



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

**North Oklahoma City
Chapter
June 2021**

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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

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

Our Regular meeting June 10th, 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

The only people who think there's a time limit for grief, have never lost a piece of their heart.



Take all the time you need.



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

Sibling Corner... Dedicated to our Brothers and Sisters

The Sibling Prayer

Beneath the amber glow of the newly rising sun,
Or standing on the hillside when the day is done,
Riding down the highway when my work day is at an end,
or sitting on a park bench, talking to a friend -

No matter where I am in life, no matter what my task,
Please give me peace of mind, dear
Lord, that is all I ask.

And when those haunting memories of the night have passed
away,

Please come rushing in my broken heart, please do not delay.

Remind me that he is in a far, far better place.

And grant me a glimpse of his hazel eyes and sweet angelic face.

Please grant me reassurance that we'll someday meet again in
Heaven's bright tomorrow.

In Your Name, I pray.

Amen.

- Laura Carpenter, TCF/Onancock, VA
The Sibling Newsletter, Summer 1993

Memories of my brother

Why is it so very hard
Accepting you are gone;
I guess the thought is unbearable
And I am not that strong.
I am too afraid to face the truth
And scared to feel the pain,
Of never seeing your sweet face
Or hearing your voice again.
Sometimes I see you in my dreams
And picture you still here,
till I awaken dreadfully
To watch you disappear.
You were always happy and carefree,
And I don't understand
How you can seem so real to me,
As your grasp slips from my hand.
The sixteen years of life you had
Somehow do not compare,
To the tragic, senseless death you faced
And the cross you had to bear.
I try to think of pleasant times
And childhood memories,
But guilt and sorrow haunt my soul
And I cannot break free.
I am sorry for the times we fought
And for treating you so badly.
I am sorry for ignoring you
And wasting the time we had.
You were and are my brother still.
When you took your last breath,
A part of me went on with you
And I shall mourn your death.

- Jennifer, TCF/Ellicott
City,

A Letter to My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here.

Why? How can this be?

Someone tell me the reason, the answer.
How can I fill the void, the space once so
full of life?

What will I do? How will I be strong for
others when the sting of pain is so real, so
near?

Though everyone seems calm, my soul
screams at the injustice, the unfairness of
losing you.

I miss you. I think of you every day and
feel you in my heart always.

Whatever the reason for your leaving, I
know your living had a reason,
Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a
lifetime's worth.

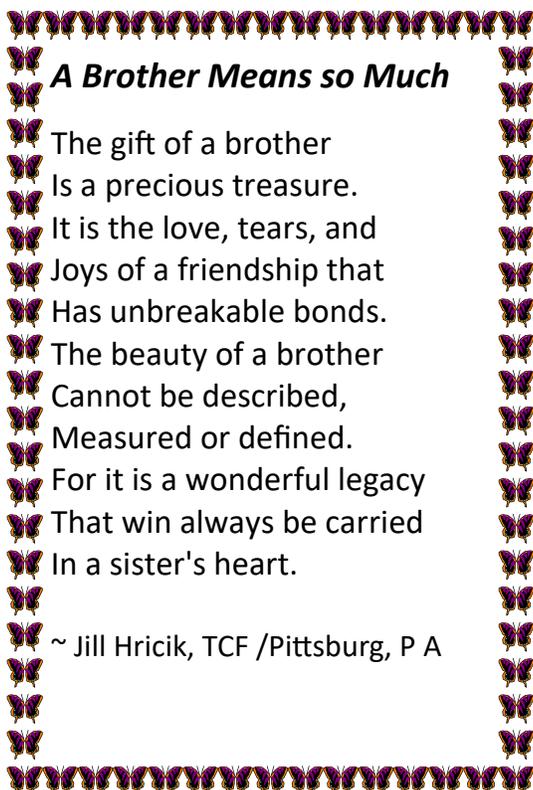
You blessed us with your presence, your
specialness.

I have only to think of you to feel the joy
you've left as a legacy.

You shaped the purpose of my life.

I can see the world through your eyes.

- Robin Holemon,
TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL

A decorative border of colorful butterflies surrounds the text. The butterflies are arranged in a rectangular frame, with some larger butterflies at the corners and smaller ones along the sides.

A Brother Means so Much

The gift of a brother
Is a precious treasure.
It is the love, tears, and
Joys of a friendship that
Has unbreakable bonds.
The beauty of a brother
Cannot be described,
Measured or defined.
For it is a wonderful legacy
That will always be carried
In a sister's heart.

~ Jill Hricik, TCF /Pittsburg, P A

Father's Day Is Still a Time for Celebrating

A long time has passed since I've enjoyed a holiday—or for that matter any special occasion.

With Father's Day coming up shortly, I've decided that this year I'm celebrating.

The kids used to love when special occasions came along. I can still remember Stef's eighth birthday, only three months before her death, and how proud she was when we told her she could invite her best friends over for a birthday party. She wore her prettiest blue trimmed party dress with the lace ruffles.

The games they played still stick in my mind. There was "pin the tail on the donkey" and then "Simon Says." I remember clothes flying everywhere in a contest to see which child could put on a complete set of clothes fastest over her party clothes. I remember the hotdogs, punch and cake, the party favors. I remember Stef's giggles.

The memories also wander back to the party our family threw for Stephen's fifth birthday, only three days before the accident which also claimed his life. I still have the picture in my mind of that goofy orange cap someone had given Steve. He loved it, but it was at least two sizes too small. When he tried to put it on, the bill of the cap was up and Stephen flashed us one of those impish grins that reminds you of Spanky and Our Gang.

As I'm writing this, the tears are flowing down my cheeks remembering the good times we had together.

A lot of things changed when the kids died. Christmas, Easter, birthdays all became days other people celebrated. But not us.

I've done a lot of thinking since then. I know Stef and Steve are in a better place than I could ever imagine and that every day is a holiday for them. In my mind, I think Stef and Stephen would be sad if they felt their Mom and Dad couldn't celebrate life anymore.

Pat and I now have another son, Christopher, plus we have our fourth child on the way. We're trying to rebuild our lives and I feel we have been blessed along the way. Of course, Christopher is too young to understand Father's Day, but even without him here, I would still consider celebrating Father's Day.

I still remember the Father's Day a couple of years before Stef and Stephen died. With their mom, they had searched all over for something special for me, finally deciding on a T-Shirt that proclaimed "World's Coolest Dad." I still wear that now faded shirt on occasion despite the many grass stains and grease marks.

When Father's Day arrives, I think I'm going to pull that old T-Shirt out and wear it. I'm going to lay down out in the grass, letting the warm breeze hit me. And I'm going to pretend I'm being caressed by Stef and Steve. I'm going to remember . . . and I'm going to celebrate!!!

Wayne Loder
TCF Lakes Area, MI

A Father Mourns Too

I just watched another TV commercial for cologne, which is the first sign of the approach of Father's Day. Like other fathers, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen—my son's life, an opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are his age, a chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again.

But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called my own father the night before to wish him a happy Father's Day, and I will go to the cemetery to place flowers on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time and then return home to my wife' and new infant son.

This year we will have a greater measure of peace because of the birth of our son, but I shall always have a hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I die.

Like many bereaved fathers, I have felt misunderstood about how a father should mourn and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such a belief in the strength of maternal love and do such a good job ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at my son's memorial service was how was my wife dealing with this tragedy, to the longtime friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark commercial, it seems that many around us have difficulty understanding a father's grief.

So, support and love is needed and needed badly. Of course, we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. I hope that bereaved fathers will not be forgotten on Father's Day. It is often said that we don't often talk of our emotional needs and are reluctant to show our pain, but we too need love when we hurt.

Please remember us on Father's Day and remember that the cute little commercials that hurt mothers in May take their toll on fathers in June.

Doug Hughes, TCF Las Vegas, NV

But Your Son WANTED to Die—Mine Didn't

I cringed as once again I heard this remark, repeated so often since Warren took his life 3½ years ago. Even now, when I thought I had steeled myself to the harsh meaning of the words, they still left me hurt and demolished. Is it all that simple? Could anyone 'feeling good' just choose to die like that—if they knew the pain and suffering that then engulfs their surviving family?

How can I explain why he died when I do not really know myself? How can I make anyone understand his emotional pain, increasingly obvious to us, so skillfully masked from others? Our son was so handsome, intelligent and sensitive. It is still incredible that he shot himself one morning after returning from the hospital 'cured' of his terrible depression.

Our beautiful first-born baby grew into a perfect son, but somewhere, somehow, our masterpiece had a flaw as cruel and as tenacious as any disease that strikes any other young person. So, until research proves otherwise, we have to go along with the words of Professor Erwin Ringel that "SUICIDE CANNOT REALLY BE CHOSEN—since an intense and overwhelming inner compulsion renders any free choice null and void."

Our loss is as great as any other parent. We grieve just as deeply. Remember this and do not judge, we beg. We, and all the Survivors of Suicide suffer too much already from a horrendous tragedy that can, and does, happen to anyone. Our Kids Loved Us—And We Love Them!

Maureen Hargreaves, TCF Melbourne,
Australia In Memory of my son, Warren

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.

June Birthdays

1	GERON WESLEY GALL
2	ANGELA DAWN KENDALL (SZCZEPANIAK)
2	CONNOR PATRICK McGRATH
3	DONNA BURRELL
4	ROBERT KENNETH KOTT (ELLINGTON)
4	SUSAN LYNN HEIL-DINA
5	KALEE EATON
7	AUSTYN RAE SIDNER (THOMAS)
7	JULIA KATHRYN GILBERT
9	JARED EWY (NELSON)
9	JARED MARC SMITH
10	CONCHATTEE JOHN DOONKEEN
10	JEAN ELLEN McABOY SHERWOOD
12	LARUA TINSLEY (REICHERT)
13	CINDY BRECHEEN (JOYNER)
13	JAMES PRIDEAUX
14	ZACHARY TAYS
15	JEFFREY SHRADER
16	SHAWN FRANKLIN CHOATE
18	TRACEY HUMPHREY
20	COLTON TRACE SHERRILL
21	BROCK FLEMING (KILLINGER)
21	RUSSELL ALAN CONN
22	SAMUEL MARTIN (BROWN)
24	DONNY LEE HAMBY
24	EMILY BURNS
24	SHAWN HARRELL
27	JONATHAN GOOTEE
27	MICHAEL D BARKER (GATLIFF)
28	LAUREN ELIZABETH BARKER
28	TYLER J KAMMERZELL (LAWLESS)
30	DAVID TERRY

June Angelverseries

2	CONNOR REID (PERRY)
2	JASON OLIVER
2	MATTHEW JOHN NEUNLIST
3	ALEXANDRIA WAGGAMAN
3	JOSH WILLIAM HAYNES
3	SYDNEY MURRAY
6	NOEL DEAN HARRIS
7	CAMERON VAN NOSTRAND (McClure)
7	COBRYN MATTHEW (SHELTEY)
8	DONNY LEE HAMBY (DOWDY)
8	MOLLY KATHRYN EMERSON REED
8	SUSAN LYNN HEIL-DINA
10	PAUL EARNEST COLBERT BROWN
11	COLTON TRACE SHERRILL
14	EMILY STROUGH
15	JOHN FAULK
15	PETE FRANK
16	ANTHONY WHALEN
17	SANJEET ASHOK-NALDU (KANNAN)
19	SEAN WILLIAM KYLE
21	JESSICA HATCHER (MALCOLM)
21	MADDOX RYAN DURBIN (LASSITER)
22	DUSTYN BOSWELL
22	MARK CHRISTOPHER PIERCE
23	KYLE NICKEL (CREECH)
23	LARUA TINSLEY (REICHERT)
26	JAZMINE ROZELL
27	PETER DEWAR CRAWFORD
28	LAUREN ELIZABETH BARKER
30	LORWIN MANTOOTH





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.

Dan Yancey. "In memory of David Yancey and Janice Yancey Gunn.

M. Chris Mathews "In memory of Laura E. Gallegly

Elizabeth Cunningham To NWTCF, Thank you guys for all your workers do.

To my Beloved Son, Billy Joe Cunningham, I miss you so much every day. Yet another Birthday has come and gone with out you here. I know, however, you are okay there with Pa Pa and Jenes.

Love, Moma

WHEN FATHERS WEEP AT GRAVES

I see them weep
the fathers at the stones
taking off the brave armor
forced to wear in the work place
clearing away the debris
with gentle fingers
inhaling the sorrow
diminished by anguish
their hearts desiring
what they cannot have-
to walk hand in hand
with children no longer held--
to all the fathers who leave a part
of their hearts at the stones
may breezes underneath trees of
time ease their pain
as they receive healing tears
... the gift the children give.

- Alice J. Wisler, For David, in memory of our son Daniel

Shuddering

In Roger Rosenblatt's *Kayak Morning: Reflections on Love, Grief and Small Boats*, he writes, "Ginny tells me that I sigh a lot. I was not aware of it. I don't know what it means." Dennis Apple noticed the sighs of his wife. His book *Life after the Death of My Son* describes it this way: "from the other side of the bed, I would hear a sad sigh, like a weary mountain climber picking up her heavy backpack and preparing to climb Mount Everest after a sleepless night."

I don't sigh. I shudder. I looked it up. It means "to tremble with a sudden convulsive movement, as from horror, fear, or cold." Yes, that's it. I glimpse a photograph out of the corner of my eye, or notice the circle of tall holly trees in the front yard that my son used to call his "fort," or I'm attacked by an intrusive thought of the circumstances of his death. And I shudder. It's as though my body is trying to shake off the reality. It just can't be; it just can't be. My body is railing against this awful truth, this unspeakable still somehow new truth. My son is gone. I shudder to think of it.

Peggi Johnson, TCF Arlington, VA

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

June
2021

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK
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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.