



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS Newsletter

MEMPHIS, TN

MAY/JUNE 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 for May – “What shall I do with my child’s things?” After the death of our children, we are often lost as to what to do with his/her toys, clothes, cars, trophies, etc. We will discuss some different ideas for tackling this tough hurdle.

Refreshments will be provided by Jennifer Brown & Keith Rivers

TCF Meeting for June – “Hints for Progress” Joe & Elizabeth Rousseau are bereaved parents from Michigan; Joe wrote the TCF Credo. We will listen to a CD made by the Rousseaus’ with some excellent suggestions for moving forward. There are some really helpful ideas for the newly bereaved or those who may be “stuck.”

Refreshments will be provided by Shelia Foust & Diane Johnson

Happy Mother’s Day and Father’s Day

For the newly bereaved, your first Mother’s Day and Father’s Day will be difficult; as this day brings you precious memories of your child please know that their life and your memories will never be forgotten. Our children will always be with us in our hearts.

Notes from Beyond

Don’t cry over me, Mom and Dad, we are only apart for a while. I think of you without being sad and hope when you remember me you smile. Where I am now is hard to explain. From your side there are just hints from above; a vague sense of knowing, deep in your brain; a place or a time you are not sure of. In my earlier state, while still in the womb, I vaguely perceived something outside of you. You know as much of this side of the tomb, as beyond my fetal home I then knew. I’ve been here forever, I only just came. Eternity turns time around somehow. Yesterday, tomorrow, today are the same, time is not linear, always is now. Regarding my end, please set your mind free that I was young and my time was not due. The concept of age and of fairness to me is as puzzling as “Why” is to you. I know life seems indifferent and justice seems gone; innocents suffer and men live in fear. Though all seems hopeless, God’s work is not done, it all fits together when seen from here. Death dismantles your life, ends all your joys, pointless and tragic to mortals it seems; but dissonant chords and mind piercing noise, God can arrange into harmonious themes. It seems very odd that I’m teaching you, as you once taught me before; but I want you to know before you come through; death’s not an end but a door. So, until your time comes to join me here, live your life to the fullest each day. When you cross over, there’s nothing to fear; for I will be waiting to show you the way.

Richard Drew

Rachel’s Cry – A Journey Through Grief

Missing Graduate

Parent’s happy faces all around me, with a glow from within; pomp and circumstance is playing now the program will begin. The graduates are lined up, they are coming down the aisle; some have serious faces, yet some have a little smile. I look down the aisle, hoping for your face to come into sight, this is your class; it was to be your graduation night. All the graduates pass by, but none of them are you; a tug of my heart tells me, you’re not here, your death is true. God called you home; I wanted you here in such a bad way. Looking into your classmates faces, do they recall you are missing this day? Memories, sweet memories, now fill my mind and heart. There will be no golden tassels, this day for my Sweetheart. The class is oh so happy; this isn’t the time to be blue. No, I must go shake a hand, and get a hug or two.

Emma Valenteen - TCF, Valley Forge, PA

Grief makes one hour ten.

William Shakespeare



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-mailed 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 send to Clint Norwood, 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.



Phone Friends

We have all experienced the pain of losing a child and know that sometimes when you are having a particularly bad day you might need to talk. We understand and would like to listen. Please feel free to contact any of us listed below.

Accidental Death – Shelia Foust 901-496-9649 or 662-895-1424

Sue Ann Duffy 901-848-4134

Illness/Cancer – Gwen Elrod 901-388-3298

Chronic Illness – Jack & Peggy U'Ren 901-388-6759

Infant/Baby – Jennifer Brown 901-483-0605

Suicide – Oliver & Claudia Ellison 901-466-0973



2009 TCF National Conference

"Community of Compassion – Rainbows of Love" will be the theme of the 32nd National Conference to be held August 7th, 8th and 9th 2009, at the Double Tree-Lloyd Center Hotel in Portland, Oregon. The keynote speakers for this year's conference are Candy Lightner, founder of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), Darcie Sims, who uses a unique form of humor as a type of grief therapy, Reg and Maggie Green who's son was killed at the hand of Highway bandits in Italy and Michele Longo Eder, author of *Salt in our Blood-The Memoir of a Fisherman's Wife*. For the most up to date information, visit TCF 2009 National Conference at compassionatefriends.org.

I think these difficult times have helped me to understand better than before how infinitely rich and beautiful life is in every way and that so many things that ones goes around worrying about are of no importance whatsoever.

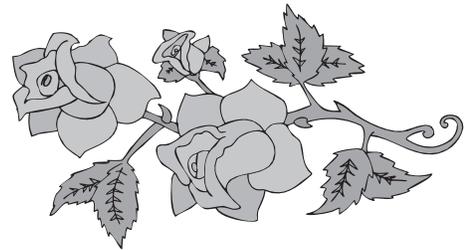
Isak Dinesen

Should I Keep My Changing Grief a Secret?

When your daughter or son died, you discovered what the depths of grief were. You didn't want to live. Why go on when your precious child has been torn from your grasp? Like many parents, you may have thoughts of suicide. Early in their bereavement process many parents have said to me something like, "Bob, I'm not going to go out and kill myself, but if I'm driving down the street and a semi-truck is coming at me, I'm not going to get out of the way; I can't take this. The pain of living each day is too great." These feelings are common; but fortunately for most parents, the power of these feelings subsides as the months and years go on. And so does, as one father called it, whose three year old son died in an auto accident, "the white-hot pain of grief." If you are more than a couple of years from the day of your child's death, you may have begun to notice that the white-hot pain is not so intense. Although the grief is still there and although you would give anything to bring back your child, the pain may have eased in certain areas of your grief. For example, when your child died, you may have experienced incredible guilt. You might have said to yourself, "What kind of parent am I whose child would die?" Do any of the following phrases sound familiar? "If only..., I should have... Why didn't I.?, I feel so guilty about..." these are guilt statements. Anger is also a huge issue for many. Have any of the following words come up for you following your child's death? Mad, upset, irritated, enraged, ticked, po'd, furious, bitter or frustrated. As time has passed have you seen yourself not as mad, upset, irritated, and so on? In addition, are you not as numb, fearful, and sad? Has your concentration improved somewhat? In other words, is your grief changing? At the same time, have you noticed that people around you have not changed as much as you? That is, even though you have begun to see the intensity of your grief subsiding, you see that others who also loved your child are still feeling the white-hot intensity of grief. The question I have for you is, should you tell others that your grief has been changing?" Let's look at the positives and negatives of this question. First, sharing where you are in your grief process is quite helpful for most people; it is at the core of the credo of The Compassionate Friends. However, should you tell everyone? Including those who are not as far along as you? By the way, isn't the term "far along" interesting? It assumes that grief is a straight path, when in fact grief is more like a maze in which you hit dead ends, circle back to the beginning, and often get lost. Sharing our feelings is an honest reflection of who we are as humans. Why hide what we are truly experiencing? Those who care for us would want to know if we are beginning to feel better. Make sense? However, there is another side to sharing your grief journey. What if you told the people in your life that the heaviness of your grief is lifting? What harm could this do? Those of you, who have done this, know what is coming in this paragraph. Telling others that you are not hurting so much can lead and has led to some of the following responses: "Oh, you must not love your child as much as I do" "Good, you're getting over it. Now I don't have to support you as much; and you don't need to go to those Passionate Buddies meetings or whatever they call themselves. I never knew what you saw in that group anyway." "You must be blocking your feelings, you haven't really dealt with your grief; perhaps you need therapy." "So, you're not as angry anymore? Well, I still am." "Are you forgetting the

life of our daughter or son?" "I guess I'm glad you're getting better; but I'm not." "I'm glad you're recovering; I'm looking forward to getting the old you back." Which path is preferable regarding your changing grief, sharing it or keeping it a secret? We've come to the point where you can begin to answer this question for yourself. Think of each person in your life who is coping with the death of your child. One by one, imagine what his or her response might be if you shared your changing grief. Can you take a moment now to do the following? If you are married, think of your spouse. What would he or she say about your grief? If your parents are alive, what would they say if they knew exactly how you are now feeling? The same question for your siblings and other relatives; how would your brother react? What about your sister? What would she say? And what about your close friends, how would they react? In which of the ways above might any of these people respond? How did you do? Of course, you cannot always predict how a loved one will react. Remember to permit yourself to grieve however you grieve. Try not to be so hard on yourself and decide whether or not you wish to share with others where you are in your grief. If you've already done what you need to in this area, good for you. If not, I hope this has given you a way to make the decision that is best for you.

Bob Baugher, PhD



The Stepping Stones

Come, take my hand. The road is long, and we must travel by stepping stones. No, you're not alone; I'll go with you. I know the road well. I've been there. Don't fear the darkness, I'll be with you. We must take one step at a time, but remember, we have to stop awhile. It is a long way to the other side, and there are many obstacles. We have many stones to cross, and some are bigger than others. Shock, denial and anger to start, and then comes guilt, despair and loneliness. It's a hard road to travel, but it must be done. It's the only way to reach the other side. Come, slip your hand in mine. What? Oh, yes, it is strong; I've held many hands like yours. Mine was once small and weak, like yours; because you see, once I had to hold someone else's hand in order to take the first step. Oops, you stumbled! Go ahead and cry. Don't be ashamed, I understand. Let's wait here awhile and get your breath. When you're stronger, we'll go on; one step at a time. There's no need to hurry. Say, it's nice to hear you laugh. Yes, I agree, the memories you shared are good. Look, we're halfway there now; I can see the other side. It looks so warm and sunny. Have you noticed? We're nearing the last stone, and you're standing alone! And look at your hand, you've let go of mine. We've reached the other side. But wait, look back; someone is standing there. He is alone and wants to cross the stepping stones. I'd better go, he needs my help. What? Are you sure? Why yes, go ahead, I'll wait. You know the way, you've been there. Yes, I agree, it's your turn my friend to help someone else cross the stepping stones.

Barbara Williams Fort Wayne, IN

When an Adult Child Dies

Who would want to think about the possibility of the death of their adult child? The reality of such a loss turns the world upside-down. Such a death is off time and unfair. Parents, particularly older parents, expect to die before their adult child. "Adult child" is a strange pair of words. When we think of a child, we tend to think of a very young person who needs care and protection, and who lives under the wing of parents. An adult is expected to be independent, live away from parents and have a family of his or her own. But an adult child, no matter how old, remains a child to the parent. The bond continues throughout adulthood, as both parent and child tend to see the other as important and caring. The impact of the death of an adult child is profound regardless of how close or strained the relationship, or how far they lived apart, or whether the death was anticipated or sudden. Parents do not want or expect their child to die before they do. But it still happens, to too many middle-aged and older parents. It's been estimated that one in ten parents who are age sixty and over have suffered the loss of one of their children. When a middle-aged person dies, the surviving spouse and children are often considered the most important grievers. The older parent may be shown less concern by the doctor, the clergy, the hospice, family and friends. Yet, many people we have spoken with have said that the pain of the loss of an adult child can be more intense than the loss of a parent or of a spouse. There is such a special bond, the feelings of loss continue for a lifetime. For the older parent the death of a child is potentially compounded by other losses such as widowhood, retirement, poor health, loss of friends, and limited finances. When a child dies the future looks different. In spite of the loss, hope for the future can build on the richness of the child's life. Bereaved parents may find solace in trying to fulfill some of the legacy of their child by setting up a memorial honoring the child and spending time caring for the people and things that the child treasured. Although time will pass and tears will lessen, the child who has died will always be part of the parent and surviving family. The image of the child persists. It is natural to wish the child back while at the same time you accept the death as real. As you mourn the loss, you treasure the meaning of the child's life. The tie with the child remains. Death cannot end a relationship. Birthdays, holidays and reunions tend to be bitter sweet as the sense of the presence of the child combines with the keen pain of absence. Memories of good times together recall the loss, but also can provide comfort and solace. It is natural for the bereaved parent to have both a strong awareness of letting go of the child and at the same time a strong sense of holding on.

Miriam Moss

Our Day – A Very Special Day

Our day, a very special day; a day that is set aside especially to honor all Mothers. Mothers, a beautiful word. What other word would you use to best describe giving birth to, nursing, loving and caring for tiny helpless human beings, a gift of life to treasure? But weren't we taught that once you give a gift to someone, you should never take it back? What went wrong? Mine was taken away from me. Does that mean that I wasn't worthy to be a Mother, that I was failing, that I didn't

appreciate the gift? The gift was too precious to be given for keeps. It was only loaned to me for a short while, even in my sorrow I feel special, for I know the true meaning of the word Mother. I have reached the ultimate, from the joy of birth to the sorrow of death. I belong to a special group who truly knows the meaning of the word Mother. Would I have not accepted the gift if I had known the terrible loss I would feel by having it taken away from me? No, I would still hold out my hands and accept such a precious gift, to love and to cherish, even for a short while, is worth every fear. This year on Mother's Day, I'll shed my tears but let them be as a soft summer's rain, a rain that nourished the earth, tears that heal and cleanse my heart.

Vera Babb TCF, St. Louis, MO

You Will

You will live, although you feel like you are dying. You will laugh once again, although you feel that emotion is lost forever. You will think clearly again, although you feel very confused most of the time. You will celebrate your child's life, although now you are enveloped in the whys and if onlys of your child's death. You will somehow make your way through this rough work called grieving although today you feel you are slipping backwards. You will find love, understanding and caring with TCF, although today you are lonely, isolated and withdrawn. Choose the "You Will," I did, and it is helping with that large hole in my heart.

Carol Joyce, TCF, Ft Lauderdale, FL

I Heard My Father Cry

Feeling so helpless and sad, listening from the room next door, I cover my ears using every pillow I had, I couldn't take it any more. His pain came from inside, cries turned into screams, what he felt he could no longer hide, the loss of his only son took away his dreams. His sighs echoed off the walls, he couldn't seem to pull himself together, as our eyes met at the end of the hall, I realized his hurt will be with him forever. With eyes so sad, he looked right through me, not knowing what to say, I didn't even try. This is something I never expected to see, but now I know that real men do cry.

Karen Keck, TCF, Sacramento Valley

*If tears could build a stairway,
and memories were a lane,
I would walk right up to Heaven
to bring you home again.
No farewell words were ever spoken,
no time to say goodbye,
you were gone before we knew it,
and only God knows why.
My heart still aches in sadness,
and secret tears still flow;
what it meant to lose you,
no one will ever know.*

My Old Friend Grief

My old friend Grief is back. He comes to visit me once in a while to remind me that I am still a broken man. Surely there has been much healing since my son died six years ago, and surely I have adjusted to a world without him. But the truth is we never completely heal, we never totally adjust. Such is the nature of loss that no matter how much life has been experience, the heart of the bereaved will never be the same. It is as though a part of us also dies with the person we lose through death. We will be all right, but we will never be the same. And so my old friend Grief drops in to say hello. Sometimes he enters through the door of my memory. I'll hear a certain song or smell a certain fragrance; I'll look at certain pictures and I'll remember how it used to be. Sometimes it brings a smile to my face, sometimes a tear. One may say that such remembering is not healthy, that we ought not to dwell on thoughts that make us sad. Yet the opposite is true. Grief revisited is Grief acknowledged, and grief confronted is grief resolved. But if grief is resolved, why do we still feel a sense of loss on anniversaries and holidays and even when we least expect it? Why do we feel a lump in the throat even six years after the loss? It is because healing does not mean forgetting and because moving on with life does not mean that we don't take a part of our lost love with us. Of course, the intensity of the pain decreases over time if we allow grief to visit us from time to time. But if the intensity remains or if our life is still dysfunctional years after our loss, we are stuck and in need of professional help to get unstuck. Sometimes my old Grief sneaks up on me. I'll feel an unexplained but profound sadness that clings to me for days. Then I'll recognize the Grief and cry a little, and then I can go on. It's as though the ones we have lost are determined not to be forgotten. My old friend Grief doesn't get in the way of living; he just wants to come along and chat sometimes. Grief has taught me a few things about living that I would not have learned on my own. He has taught me that if I try to deny the reality of a major loss in my life, I end up having to deny life altogether. He has taught me that although the pain of loss is great, I must confront it and experience it fully or risk emotional paralysis. Old Grief has taught me that I can survive even great loss, and although my world is different, it is still my world, and I must live in it. He has taught me that when I let go, I can flourish again in season and bring forth the good fruit that comes not in spite of my loss, but because of it. My old friend Grief has taught me that the loss of a loved one does not mean the loss of love. Love is stronger than separation and longer than the permanence of death. My old friend Grief may leave me for a while, but he'll be back again to remind me to confront my new reality and to gain through loss and pain.

Adolfo Quezada TCF, Grand Junction, CO

Oh Daddy!

Oh Daddy, let this Father's Day be a day filled with only happy memories of me. Not a day spent thinking of what might have been or that my dying was somehow your sin. Please try not to cry about the bike I won't ride or times you pretended you couldn't find me when I'd hide; or the toys on the shelf gathering dust or the swings in the yard turning to rust. Don't

dwell on the fact that you won't see me go on my first date; or walk down the aisle to give me away to a mate. Or of children I'll never lay in your arms to steal your heart with their sweet charms. If you must, Daddy, weep for the joy you felt when you gave me a big hug and kiss. For the trust and love you saw in my eyes for the questions you answered like "Why is the blue in the sky?" When you see a butterfly, please think of me and know, like that butterfly, I am set free. Smile as you watch the stars twinkle up high, for now you have a special Angel in the sky.

Cherie Jones Cordon, TCF North Dade, FL



A Hug and Kiss from Me

You carried me inside you, for so many days; now that I'm gone, I have some things to say. I'm with you as you wake, and all through the night, I wish I could talk to you, reach and hold you tight. Now that I'm in Heaven, I have no pain or fear, I visit friends and family, do you feel me near? We share in all you say and do, so please remember this, close your eyes and think of me, and I'll give an Angels kiss. Please don't be too sad, for I am really happy here, even though when I think of you, I too shed a tear. But always think about the day, that we will meet again; practice your hugs and smiles until I see you then. I'll ask God to send a special blessing, of this I have no doubt; for we who come here before our moms, have a special clout. And on this year's Mothers Day, that is so soon to be, you'll feel a warmth from Heaven, a hug and kiss from me.

Dan Bryl

PLEASE

Please don't ask me if I'm over it yet; I will never be over it. Don't tell me she is in a better place, she's not here. Don't say at least she isn't suffering; I haven't come to terms with why she had to suffer at all. Don't tell me you know how I feel unless you have lost a child. Don't tell me to get on with my life, I'm still here, you'll notice. Don't ask me if I feel better, bereavement isn't a condition that clears up. Don't tell me God never makes a mistake; you mean He did this on purpose? Don't tell me at least you had her for twenty-eight years, what year would you choose for your daughter to die? Don't tell me God never gives you more than you can bear; who decides how much another person can bear? Just say you are sorry. Just say you remember her if you do. Just let me talk if I want to, and please let me cry when I must.

Rita Moran TCF, Miami, FL

OUR CHILDREN LOVED AND REMEMBERED

May / June

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

Ronnie & Teri Anderson May 6 – Sept. 21	Amanda “Mandy” Taylor Smith	Steve & Sandra Lawson Oct. 8 – June 26	Neal Andrew Lawson
Richard & Cheryl Arnold Aug. 12 – June 1	Kevin Ryan Arnold	Gene & Sandra Logan Feb. 2 – June 29	Brandon Eugene Logan
Tabb Ballard Nov. 9 – June 17	Jerome Patrick Randolph, Jr.	Ken & Sharon Ludwig June 11 – Aug. 19	Seth Matthew Rowan
Matthew & Johanna Barbre July 9 – June 12	Emily An Barbre	Keith & Rhonda McFarland June 9 – Feb. 19	Rachel Jill McFarland
Gary & Nancy Bilderback June 20 – Jan. 13	Cary Kyle Bilderback	Norris & Lauren McGehee May 4 – June 10	Norris Williamson McGehee, Jr.
Gary & Betty Bivens May 23 – Aug. 3	Ashley Nicole Bivens	Amy McOwen May 22 – Aug. 10	Arthur Dillin Mackey IV
Randy & Patti Blackard Sept. 8 – June 12	Rachel Marie Blackard	Liz Medlin May 22 – Nov. 2	Lt. Gregory F. Medlin
Mike & Karen Bobbitt June 4 – Feb. 25	Charles Samuel Bobbitt	Cindy Todd Monroe June 29 – June 14	Angela Kim Todd
Frankie Brooks Jan. 24 – May 24	Frank Alexander Brooks	Ken & Katie Morrow Oct. 11 – May 14	Kaitlyn Grace Morrow
Steve & Jennifer Brown Dec. 13 – May 20	Aubrey William Brown	Read & Teresa Morton June 10 – Apr. 23	Aaron Scott German
Charlotte Byrd June 23 – July 10	Kevin Thomas Byrd	Toni Muldrow Mar. 28 – May 30	Daniel Alexis Muldrow
Penny Callonas May 22 – July 30	Devon Trace Callonas	Brandon & Angela Myers June 30 – July 1	Calen Seth Myers
Teresa Calvin June 19 – Apr. 11	Eric R Calvin	Brandon & Angela Myers June 30 – July 1	Caden Nathaniel Myers
Melanie Chase Dec. 2 – May 27	David Marin Gurley	Mary Page Oct. 27 – June 9	William “Parker” Page
Judy Craig May 12 – Jan. 26	Charles Edward Woodson	George & Cayce Pappas Dec. 28 – June 19	William Andrew Pappas
Sam & Sylvia Daniel May 23 – Sept. 23	Debbie Daniel Stewart	Richard & Kimberly Parks June 11 – June 11	Angel Faith Parks
Colleen DePete May 30 – Aug. 3	Joseph Gerard DePete III	Brian & Renee Pate July 15 – May 9	Andrew Wade Pate
James & Virna Ruth Doyle Apr. 28 – May 5	Jamie Elaine Doyle	Mary Brown Pearson Dec. 13 – May 20	Aubrey William Brown
Karen Dunathan May 4 – Sept. 19	Jackson Reese Dunathan	Paul & Gloria Plescher Dec. 20 – May 13	Joseph Nathaniel Plescher
Ann Dwyer Dec. 5 – June 9	Thomas Dwyer	Sonya Poe Oct. 27 – May 14	Michael Dale Poe
Oliver & Claudia Ellison Nov. 27 – June 7	Justin Michael Davis	Ron & Dorris Porter May 12 – July 8	Eric Gentry Porter
Larry & Gwen Elrod May 7 – Apr. 4	Scott Alan Elrod	Dianne Rhea Aug. 28 – May 11	Jason David Rhea
Steve & Sue Ermert June 20 – June 6	Brandon Gregory Ermert	Leonard & Barbara Richman May 18 – Aug. 30	Stephanie Leigh Richman
Lenora Faye Eubanks Dec. 7 – May 19	Raytheon “Ray” D Perry	Keith Rivers May 25 – Apr. 10	Keith “Teddy” C Rivers
Randy & Kelly Fears June 29 – Apr. 24	Cullen Lee Waddell, III	Lowell & Betty Salmon June 10 – Apr. 23	Aaron Scott German
Bob & Sheila Foust June 7 – Aug. 9	Lonnie “Paul” Cofer, Jr	Veronica Smith June 16	Shannon Smith
Bob & Betsy Friedl May 25 – Oct. 9	Robert Andrew “Drew” Lawrence	Bob & Dena Stouidt Nov. 18 – May 21	Lindsey Beth Preson
Dwight & Linda Fryer June 7 – Jan. 28	Adrienne Michelle Fryer	Gina Sugarmon July 18 – June 25	Tine Spence
Osama & Lillian Gaber Oct. 3 – June 12	Nora Gaber	Richard & Lajuan Tallo Nov. 29 – May 9	Lauren Elizabeth Tallo
Lee Anne Gafford Apr. 10 – June 20	Jennifer Anne Gafford	Dale & Linda Templeton May 7 – June 14	Graham Ross Templeton
Lethia Gillum June 9 – Dec. 16	Jackie Gillum	Herbert & Libby Thomas Apr. 17 – May 4	Natalie Emma Elizabeth Thomas
Jean Gingery June 14 – Mar. 18	Jeremy Carlton Gingery	Mack & Sherila Tuggle Dec. 9 – June 3	Jordan Zachariah Tuggle
Cindy Gregory May 2 – Oct. 6	David Allen Gregory	Lee & Kathy Waddell June 29 – Apr. 24	Cullen Lee Waddell, III
Warren & Cindy Haggard May 21 – Oct. 8	David Bond Haggard	Larry & Carolyn Watson Oct. 6 – May 29	Michael Dewayne Simon
Betsy Halfacre May 25 – Oct. 9	Robert Andrew “Drew” Lawrence	Fred & Deb Wells July 4 – May 26	Andrew Pierce Wells
Keith & Debra Hamsley May 11 – Oct. 6	Christopher Michael Hamsley	John & Anne Whirley May 19 – May 19	Justin Lee Whirley
Robert Haynie July 14 – June 19	Mark Lowrey Haynie	Cheryl White June 8 – Oct. 13	Joshua Lee Thorne
Mike & Donna Hedrick June 7 – Nov. 11	Sara Jo Hedrick	Pat Wiggins Jan. 17 – June 17	William Carl Sloan
Kathy Hindman May 18 – Dec. 30	Matthew D. Hindman	Laurie Williams Aug. 26 – June 19	Christopher Colby Williams
Frankie Huckaba Nov. 8 – May 7	Jeremy Huckaba	Ronnie & Tabby Williams Feb. 28 – June 1	Chris E. Williams
Jerry & Estelle Hyman June 5 – Mar. 1	Ellen Sarah Hyman Rose	Ronnie & Martha Williams Feb. 28 – June 1	Chris E Williams
Peter & Jody Jarjoura Aug. 13 – June 22	Jordan Antoine Jarjoura	Tony & Sandra Williams July 11 – June 26	Samantha Williams
Karen Johnson May 9 – Apr. 26	Jocelynn Sara Tina Holmes	Clayton & Susan Wilson May 1 – May 31	Kelly Clayton Wilson
Ernest & Shirley Jones Dec. 9 – June 3	Jordan Zachariah Tuggle	Sandy Wolf Mar. 26 – June 14	Eric Flynn Wolf
Bill & Martha Killen Feb. 10 – May 19	Jordan Lincoln Killen	Leonard & Bettye Woodall Jan. 16 – May 12	Stacey Woodall Ward Sullivan
Bob Kirk May 12 – Aug. 15	Amy Allison Kirk	Andrew & Linda Woodard June 25 – Mar. 24	Steven Andre Woodard
Brig & Ellen Klyce June 17 – Dec. 31	Rebecca Merri Cooper Klyce	Kathi Wright Mar. 20 – May 5	Kyle William Kiihnl
Ron & Regina Lawrence May 25 – Oct. 9	Robert Andrew “Drew” Lawrence	Fran Young July 17 – May 2	Julie Anne Young

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 style="text-align: center;">Ronnie & Martha Williams In memory of their grandson Chris E Williams</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ronny & Teri Anderson In memory of their daughter Mandy Taylor Smith On her Birthday May 6th</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Larry & Gwen Elrod Brian & Rebecca Elrod In memory of their son and brother Scott Alan Elrod On his 27th Birthday May 7th</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Lucy Pennebaker In memory of her son Wade Robinson Pennebaker</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Hyman In memory of their daughter Ellen Hyman Rose On the 13th Anniversary of her death</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bob & Betsy Friedl Clark Lawrence In memory of their son and brother Drew Lawrence Happy 25th Birthday May 25th</p>
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In Memory of Drew Lawrence

Betsy Friedl

I'm past the denial; I accept that you are gone. I understand that my only choice is simply to go on. I've met other parents who share my ordeal; most have assured me that with time I will heal. I've read all the books and gone to the meetings. I've received many cards, words of hope and warm greetings. I am taking care of my physical and mental health; I am not worried with my personal wealth. I have worn your clothes and slept in your bed. I visit your grave where so many have tread. I've bought angels, cards and beautiful flowers; I even go there when it's wet from rain showers. I've saved the many mementos of your life; reminders of good times even times full of strife. I've framed many photos, your smile is everywhere, I talk to you often as though you were here. I shared your dreams and I shared your goals, I felt we were joined, even deep in our souls. I try not to dwell on all that you've missed, but think of the happy days when we were so blessed. I talk to God, I kneel and I pray; I ask Him to help make this pain go away. My days are so empty, so dark are my nights, I ask God to hold me until there is light. Our bond was unique; our love was so strong; your dying so young was unfair, it was wrong. I am still your mother, and you are my son; though death has separated us, it has not won. I know that you live in the palm of God's hand, in the place where angels take care of His land. Watch over and guide me while I am still here; til it's my time to join you, my heart holds your near.

In Memory of Scott Alan Elrod

I am home in Heaven, dear ones; Oh, so happy and so bright! There is perfect joy and beauty in this everlasting light. All the pain and grief is over, every restless tossing passed; I am now at peace forever, safely home in Heaven at last. Did you wonder why I so calmly trod the valley of the shade? Oh! but Jesus' love illuminated every dark and fearful glade. And He came himself to meet me in that way so hard to tread; and with Jesus' arm to lean on, could I have one doubt or dread? Then you must not grieve so sorely, for I love you dearly still. Try to look beyond earth's shadows, pray to trust our Father's

will. There is work still waiting for you, so you must not idly stand; do it now, while life remains, you shall rest in Jesus' land. When that work is all completed, He will gently call you Home; Oh, the rapture of that meeting, Oh, the joy to see you come Home.

The Cross by the Side of the Road

We all seem the same, yet we're not at all; some stand so straight, some are ready to fall. It's always the same when you pass us by, you wonder what happened, and you let out a sigh. Ambitious dreams lost, families now broken. Laughter and joy removed from tomorrow, you let your mind roam and feel such sorrow. There was a time, before our arrival, when life was naïve, laughed at survival. Life was savored and lived, carefree and pure; life was youthful and strong, life was so sure. So abruptly those times came to a halt, and nothing was altered by finding fault. We are the same in the reason we are here; yet, so different in the name that we bear. We each stand here representatively; not for an end, but for a history. A history, a life with so much untold; a history, a life that will never unfold; a history, a life worth so much more than gold. All seen in the cross by the side of the road.

Ruth Nichols

There is a quiet place I go, full of love and sunshine. And, yes, rainbows of hope, peace and unity. It's deep within me, far behind the calendar of details and answers, beyond even the memories. I go there to find serenity and strength amongst those I've loved but lost for this period of existence. And their spirits fill mine with brilliance, glorious hues knowing no bonds of time or space. Returning from my quiet place, I am rejuvenated; able again to tackle this everyday thing called life.

Marcia F Alig, TCF, New Jersey

Believe that when you are most unhappy there is something for you to do in the world. As long as you can sweeten another's pain, life is not in vain.

Helen Keller

<p>You may send your Tax-deductible Donation to:</p> <p>Child's Name _____</p> <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>	<p>The Compassionate Friends P. O. Box 38653 Germantown, TN 38183-0653</p>
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Mention My Child

Go ahead and mention my child, the one that died, you know. Don't worry about hurting me further, the depth of my pain doesn't show. Don't worry about making me cry, I'm already crying inside. Help me heal by releasing the tears that I try to hide. I'm hurt when you just keep silent, pretending he didn't exist. I'd rather you mention my child, knowing that he has been missed. You ask me how I was doing; I say "pretty good" or "fine." But healing is something ongoing; I feel it will take a lifetime.

Elizabeth Dent

A Love Letter to My Children

You are great kids. You have always been great kids, although I haven't always been a great Mom. After your brother died, I was hardly any kind of Mom at all. I was so lost in my own grief, I wasn't there for you. You were bewildered, scared and hurt, but I couldn't reach out to you beyond my own pain. I was like a day old helium balloon drifting along, not sure whether my place was with you or with your brother. I didn't drift for long. You grabbed my string and yanked me back! The yowls and shrieks still ring in my ears; "Mom, all my underwear is dirty!" or "Mom, I'm starved!" or "Mom, he punched me!" Your brother was being cared for by his heavenly Father, but you needed your earthly mother. It was you who saved my life. I'm sorry that your brother's death robbed you of your childhood. While other kids fretted about what to wear or which movie to see, you wondered when the tears and sadness would ever end and if we would be a family again. If I could

have shielded you from such great sorrow, I would have, but I couldn't. Your lives were changed forever, and the future was uncertain, but you kept going. You supported and inspired me as we traveled that rocky road of grief together. You talked about your brother when no one else would say his name. You kept his picture in your rooms and proudly pointed out to your friends, "This was my brother." You used his things, but gently. You reminded me of the cute, funny things he said and did. You included him in your bedtime prayers; you still do. Someday I believe you will tell your own children about your brother. Thank you for keeping his memory alive. Because of the tragedy you experienced, you are more mature than other kids your age. You possess strength and courage beyond your years. You are resilient; little things don't get you down. Best of all, you are kind, sensitive, and compassionate to other. I adore you, you are my life. Love Mom.

Patricia Dyson TCF, Beaumont, TX

What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master called a butterfly.

Richard Bach

When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again you will remember me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.

Frederick Buechner, from Whistling in the Dark

The Compassionate Friends

P.O. Box 38653

Germantown, TN 38183-0653

May/June 2009



**Our Next Meetings:
May 7th & June 4th**

*Printing of our newsletter is provided by Paulsen
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In Loving Memory of their son Randy.*