



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**North Oklahoma City
Chapter
October 2021**

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Newsletter items can also be e-
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**The cut-off date for the next
newsletter is the 15th of the prior
month**

TCF NATIONAL OFFICE:

New Address
48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
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Upcoming Events

***** Good news *****

Our Regular meeting October 14th, 2021 will be a Hybrid meeting! We will be allowed to meet at Mayflower Congregational Church again, but we will also be meeting virtually for those who want to join virtually.

**** Masks and social distancing will be required of everyone per church policy! ****

You may bring a drink or snack, but we will not be allowed to furnish refreshments at this time.

While we would love to see you there we understand if you prefer to join us through ZOOM.com, using your phone, laptop, or desktop computer.

**The meeting ID is 884 5185 0603
the pass code is 753819**

You may log in as early as 7:15pm and the meeting will start at 7:30pm

Walk to Remember October 23rd,

Bluff Creek Park, 11301 N Meridian Ave, OKC 73120.

Registration 9:15, walk starts at 10:00 AM. 1 mile walk with social distancing and masks required. Fellowship and balloon release to follow the walk itself.

Memory signs for the walk path available for \$50 , send photo to NOKCTCF@aol.com so we can send them to print. Your Loved One's sign will be shared with all who participate.

If you are not comfortable walking you may , of course, send a Memorial Love Gift to honor your loved ones. Our walk has always been our major fundraiser and we do need your support to continue doing what we do. Love Gifts will also be accepted at the Walk itself that day. Additional information will soon be updated on our website and Facebook pages. You may also call the chapter phone and leave a message with your questions.

**October 15th is National Pregnancy and Infant
Loss Remembrance Day**

Sibling Corner... A Page Dedicated to our Brothers and Sisters

Saying Goodbye

One of the hardest things I ever had to do was to say goodbye to a very special person. This person was special to me in so many ways that when he died, it was like a part of me leaving too! I never thought a relationship between a brother and sister could be so strong. He seemed more than just a brother. He was also my best friend. We shared a lot of happiness throughout the years we grew up together. Although he was three years older than I, we never really argued or fought. He took me to parties and shared secrets with me. My brother always treated me like a best friend.

When Tony was a senior in high school, he was diagnosed with cancer. I couldn't believe it! I never gave up hope.... But after two painful years, I finally had to say goodbye to the best friend I've ever had. It was like a bad dream, but I just couldn't wake up. I didn't want to accept the fact that he was gone forever. I would cry myself to sleep every night and again wake up crying. I just couldn't understand why God had taken away my big brother.

After months of mourning, I finally learned to accept his death. I know now that he is finally out of pain. Seeing him sick like that is what hurt me most. It was very hard to say goodbye to my brother but I will never forget all our good times and our memories. He will remain in my heart and mind forever.

--By Kelly Conley, TCF Cincinnati,

OH My Sister, My Friend
Within our hearts
You will always be.
Our minds will be filled
With sweet memories.

Your spirit and love
Will never be gone,
For each life you touched
Will carry them on. -

-Catherine Hall TCF Hinsdale, IL

Not An Easy Word

Hope is not an easy word for grievers--
but we, more than most others,
need to understand
what hope can mean for us.

Hope means finding the strength
to live and grieve.

Hope means nurturing with grace
the joy remembrance.

Hope means embracing
with tenderness and pride
our own life
and the gifts left to us
by those we have lost.

*~Sascha Wagner
From the book "Wintersun"*



Anger and the Grieving Process

(by Chaplain Leroy Joesten Lutheran Minister and Chaplain at Lutheran General Hospital Park Ridge, Illinois.

Anger is but one of many emotional reactions to the painful reality of death. It is important to recognize anger as a natural, human response. If we can allow ourselves to be aggravated, irritated, even angered, by relatively minor life disappointments, we are certainly entitled to feel angry when faced with one of life's most devastating experiences — the death of a child. Anger is not chosen, however, whether to remain angry, to refuse to surrender it or to resolve itis a choice.

Even though it is a natural, emotional response and is not willed, anger does have some objectives. Initially, anger is PROTEST — an attempt to ward off a reality which is seen as too devastating to one's own sense of survival. It is an attempt to undo an event which is untimely and unwarranted. This phase of anger is the most acute, the most intense and therefore, perhaps, the most frightening. But anger must be expressed or ventilated in order for it to burn out. The reality of the death must be acknowledged; it cannot be fought or denied.

Anger is a means of RETRIEVAL. It craves a target. It may be directed at the doctor, at God, at oneself, or even at the deceased. Anger seeks to locate the author of the death with the hope that somehow our deceased child can be retrieved. This desire to retrieve or to have our dead child return to life continues for some time. Anger continues to feed the hope that somehow the death can be reversed. What eventually must be accepted is not only that the death has occurred but also that it is irreversible. As unfair and untimely as it is, the death cannot be undone. Anger is a means of CONTROL.

Anger erupts when we have lost control. It is an emotional response designed to regain control. It is a defense against accepting one's own sense of impotence. This helplessness may be the most painful dimension of a beloved child's death. Anger must be vented and burned out before we can, or in order for us to, get close to our helplessness. Our impotence to change the event needs to be accepted.

Once we can accept anger as a natural, human response, we can focus on its proper or improper expression. Instead of talking of good or bad ways of expressing anger, I prefer to speak of constructive or counter productive means of expressing anger. Constructive expression leads toward some form of resolution or dissolution of anger, while counter productive venting perpetuates, perhaps even magnifies, the effects of the death of a child.

Constructive venting of anger includes verbal and non-verbal means. It is important for people to have permission to verbalize their most intense feelings of anger, regardless of where the anger is targeted. Anger at God is as permissible as at any other target. If we give thanks to God for good times, it seems only natural that God would bear the brunt of at least some of our anger. It is also permissible and common that our dead child receive some of our anger. Even if the words must be yelled or screamed, the expression is healthy and therapeutic. The only caution may be to be in the company of someone who is understanding and accepting of our needs to verbalize the full intensity of our anger.

Anger can also be ventilated non-verbally. Crying itself can be a release of anger, especially the more intense and uncontrollable crying. Crying is a natural means of releasing frustration, helplessness, pain. Allowing ourselves to do those things which force the tears are good things to do: listening to music, looking at pictures, doing things that remind us of our child. Often these are avoided so that we will not cry, but they are a natural means of reinforcing the reality. Other non verbal means of expressing anger include physical exercise (running, walking, golf, tennis). The more physically demanding the better, because it forces a deeper physical release of stored up anger. (Scrubbing floors, washing walls, chopping wood, pounding nails are also good).

But there are counterproductive ways of dealing with anger. Repressing it so that it cannot come out is a common means. Displacing it on people who are either ignorant of the death or who are unable to understand the origin of the anger is counterproductive because it drives people away, causing even greater emotional isolation. Displacement may include being critical, harsh or even cruel to family members or friends for no apparent reason. Other counterproductive means include excess alcohol and drug abuse. Smoking or eating may increase. All of these make oneself the target of the anger, decreasing one's self esteem and self worth. Some may idealize their child, making him or her perfect or more than human. This can be a cover up for anger at the dead child which is too painful to express. Vengeance or taking the law into one's own hands is counterproductive. However, seeking justice through proper channels is a legitimate and potentially constructive outlet.

It is important to understand that people vary greatly in their experience of anger. Some people are said to have short fuses and erupt with very little provocation. Others are said to have the patience of a saint and are slow to anger. People also vary in their expression of anger; some find it easy while others find it difficult. These differences need to be respected so that people are free to pursue the most fitting expression of anger for themselves.

Anger must be expressed along with other emotional responses in order for it finally to be put to rest. Anger must be resolved if we are ever to be at peace with the fact of our child's death. Unexpressed anger leads to unresolved anger, which in turn leads to bitterness and sometimes depression. Bitterness is when a person's entire view of life is tainted and distorted. A bitter person is one who refuses to see the beauty and goodness and joy which, in spite of the tragedy of a child's death, still constitutes much of life. Indeed, the occasion of those qualities being restored in our life is a living tribute to the importance and lasting value of our child's life.

The goal of grief is to say goodbye to our child on all levels, to embrace the contribution our child was able to make to life and to exercise gratitude for the life that was, albeit all too short. To identify and express anger as a natural, human response is one of the steps on the way to recovery.

From TCF National Newsletter archives.

Think Before You Speak

Dear Friend, today you broke my heart,
In a place that was unbroken.
You did it with your thoughtless words
That should not have been spoken.
You know that I am grieving,
That my pain is deep and real.
Your hurtful words pierced like a knife.
How do you think I feel?
You may not suffer from my loss
Or share this lonely grief,
But I'm mourning my baby,
Who's life was much too brief.
I'm sure you don't know how I feel,
I don't expect you to.
Don't ask me to get over it. . . .
That's something I can't do.
Without grief, there's no healing
It's a journey I must make.
It's not the path that I would choose,
but one I'm forced to take.
No matter how you choose to see
What I am going through,
I need compassion and support. . . .
I'd do the same for you.

Author: Gwen Flowers

Just Those Few Weeks

For those few weeks– I had you to myself.
And that seems too short of time ,
To be changed so profoundly.
In those few weeks– I came to know you...
And to love you.
You came to trust me with your life.
Oh, what a life I had planned for you! Just those few weeks–
When I lost you, I lost a lifetime of hopes, plans,
dreams, and aspirations...
A slice of my future simply vanished overnight.
Just those few weeks– It wasn't enough time to convince others
How special and important you were.
How odd, a truly unique person has recently died
And no one is mourning the passing.
Just a mere few weeks–
And no "normal" person would cry all night .
Over a tiny, unfinished baby,
Or get depressed and withdraw day after endless day.
No one would, so why am I?
You were just those few weeks my little one
You darted in and out of my life too quickly.
But it seems that's all the time you needed
To make my life so much richer–
And give me a small glimpse of eternity.

--by Susan Erlin

We Had Planned to Dress You

We had planned to dress you like a pumpkin for Halloween.
It was your father's idea,
I preferred dressing you like a lion.
We had planned to take a picture of you holding a turkey leg
for Thanksgiving.
All the time, thanking God for you, our miracle baby.
We had planned to dress you like an elf for Christmas.
That was my idea, your father preferred dressing you like
Santa.
We had planned a big first birthday with balloons, a clown
and lots of gifts.
We had never planned to say goodbye to you.
Now we fear the holidays and your anniversaries.
No matter how much time goes by or what the future
brings, You will always be absent during those days.
We will always miss you and the things we planned but were
never able to do.

Love, Mommy --By Yolanda Castro-Arce



OUR CHILDREN *Loved...*

Missed... Remembered...



As long as we live, our children too shall live, for they are part of us in our memories.

We lovingly remember the following children on Their Anniversary.

October Birthdays

1 BRADLEY SCOTT SZCZEPANIAK
1 ERIN ELAINE VAN HORN (MALONE)
1 SUSAN CRABTREE BAER
2 ELLEN OLIVIA MILLER
2 MAGGIE JANE MILLER
5 DUNCAN HARLAN
5 TIM MCLAUHLIN
7 SHAWNA KAYE GOODIN
11 ZACHARY VAN HORN (MALONE)
13 KADYNCE HOLLARS
15 PETER DEWAR CRAWFORD
15 VICTORIA "TORI" SCHOENBERGES
16 AARON TODD SMITH
16 WILLIAM 'BILLY' KHOURIE II
17 HEATHER BORING
17 JADEN (HORN)
19 EMILY STROUGH
20 DOROTHEA A. "THEA" DELANEY
21 BARBARA MOORE (STRINGER-WALKER)
21 JOSH WILLIAM HAYNES
24 CASY LEE CUNDIFF
27 KYLE BENTON WEST
27 RAYMOND L. JOYNER
28 CASEY CASTROP
31 KARLA KAY JOHNSON PRICER (CUNDIFF)
31 TELLY R GATEWOOD
31 ZACKARY ROBERT FINCH (DAY)

October Angelverseries

2 MAGGIE JANE MILLER
3 GUY GRIFFIN
5 MASON PIERSOL
5 MEGAN YORK
6 JIMMY HEFNER
6 JOE "DAN" TRIGG JR
7 KYLE BENTON WEST
7 SCOTT AMUNDSON
9 WILLIAM JOSEPH DAVIS (FISH)
10 CARINA BRIANNE SAUNDERS (QUEEN)
11 LAUREN KACI McCAULEY
12 BRANDON NALAGAR
16 CHARLES HUDDLESTON
16 JUSTIN HERRELL
16 SAMUEL MARTIN (BROWN)
22 BRANDEN CARL
23 ANTHONY FULFORD
24 KEITH BROOKS "MARTY" (SEEBECK)
25 CHARLES BAXTER (WORDEN)
25 SHEILA BROWN
25 SYDNEY LEMONS (WILSON)
27 JARRETT HAYDEN LANG
27 BRANDON POWELL
27 HEATHER MARIE WILSON (FULTZ)
27 TELLY R GATEWOOD
28 KELSEY BRANSBY (DAVIS)
28 MICHAEL JOHNSON (KNIGHT)
30 HEATHER BORING
31 SERENITY OLIVER





Love Gifts...A thoughtful way to remember our precious children.

A *Love Gift* is given to The Compassionate Friends in honor of someone who has died...or a memorial to a relative or friend...or simply from those who wish to help.

Because TCF is a Not for Profit organization, *Love Gifts* are an important means of financial support, which enable us to continue to reach out and support bereaved families. **We are so very grateful for the *Love Gifts* listed below. Thank you for caring**



When someone you love becomes a memory ,the memory becomes a treasure.

Marty Miller in memory of Hannah

Donna Carpenter in memory of son, Tim McLaughlin

Helping Someone Survive

A death by suicide triggers great amounts of anger and guilt. However, some of those feelings can be balanced by struggling to see that the suicide was not so much a deliberate, hostile act, but a gesture of utter hopelessness and despair. Reminders that a person was so driven by emotional whirlwinds that it was impossible to sense any ray of hope, can temper considerably the emotional impact of a death by suicide.

One of the best responses to a suicide that I have ever heard came through a sermon delivered by a pastor of a young man who shot himself. With great eloquence, his pastor was able to convey tremendous hope through these words: "Our friend died on his own battlefield. He was killed in action fighting a civil war. He fought against adversaries that were as real to him as his casket is real to us. They were powerful adversaries. They took toll of his energies and endurance. They exhausted the last vestiges of his courage, and only God knows how this child of His suffered in the silent skirmishes that took place in his soul."

--Victor Passchin Reprinted with permission



I Laid a Rose On Your Grave

I Laid a Rose On Your Grave
But that's not what I wanted to do.
I wanted to tickle you, play with you,
laugh with you, read to you, sing to you, too.

I laid a rose on your grave today
and said a little prayer,
I wished so much with all my heart,
that you were here, not there.

I laid a rose on your grave today,
The tears falling from my eyes.
I will never forget when you were taken away
and left us with broken hearts and sighs.

I laid a rose on your grave today.
Forget you I can not do.
Each day, each week, each month,
I will always think of you.

Author Unknown



Sometimes when grief overwhelms us it is comforting to know that someone who cares is just a phone call away. A Loving Listener is someone who is willing to talk on the phone with another bereaved Parent, Sibling or Grandparent. A Loving Listener's phone number will be published in the newsletter as another resource to our bereavement community. Names will be listed along with special circumstances, such as auto accident, illness, suicide or homicide.

If you are willing to be a Loving Listener please let me know and I will add you to the newsletter. Contact Gary Clark at gary.clark@cox.net.

Loving Listeners

Gary Clark: Skiing Accident/Organ donation 405-691-7144

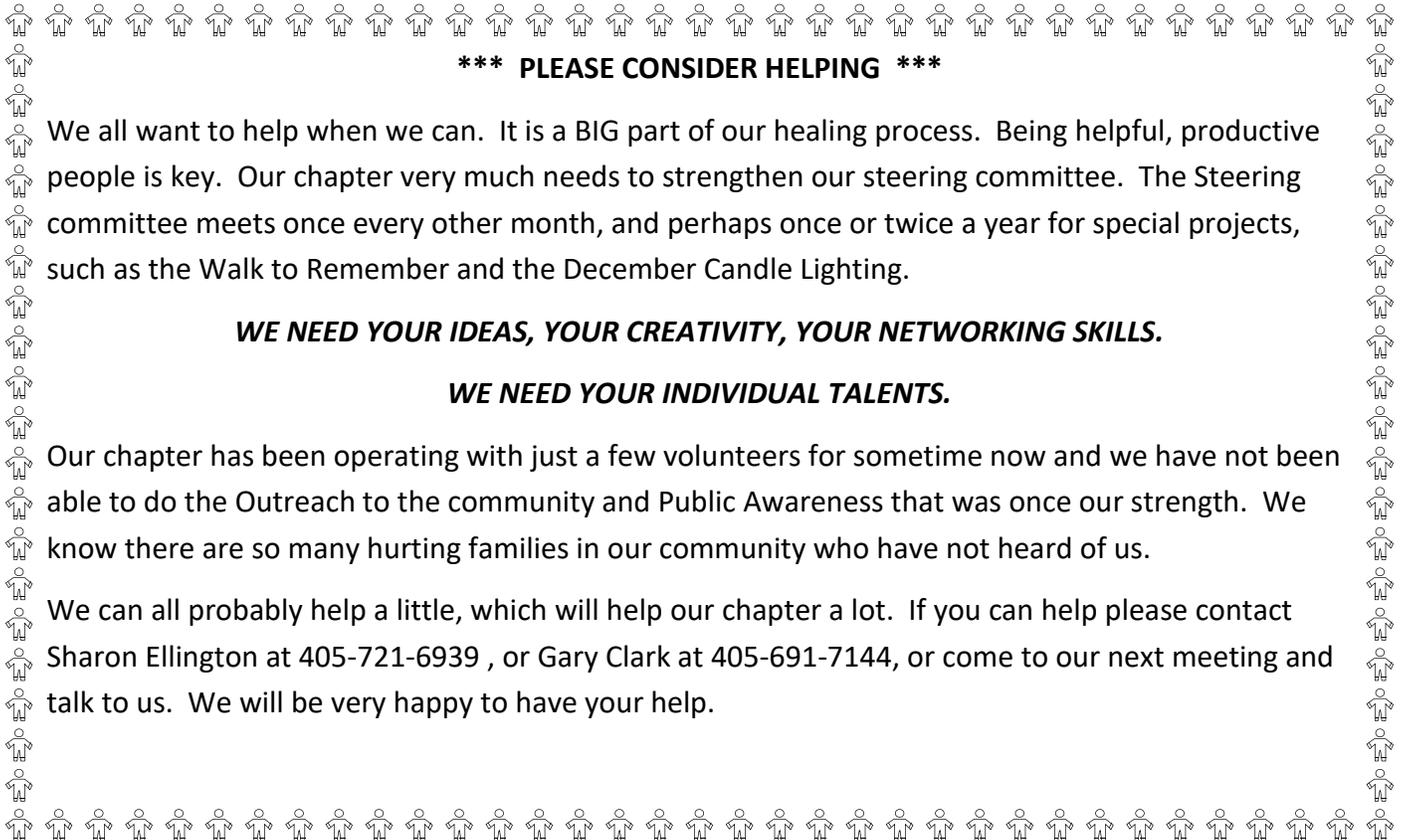
Melinda Heidling: Infant Death 405-885-2739

Sharon Ellington: Drunk Driver 405-721-6939

Robi Long: Unknown 405-408-2102

Kelly Sibley: infant death, special needs child 405-962-8968

Janet Turley: Suicide, adult child 405-413-9797



***** PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING *****

We all want to help when we can. It is a BIG part of our healing process. Being helpful, productive people is key. Our chapter very much needs to strengthen our steering committee. The Steering committee meets once every other month, and perhaps once or twice a year for special projects, such as the Walk to Remember and the December Candle Lighting.

WE NEED YOUR IDEAS, YOUR CREATIVITY, YOUR NETWORKING SKILLS.

WE NEED YOUR INDIVIDUAL TALENTS.

Our chapter has been operating with just a few volunteers for sometime now and we have not been able to do the Outreach to the community and Public Awareness that was once our strength. We know there are so many hurting families in our community who have not heard of us.

We can all probably help a little, which will help our chapter a lot. If you can help please contact Sharon Ellington at 405-721-6939 , or Gary Clark at 405-691-7144, or come to our next meeting and talk to us. We will be very happy to have your help.

We need not walk alone. 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.

Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.

We are young, and we are old. 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.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2007

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73157-2249

P.O. BOX 12249

NORTH OKLAHOMA CITY CHAPTER

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

October
2021

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TCF "Online Support Community" Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing
The Compassionate Friends national website offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under," "Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "Men Only Sharing Session," "No Surviving Children," "Survivors of Suicide." There are also sessions for surviving siblings. The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.