



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA  
GWINNETT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Meg Avery, Editor SUMMER 2013  
June, July & August



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.

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month. **next meetings: June 20, July 18 and August 15.**

**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](mailto:jc30044@flash.net) or [tcfwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfwinnett@yahoo.com)

TCF Atlanta website: [www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org)

GA Regional Coordinator Sandra Stinson, [sandrastinsontcf@yahoo.com](mailto:sandrastinsontcf@yahoo.com)

The Compassionate Friends National Office:  
1-877-969-0010

[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://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](mailto: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, Autumn 2013 will cover the months of September, October & November. 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.

*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*

## **'Brotherhood' of Fathers Who Have Lost Children**

I had a unique experience last week while I was at work that took me a little off guard. To give you some background leading up to this experience, it started the Friday before New Year's weekend and I was on the phone with someone (Mark) I had never spoken to before and we were talking about the possibility of his firm doing some sub-consultant work for a project I was managing.

I am the type of person who is genuinely interested in other people. I think everyone has a story to tell which I find intriguing. Therefore, as with most of my conversations, we started making small talk. The conversation turned to the subject how each of us was planning on spending the New Year's weekend. Mark shared with me his plans and when it came time for what my plans were, I mentioned that I was writing a book and I was planning on spending most of the weekend putting the finishing touches on one of the last chapters.

His question back to me was, "What type of book are you writing?" I then explained to him that I was writing a book for men that have experienced the death of a child. There was a few seconds delay, and then he asked me why I was writing this book and if I had experience with the subject matter. I then gave him a brief overview of my losses and what prompted me to write such a book. He then said something that got my attention: "I have experience with that. I lost a baby in the mid-80's."

This has happened to me on more than one occasion when a general conversation turns to someone sharing with me that they too have lost a child. Of course I hear from grieving dads daily through my Grieving Dads Project blog, but I am talking about the kind of people in your community that you speak with that you have no idea of what you have been through.

I think this goes to show that there are millions of us out there. The problem is we often keep that "secret" to ourselves not really wanting to talk about it or burden others with our experiences. The reality is, if we do not talk about it, we don't make the connections I made with Mark, who was a stranger before our phone conversation.

There are many grieving dads (and moms) that we pass by daily, people that understand and can connect with what we have been through. They may not be people that are newly bereaved; they may be like Mark and be almost 25 years out from their loss, but these people still "get it." They remember those deep dark early days

(years) of grief and how debilitating they are. Not to mention the thoughts we all have about not being able to survive this blow.

I got sidetracked in my story, so let me bring the story back to last week, the firm that Mark is with had planned to come in and do an hour presentation some new technology they were using. I was really looking forward to meeting Mark since this was the first time meeting him face to face. He arrived with two other guys from his firm and I got them set up in a conference room.

When I met him, I felt an instant connection with him, a strong connection. We didn't speak about our losses, but there was an understanding, at least on my part, that this dude knows what I have been through because he has walked the walk.

I know this is going to sound weird, but during his presentation, my mind drifted off from the presentation and I found myself looking at him from a different perspective. Not from a business perspective, but I looked at him as a fellow survivor, a survivor who I know has been through hell, just like I and the many other grieving dads I have met.

There was a point where I became emotional thinking about what he has been through and what I have been through. I know this is also going to sound a little weird, but I wanted to get up and walk over to him and put my arm around him. The thought of doing that brought even more emotion and a strong sense of compassion towards him.

This is a common response for me when I meet a fellow grieving dad, but this was the first experience I've had with a grieving dad in the business world. There is a brotherhood between all of us and we should try to use it to help each other along this journey.

*Kelly Farley 2012, from [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)*

Kelly Farley is a bereaved father that has experienced the loss of his two children over an eighteen month span. He lost his daughter Katie in 2004 and son Noah in 2006. During that time he realized that there is a lack of support services available to fathers suffering such a loss. He created and maintains a website for this project at [www.GrievingDads.com](http://www.GrievingDads.com). Kelly has also written several articles on the subject of men's grief and has traveled throughout North America to interview other grieving dads in order to create a resource book that captures the experiences of other men on this journey. He is on a mission to bring awareness to men's grief and provide hope to the many men that often grieve in silence due to societal expectations.

## August

## WE REMEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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



### June

Justin Todd Stephens... June 1<sup>st</sup>  
Xavier Hayes... June 6<sup>th</sup>  
Natascha Roebuck.... June 6<sup>th</sup>  
Jamie Ann Quillen.... June 7<sup>th</sup>  
Emanuel Mitchell...June 10<sup>th</sup>  
Scott Michael Malone.... June 17<sup>th</sup>  
Matthew Jones....June 19<sup>th</sup>  
Mitchell Dean Orr.... June 19<sup>th</sup>  
Christopher Reed.... June 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Christian Nicolae Moise.... June 24<sup>th</sup>  
Stephen Varzaly....June 24<sup>th</sup>  
Joseph Beatty.... June 25<sup>th</sup>  
Nathan Self.... 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>  
Jessica Rose Riley.... June 29<sup>th</sup>

### July

Monta Hunt "Tay" ...July 1<sup>st</sup>  
Adyson Claire Smith.... July 1<sup>st</sup>  
Amanda Lynn Harned....July 6<sup>th</sup>  
Raleigh-Jacqueline Clebert.... July 7<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>  
Adam Sawyer...July 28<sup>th</sup>  
Michael Clayborne Montgomery..... July 29<sup>th</sup>  
Noreen Keenan.... July 29<sup>th</sup>  
Monique Marlowe....July 29<sup>th</sup>  
Genna Watson.... July 30<sup>th</sup>  
Arnesa Darlene Royster.... July 31<sup>st</sup>



Calvin Joel Duda.... Aug. 3  
Jessica & Von Justin Windsor... Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Daniel Green....Aug. 5<sup>th</sup>  
Gabrielle Pierre Louis.... Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Chris Morrow.... Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Clint Price.....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>  
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>  
Justin Street....Aug. 24  
Jeremy James White.... Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>  
Rachael Fouquet.... Aug. 25<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>

## 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.

*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 6<sup>th</sup> Xavier Hayes  
 June 8<sup>th</sup> Billy Foulke  
 June 10<sup>th</sup> Mia Penoyer  
 June 12<sup>th</sup> Heather Helms  
 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 20<sup>th</sup> Cory Bute  
 June 28<sup>th</sup> Angelo Larocca "Al"

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> Stephen Varzaly  
 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 9<sup>th</sup> Calvin Joel Duda  
 August 11<sup>th</sup> Clint Price  
 August 13<sup>th</sup> Chris Morrow  
 August 19<sup>th</sup> John Andrew Sims  
 August 20<sup>th</sup> Emanuel Mitchell  
 August 21<sup>st</sup> Jenny Gryzinski  
 August 22<sup>nd</sup> Jeffrey Lopilato  
 August 24<sup>th</sup> Jessica Norwood  
 August 27<sup>th</sup> Trevor Aaron Jones  
 August 28<sup>th</sup> Ryan Michael Sharp  
 August 30<sup>th</sup> Amanda Lynn Harned  
 August 31<sup>st</sup> Todd Wehunt  
 August 2012 Chelsea Hutchinson



*I Earned My First Gold Star*

It's a star I'd rather not be given - but I had no choice  
 my star comes from the one year anniversary  
 of my daughter's passing.



I met it with dread  
 I met it with fear  
 my heart so heavy,  
 it was drowning in my tears  
 It felt very strange,  
 watching that date on the calendar  
 I spent it with those I hold dear  
 we drank a toast to honor her memory  
 knowing she was watching from above  
 wishing she could dry our tears

Each day felt like an eternity - struggling to get thru  
 Ask me how long it had been  
 and I can tell you the number of tears that  
 I've shed since that day

The feeling of dread, the anxiety  
 the profound emptiness & depression  
 as we unwilling wait for that date  
 It's right back at day one - the rawness of our loss  
 we think it couldn't have been that long  
 surely it can't be a year already  
 But we keep moving forward - somehow we must  
 that's what they would want us to do

But now it's been one year  
 I look back and wonder - how did I get to this place  
 But I did make it  
 just like all the people before me have  
 and the same as the ones who follow me will

Each day that passes does not ease the sorrow I feel  
 though I'm told I will someday live again  
 and be able to smile.  
 None of us want to be in this place  
 or belong to this club  
 where we've lost someone we love  
 But we are here for each other  
 friends helping friends  
 when it's time for another star

I earned my first gold star but  
 Lord I wish I didn't have to.

By Michael "Mikey" Harned, TCF Gwinnett ~~  
 In loving memory of my daughter, Amanda Lynn  
 "Mandy"

## Thoughts from Candace

Cemeteries have always given me the creeps. I do not know when my first recollection of how the process of a dead body resonated with me. From as far back as I recall, when I passed by a cemetery it wasn't (for me) a celebrated place.

It became surreal for me when I witnessed my dad being laid to rest when he passed on Christmas Day in 1975. I was 8. He was my best friend. Now he was gone. I knew that I could not go to the cemetery to be with him, so I never wanted to go there; to be disappointed as I waited for daddy to "come get me", no way; it wasn't for me.

Then my next funeral was mom, in 1986...then my son's father in 1996...then my auntie in the early 2000s; then recently my son in 2007. Making the trip back to a cemetery to say a painful final goodbye wasn't getting easier for me. I don't like final goodbyes...

My only connection with cremation was the thought of the pain inflicted (even to a dead person) in a hot fiery furnace. Surely, no one today is like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! I (ignorantly) would never ever consider cremation.

It wasn't until listening to a dear family share their story of how the choice of cremation helps them to hold on to not just the memory of their loved one, but how portions of the ashes are lovingly placed in a necklace locket and worn daily. Wow, what a beautiful gesture! I began to think, what if I had shifted my thoughts to consider cremation with some of my loved ones? Sure I have pictures, articles of clothing, letters and trophies. But a part of the actual person- I would (now) love that!

See we all have developed our own personal truths about mourning and grief. I am grateful to The Compassionate Friends group for helping me embrace other ways of coming to peace with what we've lost...

*By Candace Jordan, TCF Gwinnett, in memory of my son Marcus*

## Response to Candace's Thoughts

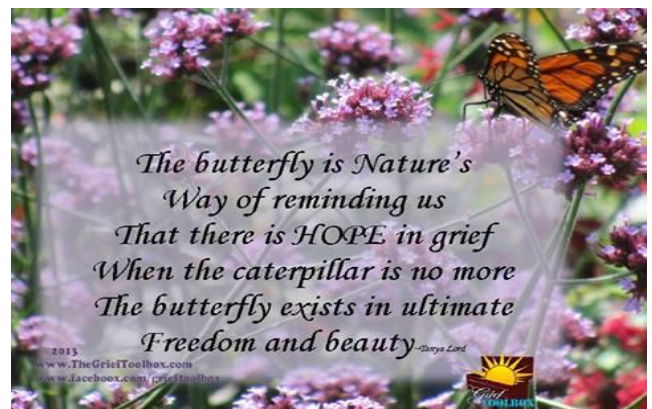
From Betty Bute, Cory's mom:

After reading this story, it just strengthens my choice I made with Cory. I too at first could not bear the thought of the "process" of cremation (in fact I don't even try to think of it even now) however, it for me was the best choice I ever made. I love the idea Candace shared with the locket. In fact, I'm now down to a small fraction of Cory's ashes remaining and would love to do the locket idea with those. I have some stories of the way we've used Cory's ashes in the past that I would like to share:

1. Any of my family members that have married since Cory's passing have always asked if they could have a "pinch" of Cory's ashes to take with them to spread on their honeymoon at various islands.
2. Cory's girlfriend and her mother went on vacation to California and she took some of the ashes and spread them in the front garden of the Playboy Mansion. Funny story this was because as she was in one of the flower beds, she heard a speaker from a large rock in the garden say "Hey...what are you doing out there?" She of course hurriedly spread his ashes and ran away. ☺
3. Cory and his brother every year would always go to the annual Supercross races in Atlanta with several of their friends. The year after Cory's passing, his brother and friends took some ashes with them to the races. They met the guy who fires the gun to start the races and told them what they had with them and about how Cory never missed a race and asked him what they could do special with the ashes at the race. He told them to give the ashes to him and he would take care of it. He then proceeded to spread Cory's ashes on the starting line of the race! How cool was that!!!!
4. And then of course every vacation we've went on we've always taken a small portion to spread somewhere just to show that Cory has been there.

As stated before, I know I've gotten down to a small portion of remaining ashes now and am more reluctant in giving them up so I'm going to consider the locket idea.

*In Memory of Cory Bute 4/2/82 – 6/20/03, from his mom, Betty Bute, TCF Gwinnett*



## **For Fathers, Loss of a Child Carries Special Burdens**

Men go through all kinds of identity changes when they experience the loss of a child, especially a child who is older and has lived long enough to create established memories with his or her father.

A man identifies himself by mainly two things: the job he has and the family he has. When a child is taken away by death, a man suddenly loses the largest, most important part of his identity. A real crises situation has been created, not just for the father, but also for the role the father plays with the family. Fathers love to feel needed, and they love to feel like they are the one responsible for the happiness of the entire family.

Men are far less verbal than women by nature, and it makes it much more difficult for family members and friends to understand the changes that are taking place with a father who loses a child. He often feels like a failure because he was unable to prevent the death or to fix the death once it took place. This is especially true if the child's life was lost due to an illness.

Fathers often believe their role is to fix things that are broken or in need of repair, and when they cannot fix their child's illness and the end result is death, a father goes through a deep grieving period of feeling tremendous guilt and failure.

A father who loses a child also loses such a large part of his dreams. Fathers don't always openly talk about their dreams of hunting and fishing with their children, or of taking bike rides together, going to ball games together or of tossing a ball in the backyard, but they think about these events all of the time.

Fathers of girls daydream about walking their daughter down the aisle and dancing that first dance at the wedding. They dream about taking care of all of their child's hurts, wiping their tears away, and being called "hero" for all of the ways they show their strength to their son or daughter.

Child loss, in a father's eyes, often represents weakness. Men believe fathers are to be strong and in charge, not at a loss for knowing what to do when death turns life upside down. Child loss is such a

helpless feeling, and often this is a foreign emotion for fathers who have been a tower of strength for their children.

What is a father to do? How can a father go on and feel whole once again?

It takes time to work through the pain of loss. It takes a long time to build back a feeling of belonging as a father. It will often take years for a father to be able to reclaim his identity of a father.

It will take lots of working through feelings of failure and loss to feel like a man who can always proudly wear the name father.

Take it a day at a time, a step at a time. Begin by telling yourself over and over that you will always be a father. Nothing can change that—not even death. Remind yourself often that some things cannot be fixed by you. Remember often that lost dreams are part of the pain every parent feels when a child dies. It takes a lot of tears and years to work past the milestone markers of such things as dreams of your child playing ball, driving a car, dating, getting married, and having children.

These are not easy dreams to release, but with time you will be able to more vividly remember the times you had with your child than to sorrow over the time you never had. Be patient with yourself. Be kind to yourself. And, when you fall into the emotional pain of feeling like a failure, remind yourself that you will always be a father and nothing can take away that badge of honor, not even death

Clara Hinton, from [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)

Clara Hinton has a burning passion to lend support to parents grieving the loss of a child. At the age of 15, Clara's 13-year-old sister died tragically, and that loss began a series of events in her life that made grief all-too-real. While experiencing the blessing of living children, Clara has also felt the pain of losing six children due to miscarriage, and has delivered one stillborn son. Knowing the grief of child-loss first-hand prompted Clara to write a book, *Silent Grief*, as well as begin a grief support website, [www.silentgrief.com](http://www.silentgrief.com), for parents seeking support while going through the pain of loss. Clara also teaches grief coping skills on college campuses, as well as coordinates grief workshops for schools, churches, and hospitals.

## 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](http://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

## R.I.P. My Angel Monta 7/1/85 – 10/23/10

I lost my heart when I lost you  
Why wasn't my love enough to  
keep you safe?  
No matter how many tears I cry,  
Oh, the pain, my broken heart remains,  
There's a void in my heart, the dreams are gone,  
Your laughter and smile I miss,  
The way you always said I Love You.  
I will miss you forever, until God sends for me,  
Then I'll hear your voice and see your smile,  
Once again.  
It's not good-bye but so long for now,  
The best is yet to come.  
Because in God's house we'll be together again,  
For eternal life.  
Love, Mom



By Mina Ramsey, TCF Gwinnett

### **The Other Season**

Look to the season of your memories-  
it fills the weather of your life  
with mildness.  
It turns to laughter what your  
mind remembers:  
the sound of words, invented new  
for singing,  
Discovery of all-important secrets.

Look to the season of your memories –  
It sets an ordinary past to music.  
It changes ordinary tears to treasure.  
It gives your faded pictures  
shape and color:  
the touch of eyes, a walk  
in foggy twilight.

Look to the season of your memories –  
how rich you were, and be how rich again.  
Look to the season of your memories:  
mourn and recall the child you love,  
you love...  
until you lose yourself  
to find yourself.

By Sascha Wagner  
from “The Poems of Sascha Wagner”

## 36<sup>th</sup> TCF National Conference, July 5-7, 2013, Boston, MA “Beacon of Love, Rays of Hope”



Registration is still open for The Compassionate Friends 36th National Conference July 5-7 in Boston, MA at the beautiful Boston Sheraton. 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](http://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 36<sup>th</sup> 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](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](http://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.



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:sherryunwala@yahoo.com) or Karen, 770-355-1024, [Karen\\_copija@att.net](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:angela@rockgoodbyeangel.com). [www.rockgoodbyeangel.org](http://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](mailto:Bill@tvip.org) For more information about our organization you can go to [www.itwonthappentome.org](http://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:

Several parents have found that writing is very healing and contribute poems to our TCF Newsletter. Other parents have found that writing in a journal is very helpful also. TCF Gwinnett has journals available at our meetings for a suggested donation of \$3. Alice Wisler, author of "Getting Out of Bed in the Morning: Reflections of Comfort in Heartache", gives the following suggestions for journal writing:



1. Buy a journal and make sure you really like it, not just because it's on sale.
2. Spend some alone time with a pen & your journal.
3. Don't worry about grammar or penmanship.
4. Write freely.
5. Write honestly.
6. Write about your struggles, your fears, your woes.
7. Write a psalm of lament.
8. Write a psalm of praise.

9. Capture quotes and Scripture that are meaningful to you.
10. Know that your journal will not judge you or ridicule you.
11. Write with the feeling that you will survive this.
12. Write a love letter.
13. Pen your memories.
14. Describe your favorite place.
15. Spend some time reflecting on where you've been and where you're going.

### 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, [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto: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:*

*Ian Sharpe*, from his mom, Becky Sharpe

*Amanda Lyn Harned*, from her dad, Mikey Harned

*Robert Coltman*, from his dad, Barnet Coltman in memory of his birthday

*Sloan Taylor*, from his mom, Vikki Taylor Harper

*Nathan Self*, from his mom, Cynthia Self

*Matthew Dwyer*, from his parents, Barbara & Leo Dwyer

*Patrick Kelley*, from his dad, Charles Kelley

*David Whitley*, from his mom, Claudine Nickens & sister Terry Rigby

*Justin Street*, from his mom, China Street

*Brenden Elbaz*, from his mom, Joy Crowe

*Jessica Norwood*, from her mom, Clare Norwood

*Justin Ellington*, from his mom, Kathy Ellington

*Thomas Michael Pattillo*, from his mom, Janice Pattillo

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: \_\_\_\_\_