



The Compassionate Friends

Tallahassee Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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Chapter Leader Becky Barch

Newsletter Editor Marian Lambeth

Welcoming Summer

By Marian Lambeth

As summer shines in the north Florida sky, it brings to mind memories of life before our son's death. Each summer when our son was small we spent time at our family's home on the river, we watched 4th of July fireworks in the park, had big bar-b-ques, mowed the grass, and sat on the screen porch to watch the sun go down or come up. Many a day we rode on the boat, swam in the murky water and sat outside by the fire at night mesmerized by millions of twinkling stars. This place represented family, friendships and fun; it was magical.

As our son grew, this place became where he felt most comfortable and longed to be. Anytime he could be, he was at the river.

As seasons change and summer approaches, the memories from all those special times wash over like waves, some small, others not so much. It's not always easy to welcome the rituals of a season when your child is gone from this life. On a recent weekend we took the little boat my father gave our son and rode along the river. The river was filled with people relishing the joy of summer activities, boating, skiing, kayaking, swimming and paddle-boarding. The water was almost dancing with laughter from all the people in its midst. We slathered on our sun screen and tooled down the river in his little boat. We were in the place he would be, welcoming summer in the way he would, bringing him with us the only way we could.



MONTHLY MEETING

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

E-mail: tcfot@yahoo.com

Second Monday of each month

Meeting time 7:00 – 8:45 pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monthly Meetings

July 13

August 9

September 14

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

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NATIONAL OFFICE

The Compassionate Friends

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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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Meet Ups

Would you be interested in sponsoring
a Meet Up?

Send us an email at tcfot@yahoo.com



Chasing Butterflies

So many times I wonder now
How will I make it through?
As years go flitting by me
Taking memories of you

Elusive, fragile, here and there
I chase and cast my net
Tiny pieces of our long agos
I fear I might forget

Like a thousand butterflies
So many, yet too few
Each one a treasured moment
Each one a part of you

Time may bring me closer
To the day I see your smile
But time can be my enemy
Stealing from me all the while

So I will chase each memory
Seen through this Mother's eyes
Until I'm with you once again
I'll be chasing butterflies

Donna Gerrior
TCF Pasco County, FL
In Memory of Rob

Friendship doubles our joy and divides our grief. ~ Swedish Proverb

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 chapters. 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. 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 Sign-up for National Publications at the top of the Home page.



The Compassionate Friends national website offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" listed under the Find Support menu.

GRIEF: OUR ACT OF LOVE

"I had a child who died." How simple these words are, yet how painful they are to say. The death of a child is the harshest blow life has to offer; it destroys our trust in the world at the most basic level. Grief is our total response to the death of a child; our body, mind, emotions and spirit all react to the loss. While many of us wish to stop the intense grief work we are doing, we find it impossible for many reasons.

First, grief is an act of love, not a lack of strength or faith. The more we loved our child, the greater will be our grief. The more integrated our lives were with the life of our child, the more we will miss his or her very presence. The intensity of our grief is often representative of our love.

Second, grief is a necessary process that we must go through in order to maintain our wholeness and sanity. If we do not grieve, we will not heal. One of the earliest and hardest lessons we bereaved parents learn is that men and women grieve differently; women, in general, grieve more openly than do men, and women, on the whole, are more comfortable verbally expressing their feelings of loss. While segments of our culture indicate it is more "manly" not to cry, we know this is not true.

Grief work also helps us to complete unfinished business with our child and close the past relationship that we had. We will never "get over" the loss of our child, nor would we ever really want to. We are who we are partly because of our relationship to that child. Our lives will always be influenced by our son or daughter, but most of us will eventually learn to live a meaningful life, despite our tragedy. Our child will always be with us in spirit and in love, and we often feel a need to hold on to tangible items, such as toys or clothes, to maintain that feeling of closeness. But, intense grief work allows us to let go of the relationship we had and create a new relationship with our child. Our remembrances, love and feelings of oneness with our child can never be destroyed. I cannot see nor touch my Philip, but I vividly remember him. I have completed earthly mothering, but I still have an intense mother-child relationship with my son.

Grief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will ever do. While we all wish for the pain to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved intensely. It is unrealistic to expect that grief to ever totally go away, because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed.

Elaine Grier, TCF Atlanta, GA, In Memory of my son, Philip

A Box of Coins

My husband Bruce and my stepdaughter Jess drove to our son's apartment to retrieve his things shortly after his death. They returned with clothing, bed linens, lots of CD's, his backpack, and a computer desk that he and I assembled together at his new apartment. They brought back the computer, kitchen items, and a New Balance shoebox.

I recognized the box. We gave him shoes as a parting gift as he left for college that fall. His college expenses stressed our budget. I second guessed most purchases but not the shoes. He needed them. I wondered why he had kept the box.

It was filled with coins and a red cup. Jess said the cup had been on his desk. Apparently at day's end our son Art emptied his pockets of loose change into the cup. Eventually Arthur poured the contents of the cup into the shoebox. The boy had a savings plan.

I saved the box of coins. I could not toss them into a change counter. He had touched each one. I stored the box under a bed that he had used as a youngster.

After four years, I pulled out the box and spent a quiet evening counting coins. \$74.14. I wrote a note from Art to an anticipated nephew or niece that he would never met and slipped it in the box. "Use these coins for college." From Art.

The box slid under the bed again. I would find the right place for those coins—maybe a charity, maybe the scholarship initiated in memory of Arthur. Not now.

Last month Jess called me with a funny story about her toddler son, my first grandchild. Jess and Brandon had taught their young son to drop coins into a big red piggybank. They were scrounging for coins because their son liked the game so much.

Perfect! Those shoebox coins just found a new home! That weekend I delivered the box of coins to them. The next time I babysat, I pulled a few coins from the shoebox and handed them to my grandson, one by one. Mason giggled as he touched each one and dropped it squarely into the piggybank. We both smiled at each other.

The boy has a savings plan. Must be genetic!

I am grateful for the gift of time with my son's possessions. TCF monthly meetings taught me to be patient with myself until I found my new balance. It took almost seven years. I gave away my son's coins with no regrets.

Monica Colberg
TCF Minneapolis, MN
In Memory of my son Art



WITH GRATITUDE WE RECOGNIZE GIFTS
TO THE TALLAHASSEE CHAPTER

In Memory of Christian Nimis

Given by Marion Nimis



In Memory of Jonathan Barch

Given by Tom and Leigh Brooks



In Memory of Gabriel Hall

Given by First Commerce Credit Union



OUR THANKS TO ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH
FOR PROVIDING OUR MEETING ROOM



2015 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.

It's all right to...

Scream in the shower

Yell in the car

Cry anywhere you like

Misplace your glasses, the car keys and the car

Put milk in the cupboard, toilet paper in the refrigerator, and ice cream in the oven

Beat up on the pillow, stomp on the ground, throw stones in the lake

Change grocery stores if it hurts

Wear one black shoe and one navy

Eat French fries for breakfast, toast for lunch, and peanut butter for dinner (as long as you eat)

Write your child a letter. Bake him/her a cake

Smell his/her clothes

Celebrate his/her life on the birthday

Talk to your pets, they understand

Leave his/her room the way it is, for as long as you like

Say his/her name just to hear the sound

Talk about your child to others

Tell loved ones what you need

Say no when you feel like it.

Cancel plans if you want

Have a bad day

It's all right to hurt

And one day when you're ready: it's all right to...

Laugh again

Dance and feel pretty. Have a good time

Look forward to tomorrow. Sing in the shower

Smile at a friend's new baby

Wear makeup once more

Go for a day, a week and even a month without crying

Celebrate the holidays

Forgive those who failed you

Learn something new

Look at his picture and remember with happiness, not pain

Go on with your life. Cherish the memories

And one day when it's time – it's all right to...

Love again.

Vicki Tushingham, TCF New Jersey

Our Children Remembered ~Anniversaries

July		August		September	
02	Jennifer L Dickman	06	Aiden Lee Timmons	09	Ronshay Dugans
05	Sharife Mitchell	10	Christian Giles Nimis	10	Annabelle Francis Jones
11	Frank Donofrio	30	Suella Howell	12	Kelly Slager
	Eric Shaw			14	Debra Landreth
21	J Joshua Cox			16	Lauren Sampson
23	Tyler Joseph Bowman Jr			20	Stephanie
27	Sidney George Griffin			22	Sylvia Marie Richardson
29	Clay Bozeman			23	Lawson Susanne Mayfield
30	Stephen Love			24	Annslee Patricia Wimberly
30	Ramsey Brown			27	Matthew James Boyd
					Robert BoDee, Jr

Our Children Remembered - Birthdays

July		August		September	
07	Patricia Ann Reed	01	Matthew James Boyd	03	Annslee Patricia Wimberly
18	Jonathan Barch	02	James Wyatt Lambeth	09	Amyia Leigh Bellamy
24	Russell Todd Cody	06	Aiden Lee Timmons	10	Annabelle Francis Jones
25	Kelly Slager	07	Mason Rhinehart		Tyler Christian Simpkins
27	James "Jamo" Pearlman	10	Douglas Prado Dickert	17	Ja'Marcus Christian
	Shawntell Footman	14	J.J. Goodman, Jr.	23	Andrew Michael Grande
28	Brooke Proehl	28	Sidney George Griffin	29	Quentez Ruffin
29	Clay Bozeman		Ronell Scroggins	30	William "Buddy" Wallace
		31	Amy McDonald		Debra Landreth

Birthday and anniversary dates are provided to remember our children and so we as compassionate friends can reach out to each other on these difficult days to provide companionship, sharing and comfort. Please let us know if there is an error or omission in our list or if you no longer wish to have your child's name on our birthday or anniversary list.

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