



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.

OCTOBER 2020

HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER

www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org

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

(Our monthly meetings are on hold amid the Covid-19 virus)

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.

Chapter Leader

David Hendricks

936-441-3840

dbhhendricks@hotmail.com

South Texas Regional Co-Coordinator

Henrik Thomsen

thomsen.tcfkaty@gmail.com

713-557-6637

Newsletter Editor

Linda Brewer 936-441-3840

llbrewer67@hotmail.com

National Headquarters, TCF

P.O. Box 3696

Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696

1-876-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MISSION STATEMENT

You Are Not Alone

When your child has died, suddenly it seems like all meaning has been drained from your life. When you wake in the morning, it's difficult to get out of bed, much less live a "normal" life. All that was right with the world now seems wrong and you're wondering when, or if, you'll ever feel better.

We've been there ourselves and understand some of the pain you are feeling right now. We are truly glad that you have found us but profoundly saddened by the reason. We know that you are trying to find your way in a bewildering experience for which no one can truly be prepared.

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.....

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

2008-Maxwell B. Heath, Son of Carrie & Dirk Heath
1986-Brendon Chase Mooney, Son of Richard & Joan Mooney
1981-Amanda Cristina Ramirez-Velazquez , Daughter of Cynthia Cruz
1986-Tara Michelle Rose, Daughter of Angie Rose
1972-Grant Koval, Son of Linda Koval
1983-Kevin Donat, Son of Diane Donat
1999-Joselito C. M. Boquilon, Son of Raulito & Kim Boquilon
1980-Felipe Danny Sanchez, Son of Lupe Sanchez
1968-Travis Davis, Son of Sharyl Davis
1988-Kayla Lower, Daughter of Lori Morris
1994-Braden Hughes Patton, Son of Sherill and Chase Patton
1963-Robert Elizeus, Son of Joanne Wycoff
1988-DeAndria Sharee Anderson, Daughter of Rawn & Loretta Stephens
1989-Michael Vincent Ledwig, Son of Mary Ann Ledwig
1985-Jenny, Daughter of John and Debbie Ryan
1975-Aimee Hurst, Daughter of Doris Odell
1967-Julie Less, Daughter of Jim Less, Sister of Susan Less
1994-Vanessa Whitford, Daughter of Russell & Nury Whitford
1981-Michael Haner, Son of Jeanne Haner
1991-Jacob Landon, Son of Brenda Landon
1971-Tony Dizona, Son of Rosemary Dizona
1982-Nathan Waldron, Son of Dan Waldron
2007-Sean Michael Gonzalez, Son of Rick & Jazmin Gonzalez
1990-Patrick O'Masters, Son of Laurie Martin
1992-Jerret Macias, Son of Betty Macias
1979-Angelique Duncan, Daughter of Rosalyn Fagen
1992-Kelsey Jackowski, Daughter of Camille Jackowski



OCTOBER ANGEL DATES

2010 Delaney Womack, Daughter of Carrie & Eric Womack
2010 Sean Hengel, Son of Laura Hengel
2004 Kristal Randolph Gilbert and Unborn Son,
Daughter and Grandson of Josephine Babineaux
2009 Travis Davis, Son of Sharyl Davis
2009 Patrick Noel Jernigan, II, Son of Juanice Jernigan
2009 BreAnna Brashear, Daughter of Julie Jones
2004 Kristine Ashley Bergaila, Daughter of Kathleen Livingston
2008 Bryan Russell Lewis, Son of Olga Lydia Lewis
2008 Shane Woodson, Son of Theresa Woodson
2008 Kayla C. Ladner, Daughter of Stephen Ladner
2009 Natalia Lopez, Daughter of Melissa Lopez
2007 Deborah Levy, Daughter of Pat Morgan
2011 Katelyn Holmes, Daughter of Melinda Holmes
2012- Kimberly Wise, Daughter of Patsy Grubbs
2009- Allison, Daughter of Ingrid Todd
2013-Braiden Mainor, Grandson of Barbara Herring
2011-Nevaeh Ramirez, Daughter of Amy Ramirez
1995-Christina, Granddaughter of Barbara Thomas
2007-Ryan Gibler, Son of Susan Gibler
2010-Donna Weston, Daughter of Roberta Ware
2014-David Arthur, Son of Cathy Arthur
2014-Brayon Molden, Step-Son of Reagan Molden
2013-Korie Joiner, Daughter of Julie and Brad Joiner
2015-Kacie Joiner, Daughter of Julie and Brad Joiner
2015-Christopher "Cole" Knight, Son of Ken and Jan Knight
2014-Tony Dizona, Son of Rosemary Dizona
2015-Lindie, Daughter of Beth Shelton
2016-Corey Cole, Son of Tim and Cheryl Cole
2016-Jeffrey Scott Byers, Son of Deanna Young
2016-Amy Lynn Kramberger, Daughter of Nancy and Ken Thornton
2017-Reagan Ottnat, Daughter of Stacy Ottnat
2017-Bryce Cook, Son of Faye Cook
2018-James Ropp, Son of Janet Ropp
2019-Chantal Warfield, Daughter of Jacqueline Smith



CHAPTER NEWS

This is usually the time when I remind everyone about the December Worldwide Candle Lighting service, however as of now we're not sure of all the details for this year's service. We will keep you posted.

**Compassionate Friends
Worldwide Candle Lighting date this year:
Sunday, December 13, 2020**



The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.



GRIEF WRITING

Some Ideas on Keeping a Journal

Writing is a simple, yet powerful way to begin working through your grief. You will find it helps to relieve some of the physical, emotional and spiritual pain that many grieving folks are experiencing.

- It will help you work through many of the issues which are difficult to communicate in other ways.
- It is very personal and confidential - no one need share in your writings unless you specifically choose to permit it.
- It is simple to do spontaneously.
- It does not require making complicated plans; it can be accomplished at the moment your feelings and needs are strongest, even when you wake up at three in the morning.

Who are you writing for? Even though you intellectually know that it is for you and you alone, all your prior training has conditioned you differently. During school years we always wrote for others to see and usually judge, correct and grade. We have all written letters for others to read. Nearly all our prior writing has been to communicate with others.

JOURNAL WRITING IS DIFFERENT: IT IS ONLY FOR YOU TO READ!

While this sounds like such an obvious thought, you may be surprised at the difficulty in getting your inner self to grant you permission to write freely without ANY editorial judgment. As you progress in your writing, you will find that you are able to overcome the 'mind set' that you are writing for others, and you will concentrate on fully serving your needs for expression.

Since you are writing for yourself, you now have permission not to be a perfectionist. You can use an old wide lined school notebook or one of those expensive "designer journals," and you can give yourself permission to be as sloppy or as neat as you wish. Forget erasers – it is easier, quicker and more spontaneous to cross out words. Furthermore, there are no errors when writing for yourself - merely thoughts you wish to re-read and those you want to skip. Rather than erasing or tearing out pages in order to obliterate, try putting a big X through a page or crossing out a phrase. Pay attention to those thoughts you are inclined to obliterate – often they are rich sources of issues you need to work through in your grief work. For this reason, I always suggest a permanently bound notebook rather than a spiral bound or loose-leaf book.

As a new writer, I have certainly experienced a blank page staring me in the face, unable to think of anything to say. What a relief when I learned to write my "stream of consciousness". I set a time limit – for starts, perhaps 5 or 10 minutes – and then write everything which comes into my mind, no matter how unconnected, scattered or inane it may seem. Since I am not judging myself, and no one else will read it, it doesn't matter that it isn't a well composed sentence or paragraph. I capture whatever thought or image comes to mind. Since I am not trying to write a story, I merely begin to document my internal images and feelings, my internal dialogue.

Not having the pressure of composing something which makes sense, I just have to be able to write fast enough to keep up with my internal activity. If my thoughts lead me to a particular issue, I may begin to elaborate on it. When the allotted time has passed, I may choose to continue or will allow myself to stop for the day, and start again fresh the next day.

You will surprise yourself at how quickly you have developed a new tool for making progress with your grief work. With the mechanics of writing now a comfortable routine, you can become more focused. In grief work, we are frequently writing for one or more of the following reasons:

- To capture our experience or progress
- To confront an issue
- To vent, explore or express a feeling or emotion
- To connect
- To atone
- To preserve a thought
- To memorialize our loss

While few people feel they want to share everything they have written, there is frequently added value in sharing some of what we have written. Some, in their writings, have discovered parts of themselves which they felt they wanted to share. If you find this to be the case, the sharing circle at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends provides that opportunity.

If writing has always been easy and comfortable, please continue to do it. If this is all new to you, please be encouraged as you begin to use this new and useful tool which will serve you well, even beyond your grief work.

This article was adapted from a handout prepared by Alan B. Taplow, of Plainfield, New Jersey, for use with his Bereavement Support Group. He created it from material inspired by Carol Staudacher in her book, Men & Grief (New Harbinger Publ., 1991)



Redemptive Possibilities

We have talked often at our chapter meetings about "Redemptive Possibilities". I define a Redemptive Possibility as something that a bereaved parent, grandparent or sibling does to help others that would never have been done without the loss of a child.

The family of the almost three year old boy who was killed by an alligator at Disney World in June 2016, started a foundation in Nebraska. The Lane Thomas Foundation was founded to give honor and light to Lane's life. The Foundation is dedicated to supporting families of children needing life saving organ transplants. The foundation fulfills this mission by funding non-medical expenses borne by the families, promoting public awareness and sponsoring clinical research. Their effort has received national attention.

If we as bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings are open to "Redemptive Possibilities", they will appear to us. It may take a year or two or three, but those "Redemptive Possibilities" are out there for us to discover. They can be little or they can be big. They are healing and keep us looking outward rather than always looking inward.

David Hendricks

Wings Take Flight

Feathered bodies pass demurely,
Webbed feet paddle furiously,
Perfect patterns forming in their Wake.

All is well, my friends, the Geese;
I like you, with poise and peace
Glide on the surface of this Grief.

If my feet stop, will I drown?
Will onlookers rush in from all around
As so they gawked at my little child?

Honk! Honk! I want to say
Make a noise! Do something
My feelings to betray.

Let not my feathers unruffled remain
While wrestling the waters of boundless pain
That webbed foot could never dare contain.

The water is cold...Could I be so bold?

Feathers unfold
For stories untold
As weeping, Wings take Flight.

I wrote this poem while on retreat after the death of my daughter. I was struggling with the vast deception of my outward composure the graceful gliding through social circumstances achieved only by "furious paddling" on the inside, as I grappled with the vast body of water that was my grief. Grief completely surrounded me; it was an entire lake much larger than myself, a lake in which I swam tirelessly in order to keep from drowning.

Eventually, I remembered my wings. I remembered there is always the sky. Ultimately, this poem is about moving on in the midst of grief. Even as we remain weeping, we must, at some point, spread our wings-dripping with the waters of grief, our tears-and open ourselves to new flight, new stories of hope and healing in our lives. For a goose, the water will always be there; thus so the grief for me. But I have my wings, too. And the sky.



By: Lisa DeBoer Tuggle, Dunlap, TN
Taken from We Need Not Walk Alone, Winter 2002



*Seeking help is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength....
It takes bravery to be vulnerable with another person.*

The Loss of A Child

The moment I knew that you had died, my heart split in two
One side filled with memories, the other died with you.

I often lay awake at night, when the world is fast asleep
And take a walk down memory lane, with tears upon my cheek.

Remembering you is easy, I do it every day
But missing you is a heartache, that never goes away.

I hold you tightly within my heart, and there you will remain
Life has gone on without you, but it will never be the same.

Don't tell me that you understand, don't tell me that you know
Don't tell me that I will survive, how I will surely grow.

Don't tell me that this is just a test, that I am truly blessed
That I am chosen for the task, apart from all the rest.

Don't come to me with answers, that can only come from me
Don't tell me that my grief will pass, that soon I will be free.

Don't stand in pious judgement, of the bonds I must untie.
Don't tell me how to grieve, don't tell me when to cry.

Accept me in my ups and downs, I need someone to share
Just hold my hand and let me cry, and say
"My friend, I care"

~Author Unknown~

Forgive Unto Forever

Grieving is a fierce and overwhelming expression of love thrust upon us by a deep and hurtful loss. Yet, grieving is frequently such an entanglement of feelings that we often fail to recognize that ultimately forgiveness must be an integral part of our grief and our healing. For what is love, if forgiveness is silent within us? We learn to forgive our children for dying, ourselves for not preventing it. We begin to forgive our God or the fate we see ruling our universe. We start to forgive relatives and friends for abandoning us in their own bewilderment over the onslaught of emotions they sense in our words and behavior.

I believe we must be open to the balm of forgiveness. Through its expression in our lives, be it through thought, word, or deed, we find small ways to seek life once more. Deep within us, forgiveness is capable of treading the wasteland of our souls to help us feel again the love that has not died.

It is the beginning of release from the dominance of pain, not from the continual hurt of missing those we have lost, but from lacking the fullness of the love we shared with our child. That love lives with strength inside ourselves and yet our beings are so entrapped in a whirling vortex of anger, despair, frustration, abandonment, and depression that we often feel it only lightly.

Let us all heed the quiet message heard so softly in that maelstrom of the spirit. Forgive, forgive, and forgive unto forever. Let love enfold our anguish, helping us to learn to grow and strive beyond this hour to a rich tomorrow.

Don Hackett
TCF Hingham, MA
November 21, 2000



Tomorrow Will Be Better

When my son died, I felt like there would be no tomorrow. I didn't want a tomorrow. I wanted yesterday with its promise of joy and perfection. I wanted my son to be alive. But he was gone.

Now, when life gets me down, I remember the joys of yesterday, think of all that I was given, take measure of all that still needs to be done, and I promise myself that tomorrow will be better because I will work very hard to make it better.

My grandmother often told me, "If you think you can, you're right. If you think you can't, you're right. What do you think?" As a child I thought this was strange. As an adult, I know it to be true.

Tomorrow *will* be better. Tomorrow I will, once again, tell my mind to stop the negative thoughts. And my mind will do exactly that, as I command my ship of grief.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX
Forever remembering my son, Todd Mennen



AUTUMN TEARS

We look back on September and we realize that somehow we made it through those dreaded first days of school. Whether it was the anticipation or the actual days that were the worst, we survived. We used our faith, our support systems or just plain hard work and made it over yet another hurdle. We watched small children heading for their first day of kindergarten, listened to excited teenagers talk of high school and heard stories of children leaving home to attend post-secondary school. Somehow we rode the waves of grief and found ourselves ashore again.

As these waves subside new ones will build as we head into the holidays that speak of, and to, children. Halloween will soon approach and for some, painful memories. Thanksgiving arrives to exemplify family and togetherness and Christmas looms ahead. These special days are forever reminders of our loss—the costumes we'll never sew, the empty chair at turkey dinner, the fun and magic we'll never share with someone we love. Forever reminders that our child has died.

To survive when these events and anniversary days come around let's find time to think of the good memories we have—the announcement of our long awaited pregnancy at Thanksgiving dinner, the look of excitement on our son's first Halloween night, the vision of our daughter helping prepare the turkey dinner. These holidays will always be reminders that our child died. Let us also make them reminders that our child lived! They left us memories more precious than any others to hold and celebrate!

Penny Young
TCF Powell River, British Columbia
November 21, 2000



Thought for the Day

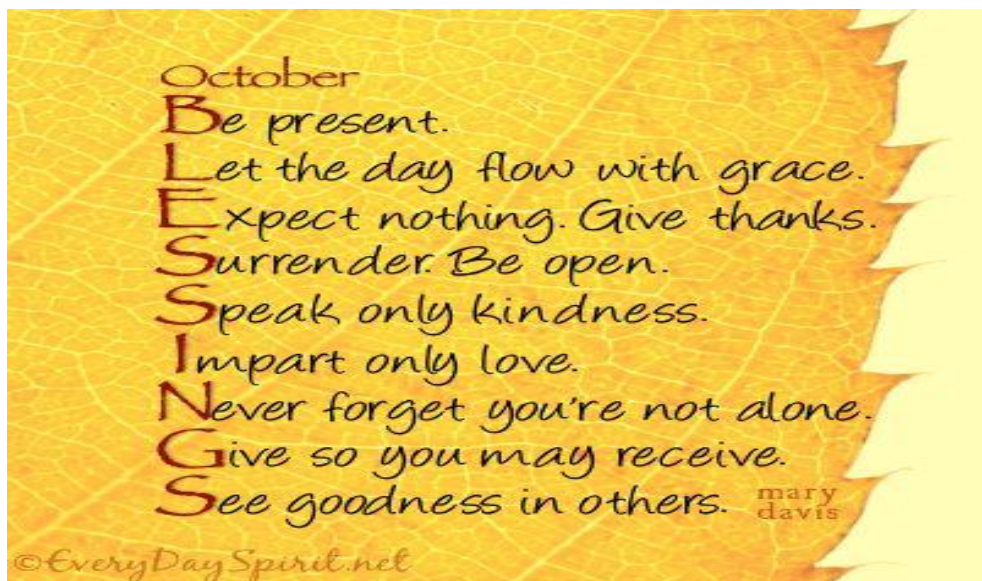
It is not easy returning to the world of normalcy when your world is so upside down. It is not easy to stop being a mother or father to your child that has died. The thought for the day is a word — **patience** — patience with yourself who suddenly and powerlessly has been thrown into this horrid nightmare; patience with your spouse who always seems to be having an up day when you are having a down day; patience with relatives and friends who wish to help but seem to hurt with hollow advice and logical words; and patience with time, for it takes time to adjust, and time can move so slowly. **PATIENCE!**

Rose Moen
TCF Carmel-Indianapolis, IN

October's Memories

October's here, the air is bright,
The leaves decked out in fancy dress,
The clouds in shapes of animals
Hang in the sky so blue.
This was our time of year, your favorite.
How many times did you come in,
Cheeks glowing, eyes sparkling,
Smelling of the leaves you jumped through
As a child and even after you grew up.
How many times did you say
"Just smell, just feel the air.
I love it, crisp,
With a hint of winter coming."
Our time, but now only my time.
Time to dream dreams that won't be.
Time to wish wishes that can't come true
Time to remember & treasure each day we had together.
Time for October's memories.

Arden Lansing, TCF, Northfield, NJ



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.

Laura Hengel
281-908-5197
linnemanl@aol.com
Auto Accident

Pat Morgan
713-462-7405
angeltrack@aol.com
Adult Child

Connie Brandt
281-320-9973
clynncooper@hotmail.com
Auto Accident

Beth Crocker
281-923-5196
thecrockers3@comcast.net
Multiple Loss
Heart Disease

Julie Joiner
832-724-4299
dtjb19@gmail.com
Multiple Loss
Infant Child

Loretta Stephens
281-782-8182
andersonloretta@sbcglobal.net
Auto Accident

Lisa Thompson
713-376-5593
lisalou862@yahoo.com
Auto Accident/Fire

Pat Gallien
281-732-6399
agmom03@aol.com
Organ Donor

Leigh Heard-Boyer
281-785-6170
boyerbetterhalf@yahoo.com
Substance Abuse

FOR FATHERS:

Nick Crocker
832-458-9224
thecrockers3@comcast.net
Multiple Loss
Heart Disease

David Hendricks
936-441-3840
dbhhendricks@hotmail.com
Auto Accident

Glenn Wilkerson
832-878-7113
glennwilkerson@thearkgroup.org
Infant Child