



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Meg Avery, Editor

SPRING 2013

March, April & May

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: March 21, April 18 and May 16.**

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

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 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, Summer 2013 will cover the months of June, July & August..

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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REFLECTIONS OF MARCH

March is a month of renewal. The dormant trees begin to stir; the birds optimistically sing of spring; the winds, sometimes violent, wake us up; perhaps we need a "shake" out of our winter lethargy; an awakening.

There is that urge to plant, to nourish, to grow a tree or a flower. There is the primordial urge to feel your hands digging in the warming earth. Perhaps we plant because we know that someone will see the results, as we have enjoyed the results of others' work. It could be called a debt of renewal, a

repayment for that which we have enjoyed. As we nourish small seedlings, we visualize the end results.

That tree may die, as our children did. That



tree may flourish beautifully, or it may meet ultimate disaster, but if that tree does well; it could be a source of great pleasure and of beauty for many coming years. We can believe that a seedling will be a glorious tree enjoyed by many. It's a nice dream. "To all things there is a season" and as life goes by, we simply cannot afford to miss the seasons, the renewals, the changes for new growth. Regardless of our griefs and regrets, life goes on, and we must try not to miss a season. Life simply will be, whether we participate or not. Someone will benefit from constructive growth, if we can find the energy to make the effort.

Severe grief, for a time, reduces our interest and our ability to participate fully in life. With a low energy level and little initiative and with our hopes for the future severely damaged, it requires great effort for the bereaved to learn to again enjoy the small things that make up most of our lives. Our hopes for the future are so damaged that there is little incentive to work today for the future. The things that exist today comprise the basics of our future. We run a risk and a danger of missing the good things that are to be, because we do not have the wish to participate in the things that are today. Although we need a time of some withdrawal, some time to ponder the unanswered questions, some time to heal, we also need to be aware of the lives that are passing. Regardless of our grief, life simply goes on, and there is much good that we risk losing if we stay too long in a state of suspense

of the present and a sad review of the past. A part of learning to "accept the unacceptable" is to learn to make the effort to sort out the good memories and take them with us into a future that will be happy again.

There comes a time when the harsh winter of our damaging grief will give way to some awakening; a time when we, like nature, can shake off some of the lethargy and see and feel the renewals life offers.

Our choice is to remember that we could not control the advent of disaster. We can only control our response. Our choice is now only in the way in which we respond to the necessity to pick up the threads of our lives and go on. We owe it to ourselves to make a positive effort. We can hope that those buffeting winds of March can help us awaken to the renewals of spring and put the "winter of our disaster" in its place, now a part of our ongoing lives.

By Dayton Robinson, TCF Tuscaloosa, Alabama

A Prayer for Spring

Like Springtime, let me unfold
and grow fresh and anew
from this cocoon of grief
that has been spun around me.

Help me face the harsh reality of
sunshine, renewed life
as my bones still creak
from the winter of my grief.

Life has dared to go on around me
and as I recover from the insult
of life's continuance
I readjust my focus to
include recovery and growth
as a possibility in my future.

Give me strength to break out of
the cocoon of my grief.
But may I never forget it as
the place where I grew my wings,
becoming a new person
because of my loss.

From Infants Remembered in Silence,
www.irisremembers.com

WE REMEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

March

Lance Robert Malone....March 3
Dallas Williams..... March 4
G.W. Fox March 8
Ian Sharpe March 10
Amity Kozak March 11
Brian Ernst..... March 11
Jeff Bradley March 13
Malachai Pierre-Louis... March 16
Melissa "Kiki" Morrow.... March 16
Samantha Mucha ... March 17
Trevor Aaron Jones..... May 19
Richard Kendell "Ken" McCurdy ... March 23
Marcus Reid..... March 23
Kevin Hamilton..... March 23
Ansley Powell.....March 25
Justin Jordan ... March 27
Ashley Lauren Hull March 30

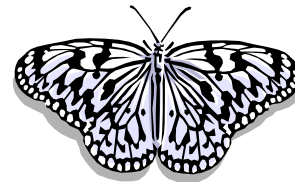
April

Cory Bute ... April 2
Morgan Alexis Burgess.... April 2
Joey Robinson April 4
Johnny Harof....April 4
Jenny Gryzinski April 7
Aaron Stephens April 9
Norma Mucha April 11
Bo Tuggle April 12
Elizabeth "Beth" Rihm April 13
Ben Ellerd ... April 15
Gary Pruitt April 18
Kathryn Collier April 18
Ryan Oliver April 19
Matthew Hinson April 24
Robert Coltman ... April 24
Ricky Ainsworth ... April 25
Kristina Oliver April 25
Richie Yee April 28
Brett Lykins April 28
Rhett Lykins April 28
Billy Foulke April 28

May



Amy Hannigan May 2
Jonathan Ayers May 4
Michael Rivero May 6
David Braund May 8
Mia Penoyer..... May 9
Natalie Sparks May 11
Kyle Harrison... May 12
Thomas Michael Pattillo May 14
Karissa Palmer.... May 19
Chad Gordon May 21
Joshua Waggoner May 25
Richie Petzel May 27
Madison Young....May 28



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.

March, April & May 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

March

Max Fiandt	March 3
Wendy McMain	March 4
Marcus Hamrick	March 4
Alan Parish	March 11
Thomas Michael Pattillo	March 11
Donelle Blackwell	March 14
Elizabeth "Beth" Rihm	March 14
Brian Ernst	March 16
Dallas Williams	March 18
Robert West	March 21
Shawn Lippman	March 23
Richard Kendell "Ken" McCurdy	March 25
Joshua Waggoner	March 26
Charles Whittington	March 27
Andrea Nicole King	March 28



April

Morgan Alexis Burgess	April 2
Tyler Ivey Rice	April 2
Jessica Bryl	April 3
Justin Ellington	April 5
Gerard Robertson	April 6
Xavier Williams	April 7
Marcus Reid	April 8
Tiffany Maxwell	April 11
Brian Hatchett	April 20
Joshua Stulick	April 27
Cameron McClure	April 30

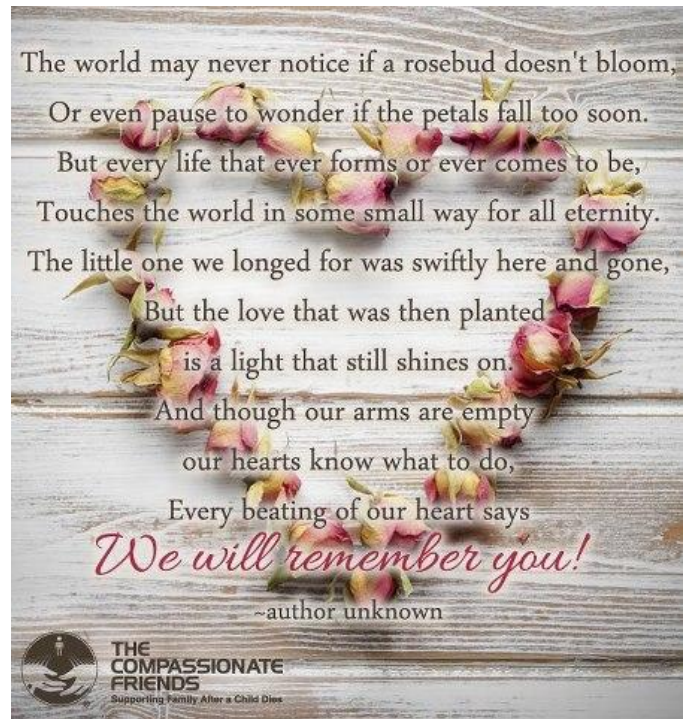
The Melody of My Heart

The melody of the child who played upon the piano of my life will never be played quite that way again, but I must not close the keyboard and allow the instrument to gather dust. I must seek out other artists of the spirit, new friends who will help me find the music of life again, creating new tunes and harmonies to enhance the melody which will always sing in my heart.

By Carol Cavin, TCF Madison, WI

May

Stephanie Fortner	May 2
Rhett Lykins	May 4
Wynne Wilson	May 5
Amanda Christine Warnock	May 6
Hayden Navarrete	May 9
Joseph Beatty	May 11
Adam Sawyer	May 15
Ian Sharpe	May 15
Justin Jordan	May 16
Justin Cates	May 17
Tom Waters	May 19
Daniel Gilbride	May 20
Dawann Wright	May 20
Justin Street	May 21
Blake "BJ" Jolly	May 23
Quavonte "Tae" Combs	May 28
Lance Robert Malone	May 29
Amity Kozak	May 30



The Seasons of Grief

Easter bunnies, brand-new clothes, egg hunts, candy and baskets – the start of spring. How exciting is this time of the year: a new beginning, everything so fresh and so invigorating! But unfortunately only painful and sorrowful memories are here for those of us who are bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Gone is the laughter, the excitement in a special child's eyes, the feeling of a whole new aspect in life.

Spring is here and the world appears ready to be born again with new life, new hope, new wonders. How can we view life in this way when part of ourselves is now gone, forever lost to us? How can our lives continue to go on when one of us is missing, no longer able to share in this "newness" of life? It seems so unfair. And yet, out of our "darkness" comes the first signs of hope, a "bud" of survival, a moment of laughter, a memory of a happier time.

The Easter season usually represents rebirth; let this season be the "birth" of your finding your way back to life again, of finding the ability to heal, and of being able to resolve your grief so that hope and comfort is once again in your lives. Let this time of the year show you can make it through this deepest, most difficult and sorrowful time of your lives.

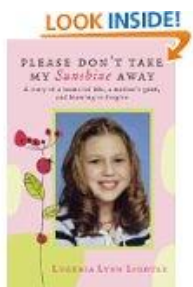
By Chris Gilbert, TCF Tampa, FL



Bent But Not Broken...

To the Mother who has lost her only child, or has no surviving children, the thought of Mother's Day sends a stabbing pain that only the ones of us who are in this situation can understand. We begin to notice Mother's Day cards slipped in right after Valentine's Day along with the Easter cards. Even before Easter the TV advertising starts. We try to blot this all out but our subconscious keeps reminding us, the day is coming closer.

For the first two years we celebrated Mother's Day for my mother and sister very quietly. The third year after my daughter Shawna's death, we decided to go to a local restaurant featuring a nice buffet. We arrived early hoping to avoid the crowd. A very flustered hostess greeted us and found a table for us. The tables had been pushed close together to accommodate more people. It was already becoming very crowded. She asked the question, "How many mothers?" It was then we noticed the flowers she was carrying. Someone managed to stammer out, three- three- mothers. She handed us each a flower, while glancing around to find a table for the next group of people. She didn't notice the one she handed me was pretty battered. My sister wanted to give me hers or get another. "No, it's ok," I said. The stem was bent, but not broken completely. A wilted tired flower was hanging from the stem. I brought it home and propped it up in a glass of water to revive it. You see, I could identify with that flower. As a mother without my child, I have felt so bruised and battered. Somehow through all the pain, tears, and loneliness, like the flower, I have been bent but never quite broken.



Book Review: *Please Don't Take My Sunshine Away*, by Lugenia Lynn Lightle
Recommended by Wayne Faulkner, TCF Gwinnett (Mike's dad)

"A co-worker of mine wrote this book. It is a book for us. Gina lost her 13 year-old daughter to a tragic car accident one morning. All the experiences she writes about are real."
(Available on Amazon for Kindle only)

~Donna Frechec, TCF Enid Chapter~

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

To My Brothers

On the anniversary of their deaths- I loved them
so.

Have you ever lost two brothers?
To an auto accident?
It can really make you crazy
Wondering why and where they went!

They had smiles bright as sunshine.
Hugs as warm as summer rain.
And they loved until their hearts would burst
And then they’d love again.

In the sunrise every morning
I am sure that I do see
My warm and loving brothers
Reaching out and touching me.

With each gentle breeze of springtime
Comes a message from above
They were here and gave me laughter
And filled my heart with love.

If I could have but one wish
The secret wish would be
That everyone could know the love
My brothers gave to me!

By Kathy Gunthrie, TCF Cape May, New Jersey

Grandparents Remembrance

Susan Mackey, TCF, Rutland, VT

We are the grieving grandparents, the shepherds of
our children and grandchildren's lives. Our grief is
two-fold and at times we feel powerless to help. We
seek to comfort our children in the depths of their
grief and yet we need the time and space to face our
own broken hearts. We have been robbed of the
special tender touch a grandparent shares with a
grandchild, and we have lost a symbol of our
immortality. As we walk by our child's side, we both
give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts
to comfort them, and when they reach out to us in
their distress, we begin the journey to heal together.
We continue to be their guardians. We allow
traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We
support the new ones, which symbolize the small
steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our
hearts find comfort.

36th TCF National Conference, July 5-7, 2013, Boston, MA "Beacon of Love, Rays of Hope"



Registration is now open for The Compassionate Friends 36th National Conference July 5-7 in Boston, MA at the beautiful Boston Sheraton. We recommend registering early as this is expected to be one of the best attended U.S. TCF National Conferences in history with 1500 expected for the July 4th Holiday weekend event. (www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

If you're seeking a way to remember and grieve for your child, sibling, or grandchild with people who understand and don't expect you to be "back to normal," give yourself a gift of hope and healing this summer by attending the 36th Compassionate Friends National Conference. This is a unique opportunity to be surrounded by a safe-haven that comes along only once a year. See old friends and make new ones while learning coping mechanisms and skills that will help you and surviving family members through the rough times.

TCF is always known for having great keynoters
This year's speakers are:

- Dr. Heidi Horsley, Dr. Gloria Horsley, founders of "Open to Hope" Foundation and Phil Horsley (Chair of TCF Foundation's Board of Trustees), a family united after the loss of sibling and son Scott, will combine to welcome you as Opening keynoters at the National Conference.
- Tina Chery who, after the murder of her son Louis, created the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute with a mission to create and support an environment where families can live in peace and unity.
- Ken Druck, bereaved parent, founder of the Jenna Druck Foundation, and one of the nation's pioneers in personal transformation including healing after loss.
- Bill Hancock, director of the Bowl Championship Series (college football), author of *Riding with the Blue Moth*, and father of Will, who was killed during the January 27, 2001 crash of an airplane carrying members of the Oklahoma State University men's basketball team.

Reservations are being accepted now for hotel rooms for TCF's 36th National Conference being held at the Boston Sheraton at 39 Dalton Street. Reservations for rooms at the conference host hotel can be made via the Online Reservation link on the TCF website's "2013 National Conference" page or by calling the hotel. Although The Compassionate Friends has arranged a large room block for the conference, it is recommended that you reserve your room early if you wish to guarantee that you can stay at the host hotel as it is believed that the room block, although large, will be filled. The room block is available from June 29-July 11, subject to availability. Latest date to reserve rooms, if still available, will be June 11. Room charge is \$129 per night plus tax.

http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Conferences/TCF_2013_National_Conference_Boston.aspx

The Compassionate Friends Walk to Remember® is a



highlight of every TCF National Conference. It was created as a symbolic way to show the love we carry for the children we mourn. Held at 8 a.m. Sunday on the final day of the national conference it starts at the host hotel of the conference. There is an air of anticipation and excitement as everyone gathers in preparation for the start of the Walk. Finally the Walk begins and, hand-in-hand everyone walks, meditating on a much different time in their lives. Since its inception in 2000, the Walk to Remember has taken on many distinctive facets. There is the main Walk to Remember where those attending the conference join with local bereaved families and others who fly in from across the country just for the Walk. As many as 1400 have participated. Some go the full distance while others only walk a short way knowing that in participating, they are remembering. Special Walk to Remember T-shirts are given to all who register, as well as "walk bibs" where the names of the children being remembered can be written. **Please note:** Registration is *required* to participate in TCF national Walks to Remember. Those under 9 are not required to register but still must have a waiver of liability signed for them by a participating parent or guardian.

For more information on the National Conference or the Walk to Remember, visit www.thecompassionatefriends.org and go to the "News and Events" tab. The Walk to Remember is listed under Special Events and the conference is listed under Conferences.

TCF Regional Conference, Frankfort, Kentucky
"Walking Towards Stars of Hope"
April 5 & 6, 2013

TCF regional conferences offer a rewarding opportunity to share an intimate time with families that have also experienced the death of a child and are seeking ways to learn more about the common path on which we walk. Regional conferences are generally held three to four times a year around the country by local chapters, or groups of TCF chapters. The content of regional conferences will vary greatly as planners try to provide a comfortable and pleasant learning and sharing experience for all who attend. Most regional conferences have workshops of some type and quite often a special speaker and other planned events. Usually 50-200 people will attend most TCF regional conferences compared to 1200 or more for TCF's annual national conference. Regional conferences are a smaller version of the national conferences and still wonderfully supportive.

Speakers for this Regional Conference include TCF Board Member Chuck Collins and special guest presenter Michael Nunley, who will conduct a workshop on grief/music and performance Friday evening. Registration is \$60/person and the conference is being held at the Capital Plaza Hotel. For more information visit www.thecompassionatefriends.org to the News and Events tab.

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.

Would you like to order a quilt made of your child's tee shirts? Deana Martin, Amanda & Logan's mom, had a beautiful quilt made and is sharing the information with us. Elizabeth Longbrake makes these wonderful high quality quilts. She can be contacted by telephone at 678-377-9404 or by e-mail at elizlongbrake@aol.com The cost for the T shirt quilts are \$150-\$400 depending on size and style desired.



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

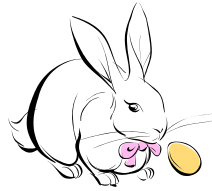
Support Group in Gainesville
Rock Goodbye Angel

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



Easter and Passover

This is the month for celebrating Easter and Passover, family holidays and family gatherings. Again, as bereaved parents, especially if we are newly bereaved parents, we pause and must make a decision as to how and if we are going to proceed as we have in former years, before the death of our children. For both holidays, there is the "children's hour" so to speak. For Easter there have always been the Easter parade, Easter eggs and the Easter bunny.



For Passover there is matzoh, the Seder with the recitation of the Four Questions and the participation of the youngest child. So again, what to do? Both Easter and Passover are holidays in which children are strongly involved. To see that empty chair at the table; to know that the missing child is no longer with us, can be devastating, especially after the first or second anniversary of the death. As with the other holidays, Christmas, Chanukah, Thanksgiving, there are no pat answers, no magic formulas. If you can, talk about your child during the holidays. At our home we have made it a ritual to remember our son at the beginning of the Passover Seder. Please handle these holidays any way you can. There are no rules. Do it your way.

By Dave Ziv, TCF Bucksmont Chapter, PA

Thoughts on the Month of May

The spring flowers on your grave
express the time of year.
It used to be a busy time –
lots of happy days and cheer.

I still have all the Mother's Day cards
made of construction paper and glue
Verses written on a slant that said,
"Mom, I love you".

I'll make no birthday cake this May
nor see the graduation of your class.
The parades, ice cream socials and such
are all a part of the past.

And though these weeks bring sadness
when I remember them I have to smile.

May was really very special
and I'm glad we had it – for a while.

By Norma Herzog, TCF Cincinnati, OH

Mother's Day

It's here again: the time of year when children pay homage to their mothers. What a poignant day for bereaved parents. What used to be a joyous occasion has become another day to get through and "grin and bear it".

We, who have other living children, don't want to burden them with our feelings of depression and sadness, so we put on our happy faces and try to enjoy the day. We do enjoy parts of this annual tribute to mothers. We do get pleasure from our living children. The gifts, cards, and remembrances they heap upon us are appreciated.



But what we all, in our secret hearts and souls, yearn for is the presence of our beloved children who are no longer here to share our day. Nothing will bring them back.

The first Mother's Day that came after my children's deaths, I went to the cemetery. My sister questioned whether it would be "good" for me to go. I responded that since they couldn't come to me on this day, I would go to them. How many of us have longed to "go to them"? How many of us have missed and wanted our children, not only on Mother's Day, but also on every day...in one way or another?

I know that all the bereaved fathers feel as we mothers do. Next month in June will come their trying time...Father's Day. My heart goes out to them.

Again, I wonder about the inequities in this drama called life. I observe some people living into their 70's and 80's and never losing a child. Their Mother's Day and Father's Day must be wonderful. I envy them.

I can't end this without paying my own personal tribute to all the bereaved parents who have lost either an only child or all their loving children. I salute their courage; I cry for them, and most of all, I send a silent prayer to them and wish for their strength to continue. The parents I've met through Compassionate Friends I consider a privilege to know.

By Anita Weistein, TCF Penn Wynn, PA

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

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**; **Trina Yearby**,
creating & mailing Birthday & Anniversary
Remembrance Cards in memory of her children,
Gabrielle, Xavier & Malachai; ; **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

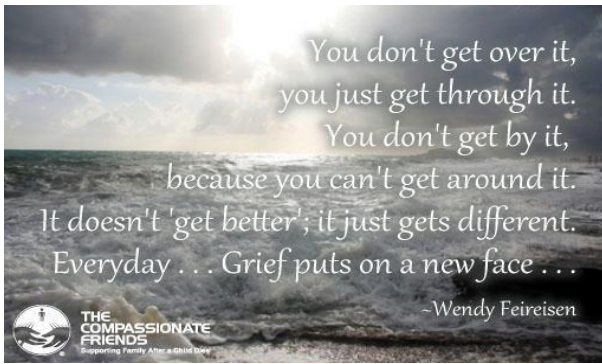
Committee Member in memory of her son
Brenden Elbaz; **Claudine Nickens**, Steering
Committee Member & facilitator in memory of her
son **David Whitley**; and **Sandy Lavender**,
Database Maintenance in memory of her daughter
Ashley Lauren Hull.

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 or Meg Avery by email,
tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com



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:

Gary C. Pruitt, from his mom,
Shirley Streetman

John Andrew Sims, from his mom,
Sue Whitaker

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. As of Feb. 2013 we have \$460 in our TCF Gwinnett account. Donations are greatly appreciated.

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. Last year we used a large portion of our memorial garden fund to replenish, refresh and update our memorial garden since Rhodes Jordan Park had been closed for renovations for nearly 2 years and we were unable to access our garden. Many thanks to Diane Wolcott who headed up the effort to make our garden beautiful again.

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: _____