



**Monthly Group Meeting**

Tuesday, September 18, 6:30 p.m.  
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

**Contact**

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P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711

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Chapter Co-Leader.....Pat Settle  
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Margie Newman, Mary Lingle

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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 birth-days 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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**Donald's Trail**

Our son Donald died on November 15, 1989, from depression which led to suicide. One asks many times what causes a handsome, intelligent, and sensitive young man to take his life. What could be so bad he saw no other way out of this emotional pain?

Of course, our son experienced teen peer pressures; he had to face alcohol and drugs. He also took on the world's problems. The environment concerned him greatly — the ozone layer fading away, the disappearance of rain forests, and the greenhouse effect. Donald was also concerned about earthquakes, like the one in San Francisco in 1989, months before he died. He took on the problems of his friends, his family and the world. That's too tall an order for anyone to fill.

Out there in nature, we feel a oneness with Donald. No, we cannot physically see him, but we can definitely feel his presence.

A gentle breeze blows there, and the softness of a pine branch embraces my arm. I see the babbling brook, so much in a rush—like Donald was. I feel the warmth of his smile. The rocky ground reminds me of his struggle with things that became obstacles for him. It also reminds me how difficult our lives are trying to trudge the rocky ground without him. Yet, it's not all sadness, it's more like a trail map of Donald's life. Sometimes the trail is smooth and paved with soft pine needles, and sometimes it's rocky, winding and steep. At the top though are gorgeous views to take your breath away.

I believe Donald cares for this trail also and walks it many times. I'm sure his view is one of even greater beauty than we can see — and one of greater peace than we can know on this side.

*Linda Trimmer ~ TCF, York, PA*

**School Starts**

Strange things happen to you when your child dies. You'll fail if you try to make sense of most of it.

Both my children had finished high school when my son died, yet I found the beginning of school—especially that first year—to be difficult. The bus stops in front of my home for the neighborhood children. Suddenly, as they all gathered to wait for the bus, I found myself reliving those simpler, happier days of old; longing for them actually. It was a painful time.

Now, if I, whose children are grown and gone, had a problem with school starting, those of you who do have school age children must know that your pain is normal. It's another reminder that life goes on—with or without our children—and acknowledging that it hurts! I came to the conclusion that it was all right to pine for happier times and it was nothing to get upset about. As with many remnants of grief, I recognize it, allow it and then get on with my life.

Maybe you're like me, you'll always be a little nostalgic about school starting. That would probably have been true even if my son had lived. Maybe you, too?

*Mary Cleckley ~ TCF, Stone Mountain, Georgia*

**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 heart of grief, its most difficult challenge, is not "letting go" of those who have died, but instead making the transition from loving in presence to loving in separation.” —*Thomas Attig*

## 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.”

## Thoughts About Progress

One thing that is frequently discussed at our meetings is the despair of thinking you are on the road to “recovery,” when all of a sudden you seem to be back at square one. But are you really?

Let’s keep in mind most of us have had no previous experienced “recovering” from the loss of a child. Therefore, we have no point of reference—it’s all new to us. Actually the “roller coaster” of emotions is perfectly normal. In the very beginning most of us seem to vacillate between dead numbness and excruciating pain. Constant crying, to not a tear left—just dried up and limp. We actually are living minute-to-minute.

After a couple of months we might actually have a few hours that we have not cried or felt that deep overwhelming despair. Then, WHAM—back to where we started. We tend to panic and think something is wrong with us. Let’s be realistic! There is something wrong—terribly wrong: we have each lost a child.

Let’s be fair to ourselves. We started to play a role to the outside world. Like the old song says, “laughing on the outside—crying on the inside.” We want to be acceptable to society. “You are doing so well,” we hear. If only they knew! We may feel we have to fool others, but let us really be honest about our feelings. To deny our feelings, particularly to ourselves, is to block the road to recovery. Remember that recovery in this case does not mean, “getting over it,” it means to gain control of our lives again.

So, let’s not worry about what other people think, say, or expect. Our friends (well meaning as they are), sometimes members of our family, even someone who has lost a child, should not sit in judgment. Each person grieves differently, due to a person’s general make-up and the relationship with the dead child. Unless someone has totally withdrawn from everything and everybody over a lengthy period of time, the chances are all is in the realm of normalcy. Only after we have walked down the long road of grief and can look back, remembering those early days and weeks, can we see we really are not on square one again. We have just slipped backwards for a time. That is all. Allow yourself that, and then strive forward again. It takes time, a lot of time! We tend to expect too much from others, others expect too much from us, and therefore, we tend to expect too much from ourselves.

*Mary Ehmman ~ TCF, Valley Forge, PA*

**SPECIAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 4TH!** We will be meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 4th at our meeting facility on Houston Street to discuss volunteer opportunities and committee membership. The Compassionate Friends of Tyler relies solely on the volunteerism of our parents. If you are ready to make a difference and help others who have joined us in this walk of grief, please join us on the 4th. For more information, contact us at (903) 258-2547. Giving back is another way to help with healing.



*We need not walk alone.*

“...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 Hackett*

## Love Gifts



Don & Leslie Dixon Dixon in memory of Austin Dixon - book for library

Pam Johnson in memory of Lori Campbell

Donna Griffin in memory of Jake Higgins

Peggy Rozell in memory of Jill Rozell

Bobby & Jean Gimble in memory of Cason Gimble

Wilbur & Dorothy Rawlinson in memory of Jonathan Sanders

Tina Loper in memory of Christopher Loper - refreshments

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

**SPECIAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 4TH!** We will be meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 4th at our meeting facility on Houston Street to discuss volunteer opportunities and committee membership. The Compassionate Friends of Tyler relies solely on the volunteerism of our parents. If you are ready to make a difference and help others who have joined us in this walk of grief, please join us on the 4th. For more information, contact us at (903) 258-2547. Giving back is another way to help with healing.

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

**CALLING ALL CRAFTERS!** We are planning to participate in the Green Acres' Craft Fair in October. We appreciate those who are willing to donate craft items for us to sell during this fundraiser, and those who might want to get together with other TCF members to work on new craft projects to sell. Call (903) 258-2547 for more information.

**We are accepting canned food at the meetings** through the 2nd week in December for the Lack's Christmas tree food drive.

**Chapter #2275, TCF of Brazoria County:** Connie Mosier & Rosalind Woods, P.O. Box 1395, Brazoria TX 77422. They meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Chapelwood United Methodist Church, 300 Willow Dr. Lake Jackson, TX 75756

## What Is Left?

When a child dies, you ask, among other questions, what is left? A beautiful, sensitive, intelligent son has chosen to end his life. What can be left after such a crushing blow?

Others will point out that you have a spouse, other children or grandchildren, perhaps relatives and friends. They are all left. Perhaps you have a career that is left. And yet how meaningless all of those are to a bereaved parent, to one who is suffering the most devastating loss of all. So you continue to search for what it is that is left.

You read books on bereavement scarcely remembering what you have read; you attend meetings, talk with others who have suffered a loss like yours. If you are fortunate you have one or two good friends who, while they cannot fully understand, are there to love and listen. Perhaps there is a therapist who guides you in your search for an answer. But for a long while everything you read or hear has little meaning and certainly cannot provide the answer to your question. Or can it? Does all that you have read and heard and experienced finally come together and answer the questions of what is left?

For me it does. The answer was 13 months in coming, but how clear it seems now. I am left. That's it! I am left and I have been left with the love of Scott. It is a new love, it is different, more intense, it is undemanding, it need not be reciprocated, there are no strings attached. I love this love of Scott's. It warms me and comforts me. It is a wonderful love, but I cannot keep it. It would be wrong to do so; this love is too precious to keep to myself.

I am left with love to spare and love to share. It will never run out. He will always be with me to replenish it. I have found my answer! I am left to share Scott's love with you.

*Betty Stevens ~ TCF, Baltimore, MD*





*We need not walk alone.*

"The death of a child is so painful, both emotionally and spiritually, that I truly wondered if my own heart and spirit would ever heal. I soon learned that I could help myself best by helping others." —*Barbara Bush*

### September Birthdays



**Justin Dover**  
9-14-89 ~ 8-15-02  
Son of Stacey Dover



**Chad Cavazos**  
9-24-86 ~ 4-20-01  
Son of Dale & Phyllis Cavazos



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



**Theresa Kay Talley**  
9-16-78 ~ 12-20-05  
Daughter of W.A. & Ruby Talley



**Robert Attaway**  
9-11-99 ~ 9-11-99  
Grandson of Nancy Cooke



**Shantrice Willingham**  
9-11-02 ~ 9-11-02  
Daughter of Thelma Washington



**Michael R. Peymon**  
9-18-79 ~ 1-2-06  
Son of Tom & Sharon Peymon



**Gary Dean Arnold**  
9-17-57 ~ 3-7-04  
Son of Betty & Harold Arnold



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



**Joshua Jolley**  
9-28-78 ~ 5-12-02  
Son of Brenda Jolley



**Douglas Johnson, Jr.**  
9-24-97 ~ 3-18-05  
Son of Douglas & Shelley Johnson



**Samantha Johnson**  
9-23-86 ~ 5-13-02  
Daughter of  
Dennis & Vicki Johnson



**Adam Thomas Pritchard**  
9-21-82 ~ 2-21-04  
Son of  
Thomas & Ginger Pritchard

### Chassidic Tale

A man had been wandering in the forest for many days, and was nearing the end of his water and food supply. With each passing hour his sense of fear and despair was increasing. His body was weary with fatigue, yet he was unable to sleep.

Slowly it became clear to him that he had been walking in circles and retracing his steps. He knew that his end was near.

Suddenly, in the distance, he noticed the figure of a bedraggled fellow wanderer approaching him. His joy was boundless as he thought to himself, "At last, a way out of this dark and foreboding forest."

The man gathered all of his remaining strength and ran towards the stranger and exclaimed, "My brother, I can't begin to tell you now happy I am to see you. Which way leads out?"

The stranger responded, "My dear friend, I am so sorry to disappoint you, but I too have been wandering in this forest for days on end. I can't save you - I too am looking for a way out.

In a fit of despair the first wanderer shouted, "Then all is lost. It is over. There is no use in continuing," and fell to his knees in a fit of tears.

The stranger responded in a deeply caring and comforting voice, "My friend, why are you giving up hope? Let us journey together. I will show you the paths I have taken that have led me nowhere, and you will show me the paths you have taken that have not brought you to your destination. Let us walk together and find a path home."



*We need not walk alone.*

"Whether we cry on the inside or cry on the outside is predetermined by society, our genetics and a host of other factors. But we do cry these beautiful tears for our deceased children. These tears somehow remind us of the connection to our children, their departure and our deep, deep loss." —Annette Mennen Baldwin

### September Anniversaries



**Tim Cole**  
4-15-69 ~ 9-15-97  
Son of Mary Miller (deceased)



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



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



**Jonathan Lee Daniel Sanders**  
1-4-87 ~ 9-8-2006  
Son of Lisa Dunford & Donald Sanders



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



**Amanda Stone**  
3-25-85 ~ 9-7-03  
Daughter of Mary Kay Stone



**Mary Jennifer Stone**  
2-22-81 ~ 9-21-96  
Daughter of Dick & Denise Stone



**Toni Wood**  
3-10-79 ~ 9-29-03  
Daughter of Tami Wooldridge



**Shantrice Willingham**  
9-11-02 ~ 9-11-02  
Daughter of Thelma Washington



**Robert Attaway Jr.**  
9-11-99 ~ 9-11-99  
Grandson of Nancy Cooke



**Sarah Thompson**  
10-3-81 ~ 9-8-05  
Daughter of Ted & Carol Thompson



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

### Remembering You

Thousands of tears have we cried since  
the day we said good-bye.  
Though the words brought so much pain  
in our hearts you'll always remain.

As the days come and go there is  
one thing we will always know  
A gift from God you surely were,  
you gave a little heaven here on earth

Life will never be the same without you here  
but heaven is so much sweeter with you there.

In memory of our loving grandson,  
Jonathan Lee Daniel Sanders, 1-4-87 ~ 9-8-06

*Dorothy Rawlinson ~ TCF, Tyler, TX*

### You Filled Our Lives With Joy

In memory of Jonathan Lee Daniel Sanders

When you came into the world  
Everyone said it was too soon,  
But the doctor said he wouldn't wait.  
You were so small  
Only 4 lbs., 2 oz.

At that time we realized  
That God knew what he was doing  
When he brought you into this world.  
We made a promise to teach you how to be the  
best you could be

And you met every expectation.  
As you grew into the 195 lb. man that you became,  
You filled our lives with joy.  
Accomplishing so much in the 19 years you were with us.  
You always strived to meet all your goals in life  
And you long surpassed ours.

Now that you're gone  
we hang on every memory,  
missing you more and more each day.  
You will remain in our hearts forever,  
until we can be with you again someday.

*Loving you always, Mom, Dad & Lindsey ~ TCF, Tyler, TX*



*We need not walk alone.*

“The most beautiful things in this world cannot be seen or touched—they are felt by the human heart.” —*Helen Keller*

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## Butterflies Make Me Happy

Sometimes in our grief we truly believe we are going crazy. We hurt so bad we don't think we can manage to go on living without our precious child here with us. Part of the grieving process is learning how to do just that. Some parents need the reassurance that their child is okay. I think the human mind can only take so much pain and jumps at the chance to see signs from their children, reassuring them that they are okay.

The way I look at it, if you get comfort from a dream or a sign...enjoy it. You've suffered enough, and believing in signs, butterflies, dreams or what ever else gives you comfort and hurts no one else, is your right as a bereaved person. Are these signs real, or just in my imagination? Can I prove they are messages from my son? Does it even need to be proven? No, I can't scientifically prove it. But I know that dreams, butterflies, signs and enjoyment in nature makes me feel closer to Eric and therefore I will continue to enjoy them. It hurts no one, I'm not obsessive about it and anyone who chooses to think I'm nuts for believing in such things, can think I'm nuts.

We've all heard how the butterfly is a symbol of rebirth. Whether its our child moving from this world onto a higher plane, or a bereaved parent emerging from the cocoon of grief into a world without our child here. With us, butterflies are a comfort for many. When I'm missing my son and see a butterfly fluttering from flower to flower, I smile and feel better. When I'm in a happy mood and see a butterfly, I enjoy the beauty of such a delicate creature. Taking the time to slow down and watch such a fragile creature going about its business is calming and I don't think anyone should discount the benefits from having a calming moment.

About four months after Eric died, I had a dream about him. I woke myself up from tears of joy running down my face, I knew he was okay...what a relief that was. I still hurt terribly and missed him more than I thought I could endure, but I felt comforted by the dream. Some could say it was my subconscious trying to sort things out, but I choose to believe it was his way of trying to comfort me. Either way, it made me feel better.

Maybe it's because bereaved parents walk around in such a fog and function on automatic pilot that we are moving slow enough to notice the signs that are around us. Maybe dreams are one way for us to accept messages we need to hear and take into our hearts without logically trying to interpret them. Maybe faith is what we rely on when nothing else makes sense and we instinctively know we need something to hold on to. Whatever it is, just give me a second helping; I like feeling closer to my son!

*Lynn Vines ~ TCF, South Bay/L.A., CA*

## My Secret

Within days of my son's tragic death helicopter crash, it became my sad duty remove his belongings from his apartment. In the numbing fog of shock and denial, I sifted through every drawer, cabinet, and closet. The wrenching decisions of what to with his clothes, his video tapes — even his toothbrush — made my head swim.

Although I gave away many of the things to his roommate, other friends and family, and to “Goodwill,” I kept the “special things for myself — school yearbooks, pictures, certain articles of clothing, and his collection of crazy T-shirts. I put this strange assortment of things in his footlocker, a remnant of his boarding school days.

What I didn't tell anyone was that I never laundered the T-shirts I found in the dirty clothes hamper. I just folded them and put them in the Footlocker with a my other memories. And from time to time during those first months of agonizing pain, I would sit on the floor, open the footlocker and sort through the treasured remnants of a life that had been such a large part of mine.

Then I would take the unwashed T-shirts and bury my face in them, inhaling the combined scents of his cologne, deodorant, and perspiration, mixed with the wetness of my tears. It made me feel, for just moment that he wasn't really so far away. “What a perverse thing to do!”, I thought. I'm sure no one else would understand my doing such a thing — they would surely think I'd gone off the deep end.” So I never told anyone about this strange behavior — and the odd comfort it gave to me.

Months later at a National Conference, I heard a speaker tell hundreds of bereaved parents assembled about a mother whose had died suddenly and how she had refused to wash the soiled shirt he had been wearing, but found comfort in holding it close to her and smelling it. “My gosh,” I thought, “maybe I'm not so crazy after all.”

Since this experience I have discovered this is not as uncommon as I had once thought. The scents of a loved one are as much a part of them as the sound of a voice, the touch of a hand, or the tenderness of of a kiss.

There is nothing “perverse” in wanting to cling to these precious memories. Memories are what remain after the death of our child and there is comfort to be found in them.

*Carole Ragland ~ TCF, Houston-West Chapter*



# 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



**"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

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