



The Compassionate Friends *of Northwest Houston* **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

Welcome to The Compassionate Friends. We are sorry for the reason you are here, but are glad that you found us. You Need Not Walk Alone, we are The Compassionate Friends.

AUGUST 2018 **HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER** www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org

**We meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.
at**

**Cypress Creek Christian Church
6823 Cypresswood Drive,
Spring, Texas 77379**

(Our next meeting is Tuesday, August 14th)

We are located between Stuebner-Airline and Kuykendahl, about 2 miles North of FM 1960 West. We meet in the Youth Building of the Church which is located on the side next to the Barbara Bush Library and the Children's Fountain. At the York Minster traffic light turn into the church area parking. Follow the posted signs to our meeting room.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MISSION STATEMENT

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

To the Newly Bereaved

As the years pass, we see new members come into the chapter, and we try to help them with their grief as we progress in our own. Over and over again, I have seen newly bereaved parents come to their first meeting totally devastated and convinced that their lives are over. Through the months (and years) I have seen them struggle and suffer and try to find meaning in their lives again. And they do! Through all the anger, pain and tears, somehow the human spirit is able to survive and flower again in a new life – perhaps a changed life and possibly a sadder one, but a stronger one nevertheless.

We feel so weak and crushed when our beloved children die, but I know because I have seen it countless times in the years I've been involved with The Compassionate Friends that we can make it together. When you walked through the door for the first meeting, you were frightened and nervous; but with that step you made a statement about your life. With that first step through the door, you said you wanted to try, you wanted to find a reason for living again, that you weren't willing to be swallowed by your grief. You wanted to go forward, and those first steps into The Compassionate Friends began your journey.

The journey will be a long one, for you loved your child with all your heart and soul. When that child died, a part of you was ripped away. It takes a long time to repair that large hole. The journey will not always be steady or constant; there will be many setbacks. Those of us who have taken the journey before you can assure you that, while there may be no rainbow at the other end, there is indeed "light at the end of the tunnel."

We want to help you as we were helped, but in the beginning and in the long run, you must help yourself. You have to want to get better, to talk about your loss, to struggle through the grief. We will listen, suggest, share and laugh and cry with you; and we hope, at this time next year, you'll be several steps along in your personal journey through grief. Then you can begin to help others.





Lighting a candle, cherishing a birth.....

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

2003-Makaylin Angel, Daughter of Jennifer Edwards
1999-Devin Wood, Son of Natalie Wood
1970-Lisa Renee Sanders, Daughter of Jim & Peggy Holland
1988-Shaun N. Finley, Son of Barbara Finley
2002-Samantha Short, Daughter of Linda Short
1988-Trace Thornton, Son of Nina Thornton
1988-Honey Khan, Son of Amra Khan
1963-Lloyd Ross (Rossi) Moore, Jr., Son of Carolyn Moore
1988-Matthew Peterson, Son of Sharon Peterson
1983-Fallon Ginther, Daughter of Lisa Ginther
1983-Travis Walden, Son of Janet Walden
1961-Terry Shannon Pauling, Son of Howard & Jean Pauling, Brother of Vicki Hyde
1995-Cheyenne Crocker, Daughter of Beth & Nick Crocker
1983-Christine Marie Frazier, Daughter of Steven R. Frazier
1980-Molly Long, Daughter of Carolyn Long
1955-Tony King, Brother of Carolyn Moore
1968-Dillon R. Howland, Jr., Son of Rachel Howland
2001-Emily Crocker, Daughter of Beth & Nick Crocker
1980-Ryan David Dodson, Son of Diane & David Dodson
1985-Derek Johns, Son of Shauna & Jeff Crook
1990-David Morgan, Son of Brent & Martina Morgan
1998-Katelyn Holmes, Daughter of Melinda Holmes
1989-Danielle Basford, Daughter of Jerry & Laurie Basford
1988-Samual Johnson, Son of Tim Johnson
1970-James Loveless, Son of Bob & Frances Loveless
1960-Kimberly Grubbs, Daughter of Patsy Grubbs
2013-Elias Reyes, Son of Crystal Reyes
2013-Jasmins Potter Jr, Son of Jasmins & Erika Potter
1984-Justin McHan, Son of Ronnie & Linda McHan
1978- Sarah Beltran, Daughter of Hila Beltran
1993-Forrest Gadler, Son of Tanya Gadler
1998-Tremaine Robinson, Son of Toya Robinson
1993-Cathrine Breeding, Daughter of Barbara Breeding
1997-Wesley Hundl, Son of Sharon Mondrik
1987-Marc Pournier, Son of Jolena Pournier
Ariel & Athena Suniga, Daughters of Selena Suniga
1980- Jessica Nicole Driskell, Daughter of Patricia Ann Tull



Lighting a candle, remembering a life

AUGUST ANGEL DATES

2008- Dillon & Alex Gussie, Sons of Debbie Benavides
2009- Nicholas (Nick) Skala, Son of Judy Skala
2007- Alan Jerome Austin, Son of Rhonda Austin
2003- Brian D. Klaus, Son of Johnny & Ginger Klaus
2011- Cherelle Luter, Daughter of Sylvia Green
2012-Landyn Elizabeth Tickle, Daughter of Matthew & Shelby Tickle
2013-James Loveless, Son of Bob & Frances Loveless
2013-Colton Alderson, Son of Jimmy Alderson
2013-Elias Reyes, Son of Crystal Reyes
2013-David Kerpchar, Son of Sally Kerpchar
2012-Misty Smith, Daughter of Terri DeMontrond
2008-Adam Brown, Son of Greg & Debbie Brown
2014-Gene Ware, Son of Roberta Ware
2014-Ginger Ware, Daughter of Roberta Ware
2014-Giavanna Calista, Daughter of Nicole Kelley
2015-Luke Curry, Son of Lynsy Curry
1983-Justin Ross Heino, Son of Darryl Heino
2015-Kellie Martin, Daughter of Denise Martin
2014-Hunter Smith, Son of Lee Smith
2017- Kahlid "Kal" Albaba, Son of Ramsey Albaba



YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

You are not forgotten, loved one
Nor will you ever be,
As long as life and memory last
We will remember thee.
We miss you now.
As time goes by
We'll miss you more.
Your loving smile, your gentle face
No one can fill your vacant place.

Written by the family of Odessa Anne Box

CHAPTER NEWS

Our next meeting is Tuesday, August 14thth at 7pm. We will meet in the Youth Building of the Church. The Youth Building is on the east side of the Church next to the Barbara Bush Library.

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members - We're Glad You Found Us.

We offer our warmest welcome to our newest members, **Susan Doss, lost her son Zach in March of this year and Stephen and Courtney Knight, lost their son Elijah in June.** If you have walked through the door to a TCF meeting, we understand how traumatic and difficult that is to do...we have all taken that step and reach out to you in friendship and support.

As our TCF Credo says, *"We come from different walks of life..."*, but the common bond we now share is the death of a beloved child, grandchild, or sibling. Others cannot understand the terrifying and debilitating emotional issues that occur in our daily lives once this event happens; a TCF member can and does!

We hope you will find our meetings and newsletters to be a source of comfort, a place where tears are allowed, no judgments are made and the hope that through this trauma, we can once again find hope and meaning in our lives.

Love Messages to Your Child

Please share with the group an article, poem or love message about your child. You can bring them to the next meeting or email them to me at llbrewer67@hotmail.com. With your permission I will include them in the next newsletter.

PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUPS

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. A private message will be sent prior to approval, please be sure to check your mailbox marked "Other" if you do not receive one in your main mailbox. These pages were established to encourage connection and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings grieving the death of a child, grandchild or sibling.

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/private-facebook-groups/>

*You never know how **strong** you are until **strong** is the only choice you have.*



A Letter to My Sweet Wesley

On his 21st Birthday (8.23.18)

My youngest, my baby, my angel with the curly red hair and baby blue eyes. You had a smile that would light up a room. A hug that would bring comfort and support, and a feeling of peace.

You were and still are, someone very special as both my son and a person in this world. You showed such kindness and compassion to your friends and family. You saw them differently than most, through gentle eyes of kindness and genuine empathy. So many friends told me later how you

changed their life. I will always remember that. I was so proud of you each time I heard it. I only wish I could tell you now.

Through your pain and struggles, it changed our simple world. But somehow, it brought you and I even closer. We were able to talk about anything. Seeing you suffer, was one of the hardest things I've done as a Mom. I did all I knew to do, but sadly I couldn't take away your pain. I couldn't fix it. God knows I've never prayed more that He would. It's still hard for me to understand why. Maybe one day when I see you again, I'll know. Maybe then, it won't matter.

Until I see you again, I'll remember all those happy memories you gave me for 18 wonderful years. All the joy, laughs, hugs and kisses that fulfilled me to no end. All the accomplishments you made in your short life, and more important, the person that you were. That made me so proud to be your Mom. I am so grateful for you.

I've never known a stronger person than you in my life. You amazed me. My sweet, kind, compassionate boy – not yet a man but well on his way. I'll Love and cherish you Forever. I'll Miss You every day, my very Special Son. You are My Sunshine always. Happy Birthday, Wesley. I Love You.

Forever Wesley's Mom

Sharon Mondrik

TCF Houston Northwest Chapter



Communicating with My Child

Eighteen months ago, I dedicated a bench to Philip. It's in a space Philip would like, out in the natural world, with abundant wildlife and wonderful views across hills and sea.

I go there often to spend time alone with my beloved son. I sit on the bench, look at the vistas, and remember our family as it used to be. I talk to Philip. I make him promises; I ask for his guidance. I muse on what his life would be like now. I tell him how deeply I love him, how missing him gets harder with each passing year. I tell him about his brothers, about his sister-in-law and his little nephew, both of whom he never met. I tell him how important he is to us. I tell him that we will never forget him, that though our lives are five years past his death, we still think of him all the time and want him with us. I tell him that I am having a terribly hard time accepting that he has died, and that I am doing the best I can.

I have no idea if I am communicating with a Philip who has survived death or with myself, who hopes he has. Sometimes I think I feel an impatient nudge, a sort of, "Get on with it, Mom, it's not what you think" message. Sometimes I feel his arms around me in compassionate understanding. Sometimes I don't feel any response at all.

I am grateful for these private times with my child. Whether he lives on in some other sphere—and how I hope he does!—or whether he resides only in our deepest hearts, there is an honoring of him in these conversations, a recognition of his existence and its importance, that matters very much to me.

I believe that we all need to find our individual ways of keeping the channels to our children open. My conversations with Philip may seem odd to some people, but they are right for me. I encourage you to honor your own private ways of communicating with your beautiful child, whatever they are. If you are searching for the channel that will work for you, consider what some other bereaved parents have found helpful: poetry, painting, journal writing, hiking in the natural world, daydreaming, music, meditation, lighting candles, wearing a deceased child's clothing, sitting in his/her room, playing a sport she/he loved, among many, many others. May the time spent in private dialogue with your child bring you peace-filled moments, a renewed sense of connection, and strength to continue the difficult journey we are all on.

Kitty Reeve
TCF Marin County and San Francisco Chapters, CA
In Memory of my son, Philip
November 16, 2000

People do not "get over" grief. Instead, we learn to integrate it into who we are. It changes us and becomes a part of us. As after a serious physical injury, we can heal, but we are different. Yet our lives can be full and rich again.

This healing process takes time and effort. The more actively you pay attention to and express your grief as it naturally unfolds, the more you are giving yourself momentum toward healing. Contrary to popular belief, time alone does not heal grief. It takes hard work. It takes focus and determination.

Alan D. Wolfelt PH.D.

A VISITATION DREAM

My son David died February 26, 1997 after almost three days in intensive care unit in Pueblo, Colorado. Two days later in the late afternoon, after spending two days dealing with medical examiners and death certificates, my surviving three children, David and myself flew back to Houston. We arrived late, and I drove home with my children.

The next day I was scheduled to go to the funeral home to make final arrangements and to meet with my minister to plan David's funeral. I was exhausted and emotionally spent. That night I had my only visitation dream in twenty one and a half years. David appeared radiant and handsome. His blond hair was gleaming and there were several young men with him who I didn't recognize. He said, "Dad, you're busy, but then you're always busy. But I'm busy too and have lots to do. I just wanted you to know I'm OK." With that he turned and left. That was the end of my visitation dream.

The next day I went to the funeral home and met with my minister. That afternoon I called David's mother, who was in Germany with a broken leg and couldn't make it to the funeral, to report what was going on. Before I could give her my report, she said let me tell you about a dream I had last night. She said David appeared glowing and totally handsome. He had several friends with him. He told her he was busy, but he wanted her to know he was OK. Two dreams, one message, delivered personally on two different continents on the same night. Yes, I believe in dreams and signs. I have lived with that dream as comfort since David's death.

After listening to other parents describe their dreams, I differentiate a visitation dream from a dream about the deceased in several ways. In a visitation dream:

- 1) Both parties know about the death.
- 2) The deceased speaks directly to the parent.
- 3) The deceased wants to assure the dreamer that he or she is OK.

In addition and in general, the deceased looks great, has a definite glow, is busy so can't stay long and the conversations occur in "mind speak" rather than words. Each party just knows what the other is saying.

I pray regularly for another visitation dream, but it hasn't happened. I've had some signs, but I sure would like David to speak to me.

David Hendricks
In Memory of My Son David
TCF Houston Northwest Chapter

Day Dreams

Sometimes I wander to a distant corner of my mind
Where I find myself in a place so serene
That I can erase today's pain and sadness
And there I'll just dream

I imagine I'm so near you and watching
As you're doing all the things little Angels do
You are so happy and so beautiful
With your snow white wings and halos too

This wondrous place you're in is heaven
Warm with love and nestled in the rainbow's array
Your softness and heavenly glow is a joy to see
As you play and sing praises to the Lord each day

I see you cradled in the Master's loving arms
I imagine your eternal bliss and glory
Where in this place you have no burdens
And each day you tell the Lord's great story

I'll dream of your beautiful mansion
Beside the streets paved with gold
Standing on the banks of the river of life
What a beautiful sight to behold

All these things dwell somewhere deep within my mind
Taking me so far away from all my sadness and grief
I can only believe that while in these secret moments
My little Angels are sending me this blessed relief

Macy and Loral, I know you feel my presence
As my mind drifts into this distant somewhere
I can hear your sweet Angel voices singing
"MeMaw and PawPaw, we'll be waiting for you up here"

PawPaw
Donald Moyers
TCF Galveston County, TX
In Memory of Macy and Loral

Signs and Dreams From Our Children

By Louise Lagerman
Taken from Open To Hope

Dreams and signs of our children. Do they really exist? Are dreams and signs a technique our deceased children use to contact us to let us know they are fine and indeed do live on?

I believe with my whole heart they do. I am very fortunate and blessed, because of my Grief Support website, I am privileged to hear about numerous dreams and signs deceased children have shown their parents and grandparents. Although they vary in context they all have the same theme of our deceased children communicating to us that they still exist and one day we will be with them once more. Just like grief has no time table neither do signs or dreams.

They can come at anytime and we should always look and be open to the signs our children are trying to convey to us.

I had a very remarkable dream about my deceased daughter that I would like to reveal to you. The dream filled me with hope and a peace that passes all understanding. I feel it was a visitation dream. I could just sense that my daughter needed to get in touch with me.

I was by the seashore. The ocean brings me such tranquility. The dream centered on one of my favorite seashores, Cape May, New Jersey. I was standing right on the shoreline watching the tide draw closer. It was a brilliant luminous day. I looked towards the sky shielding my eyes from the sun with my hand. Then I observed many thousands of balloons of all different colors. The balloons were very distinctive as I watched them descend from the sky. I knew immediately that the balloons contained messages for people living here on earth from deceased love ones.

I instantaneously recognized I was there to receive a message from my daughter Keren. I even pulled some balloons from the sky, but knew intuitively that they were messages for other people so I let them go and fly gracefully back into the sky. Thousands of magnificent balloons of all different colors filled the picturesque sky. Finally a green balloon (my daughter's favorite color) floated right down beside me. I was so excited and thrilled because I knew this balloon was from my deceased daughter. On the string of the balloon there was a note. I remember the words so vividly. They read: *Mom don't lose heart I am still with you I am living in a parallel universe next to yours. One day you will join me here and we will all be together again. I love you.*

I then noticed two white hand prints on the green balloon, just like children make in grade school, and knew without a doubt they were my daughter's hand prints. I just understood this to be. I woke up completely aware that those were really my daughter's handprints and her message sent to me via dream.

It was my daughter breaking through the dimensions to give her mom a message of hope and love. I sensed it from the beginning of the dream. When I first cast my eyes to the heavens and received her message of hope and love, I realized she wanted me to comprehend that life does go on when our bodies die and we will be with our loved ones again for eternity. Love never ends. Thanks to my wonderful superb daughter, I now truly believe.



The Sign



As a little boy Jody loved to pick Black-eyed Susans. He'd pick those wild flowers and bring them to me with such love and pride in presentation. The last bunch he picked for me was on my birthday before his death, August 4, 1976.

The Black-eyed Susan is an independent wild flower that cannot be forced to grow out of season. The growing period for these wild flowers is the middle of June to the middle of August. But there, the first of September in the year of my son's death, in the center of Jody's grave, was a single perfectly formed Black-eyed Susan. It stood with strength and reassurance. It was all alone in the still, unsettled dirt covering the grave. There was not even a blade of grass or a single weed around.

I wept with mixed emotions of intense loss and love, feeling both distance and closeness, sadness and sudden relief. I saw it as a sign from my darling Jody. It spoke to me words from my dead child. "Do not cry. Do not despair. I love you and never intended for you to suffer so much. Please forgive me, and please be happy with the rest of your life. Please believe that I'm okay and at peace."

Whether it was a sign from Jody or from God, perhaps a bird dropped a Black-eyed Susan seed on the fresh grave, it brought me relief. I felt that my son wasn't so far away, and that his spirit would always be with me.

If nothing more, it helped me to begin to think of Jody there at the gravesite. He was dead, and I began to accept that. I started to realize that I would never again see his form as I had known it. But his spirit would be close and would guide me. I would not forget him and what we shared. He would always be special. What we gave to one another, what we had meant to each other, would not die or diminish with the passage of years, and it has not.

Each year since Jody's death, a single Black-eyed Susan has grown on his grave. It is a comfort and a joy. It is a remarkable phenomenon that now makes me smile rather than cry. Joey was a kid who never forgot my birthday, and never outgrew giving his mom flowers. I choose to believe he still hasn't. There are many mysteries in life and death that can't be explained, and I think shouldn't be, just accepted.

Susan White-Bowden
In memory of Jody
"From a Healing Heart"

8 characteristics of true visitation dreams

True “visitation dreams” are actually very easy to identify because they are very different than “everyday dreams.” Characteristics of most (but not all) visitation dreams include the following:

- **Characteristic #1:** The most important characteristic of a true visitation dream is that it feels “real.” It will also be very vivid.
- **Characteristic #2:** If you have to ask whether the visitation dream was really a visitation dream, then it probably was NOT a visitation dream. They are so real and vivid that you won’t have to ask this question. When you *do* have a visitation dream, you may wonder if it was truly real; but in your heart or gut, you will “know” it was real.
- **Characteristic #3:** Because they are so real and so vivid, you will remember visitation dreams very clearly for days, months, years . . . probably for your entire lifetime!
- **Characteristic #4:** The person (or animal) will almost always appear in the dream to be completely healthy and behaving in a loving manner. They will *rarely* appear sick or injured. They will *never* be angry, disappointed, depressed, or punishing. They *will* be “whole, complete, and perfect” because they are now reconnected with God/Source energy.
- **Characteristic #5:** Whether or not they speak to you verbally in the dream, they will communicate very clearly. (NOTE: As you’ll see in the next two examples, in neither of the dreams did actual verbal communication occur; the messages were conveyed telepathically and were completely clear.)
- **Characteristic #6:** When they do communicate (either verbally or non-verbally), it isn’t because they want to engage in idle “chit-chat.” It isn’t easy for deceased loved ones to enter a dream. They come with a purpose, and they will convey the message and then be gone.
- **Characteristic #7:** Most often, their messages fall into the category of “reassurance.” They come to let you know that they are fine and that they want you to be happy. Occasionally, they will come with a warning; however, when giving a warning, they will give you loving support and you will feel reassured by their presence.
- **Characteristic #8:** After a visitation dream, when you wake up, you will often be filled with a sense of peace and love.

The journey of grief can seem bleak and lonely
Look in front of you...
there are others encouraging and guiding you
Look beside you...
there are others on the same journey
Look behind you...
there are others encouraged by you
We are not alone on this journey

Phone Friends

All of the people on the following list are bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. They understand what you are going through and have all wished to be included in this list in the hope that anyone who needs to talk will reach out to them. They are willing to talk with you at any time you need their support. Some have listed the specific area in which they have personal experience but they do not intend to imply that that is the only topic they wish to talk about. We all have experienced this journey through grief and it encompasses much more than the specifics surrounding our individual loss. Having a compassionate person to listen when you are having a bad day or just need someone to reach out to when you feel overwhelmed can make the difference in getting through one more day. We have all been there and understand, please feel free to contact any one of us.

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