



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS Newsletter

MEMPHIS, TN

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 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 November** – “Coping with the Holidays!!!” How do you deal with this special time of the year when you are hurting so badly? Your child, grandchild or sibling has died, and all the traditions of the past seem impossible to navigate. We will share ideas, experiences and suggestions on getting through the holiday season without our loved one. This is a good meeting to bring your family and friends that will be supporting you through the holidays. We hope you will be able to join us.

*Refreshments will be provided by Oliver & Claudia Ellison and Pri Morden*

**TCF Meeting for December** – Our chapter will join in the “Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony.” The meeting will be held at Immaculate Conception Church on Sunday December 13th; invitations will be mailed with the details of the ceremony.

*Refreshments will be provided by the Memphis Chapter Steering Committee*

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2009 – Angel of Hope Remembrance – December 6<sup>th</sup> – St Louis Church – Angel of Hope Site – 7PM

December 2009 – TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony & Memphis Chapter Candle Lighting Ceremony – **Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> – Immaculate Conception Church – 6PM**

#### Holidays – A Difficult Time

Holidays are an especially difficult time for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings, especially the newly bereaved. In the past, the holidays have been some of our happiest times and now we face the first or yet another holiday without our child, grandchild or sibling. It has been our experience that the days leading up to the holiday are more difficult than the actual day. We hope during this period you can find some happy times to remember. The pain of loss will always be there, we share that. There will be hard times and sad days; we will be with you in spirit; you are not alone.

*Memphis Chapter Steering Committee*

#### The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony and December Meeting

Our December meeting will be held Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony. Our meeting will be held at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Marion Hall, 1695 Central Avenue, Memphis, TN. Our regular meeting will begin at 6PM with the Candle Lighting Ceremony beginning at 6:45PM. Join with us as we honor the memories of our Children, Grandchildren, Siblings and Friends! Held annually on the second Sunday in December, we will unite family and friends around the globe as we light candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7PM local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious and political boundaries. Believed to be the largest mass candle lighting in the world, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, TCF's gift to the bereavement community, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten. If you would like to have your child, grandchild or sibling's picture included in our presentation for the December meeting, contact Larry or Gwen Elrod at 901-388-3298.

**Sunday December 13, 2009 • 7PM Around the Globe**

*...that their light may always shine.*

#### Tonight I Hold This Candle

Tonight I hold this candle in memory of you. Hoping someday, somehow, my love will shine through. I close my eyes, lost in the glow. There are so many things I want you to know. This candle says I love you, this candle says I miss you. This candle is saying I remember you. When I'm holding it toward Heaven, it feels like you are near. If you're looking down tonight and see this candle burning bright, it says I'm wishing you were here. In the glow of this candle, I can almost see your smile, and it carries me away for a little while to another time, another place, when all it took to light up my world was your beautiful face. Someday, somehow I'll see you again. I'll hold you in my heart until then.

*Alan Pedersen Written in memory of his daughter Ashley*

## 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](mailto: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](http://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 checkout 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 Jack & Peggy U'Ren at 901-388-6759.

### 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](http://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](mailto: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.

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 901-497-7424 or 901-603-8478  
Accidental Death – Shelia Foust 901-496-9649 or 662-895-1424  
Sue Anne Duffy 901-276-4184 or 901-848-4134



### Refreshment Schedule

November – Oliver & Claudia Ellison & Pri Morden

December – Memphis Chapter TCF Steering Committee

*Note: If you would like to sign up to bring refreshments for our 2010 meetings, a sign up sheet will be available at the November meeting. Claudia Ellison is our Refreshment Chairperson; you can contact her at 901-603-8478.*

*I'm thankful, Lord for loving care; I'm thankful, too, for something more.  
I'm thankful, Lord, that I can bear the things that I'm not thankful for.*

**Clair Sanford, TCF, Logansport, IN**

If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please contact us at [gwenelrod@comcast.net](mailto:gwenelrod@comcast.net) or drop us a note at P.O. Box 38653, Germantown, TN 38183-0653.

## Remember Your Child During the Holidays

We generally associate the December holidays with festive decorations, gift giving, and the laughter of little children. For a parent who has lost a young child, just the word holiday can cause great emotional pain. It is difficult to walk into a store and be bombarded with all of the reminders of children. The toys, holiday clothes, colorful children's gift wrap, and the holiday music being sung by young children all bring on waves of grief that are difficult to bear. Often parents who have lost a young child find themselves falling into a depression around the holidays. It would be far easier to avoid the holidays than to face the season without the joy of your precious child. With some planning prior to the holiday season, the pain of loss can be softened somewhat. At some point, though, it becomes necessary to face the reality of the holiday season as being very different. Parents need ways to remember their child during this time of the year. By doing something special, parents will find it a bit easier and far more healing to face the otherwise empty holiday season. It is quite healing to remember your child by lighting a candle in memory of your little one. The candle can be placed on a decorated table in a special place in your home where you will feel your child is still very close to you. There are many types of memory candles one can buy, and you can place small mementos of your child on the table with the candle. This might be painful to see at first, but it will also create an atmosphere for healing. Remember your child by placing a special ornament on the tree. There are many stores that will do creative engraving, which you might find to be a desirable option for you. Have a special phrase or saying engraved along with the date of your child's birth and death. The keepsake ornament will become treasured all the days of your life. Remember your child by creating a memory box that can be shared with others during the holidays. Use your imagination as to what you want to place in the memory box. You can even decorate the memory box together as a special time of gathering the family together to remember. Many parents find it very healing to hang a stocking with their child's name on it by the fireplace mantle. Fill the stocking with some small gifts that were memorable of your child. Also, it might be very healing to write a letter or poem to your child and place it in the stocking. During a family meal, have someone read the letter, then place it in the memory box you've created. Each year a letter can be added. This will one day become a family treasure. If you have some sewing ability, a wonderful way of remembering your child is to create a small quilt from some of your child's clothes. This quilt will be cherished for years to come, as it will remain a priceless remembrance of your special child. As you think of ways to remember your child during the holidays, do things that will be healing to your heart. Remember; there is no right or wrong way to remember. Do those things that are healing specifically to you! By remembering and including your child in the holiday, you will promote an atmosphere of healing and hope.

*Clara Hinton*

## A Memorial Space

Creating a personal memorial space is a way of honoring a loved one and inviting positive spiritual feelings into our home. A memorial space can include anything that reminds you of your loved one. It might simply include a photo, along with a few possessions or symbols of that person. The space doesn't need to be huge or elaborate; it can be something fairly simple and unobtrusive on a dresser, bookshelf, outdoor area or another location. It is a sacred space with special articles of remembrance. Many of us have an instinctive need to remember those who are most valuable to us in an atmosphere of music, candles, poetry, readings, flowers and plants. This space may be secular, spiritual, religious or a combination of all of these areas of life. In a 2001 study, researchers found that creating this space is the second most important ritual activity that helps the bereaved. Many of us feel comfortable using memorial spaces as often as it feels right to do so; daily, weekly, monthly or yearly on an anniversary date or holiday. Find what is best for your memorial space and hope it brings you comfort and peace.

*Reverend Jennifer Malewski, Staff Chaplain, University of Kansas Hospital, Kansas City, KS*

## A New Normal

On the day my life changed forever, I learned that my beautiful little girl had been killed in Iraq. Andi wasn't a soldier; she had gone to Iraq to teach its elected officials the principles of democracy and human rights. Andi came into this world walking to the beat of her own drum; she possessed a spirit of determination in everything she did, from scoring goals on the soccer field or runs on the softball field to reading as many books as she could in one night. That same spirit of determination followed her throughout her entire life as she felt a sense of responsibility to make this world a better place. She pursued a career in communications and public relations because she thought it to be a good medium to bring certain issues to light. She was diligent in remaining committed to one day bringing forth some sort of social change. Andi did not support the war in Iraq, but she believed she could use her skills and knowledge to create something positive out of the war she felt was unjust and unnecessary. She felt a desire to help improve others' lives. She was only 28 years old when insurgents ambushed and killed her after leaving a political party training session. My little girl and the love of Michael Hasting's life was dead. Michael was working as a foreign correspondence for *Newsweek* in Baghdad. He and Andi had a plan to elope in Paris, France, on Valentine's Day in February 2007. After her death, Michael recounted the story of their tragic relationship in a book he wrote called *I Lost My Love in Baghdad*. Proceeds from the book are donated to the Andi Foundation. On the day my life changed forever, when it was shattered by the grenade that killed my daughter, I knew that I would never be the same. I knew that every remaining day of my life would be filled with sadness and pain. I wish I could say two years later that I'm learning to accept Andi's death, but I can't and never will. What I am learning however, is how to find small comforts that soften the sadness that permeates my soul. When your life is so irreparably changed by a loved one's death, it helps to create what I call a new normal for yourself. There are mornings when my new normal means simply getting through the day, just living to live. As part of this new normal, I cry more on the inside now than I do on the outside. The only problem with these inner tears is that no one on the outside can hear me. I feel that tears are important; they help me rinse sadness from my soul. So I pray to God each day the following prayer, "Please do not forget me, God. As I travel through loneliness and sadness each day, help me to do this in a positive way." When I need to comfort myself, I walk through the lakeside park where I used to take Andi to play. Sometimes I'll sit on a bench and talk to her, as though she's still alive. After one of my "Andi conversations," I felt something I'd never experienced before, a feeling of complete serenity and contentment. My wife, Vicki, says that it was Andi giving me a hug. I'd like to believe it was her saying, "Don't be sad, Dad, I'm fine." Vicki has found solace in her work as a nurse and in our grandchildren and friends she calls her "Angels of Comfort." My sons have turned to their music, my daughter has found strength in her husband and her daughters, the nieces Andi loved. All of us have found a positive way to remember Andi in the Andi Foundation, which provides scholarships to women who aspire, like her, to help the world. Yet I know that, even though we have gotten better at grieving, my family and I will always be among the "walking wounded." If you are grieving the loss of someone you love, try to create "a new normal" it may help you to find at least small comforts in your pain.

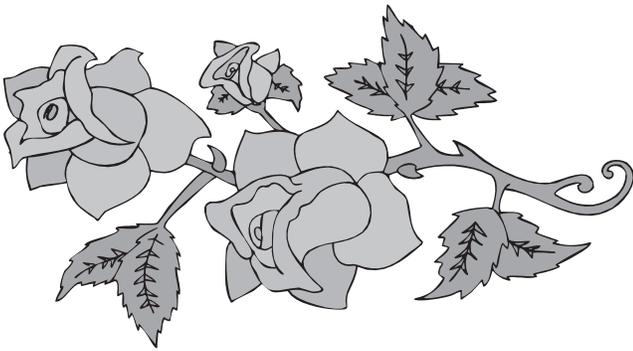
*Andre Parhamovich*

## Thanksgiving

As Thanksgiving approaches my thoughts naturally return to Thanksgiving Day of 1978. Bob and I were at the lowest point in our lives. I was just three days after Blake had been killed and we were making time before the Memorial Service that was scheduled to take place the next day. I don't remember much about that day, but I do recall that as our extended family gathered around the table to share the feast that my mother had lovingly prepared, I knew that I could not offer thanks for anything. I wasn't even thankful for being alive. How could I be when we had just lost something more precious than life itself? Now, three

years later, there is much for which I am thankful; an understanding and patient husband, two surviving sons and a lovely daughter-in-law who have all worked hard these years to rebuild our shattered family into the happy and loving one that it is today. The Compassionate Friends who gives us hope and role models to continue the task of rebuilding our lives when falling apart seemed easier; and the knowledge that we may be able to now extend a helping hand to someone who has just begun the terrible grief journey. But most of all I am thankful for the nineteen years that we had Blake with us. Life with Blake ranged from loving communication to teenage withdrawal and everything in between. I wouldn't change one minute of any of it. As a matter of fact, three years' perspective has given me the ability to laugh at some of the things he did that sure didn't seem funny at the time. Now that a lot of pain has moved out of my heart, there is more room for Blake to reside there. My message to those of you who are facing your first Thanksgiving since your child died, is don't feel guilty if you cannot find absolutely nothing for which to be thankful. Be very patient with yourself and face these trying days one at a time. I promise you that you really will reach a day when you will be able to offer thanks once again.

**Marge Frankenberg TCF, Arlington Hts, IL**



### **When All You Can Do Is Buy Flowers**

One of the many hurdles that I faced after my son Matthew died was not being able, during the holiday season to buy him anything ever again. When the holidays rolled around, I had such an empty feeling. I was buying gifts for my surviving children and all I could get Matthew was flowers for his grave. That just wasn't enough! Shopping was such a chore because I didn't have the energy and the Christmas spirit just was not there. Not being able to buy anything for my Matthew was just unbearable. What has helped me so much throughout the years is our St. Peters BP/USA support group meeting. At our December Potluck, Picture and Gift Night, we are asked to bring a gift. The gift is something that we would have bought for our child if he/she were alive. This is not mandatory but the majority of the group does participate. We go around the table and each person displays what they bought and explains why they bought it. Hearing funny stories that are told is just wonderful. I hear laughter and see tears at the same time. The gifts are later taken to a local children's home. At first, the gifts that were taken to the children's home consisted of a couple of bags. However, the generosity has grown more and more each year. The parents that don't attend meetings anymore throughout the year will come to the meeting in December, just to bring a gift for their child. On Christmas morning, when my surviving children are opening their gifts, I sit and I picture a child that probably would have not gotten a gift at Christmas, opening the gift that I bought Matthew. That gives me such peace. I will not wish you joy this holiday season. That is something that will come later. But I will say this, do as much or as little as you can handle. Don't push yourself too much, I will however, wish you peace.

**Sabra Penrod St. Louis, MO BP/USA**

### **Dealing with Grief After Your Child Dies**

Things that I have felt that are important after attending TCF meetings are five key things that have helped me handle my grief. I want to share them with you:

- Allow yourself to face and experience the pain of grief. The sooner you can bring yourself to meet it head-on, the sooner you will begin to work your way through it. You cannot escape or just hope it will go away, the only way out is through it.
- Remember, this is your grief; no one else understands exactly how you feel, not even the other parent. Don't let anyone else set the agenda; you have the right to do it your way on your timetable.
- Be especially patient with your spouse and other family members. They will grieve differently from you, even though it's for the same child. Allow them the same freedom for individuality that you need.
- Know that bizarre mood changes and feelings of apathy, numbness, losing your mind, anger, and hopelessness are normal. Be patient with yourself as your system struggles to repair itself from the devastating blow.
- Believe that time is on your side. The amount of time needed varies with each person, but things will get better. Of course, nothing will ever be the same, but you will learn to build a new and meaningful life in which you can function productively.

We who have been through this experience have a special love for the newly bereaved parents. We have felt much that you are feeling, and we have survived. The situation will improve, you can make it and we are here to reaffirm that whenever you need us, we are there.

**Jeanne Bucselo TCF, Atlanta, GA**

### **How Many Stockings Shall I Hang?**

What a torment! Funny how you worry what your friends will think. For days I worried, finally, I hung three upon the fireplace wall, and laid one gently on the mantel. But that was last year! And this year I shall hang all four above the fireplace. For this year the confusion of the mind has found new answers, with conviction! For it does not matter whether my oldest daughter lives in Tucson, or my youngest son is dead. They are my children, my family, and as long as we hang the Christmas stockings, we shall hang all of them.

**Shirley Melin TCF, Fox Valley, IL**

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day that he died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, 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, TCF Hingham, MA**

Surely there is no journey as lonely, nor one embarked upon with more pain, than the walk a grieving parent takes through the wilderness of grief.

**Martha Bittle Clark Are You Weeping With Me, God?**

### **The Holiday Army**

year, waiting for the Thanksgiving Day trumpet signal to begin their attack. They don't seem to be satisfied to have their celebrations and dinners and festivities unless they can recruit ALL of us into their ranks. Actually, we wish them well. All we want is for them to leave us alone and let us mourn in peace and quiet. We prefer our "Silent Nights" to their "Deck the Halls" and "Jingle Bells." We don't intentionally spoil their fun; it's just that our pain makes them uncomfortable. They've been conditioned to believe that the "Holiday Season" should have no

blemish of suffering or lack of frivolity. We must not only bandage our wounds in their presence, but cover them with taffeta and sequins besides. They are convinced that all we need is to “put on a happy face” and all our sorrows will magically evaporate. In their mad pursuits of happiness, they shoot us with the bullets of shopping, piped-in music, special holiday foods, gift wrapping, cards, decorations, joyous children with happy smiles, parties and gift exchanges. The most devastating bombs they drop into our lives are the images of reunion, times of greeting and hugging folks who are much loved and sometimes not often seen for a while. They may only be separated by geography, but our absent loved ones cannot cross the chasm of loss that looms before our tear-filled eyes. They remind us of things we should be grateful for, and we are more thankful for many of those things that they can ever imagine. They prod us with their spears of delightful togetherness. We would not dream of attacking them in these battles for holiday survival. With our noses pressed against the glass that divides us, we actually long to be able to be part of their happiness. We remember the times we joined in their fun and we, too, were part of the army of nostalgia and joy. Our broken hearts and bleeding wounds do not excuse us from being gracious, however. Grief does not give us permission to be rude and selfish. While we take no overt action against their aggression, we are not without defenses in these battles. We can shield ourselves with kind but direct and simple explanations. We understand your need for celebration, but this year we prefer quiet and private reflection and meditation. Right now, it's hard for us to function in large groups and to appreciate laughter and high spirits. Our energy is so limited; we'd appreciate some one-on-one time with you in a quiet atmosphere. We can gently remind them of how important it is to remember those we love that are gone. These are statements that clarify our position without judging or criticizing them for theirs. In kind and non-threatening ways, we can tell them what's good for us. We can also exercise the muscle of our sense of humor. It will take some effort on our part, but so does anything that is worthwhile and good for us. We can teach ourselves not to fall into the trap of thinking that our grief makes us the center of the universe. We can limit our demands that others treat us in “special” and “deferential” ways because of our pain. We can cut them a little slack and remember that once upon a time, we were just like they are now. It's good and healthy for us to review our perspectives now and then, and decide if we're being fair and reasonable. We can express our life in simple and unhurried ways without all the frenetic, expensive and often hysterical hype that the holidays can generate. And we must exercise the expression of our love, it reminds us ever more dramatically of our need to both give and receive love while we are here. Whenever we can take some control in our situations, we empower ourselves, and we feel less like victims in what seems like a war of “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” Any time we can educate and inform with mercy and compassion, we have given a true holiday gift of love that will keep on giving forever. May your season be filled with genuine blessings of peace.

**Andrea Gambill, Bereavement Magazine**

#### **Practical Ways To Deal With Your Grief**

There are no magical methods or definitive answers on how to deal with grief. However, with each other's experience from grief healing, it is possible to help each other in those times when we are having a difficult time. My experience with grief has helped me to assist others throughout the years and I would like to share these thoughts with you. There are times when you feel lost and alone, but I want to remind you that there are people like me who want to provide support and encouragement, not for financial gain, but a genuine concern because we have experienced what you are going through right now. Try not to isolate yourself from anyone because if you do, you will face depression, which may get too extreme for you to handle. Seek the company of other family members who share your pain. Sit and talk about your loved one and make sure you include the good memories that will put

a smile on your face. Never give up hope because while there is life, there is always hope for your future. Your dreams are still real. You have much to live for in fulfilling your purpose on earth. Be encouraged to know that you are important and there is a reason why you are still alive. Find something that you can do to uplift someone else or maybe something that your loved one would have liked to do. It will fulfill your day in some way to know that you are reaching out. Cry if you want to. This is completely reasonable for someone going through the grieving process. It is a way of purging your soul. Never be too hard on yourself and never feel guilty about being happy. Believe it or not, your loved one would have wanted you to be happy. Do something spontaneous like going on a cruise or going to dinner. It will enlighten you or it may make you feel sad, but you will never know unless you try something. Every day will be different for you, but hold on to your sanity. You need this to advance into the future. Read books that will motivate and encourage you. Do not withdraw yourself. I cannot stress this enough. This will sink you into a depression that is hard to shake off. Write, write, and write some more. Keep a daily journal and jot down your thoughts. Write the good thoughts that you are thinking about your loved one and don't be afraid to journalize your fears. You will have fear of the unknown, but your journey will take you to a place of hope. It is a day-to-day journey and you must travel the road of grief to reach the destination of healing. Surround yourself with people who are positive and who will understand your pain. Each day, leave the day before behind. Don't retrace your steps. You are on a healing path and looking back is a reason to intensify your pain. Everyone deals with grief differently, but for the most part, there are some specifics that are universal. I am speaking from the heart of my experiences and hope that the encouragement will lead you to a peaceful place of new beginnings. Don't give up; keep holding on to each day and be thankful that you will get closing to your healing.

**Cheryline Lawson**

Let this Christmas be gentle for you, give yourself the gift of peace. Let the magic spin your private cocoon, with a hope that will never cease. Remember your children tenderly; let the light of their love shine through. For the wonder and magic of Christmas time; they are sending their gifts to you. Sweet Hope, Sweet Peace, Sweet Love.

**Dana Gensler TCF of South Central Kentucky**

*Good friends  
are like stars.  
You can't always  
see them, but  
you know they're  
always there.*



# OUR CHILDREN LOVED AND REMEMBERED

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

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

Justin D. Mason July 4 – Nov. 26	David & Joanne Altizer	Kyle Gregory Juelfs Nov. 4 – Nov. 4	Chris & Michelle Juelfs
Chaelson Philip Andre Feb. 19 – Nov. 3	Nancy Andre	Julie Diane Vannucci Barney Nov. 1 – Aug. 12	Diane Vanucci Johnson
Terry Atchison Dec. 24 – Sept. 14	Alex & Randi Atchison	Bethany Susan McCarver Dec. 24 – Feb. 28	Janine McCarver Johnson
Jerome Patrick Randolph, Jr. Nov. 9 – June 17	Tabb Ballard	Antonio Jones Nov. 15 – Jan. 31	Deloris L. Jones
Andrew Taylor Bennett Sept. 20 – Dec. 16	Roger & Dorothy Bennett	Jordan Zachariah Tuggle Dec. 9 – June 3	Ernest & Shirley Jones
Christopher "Chris" M. Brannon Dec. 6 – Sept. 17	Joe & Carol Brannon	Jack Keesee Feb. 20 – Dec. 9	John H. Keesee
Shaun Thomas Brant Sept. 4 – Dec. 14	Tommy & Peggy Brant	Rebecca Merri Cooper Klyce June 17 – Dec. 31	Brig & Ellen Klyce
Jordan DéAndre Brooks Dec. 27 – May 23	Brian & Iris Brooks	Carter Lyle Knych Aug. 12 – Dec. 31	Ken & Vicki Knych
Aubrey William Brown Dec. 13 – May 20	Steve & Jennifer Brown	Jenifer Ashley Krasner Nov. 13 – Sept. 4	David & Joyce Krasner
Christopher Gene Pike Nov. 7 – Feb. 21	Roger & Phyllis Burns	Stephen Wayne Lowe Nov. 12 – Dec. 24	Paul & Sara Lowe
Jody Michael Bynum Dec. 2 – Aug. 29	Mike & Jan Bynum	Rachel Elizabeth Massey Apr. 30 – Dec. 5	Lisa Massey
Jonathan William Carter Nov. 17 – Apr. 14	Beth Carter	Jesse Tyler McKinnon Nov. 27 – July 18	Derek & Barbara McKinnon
David Martin Gurley Dec. 2 – May 27	Melanie Chase	Lt. Gregory F. Medlin May 22 – Nov. 2	Liz Medlin
Richard Aaron Cohn, M.D. Nov. 19 – Apr. 4	Dorothy Cohn	David Edward Moore Dec. 16 – Apr. 30	Marlow Moore
Larry "Travis" Shaun Carter Oct. 27 – Dec. 24	Judy Craig	Kyle Stephen Morden Apr. 24 – Nov. 6	Pri Morden
Billy Wayne Woodson Feb. 21 – Nov. 14	Judy Craig	Christopher Jason Demo Nov. 10 – Oct. 5	Stacy Mote
Maureen Elizabeth Craven July 29 – Nov. 5	Elaine R. Craven	William Andrew Pappas Dec. 28 – June 19	George & Cayce Pappas
Bryce Creekmore Nov. 27	Preston & Velma Creekmore	Jimmy Parker Nov. 24 – Nov. 19	Becky Parker
Beth Anne Crittenden Sept. 6 – Dec. 5	David & Kim Crittenden	Kevin Dewayne Burks Dec. 13 – Apr. 27	Nellie Patterson
Shelby "Chi-Chi" Dawson July 30 – Nov. 9	Barbara Deloach	Aubrey William Brown Dec. 13 – May 20	Mary Brown Pearson
Jordan Keshawn Dorris Dec. 20 – Dec. 6	Al & Pattye Dorris	William Shea Pierce Dec. 30 – Mar. 20	Todd & Dawn Pierce
Kennedy Grace Doyle Dec. 9 – Feb. 16	Barry & Brandy Doyle	Tina Darlena Warren Wiles Oct. 2 – Dec. 23	Frances W. Pierce
Thomas Dwyer Dec. 5 – June 9	Ann Dwyer	Christopher Gene Pike Nov. 7 – Feb. 21	Samuel Pike
Justin Michael Davis Nov. 27 – June 7	Oliver & Claudia Ellison	Joseph Nathaniel Plescher Dec. 20 – May 13	Paul & Gloria Plescher
Raytheon "Ray" D. Perry Dec. 7 – May 19	Lenora Faye Eubanks	David Bryan Ray Nov. 14 – Apr. 16	Linda Ray
Stephen Faulkner Dec. 27 – June 20	Peggy W. Faulkner	Joshua Martin Robbins Nov. 15 – Oct. 26	Mona Robbins
William Christian Fischer Oct. 16 – Dec. 20	Terry & Mindy Fischer	Phaedra Brown Nov. 30 – July 8	Tina Rogers
Jessica Sue Gafford April 10 – Nov. 28	Lee Anne Gafford	Teresa "Terri" Lanette Sax Nov. 8 – Apr. 24	Tommy & Christy Sander
Jackie Gillum June 9 – Dec. 16	Lethia Gillum	David Alan Shaw Dec. 26 – Mar. 18	Charles & Rita Shaw
Gary Edwin Rives July 22 – Dec. 21	Pam Goode	Steven Kirby Spear Nov. 14 – Feb. 2	Kenneth & Dorothy Spear
Derrick Lee Grayson Oct. 9 – Dec. 26	Hazel Grayson	Storm Spearman Aug. 23 – Nov. 27	Robbie Spearman
Sarah Emily Griffith Apr. 1 – Dec. 6	Tom & Nelda Griffith	Lindsey Beth Preston Nov. 18 – May 21	Bob & Dena Stoudt
Mallorie Dianne Hall Sept. 1 – Nov. 7	Alan & Debbie Hall	Lauren Elizabeth Tallo Nov. 29 – May 9	Richard & Lajuan Tallo
Kyle Gregory Juelfs Nov. 4 – Nov. 4	Alan & Debbie Hall	Randy Lashley Aug. 20 – Nov. 9	Ruth Ann Terry
John David Hatch Nov. 1 – Apr. 24	David Hatch	Michael L. Dorian Nov. 7 – July 24	Gloria L. Thomas
John David Hatch Nov. 1 – Apr. 24	Debbie Hatch	Jacqueline Jean Thompson Carroll Apr. 12 – Nov. 25	Jack & Dot Thompson
Sara Jo Hedrick June 7 – Nov. 29	Mike & Donna Hedrick	Jordan Zachariah Tuggle Dec. 9 – June 3	Mack & Sherila Tuggle
Matthew D. Hindman May 18 – Dec. 30	Kathy Hindman	David Michael Wark Sept. 14 – Dec. 22	Nancy Wark
Tracey Leigh Tucker Sept. 17 – Nov. 21	Jane Hobbs	Aniyah Cerena Salmon Dec. 5 – Dec. 15	Sheryl Hurt White
Kevin Lee Huffman Feb. 2 – Nov. 30	Joy Huffman	William James "Jimmy" McCallum Dec. 30 – Aug. 28	Russell & Sherry Wilburn
Aniyah Cerena Salmon Dec. 5 – Dec. 15	Alita L. Hurt	Adriaonna K. Williams Feb. 21 – Dec. 21	Karen L. Williams
Brian Wayne Jacques Dec. 9 – Apr. 24	Ken Jacques	Michael Alan Schmucker Nov. 22 – July 12	Larry Schumucker

## 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.

**Ron & Wanda Gray**  
In loving memory of their son  
Daren E. Gray

**Mike & Betty Devereaux**  
Remembering Cindy on the  
Anniversary Death Date  
10-27-95



**Larry & Gwen Elrod**  
**Brian & Rebecca Elrod**  
In memory of their son and brother  
Scott Alan Elrod

**John H. Keesee**  
In loving memory of his son  
Jack Keesee

### Holiday Reflection

Christmas and Hanukkah are upon us once more. December is an emotionally laden month for most adults. We pause and ponder the meaning of "peace on earth, goodwill toward men." We overflow with nostalgia for holidays past. We touch base with our beliefs, rituals, traditions and treasured memories. In passing on this heritage to our children, we are like conduits connecting past, present and future. It is a bit of immortality, a sense of tradition flowing from generation to generation. It is this very essence of the holidays that stabs at the heart of bereaved parents. Our children represent the future. We may wonder what is the point of tradition with so many of the pieces of the future dead. Each grieving parent must struggle to answer that question effectively in order to establish a framework for the holiday season. Since we cannot ignore it or make it go away, we can deal with the situation by making specific plans with our families. We can assess priorities. We can make changes. We can decide which traditions to uphold and which to set aside this year. We can choose to acknowledge openly to our children our grief. We can think about some very special gifts. To ourselves we can grant the gift of acceptance by realizing that our grief is a necessary healing process. To our families we can extend the gift of empathy by remembering that they, too hurt. To our missing children, we can bestow the gift of homage by determining to work through grief so that we may live life to the fullest.

*Candy McLaughlin TCF, Minneapolis, MN*

### Heaven's Children

Do you suppose they meet like us, to lend support and love? As we assemble, do they gather too, watching from above? Do you suppose they ask our God to care for parents, here? Just as we beseech Him to hold our children dear? Do you suppose, among them, they comfort one another? When they see deep grief consume their father or their mother? Do you suppose, together, they wipe away our tears? Holding hands, as we do, to cleanse away our fears? Do you suppose they listen to the breaking hearts we share? As we tell our stories our tragedies laid bare? And, do you suppose they know the Truth, these children whom we adore? Knowing fully that God's love in abundance he will outpour? And, do you suppose they understand far better than we mortals? That peace and joy and soul's content await us at the portals? And, do you suppose until the day they see us face to face; they're tugging on God's heartstrings to keep us in His grace?

*Sue Smith*

### Searching

Once again, my list has vanished; it was here, but now it's missing. Keys and glasses are disappearing; books and letters are overdue. I'm forever searching, searching, they must be here, and I need them! Could it be that what is missing, what I want this very minute; could it be that what I'm really searching for my Child, is you?

*Joyce Andrews TCF Sugarland, Houston, TX*

### To Scott

Christmas this year will not be the same; there are a lot of packages, but none with your name. We hung your stocking by the chimney with care; it looks so nice, we're sorry you're not here. The family will gather to talk and eat, but at our house, there will always be an empty seat. Somehow we'll manage, we guess we'll get by, but throughout the day, one of us will cry. Christmas will always be different from past years, simply because, you are not here.

*Love Dad, Mom, Brian & Rebecca*

*In Memory of Scott Alan Elrod*

### "TIME"

When our children are born, our life becomes theirs. They seem to grow so fast that we try to hold back on the things they have to bear. But sometimes in life things happen in reverse, God will call our child Home first. To a parent there is no greater love, than that which we have for our child. You have gone before me and I will be just a while. When my job here on this earth is finished, I will understand, the reason we are to follow God's command. It is your time to turn 21 and your time to shine in the sun. Wishing you were here to celebrate, I know your having a party that is greatest of great! We miss you and feel that you should still be here, but we also know you are celebrating over 2 years, of being with our Heavenly Father to whom is so dear. I want you to know there is no time that you're not on my mind. Now it is time for fall, and the Christmas shopping ahead at the mall. It has been over 2 years and 2½ months and I am not functioning well at all. I keep waiting on the better days they say will come in time, but I still don't see them yet in this life of mine. You know that you will always have my love. That year after year and through the days of time, you're always in this heart and soul of mine! All I want is for you to shine, shine, shine! I love you more than life ...

*Mom*

*In Loving Memory of April Michelle Pera*

*August 2, 1988 - August 7, 2007*

**You may send your Tax-deductible Donation to:** **The Compassionate Friends**  
**P. O. Box 38653**  
**Germantown, TN 38183-0653**

**Child's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's/Grandparent's/Friend(s) Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Love Gift (Any Donation Amount)** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory Of** \_\_\_\_\_

**On The Occasion Of** \_\_\_\_\_

### TCF is Now on Facebook

The Compassionate Friends national organization now has a Facebook page. You can find this page by going to TCF's national website home page at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and clicking on the Facebook Link on the left side. Or you can go on to Facebook and do a search for "The Compassionate Friends/USA." The new Facebook page will provide an additional means of communication with not only our members, but also with others who may not be aware of The Compassionate Friends.

### TCF National Information

- If you are seeking grief support on the web, **The Compassionate Friends Online Support Community (OSC)** gives you the opportunity to meet with others who are also grieving the death of a child. There are OSC rooms for: Parents/Grandparents; Siblings; Pregnancy/Infant Loss; Bereaved Two Years and Under; Bereaved Two Years and Over; Men Only; No Surviving Children and Survivors of Suicide. All rooms have trained moderators, visit; [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).
- TCF's National Website has a "**Grief In the News**" page that links with more than 100 stories published in the media. To view the stories visit "Grief in the News" at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).
- **Healing the Grieving Heart** web radio show features many aspects of grief, with a main focus on the death of a child and its effects on the family; visit the national website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) for dates and times.

The time of Christmas rings with tears and laughter. And if you listen deeply, you will find the sound of every voice you ever knew.

*Sasha Wagner*

There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept, things we don't want to know but have to learn, and people we can't live without but have to let go.

In our hearts, we all know that death is a part of life. In fact, death gives meaning to our existence because it reminds us how precious life is.

What cancer cannot do; it cannot invade the soul, suppress your memories, kill your friendships, destroy your peace, conquer the spirit, shatter your hope, cripple your love, corrode your faith, steal your eternal life or silence your courage.

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, "What, you too? I thought I was the only one!"

*C.S. Lewis*

After the worst has happened, with nothing left to fear, the sun continues shining, with undiminished cheer. And winds continue blowing, and skies continue fair, as hearts continue bearing the thing they could not bear.

*SIDS Network Ohio*

### My First Christmas in Heaven

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below, with tiny lights, like Heaven's stars, reflecting on the snow. The sight is so spectacular; please wipe away your tears, for I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year. I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear, but the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here. I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring, for it is beyond description to hear the angels sing. So be happy for me dear ones, you know I hold you dear; and be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year. I send you each a special gift from my heavenly home above; I send you each a memory of my undying love. After all, love is a gift more precious than pure gold; it was always most important in the stories Jesus told. Please love and keep each other, as our Father says to do, for we can't count the blessings or love He has for each of you. So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away the tears; remember, I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

*Unknown*

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

*November/December 2009*



**Our Next Meetings:  
Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> & Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>**

*Printing of our newsletter is provided by Paulsen  
Printing Company, Jim and Judy Paulsen, Owners;  
In Loving Memory of their son Randy.*