



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Meg Avery, Editor                      SUMMER 2011  
June, July, August

### CHAPTER MEETING AND CONTACT INFO:

Gwinnett Chapter- 7:30 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month. **Trinity Christian Fellowship, 1985 Old Fountain Road, Lawrenceville, 30043** Contact June Cooper by phone 770-757-4927, or email [jc30044@flash.net](mailto:jc30044@flash.net), **next meetings: June 16, July 21, and August 18.**

TCF Atlanta website: [www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org) Gwinnett website: [www.tcfgwinnett.homestead.com/index.html](http://www.tcfgwinnett.homestead.com/index.html)  
Georgia Regional Coordinator: Muriel Littman, 404-603-9942 Email [muriellittman@comcast.net](mailto:muriellittman@comcast.net)  
The Compassionate Friends National Office: 1-877-969-0010 [www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

### *Our Credo . . .*

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.

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A non-denominational self-help support group offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families who have experienced the death of a child at any age, from any cause.

"The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information to help others be supportive."

[www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org) and [www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

**We need not walk alone.  
We are The Compassionate Friends**

Dear Friends,



The Gwinnett newsletter is available both in print and through e-mail. If you have received this issue in print and would prefer to receive e-mail instead, please notify us at [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com) or 770-932-5862. This will help keep our postage and printing costs down. We welcome your suggestions to improve our chapter newsletter.

We need your input for the newsletter. Poetry, letters and comments submitted by parents, siblings and grandparents will be an important part of each issue. Our next issue, Autumn 2011, will cover the months of September, October & November.

We will also continue to recognize birth and death dates as times of special remembrance within our TCF family. Please communicate this important information to us if you have not already done so.

### MEETING LOCATION



TCF Gwinnett has a new home for our monthly meeting. We are now meeting at **Trinity Christian**

**Fellowship, 1985 Old Fountain Road, Lawrenceville, 30043.** We meet in the 100 Building. Visit their website, [www.tcfchurch.com](http://www.tcfchurch.com) or TCF Gwinnett's website: [www.tcfgwinnett.homestead.com/index.html](http://www.tcfgwinnett.homestead.com/index.html) for specific directions. Meetings are the Third Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm.



## Summertime

With summer comes more time for relaxation and more time for get-togethers with family and friends. After our son died it left a void in all those family activities and lots of time for thoughts of summers gone by - vacations, 4<sup>th</sup> of July's, Bible schools, camps, baseball games, swimming lessons, skiing at the lake, and many other memories.

It still seems important for us to participate in those same activities because on each occasion some memory is stirred of a time when our son was a part of these activities that made summer such a special time for us. At first those memories made us so sad, but now when we remember what he did or said in certain situations, our hearts are a little lighter and even sometimes a little smile appears on our faces.

These memories are what we have left and they are so very precious. Summers are a good time to relax and remember our happy times together.

By Carol Linch, TCF LaGrange, GA

## Our Children are Always With Us In Spirit

By Sandy Fox

*I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death.*

*They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make.*

*Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories. We find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love.*

- Leo Buscaglia -

I happened to see this quote in a current issue of the online Compassionate Friends Newsletter. How true! How true it is! I think of how I can apply this quote to everything I have done since my daughter died.

Every time I have to make a decision about something, whether it be to participate in an event, give to a charity or even just where to travel, I always think of how my daughter, Marcy, would have responded. "Mom," she would say, "Go for it! You're good at organizing events. You're a Virgo and Virgos are perfectionists." I smile. That I am, just as she was a stubborn Leo.

I have taken on national bereavement conferences and am happy to help others. I have walked for charities or just donated when receiving information on that charity,

if I believe it is worthwhile. And traveling, my passion and hers also: I am always so sad that she is not able to see all the places I know she would have liked. When I am at a destination, I turn to my husband and always say, "Marcy would have loved this city... these mountains... this exhibit."

We never forget our children, no matter how long it has been since they died. A piece of our heart has died with them, yet we go on. Then something always triggers a remembrance, and that is okay. Whether it makes you smile or cry, either one is a healthy reaction. You don't have to be ashamed or embarrassed around others, because your feelings for your child will always be within you, no matter what.

So many good memories...why not write them down, put them away and treasure them always? If you are having a bad day, take one out and remember, smile or even laugh.

The parents of 9-year-old Christina Green from Tucson, who was born on a tragic day 9/11/2001 and died in a tragic shooting in Tucson in January that also seriously wounded Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford, will always think of her when thinking of politics, how enthusiastic she was about serving her country and wanting to get to know her congresswoman from Tucson. It would not surprise me if her parents or sibling, years from now, honor her memory by doing something along political lines, whether as a volunteer or as an advocate.

This is how we share our love for our children when they are no longer with us physically but always in our hearts and minds. We try to do good; we try to help others as our children would have done; we try to find a cause that will bring a smile to our child's face, wherever they are and to ours. Our lives have been enriched for having them, and we become better people for it.

Sandy Fox 2011, from [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)

Sandy Fox has won three finalist awards for her recent book "Creating a New Normal...After the Death of a Child."

She is also the author of another grief book, "I Have No Intention of Saying Good-bye."

"I Have No Intention of Saying Good-bye" tells the stories of 25 sets of parents and how they moved on with their lives after the death of their child, offering hope and survival techniques.

Sandy has headed two national bereavement conferences for childless parents and spoken for many years at Compassionate Friends National conferences, POMC and across the U.S. to a variety of bereavement groups. She also writes articles for the Open to Hope site and her own weekly blog: [www.survivinggrief.blogspot.com](http://www.survivinggrief.blogspot.com).

## Birthday Invitation

### WE REMEMBER...



#### *June, July & August Birthdays*

The light of life never goes out, and so we remember their birthdays

### JUNE

Justin Todd Stephens... June 1<sup>st</sup>  
Don Walton.... June 4<sup>th</sup>  
Blake "BJ" Jolly.... June 4<sup>th</sup>  
Xavier Hayes... June 6<sup>th</sup>  
Natascha Roebuck.... June 6<sup>th</sup>  
Jamie Ann Quillen.... June 7<sup>th</sup>  
Grant Nelson.... June 16<sup>th</sup>  
Scott Michael Malone.... June 17<sup>th</sup>  
Mitchell Dean Orr.... June 19<sup>th</sup>  
Chanda Leigh Wooden.... June 20<sup>th</sup>  
Christopher Reed.... June 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Christian Nicolae Moise.... June 24<sup>th</sup>  
Joseph Beatty.... June 25<sup>th</sup>  
Ryan Michael Sharp.... June 26<sup>th</sup>  
Brian Devine.... June 26<sup>th</sup>  
Adam Lee Jones.... June 27<sup>th</sup>  
Cathy Hayes.... June 28<sup>th</sup>  
Jessica Rose Riley.... June 29<sup>th</sup>



### JULY

Charlie Smallen.... July 1<sup>st</sup>  
Adyson Claire Smith.... July 1<sup>st</sup>  
Robbie Schmeelk.... July 5<sup>th</sup>  
Raleigh-Jacqueline Clebert.... July 7<sup>th</sup>  
Jason Pettus.... July 8<sup>th</sup>  
Justin Cates.... July 12<sup>th</sup>  
James R. Avery, III.... July 15<sup>th</sup>  
Johnathan England.... July 17<sup>th</sup>  
Christopher Gabriel Patton.... July 17<sup>th</sup>  
Fara "Nicole" Choate.... July 27<sup>th</sup>  
Michael Clayborne Montgomery..... July 29<sup>th</sup>  
Noreen Keenan.... July 29<sup>th</sup>  
Genna Watson.... July 30<sup>th</sup>  
Arnesa Darlene Royster.... July 31<sup>st</sup>

Every month we have a Birthday Table and you are warmly invited to please come share your child's birthday with us when his/her birthday is that month. This is your chance to tell us a favorite story, or share a poem or thoughts that either you or your child wrote, or whatever remembrance you choose in memory of your child. Our child's or grandchild's or sibling's birthday will forever be a very special day and we at TCF know how important that day is and how helpful and healing it can be to share with others.

Please plan on attending the meeting of your child's birthday and filling our Birthday Table with pictures and/or mementos. You are also more than welcome to bring his/her favorite snacks.



### AUGUST

Jessica & Von Justin Windsor... Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Gabrielle Pierre Louis.... Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Chris Morrow.... Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Ronald Bruce West.... Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Jacob Meadows.... Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>  
Amanda Sullivan.... Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>  
Stephen Owens.... Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>  
Eric Amend.... Aug. 17<sup>th</sup>  
Wendy McMMain.... Aug. 18<sup>th</sup>  
Justin Evans.... Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>  
Ryan Gilbride .... Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>  
Jarod Robert Wills.... Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Todd Wehunt.... Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Edward Leonard Stempien.... Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>  
Jeremy James White.... Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>  
Rachael Fouquet.... Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>  
Johnia Berry.... Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>  
Michael LaVierge.... Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>  
Brittany Hopkins ... Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>  
Brian Hatchett... Aug. 29<sup>th</sup>  
Tommy McDonald.... Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>



## I Know

### *June, July & August Anniversaries*

So that their lives may always shine, our children are remembered. As long as we live, they too shall live for they are part of us in our memories

June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Richie Petzel
June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Nathanael Tate
June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Christopher Downs "CJ"
June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Xavier Hayes
June 8 <sup>th</sup>	Billy Foulke
June 14 <sup>th</sup>	Linda Strauss
June 16 <sup>th</sup>	Matthew Hinson
June 16 <sup>th</sup>	Richie Yee
June 18 <sup>th</sup>	Scott Michael Malone
June 18 <sup>th</sup>	Melissa Dennis
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Cory Bute
June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Jason Edward Palmer
June 30 <sup>th</sup>	Robbie Schmeelk
July 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Aaron Stephens
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Jennifer Hardy
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Jeremy James White
July 5 <sup>th</sup>	Kyle Harrison
July 12 <sup>th</sup>	Genna Watson
July 13 <sup>th</sup>	Jonathan Ayers
July 14 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Dunn
July 19 <sup>th</sup>	Misty Autumn Dubose
July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Christopher Boyd
July 28 <sup>th</sup>	Noreen Keenan
July 28 <sup>th</sup>	Melissa Morrow
July 30 <sup>th</sup>	Ronald "Scott" Long
August 1 <sup>st</sup>	David Arthur Braund
August 1 <sup>st</sup>	Brett Lykins
August 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Jessica & Von Justin Windsor
August 5 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Clayborne Montgomery
August 8 <sup>th</sup>	Melissa McDonald Weber
August 9 <sup>th</sup>	Blake Hinson
August 13 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Morrow
August 19 <sup>th</sup>	John Andrew Sims
August 21 <sup>st</sup>	Jenny Gryzinski
August 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Jeffrey Lopilato
August 28 <sup>th</sup>	Ryan Michael Sharp
August 31 <sup>st</sup>	Todd Wehunt

You don't need to say you're sorry  
It's written in your face.  
I know you share my sadness  
By the warmth of your embrace.

Don't try to justify the "why"  
Or "how" this came to be;  
Or explain away the mystery  
Of death's reality.

Just know that more than any words  
The thing I hold most dear  
Is the friendship in your handshake  
And your hug and that you're here.

By Bruce Conley, Columbia, MO  
From the Bereaved Parents USA Newsletter "A Journey  
Together" [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

### Dads need Hugs too

When a child dies, everyone has such compassion for the mother. Months after the death, people still ask how she is doing. There is always a shoulder available for her to lean on to release some of her pain. Let's not forget the father. The child was a part of him, too. That child was his son, to play ball with, coach in sports, watch sports with or collect baseball cards. Or she was his daughter, his princess, the most beautiful girl that ever lived. Daddy's perfect angel.

Fathers hurt deeper than mothers sometimes because there is no release for their pain, no one there to listen to them say, "I feel terrible. I miss my child so much." Or "Today reminds me of when..." The longer fathers keep silent, the more hurt they have to keep inside, pushing it deeper and deeper to make room for more.

The next time you see a father that has lost a child, don't forget to ask how he is today and give him a hug or just put your hand on his shoulder to let him know you see his pain. Dads need hugs too.

By Kathy Hunsicker, TCF Lehigh Valley, Penn.



## For Men: Living a Regret-Free Life After Loss

Hands down, the strongest, most destructive part of grief is regret. That ever-present feeling that you could have done more. Regret can become so strong that everything else about life gets tossed aside. It is exactly what happened to me. The night before I lost my 17-year old son, Michael, in an auto accident, he had come over from his mother's house to get something from my house. He was outside in the driveway playing basketball with my oldest son, Ronald. I looked down from the window upstairs and watched them for a few minutes. He didn't see me. I had a long day and had a few other things to do. So I didn't go downstairs. I simply figured I would catch up with him next time. That was the last time I saw my son. For years after, I lived with this overwhelming regret and was stuck in this moment of time. It wouldn't have taken long. And, more importantly, I would have had that "last chance" to be with him. Why didn't I just go down?

Now, I knew that I couldn't change the fact that he died the next day. But then, over time, I started to realize that I could change how I felt about that last regret-filled night. Naturally, I didn't know it was his last night. So the point is this: Had Michael *not* died the next day, me not going down would have been just another ordinary thing. I would have seen him the next time — no big deal. I took for granted that Michael would be there. THIS was the real, true reason for the pain I felt about the last time I saw Michael.

This is where the loss of my son taught me something about living life. I wanted to begin living regret-free. So I knew that I needed to never take anything or anyone for granted again. Now, for men, showing gratitude is a tough thing to do anyway. We tend to just "go with it." We don't think that deep about the normal everyday things — like coming down the stairs and going outside to play after a long day. We just take for granted it will be there tomorrow.

Now pair that up with dealing with loss. What happens is that the mind often traps the good emotions underneath all the pain. What we need to do is open the mind's vault and start to get some "grief relief" by letting out some of the positive emotions, like gratitude.

Try this — identify just one thing that you are currently taking for granted in your life. And then take one step toward showing your appreciation. It can be as simple as washing your car to show how important it is in your life. Once you become familiar with showing your thanks with the simple, it will become a bit more

comfortable to show it for some of the more complicated.

To be truthful, this moment in my life haunts me to this day. It is why I am so passionate about never, ever, taking anything in my life for granted again. It is just one of the legacies left behind by my son, Michael. Start today by choosing to do one thing new for something or someone in your life. I guarantee you will feel a great smile all around you.

*Ron Villano, 2011*

*From Open to Hope, [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)*

Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

Please accept this photo album as a gift from me to you. It's my life story. Though brief, I know that I touched many lives. Please don't tuck it away and try to forget, but keep it close and remember always. I was truly a beautiful baby!

My mom and dad are very sad, and I know you are too. I have heard your cries, and I wish that I could comfort you.

Oh, Grandpa, How I will miss the rides in your pick-up truck and rides upon your knee. Grandma, I look at you and I know how special my smile to you would be.

I have one small request I hope you will do for me. It's a gift for mom and dad, given in love from you and me. Listen to them as they talk about the person I would have become. Please, kiss my mom and hug my dad. Wrap them in your arms, and keep on holding tight. Having your support and love will help them make it through the silent nights.

I am smiling at you through my own tears, so I'll sadly say good-bye, from my place in heaven above.

Hugs and kisses.  
Love,  
Tyler Jay

Grandson of Betty Behnken

From [www.irisremembered.com](http://www.irisremembered.com)  
Infants Remembered In Silence

## Grief Support For Siblings

When a child has died, siblings are often referred to as “the forgotten mourners.” While parents usually receive much support, siblings usually receive little—often being asked “How are your parents doing?” The Compassionate Friends is an organization that is not just for bereaved parents. It’s also for bereaved siblings (and grandparents). Some chapters have sibling subgroups while many welcome adult siblings to their meetings. Contact your local chapter to find out their policies on siblings and their meetings. On The Compassionate Friends national website, you will find support in a number of different ways.

[Online Support Community](#) (live chats) allows you to talk with other bereaved siblings from across the country during the Online Support Community sessions held every week. These sessions are limited in number of participants and have trained monitors who are also siblings. Check out [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and go to Resources/Siblings.

### *Who Am I Now?*

Who am I now that my sibling has died? I have asked myself that question many times over the last four years. When I think of my brother, Sean, I think of how things used to be. I also think of all the things that he will miss. For example, my husband or my children will never know Sean. Sean will never have children. There are just so many things that he will miss. I began to question who I was about a month after Sean died. He and I shared a great love of music. When I think of music, I think of Sean. At first, every song I heard made me cry. After a while though, I began to try to find a deeper meaning in the songs. I know that a lot of teenagers and young adults identify important times in their lives by music. I am one of those people. Now I am trying to figure out what place the music has in my life. After Sean died, music took on new meaning for me. The music I sing and listen to is my special connection to my brother. The song “Because You Loved Me” by Celine Dion was especially powerful for me. I came to realize that through simply loving and supporting me, my brother had helped to shape the person that I was becoming and who I want to become. I have realized now that my life’s direction has taken a slight detour. I have had to reroute my image of myself. When I see music, I see my brother and I hope that will never change. When I saw myself in the past, I saw Sean by my side. That picture has now been altered. The biggest part of the question, “Who am I now?” is also “Am I still a sister?” The answer to that is a simple yes! Sean will always be my brother and I will be his sister. Forever.

By Traci Morlock, BP/USA Bereaved Sibling, St.Louis, MO

## Create a Family Flag

Creating a family flag can represent your family’s grief journey.

1. Use fabric of choice and cut to desired size.
2. Hem and sew one seam along the edge for the flagpole to slide through.
3. Decorate and embellish as desired. Use small jewels or photos that remind your child of your loved one or your families journey through grief.
4. Proudly display your flag to encourage hope for the future and represent love for the past.

Variation: Create a paper flag and use macaroni, stickers and strings for embellishments. Then proudly display on the fridge or on your child’s bedroom wall.

Just for Me! Activities for grieving children & teens. (2009), p.10. ~ [www.ryansheartnpo.org](http://www.ryansheartnpo.org).

## A GRANDPARENT’S POINT OF VIEW

**The death of a child is a most tragic thing. It affects so many – family, friends and even strangers.**

**My grandchild died, and only a grandparent can understand the special love we have for our grandchildren and the loss we feel. For us, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day.**

**The smile that was always on my daughter’s face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep and there are so many questions. You feel helpless as a parent. You can’t kiss the hurt away as you did when they were a child. You have no answers for their questions, for you can barely understand your own feelings.**

**Each day I hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on my daughter’s face. I search for a little something to say or do that will comfort her. It seems there is no end to the suffering.**

**As time has slowly gone by, I see the healing process begin. In time, a ray of hope will shine on my daughter’s face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to me for what little comfort I can give her. There will always be a part of me that is gone. In time I will learn to live with the part that is still here.**

By Ruth Eaton, from Infants Remembered in Silence, [www.irisremembers.com](http://www.irisremembers.com)

## Independence Day

The Fourth of July, Independence Day, Our Nation's birthday - Whatever you call it, we celebrate America's independence from England on July 4<sup>th</sup> each year. As a nation, we have endured for 200+ years to become a significant, independent, and powerful force in the world. We were founded on the principles of equality and religious tolerance, of equity and opportunity, and of rights and responsibilities. Several generations of men and women have defended our precious freedom with their lives. As we celebrate this year, let's take a moment to remember those who paid the ultimate price for freedom - and to remember their families. It is sometimes easy to think only of the glory of their sacrifices, and to overlook the sacrifice of their families. War is never glorious, no matter how romantic the notion created by Hollywood. War has casualties that go farther and deeper into the fabric of our nation than we may realize. Those who died are buried with fanfare, as befits the nation's fallen valiant. Their families learn to go on, just as we have, in spite of their loss.



But think for a moment of those who were declared missing in action, or who were prisoners of war. Their families must endure, often for years, and sometimes without an end to their pain and loss. Remember all of our nation's fallen when you celebrate this year. Remember those ceremoniously laid to rest; remember those who were captured, imprisoned, even tortured; remember those whose fate remains unknown. And remember, too, the families of all of them. Death, no matter how noble, is never easy for those left behind. We send our thanks to the veterans - living, dead and missing - and their families.

By Tom & Sondra Wright, TCF Tucker, GA

### Survivors of Suicide Support Group

Meets the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm at The Warehouse at Family Festival, 5095 Post Rd, Cumming, 30040. The Meeting Room is located past The Land of 1000 Hills Coffee Bar, down the hall, first door on the right. For info contact Sherry 404-660-0907, [sherryunwala@yahoo.com](mailto:sherryunwala@yahoo.com) or Karen, 770-355-1024, [Karen\\_copija@att.net](mailto:Karen_copija@att.net)

### A Father's Grief

By Ron Howard

In silent disbelief  
I read those granite words  
That tell a soldier's tale  
And how valiantly he served.

Monuments to freedom  
Standing straight and tall  
They represent men willing  
To sacrifice it all.

I stand as tears fill my eyes  
And pain chokes out my heart  
So proud that you were willing  
To go and do your part.

And though I do have pride  
In the battles that you won  
It gives me little comfort  
For I have lost my son.

Rest peacefully my son,  
Your battles now are through.  
Look down on me from Heaven  
And remember I love you.

From Bereaved Parents USA National Newsletter "A Journey Together" [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

The Compassionate Friends of Atlanta now has a Facebook Group. We invite you to join.



For more information, Click the following link  
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=43057397614>

You will need to log into Facebook to join the group. You will also need a Facebook account (they are free). Our hope is that you will be able to connect to someone to help you in your grief journey.

Remember "We Need Not Walk Alone"  
<http://www.facebook.com>

# Compassionate Friends 34<sup>th</sup> National Conference



Minneapolis/St. Paul  
July 15-17, 2011 at the  
Sheraton Bloomington  
Hotel.

A national conference of The Compassionate Friends is unlike any other conference you may ever attend. It is a place where you can go and know that you truly are not alone as you travel your grief journey. Every person comes for the same reason—a child has died. It is a place where “friendship, understanding, and hope” are more than just words.

For over three decades The Compassionate Friends has held national conferences in different locations, from the east coast to the west coast, from north to south. Today it’s normal to have 1100-1400 bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents attend. Of that number, it usually is the first TCF National Conference for nearly 40 percent of the attendees. Those new to TCF conferences are given a special butterfly sticker to wear so that others may notice and give them special hugs. Everyone feels they are in a place where they belong. We often say that those at the conference are friends you simply have not yet met.

At each conference, there are many activities, but you decide what is right for you. There are more than 100 workshops (but don’t think these are work—they’re really a time for learning and sharing). Many areas of grief are covered by the workshops. There are workshops for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. And there will be many workshops for those who have no surviving children. You’ll find a hospitality room, a reflection room, the Butterfly Boutique, and a complete and stocked bookstore. There are very interesting and well-known speakers who address the Opening Session, the Friday afternoon banquet, the Saturday evening banquet, and the Sunday closing. There’s also a special candle lighting ceremony to conclude the Saturday evening banquet. If you like a more intimate time with others, join in the evening sharing sessions of your choice.

But don’t miss the Walk to Remember Sunday at 8 a.m. prior to the closing. As many as 1300-1400 walkers carry the names of more than 10,000 children from across

the country who will always be remembered. Some fly in from across the country just to participate in the Walk!

Further info is available at  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## GAINESVILLE GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Hospice of Northeast Georgia Medical Center has started a grief support group for parents. Meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of each month from 3 – 4 pm. Meeting will be held at 2150 Limestone Parkway, Suite 222, Gainesville. Contact Jennifer Sorrells at 770-219-8528 or [jennifer.sorrells@nghs.com](mailto:jennifer.sorrells@nghs.com) for more information.

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## Woman to Woman: Surviving Through Grief

Breakfast Brunch Devotional at the Holiday Inn at 7035 Jimmy Carter Blvd, Norcross on Saturday, June 18, 2011 at 9:00 am. Cost is \$10/person.

To register, visit [www.conceptualpower.webs.com](http://www.conceptualpower.webs.com) or call Candace Jordan (mom of Marcus Reid) at 678-499-9587.

## New Support Group in Gainesville Rock Goodbye Angel

(Recognizing, Gifting and Affirming Families of Pregnancy & Early Infancy Loss)



We are a family of bereaved parents who have come together to provide an organization serving and assisting those who have experienced a loss due to miscarriage, stillbirth, perinatal loss or neonatal loss.

We provide **Hope, Compassion, Understanding and Love** for families to honor our little angels who have been 'Rocked Goodbye' to our Heavenly Father.

There are many struggles associated with a premature loss. If you or someone you know needs support during this time, please contact us.

The group meets every Monday at 7 pm at Lanier Park Campus, 675 White Sulphur Road, Gainesville. For information, contact Angela at [angela@rockgoodbyeangel.com](mailto:angela@rockgoodbyeangel.com).  
[www.rockgoodbyeangel.org](http://www.rockgoodbyeangel.org)

### Gifts of Love

A love gift is a financial donation to The Compassionate Friends Gwinnett Chapter. It is usually in honor of a child who has died, but it can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of our chapter. Love gifts are acknowledged in each quarterly issue.

### In Loving Memory of:

**Joey Robinson and Natascha Roebuck**, from Joey's dad and Natascha's mom's friend, Weyman Robinson

**Adam Lee Jones**, from his mom Linda Jones

**Jenny Gryzinski**, from her grandmother, Dolores Gryzinski

**Justin Jordan**, from his mom, Karen Jordan-Allen

Stamps were donated by Marvin Choate, for Remembrance Cards, in loving memory of his daughter, **Fara Nicole**

.If you make a monetary donation to TCF Gwinnett, (which is tax-deductible) you may specify whether you would like your contribution to go toward the memorial garden account, newsletter account or general account. Funds from the general account pay for remembrance cards, postage, labels, the annual picnic, expenses associated with monthly meetings and for information packets for newly bereaved parents. We do not receive funds from The Compassionate Friends National Office and we are always extremely appreciative for any contributions. Please be assured, however, that there are no financial dues to be a member of TCF.

### **THANK YOU!**

Many parents give back to TCF through volunteer opportunities as a means of honoring their child. Without volunteers our group would not exist. We are grateful to these volunteers: **June Cooper**, Chapter Co-Leader, in memory of her daughter, **Wendy McMain** & in memory of her sister, **Noreen Keenan**; **Meg Avery**, Chapter Co-Leader & Newsletter Editor in memory of her son **James Avery**; **Barbara Dwyer**, Chapter Treasurer and group facilitator and **Leo Dwyer**, group facilitator and community outreach, in memory of their son **Matthew Dwyer**; **Terry Sparks**, provides newly bereaved packet info & group facilitator, in memory of his daughter, **Natalie Sparks**; **Nancy Long**, creating & mailing Remembrance Cards in memory of her son **Joseph Beatty**; **Gary Fox**, facilitator, in memory of his son, **G.W. Fox**; **Sandy Lavender**, organizing & setting up the library in memory of her daughter **Ashley Lauren Hull**; and **Chuck & Patti Hatchet**, mailing TCF information to newly bereaved parents in memory of their son, **Brian**.

### **News from the Gwinnett Chapter**

We reach out to you with the understanding and love only another bereaved parent can offer. Attending meetings and learning from others what has helped them is one way to ease the pain of losing a child. We welcome you to join us at the Gwinnett Chapter of TCF.

### **Small Sharing Groups**

Monthly support group meetings are the heart of The Compassionate Friends. These gatherings provide a safe and caring environment in which bereaved parents and siblings can talk freely about the emotions and experiences they are enduring. Parents receive the understanding and support of others who have "been there." *Our small sharing groups would like to focus more on the issues and topics that bereaved parents face each day, from what to do on a birthday, how to handle tough questions, how to find the will to go on, what works and what doesn't work during the grieving journey & why or why not, to ideas on how to reinvest in living, how to rediscover joy & how to carry our child's memory and legacy through our daily lives.*

There are opportunities to give back and to help out with the "behind the scenes" efforts for our local chapter. We need new volunteers to successfully continue the efforts begun when the Gwinnett Chapter was created in 1994. Volunteer opportunities range from helping to set up a meeting, becoming a facilitator, and making phone calls. Most especially, we need a new co-leader to help out with the organization, details and paperwork involved with our chapter. This is a great way to give back in memory of your child after you have found hope, encouragement and strength from TCF to survive & thrive in spite of life's worst tragedy. Making the change from needing help & finding help to giving help & support to new parents is another healing milestone. Please call or e-mail **June Cooper**, 770-757-4927, [jc30044@flash.net](mailto:jc30044@flash.net), or **Meg Avery**, 770-932-5862 if you have questions or if you'd like to volunteer.

### **Would you like to honor your child by making a donation to the Gwinnett TCF Chapter in his or her memory?**

*Please fill out the information below, clip and mail with your tax deductible donation to: Gwinnett TCF, Barbara Dwyer, 4905 Pond Ridge Lane, Cumming, GA 30041. (Please make checks payable to TCF Gwinnett.)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify if you would like your donation added to the Children's Memorial Account, Newsletter Account, or General Account.