



# ***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.*

**FEBRUARY 2020**

**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, February 11<sup>th</sup>)**

at

**Cypress Creek Christian Church  
6823 Cypresswood Drive, Room #3  
Spring, Texas 77379**

The Church is located between the Courthouse and the Barbara Bush Library. At the York Minster traffic light turn into the Church area parking. 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**

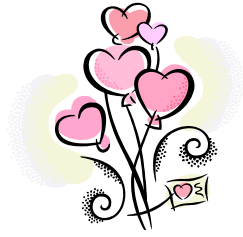
As the years pass, we see new members come into the chapter, and we try to help them with their grief as we progress in our own. Over and over again, I have seen newly bereaved parents come to their first meeting totally devastated and convinced that their lives are over. Through the months (and years) 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.





## ***Our Children, Siblings, and Grandchildren Remembered***

### **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Natalia Lopez - Daughter of Melissa Lopez  
Devin Giblin - Son of Tanya Giblin  
Ryan Mitchell Smith - Son of Anne-Marie Smith  
Jonathon Kuta - Son of Larry & Terri Kuta  
Jeff Shinsky - Son of Margaret Butler  
Jason Allen Denbo - Son of Donna J. Denbo  
Jason Lucher - Brother of Kerri Lucher  
Ryder & Levi Wagner - Sons of Susan & R.J. Wagner  
Jason Robert Kramberger, Son of Nancy & Ken Thornton  
Charlotte Caldwell, Daughter of Jason & Rebecca Caldwell  
Colton Alderson, Son of Jimmy Alderson and Julia Ware  
Patrick Bull, Son of Tom & Gayle Bull  
Christopher Gibler, Son of Susan Gibler  
William Michael Shaw, Son of Mary Kay Martin  
Katherine Collins, Daughter of Kevin & Paula Collins  
Miller LaCour Wade, Son of Burton & Julie Wade  
Moriah Clay, Daughter of Kim Clay  
Amelia Tayloe, Daughter of Matthew & Misty Tayloe  
Race Killen, Son of Wendy Killen  
Sean Weinstein, Son of Steve & Sherry Weinstein  
Creighton Heslop, Son of Barry & Kris Heslop  
Jonah Basile, Son of Malea Basile  
Anthony Pietrzak, Son of Joshua Pietrzak  
Gerald Jennings, Son of Candy Jennings



#### **A Solitary Journey**

**By: Helen Steiner Rice**

***Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.***



## FEBRUARY ANGEL DATES

Lisa Renee Sanders - Daughter of Jim & Peggy Holland  
Gregory Whitney Vinson, Son of Lance & Marilyn Vinson  
Travis Walden, Son of Janet Walden  
Jeff Walker - Brother of Stephanie Thrift  
Matthew Brown - Son of Cathy Brown  
Ryan Mitchell Smith - Son of Anne-Marie Smith  
Michael Shrum, Son of Mike & Melva Shrum  
Jerry Dwight Tanksley, Jr., Son of Virginia Tanksley  
Christy Wempe, Daughter of Ann & Lance Parks  
David Morgan - Son of Brent & Martina Morgan  
Emily Crocker, Daughter of Nick & Beth Crocker  
David Hendricks II, Son of David Hendricks  
Leah Elizabeth Davis - Daughter of Ron & Laura Davis  
Logan Xavier Venegas, Son of Rochelle Snyder  
Ryder & Levi Wagner, Sons of R.J. & Susan Wagner  
Amber Eileen Schulze, Daughter of Lisa Schulze  
Joshua Hucklebridge, Son of Elaine White  
Sloan Nagy, Son of Tammy Johnson  
Tiffany Driscoll, Daughter of Dan & Cindy Driscoll  
Ryan Moody, Son of Gloria Moody  
William Michael Shaw, Son of Mary Kay Martin  
Katherine Collins, Daughter of Kevin & Paula Collins  
Miller LaCour Wade, Son of Burton & Julie Wade  
Wesley Hundl, Son of Sharon Mondrik  
Athena Suniga, Daughter of Selena Suniga  
Jonah Basile, Son of Malea Basile  
Danielle Spivey, Daughter of Mark & Donna Spivey  
Chance Barton, Son of Sherry Barton



*You may not be able to hold them in your arms today , but  
you can still celebrate the LOVE that you have by sharing  
it with others.*

## CHAPTER NEWS

**Our next regular meeting is Tuesday, February, 11th at 7pm. I hope you will join us. I would like to extend a special invitation to our old members. Please join us and share your grief journey with our newly bereaved members. Come and share your wisdom and give back to those in need of your support.**

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

We offer our warmest welcome to our new members, **Penny McElhaney, lost her son Bryan Pfluger in December 2019 and Sherry Barton, lost her son Chance in February 2019.** 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 Gifts – A Way to Remember**

There are no dues to belong to Compassionate Friends, because we have already paid the ultimate price; the loss of our loved one(s). A Love Gift is a gift of money given in honor of a child, who has died, or a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help support our Chapter. Your gifts are tax deductible and are used to reach out to other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Your gifts support this newsletter, our TCF Library, and other Chapter expenses.

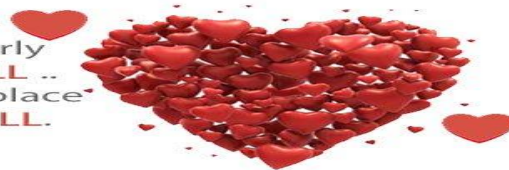
### **Volunteers**

**We are always in need of volunteers that can help set up before the meeting, greet people at the door, make coffee, bring light refreshments, etc. If you are interested and would like to help please email me, at [dbhhendricks@hotmail.com](mailto:dbhhendricks@hotmail.com) or see after the meeting.**

### **TCF National Magazine**

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. Sign-up for a free online subscription through our website, [compassionatefriends.org](http://compassionatefriends.org).

In life I **LOVED YOU** dearly  
In **DEATH** I love you **STILL** ..  
In my **HEART** you hold a place  
**NO-ONE** could **EVER FILL**.  
all-greatquotes.com



## LOVE IS IMMORTAL

Many of us will resent the lengthening of time between our child's life and our own present. Others may welcome the increasing distance in the hope that time itself will be a balm to pain. Yet, all of us perceive, beyond all the hype and expectations, that new years and seasons are merely calendar events.

Whatever problems we have had in the past will follow us into the present. There is no inner demarcation with hurting behind and joy ahead.

Each of us has the same opportunities now as we had before. We can permit time to simply pass, or we can work to mold its passage into constructive growth.

In the deaths of our children we have discovered with certainty that we lack the means to control the most cherished elements of our lives. But we also know that within each of us is the potential to rise above the debilitating anguish we have experienced.

Time continues to move forward and most of us have been too damaged to even play the games of resolutions and dance the rites of spring. We are beyond the futility of such exercises. But, let us each confront this moment and time with an inward commitment to recovery, to living the hours which comprise our existence with the fullness and love of which we are capable.

Hurting will ultimately lessen. Pain will slowly become more bearable. Fears and guilt will gradually pass away. But love, that inner dance of the heart which leaps to our child's name or the memory of an especially close experience that bears only the mantle of endless joy, will not pass away. All else, fame, fortune, distress and dismay, wealth and power, even ourselves, will at last be done.

But love...Love is immortal...May the immortality of love grow secure and healthy again within each of us.

Don Hackett  
Plymouth, MA  
From ALIVE ALONE





## Forever In My Heart

You are forever in my heart  
The day will come, I know  
When all the rain has fallen  
And the sun begins to show

I'll think of you in all I do  
Your warmth will touch my face  
You'll twinkle in the starlight  
And be held in each embrace

So please do not be saddened  
If a tear for you I shed  
But we had dreams and wishes  
Which I'll safely keep instead

Although it hurts, I understand  
You'd somewhere else to be  
Our time together has not passed  
You'll always be with me

In every day, in every way  
You'll always be a part  
My precious little angel  
You're forever in my heart



**As long as I live, you will  
live.**

**As long as I live, you will be  
remembered.**

**As long as I live, you will be  
loved.**

**--Unknown**



## From My Heart . . . To Yours

The newly bereaved parents looked around the group at the meeting and hoped and prayed they wouldn't still be attending TCF meetings 20, 30, and 40 years from now. Well actually, we at TCF hope you will be.

You see, the bereaved parents who answered the call in their hearts to continue to open the door for monthly meetings and to go each and every month with arms open for hugs and tissue boxes passed around, are the one reason why you had a place to go and pour your hearts out, cry your eyes out, and feel justified in what you were experiencing since your child died.

If it were not for these bereaved parents who buried a child decades ago, there might not be anyone there to sit around and take the time to care about you, to listen with understanding, to

offer support, to know what you are going through. It might have been many years ago, but those shoulders were dragging at one time, too.

Forty years ago, burying a child hurt just as much as it does for you today. Twenty years ago, the pain of loss was no different than it is for you today. These parents know. They understand. That's why they are still here. It is not because they can't move on with their own grief. It is because they want to help you move on with yours.

Thank goodness someone in your area listened to the voice in their heart to start a TCF group, to organize meetings, to put out a newsletter, to answer your phone call, to share their own story. Because of that, you feel safe to share your pain. And every time you share your feelings, every time you cry with someone, every time you work through your pain, healing is slowly and silently creeping into your heart.

One day you might feel you don't need to attend any more TCF meetings. We know that time will come. We will be happy for you. But if it should happen that a little voice in your heart continues to whisper . . . "Now it's your turn to help someone else," be sure and listen, because someone else is going to have to take the place of those who have been there for so many years before you arrived.

So, look around at those who have opened the doors for you and helped you. Then listen to your heart . . . always listen to your heart.

Cathy Heider  
TCF North Central Iowa Chapter



*When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.*





## LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

"Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing." Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouchies" can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so...we are stuck with this pain, this grief and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable...some day.

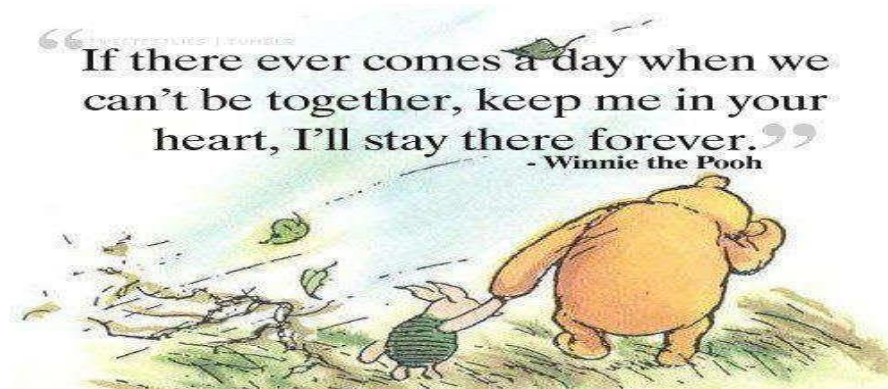
TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don't have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be "crazy" and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress through grief against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.

Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments...but don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child...HE [SHE] DIED. We don't lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very glad I loved. Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

Darcie D. Sims



## Broken Heart Syndrome

One afternoon, I was channel surfing looking for something to watch when I came across the Oprah Winfrey Channel. She was interviewing a woman named Madonna Badger. On Christmas Day, 2011, Madonna's 7 year old twins, a boy and a girl, her 9 year old daughter and her parents all died in a horrific house fire. She spoke of the unrelenting grief and sorrow she has suffered in the years since. I was riveted to the television screen as she recanted her story. As she talked, she coined a phrase that I had never heard of before to describe her pain, "Broken Heart Syndrome." It is a temporary condition that is brought on by extreme stressful situations, such as the death of someone deeply loved.

I thought, finally there is a label for the intense pain and suffering that those who grieve feel! Broken Heart Syndrome is an identifiable condition brought on by stressful situations, such as the death of a loved one. Broken Heart Syndrome is also called *takotsubo cardiomyopathy*. Broken Heart Syndrome manifests as a temporary disruption of the heart's normal pumping function or with even more forceful contractions, while the remainder of the heart functions normally. Symptoms can include chest pain and shortness of breath. It effects more women than men. It is attributed to a reaction to a surge of stress hormones.

After my daughter died, I suffered with intense bouts of pain on the outer left muscular wall of my upper torso. An EKG revealed no abnormalities. Seven years later, I still never know when this pain might reoccur. I have however connected my episodes with certain stressors, such as; my child's birth and death dates, holidays and special occasions.

Although doctors are just now learning about this condition, the good news is that broken heart syndrome is treatable and the discomfort should abate with time. If you think you might be suffering from broken heart syndrome, you should discuss it with you physician.

Let us all take care of our own hearts this Valentine's Day.

Janet Reyes  
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX



## 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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