



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.

JULY 2026

HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER

<http://www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org>

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

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.

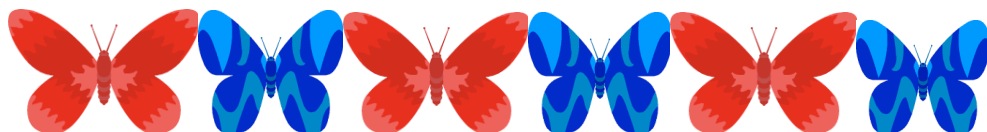
To the Newly Bereaved

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

JULY BIRTHDAYS

1983 - Nicole Berrow, Daughter of Rosie Berrow
1971 - Amy Wells, Daughter of Kerry & J.R. Wells
2010 - Delaney Womack, Daughter of Carrie & Eric Womack
1984 - Kristine Ashley Bergaila, Daughter of Kathleen Livingston
1968 - Van Holland, Son of James & Olivia Holland
1985 - Sean Hengel, Son of Laura Hengel
1972 - Gregory Whitney Vinson, Son of Lance & Marilyn Vinson
1960 - Evanna Johnson, Daughter of Nelwyn Heath and
Sister In Law of Christal Janis
1980 - Andrew Rininger, Son of Philip & Ellen Rininger
1982 - Geoffrey Lynn Meier, Son of Gary Meier
1989 - Kylar Shotwell, Daughter of Tracy Bradley
1982 - Chance Wilcox, Son of Shelli Ralls
1967 - John Steven Sims, Son of Marilyn Sims
1999 - Ahjzanae Adore Triplett, Daughter of Alesia Abbott
1993 - Patrick Burns, Son of Ray & Amanda Burns
1991 - David Kerpchar, Son of Sally Kerpchar
1971 - Joel Sloan, Son of Jim & Glenna Sloan
1982 - Adam Brown, Son of Greg & Debbie Brown
1979 - James (Jimi) Nicholas, Son of Fred & Linda Nicholas
2015 - Kacie Joiner, Daughter of Julie Joiner
1999 - Jared Mayfield, Son of Robbie Lampkins
1986 - Kristina O'Masters Palmer, Daughter of Laurie Martin
1997 - Ethan Tyler Brown, Son of Erica Poorbaugh
2018 - Kingston Bowen, Son of Lakisha Washington
1984 - Justin Moyer, Son of Valli Moyer
1986 - Chad Moyer, Son of Valli Moyer
1989 - Chance Barton, Son of Sherry Barton
1990 - Beau Kocina, Son of Carolyn Kocina
2020 - Kennedy Jane Parks, Granddaughter of
Janey Chambless and Patty Learned
1974 - Terrance Riggs, Son of Brenda Riggs



JULY ANGEL DATES

2008 - Aaron Michael Wolf, Son of Laura Wolf
2006 - Chasen Sean Shirley, Son of Debbie Shirley
2008 - DeAndria Sharee Anderson, Daughter of Rawn & Loretta Stephens
2010 - Evanna Johnson, Daughter of Nelwyn Heath and
Sister In Law of Christal Janis
2008 - Lloyd Ross (Rossi) Moore, Jr., Son of Carolyn Moore
2010 - Sanai Caden Johnson, Daughter of Octavia Johnson
2012 - Brett Collins, Son of Bill & Geri Collins
2010 - Ahjzanae Adore Triplett, Daughter of Alesia Abbott
2011 - Christopher Birken, Son of Elizabeth Birken
2013 - Zy-Air Stoval, Son of Jerome & Dora Stovall
2010 - Austin Haecker, Son of Debbie Haecker and
Grandson of Carolyn Cooper
2013 - Jacob Landon, Son of Brenda Landon
2016 - Matthew Coers, son of Michelle Guerrero
2015 - Brian Smith, Son of Cindy Smith
2005 - Patrick O'Masters, Son of Laurie Martin
2017 - Kristina O'Masters Palmer, Daughter of Laurie Martin
2018 - Kingston Bowen, Son of Lakisha Washington
2018 - Austin Balogun, Son of Yokima Whittaker
2020 - Eric Castelo, Son of Debbie Castelo
2021 - Matthew Hanzi, Son of Nelda Hanzi
2021 - Alex Coogan, Son of Tim and Amy Coogan
2020 - Ruby Abrol, Daughter of Bina Abrol
2021 - Julian Karim, Son of Reshad & Rosanna Karim

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, July 14th at 7pm.

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

We offer our warmest welcome to our new member, **Dustin and Erica Lear, lost their son David in April of this year.** 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 one comes to judge another. You will find that children are being mourned who have died from all ages and all causes. The pain is the same-that of the loss of hopes and dreams that will never be realized.

Come and join with others who understand much of what you're feeling more than most people, simply because we've been there. Know that there will be sadness and tears as we talk about our loss, but there will also be joy and laughter as we remember special times with our children. You don't have to say anything if you don't want to, but you will certainly be given that opportunity.

We ask but one thing from you, that you attend at least three meetings before you decide if The Compassionate Friends is right for you.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Our chapter welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send your articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to David Hendricks at: **dbhhendricks@hotmail.com**. The deadline for submitting your articles is the 5th of each month.

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/>



July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month
And she chose this month to die.

Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was she
Having been, and left her mark.
A glorious incandescent life,
A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.

The July birth, the July death of
my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
With love that never dies.

Sally Migliaccio
TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY

**"May love be what
you remember
most."**

— DARCIE SIMS

Big Plans

Before my daughter died I had big plans. I was an avid gardener. Every chance I got I was out in the yard. My entire back yard was a butterfly, hummingbird garden. It was a certified backyard habitat registered by the National Wildlife Association and a certified Monarch butterfly way station registered with National Monarch Society. If I wasn't riding my John Deere mower in the front yard, I was probably planting or pruning in the back. I was taking classes to receive my organic gardening license and my husband and I even bought a lovely little 13 acre vegetable farm in Comfort, TX, complete with a homestead on it from the 1920's and a year-round, spring fed creek. I was going to retire in Comfort and raise and sell organic vegetables.

Then Angela died. I thought I was going to die. I lay on the couch for a year. I screamed, I cried, I went to counseling and to TCF meetings. Slowly, I tried to get back into the rhythm of life. My back yard was a mess due to lack of maintenance. My front yard didn't look much better. I half heartedly tried do my gardening. I didn't have the energy or the enthusiasm I once did. Things weren't as beautiful as they once were. The colors of the flowers weren't as vivid as they once were not nor did they smell as sweet. When I planted, the earth didn't feel good in between my fingers like it once did. I started getting horrible headaches every time I tried to work outside. It felt like the back of my head was coming off. I thought that it was either stress or perhaps allergies. I came down with one sinus infection after another. I finally went to a specialist. I needed sinus surgery to correct my abnormally small sinus passages. After all these years I spent loving the outdoors and gardening, I now needed sinus surgery? It didn't make a lot of sense to me at the time. I now believe that somehow the grievous loss of my daughter was such a blow to me physically that it weakened my defenses and my precarious sinus condition manifested itself.

Take good care of yourself. The loss of a child is the worst blow a person can suffer. When we lose a child we are encouraged to reach out for help through family, friends, clergy, professional counseling, support groups, etc. All of these outlets can be invaluable in helping us as bereaved parents to survive the impossible. One important aspect of dealing with loss that is often overlooked is our physical health. The physical effect that the loss of a child has on our bodies can be just as real and devastating as the impact that it has on us spiritually, mentally and psychologically. Make sure that your doctor is aware of what you are going through. Be careful not to miss your annual checkups. Try to get enough sleep and if you can take a walk and get some fresh air. Come to TCF meetings. You will find empathy and understanding. And most of all, try to keep on loving yourself.

Janet G. Reyes
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX



Finding Meaning

One of the characters in Larry McMurtry's book, "The Streets of Laredo" says that, "He could remember the person he had been, but he could not become that person again." I think that's how all bereaved parents feel. Although friends, relatives and others want the old person back, the new person is who we've become.

David Kessler has written six books about grief. His latest is "Finding Meaning: The Six Stage of Grief." Most of us are familiar with Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief. In her book "on Death and Dying", she developed her theories while working with the terminally ill and their families. Her initial focus was not on the loss of a child, but those five stages are used with a variety of grief situations.

Kessler says, finding meaning does not equal understanding. Most of us don't understand why our child had to die. Each of us can find meaning in what we do after the death of our child. Meaning can occur in small moments. Maybe you became a more generous person, or a kinder person, or a more determined person. Or maybe you find a way to commemorate or honor your child.

This last definition of meaning is what we've called "Redemptive Possibilities" in our chapter meetings for years. Redemptive Possibilities means you do something positive to honor your child that you would not have done if your child were alive. Examples are scholarships, helping with whatever your child's interest were, being active in grief groups, donating time and /or money to causes close to you and your child, etc. Meaning is what we make happen after the loss. Finding meaning takes time, even years, to be able to recognize that meaning or to be open to redemptive possibilities.

Finding meaning is part of becoming the new person. The final stage of Kubler-Ross's stages is acceptance. That's also part of becoming the new person. And just like McMurtry's character, you can remember the old person, you just can't become that person again.

David Hendricks
Chapter Leader
Houston Northwest Chapter



*Although it's difficult today to see beyond the
sorrow, may looking back in memory help comfort
you tomorrow.*

First Anniversary

When a bolt of lightning took the life of my son, Curtis, my life changed forever. The first winter after the loss was the darkest period of my life. In my misery I'd often daydream of sitting on a warm, sandy beach, watching the waves roll in. I believed this might bring some peace to my aching heart.

At last, winter turned to spring and then summer. For many weeks I dreaded the coming of the first anniversary, July 24th, but knew I wanted to spend the day by the water. My husband and I made plans to travel to Bayfield County, Wisconsin. The 24th was a beautiful, sunny day when we arrived on the shores of Lake Superior. As we set up our chairs in a shady spot on the beach, we looked around at the many families surrounding us. Parents were relaxing as their children played in the sand and water. Tears ran down our cheeks as we watched and remembered Curt and his sister, Pam, doing the same thing as youngsters. The memories were hard to bear—this wasn't the soothing, peace-filled day that I had hoped for. As we left the beach, I wondered if people noticed my tear-streaked face. The next evening we traveled to a different, more secluded beach. The sun setting over the water was a beautiful sight, and the photo I took is one I love to look at, especially in the cold winter months.

Bayfield County is known for its many orchards. The sweet cherries and blueberries were ready for picking, so we decided to take advantage of the opportunity. For several hours we worked side by side, first picking the cherries from low-hanging branches, and then kneeling to pick the loaded blueberry bushes. We talked as we worked, occasionally sampling the delicious fruit, and surprisingly, even laughing. For short periods of time we were able to put aside the sadness and enjoy the moment. When we arrived back home, the "anniversary" cards and messages waiting for us from thoughtful friends touched our hearts. We took great pleasure in sharing our fruit with family and friends.

As the 4th anniversary of Curt's passing approaches, I look back and see the progress I've made. The grief process is exasperatingly slow. Healing doesn't magically happen with the passage of time, but requires lots of hard work and patience. My journey through grief continues, and sometimes I question if it will ever end. However, I do know that the crushing sorrow I once felt no longer rules my life. I've done what I thought was impossible—I've survived the loss of my precious son and have become a more caring, compassionate person because of it. I know that I must live for today, appreciating the beauty and surprises that each day brings. I will do the best I can because this is what my son would want.

Ruth Ann Meyer
TCF Greater Antigo Area, WI
In loving memory of my son, Curtis



The Paths to Peace

As bereaved parents, we look to others for answers about our grief journey. For eight years I have listened as so many parents spoke about the combination of factors which brought peace to their hearts and allowed them to move forward into a different, less painful, life. I have read books, watched movies, attended seminars and retreats. I have gone to 93 Compassionate Friends meetings. And I have discovered one key factor in finding peace and resolution on this terrible grief journey: there is no single element or singular combination of elements that answers the needs of more than one parent. Each parent must patiently seek those elements that will enhance the individual and a unique personal journey: there is no magic map to finding the path to peace.

There is one common denominator in this quest for the peace on our long journey, and that is patience. Patience with ourselves is mandatory, because the grief journey after the death of our precious child is so horrible, so painful, and so isolating that our psyches and our bodies take so very much time to begin the healing process. There are setbacks. There is progress. Each of these comes in spurts. Each is partially reversed and the process begins anew.

Friends and family do not thoroughly understand our perspective on our unique journey. We must make allowances for them. But we must ask that allowances be made for us. For we are finding ourselves while on a path that we did not choose. We are lost. We are weakened. We are heartbroken. Each of us in our own way is seeking the formula that is uniquely our own.

Some parents find a kind of peace in their religion. Some parents are angry with their God. Many parents seek private counseling. Other parents read prolifically about the grief journey, seeking some element which resonates with them. Many parents come to Compassionate Friends meetings and actively participate. Others attend meetings and say little. Some parents slip into denial and proceed on the old path of their lives. We each make choices. We are different people with different experiences, backgrounds, cultures, genetic hard wiring, education and combination of abilities.

The path to peace is found by searching, by reaching out to every resource available. We will reject much of what we find; but if we search, we will find what we need.

For many of us, finding other bereaved parents presents an opportunity to listen to the stories of their child and their journey and, within those stories, we find many threads that fit our unique journey. Many stories, many journeys, many new threads are shared in group discussion and in private discussions. We find “seasoned” grieverers who provide perspective on our feelings, and listen to our story. We find newly bereaved parents who touch our hearts and remind us how we have built our path to peace brick by brick. Their pain brings reflection and new revelations about our own grief journey.

I found kindred souls at Compassionate Friends. These kindred souls have allowed me to explore the various aspects of my being and gradually create a path of peace for myself. But the journey does not suddenly end. We walk this path for the rest of our lives. And if we do the hard work and face our demons early on, we accept the unacceptable and face life on our own terms. And that is as it should be.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX



Wish You Were Here

You'd be nineteen if you were here
But why you're gone still isn't clear.
Your things are still all in your room
As if you'd be returning soon.
Spongebob waits there by the door.
Your shoes are still there on the floor.

Your friends are all young women now.
They're working jobs or college bound.
Sometimes we see them and they say
We miss her so, wish she had stayed.

Your boyfriend's in the Army too
And by the way, he still loves you.
You thought his love was not so true
And that some other girl he'd choose.
But near two years have passed on by
Still to your grave he goes to cry.

Your niece and nephews miss you too,
And talk of the things you used to do.
Your Mother's going to be alright
And doesn't cry so much at night.
She puts the flowers on your grave,
And scrapbook pictures tries to save.

And me, I'm still the same old Dad,
The same old routine like I had.
I work real hard to make a way
To pay some bills and pass the day.

I'm not as funny as before
My world's not happy anymore.
I don't let on the pain I feel
But deep inside the hurt is real.

Time passes by year after year,
Life goes on with seldom a tear.
One wish I have, a wish so clear
My wish most of all, I wish you were here.

~Dad

Steve Tutt, TCF Tyler, 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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