



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies

North Oklahoma City Chapter

December 2020

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

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## Upcoming Events

### Regular meeting December 10th, 2020

**Do 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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**Our Virtual WorldWide Candle Lighting will be 12/13. You can log in as early as 5:30 PM.**

**Meeting starts at 6 P.M. through 8 P.M.**

**Meeting ID 886 1806 7218 passcode 629509**



## *Sibling Corner... Dedicated to our Brothers and Sisters*

### **REFLECTIONS**

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness.

Despite the pain and the loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and a productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people who help me through the rough times. But most of all- I have been given the gift of time - time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

**Cathy Schanberger**

*From This Healing Journey, an Anthology for Bereaved Siblings*  
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### **I Am Your Sister and Always Will Be**

"I am your sister and always will be." That's how Susie signed her cards to me. After a while, she shortened it to, "I am..." And of course I knew the rest of it Susie was two and one-half years younger than I. She was alive one evening talking on the phone to Mom about the Oscars and to Dad about moving. The next day she was found. Whatever it was—it ended her life and changed mine forever. There was a wonderful side of my sister that I didn't pay enough attention to. She was a kind and loving person, always ready to shelter lost animals and lost souls. When she was in a good mood, her smiles warmed my heart. Yet I spent most of my life wishing that things were different—wishing that she thought more of herself, wishing that she would take my advice, wishing that she were happier, wishing that we could accept each other. Now, for two years, I've done nothing but wish she were here so we could have another chance to work at our relationship. Now, I wish that I had been able to give her my unconditional love and support. (She needed it and deserved it.) Now, I wish that I could have been with her that night so she would not have been alone. Now, I wish that I would have held her in my arms and told her how very much I loved her. Because, Susie, I am your sister and always will be.

Michele Walters, TCF Baltimore, MD

**'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS**  
~FOR BEREAVED PARENTS~

Tw'as the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days  
that I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.  
The stores were all filled with holiday lights,  
in hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.

As others were making their holiday plans,  
My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.  
I had lost my dear child a few years before,  
And I knew what my holiday had in store.

When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,  
I sprang to my feet and was looking around,  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash

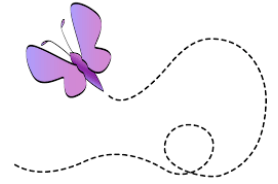
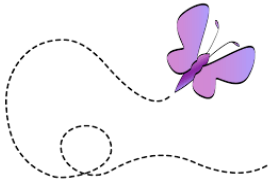
The sight that I saw took my breath away,  
And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.  
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.  
With beauty and grace they performed a dance,  
I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,  
That my child was still near me and that I was loved.  
The message they brought was my holiday gift,  
And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.

As I knelt closer to get a better view,  
One allowed me to pet it - as if *it* knew -  
That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,  
To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed I carried the thought,  
Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -  
That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,  
Our children are with us - they're not really dead.

Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,  
A message of hope - a message so dear.  
And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,  
"To all bereaved parents - We love you tonight!"  
~ by Faye **McCord**, TCF Jackson, MS



## The Good Fight

Before our son's death turned our lives upside down, I cannot recall spending any time in cemeteries. One of two elderly relatives, who had lived out their span, are in cemeteries now, and their loss is felt at holiday gatherings. When I was a child, our Sunday School class took a tour of the pre-Revolutionary War cemetery behind the historic old church I attended. I remember being shocked at the number of tiny markers for the very young who, our teacher said, were so susceptible to diseases in those colonial days. We were simply told that people had large families then because they knew illness would take some of the children. We were never exposed to the notion that this was a tragedy to these real people so long ago.

Many years later, when my grandmother was in her 80's, she told me that the child born before her had died at the age of three. At the age of 13, Grandmother was stunned to find her mother caressing this child's clothing and weeping in the attic of their home in the rolling hills of Kentucky. I was a parent then and I thought, "well, of course Grandmother's mother was sad, but she had other children". I didn't know, did I? Who among us did?

Now, when I go to my son's marker, I examine the other headstones carefully. Did everyone in the family live to an acceptable age? When I find one that clearly indicates the death of a child, I study the parents markers closely. How long did they have to live without their child? Sometimes the number of years takes my breath away. I am to learn from this. Others 'made it'. So can I. Without Compassionate Friends I wouldn't have had a clue as to HOW they made it, and probably would have given up the effort.

I read the inscriptions on these older markers to see if they provide any clues as to what helped those before me carry on. I found one that summed it up. It read:

"LIVING YOU MADE IT GOODLIER TO LIVE  
DEAD, YOU MAKE IT EASIER TO DIE"

So -- we are to endure. We do know what it was to live, but now we have the added dimensions of courage, love and

steadfastness. And, though we no longer hope for our own death as a release from the pain, we, unlike most "other people", will not fear it when we have finished fighting the good fight.

- Pat Kuzela, TCF Atlanta

## ONLY DECEMBER

**Feelings heavy,  
tears and tears.  
Will the darkness last?  
Or is it-only December?**

**Hadn't past months  
brought peace and hope?  
Where is the strength of October-  
and November?**

**Lights, carols, ornaments on trees,  
cards from friends,  
happy times in seasons past.  
We remember.  
We remember.**

**Will January bring light at last?  
Will we be stronger then,  
for making it through  
this December?**

**When people ask  
how I'm doing,  
I say, "Well, you know,  
it's December..."**

*from Stars in the Deepest Night – after  
the death of a child  
By Genesse Bourdeau Gentry*

## 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.*

#### **December Birthdays**

|    |                                 |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 1  | GUNNER SHULTZ                   |
| 1  | RUSTY LOFTIS                    |
| 2  | DUSTIN LYLES                    |
| 5  | JETT STARK                      |
| 7  | AMY HELMS (WITMER)              |
| 9  | ANDREW JOSEPH LAWS              |
| 9  | JOLEE BRITT WHITE               |
| 10 | TAMMIE LYNN ERWIN               |
| 12 | HUNTER "COLE"MAN JACKSON        |
| 14 | CARTER WILSON                   |
| 15 | RAHSAAN "ROME" DURHAM (COLBERT) |
| 16 | BREANNA STAR SWANSON (JOHNSON)  |
| 16 | DAISLEY PALMER (CHELSEA)        |
| 16 | TARA JONES                      |
| 17 | JOSEPH "JOEY" CULLNAN           |
| 17 | RYAN ELSASS                     |
| 20 | CHARLES HUDDLESTON              |
| 21 | CHARLES BAXTER (WORDEN)         |
| 21 | CHASE ASHLEY                    |
| 21 | JACKSON CLAY HENSLEY            |
| 23 | LINCOLN VAUGHN HENRY LEWIS      |
| 24 | KEITH BROOKS "MARTY" (SEEBECK)  |
| 27 | GREGORY O. GLENN JR.            |
| 27 | MARK CHRISTOPHER PIERCE         |
| 28 | BRANDON LEON GARRISON           |
| 28 | BRIAN ALAN EATON (MOORE)        |
| 28 | KELSEY FOLMAR                   |
| 28 | LARISA RHINEHART (CONSTANCE)    |
| 30 | PATRICIA JEAN BASCO-YOUNG       |

#### **December Angelverseries**

|    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1  | ROBERT L HOPPER JR             |
| 2  | DYLLAN ROSS SANDERS            |
| 3  | LARA GENTRY (HULSEY)           |
| 5  | JENNIFER SIPES (PERRYMAN)      |
| 5  | MICHAEL KEVIN ADKISSON         |
| 5  | RYAN ELSASS                    |
| 5  | JEFFREY SHRADER                |
| 6  | ANDREW ROGERS                  |
| 8  | JAMIE STARR MURRAY (BROTHER)   |
| 9  | JENNIFER BORING                |
| 9  | TARA JONES                     |
| 10 | BRYAN NICHOLSON (BAKER)        |
| 12 | JOSHUA GRIGGS                  |
| 12 | JEFF JEHLIK                    |
| 15 | MELISSA CAOLE (BAKER)          |
| 15 | SEAN M TUCKER (LEWIS)          |
| 16 | LANCE WALTER HARTSFIELD        |
| 16 | MATTEW DAVID HAMILTON          |
| 19 | JONATHAN GOOTEE                |
| 23 | MICHAEL D BARKER (GATLIFF)     |
| 23 | SHYAM DEV PATWARDHAN           |
| 24 | CONNIE CAPPS                   |
| 25 | JUSTIN RYAN LASSITER           |
| 26 | ZAYD ZUBAIDI                   |
| 26 | CARTER WILSON                  |
| 29 | STEFFANI CATHLYN TATE (THRIFT) |
| 30 | JARED MARC SMITH               |







**Love Gifts...A  
thoughtful way to  
remember our pre-  
cious 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.***

Deanna Becker Johnson in memory of Jenna Russell

Delores Wallace in memory of Jenna Russell

Laura Mae Crain in memory of Jenna Russell

LaVona Carlson in memory Jenna Russell

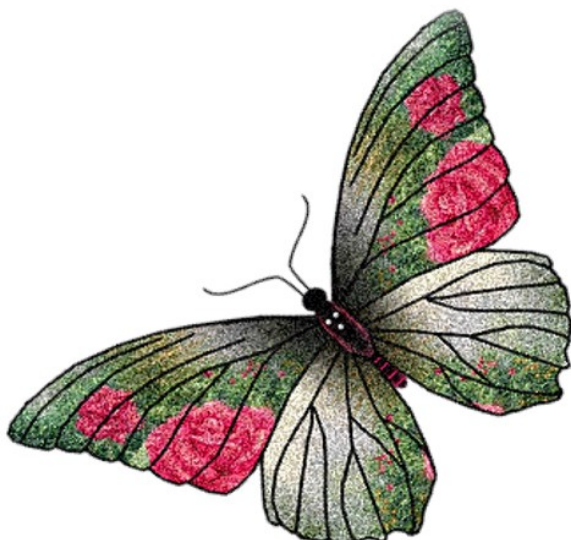
Kathy Vinson in memory Jenna Russell

Leigh & Randy Mulanax "In loving memory of our son Zachary Ryan Mulanax"

Patty Elsass" A gift in memory of my son--Ryan Elsass"

Susan Burger Curby in Memory of Landon Burger

**In the Fall**



"When amber leaves are shed, softly, silently,  
like tears that wait to flow  
I watch and grieve.  
My heart beats sadly in the fall  
tis then  
I Miss You Most of all."

In memory of my sons,  
From Vince and Gary"s Mom, Barbara Lopez

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).**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Loving Listeners**

**Gary Clark: Skiing Accident 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

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NORTH OKLAHOMA CITY CHAPTER

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

**DECEMBER  
2020**

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