



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS Newsletter

MEMPHIS, TN

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 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.

TCF National Office
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Oliver & Claudia Ellison
Larry & Gwen Elrod
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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 September – “How am I broken?” The death of a child “breaks” us in many ways; we will discuss this and what might help.

Refreshments will be provided by Jack & Peggy U'Ren and Ron & Wanda Gray

TCF Meeting for October – “Do you or have you ever allowed yourself to become envious of parents with living and healthy children?” How do you deal with this feeling?

Refreshments will be provided by Sue Anne Duffy

TCF Meeting for November – “Coping with the Holidays!!!” We will share ideas on getting through the holiday season without our children.

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; invitations will be mailed with the details of the ceremony.

Refreshments will be provided by the Memphis Chapter Steering Committee

Upcoming Events

September 2009 - Balloon Release and Pot Luck In Memory of Our Children

When: September 27th

Where: On the campus of the Maria Montessori School (Harbor Town)

Time: 3:00pm – 5:00pm

What to Bring: A dish or two to share and lawn chairs

***A flyer will be mailed with details and directions**

December 2009- Angel of Hope Remembrance – December 6th – St Louis Church, Angel of Hope Site

December 2009 – Memphis Chapter & TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony – December 13th – Immaculate Conception Church

The Twelve Gifts of Hope

The Gift of Hope is:

- To find a new place to go or someone to go with
- To honor my wish list on a special day or holiday
- To honor a grief burst; a happy memory of the way it used to be
- To have a take care of “Me” day; treat myself to something that feels good
- To recall a cherished memory that makes me smile or laugh
- To take time-out to enjoy a hobby, sporting event, or something my loved one liked to do
- To give and receive love and support in unexpected ways
- To heal my pain through laughter, music or spirituality
- To find a new friend, a new support group or social activity to expand my circle of life
- To learn more about grief through books, people, classes or groups
- To count my blessings and focus on what I still have, not what I’ve lost
- To give the gift of hope to someone else in need

WINGS, A Grief Education Ministry 2009

Explorers

As grieving parents and siblings, we become explorers. We do not choose to become explorers but we are called to enter new lands. These lands represent new territory for us, as yet undiscovered and unmapped. For this reason, the elements of fear and risk will be encountered on this journey. It will be a certain challenge. It will be a difficult challenge full of hardships. Do we embark on this trip as a strong healthy whole explorer? No, we begin this journey as a weak wounded broken explorer. One just struggling to survive such a traumatic loss; do we make mistakes? Yes, this is a part of the normal exploration process. We must be kind and gentle with ourselves even when we stumble on the new ground. Our load is heavy and we might even stagger at times. We are in the process of exploring all possibilities for healing as well as relief from our overwhelming grief. Our goal is to discover and enter the promised lands of blessed hope and peaceful hearts and minds. On this journey of exploration, we rely on God for guidance and lean on our fellow travelers for encouragement and companionship.

Robert “Bob” Haynie TCF, Collierville, TN



Next Meetings:
Sept. 3rd & Oct. 1st



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.

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

September – Jack & Peggy U'Ren & Ron & Wanda Gray

October – Sue Anne Duffy

November - Oliver & Claudia Ellison & Pri Morden

December – TCF Steering Committee

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

A Cure for Sorrow

There is an old Chinese tale about the woman whose only son died. In her grief, she went to the holy man and said, "What prayers, what magical incantations do you have to bring my son back to life?" Instead of sending her away or reasoning with her, he said to her, "Fetch me a mustard seed from a home that has never known sorrow; we will use it to drive the sorrow out of your life." The woman set off at once in search of that magical seed. She came first to a splendid mansion, knocked at the door and said, "I am looking for a home that has never known sorrow; is this such a place? It is very important to me." They told her, "You've certainly come to the wrong place," and began to describe the tragic things that had recently befallen them. The woman said to herself, "Who is better able to help these poor, unfortunate people than I who have had a misfortune of my own?" She stayed to comfort them and then went on in search for a home that had never known sorrow. But wherever she turned, in hovels and in palaces' she found one tale after another of sadness and misfortune. Ultimately, she became so involved in ministering to other people's grief that she forgot about her quest for the magical mustard seed; never realizing that it had in fact driven the sorrow out of her life. Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

George Baldwin TCF, Alva, OK

A Narrative from the Heart

You cannot know the pain until you have been there. The death of a loved one brings pain to the spirit. There are physical pains too, headaches from crying, compulsive energy spurts, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea. But the real pain is in the soul, at your very depths. It cannot be explained, it just is. For no apparent reason, and all the reason in the world, the tears and the sobbing start, ease up, start again, until with time, the loss is less acute. But when you are first plunged into the abyss of grief, nothing can explain how you feel, and nothing seems to help. At that time, life simply is not worth living; it would be simpler, easier, nicer, if you could just give it all away, and be with the loved one again. There seems no way out, and no way to feel better. It is so hard, so indescribably hard. God! Why is there such suffering? Is there any point to it? Any reason at all? If there is, it is beyond me. I am in a spiritual coal hole, trying to understand, trying to cope. Nothing has so shaken what faith I may have had. Where is the backup now, now when I need it so desperately? There is nothing fair about life. It comes and goes, and doesn't give a damn about how you or I feel about anything. It doesn't matter that this person, was kind, gentle, young, and naïve, not given a fair shake. They're gone now, totally away from our world. So where is this spirit world we are supposed to have waiting for us? If it is within us, then forget it. There is nothing within me, just emptiness, loss. If it is elsewhere, then show it to me. If it is both within and without, show me at least something of that part that is elsewhere, because there is nothing within right now. Where do I go from here? The chores can keep me going a little while; laundry needs to be done, beds made, dishes washed, but who cares? Does it really matter? What does matter is that I want to be with my loved one, not necessarily to have him back, just to know he is safe? No, I can't just take your word for it, whoever you may be. I need to see for myself; then maybe I can rest. Then maybe I can even rejoice that he is in a nicer place, that his being is better than it was here. There is guilt, some guilt; the most useless of emotions. Could I have made his life better while he was here, could I have done something sooner to ease his pain? No. One does the best one can under the given circumstances.

Rarely does anyone do less, and if they do, that is their choice. But ignorance and fear can interfere with choice, sometimes obliterate any possibility of seeing a choice; you just do the best you can at the time. Get on with your life, they tell you. Well, it's not so easy when there doesn't seem to be much to get on with. How much of a life is left, with this tremendous burden of loss? Who would really be very concerned if I went too? My presence, my actions, is not essential to the existence of this world. I am but a small spark, and that spark is pretty tiny right now. Life goes on, it doesn't need me. So is this what I have to learn from all this pain? To go on and make my contributions regardless of what the rest of the world thinks? Why should I bother? Because my spark is important? Says who? I may have to think about that for a while. It means I have to think about my effect on others; it means I have to think about going on. That is too hard right now. I can cope with the dishes; I can manage until tonight. I don't know about the night time. Maybe one of those alleged guardian angels can help me through the night. Maybe tomorrow I can think more about going on. Maybe, right now, I won't even answer the telephone. Nobody can understand how I feel because it is my pain; I don't want anyone to share this pain, it is too awful to share. Even if you have been there, you don't want to go back, you don't want to feel that way again. A hug from someone who cares doesn't hurt though; sometimes it helps a little. I thought the first time it happened, the next time it would be easier. There would be more understanding, but the circumstances are different each time, and it doesn't seem to get easier. Especially if there seems no reason for the loss, no prolonged illness, no incapacity, lots to live for. Where does that come from? What made life worth while before the loss? Maybe I can deal with that tomorrow. Today, there is still so much pain.

Susan F.S. McLaren

*Because someone cared today,
I knew God's love was strong;
I found new hope to bear my cross
and courage for my song.
My neighbor's heart conveyed the love
I needed for my pain;
and happily I felt the faith
to dream and smile again.*

Inez Franck

I am drawn quietly to her grave to check on her, just as I'd have been drawn quietly to her crib. I trim the grass around her marker, and dream of trimming bangs from her forehead. I place flowers in her vase, and dream of placing ribbons in her hair. I hold her memory dear to my heart, and dream of holding her in my arms.

Barbara A Daniels TCF, Kansas City, MO

Only Surviving Siblings; Am I an Only Child Now?

In families of only two children, the siblings often look out for and protect each other, which make the loss of one even more difficult for the surviving child. The brothers and/or sisters looked forward to a long and enjoyable future, never thinking that they would be separated. There was the assumption that the siblings would grow old together, reminiscing about the past. Not only are there the intense sadness and feelings of total devastation, but the surviving sibling may feel a huge sense of responsibility for the future care of the parents. While both siblings are alive, there might not be much thought about the loss of a parent, as they believe they will always be there to help each other make decisions when the time comes; that they would always go through everything together. Another concern is that the surviving sibling won't have any family to rely on to remember the past. With the loss of a sibling, we are left with an immense grief and a "new reality" that we never wanted, never asked for. The anguish and loneliness are overwhelming. Those who have no surviving siblings to share their thoughts, feelings, memories and pain are left to deal with a wider range of issues. Bereaved parents often have a hard time with the question, "How many children do you have?" Many only surviving siblings also have a hard time dealing with similar issues. They may not be up to explaining what happened. It often depends on the relationship to the person asking. The best choice is to answer whichever way is easier emotionally. Another question surviving siblings often ask themselves is, "Am I an only child now?" The sibling who has died will always be their brother or sister, but they may want to spare themselves the pain of people's reactions to hearing of the death, or just the pain of having to say it, which is hard enough. It is so difficult to process the fact that this one person, who shared the past, will not be a part of their future. It's good to remember that no matter how the question is answered, we will always be an older or younger brother or sister.

Daniel Yoffee

The Lunch Box

I wonder how many people think about what it is like for a parent not to have to pack a lunch box for their child ever again. September marks the re-entry of kids into the world of academics, but for some parents it's the reminder that the excitement of the children that electrifies the air won't be the same in their homes this year. So many hopes and dreams and memories are wrapped up in what occupies a major part of a child's life, school time. Summer cushions us from having to be painfully aware that our children won't be walking to school or riding the school bus with the other kids or won't be trying out for the lead part in the school play or won't need new school clothes or won't fall in love with the girls he sits behind in math class. Parents who never had the pleasure of letting them go to school for the first time knows what they have missed. They remember their own first time; and would have liked to have relived it with their own child. They would have liked to have made it really special and to have asked all of the questions their own parents asked them when they arrived home from school. Hopes and dreams for this child's future will never be realized. I wonder if my neighbor remembers that if my baby had lived, this is the year that he would have started kindergarten. I wanted him to have a lunch box just like the other kids.

Joan Jones TCF, British Columbia

How Do You Say Good-bye

If a fir when it falls in the forest makes no noise if no one is near, how do you say good-bye when no one is there to hear? Who do

you say good-bye to when the person who's leaving is gone, and all that is left are the memories that you live and relive all alone? You say good-bye to the little guy you taught to ride a bike, and good-bye to the heart-bonded buddy, who went with you to hunt, fish and hike. And finally good-bye to your hero who would be all that you wanted to be, who'd climb to heights never dreamed of and see sights that you'd never see. Where do you say good-bye when you don't know where he is? Where can you go and feel him close by and not lost in some dark abyss? You can say good-bye in his bedroom where you snuggled and read stories to him, or down by the creek in the deep woods where you taught him to fish and to swim. You can say good-bye by the goal posts where he made you feel so proud, or out on the lake in a bass boat where you debated the shape of a cloud. What do you say good-bye to when nothing is there to see? Do you just talk to the air, or murmur a prayer that something is there listening? You say good-bye to your future that you had planned and barely begun, and to the joy and happiness to grandkids when you finally admit there'll be none. And you say good-bye to the good times and birthdays and Christmas cheer, and hopefully, good-bye to "That Day" which methodically comes round each year. How do you say good-bye and accept that it's over and done? When you can deny it no more, you must close the door and whisper, "Good-bye until then, my son."



Richard Dew Rachel's Cry – A Journey Through Grief

Live One Day at a Time

Memories, tender, loving and bittersweet; they can never be taken away from you. Nothing can detract from the joy and the beauty you and your loved one shared. Your love for the person cannot be altered by time or circumstance. The memories are yours to keep. Yesterday has ended, though you store it in the treasure house of the past. And tomorrow? How can you face its awesome problems and challenges? It is as far beyond your mastery as your ability to control yesterday. Journey one day at a time; don't try to solve all the problems in your life at once. Each day's survival is a triumph.

Rabbi Earl Grollman

Letting Go of Guilt

Quite often, the first feelings that overtake a mother or father following the death of a child are feelings of extreme guilt. Thoughts of "if only" seem to relentlessly keep returning. "If only" I had taken her to the doctor sooner. "If only" I had not given him the car keys when I knew the roads were icy. "If only" I had not turned my back to answer the phone. "If only" I had not left him playing alone in the bathtub. Guilt is such a heavy burden of grief to carry around! How does a parent move beyond the guilt of losing a child? How can a parent shed the painful feelings of inadequacy? How does a parent ever find a way to let go of the guilt? The most difficult step

in releasing the tight clutch that guilt holds on a parents' heart is dealing with the reality of the loss. "My child died" are often the most difficult three words that will ever come from the mouth of a parent. Those words are hard words, yet they are words that are necessary to say and to understand before being able to rid oneself of guilt. When we live in an "if only" emotional environment, we have not yet come to the full realization that child loss has actually occurred. We are still working through the mental "if only" reasoning which continues to wreak havoc on a parent's heart. When a parent lives in an "if only" state, the reality of the child's death can never be completely accepted. As painful as it is, a parent must at some point make the hard choice to accept the reality that the child has died. Because a parent's primary role is to nurture and care for the child, a parent often has a feeling of deserving punishment when a child dies. That is simply another way of expressing the heaviness of guilt. A parent often wrestles with the thought that "because my child died, I do not deserve to ever smile again." Guilt continues to prevent many parents from moving forward in this difficult journey we call grief. It takes a lot of concentrated effort, hard work, and support from others to be able to forgive oneself and finally let go of the gnawing feeling of guilt following the death of a child. Until a parent makes the decision to leave the heavy weight of guilt behind, joy can never return to a heart that has been so deeply wounded by the loss of a child. Letting go of guilt is a decision that must be made. There is no timetable for making that decision, and others cannot force that decision on any parent. Eventually, a parent will come to the realization that the child's death is real, and there is a hard choice to be made; to continue to live in the guilt of the loss, or to let go of that heaviness of guilt and begin to experience a bit of peace and joy once again. Letting go of guilt requires a real effort to put an end to the "if only" questions. Letting go of guilt means that a parent no longer blames himself for the death of the child. Letting go of guilt means forgiving oneself and accepting oneself. Letting go of guilt means being gentle with oneself and allowing time for healing to take place. Letting go of guilt is one of the most difficult parts of grief work. It takes a lot of energy, understanding, and patience. But when guilt is finally set free, a parent's heart can begin to walk the journey of healing through child loss.

Clara Hinton

Child Discipline after a Death in the Family

When there has been a death in the family, whether a parent or a child, the surviving siblings are thrown into turmoil from which it takes a long time to recover. It takes deliberate effort on the part of the parent or parents to take enough time from their own grieving to focus on the devastated children and give them the attention they desperately need, and try to restore some sense of stability in the family. Child discipline is usually the first issue to be addressed, because children of any age, but especially school age and younger, will grieve in ways that force the issue. Initially, when the first waves of devastating grief hit the family, there will probably be little order in the home. Some things ordinarily addressed will be overlooked, with allowances made because of the tremendous loss each one has suffered. Refusing to go to bed or follow other routines, backtalk and disobedience, whining and calling on the death of the brother or sister as an excuse not to comply with parental guidance or instruction, are all extremely common. The first impulse of parents may be to relax their demands and overlook some of the rules and routines of the home, because the child is so distressed and traumatized already. It seems too harsh to deal out the normal

discipline at a time like this. It also takes a lot out of the parent, who is already under great stress, to enforce the rules, deal with the disrespect and disobedience, and carry through with insisting on acceptable behavior. Children, however, look to the parents for assurance that their world, while greatly changed, is still the safe and stable place it always has been. Like the framework of the home, the rules and expectations of the parents are the boundaries that give the child reassurance that the foundations of their world are secure. For this very reason, the grieving child will test the boundaries again and again, and each time they find that the rules have not changed, that parental responses are predictable, it will build up their confidence and give them more strength to face their loss. This is not to say that parents must ignore the death as they deal with their child day to day. Each challenge to their authority is another opportunity for the parent to empathize with the child's grief, to hear what they have to say, or to hug them as they cry. Enforcing the boundaries should be done with a great deal of empathy and tenderness. Keep in mind the word, "nevertheless..." It is a good transition between showing empathy, and enforcing the rules. "It's so hard for you, and for all of us, that your little brother died. I know you are heartbroken...nevertheless, you need to go take a time out in your room." Although on the surface the child may balk and rebel, there is tremendous security in knowing that the parent is still strong, still capable of protecting the children from their own impulses. A child who is acting out is hurting. Though it may not be evident from his or her words and actions, you can be assured that great pain is behind the behavior. With equal doses of loving empathy and firm reinforcement of the family rules, the child will find his or her way through mourning to a healthy environment.

Carol A Ranney



In Loving Memory of Daren E. Gray

September 28, 1981 – March 20, 2005

You never said "I'm Leaving;" you never said goodbye. You were gone before I knew it, and only God knew why. A million times I needed you; a million times I cried. If love alone would have saved you, you never would have died. In life I loved you dearly; in death I love you still. In my heart you hold a special place that no one else will. It broke my heart to lose you, but you did not go alone; for a part of me went with you, the day God took you home.

Please don't sing sad songs for me; forget your grief and fears, for I am in a perfect place; away from pain and tears. I'm far away from hunger and want and pride. I have a place in Heaven with the Master at my side. My life on earth was very good, as earthly lives can go; but paradise is so much more than anyone can know. My heart is filled with happiness and sweet rejoicing, too. To walk with God is perfect peace a joy forever new.

Danielle Holt TCF, Augusta, GA

OUR CHILDREN LOVED AND REMEMBERED

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER

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

Sheila Forrest Oct. 3 – July 2	Stephen Daly Sullivan	Alan & Debbie Hall Sept. 1 – Nov. 7	Mallorie Dianne Hall
Sam & Sylvia Daniel May 23 – Sept. 23	Debbie Daniel Stewart	Jessica Durham Oct. 21 – Sept. 1	Bishop Isaiah Jackson
Paul & Nancy Fultz Oct. 15 – Apr. 5	Michael Paul Fultz	Shelia Durham Oct. 21 – Sept. 1	Bishop Isaiah Jackson
Jane Hobbs Sept. 17 – Nov. 21	Tracey Leigh Tucker	Rhonda Clark Oct. 11 – Feb. 2	Rebekah Kay Clark
Cheryl Brown July 29 – Sept. 20	Gerald Kunene English	Karen Dunathan May 4 – Sept. 19	Jackson Reese Dunathan
Judy Craig Oct. 27 – Dec. 24	Larry “Travis” Shaun Carter	Johnny & Tammy Johnson Oct. 23 – Mar. 21	John Terry Johnson
Mike & Betty Devereaux Jan. 10 – Oct. 27	Cindy Devereaux	Gary & Whitney Jordan Sept. 25 – Sept. 25	Matthew Austin Jordan
Joe & Rosemary Burns July 16 – Sept. 18	James “Chris” Christopher Burns	Joan Kling Sept. 12 – Mar. 12	Peter Henry Kling
Barbara Carmichael Sept. 26 – Aug. 9	Paul Jason Carmichael	David & Joyce Krasner Nov. 13 – Sept. 4	Jenifer Ashley Krasner
Gary & Ann Floyd Sept. 10 – Aug. 27	Julie Kathryn Floyd	Cathy Kyle Sept. 14 – Oct. 5	Kelly Amanda Kyle
Stephen & Benita Carney Sept. 27 – Aug. 2	James Thurmond Carney	Ron & Regina Lawrence May 25 – Oct. 9	Robert Andrew “Drew” Lawrence
Sue Anne Duffy Oct. 8 – Jan. 23	William “Will” Wagner Duffy	Steve & Sandra Lawson Oct. 8 – June 26	Neal Andrew Lawson
Susan E. Cox Oct. 11 – Jan. 30	Tracy Andrew Cox	David & Nancy Mauney Sept. 1 – Jan. 8	Kimberly Iris Mauney
Sammy & Cherié Howell Aug. 15 – Oct. 14	Cory Todd Howell	Amy McOwen Sept. 14 – Aug. 10	Brandy Nicole Brown
Alex & Randi Atchison Dec. 24 – Sept. 14	Terry Atchison	Mike & Lori Morris Aug. 14 – Sept. 7	Courtney Leanne Morris
Joe & Carol Brannon Dec. 6 – Sept. 17	Christopher “Chris” M. Brannon	Ken & Katie Morrow Oct. 11 – May 14	Kaitlyn Grace Morrow
Kathy Howard Sept. 30 – Oct. 13	Jason John Howard	Stacy Mote Nov. 10 – Oct. 3	Christopher Jason Demo
Hazel Grayson Oct. 9 – Dec. 26	Derrick Lee Grayson	Seldon & Carolyn Murray Mar. 12 – Sept. 26	Carter Lee Murray
Keith & Debra Hamsley May 11 – Oct. 6	Christopher Michael Hamsley	Woody & Sherry Oliphant Aug. 31 – Sept. 1	Trey Oliphant
Ron & Wanda Gray Sept. 28 – Mar. 20	Daren Everett Gray	Mary Page Oct. 27 – June 9	William “Parker” Page
Tommy & Peggy Brant Sept. 4 – Dec. 14	Shaun Thomas Brant	Gil & Robin Parrish Sept. 5 – Oct. 21	John Gilbert Parrish, III
Haward Fowler Jr. & Vernita Evans Oct. 20 – Jan. 16	Vincent Haward Fowler	Frances W. Pierce Oct. 2 – Dec. 23	Tina Darlena Warren Wiles
Ronny & Teri Anderson May 6 – Sept. 21	Amanda “Mandy” Taylor Smith	Sonya Poe Oct. 27 – May 14	Michael Dale Poe
Randy & Patti Blackard Sept. 8 – June 12	Rachel Marie Blackard	Beverly Prince Sept. 22 – Sept. 5	Emily Meredith Prince
Roger & Dorothy Bennett Sept. 20 – Dec. 16	Andrew Taylor Bennett	Larry & Sandra Ray Mar. 16 – Oct. 24	Stephanie Boyd
Cindy Gregory May 2 – Oct. 6	David Allen Gregory	Mona Robbins Nov. 15 – Oct. 26	Joshua Martin Robbins
Bob & Betsy Friedl May 25 – Oct. 9	Robert Andrew “Drew” Lawrence	Debbie Sater Oct. 10 – Mar. 30	Samuel Jameson Trucks
Betsy Halfacre May 25 – Oct. 9	Robert Andrew “Drew” Lawrence	Cindy Savageau Sept. 17	Robert Lee
Terry & Cindi Henson July 28 – Oct. 6	Brandon Joseph Henson	Charles & Tresea Shamblin Oct. 2	Keith Edward Shamblin
Teresa Geeslin Sept. 5 – Sept. 15	Jeremy Glen Wright	Rebecca Smith Feb. 5 – Sept. 17	Daniel Keith Franks
David & Kim Crittenden Sept. 6 – Dec. 5	Beth Anne Crittenden	Karen R. Taylor Apr. 1 – Oct. 3	Bruce Daniel McSparrin
Pam Chrestman Jan. 4 – Sept. 15	Lindsey Michelle Chrestman	Thomas & Sharyn Tritsch Oct. 17 – Mar. 25	Erika Rachel Tritsch Barlow
Drs. Osama & Lillian Gaber Oct. 3 – June 12	Nora Gaber	Effie Turner Feb. 18 – Sept. 15	Tawana Blunt
Warren & Cindy Haggard May 21 – Oct. 8	David Bond Haggard	Ruff & Jo Elle Turner Oct. 8 – July 8	John Asbury Turner
Ken & Rebecca Hamric Apr. 10 – Sept. 23	Abigail “Abby” Louise Hamric	Jack & Peggy U’Ren Sept. 23 – Mar. 27	Heather Marie Hill Thorne
Terry & Mindy Fischer Oct. 16 – Dec. 20	William Christian Fischer	Nancy Wark Sept. 14 – Dec. 22	David Michael Wark
Danielle Jean Atkins Aug. 25 – Sept. 30	Jason Christopher Atkins	Larry & Carolyn Watson Oct. 6 – May 29	Michael Dewayne Simon
Neila Dick Aug. 25 – Sept. 30	Jason Christopher Atkins	Wayne Webb Sept. 12 – Aug. 9	Michael J. Webb
Jim & Patti Champion Sept. 14 – Sept. 14	Kenneth Owen Champion	Cheryl White June 8 – Oct. 13	Joshua Lee Thorne
Ron & Kimberly Dunlevy Oct. 8 – Aug. 18	Abbey Grace Dunlevy		

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>❁ ❁ ❁ ❁</p> <p>Osama & Lillian Gaber In remembering their daughter Nora Gaber</p> <p>❁ ❁ ❁ ❁</p>	<p>Bob & Betsy Friedl Clark Lawrence In loving memory of their son and brother Andrew "Drew" Lawrence, remembering him on his 10th anniversary in Heaven, October 9th</p>	<p>❁ ❁ ❁ ❁</p> <p>Debbie Gillespie In memory of her niece Hanna Dendy</p> <p>❁ ❁ ❁ ❁</p>
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Looking Back ... and Forward – The Ten-Year Mark

As I approach the ten-year anniversary of my sweet son Drew's death, I can so vividly remember when I was nearing the first anniversary mark. I did not want that day to come as it meant that I had been in this world for one entire year without him. It just broke my heart to realize that fact. But inevitably the day came, and, of course, I managed to live through that day and many, many other difficult days in the years to come. While it seems so incredible that I will soon face the 10th anniversary, I don't seem to dread it like I did that first year. I've spent a good bit of time this year reflecting on what I've learned and how far I've come in my new life. I feel as if I have lived two separate lives...one prior to October 9th, 1999, and the 10 years since. The experience of Drew's tragic death at the age of 15 and the immense grief that follows such an event have certainly changed and shaped my life philosophies. I became a bereaved parent that day and for a long time, that is the personality that seemed to override all of my other "titles", such as mother, wife, friend, daughter, child of God, etc. I now realize that I will always be that bereaved parent, but I am also much more than that. My first gut instinct the morning that Drew died was the certainty that I was facing something that I knew I couldn't get myself through without help. I reached out for that help in every way I knew. I read many books, attended TCF meetings and embraced many of the ideas I learned at the meetings. I wrote letters to Drew in a journal. I pursued unanswered questions about Drew's vehicular accident and the unusual medical complications that caused his death. I needed to make some kind of sense out of the circumstances, and it was important to me to find as many answers as I could. I sought the help of a psychologist. I found ways to memorialize my son. Some of the ways were small... some large and some are ongoing. I believe that it took all of this to find my way back from that dark place where I lived for a few years. I believe that in the face of tragedy, we must make the *conscious choice* to feel better and take responsibility for our own recovery and eventual happiness. I certainly went through the stages of grief, many

times, before I came to the acceptance stage. I didn't hang onto anger for too long and I quit asking "why" pretty soon. I began to realize that if God were to come to me face to face and tell me why Drew had to die, I wouldn't feel any better about it. I am so grateful that God accepted Drew into His heavenly home, but the better place for Drew, in my selfish viewpoint, is with me. And many people tried to tell me that God understood my grief because He too had a son to die. That really bothered me because I felt that when God's son died, he was reunited with his Father, but when Drew died, we were separated, so that one just didn't do a thing for me. But in the end, God's grace and His promise that I will be with my son one day is the one thing that got me to the next day many times. Before Drew's death, I only personally knew a handful of people who had suffered the death of a child and had never really experienced it from a close perspective. Through TCF, I have met many hundreds of bereaved parents and have felt a bond with every one of them. I have been in a leadership position now for 5 years with the Memphis Chapter, and pray that I have been able to ease the pain, just a little, and offer hope to the newly bereaved. Apparently in this strange thing we call life, it must be one of my purposes to help others through this long, arduous journey. I accept that and realize how much healing I have gained by my ability to encourage others. I think it is so important for those of who have turned the corner, to reach out offer hope to those who feel as if they will never experience joy again. It will never be okay with me that Drew is gone. I know that I will live with the pain of his death for the rest of my life. But the best way I have figured out to honor his life now is to live my life in a way that would make him say "Good job, Mom." It goes without saying that there will always be a void in my life and a hole in my heart, but I believe that the best way to honor my beloved child is to find my way back to a meaningful life with peace and joy again, and tell anyone who will listen the story of my incredible son who left this world too soon. If I as a parent don't do this, who will? I miss you, Drew.

Betsy Friedl, Chapter Leader Memphis TCF, Drew's Mom

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 _____

Halloween

It is here, this day of merriment and children's pleasure. Gremlins and goblins and ghosties at the door of your house; and the "other children" come to the door of your mind. Faces out of the past, small ghosts with sweet, painted faces. They do not shout. Those children no longer march laughing on a cold Halloween night, they stand at the door of our mind; and you will let them in, so that you can give them the small gifts for Halloween; a smile and a tear.

From WINTERSUN by Sascha

I did something today that no man should have to do. I weeded around your grave. The sun was starting to set. I could hear the crickets in the trees. I could feel the coolness of the autumn on the evening breeze. The same coolness I can feel creeping into my heart. As I bent to kiss your stone good-bye, it was warm. Once again, you have told me your love still lives; just in a different place.

Gregory M Hutson

People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

There are no words written in any poem or song that say how much we miss you now that you are gone. The memories of your smile may help to ease the pain that will stay with us forever until we all meet again.

Jackie Short TCF, United Kingdom

In the fall when amber leaves are shed, softly, silently like tears that wait to flow, I watch and grieve. My hearts beats sadly in the fall; it is then that I miss you most of all.

Lily De Lauder TCF, Van Nuys, CA

Remember that it is our choice, and ours alone, to turn even a nightmare into a positive experience.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

Bereavement is like a journey; we travel from one place of happiness, searching for another place of happiness to call home.

The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love.

William Wordsworth 1770-1850

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September/October 2009



**Our Next Meetings:
Sept. 3rd & Oct. 1st**

*Printing of our newsletter is provided by Paulsen
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