



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

North Oklahoma City
Chapter
July 2021

NEWSLETTER All contents copyright © 2021 All rights reserved. The Compassionate Friends

NORTH OKC CHAPTER:

P.O. Box 12249
OKC, OK 73157-2249
Telephone (405) 693-3955
New Phone Number

CHAPTER LEADER:

Sharon Ellington
(405)-721-6939
Email: bunji625@gmail.com

REGIONAL COORDINATOR:

Richard Szczepaniak
(580)-747-0686
E-mail: rbszczepaniak@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Interim News Letter Editor
Telephone: (405) 691-7144
Email: gary.clark@cox.net
Please send your newsletter items to:
TCF
P.O. BOX 12249
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73157-2249
Web: www.NOKCTCF.COM

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



Upcoming Events

*** *Good news* ***

Our Regular meeting July 8th, 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.

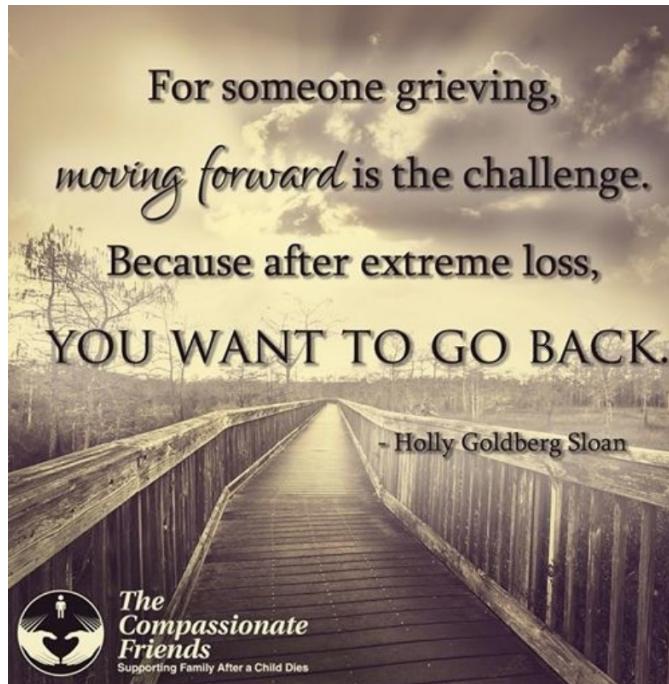
*** Masks and social distancing will be required of everyone per church policy! ***

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



** We are planning *our Walk to Remember* for October 23rd, Details to follow. **

Catching Butterflies

It often hurt to come upon reminders of my son
Tho' often since I lost him I would search around for one
Which always brought on sadness and the tears that I would shed
Were caused by names or faces, all things that I would dread.
But then one day I came upon a man who'd lost his son
I found that things I ran from, he wouldn't even shun.
But rather he would treasure and I said I wondered why
He told me that he called them "Catching Butterflies."
This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to hear more
And learned that he took all of them and carefully would store
All of the reminders that I chose to push away
He would tuck deep down inside his heart each and every day
Now a name or likeness when catching me off guard
Does not upset me as it did and I don't find it hard
For now instead I see these times as opportunities
To see my son awakened in these new fresh memories.

Dottie Williams TCF Pittsburgh PA

There Are Times

There are times
When I see a fiery sunset
Or the Silver glow of the moon,
And I see my brother and
Feel the peace, as if he still exists.

But these times are few,
And most of what I see is-
What he is now missing.
Cry now, my silent tears,
Quietly, so no one hears.

They Don't know the pain I go through
Day after Day,
And through the years.

Alissa Roeder—
TCF/Pikes Peak, CO

"The death of a child is so painful, both emotionally and spiritually, that I truly wondered if my own heart and spirit would ever heal... I soon learned that I could help myself best by helping others... It wasn't until Robin died that I truly threw myself into volunteer work. That precious little girl left our family a great legacy: I know George and I care more for every living person because of her. We learned firsthand the importance of reaching out to help because others had reached out to us during that crucial time."

Barbara Bush

Searching...

Once again, my list has vanished;
It was here, but now it's missing.
Keys and glasses disappearing;
Books and letters—overdue.
I'm forever searching, searching,
They must be here, and I need them!
Could it be that what is missing,
What I want this very minute—
Could it be that what I'm really
Searching for, my child, is you?

Joyce Andrews, TCF/Sugarland, TX



Little Baby

Little baby who was not to be,
You were a person . . . at least to me.
Would your eyes be blue?
Or hazel and dark?
Would you caw like the crow?
Or sing like a lark?
Would you have ten little fingers and ten tiny toes?
A rosebud mouth, a turned up nose?
Would you be laughing and happy,
Or somber and quiet?
Would you run and jump or rather be still?
Would you like to read, or prefer to play?
None of my questions will have an answer.
Your chance to live will never be.
The only thing I truly know . . .
Little baby,
We would have loved you so!
—Joan D. Schmidt
TCF Spotswood, NJ

July's Child

The 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
Marks a life too brief that ended
without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
on unprotected eyes,
Her lustrous life engraves my heart...
with love that never dies.

I Can Only Imagine

I can only imagine
What our hearts would feel
If that day had never happened
If your death had not been real

I can only imagine
What our eyes would see
If they hadn't shed a million tears
Pleading, Why you? Why not me?

I can only imagine
A happier life
One where all your dreams came true
You fell in love and took a wife

I can only imagine
What a wonderful father you'd be
What names you'd give your children
Would you be anything like me?

I can only imagine If I'll live to see the day
When the mere thought of you
No longer takes my breath away

I can only imagine
If things had ended differently
A family of four, now a family of three
But the one that's missing should of been me

When our work is done
And our time to go has come
Our arms at last again will hold
Brennan, our beloved son
I can only imagine...

—Tom Murphy Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy



Vacations and Grief

After my 15 year old son, Travis, died we tried to “get back to normal” as far as trips and vacations went, but nothing worked. Our favorite trips to the Lake to water ski, were joyless exercises in futility. Some well meaning friends of ours talked my wife and I into going to Disney World, just six adults. My wife had taken our two boys to Disney World about 7 years before, while I was tied up at work. I was not in the mood to be around throngs of kids at an amusement park, but my wife felt we had to do this.

The first ride we went on was kind of long benches that wound around through a tunnel. As we were waiting for the ride to start my wife was telling our friends that when she had taken our boys on this ride that Travis had thrown up. A lady in the seats in front of us, overheard the comment and turned and said “And is Travis with us today?” At that moment the ride started up and we moved into darkness. There were tears streaming down my face in the dark, and I could tell by the way my wife was squeezing my hand, and the shudder I felt go through her body, that we had once again been “ambushed” on our grief journey. The darkness of the tunnel matched the darkness in our souls as we struggled to make sense of our “new normal,” of an empty chair, missing sounds, a missing face, and missing hugs. While I must admit that I did enjoy some things on this vacation, there were still other ambushes along the way.

For those who are in the first few years of their grief, vacations can be hard. We sometimes look for an escape from our grief, but find it travels with us always. Sometimes it is raw and visible to all around us, sometimes just below the surface, and sometimes it is buried deep within us, but constantly building pressure until we either find a way to release the tension, or explode wounding all of those around us.

After 24 years of traveling this journey, and walking through grief with literally hundreds of others in The Compassionate Friends, I can tell you that your grief will change over time. Softening from a giant ice cube in your stomach, to a gentle butterfly riding on your shoulder. The TCF National conferences really are an opportunity to vacation with your child again. The conferences are a place where you don’t have to hide your emotions or put on a mask. A place where you don’t have to sit in the dark by yourself on this ride none of us wants to be on. A place where people you have never met before will ask about your child, and really want to hear your story, and share their story. At the time I am writing this, June 2021, because of COVID 19 the TCF conference will be a virtual conference, and sharing experiences will not be the same, but the message of hope will be.

Whether you are planning vacationing in a familiar place, or trying to “get away from it all,” know that there will still be ambushes waiting for you, but know also, that as time passes you may find tears running down your cheek, but you are just as likely to be smiling as you remember what once was, and the love you still carry in your heart for your child.

Gary Clark

North Oklahoma City Chapter of
The Compassionate Friends.



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.

July Birthdays

3	KEITH RYAN ORR	3	GERON WESLEY GALL
4	MICHAEL SKEEN	4	JENNIFER LEE TAYLOR
5	CHELSEY MARIE LASH (FILIPO)	4	AIDAN HOOPER
5	COLE DALTON OWENS (DREESSEN)	4	ARIYA ELISE OLLER
5	THOMAS DEAN THOMPSON	4	KAELYNN SPRADLIN (NELSON)
6	AMANDA LYNN HARNED	5	DAVID COX
6	CHANCE TOLES	5	NATHAN COLON
6	MATTHEW FLOWERS	7	EMILY KAY WILDS
7	SEAN M TUCKER (LEWIS)	7	JOSHUA JAMES CURRY
10	KAELYNN SPRADLIN (NELSON)	7	KELSEY FOLMAR (SMITH)
10	LAUREN JOHNSON	8	JASON DAVID BOOKER (ROSE)
10	SEAN WILLIAM KYLE	10	JUSTIN WALLING
11	CHARLIE WERTZ	12	DARLA KAY BURNS (JONES)
11	DANIELLE LORRAINE ROCHELTE (HUFF)	13	CAMERON CAREY
11	HERBERT C NICHOLS	13	MATTHEW PATRICK LeBEAU
11	MELISSA CAOLE (BAKER)	13	WESTON LEE REESE
11	TREY BENEAR (BARNES)	15	BLAKE MERIDETH EPHRAIM
12	JONATHAN HOWEL (WILLIAMS)	16	GLENN HOWARD DAVIS JR
13	COURTNEY BUNKER	17	ERIN ELAINE VAN HORN (MALONE)
14	COBRYN MATTHEW (SHELTEY)	17	ZACHARY VAN HORN (MALONE)
14	PETE FRANK	18	JEFFEREY Van HOOSER JR
15	KELLY MARIE CATON	18	LINCOLN VAUGHN HENRY LEWIS
15	STEPHEN ROBISON (RIVES)	18	RAHSAAN "ROME" DURHAM
17	CARINA BRIANNE SAUNDERS (QUEEN)	18	ZAC STICE
20	SARA PRIDEAUX	20	KIPP GRIFFIN
20	THAD "OX" WALKER	21	ROGER PALACIOS
25	CAMERON VAN NOSTRAND (McCLURE)	22	HANNAH DENISE McCARTY
27	KENNETH "BRIAN" BROADWAY	23	ANNETTE GRAVITT
27	MATTHEW DALE JIMERSON	24	BLAKE McKEE
27	WILLIAM "TREY" LITTLEJOHN III	25	NANCY M. JENNINGS (HORNE)
28	JARED RYAN THOMPSON	26	GREGORY "ISSAC" COVEY
29	BRANDON PERRYMAN	26	MACKENZIE RAPPE
29	MARIO JOSEPH FLORES	27	CASEY CASTROP
29	SERENITY OLIVER	29	ANDREW BOLLACKER (HOPE)
30	CAELAN MATTHEW WALLACE	30	KELLY MARIE CATON
30	CURTIS WAYNE CONN	30	SARA PRIDEAUX
30	HOWARD "NICK" PERCIVAL	31	RON PATTERSON
30	MARK COCHRAN	31	SUSAN CRABTREE BAER
30	ROGER PALACIOS		

July Angelverseries

2	GREYSON JAMES REDINGER
2	KARLA JANAE CLEMONS



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.

In memory of Keith Ryan Orr

Grief never ends

But it changes

It's a passage

Not a place to stay

Grief is not a sign of weakness

Nor a lack of faith

It is the price of love

Author unknown

Charlotte and Randy Orr



To my son in heaven, my little angel, moma will always hold a spot for you in her heart,

Love Moma, Elisabeth Cunningham.

Lost Potential

Last year I attended a workshop presented by a specialist in grief named Dr. Cable. Dr. Cable said many important things about the grief process, but as a bereaved parent one thing stuck in my mind.

He said that if you ask a bereaved person to describe his deceased mother, he will say, "Oh, she was so sweet. She always wore flowered dresses and loved to bake cookies." But, if you ask a bereaved parent to describe her deceased child, she will say, "Oh, he would be five

this year and just starting kindergarten," or, "She would be twenty-two this year and graduating from college."

You see, we bereaved parents grieve the lost potential of our children. Our children don't stop growing in our minds. We grieve again and anew each year as our child would have been a different age.

—Chris Anderson
TCF, Walla Walla, Washington

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

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK
PERMIT NO. 752

2021
July

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73157-2249

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

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," "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.