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 tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com
TCF Atlanta website: www.tcfatlanta.org
GA Regional Coordinator Sandra Stinson, sandrastinsontcf@yahoo.com

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 tcfgwinnett@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.
Copyright 2007
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  
Chad Gordon  
Kyle Copija  
Shane Miller  
Charlie Smallen  
Daniel Monk  
G.W. Fox  
Ryan Pilgrim  
Jeffrey Wolcott  
Quintin Jones  
Drake Michaud  
Justin Evans  
Natascha Roebuck  
Matthew Dwyer  
Adam Lee Jones  
Karen Hendler  
Monique Marlowe  
James R. Avery, III  
Tommy McDonald  
Amanda Sullivan  
Scott Tarbell  
Brittany Hopkins  
Johnathon David Solar  

Iza Morris  
Kevin Hamilton  
Lindsey Marie Townsend  
Daniel Hager  
Robert David Parsons  
Ronald “Bruce” West  
Robert Coltman  
Mark William Evans, Jr.

**Now Autumn**

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

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

©The Compassionate Friends
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 each 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 McMain & 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:______________________________