



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



*We need not walk alone.*

**Volume 8, Issue 5**

**Tyler, Texas**

**May 2007**

## Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, May 15, 6:30 p.m.  
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

### Contact

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

Chapter Leader .....Tina Loper  
Chapter Co-Leader .....Pat Settle  
Newsletter/Web Site .....Mary Lingle  
Steering Committee: Tina Loper,  
Pat Settle, Sam Smith, Sherri Tutt  
Margie Newman, Mary Lingle

Jim & Karen Roach, Regional  
Coordinators, (817) 244-0116

TCF National Organization  
Toll Free: (877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## The Meeting Agenda

6:30 p.m. ....  
Meeting will begin with refreshments followed by announcement of birthdays and anniversaries and reading of the Credo. We will then have open discussion.  
8:00 p.m. ....  
Meeting will close by recognizing our childrens' names. Feel free to visit after the meeting or check out books from our library.

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## Letting Go

Recently I received an award for volunteering in the community. I was honored to receive it. Some of the people in my life mentioned that it looked like I had "let go" of the pain of losing my child. "Let go?" Of course, they don't understand.

But when the award was mentioned at our monthly Compassionate Friends meeting, a bereaved mother made an interesting observation that touched my heart and reminded me why I need this special group to keep me centered and balanced.

"I remember that article you read to us last Mother's Day—the one your son wrote about how proud he was of you," she said. "Wouldn't it be great to put that article in our memory book with the newspaper article about your award? He was right about you. He was proud of you."

What a great idea! What a wonderful way to bring my son into my life even though he is no longer on this plane. That's what Compassionate Friends do—they help to bring our children into our lives even though our children are no longer alive. For a few hours each month, our children return to us. We're proud parents who can share our children's stories and keep our children in our lives—without explaining why we won't be "letting go."

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

**We will be holding our 4th Annual Butterfly Release on May 19 at 1:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church south campus, 2813 and Hwy. 69 W.**

Monarch butterflies will be available for a \$10 donation if you would like to release your own butterfly in memory of your child. The deadline to place your order is May 5th.

Contact Margie Newman at (903) 561-1447, TCF at (903) 258-2547, Tina Loper at (903) 780-7104 or Pat Settle at (903) 570-8412 to order butterflies or for more info and directions.



Please let us know if you would like to help this year in honor and in loving memory of your child.

**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.*

"Those of us who have survived many years have learned that over the long run, the human mind chooses to recall only the best of memories—the happy ones, the humorous ones, the sentimental ones—and we learn that even the pain of unhappy memories diminishes." —*Shirley Ottman*

## 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."

## On Grief and Laughter

After the death of a child, how many of us, as bereaved parents, might say to ourselves, "How can I ever smile again?" I know I felt that way following the death of my son. I have heard bereaved parents, especially during the early days after the loss, say, "I suddenly found myself laughing at work. How could I have done that?" After my son died, I went back to work one week after the funeral, and one of the first things I had to do was attend a department meeting. At one point, someone made a humorous remark. Everyone laughed, except me. One of my coworkers, seeing my poker face, called across the table, "Come on, don't look so sad." There were other times, too, when people thought I shouldn't be so glum, that I should be smiling or laughing. Once, while riding in my carpool, the driver turned around to me after observing my mask-like expression in the rear-view mirror, and exclaimed, "Smile!" I remember retorting with some acerbity, "You smile." But in time I did smile. I did laugh. It must be the subconscious guilt within ourselves that denies us the right to smile or laugh. It happened—I don't remember how long it was—at least several months, I think. I have seen parents at a TCF meeting, whose loss is recent, with tear-stained faces, smile when someone at the meeting says something that tickles the funny bone. How many of us have heard our non-bereaved friends say to us, "How can you go to that support group? It's all sadness and gloom." How wrong they are! Of course, we cry at TCF, but there are moments of laughter, too. Crying and laughter, after all, are often interchangeable, such as crying at weddings or graduations and giggling inappropriately at the sight of someone taking an unceremonious pratfall on a slippery sidewalk. Perhaps laughter is also the beginning of Nature's way of mending, of healing us.

*Dave Ziv ~ TCF, Southampton, PA*

## Please Be Gentle

An Afterloss Creed  
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?

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*We need not walk alone.*

“As we walk through this grief of losing our children, we owe no explanations. Our love for our dead children lingers, and in that love is a goodness and purity that allows us to gently be ourselves.” —Annette Mennen Baldwin

## Love Gifts



Jack & Julie Lepelley in memory of Trey Lepelley

Juanita Blake in memory of Donna Morales

Claudette Brown in memory of Terry Wayne Brown

Ruth Herriage in memory of Colleen Herriage

Tina Loper in memory of Christopher Loper

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

College-Bound Solutions for allowing TCF of Tyler  
to use their facilities as our meeting place -  
in memory of Nathaniel Peter Bolom



## Newsletter Submissions

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

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

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

## TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt

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

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



## Announcements

**Our 4th Annual Butterfly Release** will be held May 19, 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church South Campus. Call (903) 258-2547 for more information.



## Love is Immortal

Many of us will resent the lengthening of time between our child's life and our own present. Others may welcome the increasing distance in the hope that time itself will be a balm to pain. Yet, all of us perceive, beyond all the hype and expectations, that new years and seasons are merely calendar events.

Whatever problems we have had in the past will follow us into the present. There is no inner demarcation with hurting behind and joy ahead.

Each of us has the same opportunities now as we had before. We can permit time to simply pass, or we can work to mold its passage into constructive growth.

In the deaths of our children we have discovered with certainty that we lack the means to control the most cherished elements of our lives. But we also know that within each of us is the potential to rise above the debilitating anguish we have experienced.

Time continues to move forward and most of us have been too damaged to even play the games of resolutions and dance the rites of spring. We are beyond the futility of such exercises. But, let us each confront this moment and time with an inward commitment to recovery, to living the hours which comprise our existence with the fullness and love of which we are capable.

Hurting will ultimately lessen. Pain will slowly become more bearable. Fears and guilt will gradually pass away. But love, that inner dance of the heart which leaps to our child's name or the memory of an especially close experience that bears only the mantle of endless joy, will not pass away. All else, fame, fortune, distress and dismay, wealth and power, even ourselves, will at last be done. But love...Love is immortal...May the immortality of love grow secure and healthy again within each of us.

*Don Hackett, Plymouth, MA, from ALIVE ALONE*







*We need not walk alone.*

"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." —*JoAnne Rademacher*

### May Birthdays



**Jamie Allen**  
5-24-75 ~ 7-8-01  
Son of Cindy & Jim Allen



**Donna Mae Morales**  
5-8-96 ~ 5-14-01  
Daughter of Misty Morales



**Boston Kade Porter**  
5-27-05 ~ 8-12-06  
Son of Kim Porter



**Joshua Carl Tucker**  
5-17-76 ~ 4-15-92  
Son of Judy C. Googins



**Tami Kay Brown Roberts**  
5-17-72 ~ 6-10-00  
Daughter of  
Kenn & Ann Somerville



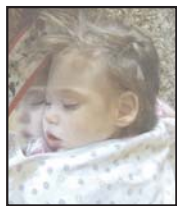
**Stephanie Harris Reed**  
5-18-79 ~ 9-5-98  
Daughter of Rick & Susan Harris



**Brian David Stewart**  
5-16-56 ~ 7-8-56  
Son of Joyce Stewart



**Shanna Marie Redmond**  
5-5-85 ~ 7-30-94  
Daughter of Patricia Miller



**Blythe Madison Harper**  
5-2-03 ~ 3-8-06  
Daughter of  
Stephanie & Joshua Harper



**Stephanie Carol Hester**  
5-9-88 ~ 4-2-04  
Daughter of  
Troy & Glenna Nicolls



**Gabe Levi**  
5-2-79 ~ 6-25-06  
Son of Deborah Hunt



**Lance Alan Massey**  
5-16-80 ~ 7-16-05  
Son of Cindy Massey

### As I Remember Him

Whenever I answer an email from a newly bereaved sibling I say "My twin brother Alan passed away of AIDS on June 25th 1992. There isn't a day in which I don't think of him."

The greatest joy in my life was being Alan's twin brother. The worst time since Alan's death was turning 40. As the ninth anniversary approached last year I was very anxious. I had thought I was doing much better and couldn't understand why I was unable to decide what I should do. Afterward, I was still nervous, as I am each year between June and August, our birthday month, but last year was worse.

As my birthday neared I realized that would be my first "milestone" birthday without Alan. I decided I wanted to go to Philly, Alan's town. To me it would be easier than being with all of the family, all except Alan. I had figured out my family was planning a surprise party. One morning before work, I became physically sick. Even though I had survived without Alan for nine years I now realized that I couldn't continue without help. Twice a week for the two weeks before my birthday I received counseling. I had decided I would have a birthday party if I could make the guest list. It turns out everyone I would have wanted was already invited. Many didn't speak of Alan but they could see his picture button while speaking to me. Thoughts of Alan were never far and as I walked the last friend to his car I realized that it was an enjoyable day but each milestone would be an adjustment.

As I approach my 41st birthday, the tenth without Alan, I have had his initials put on my car's license plate. Each trip to a diner, I order Jell-O after a meal; each new state I visit I get a miniature license plate with his name. I gave his clothes to friends and charity, designed his headstone and developed a program for his memorial service. I started a scholarship, created an AIDS quilt, web page and a backyard garden. I devoted a room, "Alan's room," with posters and articles by and about him. I donate items for AIDS & TCF auctions, write articles and volunteer for TCF, all in Alan's memory. As long as I live I will continue to find ways to honor his memory as I remember him.

*Daniel Yoffee, August 4, 2002*



*We need not walk alone.*

"Perhaps laughter is also the beginning of Nature's way of mending, of healing us." —Dave Ziv

### May Anniversaries



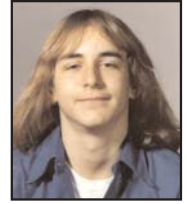
**Brady Bryant**  
4-30-01 ~ 5-2-01  
Son of Windy & Bradley Bryant



**Daniel Anderson**  
12-27-79 ~ 5-15-95  
Son of Kerry & Cheryl Anderson



**Brandon Weatherly**  
12-14-72 ~ 5-20-95  
Son of Ike & Diana Weatherly



**Jon Lee Hardwick**  
9-29-61 ~ 5-7-77  
Sister of Vicki Johnson



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



**Samantha Johnson**  
9-23-85 ~ 5-13-02  
Daughter of  
Dennis & Vicki Johnson



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



**Joshua Jolley**  
9-29-78 ~ 5-12-02  
Son of Brenda Jolley



**Kenny Ivy**  
3-10-65 ~ 5-12-85  
Son of JoAnne Ivy



**Donna Morales**  
5-8-96 ~ 5-14-01  
Daughter of Misty Morales



**Jarren Moser**  
4-28-00 ~ 5-31-05  
Son of  
Robert & Misty Hendrickson

Joshua Carl Tucker,  
5-17-76 ~ 4-15-92,  
was inadvertently  
omitted from the April  
newsletter.  
Joshua's mother is  
Judy C. Googins



**Stephanie Settle**  
12-22-81 ~ 5-27-98  
Daughter of Danny & Pat Settle



**Marshall Charles Donahue**  
10-18-65 ~ 5-18-00  
Son of Joyce Neely

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



**Terry Wayne Brown**  
7-13-69 ~ 5-27-03  
Son of Claudette Brown



**Kaila McKinsey Payne**  
4-6-03 ~ 5-28-03  
Daughter of Keith Payne



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



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“That’s what Compassionate Friends do—they help to bring our children into our lives even though our children are no longer alive. For a few hours each month, our children return to us.” —Annette Mennen Baldwin

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## Gone too Soon

As I think about Mother’s Day this year I become very nostalgic. Every spring during my elementary school days, I looked forward to the day the order form for our plants for Mother’s Day came from our local florist. I always ordered pansies for my mom, the ones with purple and yellow or yellow and brown. I could hardly wait for the delivery day to come, so that I could present them to my mother. She always received them with much surprise and appreciation, as if it were a gift she had never received before or even expected.

As a child, Mother’s Day was an important occasion to my family. My dad always insisted we wear the traditional carnations: white if one’s mother was deceased, red if still living. He would make a special trip to the florist to purchase them. We would attend church, and then drive to a nearby city for lunch.

I remember clearly my first Mother’s Day being “the mom.” Our Anna was only about three weeks old, so I had a very limited idea of what it really meant to be “the mom.” But I do remember being treated like a queen and enjoying every minute of it.

Over the next several years as we raised our two daughters, my husband continued to affirm the women of our family. On Mother’s Day he always bought roses for each of his girls. Anna would get a yellow one. Debbie would get a peach-colored one. The red roses were for me. When the girls were young I would receive and treasure their hand-made cards. As they grew into young adults, their choices in purchased cards were just as significant. Every year as Mother’s Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories. That was before...

Then the unthinkable happened. Our daughter, Anna, died. How could those special days of love and togetherness, laughter and fun become among the most dreaded days a mother must face? How could those days that we had once anticipated with joy and excitement bring such unbelievable heartache and confusion, loneliness and tears?

During those first few years we were simply lost. This was new, undesired, and certainly not requested, territory that we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away or stay in bed with the sheets over my head. The traditions we had come to love and enjoy became intensely painful. It became an impossible task to attend church services or go out for brunch. Seeing families enjoying their togetherness pierced my heart with an endless ache. My tear-filled eyes burned at the thought of being surrounded by “intact” families. Feelings of anger and resentment overwhelmed my heart. On the inside I wanted to lash out at all those mothers and fathers who were surrounded by all of their children and those sisters and brothers who had no clue what it would be like to lose a sibling. As the day drew to a close I felt tremendous relief that it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

The feelings that I have shared are not uncommon in the early years of grief with those who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling. If you or someone you care about has experienced the death of a child, I offer some suggestions from those who have been there to help you do to make it through this time.

- Realize this day is full of potential for a multitude of feelings to sneak up on you and catch you by surprise.
- Especially during those early years, do whatever works for you. This may be a time of being in “survival mode.” Trying to please everyone else can cause undo stress.
- If you have surviving children who want to honor you, communicate your feelings to them. Let them know that while you are grieving the death of their brother or sister, you still love them.
- Try to keep things simple and uncomplicated.
- Visit the cemetery.
- You may choose to pretend the day just does not exist and do something completely unrelated to Mother’s Day. Clean the house, take a nap, get out of town. One of my Compassionate Friends spends Mother’s Day at Home Depot. No one bothers her there or mentions Mother’s Day.
- Have a good cry. If you have trouble crying, just stop by a card shop and read a card or two. Maybe even buy the card that you believe your child would give you.
- Go to the recycle bin and break glass into the proper receptacle.
- Know that the days before the holiday may be worse than the actual day.

As with all holidays, be reassured that what you do this year does not have to be what you do next year. As my Compassionate Friends and I have found, with proper grief work over time, the intensity of our feelings has softened. This will happen for you, as well. In the meantime, be gentle with yourself. And remember, “you need not walk alone.”

*Paula Funk ~ TCF, Safe Harbor, Petoskey, MI*



# The Compassionate Friends of Tyler

P.O. Box 9714  
Tyler, TX 75711

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

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

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check any of following that apply.

Please continue sending the newsletter.

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

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

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

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

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Please return completed form to:  
The Compassionate Friends of Tyler  
P.O. Box 9714  
Tyler, TX 75711



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