



Monthly Group Meeting

Tyler Area Meeting

Monday, May 18, 6:30 p.m.
at Bridging The Gap on Hwy. 155 S.

Jacksonville Meeting

Tuesday, May 5, 6:30 p.m.
at Sam Smith's office, 1401 E. Rusk

Contact

Phone: (903) 258-2547
www.TylerTCF.org • info@TylerTCF.org
P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711

Chapter LeaderTina Loper
Chapter Leader.....Pat Settle
Newsletter/Web SiteMary Lingle

Steering Committee:

Sam Smith, Carol Johnson,
Carol Thompson, Patricia Miller,
Charisse Smith, Mary Ann Girard,
Cheri Zucca, Mary Lingle,
David & Teresa Terrell

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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We will be holding our 6th Annual Butterfly Release on May 16 at 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church South Campus, 2813 and Hwy. 69 S.

We are personalizing wood butterflies for an additional charge this year. If you want a butterfly designed specifically for your child, please let us know. Football, baseball, softball, cheerleading, dance, military, etc., are a few of the designs available. Personalized butterflies are \$20 and need to be paid for in advance. Live Monarch butterflies are available for \$10 each. You must place your order and prepay by May 10. If you are interested in donating refreshments this year, or would like to help with the set up, in honor and in loving memory of your child, please contact us at info@tylertcf.org, or call (903) 258-2547.



Photos from a past Butterfly Release:



Thanks to the First Baptist Church South Campus for allowing us to hold our Annual Butterfly Release at your beautiful facilities!

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.

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace and a soul generated by love.”
—Coretta Scott King

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

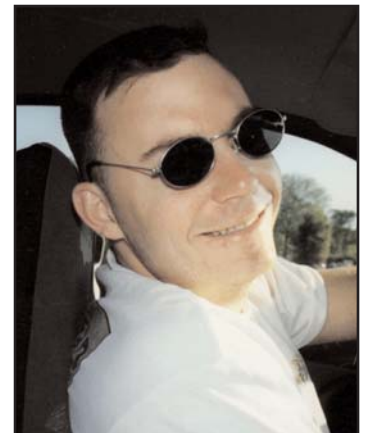
We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. Think back—what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldies” to welcome you, share your grief and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “Your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer.”

**This month’s printing of our newsletter sponsored by
Carol Johnson, Claudette Brown and Patricia Miller.**

**In honor & loving
memory of
Shanna Marie
Redmond
5-5-85 ~ 7-30-94
Daughter of
Patricia Miller**



**In honor & loving
memory of
Terry Brown
7-13-69 ~ 5-27-03
Son of
Claudette Brown**



**In honor & loving
memory of
Jared Sheets
5-14-87 ~ 9-27-05
Son of
Carol Johnson**



Call (903) 258-2547 to sponsor a monthly newsletter in memory of your child.



We need not walk alone.

“Sorrow is not forever—love is!” —*Michael A. Simpson*

Love Gifts



Melton Brown in memory of Terry

Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad

Shalina Ramirez in memory of Bryce Ramirez Cooksey

Sam Smith in memory of Stacey

Glenda Mitchum in memory of Ron

Dorothy Rawlinson in memory of Jonathan Sanders

Juanita Blake in memory of Pat Novas

Mr. & Mrs. James Crawford in memory of Jared Sheets

Sam Smith in memory of Stacey -
use of his office for the Jacksonville meeting

Bridging The Gap Ministries -
Tyler meeting location

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

Special Thanks!

Thanks to Don & Leslie Dixon for providing us with wooden butterflies for the release in memory of Austin.

Thanks to Carol Thompson and Cheri Zucca for providing public service announcements on behalf of TCF of Tyler. The PSAs will be broadcast on Gap Broadcasting stations. Also, thanks to Gap Broadcasting!

A special thanks to Claudette Brown, in memory of Terry Brown, for pledging a monthly donation. Claudette lives too far away to make it to the TCF meetings, but appreciates the newsletter and TCF events.

A special thanks to Dale & Phyliss Cavazos, in memory of Chad, for their regular donations to TCF of Tyler.

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.

Announcements

We will be holding our 6th Annual Butterfly Release on May 16 at the First Baptist Church South Campus. We are personalizing wood butterflies for an additional charge this year. If you want a butterfly designed specifically for your child, please let us know. Football, baseball, softball, cheer-leading, dance, military, etc., are a few of the designs available. Personalized butterflies are \$20 and need to be paid for in advance. Live Monarch butterflies are available for \$10 each. You must place your order and prepay by May 10. If you are interested in donating refreshments this year, or would like to help with the set up, in honor and in loving memory of your child, please contact us at info@tylertcf.org, or call (903) 258-2547.

Yard Sale: Thanks to ETCIL for the use of their building and parking lot for our first yard sale. Thanks to all who donated items, and to Carol J., Carol T. and Cheri for working the sale.

Jacksonville TCF Meeting: Twelve parents attended our first Jacksonville Meeting. The meeting 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 pdsettle@wmconnect.com or butterfly6@nctv.com, or call 903-258-2547.

July Speaker: TCF of Tyler plans to have a speaker at our July meeting. Don R. Balusek, author of *My Papa, My Pal*, will speak to our group about losing his son, Jason, his special-needs child who died suddenly in September, 2003. Watch our newsletter for details.

Steering Committee: If you are interested in participating in our chapter by serving on the steering committee, please plan to attend a steering committee meeting in 2009. These are the remaining dates we will be meeting: July 13, Oct. 12 and Nov. 2. Call 903-258-2547 for more information.

General Assembly: Join us for the 4th Sunday of the month to assemble the newsletter and mail out cards. This is a nice time for fellowship while we help ourselves and others who have lost a child. Call (903) 258-2547 for information.

Dave Maland will start a new GriefShare session beginning Saturday, April 4th, running every Saturday through May 23rd, at 10 a.m. at First Christian Church, corner of Broadway and Loop 323. For further information or registration, contact Dave at 903-581-2524.

Bonfire Sept. 26: We will hold our 2nd Annual Bonfire at Carol Johnson's. Watch for details.

Sam Smith and Scottie Garrison Performance: Join us on Oct. 24th for music, dinner and fellowship. Donations are appreciated. More details to come.

Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony Dec. 13: Please consider volunteering this year.





We need not walk alone.

"I asked for comfort and strength to face what I must face and You answered me—maybe not the way I wanted, but You always answered me."
—Judy Dickey

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



Randall Scott McDaniel
5-07-88 ~ 3-17-07
Son of Kathryn Webb



Jared Sheets
5-14-87 ~ 9-27-05
Son of Carol Johnson



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



Austin Arvizo
5-14-01 ~ 2-9-06
Daughter of
Vincent & Paula Arvizo



Margie Starkey
4-30 ~ 12-3
Daughter of Betty Abbie



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

Editor's Note:

Margie Starkey's photo was inadvertently left out of the April newsletter.

Special Notice about Newsletter Birthdays & Anniversaries

We are following the new guidelines from TCF National regarding the publishing of our children's birthdays and anniversaries. While we will leave the year intact on our printed copy, we will remove the year on the online copy. Thanks for your understanding while we comply for privacy reasons.

We have a special birthday basket at our meetings for members to choose an item during the month of their child's birthday.





We need not walk alone.

“The journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.” —Lao Tzu

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
Brother of Vicki Johnson



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



Samantha Johnson
9-23-86 ~ 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



Alexander Fleming
12-4-89 ~ 5-8-07
Son of Amy Fleming



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



Kaila McKinsey Payne
4-6-03 ~ 5-28-03
Daughter of Keith Payne
Granddaughter of Gracie Farris



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



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



Leah Zucca
9-3-85 ~ 5-10-06
Daughter of
Jim & Cheri Zucca



Melissa Elaine Majors
7-14-80 ~ 5-8-08
Daughter of
Janet Majors

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We need not walk alone.

“Don't try to face twenty years. Face today. When that has been achieved, face tomorrow.” —*Michael A. Simpson*

Turning Tragedy into Triumph— A Mother's Bittersweet Story of a Son Lost and a Grandson Found

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”
[Romans 8:28]

Let me tell you a beautiful story. I am involved with The Compassionate Friends, a worldwide grief support group for families that have lost a child. Every December, we hold a candle lighting service to honor the memory of our children. It is a beautiful service, one that helps us get through Christmas a little easier without our children.

After the service this year, a very sweet lady named Claudette came to me with this miraculous story. In 2003 she had lost her son, Terry, in a car accident. He was 34. Terry had been married and had a seven-year-old son. The following year she was cleaning out her closet and found his old military bag that he had asked her to keep for him. She has had the bag since 1994. As she was going through it she found a box containing some letters from a girl in Oregon. In the letters, dated 1993, there were some baby pictures of a baby boy named Adrian. The letters stated that Adrian had been adopted by a family in Oregon. Claudette told me, “My heart stopped beating for a moment. Adrian looked just like my son as a baby!” Claudette had a grandson that she never even knew existed.

Claudette began a search for Adrian. Three years later, in 2007, she found him and the wonderful family that had adopted him. Adrian had been born in 1990 and living with his adopted family in Oregon all these years. Claudette says that the Lord has blessed their family with a beautiful, loving relationship, not only with Adrian, but with his family in Oregon, as well. To make this miracle even sweeter, two brothers have found each other.

I listened in awe to her story, and just as I was about to leave, she asked, “Would you like to meet him?” He was there at the service! She called him over and introduced me to a very handsome, polite, well-mannered teenage boy. Claudette remarked that he had his father's eyes. She never said so, but I couldn't help but think that she felt as if she had a part of Terry back with her.

Scripture tells us that God works all things for good for those who love Him. This mother had experienced the hardest thing a human can suffer, the death of a child. A young girl becomes pregnant out of wedlock and has a child. Thirteen years later the father is killed. Three years later, his mother discovers that he had a son, her grandson that no one in the family knew about. The miracle continues. Against what would seem impossible odds, she finds her grandson and develops a loving relationship with him. Three years after the death of her son, that grandson would travel from Oregon to Texas to visit his newfound grandmother. He would accompany her to a candle lighting service to honor the memory of his deceased father that he never knew. If that is not God working tragedy into triumph, I don't know what is!

It would be wonderful to go through a lifetime without experiencing heartache or tragedy; but we know life does not work that way. Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” [John 16:33] Tragedy does not have to ruin our lives. With faith in eternal life through Jesus Christ, we can live with the promise of seeing our loved ones again and of a wonderful life after death. With faith in a perfect, loving Father God, we can expect good things to come from seemingly bad things. We can live with hope and peace and joy. This story of a mother's grief turned to joy through God connecting her to her grandson is a magnificent example of God's love for us. May this story inspire you to trust in the sovereignty of Father God and may it give you peace in knowing that He will work all things for good for those who love Him. Amen.

Dr. Sam Smith, Butterfly Ministry

A Solitary Journey

By Helen Steiner Rice

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.





We need not walk alone.

“God inspires people to help other people who have been hurt by life, and by helping them, they protect them from the danger of feeling alone, abandoned, or judged.” —*Harold Kushner*

Motherland

As three of us from the Tyler TCF chapter drove to Austin to attend a March premier screening of the documentary *Motherland*, we did not know what to expect of the film—we just knew we were intrigued by the film’s material and had a real desire to attend the premier:

“On December 1, 2006, six diverse women came together to take an unusual trip: an intensive pilgrimage to work as volunteers with children in rural South Africa. Strangers to each other before the journey, these women shared one life-changing experience in common: each had suffered the death of a child. The film *Motherland* tells the story of this inspiring journey, and how, for 17 days on the other side of the world, the lives of these remarkable women were forever transformed-again.”

The filmmaker, Jennifer Steinman, created the independent film to honor a dear friend whose child died in an auto accident. The film promoters reached out to groups such as TCF with complimentary tickets and the opportunity to personally meet Jennifer, the film’s producer as well as several of the mothers who appeared in the movie. These mothers tell their individual stories about the children they have lost and why they made the journey to South Africa as part of “Project Grace.” Project Grace (Grace is the name of one of the children we learned about in the screening) provides grieving parents unique service opportunities and a way to heal in a most special way—by reaching out to help others in the setting of a foreign country—a true adventure like no other.

Pat Settle loved the film. “There is something about being with other moms who have buried children, and it’s a bond you have immediately,” she said. “And as hard as it is to get up out of bed, when you meet someone who has buried a child, you have the natural desire to reach out to them; that, in my opinion, is when true healing begins.”

Carol Johnson’s husband, Shane, through the generosity of his business contacts, provided for our lovely hotel accommodations in Austin. Shane was humbled by these women who bared their souls on film. “That took a lot of courage, but what a benefit it will be to so many,” he said. Carol J. also recognized “the immediate bond we all feel to each other who have gone through this nightmare.” She noted another important point from the film: “What was really eye-opening for me was the fact that as horrible as conditions are in Africa, the people have an advantage in their grieving process because they do it together. As a country, America is not a good place to grieve, I don’t think—but maybe we’re learning.”

Carol Thompson says the movie is a “must see”—a film you don’t want to miss. All three who viewed the movie were stirred and inspired by Project Grace and plan to be a part of a future Project Grace journey. “We are sure that others in our TCF chapter will want to make the trip with us after they see *Motherland*,” said Carol T. “It’s no exaggeration to say the film is life-changing,” she said. “It’s the film for grieving and growing.”

Editor’s note: Tyler TCF will be screening this movie in the near future. Please watch our newsletter for details. We hope to have the movie available for sale by Mother’s Day.

I Never Believed

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that would again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on—that it can still have meaning—that even joy can touch your life once more.

Don H. ~ TCF





We need not walk alone.

“Sometimes we need to be still. We need to quiet our minds of their never-ending chatter. Though we may need this, especially in the early stages of grief recovery, it may be one of the most difficult things to do. Our minds tend to be anything but quiet and trying to force thoughts out simply does not work.”
—Pat Akery

Choices

By Fran, Mom of Don

God could have stopped you as you picked up the gun,
By gently whispering, “It’s not your time son.”
Just willing you to put the gun away
And face the challenge of another day.
But He knew that your spirit was sadly broken
Although the words had never been spoken.
He also knew that you were seeking His face
And the promise of life in a better place.
So as a tear rolled from His eye,
He whispered, “I’ll just be standing by.
I will not encourage nor interfere,
Just feel my presence standing near.
For with all the miracles I can do,
I must leave this choice up to you.
If you feel that you just cannot go on,
I’ll welcome you to your Heavenly home.
Though I would prefer that you could stay
To follow my life’s plan for another day.
But I cannot promise all joy and wealth,
Or great happiness or robust health.
If you do not have the strength to carry on,
Maybe it is time to come to Heaven’s home.”
The young man breathed a heavy sigh
And said, “I can no longer try.”
As the trigger was pulled he heard a soft voice
“It’s not my will son—but I accept your choice.”

Submitted by Carol Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets

Leah

I am remembering my sister Leah.
I wonder if she is looking down on me.
I hear her voice as if she was still here.
I see her smiling face as I walk down the hallway.
I want her to be here with me and my family.
I am missing her all the time.
I pretend she is still alive.
I feel the pain inside my heart.
I touch all her belongings and remember her.
I worry about the rest of my family.
I cried when this tragedy happened so suddenly.
I am lonely at night when I think of her.
I understand I will never see her again.
I say that I miss her and I mean it too.
I dream at night that she is still around.
I try not to think of the accident,
but of the good memories I have of us together.
I hope never to forget the things she did for me.
I am remembering my sister and the love she gave to all.

Alexis Contreras (Leah’s sister) ~ TCF, Medford, OR

The Music of You

My mind begins to wander
To another place and time
Where and when I perceived the world
Through someone else’s eyes.

Those eyes were bright and inquisitive,
Rarely missing a beat
Of the rhythms of life that pass us by
If we but fail to see.
Through sparkling blue transcending eyes
I allowed the rhythms of life
To enter in and reside awhile
As I felt their beat in my soul.
My soul encompasses the music
I surely would never have known
Had I not learned to perceive the world
Through someone else’s eyes.
My mind begins to wander
A bit too close to the past
Where tender melodies I’ve learned
Begin to change their beat,
Consistently thumping and rising
Blending with the pulse of my heart.
When the music of you beats too intensely,
I know I must open my eyes
To the rhythms of life you taught me
To never let pass me by.

My mind begins to wander
To another place and time
Where and when I perceived the world
Through someone else’s eyes.

Marcia Overstreet ~ TCF, Medford, OR

Awkward Silence

I wish that someone would say his name.
I know my feelings they’re trying to spare,
And so we go through the charade, the game,
Of dancing around the ghost that is there,
Trying to avoid evoking a tear,
Or stirring emotions too painful to bear.
That he be forgotten is what I fear,
That no one will even his presence miss,
As if there were no trace that he was here.
Be referring to him, my purpose is
Not to stir pity or keep things the same,
But my heart will simply break if his
Memory will die like a flickering flame.
I just wish someone would say his name.

Richard Dew, M.D. ~ TCF, Knoxville, TN

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 Other _____

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