



Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, October 16, 6:30 p.m.
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

Contact

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Pat Settle, Sam Smith, Sherri Tutt
Margie Newman, Mary Lingle

Jim & Karen Roach, Regional
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TCF National Organization
Toll Free: (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

The Meeting Agenda

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

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Grief and Anger

In our chapter meeting this month we will be discussing anger in our grief. Many experience anger after their child or loved one dies. A description of anger is "A feeling of rage, an emotional agitation to what is viewed as unfair, unjust and sometimes even shameful."

When we are angry we need a target. Sometimes the target may be God. (He understands.) Some may even feel anger at their child or loved one, thinking, "How could he/she leave me like this? Why? Doesn't he/she know I'm hurting and in pain?" Some people are angry at the doctors, some at the funeral directors, some even feel anger toward themselves, thinking they could have done something to prevent the death.

We may even be angry at our spouse. He/she may not grieve the same way and we may misunderstand their feelings that are just as deep as our own. Maybe our clergyman is not as compassionate as we believe they should be, or maybe they were not available to us at all. We are angry because we feel abandoned and that life is unfair. We also feel very alone and no longer in control of our emotions. We may also think nothing will ever be the same, and it won't. But as time goes on, it does get somewhat easier as you work through your grief.

We all try at times to not let this anger show to others, but suppressing it can only lead to sickness and withdrawal. Masking anger will often hurt the ones around you and may even drive them away from you. You may even risk losing your closest support system.

Dealing with your anger and admitting it and also seeking help from others who have experienced this feeling is always the healthy thing to do. Personally, talking has been the best help for me. Attending a Compassionate Friends meeting and talking to others who have "been there" has helped many.

Jackie Wesley ~ TCF, East Central Indiana & Miami-Whitewater Chapters

Endowment

Hope gives us vision for regaining the tenderness of memories.
Hope carries us through to survival and healing.
Hope offers us courage for acceptance and overcoming.
Hope gives us new spirit and new laughter.
Hope is among the greatest gifts to be found in time of sorrow.
But hope cannot restore on earth what is lost to death.
Hope can only go forward and make us new.
Give space to hope in your life.

Sascha ~ from "LARGO," Fall 2001

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.

“Eventually we can relive our memories with real joy, grateful for them and even more appreciative of the time we had together. If you are in the midst of painful memories at the moment, take heart that it will not always be so.”
—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.”

Volunteer Opportunities

At some point along our grief journey, we begin to regain some energy, and desire to reach out and help other bereaved families. If, and when, that time comes for you, please know that there are unlimited ways in which you can help. Some things can be done without ever leaving your home and others involve more of a time and energy commitment. Remember, unless you take good care of yourselves and family, you will not have the emotional and/or physical stamina to take care of others. Contact a steering member to find out more about volunteering.

Opportunities recommended for the "newly bereaved" who are ready to volunteer:

Greeter: Greet members as they arrive at the TCF meeting. Remind members to sign in. Make sure that new members are welcomed and fill out new member information sheet, and are given TCF materials.

Refreshments: Contact members who have volunteered to bring refreshments a few days before the meeting as a reminder. If there are no volunteers, you may offer to bring refreshments, and TCF will reimburse you for the cost if a receipt is provided.

Librarian: Check books in and out. Notify steering members of any book donations. Contact members who have not returned books.

Card Writing: Send cards to new members letting them know we are glad they attended, remind them phone and email friends are available and send cards to members on birthdays and anniversaries.

Opportunities recommended for members who have two or more years into his/her bereavement:

Phone and email Friends: Call members who have requested a phone friend. Allow TCF to list your number and/or email address in the newsletter for members to call you when they need to talk to someone.

Steering Member: Be involved with the daily operations of TCF, setting goals for the chapter, decision making, record keeping, etc., Serve on the committee for The Candle Lighting and/or Butterfly Release.

Grants: Research statistics, etc., for grants. Research grants available, deadlines, assist in applying for grants. Contacts: Wal-mart on Broadway, Gail Taylor; Target, Larry Edwards; Jr. League, Janet York; East Texas Communities Foundation

Additional opportunities that offer positions for everyone depending on your level of commitment:

Butterfly Release Committee: Work with steering members on planning, organizing

Candle Lighting Committee: Work with steering members on planning, organizing

Fundraising: Research fundraising ideas and present to steering committee; Organize fundraising; Make crafts to sell at events; Solicit businesses for donations; Work at fundraisers

Media: Work with butterfly release committee and candle lighting committee; Set up interviews with TV stations, radio, magazines, community calendars; Do interviews to promote awareness about TCF

Photographer: Video and/or take pictures and provide pictures of events for newsletter

Newsletter/Website: Editor; Proofread; Copy and mail; Assist in entering poems in computer; Research articles, poems, etc.

Outreach: Contact churches, funeral homes, and businesses with information on tcf events; Contact funeral homes to display or mail out tcf info; Work with United Way; Update community calendar contacts



We need not walk alone.

"Please be kind and allow me to see him in my own way, because he exists in my world and I see him when you let me." —Cindy Nevins

Love Gifts



Yvette Wallace in memory of Tammy

Jim & Cheri Zucca in memory of Leah

Dale & Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad

David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy

Mary Ann Girard in memory of Joe Maland

Carol Thompson in memory of Sarah - refreshments

Tina Loper in memory of Christopher

Danny & Pat Settle in memory of Steph

Tammy McCutcheon in memory of Jonathan Sanders

Janet St. Clair in memory of Brian St. Clair

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

Special thanks to these members who have volunteered:

Mary Delaney in memory of Ryan

Mary Ann Girard in memory of Joe Maland

Charisse Smith in memory of Ben

Miranda Smith in memory Ben

Carol Thompson in memory Sarah

Carol Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets

Patricia Miller in memory of Shanna Redmond

David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy

Special thanks to Donna Luker of College Bound Solutions for speaking at our volunteer meeting and also to the members who attended: Carol Johnson, Charisse Smith, Miranda Smith, David and Teresa Terrell, Mary Ann Girard, Mary Delaney, Patricia Miller and Sherri Tutt.



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.

Announcements

Our Annual Candlelighting Ceremony will be held on December 9th.

We are accepting canned food at the meetings from now through December 15 for the Lack's Christmas tree food drive. We will have decorated boxes at the meetings if you would like to place a box at your place of work for co-workers to donate too! We will meet Tuesday, Nov. 13 at 6 p.m. to decorate our tree with our children's photos. Prizes are awarded for the most food collected. First place receives \$200, second receives \$100 and 3rd, \$50.

Sam Smith is going to perform at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, LA, Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 6 p.m. If you would like to attend, we will be carpooling. Call Kay Asher for directions or more information at (318) 617-4085. Call (903) 561-1447 if you would like to ride with us.

Alan Fowler from Merryville, LA, has beautiful sterling silver bangel bracelets for sale. He uses one solid piece of silver and carves your child's name on it. It is a beautiful bracelet, very durable and very affordable. You can call, write or email him for more information at (337) 825-5184, P.O. Box 246, Merryville LA 70653, silvernames@bellsouth.net.

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

TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt

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

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





We need not walk alone.

"I choose joy over sadness. If there is one overriding thought in these years, including 10 TCF conferences in a row, it is simply this: Grief is inevitable; misery is optional. It does no good to sit in a hole. It does no good for the loss of one life to lead to the loss of two." —Richard Edler

October Birthdays



Cindy Dingle
10-18-57 ~ 9-6-99
Daughter of Lynda Hanna



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



Joey Moore
10-30-79 ~ 10-4-98
Son of Sarah Dolan



Jeremy Mark Lawler
10-25-73 ~ 4-19-97
Son of Mark & Sue Lawler



Brittany Butler
10-4-84 ~ 1-21-01
Daughter of Shelly Butler



James Brady Langston
10-13-96 ~ 2-15-01
Son of Jamie Langston Dacus



George Washington Shaw III
10-18-78 ~ 7-3-05
Son of Bobbie Williams



Austin Dixon
10-20-88 ~ 2-19-07
Son of Don & Leslie Dixon



Richard Heerd
10-31-76 ~ 2-22-81
Grandson of Lawrence Batte



Mark Turner
10-3-66 ~ 6-19-97
Son of Clayton & Pat Turner

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

Thanks

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say: "There is a group in town that might help you."
Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."
Thanks to the mother who went to that first meeting knowing it would really hurt to talk—and talked.
Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back—but did.
Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help."
Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies—for her "Compassionate Friends."
Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people—who became a facilitator.
Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men—and didn't say he was sorry.
Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know—next month.

John DeBoer ~ TCF, Omaha, NE



Randy Rounsavall
10-14-51 ~ 6-19-03
Son of Margaret Rounsavall



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



Allison Carson
10-29-92 ~ 7-5-93
Granddaughter of Phil & Ann Brown



Cason Gimble
10-21-86 ~ 9-9-06
Son of Lynn & Kalisa Gimble





We need not walk alone.

"To spare oneself from grief at all cost can be achieved only at the price of total detachment, which excludes the ability to experience happiness."
—Erich Fromm

October Anniversaries



Stacey Smith
9-8-72 ~ 10-4-88
Daughter of Sam Smith



John Patrick Carnahan
4-17-65 ~ 10-13-03
Son of Rod & Shirley Carnahan



Joey Moore
10-30-79 ~ 10-4-98
Son of Sarah Dolan



Kathy Robertson
4-23-57 ~ 10-23-01
Daughter of Carolyn Love



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



Sean Smith
2-2-87 ~ 10-27-01
Son of Randy & Judy Smith



Erica Smith
12-21-88 ~ 10-25-03
Daughter of
Todd & Sabrina Thoene



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



Madeline Joy Kearney
7-15-86 ~ 10-6-05
Daughter of
Melody Kearney Burnett



James Lee Lary
4-20-83 ~ 10-30-05
Son of Elgin & Ann Lary

THE SCREAM

The smile you see is not all of me,
For I'm not what I seem.
I laugh and smile but all the while,
My smile holds in a scream.



For when I see a little girl,
So innocent and free,
I think about my little girl,
Who died at seventeen.

And then the scream comes welling up,
From in my soul so black,
And so my smile must block it in,
And laughter hold it back.

I saw her born and watched her grow,
from child to blooming lass,
But through the years I couldn't know,
I'd have to see her pass.

The suffering within my heart,
I hide from all the world.
I do my job, I play the part,
And miss my little girl.

A song about a father's love,
So sweet with tenderness,
Awakes in me the horror of,
My loss and loneliness.

So, if they say "He takes it well,
He'll be OK we all can tell.
How well his life continues on,
It's almost if she wasn't gone."

Remember that I'm not so sane,
Playacting, keeping up the game,
My nightmare life trapped in a dream,
You see, my smile holds in a scream.

Steve Tutt ~ TCF, Tyler, TX
Remembering our daughter, Lisa ~ 1987-2004

"You are so strong"
Empty words
That don't touch the reality
That my life has become.
Walking through fog
Incredible pain
Searching for the beloved face
I crave to see
The voice that I strain to hear over the noises
Of people who have no idea
Of what the world has lost

Charisse Smith ~ TCF, Tyler, TX



We need not walk alone.

"Those who weep recover more quickly than those who smile." —*Jean Giraudoux*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, STACEY

"But in keeping with His promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."
[2 Peter 3:13]

September 8, 2007, was my oldest daughter Stacey's 35th birthday. At least it would have been if she were still here. I didn't celebrate her birthday the way we celebrate most. There was no party, no candles, no gifts, no birthday hugs or kisses. Instead, I visited her grave as I have done for the past nineteen years. I stood at her tombstone and talked to her, even though I know she is not there. I told her how much I loved her and how I am looking forward to seeing her again some day. It is a strange thing to do, I suppose, to stand and talk to a marble stone. It is not uncommon, however. Chances are you have talked to some yourself, and that's o.k. I placed a small butterfly pin on her stone. Silly thing to do, I guess, but it's not the first time. I just wanted to do something; after all, it was her birthday.

Before leaving, I decided to walk around the cemetery. I wasn't sure why, I just didn't want to leave right then. It was as though I thought something was going to happen - like I might see something. A few rows over from Stacey's grave I noticed a new grave-site. There were happy birthday balloons tied to the wooden cross grave marker. Someone else had been there earlier to celebrate a birthday. Reading the marker, I found that this girl had the same birthday and the same initials as Stacey - strange happenstance, I thought. I prayed for her family, and walked on.

I walked from stone to stone and read the words upon them: the names, the dates, the inscriptions. Some had Bible verses. Some had information about the person, things that the loved ones deemed important to say. I understood that. Some had their picture on the stone. I like that idea. Maybe I should do that for Stacey. I thought about the dash etched between the date of birth and date of death. I remembered reading somewhere about the dash: the life between birth and death.

I thought about the dash on Stacey's stone. Sixteen years is such a short time. Funny that her 16-year dash was the same size as all the other dashes. Some represented even a much shorter life, but most oh so much longer. That 16-year dash meant the world to me. I recall every moment of it, and every moment is so precious. I wish it could have been longer - much longer - but it wasn't, and we will have to live with that. That dash is eternally etched in my mind and heart, as eternal as it is etched on her stone.

I found a marble bench beneath a cedar tree. I have been to that cemetery hundreds of times, but I have never noticed that bench before. I sat there for a while, still having that strange feeling that something was going to happen: wishful, hopeful thinking, I guess. A few butterflies flew by, which is always wonderful to me. The clouds moved over the sun, creating a beautiful masterpiece of rays and light, sending chills down my spine. Was that what I was waiting to see? Maybe, but I still felt the need to stay longer.

I read a few more stones, thought a few more thoughts as I talked to God. The intensity of the moment was momentarily broken by one stone that had a miniature gas pump stuck to it with the inscription "out of gas". I applauded them for their sense of humor. I walked back to Stacey's grave - one more "I love you and I'll see you later" before leaving.

It was time to leave. I still don't know what I was expecting to happen. I had done all I knew to do. It had been good to be there, I thought. I reminded myself that Stacey is in heaven, and I will see her soon. It's one more year and I'm still here, holding on to her memory. I felt the Holy Spirit reminding me of God's perfect love and how He sent His Son to save us. I thanked Him for the reminder and drove away.

I will be back soon, and the next 8th of September will find me at her stone wishing her happy birthday. Some glorious day I won't have to talk to a marble stone on her birthday. I will celebrate with her and with the angels in paradise. I try now to picture the scene, knowing that it is far beyond anything my mortal mind can imagine. I pray that you know that the time will come when you will celebrate with your loved one, too. That hope - that promise - will get us through one more year.

"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, and eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands." [2 Corinthians 5:1]

Dr. Sam Smith, Butterfly Ministry ~ TCF, Tyler, TX





We need not walk alone.

"My tears are not a sign of weakness or a lack of hope or faith. They are symbols of the depth of my loss and, I am told, a sign that I am recovering." —*Marcia Davis*

In Memory of Sarah

When my daughter was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver in 2005, emotions I had never experienced virtually took control of my heart, mind and body—if you are reading the Compassionate Friends newsletter, you likely need no explanation for my statement.

Sarah was 24 and, like your child, was full of life with much to look forward to. Since she died late at night while out with her friends, we received "the call" (also known as "every parent's worst nightmare") that brought me out of a sound sleep and started our journey through the dark—literally and figuratively—as we drove to the city in which she died. We did not know her condition or learn that she had passed until a third of the way into our journey.

Many things we learned for the first time, only one of which I will focus on for this article. We learned that in Texas "failure to stop and render aid"—a prettied up term for the crime of "hit-and-run"—carried a very low penalty, even when the result was death or serious bodily injury. When a person leaves the scene, there is no opportunity for questioning by law enforcement or for investigation of the vehicle or testing of the driver. It was no exaggeration to say that the law rewarded and encouraged people not to stop. Why would a person not stop? The legal consequences of killing or injuring someone are far greater if the driver is impaired or in possession of illegal substances. In our case, the driver was apprehended about two weeks after Sarah died.

Sarah's family and friends believed we had unfinished business to be accomplished in memory of Sarah—and for the sake of countless future Texans that we will never know. In court, I promised the driver of the car that killed Sarah that her death would serve as the catalyst for us to campaign to toughen up the Texas hit-and-run laws. And so work began.

After we began a letter-writing campaign, we learned that House Bill 1840 had been introduced by Rep. Dennis Bonnen of Angleton even before Sarah died. We "piggy-backed" onto Rep. Bonnen's bill and gave it our full support because it doubled the current penalty for hit-and-run. The bill was sponsored by both Rep. Bonnen and by Sen. Glenn Hegar of Houston. The "Angel of the Bill" is my nickname for David Courreges, an Austin attorney and graduate of St. Mary's School of Law, who "babied" HB 1840 through the Texas Legislature. Sarah was a third-year law student at St. Mary's and our efforts were fortunate to have the wonderful support of many—some who knew Sarah and others who did not.

On July 17, 2007, Sarah's family and friends were privileged to join Governor Rick Perry at the Texas Capitol for the ceremonial signing of The Sarah Kathryn Thompson Act, which raised the offense of hit-and-run to a third-degree felony in Texas.

Mandy Carroll, Sarah's roommate and fellow student at St. Mary's School of Law, presented framed pictures of Sarah to Governor Perry and to the two legislators inscribed with the following: "The dead cannot cry out for justice; it is the duty of the living to do so for them." (Lois McMaster Bujold)

I am very grateful but know the work is not yet finished in Texas and in many other states. In some states, the offense is not a crime or may be a misdemeanor. I am very interested in hearing from people in any state in the country who are victims or have family members who are victims of this crime.

This work helps others—but let me be honest—this work helps me and helps to restore some meaning and purpose to my life. I intend to continue to work for stiffer penalties.

We all grieve in different ways and we react and "take action" in different ways. Sometimes the path of action is clear and sometimes it takes a long time for anything to become clear.

I just read this quote from Barbara Lazear Ascher the other day—possibly in The Compassionate Friends newsletter—it says it all: "I have been trying to make the best of grief and am just beginning to learn to allow it to make the best of me."

Carol Thompson ~ TCF, Tyler, TX





THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711



We need not walk alone.



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