



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3 NEWSLETTER DATE

Chapter Leader Becky Barch Newsletter Editor Marian Lambeth

WHO WE ARE

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national nonprofit self-help organization that offers friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There are no religious affiliations and no dues. The mission of TCF 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. The Tallahassee Chapter meets monthly on the 2nd Monday from 7:00 to 8:45 pm at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and mature siblings and typically involve sharing. On occasion there are guest speakers or special presentations. Participation in group sharing is confidential and voluntary. Our hope is that by being among other bereaved parents you may feel free to talk, cry and share, but it is okay to just come and listen.



"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion.

If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

~ Dalai Lama

Sign up for Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NATIONAL OFFICE PUBLISHES A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER DESIGNED TO KEEP YOU UP-TO-DATE ON WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS MORE THAN 630 CHAPTERS.

PUBLISHED ONCE A MONTH (AS WELL AS OCCASIONAL SPECIAL EDITIONS), THE E-NEWSLETTER INCLUDES INFORMATION ON SUCH THINGS AS TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCES, THE WALK TO REMEMBER, THE WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING, REGIONAL CONFERENCES, AND OTHER EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE. EACH E-NEWSLETTER ALSO INCLUDES A STORY SPECIALLY SELECTED FROM A PAST EDITION OF WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE, THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS. FOR THE SIBLINGS, THE E-NEWSLETTER FEATURES A PAST QUESTION AND ANSWER COLUMN BY DR. MARY PAULSON. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO RECEIVE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS E-NEWSLETTER IS SIGN UP FOR IT ONLINE BY VISITING THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NATIONAL WEBSITE AT WWW.COMPASSIONATEFRIENDS.ORG. AND CLICKING ON E-NEWSLETTER AT THE TOP OF THE HOME PAGE.

2012 MONTHLY MEETINGS

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
2198 N. Meridian Road
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-422-8404

July 9th

August 14th

September 10th

Meeting time 7:00 – 8:45

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Northern Region of Florida

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LESSONS FROM MY SON

After you were born my life became a challenge. Seeing your poised big sister who did everything right, you escaped out of your crib, knocked the houseplants over, decorated a closet wall with a bright blue marker. You didn't hesitate to scare me eight months pregnant waddling like a beached whale with a trip to get stitches when you fell in the bathtub telling jokes and laughing as the doctor sewed your chin naming the stitches 'my itches'. I can still see those bright eyes the excitement over a frog, picking green tomatoes, covered in birthday cake, drinking pool water, climbing a pecan tree, kissing a neighbor's puppy and running naked down the cul-de-sac. From you I learned the art of patience, the joy of mothering a son, that there are never enough hours for cuddling and reading. You taught me well although you were so young. And within my heart, I will always hold my gratitude for you.

Alice J. Wisler, TCF
Wake County, NC
In Memory of
Daniel Wisler



The Room

by Marian W. Lambeth

I began to think about my son's room and how parents often struggle with what to do with a child's room and belongings after a child dies. This decision may be more compounded if your child still lived at home, but living at home or not, most of us confront the decisions of how to handle our child's possessions. There are different thoughts on how to handle the physical items left behind; do we give them away, store them in a box, share them with friends or family or just leave them be. Whatever the choice...the answer lays in what brings you peace.

It has been 857 days since my son's death. While we've not kept his room exactly as it was, mostly it is unchanged. My sister made a quilt from some of his clothes and that now adorns his bed, we added a bed side table and removed a cabinet. A painting of his beloved river given to us by the mother of his friend hangs on the wall. But, his clothes are in the chest of drawers, his things still about the room, the proverbial "junk" drawer still sits un-pilfered by our hands. I know there is a chocolate Santa Clause in there and photos from a middle school field trip, a crazy pen from his grandma, notes from his girlfriend and an old phone. I'm not ready for any of that, not at 857 days.

I decided it was ok to leave it be, to allow his room to be there as before. Why should I change it, I see no need. Some days it's a comfort to go in there, some days I avoid like the plague with the fear of unrelenting tears. Some days I pull open the shade and let the light shine through, some days I leave it dark and cool. Simple acts bring startling memories of him and in my grieving the way they hit me changes from day to day. Today, the blinds are open and I can smile at his handsome face. Tomorrow, well, tomorrow will be what tomorrow will be.

The Room

I walk by your room many times a day; it's the place of all my lost dreams. The bed still sits as it was that fateful day. The dresser with a photo of you and her, the one you loved. Cologne bottles sitting there, three dollars placed under a rock, guitar picks, capo, one yellow 20 gauge shot gun shell and a sea shell. The guitars are on the wall, hanging as before...only longing to be held and strummed by you.

The shelf is there with all your things...ticket stubs from your last concert, your bible, photos of you racing your motorcycle, the books we read when you were small, Blueberries for Sal and Dr. Seuss. The harmonica, pocket-knives, the collectable die cast cars, a howling wolf atop a box that I set there not long before your accident and of which you heartily approved and a carved and brightly painted little wooden fish.

The things of a boy's life are sitting here; a boy growing into a man, yet not quite there. You were still attached to mom and dad yet yearning to be free. All was taken on that fateful day, all your freedom, all your dreams, it just went away. I wonder sometimes what to do with this room I pass by every day. This place of your existence for so long, the place you held your deepest secrets and shared with friends your thoughts and dreams. The place where you and I would sit and talk, mother to son...if only for the allotted minute or two. The scratches on the floor, the once newly painted walls that boast the little fish you caught with grandpa when you were seven and the trophies you won when racing.

I wonder some days what to do with this room; this room that holds my memories of when you were here. I've no cause to move it or change it; there are no more children here. This room I'll keep for you, as a vessel of your being here and for all my hopes and dreams.

STANDING

People say
“Oh you are doing
so well,
you are so strong,
you are an
inspiration!”
We do not feel
strong.

We feel shaken to
the core,
Saddened beyond
belief,
Pain beyond
comprehension,
Forever changed.

What do they see
that we cannot see?

“That a horrible
storm,
unexpectedly ripped
through
our lives and we are
still standing”

They are amazed
We are paralyzed

Still Standing

Julie Short
TCF Southeastern
Illinois Chapter
In Memory of Kyra



Take Your Time

One of the hardest things about grief is the so-called “time table.” You are told you should be feeling one way or the other. You are given a time to mourn by the outside world, and then you must be “over it.” “Get on with your life.” “Count your blessings.”

All of this can make you both angry and afraid. Angry because (a) you don't WANT to get over it,” (b) you are “getting on” with your life in the best way you know how, and (c) your “blessings” have nothing whatsoever to do with the pain of your loss! Afraid because you are not having some of the feelings you think you should be having because you are not reacting “normally.” There is a period of extreme shock that can last from a few weeks to several months; you may not feel anything except numbness for awhile. That's OK!

The best advice is...take your time. Be gentle with yourself. Do what you need to do, not what you think you should do. Don't clutter up your life with things that will exhaust you physically and weaken you emotionally. Remember, you are fighting the hardest battle you will ever have to face, so give yourself the best weapons you can.

Rest; get in touch with your feelings, and talk. Say your child's name to anyone who will listen...take time...your time...to heal.

Sandra Young
TCF Knoxville, Tennessee

*As long as I can I will look at this
world for both of us.*

*As long as I can I will laugh with
the birds,*

I will sing with the flowers,

*I will pray to the stars,
for both of us.*

~ Sascha



*Our gratitude to
St. Stephen's Lutheran
Church for
providing our
meeting room.*

You give yourself permission to grieve by recognizing the need for grieving. Grieving is the natural way of working through the loss of a love. Grieving is not weakness nor absence of faith. Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired, or sneezing when your nose itches. It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.

- Doug Manning

Empty Places

I drove the old way yesterday.
It'd been a while, you see.
And there, without a warning,
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday
and sadness came on strong,
taken back by so much feeling,
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait
to summon up the tears,
to say remember yesterday,
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played
are places where I cry.

These places hold the memories
that will live as long as I.

Genesse Gentry ~ TCF Marin County, CA ~ In Memory of Lori Gentry

*Let us always
meet each other
with smile, for
the smile is the
beginning of love.*

~ MOTHER TERESA

LENDING LIBRARY & BOOK CLUB

A special thank you to everyone who donated books to our lending library this quarter. For many, books are a gateway to healing and the passage by which we gain some understanding of this grief journey. TCF of Tallahassee Lending Library is a resource for bereft parents, grandparents and siblings. Our library has the classic Kubler-Ross books as well as books specific to a father's grief, the death of an only child and suicide, children's books and even workbooks that guide the reader through questions intended to help answer the myriad questions that ramble through the grieving brain. Please, peruse the selection, pick a book, perch yourself in a quiet place and ponder.



The book club was on hiatus for much of the past quarter and will re-convene in September.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Find us on Facebook
[www.facebook.com/pages/
TheCompassionate-FriendsTallahassee-
Chapter](http://www.facebook.com/pages/TheCompassionate-FriendsTallahassee-Chapter)

Telephone: 850-422-8404

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**Tallahassee Chapter
Steering Committee**

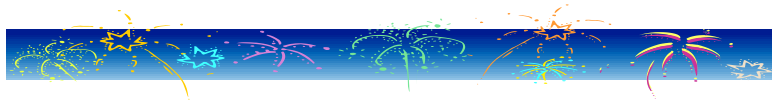
Leader: Becky Barch

Treasurer: Tammy Spikes

Newsletter: Marian Lambeth

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE

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.



July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month
And she chose this month to die.
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was she
Having been, and left her mark.
A glorious incandescent life,
A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.
The July birth, the July death of
my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
With love that never dies.
Sally Migliaccio
TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY

Walking the Lonesome Valley

One of my favorite gospel songs is "You've Got to Walk That Lonesome Valley" which is attributed to various composers in the early 20th Century. Many adaptations have been made to the words, yet all seem to fit.

This gospel song is particularly poignant for bereaved parents. We must take our grief journey alone. We must take our grief journey on our own terms and in our own way. I found myself humming and then singing this gospel song after my son died over nine years ago.

I was never really alone in this lonesome valley, however; many are taking this same walk, in their own ways and on their own terms. In TCF, we learn from other parents who walk the lonesome valley. We receive hope from those who take this journey with us. Some bereaved parents choose to return to the darkest places in the lonesome valley and help our newly bereaved parents as they define their own personal journey. Gradually, after thousands of steps, the bereaved parent comes to the place of resolution and emerges from the valley into the gauzy sunlight of hope and peace.

Reach out for assuring words and thoughts and ideas and hope. Take comfort in knowing that each of us is walking the lonesome valley.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen

*You've got to walk that
lonesome valley
You've got to walk it by
your self
There's no one here can
walk it for you
You've got to walk it by
yourself
I must walk this lonesome
valley,
I have to walk it by
myself,
Oh, nobody else can walk
it for me,
I have to walk it by
myself.
I must go and stand my
trial,
I have to stand it by
myself,
O, nobody else can stand
it for me,
I have to stand it by
myself.*

April Showers brought Books, Books, Books...
By Sara Michaels

The Tallahassee Chapter of Compassionate Friends April meeting morphed into a book club of sorts with members recommending books that helped them in their grieving. Just as we all grieve uniquely, our respective choice of books proved to be unique too. Books that affected some folks positively, others didn't care for. In another notable (sic) nod to individuality, some parents said music had more of a positive impact on them than books did. One parent enjoyed playing music while another was comforted by listening to songs their child liked or might have liked had they lived. Still another found comfort in journaling.

The list that follows details some of the books discussed, with the authors in (parenthesis) and the books listed alphabetically by title.

For children:

My Many Colored Days (Suess) Describes the broad range of human moods and emotions.

Tear Soup (Schweibert) Said to be "better than a casserole for the griever," this is the recipe for validating the grief experience and educating those who have not yet had it.

Three Questions (Muth) Based on a short story by Leo Tolstoy, a young boy learns about compassion and living with passion. The water color illustrations have won numerous awards.

Waterbugs and Dragonflies (Stickney) How to explain death to young children.

For adults:

The Bereaved Parent (Schiff) A classic that provides practical approaches to grieving.

Book of Job (The Bible) Chronicles the many trials of one man, his challenge of God and His response.

Glimpses of Heaven (Harris) Written by a hospice nurse, the subtitle is "True Stories of Hope and Peace at the End of Life's Journey".

Grief Recovery Handbook (James and Friedman) Based on a proven program that offers grievers specific actions needed to move beyond loss.

Healing After Loss (Whitmore Hickman) A book of daily meditations for those who are grieving.

Heaven is for Real (Vincent and Burpo) A graphic description of a heaven based by a child who had a near death experience.

Hello From Heaven (Guggenheim) Discusses research in after-death communication and the many forms it takes.

I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of A Loved One (Noel and Blair) The authors recount their personal struggles after sudden loss and interview others who have suffered the same.

I Will Not Die an Unlived Life (Markova) A book about rejecting a powerless life and choosing to live with passion.

Anything (Kubler Ross). Ross is renowned in the field of death and dying and offers both an objective analysis to the stages of grief and her own subjective approaches.

Lessons of Love (Beattie) Details the author's spiritual and practical struggle after the death of her 12-year-old son, her daughter's subsequent alcoholism and how she was able to put her life together again.

Lucky Man and Always Looking Up (Fox) A recovering alcoholic diagnosed with debilitating Parkinson's disease, the actor uses a dry wit to explain how he found the silver lining in those dark clouds and why he chooses to live life as fully as he can.

The Shack (Young) The fictional account of a father dealing with the murder of his young daughter. It is described as "tragedy confronting eternity." Additionally, the religious figures historically depicted as white males are portrayed in ways you might not expect but will give you pause for thought.

When Bad Things Happen to Good People (Kushner) A rabbi reflects on the ubiquitous "Why, God, why?" question when his three-year-old son is diagnosed with a degenerative and fatal disease.

While these books proved helpful to some attendees others contended that reading anything that served as a form of escape seemed to help. John Grisham was a particular "escape author" of choice.

Perhaps most interesting was the "best book I **never** read" according to one participant. Written by an anonymous thirteenth century monk, The Cloud of Unknowing proved incredibly difficult to read but conceptually helped her. Considered a spiritual classic, this book explains that the divine mystery is what separates us from God and we should accept our earthly darkness if we are ever to be in His heavenly light. To put it more succinctly, we should accept what we cannot know.

We have many of the books mentioned in the TCFoT library and they are available to anyone who is interested. Donations of books you have found helpful would be helpful to us too! If you have books you wish to donate simply bring them to a meeting or contact us via email at tcfot@yahoo.com.



2012 Love Gift Form

Consider making a Love Gift to support
The Compassionate Friends of Tallahassee

Your gift will help defray the cost of chapter expenses and allow us to provide outreach in our community related to the unique needs of those who are grieving the death of a child or grandchild. The Compassionate Friends is a 501c(3) non-profit organization and your donations are fully tax deductible. To make a love gift the Tallahassee Chapter, complete and print this form and mail it with your donation to:

**The Compassionate Friends, Tallahassee
C/O St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
2198 N. Meridian Road
Tallahassee, FL 32303**

Contributor's Name:

Address: _____

Phone: _____



This gift is made In Memory of: _____



This gift is made In Honor of : _____



This is a Chapter Gift (without memorial or honorarium)



We Need Not Walk Alone



Our Children Remembered

July

Child/Sibling	Parent/Grandparent/Sibling	Born	Died
Alex Rehder	Ernest Rehder	3-Jul	
Brooke Proehl	Linda Proehl	28-Jul	
Charles James "Jimmy" Eskew	Leah Gibson	25-Jul	
Clay Bozeman	Tracy Forrester	29-Jul	29-Jul
Daniel Hernnkind	Bill and Lynne Hernnkind	12-Jul	
Daphne C Godwin	Doris Burris	7-Jul	
David William Burns	David and Lydia Burns		2-Jul
Doris Jean Losey	Jerry and Carolyn Losey		18-Jul
Elizabeth Hudson	Chester and Louise Hudson	23-Jul	23-Jul
Frank Donofrio	Donna Wheeler		11-Jul
Fred Miller	Roy and Julie Miller		29-Jul
Haley Preston Buchanan	Tom and Mary Beth Buchanan	2-Jul	2-Jul
Heather Amanda Brooks	Robert and Tina Brooks	18-Jul	
Jacob Manassa Caswell	Brailey and Beth Caswell	21-Jul	21-Jul
James "Jamo" A. Pearlman	Marsha Holliday Pearlman	27-Jul	
Jessica Moran	Cindy Skeens	16-Jul	
John A Coonrod	Lorraine Coonrod	25-Jul	
Jonathan Barch	Doug and Becky Barch/Maryjane Thurston	18-Jul	
Kelly Slager	Bruce and Erma Slager	25-Jul	
Kenneth Lynn Langston	Curtis and Ann Langston	21-Jul	
Lisa Jane Oltman	Dave and Sue Oltman	14-Jul	
Patricia Ann Reed	Agnes Furey	7-Jul	
Russell Todd Cody	Arthur Cody	24-Jul	
Scott Andrew Yon	Vern and Phyllis Yon		20-Jul
Shawntell "Miracle" Footman	Hope Footman	27-Jul	
Sidney George Griffin	Jeri Griffin		27-Jul
Stephen Love	Juliacarol and Donald Love		30-Jul
Trenton Jordan Preston	Rebecca Preston	12-Jul	12-Jul
Tyler Joseph Bowman Jr.	Monica Cicatello		23-Jul
Virginia Lee Rozier	Judy Rozier	24-Jul	

Our Children Remembered

August



Child/Sibling	Parent/Grandparent/Sibling	Born	Died
Aiden Lee Timmons	Siana Timmons/Dorice & Lonnie Hartley	6-Aug	6-Aug
Amy McDonald	Chuck and Lina Powell	31-Aug	
Benjamin "Shane" Bidwell	Patrice Bidwell		10-Aug
Brittany Leigh McKinnell	Jim and Debbie McKinnel		14-Aug
Christian Giles Nimis	Gerard and Marion Nimis		10-Aug
Christopher Drennan Miles	Linda Miles		20-Aug
Douglas (Doug) Prado Dickert	John and Gale Dickert	10-Aug	
J.J. Goodman, Jr.	Vicki Goodman Kelly	14-Aug	
James "Wyatt" Lambeth	Jim and Marian Lambeth	2-Aug	
Jason D Wood	June Wood	16-Aug	14-Aug
Kyle Davis Taylor	Amos and Sherry Taylor	5-Aug	
Mark Anthony Pope	Marianne Pope Lee	29-Aug	
Matthew James Boyd	Mary Beth McCann	1-Aug	
Michael David Owens	Judy Young		12-Aug
Rachel Nicole Phillips	Robin Phillips	24-Aug	
Ronell Scroggins	Linda Maurer Dix	28-Aug	
Scott Andrew Yon	Vern and Phyllis Yon	5-Aug	
Scott Paul Sullivan	Pat Sullivan "Patsy" Gillihan		17-Aug
Shawn DeLester Whaley	Lester and Jean Whaley		19-Aug
Sidney George Griffin	Jeri Griffin	28-Aug	
Suella Howell	Doris Baranik		30-Aug
Thomas "Mac" Mclane Crutchfield	Charlie and Maggie Crutchfield		23-Aug
William James Tucker	Bill and Cathy Tucker	20-Aug	20-Aug

Our Children Remembered

September



Child/Sibling	Parent/Grandparent/Sibling	Born	Died
Anjarika Larika Knight	Annie Knight	4-Sep	
Annslee Patricia Wimberly	Reyanne and Gary Wimberly	3-Sep	24-Sep
Candice Hearnin Ragans	Vicki and Ronnie Ragans	12-Sep	14-Mar
Chad T Roberts	Tom and Teresa Wollschlager		15-Sep
Daniel Carl Ackerman	John and Michele Ackerman	19-Sep	19-Sep
David Edward Kinsey	Patsy Kinsey		28-Sep
David William Burns	David and Lydia Burns	11-Sep	
Debra Landreth	Emily Landreth	30-Sep	14-Sep
Gustaf "Gus" Ames Barines	Steve and Sandra Barineau	3-Sep	3-Sep
John David Pollock	David and Sue Pollock	12-Sep	
Kelly Slager	Bruce and Erma Slager		12-Sep
Kenneth "Kenny" A Stevenson	Jim Stevenson	29-Sep	
Lance Redman	Melody Redman	28-Sep	
Lawson Susanne Mayfield	Emory and Cathy Mayfield		23-Sep
Lon "Lonnie" Kitzmiller	Jim and Miki Tait	22-Sep	
Matthew James Boyd	Mary Beth McCann		27-Sep
Michael Parsons	Richard and Ginger Parsons	29-Sep	29-Sep
Paul David Bussey	Dave and Midge Bussey	16-Sep	
Ricky Powers	Milt and Sherry Dahl		29-Sep
Robert "Bobby" I BoDee, Jr	Anne Galivan		27-Sep
Ronshay Dugans	Perry and Josie West		9-Sep
Sammy Mobley	Linda Mobley	21-Sep	
Stephanie Renee Morgan	DeAnna Morgan Robison	22-Sep	
Sylvia Marie Richardson	Marie Primas Bradshaw		22-Sep
William Richard "Buddy" Wallace	Mary and Jim Wallace	30-Sep	

Tears are the silent language of grief

~ Voltaire