and we only THINK that we are helping ourselves if we deny the possibility of grief in our life. Being aware of that possibility might fortify us to a small extent against the absolute devastation which grief can create. Perhaps we can think about help, i.e. to discover in advance a safe place where to survive the tornado of grief. Perhaps we can develop an attitude of acceptance, to lessen the impact of grief’s emotional avalanche. But these are by no means guaranteed safeguards.

If we keep in mind that grief is handling us, instead of expecting to ‘handle’ grief, our chances for positive survival are much better. True, ‘handling’ grief is only a word—yet it can inadvertently convey the wrong idea at the worst possible time. Grief handles us. Grief is the master here, and a difficult master at that.

The first thing we need to learn is to stop fighting—grief only tightens its grip if we try to do battle against our feelings. Once we have learned (grudgingly) to accept and even respect grief, the workload eases a bit. By and by the master lets us do our work without that heavy hand constantly on our heart. We can start to arrange our life schedule, and our reactions, on our own, much like straightening our devastated house after a flood. That is the time, when we find that grief has taken away, or ruined, much of what we had and loved. And that is also the time when we must examine our attitude about grief, again. Do we look to new ways for living? Do we recover some treasures from the devastation? Do we have some things left to go on with? Do we find the strength to feel thankful for having had treasure at least for a while?

To paraphrase Victor Frankel, we are only in charge of one thing: the attitude we bring to the tragedy. And this attitude is not something we just naturally develop over a few days or weeks. Neither can this attitude be fully realized in theory—our attitude about grief emerges in total only during our presence in the reality of grief. Most of us need a few semesters of intensive study and practice in that reality, to give us at least the ability to cope. We could speak about coping with grief, like working with an unreasonable monarch.

What we are really ‘handling’ then, is not our grief, is not the flood, the avalanche, the tornado—what we are handling is ourselves. And the more we do the necessary work, the more we look honestly on the force of nature which is grief—the more we will be able to heal and to go on. And just as the results of a natural disaster can take a long time to disappear, so the results of grief will not become manageable overnight. We must sift through many rooms, many memories, many feelings, until we can say: “This is what is left, I have salvaged some treasure, I have restored rich memories. I have recovered many feelings. But I will always remember this event in my life, it will always be part of me—I have been changed. Grief has handled me.

sascha

## Book Review

***Shadows in the Sun: The Experiences of Sibling Bereavement in Childhood***

by Betty Davies, NF

"This book covers the immediate, short-term, and long-term responses to the death of a brother or sister in childhood and adolescence. It also describes the subsequent generational effects of sibling bereavement. Although the book is intended for professional caregivers, surviving siblings can learn much about themselves from a careful reading of this book. The final chapter brings together all that has gone before into a comprehensive model of sibling bereavement. Practical guidelines are offered for those who seek to help grieving siblings, children and families."

*Quoted from the tcfrochester.org website.*





*We need not walk alone.*

“Why not ask me? I hear it again and again, one friend asked another how I've been. How hard, really, would it be to pick up the phone and just ask me?”  
—*Genessee Bourdeau Gentry*

## To Honor You

To honor you, I get up everyday and take a breath.  
And start another day without you in it.

To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew your smile;  
And the way your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge.

To honor you, I take the time to appreciate everyone I love,  
I know now there is no guarantee of days or hours spent in their presence.

To honor you, I listen to music you would have liked,  
And sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows rolled down.

To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back,  
Risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance.

You were my light, my heart, my gift of love, from the very highest source.

So everyday, I vow to make a difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you.

*Connie F. Kiefer Byrd  
In Loving Memory of Jordan Alexander Kiefer  
8/24/88-12/13/05*

## His Room

Sun splinters through  
The stained-glass unicorn still on the sill  
Splattering black walls with color.  
Few things are as forlorn as a vacant room—  
Furniture gone, awaiting definition  
Bare, yet there on the carpet  
Imprints of chair and waterbed.  
And there is the hole he  
Accidentally shot through the wall.  
And there and there and there—  
Nail holes that held pictures and posters  
And eight-point antlers.  
And there...God, how can a place  
So empty, be so full?

*Richard Dew  
from Rachel's Cry: A Journey Through Grief*

## Forgive Me, My Son

Forgive me if I do not cry  
the day you die.

The simplest reason that I know is  
fathers are not supposed to cry.

I figured you would expect me to be strong—  
to act the way I would have taught you.

Forgive me, my son, if I do not cry  
the day you die.

Forgive me if I do.

*Author Unknown*

## On Vacation

I sat and watched the waves come in & out.  
I looked for you there, but you weren't about.

I saw a young child about your size,  
And I thought it was you, till I looked in his eyes.

I heard a strange voice call your name,  
And I thought for a second you were home again.

I went to the jetty where you used to fish;  
I gazed at the stars and made a wish.

Then I closed my eyes and I heard you say,

"I love you, Mommy,  
but it can't be that way;  
I can't come back to earth  
as you know.

But I will live within you  
wherever you go;

For I am with God in a  
place so divine  
Where there is no pain,  
no space and no time."

Then I opened my eyes and I walked away  
And I've known where you are since that day.

*Penny Linehan ~ TCF, Morris, NJ*

# 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](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 \_\_\_\_\_

**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





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

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*We need not walk alone.*



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