



# *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 2019** **HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER** [www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org](http://www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org)

**We meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.**  
**(Our next meeting is Tuesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>)**  
**at**  
**Cypress Creek Christian Church**  
**6823 Cypresswood Drive, Room #3**  
**Spring, Texas 77379**

The Church is located between the courthouse and Barbara Bush Library. At the York Minster traffic light turn into the church parking area. We meet in Room #3 which is down six steps off the main lobby of the Church on the Library side. Follow the posted signs to the 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  
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  
1984 - Justin Moyer, Son of Valli Moyer  
1986 - Chad Moyer, Son of Valli Moyer



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  
2018 - Ethan Tyler Brown, Son of Erica Poorbaugh  
2017 - Nelly Rosa, son of Mariano Jonell Rosa  
2017 - Jacquelynn Borel, Daughter of Rebecca Borel

## 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 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.**

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

We offer our warmest welcome to our newest members. 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](mailto: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/>

### **SAVE THE DATE:**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019  
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
WORLDWIDE  
CANDLE  
LIGHTING**



## TCF SOUTH TEXAS REGIONAL CONFERENCE

**OCTOBER 4-6, 2019**

### **Friday, October 04, 2019**

6:00-9:00 PM - Pick up Registration Packets

6:30-9:30 PM - Sharing Sessions

### **Saturday, October 05, 2019**

8:00-9:00 - Sign In and Pick up Welcome Packets

9:15-10:15 - Welcome and Opening Speaker

10:30-11:30 - Workshops # 1,2,3,4

Lunch Break until 1:00 PM for those wanting to attend Sharing Sessions, there will be time for a quick lunch prior to mid-day sessions.

12:00-12:45 - Sharing Sessions 1,2,3,4

1:00-2:00 - Workshops 5,6,7,8

2:15-3:15 - Workshops 9,10,11,12

3:30-4:30 - Workshops 13,14,15,16

6:30-9:30 - Dinner, speakers, Dance Performance & Candle Lighting

### **Sunday, October 6, 2019**

9:00-10:00 Walk to Remember at Bendwood Park

### **Registration**

\$100 if attending all programs.

\$50 per person

Includes All Sharing Sessions and Workshops

\$25 per person

Candle Lighting Dinner on Saturday evening.

\$25 per person

Walk to Remember on Sunday, October 6, 2019

### **VENUE**

**Norris Conference Center at City Centre**

**816 Town & Country Blvd, Ste. 210**

**Houston, TX 77024**

**Deadline for Registration is September 5, 2019 or when we reach 250 attendees.**

<http://www.tcfouthtexasregionalconference.org/tcf-regional-registration-form.aspx>



## The Long View

A few weeks after my son Arthur died I met a nurse. She conducted an assessment for me for a procedure that I had scheduled months ahead of time. She ran down her list of routine questions. One of them was "Are you in pain now?" Jess, my stepdaughter, was with me because she was my ride home after the procedure. We just looked at each other.

I hesitated and answered honestly, "Well, emotional pain," and then explained it. The nurse stopped and looked at both of us. She said soothing things that I don't remember. Then she said, "Someday, you will smile again, just not now." She was right. That's the long view of it. At the time Jess and I had no idea that would happen again. Our fresh grief was way too huge and painful to imagine smiling again.

To the tender newer members of TCF I wish you a someday when you will smile again. You will feel a spark of joy. This will come again. The Compassionate Friends support group anchored me from one month to the next. I met people who were further down the road than me who had experienced child loss. They smiled, even laughed and they were authentic. They were my role models. Now as a TCF chapter co-leader, when I see a newer member spontaneously reach out to someone who is at their first or second TCF meeting, I breathe a sigh of relief for both of them. One is helping the other and both will feel that healing on their grief journeys. This is how we work and it works very well.

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



*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*



## What a Ride

Summertime lends itself to much advertisement of exciting activities. Amusement parks in our tristate area boast of having the most "thrilling" the most "adventurous" or the most "horrifying" rides for those who dare.

Since I lost my daughter, Nicole, I feel like I repeatedly, without warning, go on the wildest amusement ride the world has ever seen. In fact, all of us who have suffered the tragedy of losing a child take sudden rides on this bloodcurdling machine. Physicists could never conjure up a ride such as this-in fact, they couldn't even come close.

The force takes us up, down, and tears us inside out. We get thrown sideways and experience sudden drops much greater than free fall. We spin at record speed mentally and internally, without ever lifting our feet off the ground. the ride is the fiercest, most frightening experience one could ever suffer through. It rages the emotions, leaving you breathless, with a feeling of urgency to share the uncontrollable adventure with those who are next. There is never a waiting line, and the park is always open.

The ticket for this ride is available only through an exclusive club. There is one catch, however-the price for this ticket is very expensive. It was our child's life, and there is absolutely no refund.

I don't want to go on any more rides.

Cindy Pekarick, Nicole's mother  
TCF Camden County, New Jersey

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.



## Shards of Grief Linger after Murder

On a dreary night in December, a knock came at our door with news that would forever alter our lives. The news was that Anne, our only daughter, had been kidnapped and brutally murdered by persons or a person unknown. The shock, disbelief, anguish and anxieties over the next several months, a small piece of the grieving process, were extraordinary, and I have often wondered how we survived.

There was the extreme rage at the person who was responsible for taking Anne's life for no reason except for the pure pleasure of destroying good. But we survived.

There was the awful anger against the legal system for being so callous and insensitive to the needs of the family and friends. The wounds from Anne's death were already deep and unhealing, but listening to and reading about the insinuations and innuendoes by the lawyers made the wounds grow deeper and deeper. The impression was given the family must endure punishment for allowing our daughter to be in the wrong place. This caused a feeling of guilt. But we survived.

There was the fear that Anne would become just another statistic, and the person responsible would go unpunished. Now the fear exists that the person will be released from prison to repeat his acts of violence. I am afraid that fears are addictive and one replaces another. Perhaps the worst fear is, when your faith in God is at its lowest ebb, that you will never be able to respond to normal stimuli again and regain all that faith. All the fears are real; but so far we have survived.

These, I suppose, are normal reactions as the result of a violent act. I believe these anxieties delay a normal (so-called) grieving period until after the culprit has been found, tried and sentenced. After these three things happened, I do know a terrible burden was lifted from our shoulders and we could restart living our lives. Somehow we survived.

How did we survive? After much reflecting, I firmly believe we survived by recalling the positive aspects of Anne's life and character. Each individual is endowed with certain instruments, and we hear the music of their lives long after they are gone.

Anne's instrument of love of life was a blessing, and we still can hear the melodies of her song in the night. These melodies cannot be taken away, and they are more valuable than diamonds to us.

Anne's instrument of hope for a future in which to achieve her goals and have some effect on society was the backbone of her dream. The songs of hope in work, in life and the goodness of heart cannot be destroyed by evil or circumstances. Today is gone, but we still hear the songs of hope for tomorrow. These songs of hope, heard in the night, sustain us.

Anne's instrument of faith that she would lead a productive life and achieve both her spiritual and material goals was music in her heart. The faith she had in herself, her family and her friends transmits to us, urging us to proceed with our lives. The music of her faith is still a beacon in the night.

We will not believe Anne's dreams have ended, but we believe they will find their place in the world to come. The music that was set in motion by her love, hope and faith will move, everlasting, in sweet memories forever. The wounds from the loss of a loved one cannot be healed by words or deeds. These terrible burdens are borne by each of us in our own way and, hopefully, we survive.

Bill Boggs  
In memory of Anne  
TCF, Atlanta, GA

# 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"

## CHASSIDIC TALE

A man had been wandering in the forest for many days, and was nearing the end of his water and food supply. With each passing hour his sense of fear and despair was increasing. His body was weary with fatigue, yet he was unable to sleep.

Slowly it became clear to him that he had been walking in circles and retracing his steps. He knew that his end was near.

Suddenly, in the distance, he noticed the figure of a bedraggled fellow wanderer approaching him. His joy was boundless as he thought to himself, "At last, a way out of this dark and foreboding forest."

The man gathered all of his remaining strength and ran towards the stranger and exclaimed, "My brother, I can't begin to tell you how happy I am to see you. Which way leads out?"

The stranger responded, "My dear friend, I am so sorry to disappoint you, but I too have been wandering in this forest for days on end. I can't save you - I too am looking for a way out.

In a fit of despair the first wanderer shouted, "Then all is lost. It is over. There is no use in continuing," and fell to his knees in a fit of tears.

The stranger responded in a deeply caring and comforting voice, "My friend, why are you giving up hope? Let us journey together. I will show you the paths I have taken that have led me nowhere and you will show me the paths you have taken that have not brought you to your destination. Let us walk together and find a path home."

-Unknown





## 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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