



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

**LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA
GWINNETT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER**

Meg Avery, Editor Autumn 2013
September, October & November

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.

“When a child dies at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or daughter, brother or sister, or grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.”

CHAPTER MEETING AND CONTACT INFO:

Gwinnett Chapter- 7:30 PM on the 3rd Thursday of every month. **next meetings: Sept. 19, Oct. 17 and Nov. 21**
Trinity Christian Fellowship, 1985 Old Fountain Road, Lawrenceville, 30043.
We meet in the 100 Building, the first building on your left.

For TCF Gwinnett: contact June Cooper by phone 770-757-4927, or email jc30044@flash.net or tcfwinnett@yahoo.com
TCF Atlanta website: www.tcfatlanta.org
GA Regional Coordinator Sandra Stinson, sandrastinsontcf@yahoo.com
The Compassionate Friends National Office:
1-877-969-0010
www.thecompassionatefriends.org

Dear Friends,
The Gwinnett Newsletter is available both in print and by e-mail. If you have received this issue in print and would prefer to receive e-mail instead, please notify us at tcfwinnett@yahoo.com. This will help keep our postage and printing costs down. We welcome your suggestions to improve our chapter newsletter.

We would love your input for the newsletter, Poetry, articles and comments submitted by parents, siblings and grandparents are an import part of each issue. Our next issue, Winter 2013/14 will cover the months of Dec. Jan. & Feb.
We will also continue to recognize birthday and anniversary dates as times of special remembrance within our TCF family. Please communicate these important dates to us if you have not already done so.

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause, is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they walk the grief journey. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings and issues that evolve around the death experience of a child.

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 become 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 other 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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Coping with October

The coming of autumn with the beautiful colors of the leaves and their falling will bring different emotions to different families. Maybe your family had a tradition of driving through particularly scenic areas. Maybe the child you lost was the one who raked the leaves. Perhaps all of this will simply be a reminder that winter and a barren landscape are coming.

Halloween is a favorite holiday for most children, but it can be hard for bereaved parents. This formerly innocent holiday, the yard “decorated” as graveyards with markers and ghosts and skeletons, the stories of unhappy spirits that must walk the earth, all have a completely different impact on us now.

Many of us have opened the door to give out treats and been faced with a costume so similar to one our child wore for a Halloween past, that either we really want to pull aside the mask to see the face behind or we want to dream that this was one last visit from our precious child.

Some parents have surviving children who still want to join in the fun – and, oh, how hard to “trick or treat” when you feel the victim of the ultimate “trick”.

Stop and Think – what can you do differently? For autumn and its beauties & chores, what routines can you change? Hire someone or ask a friend who has been offering to help & asking for specific tasks. Maybe you could do it together.

For Halloween, take surviving children to a carnival (many schools and churches sponsor these). Or if a carnival was an every year event, go to the zoo or go door to door this year. If you don't have surviving children wanting to celebrate, maybe you can leave your house dark & go to a movie and skip this holiday. In any event, planning ahead will help you get through a difficult time.

By Tracy Rhein, Bereaved Parents USA – Central Arkansas Chapter

A Season of Many Feelings By Cindy Schake, TCF Butler, PA

Fall is a season of many feelings.
Autumn is here once again as it comes every year.
And with the falling leaves my falling tears.
This time of year is the hardest of all.
My heart is still breaking,
Once again it is fall.

Memories once so vivid are seeming to fade, My time spent with you seems some other age. This season reminds me of grief and of pain. But yet teaches of hope and joy once again.
For the trees are still living beneath their gray bark,
And you my sweet child are alive in my heart.



NOSTALGIA

The school bells ring, young voices sing.
And small ones shout with glee.
The autumn air beckons school to start
And left alone is me.
What makes me feel so down and blue,
And boggled down with thoughts of you?
I see the school bus passing by
And find myself with a tear in my eye.
Is it the clothes that we can't buy?
While others grab the jeans to try?
Or is it the autumn in the air
That pulls at heartstrings already bare?
Maybe it's falling leaves and drying
grass
Bringing reflections like a looking glass.
Whatever the reason that stirs my heart
Every year when school must start
Reminds me how much I miss you.
TCF Fort Wayne, IN

WE REMEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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



September

Franklin Lewis "Shane" Martin	Sept. 1
Andrea Nicole King	Sept. 2
Karen Hendler	Sept. 7
Drake Michaud	Sept. 7
Joshua Stulick	Sept. 10
Daniel Monk	Sept. 11
Kimberly Dawn Marshall	Sept. 11
Tom Waters	Sept. 16
Melissa Hermanns	Sept. 16
Jayla Cook	Sept. 16
Darryl Reed	Sept. 19
Shawn Lippman	Sept. 19
Johnathon David Solar	Sept. 23
Quavonte Combs	Sept. 24
Julie Lyn Donaldson	Sept. 26
Catherine Amiss	Sept. 26
Blake Hinson	Sept. 29
Charlie Whittington	Sept. 30



October

Kapri Bradley	Oct. 1
Scott Tarbell	Oct. 6
Adrian Ortiz	Oct. 7
Larry Tilley	Oct. 8
Richard Parrish Mayberry	Oct. 10
Joseph Oliver	Oct. 10
Alan Parish	Oct. 11
Jennifer Hardy	Oct. 13
Sloan Taylor	Oct. 14
Olivia Rodriguez	Oct. 17
Jeffrey Lopilato	Oct. 17
Christopher Gordon	Oct. 19
Hayden Navarrete	Oct. 24
Evelyn Marie Kunkel	Oct. 29



November

Tyler Durden	Nov. 1
Danny Gilbride	Nov. 1
Virginia Leigh Phillips	Nov. 3
Heather Helms	Nov. 3
Misty Autumn Dubose	Nov. 5
Robert David Parsons	Nov. 7
Matthew Dwyer	Nov. 7
True Hewitt IV	Nov. 7
Jayvon Hammond	Nov. 9
Brannon Springer	Nov. 10
Jeffrey Wolcott	Nov. 12
Amanda Christine Warnock	Nov. 13
Pamela Leigh Thompson	Nov. 15
Frankie Ortiz	Nov. 26
Daniel Hager	Nov. 29
Clayton Olvey	Nov. 30



Birthday Invitation

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.

September, October & November 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



Christopher Gabriel Patton	Sept. 1
Chad Gordon	Sept. 3
Kyle Copija	Sept. 4
Shane Miller	Sept. 4
Charlie Smallen	Sept. 8
Daniel Monk	Sept. 10
G.W. Fox	Sept. 11
Ryan Pilgrim	Sept. 11
Jeffrey Wolcott	Sept. 13
Quintin Jones	Sept. 13
Drake Michaud	Sept. 19
Justin Evans	Sept. 20
Natascha Roebuck	Sept. 20
Matthew Dwyer	Sept. 21
Adam Lee Jones	Sept. 21
Karen Hendler	Sept. 21
Monique Marlowe	Sept. 21
James R. Avery, III	Sept. 22
Tommy McDonald	Sept. 22
Amanda Sullivan	Sept. 22
Scott Tarbell	Sept. 26
Brittany Hopkins	Sept. 27
Johnathon David Solar	Sept. 27

True Hewitt IV	Oct. 3
Richard Parrish Mayberry	Oct. 4
Sloan Taylor	Oct. 4
Ross Creel	Oct. 9
Wyatt Fons	Oct. 9
Johnathan England	Oct. 10
Franklin Lewis "Shane" Martin	Oct. 14
Rleigh-Jacqueline Clebert	Oct. 14
Elizabeth "Beth" Wood	Oct. 15
Drew Adams	Oct. 15
Jacob Meadows	Oct. 19
Cristina Jane Vargas Howerton	Oct. 19
Christopher Reed	Oct. 20
Bo Tuggle	Oct. 22
Joey Robinson	Oct. 23
Monta Hunt	Oct. 23
Ashley Lauren Hull	Oct. 27
Jarod Robert Wills	Oct. 28
Jared Chambers	Oct. 28
Evelyn Marie Kunkel	Oct. 29
Jack Fons	Oct. 31

Iza Morris	Nov. 10
Kevin Hamilton	Nov. 12
Lindsey Marie Townsend	Nov. 14
Daniel Hager	Nov. 14
Robert David Parsons	Nov. 24
Ronald "Bruce" West	Nov. 24
Robert Coltman	Nov. 28
Mark William Evans, Jr.	Nov. 29

Now Autumn

What a strange time is autumn,
More than a season,
Autumn can be like a mood,
Softness & warmth and abundance
Drift from the sky like a smile.

And you remember the seasons
Before the children died.
They do seem far away sometimes,
Those seasons, now.
But not the children –
They are always here.

In this strange time, this autumn,
When the softness
And the warmth
And the abundance
Of unseen children
Drift from the sky like a smile.

By Sascha Wagner
From her book, *The Poems of Sascha Wagner*



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).

All TCF National Conferences & many regional conferences offer workshops and other activities specifically geared for bereaved siblings.

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 and go to Resources/Siblings.

Siblings Walking Together *(Formerly the Sibling Credo)*

We are the surviving siblings of
The Compassionate Friends.
We are brought together
by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.
Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.
Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.
At other times we need our families to be there.
Sometimes we must walk alone,
taking our memories with us,
continuing to become the individuals we want to be.
We cannot be our dead brother or sister;
however, a special part of them lives on with us.
When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.
We are living a life very different
from what we envisioned,
and we feel the responsibility
to be strong even when we feel weak.
Yet we can go on because
we understand better than many others
the value of family and the precious gift of life.
Our goal is not to be
the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are,
but to walk together to face our tomorrows
as surviving siblings of
The Compassionate Friends.

©The Compassionate Friends

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.

By Robin Holemon
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

A Sister's Love

When the visions around you
Bring tears to your eyes
I'll be your strength
I'll give you hope
For a sister's love never dies

I promise you never
Will you hurt anymore
I'll be your strength
I'll give you hope
For a sister's love never dies

Over and over your heart breaks
Without me in your life
I'll be your strength
I'll give you hope
For a sister's love never dies

I will love you forever
Even now that my life is through
I'll be your strength
I'll give you hope
For a sister's love never dies.

You are never alone
My arms are always wrapped around you
I'll be your strength
I'll give you hope
For a sister's love never dies

By Holly Graham, from Bereaved Parents USA Anne
Arundel County Chapter October 2009 Newsletter

Thanksgiving Is For The Bereaved & Broken

I have a hard time believing it is the season of holidays again. While this year should be easier since it will be our fifth Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years without Daniel, I still feel myself putting on an extra shield of courage. In the cool afternoon air I am reminded of my first Thanksgiving since Daniel's death. On that day I wrote a poem; it wasn't very good but it did express what I had learned from reflecting on the origins of this national American holiday. For the first time I thought that the initial Thanksgiving among the settlers and the Indians couldn't have been that glamorous. Why not? For one thing there had been many losses. Around those tables were certainly fathers and mothers who had had to bury children. While thankful for much, these parents held heavy hearts too. Continuing to reflect this way helps me realize Thanksgiving is also a holiday with reality. It is not a Norman Rockwell painting. While we like the warmth this artist has created in his capturing of a happy Thanksgiving table, we know that in most families everyone is not present. Family members are gone from us and at times all we can notice are the silent empty chairs. How can we have Thanksgiving when we are lacking? This holiday does not have the bereaved in mind at all, we conclude.

But, in time, we are able to reflect on the presence our loved children held in our lives instead of only focusing on their absences. They lived and we are the more blessed because of their lives - so vibrant and so loving. We become more aware of just how much they impacted our lives then - and even now. Light a candle this Thanksgiving for those we miss. Recall how blessed we were to have them, even for a short while.

And remember that the origin of Thanksgiving does not stem from the situations of cheery and perfectly intact families. There had been many deaths during the difficult trek to this land from England and Europe and once the settlers arrived, more deaths due to illness occurred. The Native Americans experienced heart breaking losses as well. Even so, these men and women found reasons to be thankful. So, although our sorrow is great,

we can be appreciative for the memories we hold in our hearts.

Thanksgiving is a holiday which includes each of us -bereaved and broken.

By Alice J. Wisler

In Memory of Daniel, 8/25/92 – 2/02/97

Author of "Getting Out of Bed in the Morning, Reflections of Comfort in Heartache" and "Memories Around the Table" cookbook – www.alicewisler.com



Thanksgiving Prayer

Today, we give thanks for our friends,
Those that time has taken far from us,
Those we cherish now and those we have yet
to meet.

We give thanks for our family,
Those members who are with us in spirit
And those who are a distance away.
We give thanks for our expanding family,
For relatives need not always be family
And family need not always be relatives,
Love creates families.

We give thanks for our children,
For the ones who are here,
And the ones that live on only in our
memory.

We thank you.
Amen

TCF Madison Chapter

THE VILLAGE SIBLING SUPPORT GROUP

A place for siblings to gather to support each other in times of loss. Meets the third Wed. of each month from 6:30 – 8:30 at 678 Tom Brewer Road in Loganville. Contact Steve Williams at 678-670-3549. This sibling support group was organized by Kayleigh Ellington, in memory of her brother Justin. Their mom, Kathy Ellington, belongs to TCF Gwinnett.

GAINESVILLE SUPPORT GROUP

The Northeast Georgia Medical Center has a grief support group for parents. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month from 5:15 – 6:45 pm. The meeting is held at Lanier Park, Gainesville. Contact Jennifer Sorrells at 770-219- 0271 or Jennifer.sorrells@nghs.com for more information.

Kate's Club

Kate's Club is a non-profit organization that empowers children and teens facing life after the death of a parent or sibling. By creating friendships with kids and young adults that share the experience, Kate's Club guides children through their grief journey in a comfortable, safe & uplifting setting. For information, contact Debra Brook, Program Manager, at debra@katesclub.org or phone 404-347-7619.

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 or Karen, 770-355-1024, Karen_copija@att.net

GOOD GRIEF" Support Group in Jefferson

Meets the first Saturday of every month at 10 am at the Integrity Counseling & Personal Development Center, phone 706-387-0573, www.integrityofjefferson.com Deana Martin, TCF member and mom to angels Amanda & Logan helps coordinate and organize this group. You may also contact Deana at deana.martin@merial.com

Support Group in Gainesville Rock Goodbye Angel



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. 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 info, contact Angela at 770-331-1281 angela@rockgoodbyeangel.com. www.rockgoodbyeangel.org

Teen Victim Impact Program and It

Won't Happen To Me will be having their 7th Annual Memory Walk **Saturday, October 19th** at Tribble Mill Park in Lawrenceville. This is an event where we provide an opportunity for families and friends to walk on behalf of their sons, daughters or friends that have died in a teen driven related car crash. Anyone that has lost a teen in a tragic car crash and would like to participate and or have their teen represented along the Walk please contact Bill Richardson at Bill@tvip.org For more information about our organization you can go to www.itwonthappentome.org

TCF Gwinnett 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".

We are here to provide hope and encouragement, understanding & friendship as we all travel the grief journey. Our lives have been turned inside out & upside down and we are the walking wounded who must now figure out where to go from here, how to put our lives back together to some degree, and share coping skills and survival techniques. Together we can share our ideas and emotions, the questions and trials and tribulations that we have found ourselves in the very unwelcome world of bereaved parents.

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: **Candace Jordan**, Chapter Leader, in memory of her son **Marcus Reid**; **June Cooper**, Parent Phone Contact, in memory of her daughter, **Wendy McMMain** & in memory of her sister, **Noreen Keenan**; **Meg Avery**, Newsletter Editor in memory of her son **James Avery**; **Barbara Dwyer**, Chapter Treasurer and **Leo Dwyer**, group facilitator in memory of their son **Matthew Dwyer**; **Terry Sparks**, provides newly bereaved packet info & as group facilitator, in memory of his daughter, **Natalie Sparks**; **Diane Wolcott**, Memorial Garden Committee Chair in memory of her son, **Jeffrey**; **Gary Fox**, facilitator, in memory of his son, **G.W. Fox**; **Joy Crowe**, Steering Committee Member in memory of her son **Brenden Elbaz**; **Claudine Nickens**, Steering Committee Member & facilitator in memory of her son **David Whitley**; and **Sandy Lavender**, Database Maintenance in memory of her daughter **Ashley Lauren Hull**.

News from TCF Gwinnett:

HELP WANTED!

As we all know, the death of our child, no matter what age or circumstance, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, to whom does a family turn for the emotional support they will need during the grief journey that lies ahead? If you are reading this newsletter, you have already learned that The Compassionate Friends understands that grief for a child lasts longer & is more intense than society commonly recognizes. Together as grieving parents we can offer empathy and understanding of this loss, while also recognizing that each person's grief is unique.

However, there are many families who have not found TCF and may need the support & friendship our chapter can offer. We all read about accidents, crimes, illnesses and our hearts ache because we, better than others, realize what the parents of that child are now going to have to cope with.

We are in need of a **Community Outreach Volunteer**, who will reach out to funeral homes, social services, hospices, etc. to create awareness of our TCF Chapter. We have a Special Edition Newsletter available for new parents that can be mailed or given to organizations. It may be as simple as sending emails, or making phone calls, and/or mailing the special newsletter. The internet is a great resource and aid for creating education & awareness of TCF Gwinnett for families and organizations. If you would be interested in filling this volunteer role, or if there could be a team of 2 or 3 people to work together in this effort, please contact Candace Jordan by email, tcfwinnett@yahoo.com

National Children's Memorial Day

Sunday, December 8, 2013

Last year we had a small informal gathering on National Children's Memorial Day, which is always the second Sunday in December. The Compassionate Friends has a World Wide Candle Lighting Ceremony on this day at 7 pm in every time zone for one hour, creating a continuous wave of light around the world in memory of our loved ones. TCF Gwinnett met last year at the Lawrenceville Historic Courthouse Gazebo at 7 pm. Depending on the weather, we will try to have a **"Gathering at the Gazebo"** at **7 pm on Dec. 8** for one hour. There is electricity in the gazebo so we were able to have music last year and will plan on the same this year. Hopefully the weather will cooperate so we may gather together and light candles in memory of the love & spirit of our child, children, siblings and/or grandchildren whom we love, miss and remember, especially during the holiday season.



Information will be shared via email as it gets closer to Dec. 9. If you have not ever received an email from TCF Gwinnett, then you are not on that mailing list. Please send an email to tcfwinnett@yahoo.com to be included on chapter email monthly reminders and announcements.

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:

Jenny Gryzinski, from her grandmother, Dolores Gryzinski

Stamps for Remembrance Cards donated by
Marvin Choate
in 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 or general account. You may also choose to donate a book to our Lending Library, or cards to be used for our Remembrance Cards. If you would like to donate cards, please bring them to a meeting and labels will be added to the back of the card "card donated in memory of _____ (your child's name).

\$\$\$ *Where does the money go?* \$\$\$

Our chapter is self-supporting and donations fund our chapter activities. We pay \$300 annually to Trinity Christian Fellowship Church for the use of our meeting space and \$100 annually to TCF National Office for yearly dues. Funds from the general account pay for: remembrance cards, postage, labels, printing, postage & labels for our newsletter, picnic pavilion rental, supplies for 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 or to receive this newsletter.

Please fill out the information below, clip and mail with your tax deductible donation to:

Barbara Dwyer
TCF Gwinnett Treasurer
4905 Pond Ridge Lane,
Cumming, GA 30041.
(Please make checks payable to **TCF Gwinnett.**)

Name _____

Address: _____

In Memory
of: _____

