



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**North Oklahoma City
Chapter
May 2021**

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Newsletter items can also be e-mailed to:

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

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48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
Wixom, MI 48393
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Upcoming Events

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

Our Regular meeting May 13th, 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

Like the Butterfly

It fluttered above my head
Weightless in the soft breeze.
I reached up my hand
It lit on my finger.



Waving glistening wings gently,
It looked at me for timeless moments.
I smiled, reaching deep and
Finding all those cherished memories.



As it flitted off through the sunlit morn,
I knew we had said hello once more.

Leslie Langford TCF, North Platte, NE

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

Open Letter to Our Siblings

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together.

Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief.

There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

Mary Lamourex TCF Marin County, CA



I Am A Man

By J. J. Jim Brown

I hunt, fish, drive a fast car, play football, basketball and baseball. I am tough!! I went to war. I am the toughest two-legged mammal alive. I am a MAN! While our son was still in the hospital, I cried alone so my wife wouldn't see me. At home, I cried alone in the shower, in the back yard, anywhere but in front of my wife. I had to be a rock. After our son died, I helped support my wife in the best way I knew how. I was a rock for her to lean on. I was invincible. The rock caused more trouble than good. Soon we were not talking or getting along with each other and I didn't understand why. My wife became angry. She told me, "You act like you don't love JJ" (because I didn't appear to be grieving). The rock became mush. I then realized what I had done. I had played MAN instead of just being a father and a husband. You see, a mother doesn't need a rock with no emotions. She needed me to show her I did indeed love our son and that I was hurting after his death and that I did cry. My wife comforted me that night after we talked. I cried; she cried. We both needed it. I found out that it was good for me to cry and let my wife help me. I am a MAN. I am a grieving man who now does not mind crying in front of anyone. I cry for myself and for our son.

What to Say to a Bereaved Mother on Mother's Day

Obviously, I cannot speak for *all* bereaved mothers and how they would like to be approached on difficult days like Mother's Day. But given my daughter's stillbirth and the fact that I have come to know many women in the baby loss community, I like to think that my insight on this matter is fairly keen. So here are my do's and don'ts on how to relate to your bereaved friend on Mother's Day.

DO:

Recognize that your friend is a mother. Just because her child is dead doesn't make her any less of a mother, nor does it erase her child's life. Recognition of that is life-giving.

Acknowledge that Mother's Day is probably a strange or difficult day for her. It is an especially upsetting day if she has no living children.

Say her child's name. Every bereaved mother wants you to talk about her child. Remembering her child in a loving and honoring way is an immense gift. *You cannot hurt a bereaved mother by bringing up her child in this manner.* It's not like she has forgotten her child. Don't be afraid of reopening a wound, because the wound left by her child's death will never close.

Say, "I'm so sorry that your child isn't here with you today." When in doubt of what to say to a bereaved mother, this always works. It doesn't dismiss her pain or trivialize the loss, and it does give her and her grief that all-important recognition.

Give her a big hug, and don't be alarmed if she cries. Personally, I love hugs from my loved ones, especially when I'm hurting. But often hugs can trigger tears. Don't be afraid of those tears, though. It is a gift to be able to mourn your child with your loved ones.

Give her a card or a gift if you feel so inclined. That would be very honoring of her motherhood and her child's life -- both of which are priceless gifts to the bereaved mother.

Respect that she might not want to go out on Mother's Day. Being out and about on Mother's Day, seeing other mothers celebrating with their living children, is likely to be intensely painful. I know that for myself, I have not yet decided if I will attend church on Mother's Day. Respect her wishes, and support her by dropping a note or card into her mailbox.

Ask her how she's doing -- but only if you're prepared for an honest answer. Our culture is afraid of pain. When people say, "How are you?" they usually don't want to hear anything else but "good" or "okay." But a bereaved mother is anything but "okay," especially on difficult days like Mother's Day. So be sure that you want an honest reply when you ask -- otherwise, it's probably best to leave this one alone, so that the mother doesn't feel like she has to lie.

DON'T:

Ignore her on Mother's Day. If she is anything like me, she is grappling with intense identity issues. To ignore her (and her motherhood) on this painful day is likely to be immensely hurtful.

Dismiss her loss or her grief. If a bereaved mother chooses to say things like, "God needed my baby in Heaven," "Everything happens for a reason," or "It's God's will," that's up to her. But it is not okay to say things like that to her. These are flimsy explanations of her child's death -- and the harsh reality is that there is no explanation that will make her child's death okay. Don't try to explain her pain away. It won't work, because there is nothing logical about death and grief, and any such attempts are likely to be very hurtful.

Tell her that she'll be "over it" by next year's Mother's Day. The sad truth about child loss, whether that loss occurred before or after birth or well into adulthood, is that the mother will *never* "get over it." A significant part of her died along with her child, and grief has changed her forever.

Assume that because she has living children, Mother's Day is not difficult. As every parent knows, every child is unique and special in his or her own way. As a result, no amount of living children can ever "make up" for a deceased child -- nor should they be expected to.

Continued on page 4

What to say...

Continued from page 3

Don't

Place blame. It is *NEVER* okay to tell a bereaved mother that it is her fault her child died. That is up to the mother's doctors, who will tell her the truth. To try to blame a bereaved mother for her child's death is inappropriate all of the time, especially on difficult days. (And yes, incredibly, I have had someone blame me for Eve's death, although it was not on Mother's Day.)

In summary, on Mother's Day a bereaved mother is desperately in need of recognition. She needs to be known as a mother. She became pregnant, and loved and cherished and bore a child. The child's death does not change her love for that child, nor does it negate her

motherhood. So the name of the game in interacting with your bereaved friend on Mother's Day is *recognition*, Tell her that she is a mother, and that you wish her child could be here with her, and you are golden.

Don't be afraid to talk about your bereaved friend's dead child or grief -- ever. I know that many people are afraid of making an already difficult situation worse. But if you honor her motherhood and grief, and remember and mention her child, there is no hurt being done -- quite the opposite in fact! Even if she cries, this honoring and remembering are gifts that are more precious to your bereaved friend than you can fathom.

(From The Bear Women Wakes web site)



A Mother's

Love

A mother's love for her child may begin
with the very dream of becoming a mother ...
A mother's love for her child may begin
with the thought of maybe expecting the news ...
A mother's love for her child may begin
with the verification of her expectations ...
A mother's love for her child may begin
with the affirmation that the child lives within her ...
A mother's love for her child may begin
with her first sight of the new life that she has delivered into the world ...
A mother's love for her child may begin ...
But it may never end ...
Not even death can steal away a mother's love for her child.
A mother's love for her child knows no end!

Diana M. Rohrbaugh
TCF/Anne Arundel County, MD

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.

May Birthdays

3 CRAIG E. MILLER (BENEDICT)
5 JOSHUA LANGO
5 TRENT AARON BARNES
7 REBECCA ANN STAFFORD
8 JULIE GRANT
9 ANTHONY FULFORD
9 BRIAN MATTHEW JONES
9 JUSTIN RYAN LASSITER
10 JOE "DAN" TRIGG JR
12 BRADEN KEY (COVEY-GRANDSON)
13 LANDON GREGORY BURGER
16 AIDAN HOOPER
17 WILLIAM PALMER
18 ANTHONY WHALEN
19 GARY GLEN WILLHOITE
21 CARL WAYNE ROSS
21 KELSEY BRANSBY (DAVIS)
26 BRIAN TURLEY
26 JAZMINE ROZELL
28 COLE MOBLY (PAULSON)
28 RAMONE RASHAD COULTER (GISSANDANER)
28 TRAVIS McKINNEY (MICHAEL)
30 FELICIA ESQUIVIAS (GALINDO)
31 JASON DAVID BOOKER (ROSE)

May Angelverseries

1 PATRICIA JEAN BASCO-YOUNG
2 CALEB WILE
3 FELICIA ESQUIVIAS (GALINDO)
4 MICHAEL STOTZ
5 ANGELA DIANNE "ANGY" BARNARD
5 CAMI PERRYMAN
5 TRENT AARON BARNES
6 JONATHAN PATRICK BRAGG
8 BREANNA STAR SWANSON (JOHNSON)
9 GUNNER SHULTZ
10 BRANDON LEON GARRISON
12 BRADEN KEY (GRANDSON) (COVEY)
12 DERRICK EUGENE KILLIAN (HARRISON)

13 CALLIE KAYLIN FULTON
13 COLE DALTON OWENS (DREESSEN)
14 JOHN ALAN COX II (CARVER)
15 CHARITY ROSE HENDRICKSON (HATFIELD)
15 CHARLES 'CHARLIE' WILLIAM HARRIS
15 TYLER J KAMMERZELL (LAWLESS)
16 TAYLOR DON HEINTZELMAN
17 TANNER HILL
18 DAKOTAH DAWN PERRY
18 MADISON RACHEL
19 KARLA KAY JOHNSON PRICER (CUNDIFF)
20 HOWARD "NICK" PERCIVAL
21 KRISTINA MACIAS
22 ROWDY GRAY
23 CORD ALEXANDER MOBLY (PAULSON)
24 SAM BOWLES
27 AUSTIN NEAL WADDLE
27 DAVID BENJAMIN YANCEY
27 MADISON WATTS
28 COLE MOBLY (PAULSON)
28 THOMAS DEAN THOMPSON
29 ANGIE WILSON
29 CASY LEE CUNDIFF
30 KENDRA LOUISE HIGNITE

NO VACATION

There is no vacation from your absence. Every morning I awake I am a bereaved parent. Every noon I feel the hole in my heart. Every evening my arms are empty. My life is busy now, but not quite full. My heart is mended, but not quite healed. For the rest of my life, every moment will be lived without you. There is no vacation from your absence.

Kathy Boyette - ☐TCF, Gulf Coast, MS



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.

Nancy & Rex Gleim. In memory of Ryan Huston Gleim 04-23-71 to 04-11-1992

"Dear Compassionate Friends,

Thank you for the beautiful card and heartfelt note in remembrance of the 29th anniversary of Ryan's death. So few people take the time to remember our children. We have also appreciated your newsletter over the years. Thank you again for all that you do for grieving parents as they move through the journey towards healing."

Thomas M. Cullman simply saying "In Memory Joseph "Joey" Cullman.

CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

The mention of my child's name may bring tears to my eyes
- but it never fails to bring music to my ears.

Please don't keep me from hearing the beautiful music. It
soothes my broken heart and fills my soul with love.

Nancy Williams

There is no sequence of grief - it is a constant, evolving
journey with many diversions into emotional peaks and val-
leys along the way. It is a journey and it is never over.

In memory of Maria-Victoria TCF/Jonesboro, GA

Talk about your feelings with your spouse and encourage him or
her to express to you how they are feeling.

Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support

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

May
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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.