



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS Newsletter

MEMPHIS, TN

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009

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.

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The Memphis Chapter of The Compassionate Friends conducts meetings on the first Thursday of each month from 7-9 p.m. at St. Louis Church located at 203 S. White Station at Shady Grove.

Be sure to bring a picture of your child to the meeting. We have a table set up for the placement of pictures of our children. We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.



TCF Meeting Topic for January – “Fear and grief are our greatest teachers; do you agree and what important lessons have you learned.”

Refreshments provided by Cathy Foust

TCF Meeting Topic for February – “Renewed Grief – through the years events can trigger a “Grief Burst” that renews our grief; what are the causes and what does it mean?”

Refreshments provided by Ronnie & Tabby Williams

Note: The January Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 8th, due to the holiday.

Worldwide Candle Lighting Service

The Memphis Chapter of the Compassionate Friends held their December meeting on December 14th at Immaculate Conception Church in conjunction with the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting Program. With over 120 people in attendance, we joined together to light candles in memory of our children, grandchildren, siblings and friends. Each year on the second Sunday in December, families around the world unite in loss to remember their loved ones. A special thanks to the Memphis Chapter Steering Committee for their hard work and dedication in making this service a memorable experience; also a special thanks to Chuck's Catering and Paulsen Printing.

With Loving Memory We Light a Candle

We light these candles in the winter night; reminding our world of grief and loss; we are a part of love, in tender league, with grievors everywhere a part of us. A slow and shiny dance of candlelight now makes its way from hand to loving hand. For children who were once by our side, but have their home now in another land. The chain of candles sends its gentle glow around the planet as the hours pass; and every candle carries joyful tears, a song of light to celebrate what was. The children are with us, a friendly band, they know the meaning of these candles best. They hear the love; they see the message move around the world, alive from East to West. Let their candle light remind the world of all the children who have left this life; and all the children who are with us now are kindred spirits when they first arrive. As the candlelight sends forth its glow let our children say again “We know that peace on Earth must be what life intends.” Now in the sky, the peaceful stars behold not only what we do, but what we mean. Be our memories new or scarred and old, the stars will not forget what they have seen. We light these candles in the winter night reminding our world of grief and loss. We are a part of love, in tender league, with grievors everywhere a part of us.

Seasoned Grief

There used to be a point to summing up a year just passed, not as a personal accomplishment but as a reflection. Leaving previous hurts behind was welcomed and the sensible thing to do. I thought I was getting wiser as I was getting older, with the New Year's clean slate full of possibilities. Becoming another person seemed simple, another change at getting it right. Like redemption, being forgiven for having blundered or been found wanting. But death changed everything, without permission. Resolutions made sincerely and broken quickly, offended my need to hold on to the past; to rewind life very fast, backwards so that I could capture what I had lost. Still, time went on, regardless of my pleas. And when exhaustion sets in, as eventually it must, I understood there would be another future; not the one I thought I had the right to expect, but one where I dared carry hope in my heart again.

Eva Lager TCF, Perth, Western Australia

We welcome our newly bereaved friends. We are sorry for your loss and the reason that brings you here. We know how devastated you are; we have all been in the depths of despair as you are now. We hope that you will attend three or four meetings before deciding whether our group will benefit you. We offer friendship and understanding to all.

“We need not walk alone, We are the Compassionate Friends”

Memphis Chapter TCF Steering Committee

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Parents

The Memphis TCF Chapter has a website with information about TCF and what is happening in the Memphis Chapter. We also have a page where we have a picture slideshow of our children. We are preparing a section for individual child pages which can feature images of the children and/or their favorite possessions, themes, personal comments and stories about our children. If you would like to have your child's picture added to our website you will need to sign a release form which is required by our Webmaster and the National Chapter. Bring the picture and the written verbiage to our next meeting or send it by email to dahrius1@yahoo.com. The written information on your child needs to be prepared in any text editing program and saved on a disk to bring to the meeting or to send to the address below or e-mail as an attachment. You can view our website at www.tcfmemphis.org. Click on "Our Children." On that page there is a link to obtain the required release form. Bring the form to a meeting or mail to Clint Norwood at 3402 Douglass, Memphis TN, 38111.

Birthday Table

Each month we provide a Birthday Table for the parents whose children would be celebrating a birthday. We invite you to bring pictures, scrapbooks and other mementos that belonged to your child to share with your Compassionate Friends.

TCF Library

We have an extensive TCF Library that is a valuable resource for our Chapter and new parents. We ask that you check the books or tapes out by completing the check-out card in the front of the book/tape and return what you have checked out in a few months. If you have any books you would like to donate to our Library, contact Pri Morden at 274-9338.

Grief Materials

The Compassionate Friends has joined with Centering Corporation to provide resources at conferences and to our chapters. Centering Corporation is North America's oldest and largest bereavement resource company and carries more than 400 resources for grieving families and caregivers. If you would like to receive a catalog, contact Centering Corporation at PO Box 4600, Omaha, NE 68104; phone 402-553-1200 or visit their Web site at www.centering.org.

TCF Wristbands

Our chapter has Compassionate Friends wristbands with "Forever In My Heart" imprinted and framed by two butterflies available for \$1.00. If you would like to order TCF wristbands, call Gwen Elrod at 901-388-3298 or send your request to gwenelrod@hotmail.com.

Religion – A Continuing Theme

The principles of The Compassionate Friends state that TCF reaches out to all bereaved parents across the artificial barriers of religion, race, economic class or ethnic group. TCF promotes no specific religion or philosophical ideology. Despite our non-denominational status, many writers indicate that they have found comfort in their faith, and some have shared their anger and loss of faith. The opinion and beliefs expressed in the articles and poetry are those of the author.



Refreshment Schedule for 2009

January – Cathy Foust • February – Ronnie & Tabby Williams
March – ????????? • April – Jere Ferguson
May – Keith Rivers & Larry & Gwen Elrod • June – Shelia Foust & Diane Johnson
July – ????????? • August – Laurie Williams & Dianne Rhea
September – Jack & Peggy U'Ren & Ron & Wanda Gray • October – Sue Anne Duffy
November – ????????? • December – Memphis Chapter Steering Committee

If you would like to sign up to bring refreshments for the 2009 Meetings,
a signup sheet will be available at the November Meeting.
Sue Anne Duffy is our Refreshment Chairperson; you can contact her at 276-4134.

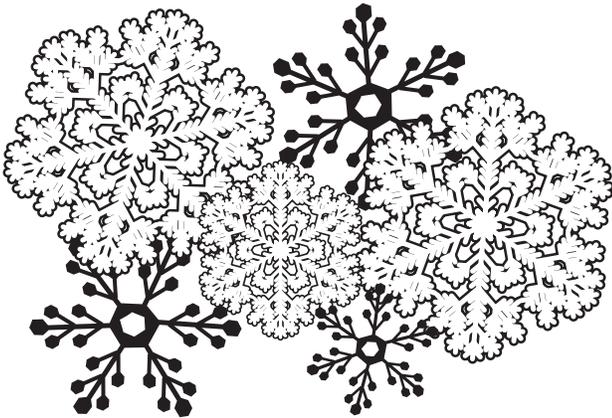


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Reflections on a New Year

We begin a new year, one that many of us enter with reluctance. After all, it means another year away from our child and another year to live without the physical presence of the one we have lost. Apprehensive about any new challenges that we may be called upon to face in our broken condition, we call out "Wait, I'm not ready yet!" The death of our child changed the course of our life; nothing will be the same again. But it also has shaped us into who we are today; and it will continue to do so as we learn to incorporate this loss into who we are to become. Have you found that you have already begun to live differently? Compassion towards others is more profound. Trivial things are not longer important. Appreciation for life, and those in our lives, is paramount. We're living the same life, just differently. Tragedies, disappointments, and heartaches combine with beauty, love, and joy fashion our life. These are all a part of life, and our challenge is to incorporate them into our world. The difference that our child's life has had upon the world continues through us. So, rather than being fearful of the challenges that lie ahead, perhaps a better question to consider at this time might be: What opportunities will present themselves in the coming year to honor this loss that is already a part of our life? Our child has become more integrally entwined into our being than ever before. We bring him or her to every situation that we encounter. How can we make that situation better because of this bond? The start of a new calendar year is a good time to remember that we are in the midst of life. It is not perfect, nor is it one that we might have chosen. But, our struggles do not put life "on hold." Rather, they are a part of life itself. Our life is ours to make the most of, with many gifts that we can share with others. There is not a better time than the present to gather up the pieces and recognize the uniqueness that we each call "ME", a uniqueness made more wonderful because of our child's presence in the life we chose to live.

Paula S Schultz TCF Evergreen Park, IL



It's My Choice To Be A Survivor Or Be A Victim

I Can Choose:

- To seek out people and resources who will listen and care when I need support OR retreat from life and isolate myself from sources of support.
- To search for meaningful things to give my life a sense of purpose OR decide I have no hope or purpose in life and that I have nothing to live for.
- To realize that loss is only one of the many factors in my life OR see myself only as a bereaved parent and allow this to blacken and disrupt all aspects of my life.

- To communicate with family and friends when I need information to help OR wait for others to discover what I need, getting angry and pitying myself when they don't.
- To accept what is gone and out of my control and act on what I can do OR constantly pity myself over what has changed and what I can't do.
- To try to understand how my family feels, they hurt too OR feel that absolutely no one can understand me and what I am going through.
- To look for ways to fight back against negative feelings OR feel that I am helpless and at the mercy of fate.
- To talk about fears with someone I trust OR bottle up fears and horrors that are unexpressed and let them have power over me.
- To accept my grief as a recovery process in my recovery from loss OR be ashamed of my grief and pretend all is well to protect others' discomfort.

Adapted from Positive Patterns of Survival

A Baby's Secret

I'm just a little feller who didn't quite make it there; I went straight to be with Jesus but I'm waiting for you here. Don't you fret about me, Mommy, I am of all God's lambs most blest; I'd have loved to stay there with you, but the Shepherd knows what's best. Many dwelling here where I live waited years to enter in; struggled through a world of sorrow and there lives were marred with sin. So, sweet Mommy, don't you sorrow, wipe those tears and chase the gloom; I went straight to be with Jesus from my Mother's womb. Thank you for the life you gave me, it was brief, but don't complain; I have all Heaven's glory and suffered none of earth's pain. Thank you for the name you gave me, I'd have loved to brought it fame but if I had lingered in earth's shadows, I might instead have brought it shame. Daddy gave me something for you, it's our secret, Mommy dear; pressed it lightly on my forehead and whispered in my tiny ear. I'll be waiting for you, Mommy; you, Daddy; Bud and Sis; I'll be with you then forever, then I'll give you a great Big Kiss.

Carol Mercer, TCF, Enid, OK

Like a tree in winter which
has lost its leaves, we look ahead
to spring for new growth
and the warmth of the sun
to heal the pain in our hearts.
Let us make January a time to
reach out to each other
and give the warmth from
our hearts, and in return
we will all show
new growth.

*Pat Dodge
TCF Sacramento Valley, CA*

Information for Newly Bereaved Parents – A Different Season

Subject: How Long Will This Grief Last?

You may wonder, “Will this pain and hurt ever end? When will these intense feelings cease?” Placing a time frame on your recovery may set you up for disappointment, if you’re not finished with your mourning once that time has arrived. Grief recovery takes time anywhere from months to years. Although the intensity of your feelings will decrease over time, remember, your sadness will be transformed into a deeper understanding of your loss. **The Good News: Your grief recovery is very different than anything you have ever experienced.**

Subject: Feeling Wounded and Different

Re-living each moment of the death in your mind can be very painful, and yet, it actually helps you to begin to deal with your loss. All of the feelings you are experiencing are common to those who grieve. There is no need to be ashamed of any of your feelings. Repressing your feelings can hurt you emotionally. Don’t allow others to tell you how you should grieve. It is not unusual when you first learn about the loss of your loved one to experience a very surrealistic moment. You feel there are “two parts” of yourself. One is reality: you continue to do things; and the other is detached: you watch things unfolding. Remember, this is a way for you to deal with the enormous pain of your loss. **The Good News: By allowing yourself to feel different, you are healing yourself.**

Subject: Being Human

Your life as you once lived it seems to have been blown apart like a bomb. During your time of grieving, however, the world doesn’t stop. Life moves along at its own fast pace. Things may not seem real to you at times. Each death is very different, yet shares a similar grief response. Grieving is individual and personal. Dealing with the reality of your loss requires patience. Don’t try to rush this process or discount what you are feeling. Discover your own style of grieving and coping, and use it to your advantage. **The Good News: Your human nature gives you all the inner resources you need to survive this loss.**

Subject: Returning to Normal

You will struggle at times in being preoccupied with your loss. You will remain overburdened. You may think you don’t have the strength to carry on. You wonder if life will ever be normal again. You seldom resolve grief. As you engage in activities at home and at work, you begin to see how many changes you’ve made. Days turn into weeks, weeks turn into months, and you realize how strong you are and how far you have come. **The Good News: In time your life will again become stable.**

Subject: You Are Surviving

Every day that passes is one day closer to full healing. This doesn’t mean that you won’t feel sadness or pain. It does mean that you will continue to gain strength and confidence in yourself. What happens to you today will never quite happen to you in the same way again. Tomorrow will be different. Don’t dwell on the past or fear the future. Look at today and all the choices available to you. You are surviving and will continue to adapt. **The Good News: Truth provides you with possibilities.**

Subject: Unfinished Business

You may experience difficulty in putting some closure to this relationship. There will be no more good-byes, expectations will never be fulfilled, and life will remain unfinished because the person who died is gone forever. You may continue to ask why this happened, yet, knowing the “why” would not necessarily make you

feel any better and certainly doesn’t change anything. Saying good-bye in your own way and in your own time is important. It doesn’t mean forgetting your loved one, but rather remembering the good and familiar times in your life. **The Good News: Every time you can say good-bye, you validate the relationship you once had, and you continue to heal.**

Subject: Remembering the Good Times

After a while family and friends may not mention the name of your loved one for fear of upsetting you. Often others are uncomfortable with their own feelings. Bittersweet moments will remind you of those gifts shared, and yet you will feel sadness. Expect this to occur for sometime. When you do share your memories with those who listen and care, (about the death, what the person meant to you, how your life is going without your loved one physically present, how you are feeling) the gift lives on. Recall the many gifts that remain, and don’t allow death to diminish any of them. **The Good News: Your loved one will always remain part of your life.**

Subject: Anniversaries

During the first and subsequent celebration of birthdays, holidays or special events after the loss of a loved one, expect your grief response to return briefly. This grief doesn’t mean that the intense pain you first experienced during your loss is returning. During this time, be extra caring and understanding of you. Allow others to comfort you as well. **The Good News: These moments are of short duration; be patient and they will pass.**

Joseph Robert Pfeiffer, LCSW, GT



Valentine Wishes

I thought I heard your laugh today, while watching children run and play. You chuckled in that special way and then you were gone. I thought I saw your gentle face, that look which time cannot erase. Then it was gone without a trace, and then I was alone. I thought I heard your voice today and suddenly my world was gay. I thought I heard you softly say, “I love you Mom, Happy Valentine’s Day.”

TCF North Hollywood, CA

Wintertime Bleak and S.A.D.

The dreaded holiday season, punctuated by the absence of a dearly loved person, has come and gone. The bereaved have survived a time of warmth, good cheer and family togetherness without the one who previously had given all previous holidays their special meaning and purpose. Even surrounded by other loved ones, the bereaved have experienced this season with that special person absent, with that voice glaringly, screaming silent. But you have survived, though not without sorrow or feelings of emptiness and futility, not without wishing that it still was the way it should have been. You have rung out the old year, but not the old, warm, cherished memories, for they are a part of you and will remain so forever. You have rung in the New Year with a heart as leaden as the bleak January sky, with the question whirling in your head, "What is there to look forward to in this New Year?" Though your real desire was to go backward in time to that time of completeness and wholeness, you have been forced forward into a new year filled with the unknowns that you felt stronger and more capable of handling when your beloved was alive and sharing your world. Where have your hopes, dreams and plans gone? Did you ask for this burden of constructing new plans, new goals, and new reasons for being? Of course you didn't. You were content with the way your life was going and had no desire for any changes. Unfortunately though, life and death are oblivious to our precious individual human treasures and our loved ones can be ripped away from us with a force that we are as powerless to alter as we are to alter the course of the frigid and swirling January wind. It is no small feat to survive the holiday season, and the after the holidays meltdown. Even nature appears to have gone into mourning. The few birds and animals that have remained on the landscape appear shabby and half-starved as they forage for the scant food available to them. Most of nature seems to have gone into hibernation. Only the hardy evergreens remain fully clothed. The occasional brilliant sunlight that punctuates the frigid air seems to give us an illusory hope of warmth for a short time. The shorter days of light and longer hours of darkness give us the illusion that we, too, are hibernating for longer periods of time than at other times of year. It can also feel like we are hibernating with our own thoughts and minds. A hibernating animal or plant has drastically reduced physiological function. It is in a period of quiescence resting and using as little energy as possible to sustain itself. We humans do not have leaves to shed or caves to repair in order to sleep out the frigid and gray winter. We must continue to function without benefit of natural fur coats or the protective prickles or thick skin of the evergreen. There are conditions that affect human beings that are caused by sunlight deprivation. Seasonal Affective Disorder, S.A.D. is a form of depression that occurs during the months of decreased sunlight. The bereaved, who are already experiencing conditions akin to depression, or actual depression, can feel even worse during the winter months. Already depleted energy can decrease even further. Feelings of loss and sadness can intensify, as can feelings of futility. Bleak days can exacerbate bleak lives. It can become difficult to motivate oneself to do anything. It is very important to recognize that S.A.D is time limited and seasonal. It is crucial for the bereaved to realize that winter can exacerbate their already low feelings and energy levels. Here are some tips to help you cope with S.A.D. and the bleakness of winter:

- Take a clue from the animals and plants; if you need more rest or to slow down, permit yourself to do so.
- Get as much sunlight and daylight as possible; there are special bulbs/light boxes that contain the same spectrum as the sun.

- As difficult as it is to motivate yourself, make sure you get regular exercise at least three times a week for twenty minutes each time. This should be done in the form of a brisk walk outside.
- Plan occasions and outings you can look forward to. Speak to other people who have gone through similar times.
- Pamper yourself; go to a spa, have a massage, etc.
- Reach out to other people; try to do something to help someone else.
- Beware of alcohol. While it may dull the edges of your pain for a short time, it is a depressant. In the long run, it is addictive and will complicate your situation.
- Ensure that physical complaints be checked out by a physician.
- If you are deeply depressed, there are medications your doctor can prescribe that are not addictive and will not dull your intellectual functioning or rid you of your sharp grief.
- Be as kind to yourself as possible.

The depths of winter are difficult for human and beast alike. Bereavement makes any time of year and any situation difficult to bear. Know that, though you feel alone you are not. Though the gray winter seems endless, it is not. Though your grief swells, excruciating and interminable, it will soften. You will survive and one day greet the awaking of spring with a smile.

Susan B. Arien

*Peace – it does not mean to be
in a place where there is no noise,
trouble or hard work;
it means to be in the midst
of those things and still
be calm in your heart.*

Unknown

In the light of day I awake with thoughts of you; in the dark of night I sleep with thoughts of you; is it grief or disbelief?

Evan Fillmore TCF, Huntington, UT

*In times of darkness, love sees.
In times of silence, love hears.
In times of doubt, love hopes.
In times of sorrow, love heals.
But in all things, love remembers.*

OUR CHILDREN LOVED AND REMEMBERED

January / February

In the month of their birth; in the month of their death; and always with love.

Susi Norris Jan. 13 – April 1	Polly Arnold	Stephen Christopher Brown Aug. 21 – Jan. 17	Denise Martin
Travis Banks Aug. 16 – Feb. 25	Esau & Adlean Banks	Kimberly Iris Mauney Sept. 1 – Jan. 8	David & Nancy Mauney
Geneva Maxine Bumgartner Feb. 19 – Feb. 19	Rodney & Beth Bumgartner	Autumn Elizabeth McBroom Feb. 14 – Aug. 28	Kathy McBroom
Cary Kyle Bilderback June 20 – Jan. 13	Gary & Nancy Bilderback	Angela Marie McCraw Feb. 10 – Feb. 10	Cheryl McCraw
Charles Samuel Bobbitt June 4 – Feb. 25	Mike & Karen Bobbitt	Rachel Jill McFarland June 9 – Feb. 19	Keith & Rhonda McFarland
Frank Alexander Brooks Jan. 24 – May 24	Frankie Brooks	Adrain Ira Mintz July 12 – Feb. 26	Sherryl Mintz
Christopher Gene Pike Nov. 7 – Feb. 21	Roger & Phyllis Burns	John Calvin Hayes, Jr. Mar. 10 – Jan. 6	Rita Oaks
Rebekah Kay Clark Oct. 11 – Feb. 2	Rhonda Clark	Austin William Owen Jan. 7 – Sept. 8	Mark & Tricia Owen
Hunter Correro Woodson Feb. 8 – Jan. 14	Carol Correro	Jimmy Norris Parrott, Jr. Feb. 4 – Jan. 31	Jean K. Parrott
Tracy Andrew Cox Oct. 11 – Feb. 2	Susan E. Cox	Kristopher Ray Rogers Feb. 10 – Mar. 4	Tracy Peterson
Charles Edward Woodson May 12 – Jan. 26	Judy Craig	Christopher Gene Pike Nov. 7 – Feb. 21	Samuel Pike
Billy Wayne Feb. 21 – Nov. 14	Judy Craig	Tonya Caprice Coleman Feb. 22 – Feb. 18	Betty Pittman
Scott Robert Cummins July 26 – Jan. 31	Glen & Judy Cummins	Kaleigh Ann Bogard Riordan Feb. 9 – Mar. 25	Kevin & Lisa Riordan
Cindy Devereaux Jan. 10 – Oct. 27	Mike & Betty Devereaux	Rebecca Jean Roberts Jan. 16 – Feb. 7	Angeline Roberts
Angela Gayle Dodd Mar. 24 – Feb. 26	Brad & Sandra Dodd	Thomas “Tommy” Lee Feb. 16 – Jan. 4	Cindy Savageau
William “Will” Wagner Duffy Oct. 8 – Jan. 23	Sue Anne Duffy	Daniel Keith Franks Feb. 5 – Sept. 17	Rebecca Smith
Alexandra Mae Sutton Ellsworth Jan. 10 – Mar. 4	Robert & Rita Ellsworth	Steven Kirby Spear Nov. 14 – Feb. 2	Kenneth & Dorothy Spear
Eric “Joshua” Foust Jan. 19 – Apr. 9	Larry & Cathy Foust	Mark Adam Stallings Feb. 28 – Mar. 6	Dale & Sylvia Stallings
Vincent Haward Fowler Oct. 20 – Jan. 16	Haward Fowler, Jr. & Vernita Evans	Matthew “Matt” Scott Tremblay Mar. 21 – Feb. 7	Nancy Tremblay & Bobby Alexander
Adrienne Michelle Fryer June 7 – Jan. 28	Dwight & Linda Fryer	Twana Blunt Feb. 18 – Sept. 15	Effie Turner
James “Jamie” Wade Gillespie Feb. 15 – Mar. 15	Sandra Gillespie	Russell Howard Ullery Feb. 6 – Jan. 9	Curt & Judy Ullery
Matthew Good Feb. 22	Buddy & Becky Good	Ruud Justin van Rantwijk Feb. 20 – July 1	Carlo & Tanja van Rantwijk
Mikkel David Grisham Feb. 1 – Jan. 6	Winston & Michelle Grisham	Christi Lynn Turner Ducas Jan. 10 – Feb. 4	Sherry Weeks
Todd “Hayes” Kent Mar. 14 – Jan. 27	Scott & Beth Hall	Tracy Jean Whaley Jan. 9 – Feb. 27	Georgia Whaley
Clifford “Trey” G. Hannah, III July 24 – Feb. 29	Cliff & Rose Hannah	William Carl Sloan Jan. 17 – June 17	Pat Wiggins
Stanton J. Isom Jan. 17 – Aug. 14	Barbara Isom	Adriaonna K. Williams Feb. 21 – Dec. 21	Karen Williams
Jessica Corine Jernigan Feb. 4 – Feb. 28	Mike & Dianna Jernigan	Chris E. Williams Feb. 28 – June 1	Ronnie & Tabby Williams
Bethany Susan McCarver Dec. 24 – Feb. 28	Janine McCarver	Chris E. Williams Feb. 28 – June 1	Ronnie & Martha Williams
Antonio Jones Nov. 15 – Jan. 31	Deloris L. Jones	Jermaine M. Holland Feb. 28 – July 7	Michael & Nina Williamson
Jack Keesee Feb. 20 – Dec. 9	John H. Keesee	Vicki Willis Long Jan. 16 – Feb. 22	Dolly Willis-Hall
Jordan Lincoln Killen Feb. 10 – May 19	Bill & Martha Killen	Cynthia Wilson Jan. 16 – Sept. 16	Charlotte Wilson
Kevin William Lazarini Feb. 22 – Aug. 8	Yolanda Lazarini	Stacey Woodall Ward Sullivan Jan. 16 – May 12	Leonard & Bettye Woodall
Paul Christopher Smith Feb. 5 – Mar. 6	Robert & Teresa Liles	Roshon Demetrius Walker Feb. 28 – July 14	Angela Zahn & Robert Walker
Brandon Eugene Logan Feb. 2 – June 29	Gene & Sandra Logan		

LOVE GIFTS

Love Gifts are tax-deductible donations to the Chapter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling or in honor of a loved one or friend. Our Chapter depends on these donations to help us reach out to others by sending the newsletter, purchasing books, brochures, and tapes/videos for our library, educating others about what we do and maintaining our relationship with the TCF National Chapter. Thank you for your support.

 <p>Oliver & Claudia Ellison In memory of their son Justin Davis</p> <p>Rick & Cindy Martin In memory of their daughter April Michelle Pera</p>	<p>Lethia Gillum In memory of her children Danny Gillum & Jackie Gillum</p> <p>Elaine Craven In memory of her daughter Maureen E. Craven and her husband William "Bill" Craven, Jr.</p>	 <p>Larry & Cathy Foust In memory of their son Eric "Joshua" Foust</p> <p>Scott, Beth & Bethany Hall In memory of their son and brother Hayes Kent & his 7th Anniversary in Heaven</p>
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We Don't Get Over the Death of a Child; We Integrate It

We don't "get over" the death of our child; we integrate it. Webster says to integrate means to "take into a whole, to unify." We make the experience of our child's death an integral part of the whole of our lives. When I was a kid, I loved to swing. There was a park not too far from our home, and whenever I could, I'd go there and swing for hours. At this moment, I can almost feel the exhilaration of swinging in the air. I can visualize how the sky looked through the tree on the upward flight, the thrill of the downward arc and the sight of how far off the ground I was when the swing took me high on the other side. I never "got over" the thrill of swinging. I integrated it. Today, the sight of a swing brings back this part of my childhood. There have been other experiences in my life, both happy and sad, that are brought back to me by similar experience. This is what it means to integrate our child's death into our lives. Though the joy of swinging as a small child will never be as great as it was when I was ten, the sight of a swing will always affect me. And though the pain of my son's death is not as great after these many years, for the rest of my life many things will remind me that he died. Before our child died, when we heard of the death of a child, we felt sorry for a time, but we were affected very little by it because we had no personal experience with a child's death to add to this knowledge. But now, when we hear of a child's death, we are immediately brought back to the pain we felt. We do not remain in that pain for any length of time, but because we had this experience in our past, it is part of the whole of our experiences. We are more affected by it than a person who has not had that experience. It think when people talk of "getting over" our child's death, they mean getting over the outward manifestations of grief. Certainly if we have worked through our grief, in the years after our child has died, we will not cry constantly, we will not have the need to express our anger or guilt, we will be able to function as we did before he/she died, but we will not be "over" the feeling that our family is no longer complete. These, and many other thoughts, will stay with us as long as we live. They become a part of the whole of us. The experience of our child's death and the years of grief that follow will be integrated with our other experiences, and just as every other experience we have had will affect our feelings, thoughts and behavior, so will the death of our child.

Margaret Gerner

Some Common Thoughts Following the Death of Your Child

- It is not uncommon to feel bitterness or a sense of injustice when one loses a child. So if you find yourself thinking, Why me? Why my child? Why our family? You are in good company.
- Some parents describe "an irrational sense of self-blame" following the death of a child. I never was able to figure out what a rational sense of self-blame might be. But I do know that many of us blame ourselves. We replay the what-ifs of our child's life and death a thousand times a day. Almost always self-blame is misplaced.
- Grief over the loss of a child lasts longer than any other kind. It heals more slowly and causes the most monumental disruption for those who survive. This is because a child is a part of what psychologists call our internal psychological structure, meaning that in a way, part of the parent dies too.
- Most experts believe that loss and helplessness are the greatest tests any human can face. A child's death is off the charts in both categories.
- You may be strong, smart and highly resilient, but nothing can prepare you for the loss of a child.
- One reason the loss feels so enormous is that a child's death violates an implicit generational contract, that our own children will survive us.
- A child's death also challenges the fundamental instinct of parents to protect their child. That is what we are supposed to do, isn't it? To make the world safe? The feeling that we have failed to do so can haunt us, compounding our sadness.
- In an era of medical miracles, we are less culturally conditioned to expect a child's death than in previous generations. On the contrary, the prevailing assumption is that science and technology can and will work wonders.
- Some experts estimate that in the face of a child's death two years is a reasonable grieving period. Others double that figure. The truth is, it takes as long as it takes, sometimes a whole lifetime. But if you are lucky, the grief will transmute. Even its physical properties will transform. Its weighty presence abates. The grief becomes gentler, less terrifying and sometimes paradoxically rather sweet.

Elizabeth Mehren – After the Darkest Hour the Sun Will Shine Again

<p>You may send your Tax-deductible Donation to:</p>	<p>The Compassionate Friends P. O. Box 38653 Germantown, TN 38183-0653</p>
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<p>Parent's/Grandparent's/Friend(s) Name _____</p>	
<p>Love Gift (Any Donation Amount) _____</p>	
<p>In Memory Of _____</p>	
<p>On The Occasion Of _____</p>	

The following donations were made for the December Worldwide Candle Lighting Service

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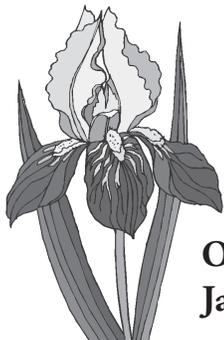
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The Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 38653
Germantown, TN 38183-0653

January/February 2009



Our Next Meetings:
Jan. 8th & Feb. 5th

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