



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 2026

HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER

www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org

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

(Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 10, 2026)

at

**Trinity Lutheran Church
Family Life Center, Room #116
5201 Spring Cypress Rd.
Spring, Texas 77379**

The Church is located on the corner of Spring Cypress Road and Klein Church Rd. Please enter off Spring Cypress Road. The meetings are held in the Family Life Center Room #116

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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

Roxane Rucker, Daughter of Deborah Maly

Alex Coogan, Son of Tim and Amy Coogan

Kayla Cannon, Daughter of Janet Cannon

David Brace, Son of Julia Hine

Micheal Holberg, Son of Sally Holberg

Ryder Jacoby, Son of Brian Jacoby

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
Danielle Devillier, Daughter of Wendy Devillier
Gabriel Tuschl, Son of Brian & Lyndi Tuschl
Antonio Ramos Jr., Son of Rosaura Aguirre
Erin Elena Moretz, Daughter of Patricia Moretz
Kennedy Jane Parks, Granddaughter of Patty Learned & Janey Chambless
Michael Holberg, Son of Sally Holberg
Justin Forester, Son of Stephanie Forester
Michael Barnett, Son of Mike & Susie Barnett

CHAPTER NEWS

Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 10th. 7pm.

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members –Brenda Riggs, lost her son Terrance in September last year; and Chris Edwards, lost a son Elijah in April last year.

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. We come together from all walks of life. 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.

SAVE THE DATE



The national conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild.



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



A Love Song

The mention of my child's name may bring tears to my eyes. But it never fails to bring music to my ears.

If you are really my friend, Please, don't keep me from hearing the beautiful music of his name. It soothes my broken heart and fills my soul with love. Nancy Wilson – TCF New Jersey



VALNETINE'S DAY

The definition from Wikipedia is, "Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is celebrated annually on February 14th. It originated as a Christian feast day honoring a martyr named Valentine, and through later folk traditions it has also become a significant cultural, religious and commercial celebration of romance and love in many regions of the world."

Although it's associated with romantic love, it also can represent a different kind of love for another person. What happens when your child's Birthday or Angel Day is in February? I think it matters more the closer those dates are to February 14th. My son David died on February 26th.

I remember giving Valentine Cards to my teachers, other kids in my class, homemade cards to my mom and my children. The essential idea is "love".

Billions of dollars are spent on Valentine's Day cards each year. But now one can't give your child a card. You only have the memories, but those memories contain lots of love.

Is Valentine's Day as significant as other important days such as Birthdays and Angel Days? Surely not. Does it rank with the holidays? I don't think so. But when Valentine's Day coincides or comes close to Birthdays or Angel Days, it can take on a significant unlike any other special day.

Maybe this year, for all the February parents, concentrate on the love and the special memories you have of your child, including the memories of long ago Valentine Cards, and maybe of more recent Valentine Cards.

David Hendricks
In memory of my son David
TCF Houston Northwest Chapter

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.

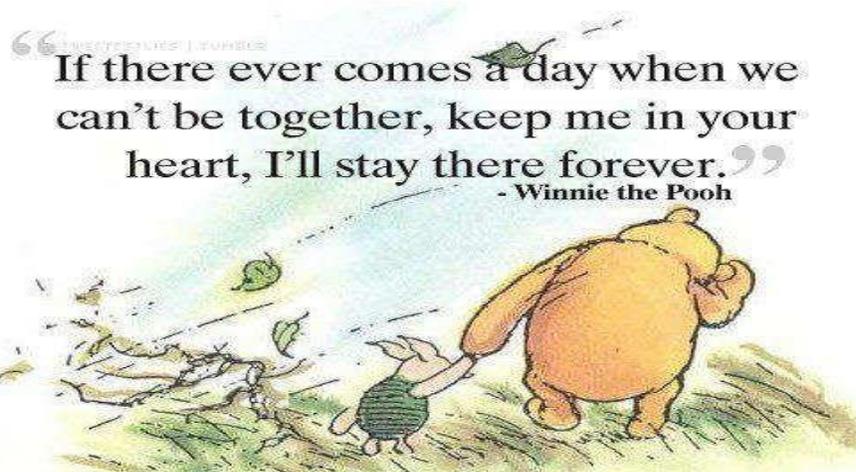
TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don’t have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

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





Wounded Heart

"Your broken heart requires at least as much care as a broken bone. With proper care you can be confident that you will heal. The same powerful forces that mend a broken bone will heal your emotional pain, but a wounded heart needs time and proper care to heal."

~Harold Bloomfield, MD~

If someone fell and broke a leg, people would rush to their aid. They wouldn't stop to even think about it. Yet, when it's our hearts that are broken, few rush to our aid and even fewer understand. At first, we receive the cards and phone calls wishing us well and telling us "if there's anything I can do"...but they soon taper off to a trickle.

Then we begin to hear that we must 'get on with our life,' 'we can't let it get us down,' and we're told just how soon we should be 'back to normal'... we're given a deadline of sorts. When we don't follow the acceptable standards for healing, we are thought to 'need help'...the professional kind... and we're told that we are 'in denial'. These same people, who seem to have all of the answers, not only have never experienced the loss of a child but also tend to not want to get too involved...too close to our pain. They would rather stand off to the side until we're back to our old selves...whatever that is! They're uncomfortable when we speak of why our hearts are broken and they don't mention it for fear of reminding us of how our hearts broke in the first place... as if we could ever forget. When they ask us, "How are you"...it's more a greeting than a question. They don't want to hear how we ache inside, how lonely and empty we feel, how desolate we feel.

Why...because they can't fix it. They can't make us whole again. And unlike a broken bone that's healed, we will never be as good as new. We will forever be missing a part of what made us the person that we once were. When our child died, so did a part of our heart and where that piece was, now there is nothing...only a gaping hole that nothing and no one can ever fill. Unlike a broken bone, we will not mend in a few weeks...in fact, we will never fully mend. We learn to live without that piece of our hearts...to live with our loss, to survive...one day at a time!

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

In Loving Memory of My Angels...

Michelle, Jerry & Danny

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SYMBOLS

We are fast approaching Valentine's Day, filled with symbols of love ... hearts and roses. As a young schoolgirl, I can remember wishing I would get a valentine from someone special. My friends and I would count how many valentines we had received, feeling certain that the more you received, the more it indicated your popularity.

As I grew older, I was thrilled when I received flowers from that special someone. Surely this was, true love. As a married woman, Valentine's Day was always special. Glen and I usually went out to dinner, and I often received flowers or a special gift that said, I love you! While those gifts were much appreciated, I would be hard pressed now to tell you what we did or what I received.

However, one Valentine's Day will stay frozen in my memory forever, February 14, 1983. Glen took my arm and steadied me as I walked into a mortuary to view the body of our 17 year old son Nathan, who had been killed by a drunken driver on February 10. We had ordered a spray of seventeen red roses to be placed on his casket. When I ordered those flowers, I was stunned to discover how high priced roses are on Valentine's Day! At first, I had decided I would be content with carnations. Then the florist saw in my eyes how much I wanted my last gift to my son to be the very best...red, long stemmed roses. The florist promised she would provide us with roses, regardless of how little we could afford to pay.

That afternoon, I drank in every detail of my boy, his hair, the bruise on his face, the National Honor Society pin on his lapel, those wonderful, strong hands. Then I pulled myself together for a very special appointment. I was the Academic Counselor at Nathan's high school, and we had arranged a special viewing for the students prior to the general visitation. I watched as young girls brought beautiful bouquets of red roses they had received from their boyfriends, but now they were placing them below our son's casket. Their final act of love for a very dear friend.

It has taken me a long time to be able to actually celebrate Valentine's Day in a normal fashion. In fact, I guess I never will be able to do that. Valentine's Day is no longer a superficial type of holiday where I just send cards or give candy or flowers without much deliberation beforehand. The symbols are still there; I just see them differently now: THE ROSE: A symbol of love that cannot be separated by death. THE HEART: Broken, bruised, and bandaged, but not defeated.

And now, there's one more symbol:

The HAND: As we offer our hands to each other in friendship, in understanding, in strength, we are saying: WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE, WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS!

May your Valentine's Day be filled with roses that will encourage your broken heart and give you strength to offer a helping hand to others who are grieving.

Marilyn Heavilin
TCF Redlands, CA
In Memory of my son, Nathan

Let Life Be Renewed

By: Kitty Reeve

As I write, I await the airport van and the beginning of a year of living overseas. It is the realization of a lifelong dream, and I know how fortunate I am.

The feeling of being fortunate is as much about the fact that I want the dream again as it is about having it happen, however. For many years after Philip's death life became something to be endured. The energy for dreams, much less working to achieve them, was zero. Unfortunately, you know this road well, also.

I write about this renewal of life because it means so much to me, and because I did not expect it.

It is startling (and gratifying) to find my old enthusiasm for life ratcheted up several notches, and the energy for work surfacing again. In other words, I am living with some of myself that had been submerged all these years since Philip died. It is good to have that back, however tempered. I never thought it would return.

When I mentioned my experience to another bereaved parent, she said. "I must admit that I have experienced similar feelings of renewed energy for life. In the process of the daily activities of our lives and the continuous interaction with people, we are moving on, and so, to hear your renewed interest in life is understood, and I rejoice."

It isn't that the renewed investment in life is as it was before our children died. It is tempered, more thoughtful, restrained in some ways. I can't believe anyone could face the horrible trauma we all have and not see life through different eyes. But what's important is that the aching pain of the first few years can indeed give way to a desire to live and a true interest in life. I had given up on having my former enthusiasm and vitality back, but it returned on its own. I am as surprised as anyone else.

If you are feeling renewed and more alive, perhaps you'll share your feelings with another bereaved parent. It is the holding out of hope that enables many of us to keep going through the darkest days of those early years.

Kitty Reeve, a journalist, is a former newsletter editor for the Marin and San Francisco Chapters of TCF. Her son, Philip Ganote, was 26 years old when he died on August 16, 1994. Article taken from We Need Not Walk Alone Summer 2002



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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