



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

**LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA  
GWINNETT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER**

Meg Avery, Editor      Spring 2015  
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 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month. **next meetings: March 19, April 16 and May 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](mailto:jc30044@flash.net) or [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com)

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

GA Regional Coordinator Earnest Stewart

The Compassionate Friends National Office:

1-877-969-0010

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

The Gwinnett Newsletter is available by e-mail and at our chapter meetings. If you have received this issue in print and would prefer to receive e-mail instead, please notify us at [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com). 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 2015 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.



**Spring 2015 Picnic**

Please mark your calendar for **Saturday May 16** and plan to attend our **TCF Picnic** at Tribble Mill Park (off New Hope Rd.) in Lawrenceville.

We have reserved the Oak Pavilion from 3 pm to 6 pm. All TCF members are warmly

welcomed, along with your friend/significant other/spouse/relative. The chapter will provide hamburgers & hotdogs, drinks & condiments. Please bring a side dish to share.

We will also have a Memorial Balloon Release – please bring a balloon and a photo of your loved one. We will also have a Memory Walk

around the lake starting at 4 pm. Elaine Spear, (Darren's mom) will be creating a beautiful floral arrangement to be raffled off.

It will be possible to purchase raffle tickets at the March & April monthly meetings if you are not able to make it to the picnic. More details about the picnic will be shared as it gets closer.

It would be helpful to have a general idea of how many to expect; if you plan to attend,

please send an email to  
[tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com)

## GRIEVING A FUTURE I'LL NEVER HAVE

*Written by Maria Kubitz*

When grief is new, it is excruciating and overwhelming. Many people get stuck in a quicksand of pain that is so thick and intense, it feels impossible to escape. As you struggle through those first few days, weeks, and months, you begin to be pulled so far down into it, you can't imagine how you'll survive. I certainly felt that way. I'm grateful that those days are behind me.

And yet you do survive. Despite all odds, you wake up each morning. Your body still functions. You find a way to quietly camouflage yourself within with the "normal" world around you. You learn to live one day at a time. One moment at a time when the day is particularly hard. Slowly – and painfully – you begin to acclimate to a world without your loved one in it. You do it because you have no other choice.

Over five years after the death of my 4-year-old daughter, Margareta, I've acclimated as best I can. I've continually faced and dealt with those painful feelings and emotions using every tool I can think of. I still go to grief support groups. I write about grief. I talk to a grief counselor when I feel the need to. I talk about Margareta with those who want to hear. I've come to terms with the impossible reality that she is gone and never coming back.

My grief over my daughter's death will never go away. Ask any grieving parent and they'll tell you the same. We'll never "get over it". What we have to do is accept it and learn how to live life despite of it. I've heard some bereaved parents don't like using the word *acceptance*. That is because they associate the notion of accepting their child's death with being okay with their child's death. But you can accept the reality of something without ever being happy about it; without ever being okay with it. You can't change the past, so you might as well accept it in order to begin to be able to heal from the devastation you find yourself in.

I have healed a lot in the past five years. The open, oozing, excruciating wound of my broken heart has since scabbed over. I'll always have the painful scar that reminds me throughout every day that my daughter isn't here. It's that constant reminder that is the hardest for me now.

I'm grieving a future I'll never have. I'm reminded every day of what could have been, but can never be. I'm grieving lost hopes and dreams. I'm grieving the loss of my only daughter and the mother-daughter relationship I only had a glimpse of. Instead of the intense, searing pain of early grief, it has transformed into a dull ache I'll never escape from.

I don't think I'll ever feel fully at ease with this constant ache. I'll always miss my daughter. I'll always regret that I didn't get to watch her grow. But I'm dedicated to learning how to live a happy, meaningful life despite of it. I do this in her honor. I do it in the honor of my other children, husband and family. I do it because I didn't physically die when she did.

In her four short years, my daughter lived life to the fullest – full of love, honesty and without fear. It is now my goal in life to do the same. I know she would have wanted it that way.

Maria Kubitz lost her four year old daughter in a drowning accident in 2009. In her grief journey, Maria continually tries to find ways to learn from the pain, and maintain a loving, healthy environment for her four other children. She volunteers at a local chapter of The Compassionate Friends, and in 2012, Maria created [www.aliveinmemory.org](http://www.aliveinmemory.org) – a supportive place where families can share precious memories of the loved ones they've lost as well as read articles about learning to live with grief.

## I Am Spring

I am the beginning.  
I am budding promise.  
I spill cleansing tears of  
life  
from cloudy vessels  
creating muddy puddles  
where single cell



creatures abide  
and splashing children play.  
I am new green growth.  
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.  
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.  
With compassion, we feather nests  
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.  
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream  
I whisper truth – life is change.  
I am spring.  
I bless long, dark wintry days.  
I crown mankind's pain  
with starry skies  
in deepest night  
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy  
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.

*By Carol Clum*

*(written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox, author of 'Finding What You Didn't Lose' and 'Poetic Medicine'.)*

## 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  
Brandon Hawhee..... March 25  
Ansley Powell.....March 25  
Justin Jordan ... March 27  
Ashley Lauren Hull .... March 30  
Kevin Lindsey.... March 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.

### April

Cory Bute ... April 2  
Morgan Alexis Burgess.... April 2  
Joey Robinson .... April 4  
Johnny Harof....April 4  
Jenny Gryzinski .... April 7  
Kati Anderson..... April 8  
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  
Brent Rose.... 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  
Mitchell Adam Siejkowski.... May 25  
Richie Petzel .... May 27  
Madison Young....May 28  
Brian Churchill.....May 31

## 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

Wendy McMain	March 4
Marcus Hamrick	March 4
Chris Nichols	March 9
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 dreams of lifetimes die when children die. The hurt is often nearly unbearable. But if we allow ourselves the freedom of grief and sorrow, we also open the paths of new happiness and new hopes and new dreams. And the child who was a part of us will live in our memories and our hearts." —from We Need Not Walk Alone*

### May

Stephanie Fortner	May 2
Brittany Knoch	May 2
Rhett Lykins	May 4
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
Quavonte "Tae" Combs	May 28
Lance Robert Malone	May 29
Amity Kozak	May 30

Spring again, spring again,  
Lovely and warm and bright.  
Spring again, spring again,  
Blossoms wait, smiling.  
Spring again, spring again.  
Memories look at me.  
You will not see this spring.  
You will not know this spring,  
Child of the other life,  
Help me to dance.

By Sascha Wagner, from her book "Poems of  
Sascha Wagner"



### 3 Ways to Use Spring to Help You Through Your Grief

By Chelsea Hanson

When we're grieving, sometimes all we want is a fresh start. You can't undo your loss, so the next best thing is to move forward. Spring is a time of "Rebirth." It's the perfect time of year to get a fresh start on anything. This spring, take advantage of the changing season to help you through your grieving process.

#### 1. *Make Time for Spring Cleaning*

There's something about the beautiful weather and warmer temperatures that make us want to clean in the springtime. Clean anything; a room, your car, a closet, your entire house, your mind. This is a great opportunity to organize or update your memories. Have a shoebox of photographs you've been meaning to display? Take time to put together a new memorial with the pictures. If you're feeling really ambitious, brighten up your house with new paint colors. Research shows that certain paint colors have an effect on our mood. Freshen up your living room with a sunny yellow accent wall or cover your bedroom walls with a cheery green color.

#### 2. *Plant Something*

Spring is the perfect time to put your green thumb to the test. If you have room in your yard, plant a memorial garden in honor of your loved one. If planting an entire garden isn't feasible, start small with a single plant. The growth and beauty of the plants or flowers will give you inspiration each day to live life. Spending time outside will help you to clear your mind and be at peace with your thoughts.

#### 3. *Start Something New*

There's always more going on during the spring and summer months. Find out what's happening in the community, or think of a new hobby to try on your own. Pick your activity and make time for it at least once a week. Your new activity will give you something to look forward to and will help take your mind off of your loss, even if it's only for an hour a week. The spring months can actually be hard on a grieving person. It's hard to watch everyone

else moving forward with the changing season if you're not ready. But keep in mind, just because you're starting something new or changing things up doesn't mean you have to leave anything behind. Your loved one would want you to enjoy the relief from the cold and take advantage of the wonderful things that spring has to offer.

From TCF North Shore, Boston

Article Source:

[http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Chelsea\\_Hanson](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Chelsea_Hanson)

### In Honor of St. Patrick's Day March 17

#### Irish Poem

I'd go with you if I could  
Though I'm time worn  
And spent with sorrow  
I'd go with you if I could  
And when you'd look at me with love  
I'd shed my dress of despair  
And blossom.



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



For more information, Click the following link

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=43057397614>

You will need to log into Facebook to join the group. You will also need a Facebook account (they are free).

Our hope is that you will be able to connect to someone to help you in your grief journey.

Remember "We Need Not Walk Alone"

<http://www.facebook.com>

## 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

## I Saw You

A Tribute to my Sister

Lori Lee Smith

I saw you today in the morning dew  
As brilliant as a sea of shimmering diamonds  
I shared the most amazing sunrise with you today  
A million shades of red so random in their  
perfection  
I heard you today in the laugh of my children  
An enchanting melody a thousand angels strong  
I walked with you today and we talked about  
everything  
. . . and nothing all at once  
I saw you today in the changing of the leaves  
The colors of your life, the close of one season  
And the ushering in of another  
I sat beside a stream with you today  
The peaceful flow, steady and constant  
I saw you today . . . and you were perfect  
And rest assured . . . I shall see you again

Avery Smith ~ TCF, Ada Area Chapter

## The Kender Mourning Song

My twin sister loved to read, just like me, and  
this poem was in one of her favorite books.  
Emily, your spirit will live on with those of the  
heroes. I will always love you. May you rest in  
peace.

Always before, the Spring returned.  
The bright world in its cycle spun  
In the air and flowers, grass and fern,  
Assured and cradled by the sun.

Always before, you could explain  
The turning darkness of the earth,  
And how that dark embraced the rain,  
And gave the ferns and flowers birth.

Already I forget those things,  
And how a vein of gold survives  
The mining of a thousand springs,  
The season of a thousand lives.

Now winter is my memory,  
Now autumn, now summer light -  
So every spring from now will be  
Another season into the night.

-Mary Kirchoff (from [www.journey-through-grief.com](http://www.journey-through-grief.com))

## The Roller Coaster

As a child I enjoyed the thrill of the roller coaster: gliding up the giant track, reaching the top with a momentary anticipation and the thrill of the quick dropping roll to the bottom of the track. The deep turns, first to the right and then to the left were designed to heighten the anticipation of the next climb and drop. In my childhood mind, these curves, climbs and drops were an isolated experience, temporary and fun. The ride would end.

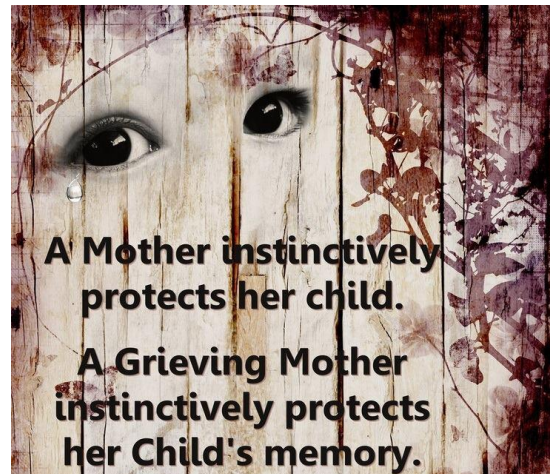


A few months after my son's death, I dreamed of the roller coaster. But this time it wasn't fun. It was a nightmare of fear, anxiety and pain; I was so paralyzed that I couldn't breathe. That dream was the simple symbolism of life since my son died. Now I ride a different sort of roller coaster. The climb to the top is a slow, difficult rise to normalcy. The rapid descent to the bottom is yet another terrible setback. I hang onto the bar of sanity on the curves, first one way, then another. I really want to stop this ride, but it is forever. This ride won't end. Today I recalled that roller coaster dream, in all its vivid detail, and I compare it to the roller coaster that is my life now. Are the highs lower and the lows higher? Are the curves softening? Yes, I believe they are. It's been two years and two months since Todd died. I still weep. Tiny tears still fall unexpectedly. I still have anxiety. I still feel as if the earth has dropped from under me. I still miss talking with my son. I miss seeing him. I ache for that special hug that only my child can give. Yes, I miss my only child very much. My heart has been shattered, my definition of myself has been altered and my loneliness is incomprehensible. But something has changed on the roller coaster of this life. That something is, of course, me. I work through my grief in many, many ways. I have consciously shifted the paradigms of my life. I have learned to evaluate people from a different perspective. I have become so sensitive to the pain of other parents that I feel it as if it were my own. I have stopped anticipating how I will handle stressful events, anniversaries, birthdays, holidays. I have

learned to live without being a part of my grandchildren's lives. I have learned to keep negative energy and negative people at a far distance. I have learned that a routine provides necessary structure. I have learned to live in the moment, to take joy in simple things, to talk openly about my child's life and to acknowledge the things I cannot change. As time moves forward, I will continue to accept what is given and give what I can. I know the roller coaster will level out eventually.

For as long as I live, I will keep my child with me, in my heart. That's all I can do as I ride this changing roller coaster that is now my life.

*Written in memory of my son, Todd Mennen ~  
Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF, Katy, TX*



### *Mother's Memories*

Across the field of yesterday  
He sometimes comes to me  
A little lad just back from play  
The lad he used to be.

Yet as he smiles so sweetly  
As his memories are held within  
I wonder if I can see  
The man he might have been.

By Yvonne Butler 1990,  
TCF Covington County, Alabama

## The Mother's Day Card

You handed it to me  
With never a word  
Your eyes shone with feelings  
That no one else heard.  
When I opened the envelope



I wasn't prepared  
Instead of the humor  
We so often shared,  
There were flowers and a rainbow  
And butterflies at play  
In a beautiful meadow  
On a sunshiny day.  
Inside was a verse  
Like a sentimental song,  
As though you knew  
That you'd soon be gone.  
This card must last me  
A very long time.  
Is that why you chose  
Such a special rhyme?  
At the bottom inside  
The heart you had done,  
You wrote, "I love you, Mom,  
From Scott, your only son."  
XXOOXX

By Kathi Pittman, for Scott Lee Pittman  
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL Chapter

**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.

## Mother's Day...Father's Day...Graduations...Proms

Spring comes - and with it comes the uneasy awareness of difficult days ahead. For those who are still going through all the "firsts" without your child, we share with you some special ways other parents have coped and managed. Mother's Day...Father's Day...graduations...vacations...these are special family times which often catch us unaware and bring unexpected tears and painful memories of young lives cut short. It does get better! And you can make these special days better with some planning and with encouragement from those who have already been there. Whatever the "special day" that lies ahead for your family, try to focus on doing something meaningful and tangible in remembrance of your child. Share as a family thoughts and suggestions about planting a tree or starting a rose garden, donating a book to the library or school, putting flowers on the altar, lighting a special candle or taking that long talked-of vacation. Tears and moments of sadness are okay, for they are expressions of love.

Remember:

- ~ take one day at a time
  - ~ keep things simple by playing down the holidays and special days, while they are so painful
  - ~ change your routine from past years
  - ~ make plans to be "busy" during at least part of the day (go out to lunch or to a movie, or visit friends)
  - ~ give your older children some "space"; they not only feel your extreme sadness at these times; they also have their own feelings to deal with.
- The anticipation is often worse than the day itself!

From Fox Valley TCF Chapter, Aurora, Illinois

## 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)



## **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@cryformenomore.com](mailto:deana@cryformenomore.com)

## **Justin's Heart Grief Group**

A place for the bereaved to gather to support each other in times of loss. Meets the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 – 8:30 at Loganville Ministry Village. Contact Kathy Ellington at 770-826-4339. This support group was organized by Kayleigh Ellington, in memory of her brother Justin. Their mom, Kathy Ellington, belongs to TCF Gwinnett

## **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

## **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 Meg Avery by email, [tcfnewsletter@outlook.com](mailto:tcfnewsletter@outlook.com)

## **Thank you to new TCF volunteers:**

**Nancy Coker**, Austin's mom, and **Patty Key**, Ryan's mom are our chapter's newest volunteers. Nancy will be maintaining our yahoo email account (checking for new messages, sending messages/reminders & adding new addresses to our contacts). Patty will be updating & editing our TCF member database as needed, adding new parent info and making any necessary changes for addresses, phone numbers and/or email addresses. Many thanks to Nancy & Patty!

Thanks to **Terry Sparks**, Natalie's dad, who has volunteered to be chapter co-leader for one year. Terry has already been helping a great deal with TCF Gwinnett as facilitator and providing new parent packets.

Along with Terry, Meg Avery (James' mom) will also be a chapter co-leader for one year as well as newsletter editor.

**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: **Terry Sparks**, Co-Leader & provides newly bereaved packet info & as group facilitator, in memory of his daughter, **Natalie Sparks**; **June Cooper**, Parent Phone Contact, in memory of her daughter, **Wendy McMMain** & in memory of her sister, **Noreen Keenan**; **Meg Avery**, Co-Leader & Newsletter Editor in memory of her son **James Avery**; **Barbara Dwyer**, Chapter Treasurer in memory of her son **Matthew Dwyer**; **Diane Wolcott**, Memorial Garden Committee Chair in memory of her son, **Jeffrey Wolcott**; **Gary Fox**, facilitator, in memory of his son, **G.W. Fox**; **Nancy Coker**, email account volunteer, in memory of her son, **Austin Coker**; **Patty Key**, database maintenance in memory of her son **Ryan Morton**; **Claudine Nickens**, Steering Committee Member & facilitator in memory of her son **David Whitley** and **Clare Norwood**, creating Remembrance Cards in memory of her daughter **Jessica Norwood**.

### TCF Email Account

We have experienced problems with our email account, [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com) and have had to recreate our contacts. Hopefully you are still receiving news & announcements via email. We also now have [tcfnewsletter@outlook.com](mailto:tcfnewsletter@outlook.com) expressly for the quarterly newsletter distribution. Please contact Meg Avery, Newsletter Editor, at that email, if you ever have any submissions for the newsletter. If any of your contact information has changed, please be sure to send an email to one of those accounts, or a handwritten note to Meg Avery at 4575 Forest Green Drive, Sugar Hill, GA 30518.



### 2015 TCF National Conference in Dallas

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Dallas, Texas will be the site of the 38<sup>th</sup> TCF National Conference **on July 10-12, 2015**. "Hope Shines Bright...Deep in the Heart" is the theme of next year's event, which promises more of this year's great national conference experience. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. More details will be available on the national website as they become available. [www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

### Gifts of Love

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

From Elaine Spear, in memory of her son Darren Bo Everett

From Wayne & Lisa Faulkner in memory of their son Mike Faulkner

From Barnet Coltman in memory of his son Robert Coltman

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

## *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*

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:** \_\_\_\_\_