



# ***The Compassionate Friends***

## ***Tallahassee Chapter***

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

Volume 10, Issue 1 January - March 2016

Chapter Leader Becky Barch

Newsletter Editor Marian Lambeth

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## **The Loving Listener**

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One day last month, seemingly out of nowhere, my dark and dreaded companion “grief” came roaring back in to my life. Just as I thought I was “doing all right,” grief came once again to wrench, rip, and tear at the thin delicate membrane of scar tissue that had formed over the wound in my heart, that I had foolishly believed allowed me to be normal again. I was in unbearable agony. I thought, “Oh my God, I can’t believe I ever hurt this bad. How did I ever survive this agony?” I finally pulled myself together as best I could and reached out to one of our beautiful angels of mercy. I called our “Loving Listener.” “Hi, do you have a minute?” She chirped “Absolutely!” I went on to pour out my heart to her. She listened patiently. She offered no quick fixes or advice, trite phrases, or empty platitudes. She just spiritually embraced me and suffered along with me; quietly offering her love, compassion and understanding. When most of my pain and sorrow had finally emptied out, I realized it was coming up on the anniversary death date of my child. It would mark five years since the death of my beloved daughter Angela. This was the catalyst that had plunged me back into the abyss of grief. I could not bear the thought that my beautiful child had been dead for a half a decade. As soon as I realized what had caused this awful digression, I began to feel a little better. If your chapter has a Loving Listener, please give them a call. They will give you solace, comfort and companionship. We Need Not Walk Alone.

Janet G. Reyes  
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

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## **MONTHLY MEETING**

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

E-mail: [tcfot@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfot@yahoo.com)

Second Monday of each month

Meeting time 7:00 – 8:45 pm

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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Monthly Meetings

January 11

February 8

March 14

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## **REGIONAL COORDINATOR**

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Becky Barch

850-422-8404

[tcfot@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfot@yahoo.com)

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## **NATIONAL OFFICE**

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[nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## **The Compassionate Friends Credo**

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

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## **The Pleasures of Friendship**

The pleasures of friendship are exquisite,  
How pleasant to go to a friend on a visit!  
I go to my friend, we walk on the grass,  
And the hours and moments like minutes pass.

by Stevie Smith

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## **Where Are You Now?**

where are you now  
but in my heart  
your voice clear in my mind  
I know we're never far apart  
mind to mind  
heart to heart  
and, maybe, if I'm fortunate,  
soul to soul  
we connect  
you, watching over me  
me, so unaware  
but, oh, to actually see you  
how you've grown and changed  
still, oh, to embrace you  
feeling your strength and youth  
breathing in your life  
now held only within  
mind's eye  
heart of hearts  
and lonely soul

Victor Montemurro  
TCF Brookhaven in Medford, NY



## *Tears are the silent language of grief ~ Voltaire*

### TCF National Magazine *We Need Not Walk Alone* Available Free Online

The Compassionate Friends national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*®, is available for free online. The magazine remains available in print free with any patron donation or when ordered by paid subscription through TCF's online store.

*We Need Not Walk Alone* provides comfort and support to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents through stories, poems, advice columns, and much more. It has been referred to as "a support group in print" and is published three times a year. Sign-up for a free online subscription through our website, [compassionatefriends.org](http://compassionatefriends.org). It can be read online or downloaded to your computer for personal use.

Advertise in the Upcoming Issue of *We Need Not Walk Alone*

To help support free online subscriptions of *We Need Not Walk Alone*, The Compassionate Friends is now accepting paid advertising from organizations, products, and services that are in line with TCF's Mission Statement and Principles. All advertising is in full color and will reach all those receiving our print edition, as well as online and in the website archives. For more information, including rates, please e-mail [theresa@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:theresa@compassionatefriends.org).



### Gratitude for Gifts to the Chapter



**Rumbles, Inc., in memory of  
Tiffany Spikes**



**Doug and Becky Barch in memory of  
Jonathan Barch**



**Carol and Jay Breeze in memory of  
Chris Breeze**



**St. Stephen Lutheran Church for  
providing our meeting space**

## Forever Entwined

Losing a child to death is statistically improbable, yet all parents harbor the concept as their worst fear, the stuff of nightmares, cold sweats and anxiety. But when our children die, the anxiety of that possibility pales against the soul wrenching horror of the reality. At first we freeze in time as our focus is on the primal.....breathe, drink water. After the initial shock has ceased to control our every moment, we seek answers. Can I get through this? Do I want to get through this? How have others managed to continue living after their child has died? I have disconnected from my friends and even my family. I don't want to go forward.....the pain is too intense. Death would be a mercy. Life is no longer a joy. My heart is broken. I will never see my child again.

If we are fortunate enough to find a Compassionate Friends Group, we meet people who have taken this nightmare journey.....and survived. Our first meeting is the most difficult.....at my first meeting the only word I could say was my son's name. Later, we tell our story to those have experienced the death of their child and find that talking to kindred souls can be cathartic. If we persevere and continue to attend meetings, get to know other parents, participate in the group discussions, cry with others and smile at the memories of their child.....we begin the healing process.

Now our lives are forever entwined with those of other parents who have lost a child to death. Like the Celtic knot, we are now part of an eternal paradigm: we are strands in the knot, weaving our stories into each others' lives. This interlace of our lives is a permanent and beautiful blending of souls seeking comfort from one another. Our reality is shared by others; we lean on them, they lean on us. We give, we receive.

Many friends from our lives before the death of our child hesitate to mention our child's name and even fear talking about our child's life and listening to our memories. But we don't want to forget our child as that would be the worst betrayal. We want to talk about our child's life and keep their spirit with us always. Those in our lives who do not share this feeling are not part of our eternal paradigm; they will never be entwined with us as we complete our journey on this earth.

The Celtic knot, the symbol of eternity, is symbolic of the relationships we have found at Compassionate Friends. These lives are forever woven into ours, we accept each other's perspectives and share their sorrow and the joy of their memories. There is a place in our Celtic knot for all parents who have lost a child. As other parents join us, they are enfolded forever into the eternal paradigm of healing and compassion.

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



## 2016 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 of Tallahassee**

**C/O St. Stephen 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

A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to  
bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

# Our Children Remembered ~Anniversaries

January	February	March
01 James "Wyatt" Lambeth		10 Ashleigh Diane Jacobs
07 Morgan Christine Hooper	11 Jimmy Cunningham	10 Miles Kent
09 William Richard Wallace	22 Kaia Star Peterson	13 Thomas Hollister
10 Tracy Owens	25 Andrew "Drew" Thompson	17 Erica Lewis
13 Brook Catherine Bowers	28 Andrew "Scott" Mathews	23 Christopher Thomas Reed
15 Quentez Ruffin		23 Patricia Ann Reed
20 Carter Winston Pittman		24 McKenzie Bailey
23 Justin Patrick Murphy		24 Tyler Christian Simpkins
		25 Heather Braswell
		26 Rebecca Ann Starnes Milner

# Our Children Remembered - Birthdays

January	February	March
6 Darrielle Monique Copeland	10 Luke Rigsby	3 Jason "Sun" Paris Scribner
10 Elizabeth Lauren Butler	12 Scott Maltby	4 Suella Howell
13 Brook Catherine Bowers	17 Joshua Floyd	10 Miles Kent
16 Dustin "Pooh Bear" Rae	21 Robert Thea Robinson	14 Milton Johnson
19 Michael Lindberg Hardy, Jr	25 McKenzie Bailey	20 Christopher Anthony Breeze
20 Matthew William Beard	25 Andrew "Drew" Thompson	22 Tiffany Miranda Spikes
20 Tracy Owens		29 Brook Catherine Bowers
21 Rebecca Ann Starnes Milner		
25 Brent Blaisdell		
30 Jimmy Cunningham		