



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



We need not walk alone.

Volume 5, Issue 11

Tyler, Texas

November 2004

Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, November 16, 6:30 p.m.
Clinical Associates of East Texas
2010 Sybil Lane, Tyler, Texas

Topic

Still Able to be Thankful

Contact

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National Organization Information

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The Meeting Agenda

6:30 p.m.....Fellowship
7:00 p.m.Welcome; Announcements;
Introductions; Topic
7:15 p.m.....Open Forum
9:00 p.m.Additional Fellowship &
Refreshments

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Feed the Cat?

My son is dead—and you expect me to feed the cat? Isn't it amazing how society is so rigid in their expectations? There are rules you know...steps we must all take..." Whoever set these standards obviously has never lost a child, the core of your heart and soul. It just doesn't work that way.

Simple every day tasks are impossible to complete. The only constant in your upside down world is pain, unlike any pain you have ever known. Shortly after your child's death, you are expected to return to your job, take care of your household, pay the bills, and yes, feed the cat! It has been a year for me, since I lost my son, and I still go blank mid act. I stand in a store with no idea what I came in for, or I cry over bananas because Lee loved them. I can go from laughter to tears in 1.1 seconds.

The Compassionate Friends has been a life saver (or perhaps a heart saver) for me. Only those who have experienced the same heartache will understand when you say I need to be alone, but I can't stand to be alone! Each grieving parent must heal in his or her own way, in his or her own time. One step forward, 15 back, spin around and start over, only to repeat the same progress, one step forward, 15 back, spin around... You get the picture. But you don't have to heal alone. You need not walk alone. Join us, we know you're not crazy—just a grieving parent. We do care.

Ann ~ TCF, Roseburg, OR

Chapter Chat

November is here—and soon Christmas. We would like to encourage everyone to participate in the candle lighting this year. We are accepting songs, poems or any suggestions.

Please send your photos as soon as possible we will include them in the slideshow as well as putting them on the tree that will be on display at the candle lighting. You may even e-mail them to the address on your newsletter.

We will have butterfly ornaments available now and at the candle lighting. These can be personalized only when placing your order in advance. The deadline for this order is November 19th. This will ensure that we have what is requested in time for the candle lighting. We will put your ornament on the tree and you may pick it up then.

Don't forget to order for friends and family, as well. They will make great stocking stuffers.

This is the month that we are having our get together at Margie Newman's house. Please contact her and let her know if you can make it. This is not a meeting, just a casual get together.

Sweet memories,
Tina, Pat and Mary



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.

“If we are loved and remembered, then we live on forever in the hearts of those who love us. —*Ten Menten*”

Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to those who attended their first TCF meeting in October.

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.”

New Traditions

New traditions are now permanently woven into the fabric of our lives. The catalyst for these traditions is not a happy addition to our lives; indeed, the catalyst marks a traumatic loss in our lives. That subtraction comes in the form of the death of our child.

The finality is crushing. This overwhelming loss has redefined each of us, changed our perspective forever and brought us close to the abyss of insanity. The new traditions gradually pull us back from the abyss and may eventually provide a sense of comfort, serenity and peace. And so in June we remember our children. We communicate with them, via a note from our hearts, written on a butterfly shaped paper and tied to balloon. We, the parents of the dead, gather and listen to a poem about our collective and individual loss. We the parents of the dead experience the haunting bagpipe as it fills our senses with the sound and the meaning of Amazing Grace. We, the parents of the dead, once again stand together and remember our children. We speak to them. Our butterfly messages become kisses on the wind as our balloons ascend into the sky, floating southward, floating higher and higher until, we imagine, our children can reach out and grab each message and read it and know that we love them deeply and miss them every day and every night. This is our tradition. Each of us views it from the depth of our souls; our love of our children is demonstrated openly as we weep without shame for the loss we have experienced.

A significant part of each parent died when our children died. Yet, a crucial part of each child lives in the hearts of every mother and father. Neither time nor death will erase that bond. It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.

We hope that one day we will each make some sort of peace with this monster, this nightmare, this void, this pain. We hope one day to heal our open wound but know we will always carry an invisible yet deep scar. The worst loss a person can ever experience has been thrust upon us. The only change will come from within each of us. We may one day feel a serenity that comes only through pure love, pure kindness and pure understanding. We will learn to remember yesterday, live today and anticipate tomorrow. And we will always have our new traditions—traditions that are now part of who we are, where we have been and where we are going in this life. Our traditions remind us that our children lived, laughed and loved. We linger in the moment for that is all we have.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

The Brain Must Follow the Heart

Some survivors try to think their way through grief.

That doesn't work.

Grief is a releasing process, a discovery process, a healing process. We cannot release or discover or heal by the use of our minds alone. The brain must follow the heart at a respectful distance.

It is our hearts that ache when a loved one dies. It is our emotions that are most drastically affected. Certainly the mind suffers, the mind recalls, the mind may plot and plan and wish, but it is the heart that will blaze the trail through the thicket of grief.

Carol Staudacher in A Time to Grieve: Meditations for Healing After the Death of a Loved One



We need not walk alone.

How well are you doing with your grief? "If I were doing well with my grief, I would be over in the corner curled up in a fetal position crying, not standing here acting like no one has died." —*Doug Manning*

Announcements

Hospice of East Texas is offering **Wings Children's Grief Regional Workshops**. Look for information on page four of our newsletter, or visit www.hospice-etex.com for details.

Our Annual Candle Lighting Memorial will be held on December 12th at the First Baptist Church of Gresham, located at 16844 CR 165 Tyler Road (behind the Dairy Queen in Gresham). The ceremony begins at 6:30 p.m., and candles are lit in memory of our children at 7 p.m. For 24 hours straight, candles stay lit in every time zone around the globe for one hour to remember our NOT FORGOTTEN children.



If you would like, you may bring a photo of your child, at least 8x10, to display at the service. We have to have a signed release before we can use your child's photo.

Family and friends are invited. Candles are provided.

If you find that this time of year is especially tough because of the holidays, maybe your involvement in our candle lighting ceremony will bring some comfort. We appreciate your help!

For more information, please call (903) 581-2831, (903) 780-7104 or visit our Web site at www.TylerTCF.org.



Love Gifts

Margie & Victor Newman in memory of their son Jeremy
Mary & Erin Lingle in memory of their daughter & sister Candice
Dolly Mobley in memory of her daughter Shannon Scheffler
Brenda Pope in memory of her son Christopher
Juanita with Ladie's First



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.

I Am Your Sister and Always Will Be

"I am your sister and always will be." That's how Susie signed her cards to me. After a while, she shortened it to, "I am..." And of course I knew the rest of it Susie was two and one-half years younger than I. She was alive one evening talking on the phone to Mom about the Oscars and to Dad about moving. The next day she was found. Whatever it was—it ended her life and changed mine forever.

There was a wonderful side of my sister that I didn't pay enough attention to. She was a kind and loving person, always ready to shelter lost animals and lost souls. When she was in a good mood, her smiles warmed my heart. Yet I spent most of my life wishing that things were different—wishing that she thought more of herself, wishing that she would take my advice, wishing that she were happier, wishing that we could accept each other.

Now, for two years, I've done nothing but wish she were here so we could have another chance to work at our relationship. Now, I wish that I had been able to give her my unconditional love and support. (She needed it and deserved it.) Now, I wish that I could have been with her that night so she would not have been alone. Now, I wish that I would have held her in my arms and told her how very much I loved her. Because, Susie, I am your sister and always will be.

Michele Walters ~ TCF, Baltimore, MD

YOU ARE INVITED...

to a Compassionate Friend's potluck dinner at Margie Newman's home on November 20th. Please join us for this casual get together with food and friends. Everyone is welcome! Just bring your choice of food dish.

Take Hwy 31 West past Kelly Springfield. After Kelly Springfield there is a red light and that is spur 364. Take a left at that light. Go down about 1/2 mile and on the right is Indian Creek, right beside a little store. Turn right on Indian Creek. Go over the railroad tracks and a bridge and up a big hill, and start watching after the hill to the left for Valleyview Drive. Turn left on Valleyview Drive. We are the 5th house on the left. I will have a sign or balloons outside to mark the house. Call (903) 561-1447 for further directions and please RSVP so we will know how many to expect.



We need not walk alone.

"Grief knits two hearts in closer bonds than happiness ever can; and common sufferings are far stronger links than common joys." —*Alphonse de Lamartine*

November Birthdays



Mikel Conway
11-17-57 ~ 10-11-01
Son of Viola Conway



Wade Goetze
11-29-76 ~ 10-28-01
Son of Charlotte Nelson



Christopher Jordan Pope
11-10-90 ~ 6-16-03
Son of Edward & Brenda Pope



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



Bobby Knott
11-6-68 ~ 4-24-83
Son of Virginia Knott



Lindsey Stewart
11-6-87 ~ 4-2-04
Daughter of Stephanie Stewart



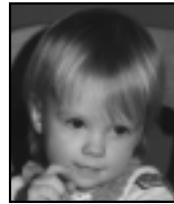
Kayla Smith
11-7-89 ~ 3-5-04
Daughter of Debbie Smith



Thomas Carroll
6-2-73 ~ 11-13-93
Son of Linda Carroll



Crystal Greene
8-6-83 ~ 11-13-01
Daughter of Lory Greene



Candice Lingle
2-21-91 ~ 11-8-93
Daughter of Mary Lingle



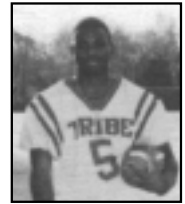
Brooke Wallace
1-16-81 ~ 11-24-98
Daughter of
Charles & Tammy Wallace



Salvador Estrada
12-11-79 ~ 11-3-01
Son of Charlotte Estrada



Jonathan Reynolds
12-14-98 ~ 11-16-02
Son of Addison & Debra Reynolds



Ijuan Simms
2-20-79 ~ 11-7-01
Son of Sharon Simms



Andy Terrell
2-11-72 ~ 11-25-03
Son of
David & Teresa Terrell



I brake for butterflies!
www.TylerTCF.org

Our new bumper stickers are available for a \$2 donation. You may get them at our monthly meetings or by sending a request to: TCF of Tyler, P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711.

Sweet Remembrance

Let fate do her worst; there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy;
And which come in the night-time of sorrow and care,
To bring back the features that joy used to wear.
Long, long be my heart with such memories filled,
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled;
You may break, you may ruin the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang 'round it still.

T. Moore



We need not walk alone.

"Grief ebbs but grief never ends. Death ends a life but death does not end a relationship. If we allow ourselves to be still and if we take responsibility for our grief, the grief becomes as polished and luminous and mysterious as death itself. When it does, we learn to love anew, not only the one who has died. We learn to love anew those who yet live." —Julius Lester

Words from Heaven

We weren't ready yet to say goodbye,
And if only we could hold each other
Just for one more hour
I would wipe all the tears from your eyes.

If I could say one thing to you it would be,
Mom, Dad, Brother, please don't worry about me.
I'm in a place so great I can't begin to explain
A place where I wish everyone could come and see

Momma, when you think of me don't cry,
Cause you would smile so big if you saw me now.
I have asked the Lord to take your pain away,
And give you all peace somehow.

The hardest thing was leaving that day in the room,
But I was needed by God, even more than you.
Know always that I will be here in this beautiful heaven,
Waiting on the day when I will see you.

John Pope

The Piano Sits Silent

I etch her name in the dust.
Run my hands over the keyboard,
too long untouched
by the pianist;
The one no longer
physically here,
who played the songs,
badly at times,
yet unstoppable in
her need to make music.
As if it was her mission
to get it right.
As if she knew there was little time
to master the melody.
So she played and played.
Melancholy tunes
that spoke of lives gone too soon.
I would call to her,
"You're playing too loud,
I can't hear myself think."
If I could just take back those words,
for I long to hear my
beloved child play the music,
that once rang through these halls.
Those uneven strains would be
the sweetest music to my ears.
I touch the ivories and hear
the foreign sound of this long
silent instrument.
And remember my precious child,
remember the joy
her efforts brought her...
Remembering, remembering....
Though my tears fall gently,
my heart smiles as I
recall the sweet sounds of her life.
And even as the piano sits silent,
My memories resound
and I recall the love, always the love.

Cathy Seehuetter ~ TCF, St. Paul, MN



A Community Service Offering from:
HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS

Main Office: 4111 University Blvd. Tyler, TX 75701

Wings Children's Grief Regional Workshops
• **November 6, 2004: TYLER**

These half-day Saturday workshops are for children
and families grieving the death of a loved one.
To register and for more information, please call:
Laura Mattheis, Bereavement Coordinator:
(903) 566-9023 or (800) 777-9860
www.hospice-etex.com



Visit us online at www.TylerTCF.org

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





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