



The Compassionate Friends Newsletter

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Marietta Chapter Meetings

Our meetings are held the
First Tuesday of each month
First Baptist Church of Marietta
148 Church Street, Marietta
Main Building on the third floor
7:00 - 9:00 PM

5th Annual TCF Marietta Butterfly Picnic and Balloon Release

Sunday, June 14

Marietta Camp Meeting Campgrounds

2301 Roswell Road, Marietta

3:00 - 6:00



This is an opportunity for the entire family to socialize with other bereaved families and a special time for us all to remember our children. It is a favorite event and a meaningful experience, especially for the younger members of the family who do not often get a chance to memorialize their loved one.

We will have barbeque catered by Williamson Brothers and cake will be donated by Publix. You may also bring one of your child's favorite foods or dessert to share, and bring a 5x7 or smaller photo of your child for our story board. We will have a balloon release at the end of the picnic. Because we are encouraging this as a family event, there will be no charge for children under 12, \$5 for teens and \$10 for adults. Please mail the attached registration form with your check to Lorna Kennedy by June 10 so that we can plan on how much food to order. You may also register and pay at the monthly meeting.

For information contact:

Lorna at 770-722-4688 or email tcfmarietta.lorna@hotmail.com

Kathy at 770-579-3512 or e-mail tcfmarietta.kathy@hotmail.com





The Anticipation of Spring

Spring is a time for growth and renewal. As a child, teen, and then an adult, I always looked forward to spring with anticipation. The thoughts of green grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers of all varieties and colors were a welcome change from the long cold, dreary Michigan winter.

It was a magical time of year. When I was a child, each member of my family watched anxiously to lay claim to being the first to spot the familiar hop-hop of the returning robin, the first sign that spring was actually here. We could finally take off the gloves, shed our heavy winter coats and boots, and roll down the windows on the car to hear the laughter of children playing outside and smell the fresh mown grass as we'd drive down the road.

That's the way it was for me on the first day of spring 12 years ago. I remarked how beautiful the tulips looked as they danced in the wind. The trees were budding, and there was magic in the air. My kids and I shed our heavy winter coats, flinging them in the backseat, rolled down the windows of the car, and started singing in celebration of the beautiful day we were experiencing. And then . . .

IT happened. Suddenly, undeniably, horrifically—my world, my spring, my life changed.

My 5-year-old son, Stephen, died that first spring day. His 8-year-old sister, Stephanie, my firstborn, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on the death certificate. Gone was the laughter, the magic, the beauty of my world.

The springs that followed were no longer filled with anticipation or magic. They were dark and ugly and filled with memories too painful to talk about. I wanted nothing to do with "spring." If H.G. Well's time machine had existed, I would have entered it at the end of winter and fast-forwarded through spring.

As time marched on and one spring followed another, I learned an important lesson in my journey through grief: As much as I wanted to, I couldn't fast-forward through the hard spots. I couldn't go around them. I had to go through them slowly, like a dog paddling through water, so I could get to the other side. Somehow doing this taught me to cope, to endure, to face tomorrow and all the first days of spring that followed. It's much like the transformation that takes place when a butterfly emerges from a dark, cold, seemingly lifeless chrysalis.

A few years ago, as winter was drawing to a close and the first day of spring was quickly approaching, I looked out the kitchen window toward the budding pear tree in the backyard and discovered it was full of chirping robins. I smiled and knew that Spring somehow wasn't going to be so bad. It was once again time to enjoy the smells of the season, the beauty of the budding trees, and the magic that the season had to offer. And I knew Stef and Steve would have wanted that for me.

Pat Loder, TCF Lakes Area Chapter, MI

Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.



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 and siblings receive the understanding and support of others who have "been there."

Through the years, the hope for the future that is provided through these sharing sessions has been more helpful than anything else in resolving the grief of bereaved parents. Siblings, grandparents and other adult family members are also welcome at Compassionate Friends meetings.

The death of a child of any age, from any cause, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, to whom does a family turn for the emotional support it will need during the grief journey that lies ahead? The Compassionate Friends understands that grief for a child lasts longer and is more intense than society commonly recognizes. Other grieving parents can offer empathy and understanding of this loss, while also recognizing that each person's grief is unique.

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME !



If you would like to give of your time to our chapter, we warmly welcome volunteers. Volunteer opportunities range from helping to set up a meeting, facilitating meetings, maintaining the library, making phone calls and helping with special events. This is a great way to give back in memory of your child after you have found hope, encouragement and strength from TCF. Making the change from needing and finding help to giving help and support to new parents is another healing milestone. Please contact Kathy Kelcourse at tcfmaretta.kathy@hotmail.com if you would like to help or have any questions.

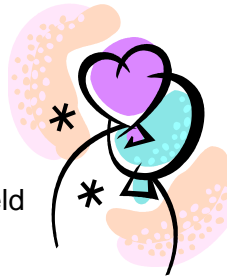
April - May Birthdays

Birthdays are given special recognition at our monthly meetings. We have a birthday table set up where parents and siblings are invited to bring in photos and other memorabilia to share with the group. There is also an opportunity to share a short story or memory of your child with the group before breaking up into our smaller sessions. Many also like to bring in a cake or other favorite snack to celebrate the birthday of their child or sibling.

We also invite you to share a special story, picture, or both for the Birthday Tribute section below if your child's birthday is in the upcoming months. If you would like to place a birthday tribute to your child in the newsletter, you may do so by emailing it to Louise Hoefler at tcfmarietta.louise@live.com.

April Birthdays

Michael Joshua Evans
Sean Michael Costello
April Nesmith
Jessica Nichole Bedingfield
Sadie Ruth Barrett
Anke Marjon Furber
Michelle Massey
Chad Brown
Christopher Williams
Taylor Pratt



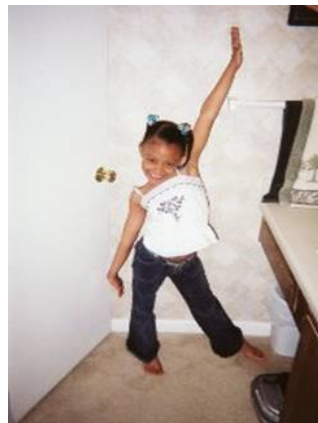
May Birthdays

Alayjiah Harvell
Aaron Samuel Olitsky
Roy O'Shields
Zachary Simon
Melanie Brooke Thompson
Marion Curtis Waldrep III (Curt)
Cesar Daniel Enriquez
William Gabriel Enriquez
Kimberly Nicole Andrews
Rusty Kohler
Livia Elaine O'Connor

Michele Laura Reno
Steven Gerard Smith
Jacob Noah Beachy
Joshua Karlya Runyan
Ashley Margaret Sabbatino
Madison Paige Frey
Jarrod Mitchell Norman
Michael Keith Copeland
Thomas John Freeman
Melissa Hague
Jeremy Michael Hitt

Birthday Tribute

I miss your smile, your silly laugh
and the "Ms. Layjiah" dance
I think about how much I took for granted
And how I'll never get the chance
To see you grow into the beautiful woman
I knew you'd grow to be
And how I'll never hear or feel again
How much you cared for me
So God if you are listening
Please grant me just one wish
A dream to kiss my baby
And tell her how much she's missed
China Watkins, Mother of Alayjiah Harvell



Alayjiah Harvell
May 2, 1999 - Jan 14, 2006

Second Sunday of May

Many happy memories
Linger in our hearts this day
As we each remember our child
Who has left this earthly plane.
The day is bittersweet for us,
The mothers who have lost so much,
For to remove all pain could well
Erase the precious life we touched.
Tears will trace the memories of
Other, happier Mother's Days,
As we dwell in a quiet reverie
This Second Sunday of May
Annette Mennen Baldwin
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen
May 2006 TCF, Katy, TX



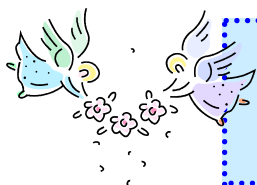
Wings of Hope Support Group

Debbie Brooks is a TCF member who has started a smaller support group in Paulding County. She has opened her meetings to ANYONE who has experienced the loss of a child, whether you are a mom, dad, aunt, brother, grandma or best friend.

They meet the third Tuesday of each month at Hope Church, 1970 Marietta Highway, Dallas, GA.

Any questions, please contact Debbie Brooks at 678-363-6650

*Hearts that are united through the medium of sorrow,
Will not be separated by the glory of happiness.
Love that is cleansed by tears will remain eternally
pure and beautiful.*
~ Kahlil Gibran



April - May Angel Dates

Our Children Loved and Remembered

April Angel Dates

Jason Charles Burns	Paula Wandell
Kyle Alexander Heskin Eastham	Lucas Robert Barrett
Ryan Gregory Alexa	Tim Daniel Kincaid
Maria McElreath "Little Maria"	Brian Arthur LaForce
Sean Michael Costello	Lori Witmer
Marion Curtis Waldrep III (Curt)	Ryan Douglas Romanoski
Jeffrey Armstrong Patterson	Dakari Kalayn Baker
Jeffrey Lee Powell	

May Angel Dates

Brian Hoefler	Rachael Elizabeth Goldberg
Paul Badger	Janay Helemia Townsend
Katie Kirk	Clayton Thomas Moore
B. Scott Langley	Stephanie Leigh Taylor
Barry M. Lawrence	Cesar Daniel Enriquez
Ryan Lynn Talkington	William Gabriel Enriquez

Love Gifts



A love gift is a donation to help carry on the work of our chapter. There are no dues to be a member of TCF but we are always appreciative for any contributions.

THANK YOU to those of you who make donations at our monthly meetings. Your contributions help in such a wonderful way to continue the efforts of our chapter.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the following for their generous gifts, which allow us to reach out to the newly bereaved and give needed support to the bereaved parents and siblings in our community.

Sharon and Cliff Hower in memory of their daughter, Jennifer

Madeline Flores in memory of her son, Jeremy Nieves

Judy and George Barrett in memory of their son, Captain Rob



Would you like to honor your child by making a donation to the Marietta Chapter of the Compassionate Friends in his or her memory?

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

Marietta Chapter TCF P.O. Box 1892, Marietta, GA 30061

Please make checks payable to Marietta TCF.

Name _____

Address _____ **City** _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

In memory of: _____

Please specify if you would like your donation added to the Library account or the General account.

To Honor You

To honor you, I get up everyday and take a breath.

And start another day without you in it.

To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew your smile

And the way your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge.

To honor you, I take the time to appreciate everyone I love,

I know now there is no guarantee of days or hours spent in their presence.

To honor you, I listen to music you would have liked,

And sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows rolled down.

To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back,

Risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance.

You were my light, my heart, my gift of love, from the very highest source.

So everyday, I vow to make a difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you.

Connie F. Kiefer Byrd

In Loving Memory of Jordan Alexander Kiefer

8/24/88 – 12/13/05

Taken from A Journey Together, newsletter of Bereaved Parents of the USA website

2009 National Conference in Portland, Oregon, August 7 – 9

A national conference of The Compassionate Friends is unlike any other conference you may ever attend. It is a place where you can go and know that you truly are not alone as you travel your grief journey. Every person comes for the same reason—a child has died. It is a place where “friendship, understanding, and hope” are more than just words.

For over three decades The Compassionate Friends has held national conferences. They’ve been held all over the country. Today it’s normal to have 1100-1400 bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents attend. Of that number, it usually is the first conference for nearly 40 percent. Those new to TCF conferences wear a special butterfly sticker so that others may notice and give them special hugs. Everyone feels welcome. We often say that these are friends you simply have not yet met.

At each conference, there are many activities, but you decide what is right for you. There are nearly 100 workshops (but don’t think these are work—they’re really a time for learning and sharing). Many areas of grief are covered by the workshops. There are workshops for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. And there will be many workshops for those who have no surviving children. You’ll find a hospitality room, a reflection room, the Butterfly Boutique, and a complete bookstore. There are very interesting and well-known speakers who address the Opening Session, the Friday afternoon banquet, the Saturday evening banquet, and the Sunday closing. You’ll marvel at the quality of entertainment geared for those attending. There’s also a special candle lighting ceremony to conclude the Saturday evening banquet.

And don’t miss the **Walk to Remember** Sunday at 8 a.m. prior to the closing. As many as 1400-1500 carry the names of more than 10,000 children from across the country who will always be remembered. For more information on the Walk to Remember, visit www.compassionatefriends.org.

Candy Lightner, the dynamic founder of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) has agreed to be a keynote speaker at the conference. Candy’s 13 year-old daughter Cari was struck by a vehicle from behind and killed May 3, 1980, as she walked down a quiet street. The hit-and-run driver had four previous drunk driving convictions and had served virtually no time in jail. Candy went from being a divorced mother selling real estate to a “crusader with a cause,” testifying before legislatures. Obsessed with her crusade, Candy, with friends, started MADD, which has grown to more than 600 chapters and three million members throughout the United States and at least four other countries. Among the many accomplishments of MADD was the successful lobbying to raise the legal drinking age to 21 in 1984, which is estimated to save approximately 800 lives annually. TCF is pleased to have Candy Lightner joining with our featured keynote speakers in Portland, Oregon.

Besides Candy Lightner, the conference will feature keynoters **Reg and Maggie Green** and **Michele Longo Eder**. Reg and Maggie are the parents of Nicholas Green, the seven-year-old American boy who was shot and killed by highway bandits in Italy in 1994. Their decision to donate his organs to seven Italians became a major news story around the world, spawning thousands of organ donations in Italy (a country where organ donations were virtually unheard of before Nicholas’ death) and around the world. This remarkable story was made into a CBS movie of the week called *The Nicholas Effect*.

Michele Longo Eder is author of *Salt in our Blood—The Memoir of a Fisherman’s Wife*. Michele, an accomplished lawyer, started journaling what daily life was like for her while her husband and sons were commercial fishing off the coasts of Oregon, Washington, and northern California. Never did she dream that her journaling would include the account of a personal tragedy that struck just before Christmas 2001.

The ever-popular **Darcie Sims**, who uses her own unique brand of humor as a special type of grief therapy, has been announced as the final keynote speaker at The National Conference. Darcie is a bereaved parent, nationally certified grief management specialist, a psychotherapist, and a board certified hypnotherapist. An international speaker on grief, Darcie co-founded Grief, Inc., an international grief consulting firm. She is a well known author, international speaker and was Coping Editor for *Bereavement Magazine* for fifteen years. She currently writes for *Grief Digest*.

“A sense of humor is a priceless gift, and Darcie Sims shares her gift of humor by parting the darkened clouds and revealing rays of sunshine,” says Andrea Gambill, former publisher of *Bereavement Magazine*, current editor of *Grief Digest* magazine, and past TCF board member.

Reservations for those attending TCF’s national conference are being accepted by the Doubletree Hotel Portland where the conference will be held. TCF has negotiated for a large block of rooms at a special price for those attending the conference. Rate is \$129 per room per night. As always, we suggest that you make reservations early to avoid disappointment. To reserve online, visit www.compassionatefriends.org. You may also call the Doubletree Hotel at 503-281-6111 and receive the negotiated price, but you must identify yourself as attending The Compassionate Friends National Conference. The rooms are available at this special rate for those staying the nights of August 5-August 9. Last day for reservations, if rooms are still available, will be July 4.

Mother's Day For Bereaved Moms

A day of joy and celebration
for all mothers on this earth
who love their children unconditionally
from adoption or from birth

This love lasts a lifetime
but if your child should die
the day is marked with sadness
stained with tears that you will cry

God bless you special mothers
whose children have donned wings
our thoughts are with you this bittersweet day
and the melancholy that it brings

No matter how many years will pass
your heart will hurt this day
like a glowing ember flaring up
the pain returns your way.

There is nothing that can be said
nothing anyone can do
no one can heal the pain
so deep inside of you.

It is your pain
the greatest burden a mother can bear
imbedded within all the joys of Motherhood
there will always be some despair.

Find solace the best you can in knowing a
mother's love transcends all time and space
and no matter where your child is
they will feel your heart's embrace.

By Mitch Carmody, TCF Minnesota, author of
"Letters to My Son" www.heartlightstudios.net



A Mother's Prayer

Help me please
Oh Lord, I pray
To endure the trials
Of each new day.
Let me look them
Squarely in the face
And then put them
In their rightful place.
Give me patience
And strength to cope
But most of all God
Give me hope.
When all seems futile
Please let me say
"Look how far I've come
To reach this day".
Reach out Your hand
And pull me through
Cause, Lord,
I'll never make it
Without You!

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
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permission of author

In Loving Memory of My Angels...

Michelle, Jerry & Danny

A Grandparent's Point of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing
that can happen to anyone. It affects so
many lives – family, friends and even
strangers.

I lost my grandchild through death, and only a
grandparent can understand the special love
we have for our grandchildren and the loss
we feel when the child dies. For
grandparents, it is a double loss. Not only is
your grandchild gone, but you also watch
your child die each day.

The smile that was always on my daughter's
face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep
and there are so many questions. You feel
helpless as a parent. You can't kiss the hurt
away, as you did when she was a child. You
have no answers for her questions, as you
can barely understand your own feelings.

Each day I hope and pray for a little ray of
sunshine to show on my daughter's face. I
search for a little something to say or do that
will comfort her. It seems that there is no end
to the suffering.

As time has slowly gone by, I have seen the
healing process begin. In time a ray of hope
will shine on my daughter's face and a smile
will make her eyes light up again. She will
turn to me for what little comfort I can give
her. There will always be a part of me that is
gone, but in time I will learn to live with the
part that is still there.

By Ruth Eaton,
TCF Savannah, GA



My 21 year old son Brian died unexpectedly on a Spring day just before Mothers Day in 2006. Spring used to be a wonderful time of year for us. We loved the warm sunshine, at last, after the cold and dreary winter. There was something about the sights, sounds and smells of Spring that made us want to be outside to enjoy every moment of a beautiful day. This May will be three years since Brian's passing. When he died, my world fell apart. Spring and Mother's Day and every other event or holiday after that no longer held the joy or hope that previous ones did. I thought I would never recover and would never again enjoy the things we used to.

I reached out to Compassionate Friends shortly after Brian's death, at the suggestion of a close friend. I didn't know where else to turn for answers on how to cope with my grief. In those first few meetings I met others who were in the early stages of grief as I was. I also met people who were further along in their grief and who had somehow, it seemed, moved beyond the early pain of their grief; though I could not understand how they could and didn't believe that I ever would. Each meeting I felt a mixture of emotions that included pain, sadness, sorrow for my fellow grieving parents, and anger, that gradually progressed into relief, compassion, hope and even laughter. I found that getting to know others who shared the bond of losing a child, and making the transition from being heartbroken and hopeless to listening to others and helping others made a huge difference in my healing process. When I look back now at the early months and how far we have all come in the past years, it offers me new hope that we will continue to grow stronger and build bonds of friendship that will be a main source of support for us for years to come.

This year, I am looking forward to Spring and the many beauties of nature that it brings and I am hopeful that I will be able to appreciate them for the time that I am here. I'm hopeful that the healing process will continue and that I will use every opportunity to appreciate life, and find new ways to remember and honor Brian's life.

Louise Hoefler, in Loving Memory of Brian Hoefler, TCF Marietta, GA

Announcements

Each month we plan a social outing in addition to our monthly meetings in an effort to get together with our TCF friends in an informal setting, to do something active, talk, and usually share a meal afterwards. We encourage these socials as another means of group support with other bereaved parents and their families and a chance to get out and enjoy some healthy activities.

For our **April** social we will go to the **Atlanta Botanical Garden**
1345 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30309 www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org

Saturday, April 25

If you'd like to carpool, meet at the entrance of the church
(1st Baptist Church in Marietta) by 10:00 AM
or meet us at the Garden at 11:00 AM



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: If you would like a :
: photo button made of :
: your child, you may :
: submit a photo by email :
: to Glen Cummins at :
: [georgiaglen@hotmail.c](mailto:georgiaglen@hotmail.com) :
: om or bring one with :
: you to the meeting. :
:
:



We had a great hike at Red Top Mountain in March. It was a perfect day for a walk through the Iron Hill Trail, a 4 mile walk that runs along Lake Allatoona. Some of us got to take a hayride too! We enjoyed this hike so much we would like to go there again in May and try another trail.

Red Top Mountain State Park

Saturday, May 23

Meet at the Visitors Center at 10:00 AM

www.gastateparks.org/info/redtop



Lending Library

Our chapter offers a lending library with a variety of books on grief and bereavement. We encourage you to browse our library and feel free to check out a book or CD to take home with you. We only ask that you sign out the books and return them in a timely manner so others can have the benefit of the information as well. If you have read a book that was helpful to you and would like to share it with others, donating that book in your child's name is a wonderful way to honor them. Stickers are placed in these books to note whose memory they are given in.

CALLING ALL BOOKS!



In an attempt to keep track of our books and update our inventory, we are reinstating our sign-out policy for books and request that if you currently have a book out please email Kathy at tcfmarietta.kathy@hotmail.com with the title.

Save the Dates! Calendar of Events

April 25 - Atlanta Botanical Garden
May 23 - Hike at Red Top Mountain
June 27 - Indian Mounds, Cartersville
(Indian flute/dance)
July 25 - BBQ at Lorna Kennedy's
August 23 - Bowling at Marietta Lanes
September 19 - Hike Amicalola Falls
October 17 - New Echota (Frontier Day)
November 21 - Harvest Festival
December 19 - Christmas in Helen

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We encourage you to participate in our chapter Newsletter by submitting articles, poems, or book reviews. Please help to keep us up to date by letting us know if there is someone who would like to receive our newsletter, if your address or email address has changed, or if you currently receive a hard copy of the newsletter and would prefer to receive it by email. Contact Louise at tcfmarietta.louise@live.com. CHECK OUT our chapter website www.tcfmarietta.com for chapter updates and past newsletters.
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Thank you to Karl Jahn and Omni International for donating their services for printing our newsletters, and thanks to Theo Furber and TBF Computing for their help with other computing needs.

TCF 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 becomes 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 others 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 a 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©2009



**The Compassionate Friends
Marietta Chapter Newsletter**

c/o

Marietta TCF

P. O. Box 1892

Marietta, GA 30061

Vol. 5, No. 2

April - May 2009



MARIETTA TCF BUTTERFLY PICNIC & BALLOON RELEASE 2009



Marietta Camp Meeting Campgrounds

2301 Roswell Road, Marietta

3:00 - 6:00

*****PLEASE REGISTER BEFORE JUNE 10th 2009*****

Since our lunch will be catered, we need to know how many people are attending.

Please Print Legibly

Name of person making reservations: _____

Telephone number or email where you can be reached: _____

TCF Chapter: _____

Number of persons attending _____ **Enclosed is my check for** _____

Name of deceased child: _____ **Son** _____ **Daughter** _____

Child's Birthday _____ **Child's Death Date** _____

Names of Persons Attending Butterfly Picnic (please specify Adult, Teen or Child)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

****Cost of Picnic****

\$10.00 per adult ~ \$5.00 for teens ~ Children are free

All Payments are Final and Non-Refundable

For questions call Lorna at 770-948-4688 email: tcfmarietta.lorna@hotmail.com

or Kathy at 770-579-3512 email: tcfmarietta.kathy@hotmail.com

PLEASE SEND ALL REGISTRATION FORMS WITH PAYMENT TO:

LORNA KENNEDY

666 PUCKETT DRIVE

MABLETON, GA 30126