



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

North Oklahoma City Chapter

April 2021

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Newsletter items can also be e-mailed to:

NOKCTCF@AOL.COM

The cut-off date for the next newsletter is the 15th of the prior month

TCF NATIONAL OFFICE:

New Address
48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
Wixom, MI 48393
Toll-Free (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

Upcoming Events

Regular meeting April 8th, 2021

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, our chapter has elected to NOT meet in person for the time being.

We are offering a chapter meeting via a video application called ZOOM. With zoom you can participate in the meeting on 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

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## **Easter Thought**

One more winter overcome,  
One more darkness turned to light.  
Winter is the price for spring.  
Struggle is the price for life.  
Even in sorrow,  
Remember to prepare your heart  
For celebration -  
Next spring perhaps.

Or the spring after that...



-- Sasha

# Love Never Goes Away

"Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing." Sound familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouches" can compare with the hurt we now 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 commonly recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guide-lines. 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 anymore. 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, and to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be "crazy" and TIME to remember.

Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress 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 their 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 the good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child...HE/SHE DIED. We didn'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, very glad I loved.

Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

-Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D.

# Hurricane Houses

We grievors remind me of people who live by the ocean, where they build sturdy, good looking homes which offer most spectacular views. One can tell how their owners cherish these well-tended houses with shiny clean windows like eyes watching the beautiful, unpredictable sea.

But then, there comes a hurricane. In a matter of minutes the treasured, handsome houses are struck, broken, swept away by wind and water, covered by an avalanche of uncaring sand.

I have wondered, weren't the people afraid of another hurricane? Yes, of course, they were afraid, but there was no better place in all the world to live, and so they would stay, they would risk it all again.

I understand those people in their hurricane houses. My life, too, has felt like a hurricane house at times. My children died, taken by one drowning and by one suicide – leaving me broken and swept aside by a storm of tragedy, overwhelmed by loss.

Yet, if someone asked me about it today, I would say that, while I was bitterly hurt and hopeless then, I see that my place in life is still the finest because I once had my children. I have learned to accept the lonely

beach. I build another house and now a changed "me" lives there in those rooms filled with welcome feelings and cherished memories.

I think that a veteran griever will know what I mean, while a "hurricane house" may seem impossible for most newly bereaved parents. Perhaps we will all understand next

year or the year after that. There is no hurry.

To honor the legacy of times remembered, to find a new view of life, and for the sake of those who survived with us, many of us have decided to stay on the dangerous beach and to restore our hurricane house with its shiny, clean window like eyes watching the beautiful, unpredictable sea.

—Sascha Wagner

## Goodbye, "Best Friend" (Written for Some Bereaved Mother out There)

At 3 weeks; Don't tell me to stop crying. I cannot, and I resent your telling me that. But I'll bite my tongue, and clench my fist. And I'll not answer you, "my best friend."

At 2 months; Why must you tell me I should be over it in 2 months, That I should snap out of it - you, "my best friend?" Can't you feel the knife in my heart? At 3 months Why won't you let me talk... you and I were always inseparable. I thought you of all people would understand. Now you cut me off when I call, and do not return my calls.

Several months later; I must tell you one more thing before I lose your friendship forever. I got a call today from a perfect stranger, who also lost a child... and she talked to me and let me talk - We talked, we cried, for over 2 hours. "Come to The Compassionate Friends," she said. "We will help you, we have been down the same path." "Yes," I said gratefully, "I will, dear friend."

I'm so sorry, my old friend, that we will never be best friends again. I just couldn't make you understand, you see, that I lost a child, that I am hurting. And you would not listen. Goodbye. I will miss you. -

-Dave Ziv TCF, Lower Bucks County, P



## A Sibling's Memories

As the youngest child in the family, I was the tagalong. I could never run as fast, or play as hard, as my older siblings. My sister, barely 3 years older, pushed our relationship into a competition that she always won. My brother, 5 years my senior and a male role model, was my protector. I can still remember his clothes, blackened with the musty darkness of our tree house, and the sweaty smell of the perspiration of play. I could never keep up. He knew that when he took my hand, I would lean on his shoulder, where I could feel his blood pulsing through his veins. He would vault me on his back, where I clasped my hands around his neck. He smelled of minty shampoo and musk, as if he were an older man. He was 10.

On days when he was away, and I was alone or scared, I would open the door of his bedroom and let the whirlwind of air envelop me.

I would close the door carefully and lie on his bed, the powdery scent of his sheets surrounding my body like a security blanket. Then I would rise from my reverie, and look at his metal airplanes and the rest of his stuff. The sound of a door slamming would snap me out of my trance. I would run from his room.

Now, 12 years later, I am 17 and my brother is dead. But his presence rushes back to me when I sort laundry. The musty smell of his clothes resides in my memory like yesterday. And when things become too rough and I need my protector, I slip into his room to see his stuff, and the moment lingers.

-Samantha Stritter TCF, North Andover, MA

## ***Your Compassionate Friend***

I can tell from that look, friend that you need to talk,  
So come, take my hand and let's go for a walk.  
See, I'm not like the others, I won't shy away,  
Because I want to hear what you've got to say.

Your child has died and you need to be heard,  
But they don't want to hear a single word.  
They tell you your child's "with God" so be strong.  
They say all the "right" things that somehow sound wrong.

They're just hurting for you and trying to say,  
They'd give anything to help take your pain away.  
But they're struggling with feelings they can't understand  
So forgive them for not offering a helping hand.

I'll walk in your shoes for more than a mile.  
I'll wait while you cry and be glad if you smile.  
I won't criticize you or judge you or scorn,  
I'll just stay and listen 'til your night turns to morn.

Yes, the journey is hard and unbearably long,  
And I know that you think that you're not quite that strong.  
So just take my hand, 'cause I've got time to spare,  
And I know how it hurts friend, for I have been there.

See, I owe a debt you can help me repay  
For not long ago, I was helped the same way.  
As I stumbled and fell, thru a world so unreal,  
So believe when I say that I know how you feel.

I don't look for praise or financial gain  
And I'm sure not the kind who gets joy out of pain.  
I'm just a strong shoulder who'll be here till the end -  
I'll be your Compassionate Friend

*Steve Channing  
TCF Winnipeg*

*In Memory of my daughter, Kimberly Susanne Channing*

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*Steve Channing  
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# 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.*

### **April Birthdays**

|    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 3  | JAMES KENNETH HIGNITE         |
| 4  | ZACHARY RYAN MULANAX          |
| 6  | AUSTIN NEAL WADDLE            |
| 6  | KARLA JANAE CLEMONS           |
| 8  | CONNIE CAPPS                  |
| 9  | DONALD "STUBY" JARVIS         |
| 9  | LANAYE JOHNSTON               |
| 9  | NICHOLAS IAN "NICK" DAHL      |
| 10 | BLAKE MCKEE                   |
| 10 | KEITH DAVIS                   |
| 11 | BARBIE SUE GOODMAN            |
| 11 | LANCE WALTER HARTSFIELD       |
| 13 | SHELL DAWN TATE-SAPP (THRIFT) |
| 14 | SAM BOWLES                    |
| 15 | STEPHEN WHITE (WOOD)          |
| 16 | AUSTIN ABBITT                 |
| 17 | CHAD STOREY                   |
| 17 | SUSAN LANHAM                  |
| 18 | RYDER JOHNSON (HOGUE)         |
| 19 | ANDREW BOLLACKER (HOPE)       |
| 20 | MATTHEW JOHN NEUNLIST         |
| 22 | DARLA KAY BURNS (JONES)       |
| 23 | JOSHUA JAMES CURRY            |
| 23 | RYAN HUSTON GLEIM             |
| 23 | ZAYD ZUBAIDI                  |
| 24 | TRAVIS CLARK                  |
| 25 | BETHANEY ODOM (THOMAS)        |
| 25 | JOHN FAULK                    |
| 26 | AMY LYNN AKINS                |
| 26 | MEGAN LYNEE WHITE             |
| 30 | SCOTT AMUNDSON                |

### **April Angelverseries**

|    |                                     |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 2  | HERBERT C NICHOLS                   |
| 3  | BRYAN PIETSCH                       |
| 4  | JAMES K WIEDEMAN (PERKINS)          |
| 4  | LAUREN JOHNSON                      |
| 4  | SHAWN FRANKLIN CHOATE               |
| 6  | GREGORY O. GLENN JR.                |
| 6  | RYAN S DALLAM                       |
| 6  | TRAVIS MCKINNEY (MICHAEL)           |
| 8  | BLAINE LONG                         |
| 8  | JOSEPH "JOEY" CULLNAN               |
| 9  | TREVOR MAX HEIDLING                 |
| 10 | AARON TODD SMITH                    |
| 10 | STEPHEN ROBISON (RIVES)             |
| 11 | KEITH MAPLE                         |
| 11 | RYAN HUSTON GLEIM                   |
| 15 | BRENDA WEST                         |
| 15 | MATTHEW FLOWERS                     |
| 16 | DEVON DAVISON                       |
| 16 | TAMMIE LYNN ERWIN                   |
| 18 | JAMES KENNETH HIGNITE               |
| 18 | JANET DIANE PIPPIN                  |
| 21 | AMANDA FULTZ                        |
| 21 | LANCE WAYNE BEUTLER                 |
| 21 | RAMONE RASHAD COULTER (GISSANDANER) |
| 22 | A J PEARCE                          |
| 22 | BRANDOLYN DICKEY HENDERSON          |
| 23 | BRADLEY SCOTT SZCZEPANIAK           |
| 25 | CALEB POSS                          |
| 26 | TRENT LADD DANIEL (VANDER HARR)     |
| 27 | REBECCA ANNE BROOME                 |
| 29 | AUSTYN RAE SIDNER (THOMAS)          |
| 29 | RITA KAY GWINN                      |



## 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 non-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.***

"TCF, Thank you for always remembering Jean Ellen's anniversary, "2-20-78". I am so happy that CF has continued on, as in 1978 we didn't have the grief support we have today. As the originator of the OKC Chapter I am thankful it is on-going! As ever, Pat McAboy

Barry & Tonda Stafford, In Loving Memory of Rebecca 5/7/91-3/10/124

Elizabeth Cunningham "For my Billy Joe Cunningham, I haven't been to your graveside because of this virus and taking care of our family that need me. I know you understand. My heart is still there by you everyday. I will be there as soon as it is safe to do so. I miss you everyday. All my Love, Moma"

"Thank you to you and your team for all the wonderful work you do" Bob Willis

## You're Just a Thought Away

Distance takes us far apart  
And darkens my today,  
I have to keep remembering -  
You're just a thought away.  
When the world is too confusing,  
And times are hard to bear,  
I pull your precious meaning,  
Your bright spirit, from the air.  
And if I sometimes drift  
Into a lonely state of mind,  
I gather up the memories  
Of the days now left behind.  
And though you're not beside me,  
I can tap into my heart  
And draw upon the warmth and love  
That now lives while we're apart.  
And with these fond reflections  
On the times when you were near,  
I sense a little bit of what  
it's like to have you here... -

-Bruce B. Wilmer TCF, Brisbane Australia

## *Love and Hope*

On a cold winter day,  
the sun went out,  
Grief walked in to stay.  
I turned away from the unwanted guest  
And bid him be on his way.  
  
Grief was merciless, he brought his friends,  
Loneliness, Fear and Despair.  
They walk these rooms, unceasingly,  
In the somber cloaks they wear.  
  
Every so often now, Love pays a call  
She always has Hope by her side.  
I welcome Love as well as Hope,  
For I thought surely they had died.  
  
Love counsels Grief in a most gentle way,  
Bids him be still for awhile.  
Then Love walks with me through memory's hall,  
And for a time... I can smile.

— Kerry Marston, TCF  
Grand Junction, CO

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](mailto:gary.clark@cox.net).**

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**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.

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OKLAHOMA CITY, OK  
PERMIT NO. 752

**April**  
**2021**

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
NORTH OKLAHOMA CITY CHAPTER  
P.O. BOX 12249  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73157-2249

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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.