



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**

*Linked Together*

**Newsletter of the Atlanta Chapter  
Spring 2008**

"The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive."

**Atlanta Area Web Site**  
[www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org)

**TCF Atlanta Newsletter**  
1364 Sanden Ferry Drive  
Decatur, GA 30033  
Editor: Cindy Durham 770-938-6511  
[cindy\\_durham@bellsouth.net](mailto:cindy_durham@bellsouth.net)

**Atlanta Chapter  
Co-Leaders**

Cindy Durham 770-938-6511  
[cindy\\_durham@bellsouth.net](mailto:cindy_durham@bellsouth.net)

Ghakarhi Btembke 678-291-9935  
[unicorngab@comcast.net](mailto:unicorngab@comcast.net)

Tamie Dodge 770-982-2251  
[Dodgecat2001@yahoo.com](mailto:Dodgecat2001@yahoo.com)

Joe Hobbs 770-879-0023  
[joe.hobbs@cox.com](mailto:joe.hobbs@cox.com)

**Atlanta Chapter  
Co-Leaders, Sibling Group**

Jim Dirr 770-813-9831  
[jdirr@lavista.com](mailto:jdirr@lavista.com)

Nina Florence 404-484-2618  
[JamarrsMyAngel@aol.com](mailto:JamarrsMyAngel@aol.com)

**Georgia Regional Coordinator**

Muriel Littman 404-603-9942  
[muriellittman@comcast.net](mailto:muriellittman@comcast.net)

**National TCF Office (Oakbrook, IL)**  
Toll Free 1-877-969-0010

**The Atlanta Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the second Tuesday of each month from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. at the:**

**First Christian Church of Atlanta  
4532 LaVista Road, Tucker, GA 30084**

**Spring Chapter Meetings:**

**April 8**

**May 13**

**June 10**

The Atlanta Chapter also offers a Sibling Group at the same time as our regular monthly meeting.

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. 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 go through the grieving process. 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.

**To Our New Members**

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not The Compassionate Friends will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

**To Our Members Who are Further Down the 'Grief Road'**

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK – what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

## Atlanta Chapter Event

### **Pedersen Concert & Potluck Dinner: Friday, May 2, at 7 p.m.**

Alan Pedersen, who sang at our Candlelight Service in 2006, will perform a special concert for our chapter on Friday, May 2, at the First Christian Church of Atlanta.

The evening will begin at 7 p.m. with a potluck dinner. Each family is asked to bring a main dish or side dish to share. We will not have access to an oven, so bring dishes that are ready to be served at 7 p.m. If you'd also like to bring a dessert, that would be appreciated.

Following dinner, Alan will perform songs from his new CD, "Celebrate The Children." This CD – like his first two – were recorded in memory of his daughter Ashley.

A donation basket that evening will allow Atlanta Chapter members to contribute toward this "labor of love." Over the course of the next two years, Alan and his wife are touring the country as he plays for TCF chapters. Your contribution that evening will help to defray his expenses during the tour.

You also will have the opportunity to purchase CDs from Alan, if you would like to do so.

Won't you join us on May 2? In addition to hearing some wonderful music, it will be a social evening over dinner with your fellow TCF Atlanta chapter members.

For more information, contact Cindy Durham at (770) 938-6511 or [cindy\\_durham@bellsouth.net](mailto:cindy_durham@bellsouth.net).

### **Mother's Day Event Set for Sunday, May 11 – Chapter Members Invited**

Mother's Day can be a difficult day for many TCF members. All chapter members (moms, dads and siblings) are invited to a gathering on Sunday, May 11, at Trish Maham's house. Trish is a member of our chapter's Steering Committee.

Come any time after 2 p.m. for a social gathering at her home. We'll enjoy fellowship and appetizers during the afternoon, with dinner around 5 p.m. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to share.

To help us plan for this event, please e-mail Trish if you can attend. She'll send directions to everyone who confirms plans to attend: [pmaham@yahoo.com](mailto:pmaham@yahoo.com).

Is there a Dad in our chapter who might like to host a similar gathering in June – on Father's Day? E-mail [cindy\\_durham@bellsouth.net](mailto:cindy_durham@bellsouth.net) if you would be interested in seeing us host a similar Father's Day gathering.

### **Join Atlanta Chapter Members at TCF's Conference in Nashville!**

With Nashville just a four-hour drive from Atlanta, we hope to have a large group from our chapter make the trip to the 31st national conference of The Compassionate Friends, scheduled for July 18-20.

Under the theme *Volunteers for Healing... Friends for the Future*, the conference will include more than 100 workshops

covering most aspects of grief following the death of a child, and many additional activities. It will conclude on Sunday, July 20, with the ninth annual two-mile Walk to Remember at 8 a.m.

The Atlanta Chapter will again carry a banner containing the names of our chapter's children. To have the name of your child, sibling or grandchild included on the banner, please complete the enclosed form and mail it to Jayne Newton.

To allow everyone to be a part of this year's conference experience, the conference committee plans to decorate the conference area with real 7" vinyl records that have pictures of our children in the center. Templates and directions are available for download from the TCF Web site at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). Whether or not you are able to attend the conference, a child, sibling, grandchild, or loved one can still be remembered at the conference.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Music City Hotel and special room rates are available. Rates for a standard room (king-size bed or two double beds) are \$124 a night. Call (615) 885-2200 for reservations. Hotel rooms are expected to fill quickly, so make your reservations early.

Registration forms for the conference now are available on the national TCF Web site: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). More than 1,200 people are expected to attend.





# Atlanta Walks For Our Children and Siblings Gone Too Soon

The Compassionate Friends National Walk to Remember will be held at 8 a.m. Sunday morning, July 20, in Nashville, Tenn., the National Conference host city, prior to the closing ceremony.

First held in conjunction with the national conference in 2000, this Remembrance Walk has quickly become a highlight for conference-goers with between 600 and 1,000 joining together hand-in-hand, arm-in-arm to cover the two-mile course arranged for the event.

This is our way to honor the memories of children and siblings who we will never forget.

Families who have had a child die, but are unable to attend the conference or walk, are invited to include their child's name on our **"Atlanta Walks"** banner carried by members of our local Atlanta TCF Chapter attending the Nashville conference.

If you would like to have your child, sibling or grandchild's name included, please complete the following form and return it to us as soon as possible. The deadline is June 15.

## Atlanta Walks – 2008 In Memory of our Children and Siblings

Yes, I would like to have my child/sibling/grandchild included on the Atlanta Walks banner.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print clearly)

Yes, I would like to help with the Walk to Remember expenses and support the work of The Compassionate Friends Atlanta Chapter by making a donation in the amount of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$10, \$25, \$50.....)

Please mail your check payable to "The Compassionate Friends" to:

The Compassionate Friends  
c/o Jayne Newton  
808 Brentway Court  
Lilburn, GA 30047  
Thank you for your support. (Deadline June 15)



*Sample Banner from 2004 Walk for the Hollywood Conference  
"Atlanta Walks...  
In Memory of Our Children and Siblings"*

## *April, May and June Birthdays*

(On the advice of the TCF national office, we are only including the month and date  
– not year – of birthdays and angel dates.)

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Family</u>
Michael Btembke	April 1	August 3	son	Ghakarhi Btembke
Matthew McMichaelTaylor	April 1	April 13	son	Jim and Elaine Taylor
April Leshay Nesmith	April 5	June 5	daughter	Carla Adamar
Steven L. Brumlow	April 7	June 10	son	Colette Bauer
Charisma Tyar Inez Sanders	April 7	April 29	daughter	Marva J. Peters
Dr. Thomas Brown IV	April 8	July 27	son	Lillie Brown
Bo Tuggle	April 12	October 22	son	Connie and Johnny Tuggle
Padraic Dirr	April 20	July 15	son	Jim Dirr
David Ferguson	April 20	October 30	son	Christina and David Ferguson
Victoria Fields	April 22	December 4	daughter	Tricia Chasse
William Fielding Foulke, Jr.	April 28	June 8	son	Holly Foulke
Jason Maham	April 28	August 17	son	Trish Maham
Jennifer Lea Evans	May 6	June 19	daughter	Delores Evans
Elijah Samuel Marcus	May 9	May 9	son	Eric and LaPrecious Marcus
David Brown	May 13	October 7	son	Keith and Ann Brown
Damien White	May 17	January 6	son	Robin White
Tom Runfola	May 19	June 21	brother	Karen Davis
Daniel Prescott	May 19	March 31	brother	Pam Prescott
Thomas Michael Runfola	May 19	June 21	son	Pat Runfola
Marc William Waidner	May 19	October 30	son	Mary Alice Wood
Chad Gordon	May 21	September 3	son	Jayne and Wayne Newton
Kimberly Florence	May 23	August 3	daughter	Kate Florence
Joey Capron	May 26	March 17	son	Carmen Capron
Henry Robinson Cart	May 27	September 30	son	Roberta and Rob Cart
Richmond Matthew Petzel	May 27	June 1	son	Cindy Garner
David Thompson	May 27	May 15	son	Bill Thompson
Ronald Taus	May 28	March 20	son	Dena Hubbard
Derek L. Brown	May 29	April 2	son	Denice and Gerald Brown
Donald Wesley Carithers	June 10	August 8	son	Susan and John Carithers
Spencer McCrea Oedel	June 10	September 11	son	Amy Lighthill
Evan Sheffield	June 12	June 23	son	Cathy Spraez
Joshua Anavitarte	June 13	March 3	son	Jean Marie Anavitarte
D'Keesiyah Hardaway	June 16	March 3	granddaughter	Albert and Florence Daniels
Jennifer Hower	June 23	December 27	sister	Julie Fischer
Billy Snapp	June 23	February 25	son	Teal and Bill Snapp
John Allen Askins	June 24	March 3	son	Elaine Askins
Brian Patrick Devine	June 26	August 21	brother	Colleen Devine
Brian Patrick Devine	June 26	August 21	son	Eileen and Patrick Devine
Anita Alford	June 29	September 2	daughter	Selma Calaman
Mandi Lynn Mast	June 29	August 15	daughter	Diane and Daniel Mast
Rebecca Steinbach	June 30	June 19	daughter	Dawn Steinbach
Aaron Woodruff	June 30	June 22	brother	Rachel Woodruff

**“A greater love comes from your deepest pain  
And there’s power in that love to help you rise again”**

*From “A Little Farther Down the Road” by Alan Pedersen*

## *April, May and June Angel Dates*

(On the advice of the TCF national office, we are only including the month and date  
– not year – of birthdays and angel dates.)

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Family</u>
Todd Kirk Stien	April 1	February 25	son	Lorann Stien
Derek L. Brown	April 2	May 29	son	Denice Brown
Jessica Lyn Bryl	April 3	January 19	daughter	Betty and Daniel Bryl
Hallbrook 'Trey' Polite, III	April 9	March 28	son	Linda and Hallbrook Polite, Jr.
Matthew McMichaelTaylor	April 13	April 1	son	Jim and Elaine Taylor
Jameka Deshon Holmes	April 14	November 4	daughter	Charlotte Hamm
Jennifer Smith	April 14	August 24	daughter	Linda Smith
John Sistrunk	April 16	August 10	son	Sarah Smith Sistrunk
Anita Marepally	April 20	September 15	sister	Archana Vemulapalli-Marepally
Philip E. Walsh	April 21	October 15	son	Ruth Simmons
Christopher Kuzela	April 24	July 7	son	Ed and Pat Kuzela
Xavier Khamani Ray	April 24	September 7	son	Stephanie Ray
Charlie Wellman	April 27	January 20	son	Mary Wellman
Charisma Tyar Inez Sanders	April 29	April 7	daughter	Marva J. Peters
Yolandra Erin Dixon	May 3	March 5	daughter	Georgia Ware-Dixon
Connor Brown	May 4	October 6	grandson	Kaye Hyde
Arthur Burt Jordan	May 6	February 16	brother	Emily Jordan
Amanda Christine Warnock	May 6	November 13	daughter	Amy Osier
Arthur Burt Jordan	May 6	February 16	son	Ann Asbell
Julian Oliver Carter	May 7	August 12	son	Bryan and Julie Carter
Al Bath Wilson	May 8	November 2	son	Susan Wilson
Christopher Lee Simpson	May 9	August 22	grandson	Elizabeth Luke
Christopher Lee Simpson	May 9	August 22	son	Tricia and Kenny Simpson
Elijah Samuel Marcus	May 9	May 9	son	Eric and LaPrecious Marcus
Brandon Burke	May 10	December 2	grandson	Shirley A. Kendrick
Brandon Burke	May 10	December 2	son	Charlene and Johnny Burke
Kameron Rutherford	May 11	November 21	son	Judy and Khristopher Rutherford
Tyreek Seivwright	May 12	November 1	son	Donna Attride
David Thompson	May 15	May 27	son	Bill Thompson
Kim Gelly	May 24	March 24	daughter	Wanda and Bobby Boylston
Kim Gelly	May 24	March 24	sister	Laurie Rogers
Matthew Thomas Crowell	May 24	July 27	son	Barry and Doris Crowell
Amanda Irene Smith	May 29	August 1	daughter	Earl and Paulette Cagle
Sallie Scanlon	May 31	October 20	daughter	Jane R. Scanlon
Richmond Matthew Petzel	June 1	May 27	son	Cindy Garner
Joshua Polain	June 1	December 3	son	Kimberly Polain
Christopher James Downs	June 3	January 9	son	Jim and Joan Downs
April Leshay Nesmith	June 5	April 5	daughter	Carla Adamar
Paul Abraham	June 5	August 13	son	Alan and Deborah Abraham
William Fielding Foulke, Jr.	June 8	April 28	son	Holly Foulke
Margie Ann Lind	June 10	August 21	daughter	Bette and Bob Lind
Robert A. Lind, Jr.	June 10	November 29	son	Bette and Bob Lind
Steven L. Brumlow	June 10	April 7	son	Colette Bauer
Kaxon Harris	June 10	October 3	son	Karen Harris
Lane Veteto	June 11	October 7	son	Margaret Bear

## June Angel Dates -- Continued

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Family</u>
Keith Perry	June 11	November 14	son	Oveta Perry
Averil Brown	June 15	December 7	son	Carolyn Brown
Jenny Moriarty	June 16	July 12	daughter	Larry Moriarty
Jason Gibson	June 18	January 10	son	Tricia Garrett
Jennifer Lea Evans	June 19	May 6	daughter	Delores Evans
Rebecca Steinbach	June 19	June 30	daughter	Dawn Steinbach
Kawasiki S. Ricks	June 19	September 29	son	Beverly Ricks
Tom Runfola	June 21	May 19	brother	Karen Davis
Thomas Michael Runfola	June 21	May 19	son	Pat Runfola
Hadiyah Rasheedah Evans	June 21	September 25	son	Patricia Evans
Aaron Woodruff	June 22	June 30	brother	Rachel Woodruff
Evan Sheffield	June 23	June 12	son	Cathy Sprاعت
Dominic Alan Nwoye	June 25	September 13	son	Juanita Bell
Steven Curtis	June 26	January 22	son	Janet Curtis
Jacob Martin Drollinger	June 29	December 28	son	John and Virginia Drollinger
Melvin Shannon	June 30	February 23	brother	Juanita White
Melvin Shannon	June 30	February 23	son	Lillian Smith

## Tears and Flight

Why when I cry do people run and hide?  
Is any emotion other than a false happiness not to be shared?

I cry for my daughter when I speak of her because of both the happiness I felt when she was here and the grief I feel because she is gone.

If I pretend to be happy people will talk to me and ask me about her and when I start to cry they take flight.

Is the world such an emotional desert that people are not allowed to show other emotions?

Everyone is flying here and there never stopping to say they love someone or they miss someone.

No one hold hands and holds each other anymore.

They pat your back or hug themselves.

Are we so engrossed in our own personal space that we cannot break thru to someone else to share their pain and their happiness too?

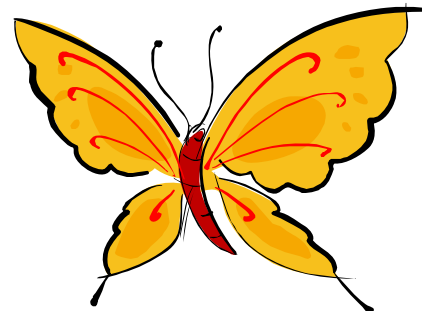
I often wonder if my daughter had not died would I still be behind the shell of anonymity that the rest of the world hides behind....

When you lose someone you lose your shell and the world seems harsher and at that time unrealistic but in all reality it's just you are outside yourself, your safe zone because you have been forced to admit you are not infallible, and

that the world doesn't start and stop with you. That there are people in it that you depend upon even if you didn't know it and that changes you; you become lost and bereft of what you never even knew you had....

You become a survivor; the one left behind, the lost, the scarred, and the heartbroken and that makes you so very different than the false happiness shelled in people around you.

*SLH...in memory of Sarabeth Cheyenne*





## Mother's Day, 'Before' and 'After'

While sorting through boxes and bags, it is not unusual for me to find something unexpected. It happened just the other day. Shifting through a box, I came across a wrinkled, somewhat yellowed piece of lined school paper. I carefully unfolded it only to find a drawing of a stick-Mom and stick-daughter standing alongside a mammoth daisy. The mom and little girl were holding hands with huge lop-sided grins on their faces. In her little girl just-learning-to-print handwriting were the words, "Happy Mother's Day, Mommy. I love you, Kristina."

Even six years later, little "gifts" such as these can bring fresh tears. It is times like these that I am glad that I was an incredible pack rat, especially when it came to saving things that my children have made. I can picture my then-blond, petite little Nina (her nickname), with the wispy hair, bent over the kitchen table, crayon in hand, creating that handmade card filled with love. Memories of breakfasts in bed, only to return to the kitchen after finishing the "gourmet" meal served with tender care, to find it in such disarray that it took hours to clean up! Even through the tears, these are the sweetest memories.

As I type this, I look at another gift from a Mother's Day past; a little statue of a harried mom, surrounded by mop, broom and bucket, that says, "World's Greatest Mom," chosen for me at a neighborhood garage sale. I came across it accidentally shortly after Nina's death, unearthing it from its hiding place. I wondered to myself, why had I packed it away? Did Nina know that I did and did she think that, by doing so, I hadn't appreciated her gift? Did I ever thank her for it along with the other garage sale items that she proudly brought home to me, or did it show on my face that I really didn't need anymore "junk" around the house?

Sometimes resurrecting these treasures can bring unpleasant feelings of guilt as we wonder if our children knew how much their little gestures of love meant to us. When our child dies, it becomes easy to second-guess ourselves, trapped in our fixations and exaggerations of the negative things that may have occurred during our child's life.

The first Mother's Day after Nina died was a grief-numbing blur, as it occurred only three days following her death. Unlike previous joyful dinners out with my four children pampering their mom, we spent the day making funeral arrangements and choosing a casket for one of them. In the early evening, I overheard it said to someone else, "Happy Mother's Day." I turned to my own mother and apologized for having forgotten.

I could not imagine ever celebrating another Mother's Day again. I am sure the dads have these same feelings on Father's Day. My heart goes out to them, because I think we forget that they, just like us, grieve and hurt, too.

For those mothers and fathers who have lost their only child, I have been saddened by stories told to me by them of attending church on Mother's Day Sunday and when the pastor asked the mothers in the church to please stand, they were undecided on whether they should stand or not. I hope that they will always remember, and the fathers as well, "Once a mother, always a mother; once a father, always a father." We are forever their parents.

If we are fortunate to have surviving children, they are often forgotten as well. In the early days, we become obsessed with the one who is missing. My own children showed quiet patience with this. I often wonder if they thought "What about us? We're still here!" Now with almost seven Mother's Days behind me, I try to accentuate what I do have.

This does not happen overnight. I found that in celebrating my surviving children, I could still honor Nina's memory and find ways to include her as well. I have developed a ritual where I get up early on that morning and bring flowers out to the cemetery. I bring a flower and a note to some of the mothers that I know who have buried children there to tell them I am thinking of them and their child. There is something very healing when reaching out to others. I then sit by my daughter's grave-site on the spring-green grass listening to the sweet call of a robin. I bring her a flower and write in her journal telling her how thankful I am to be her mother, how much I love and miss her. That is our private time together; the rest of the day is spent honoring my other children.

Mother's Day and Father's Day are holidays especially created for us. Try to get through them the best that you can, in whatever way feels right for you. Truly, only you know what that is.

Whether it is alone those first few years or with people that you love and who understand, do something that you find comforting. It is your day, for you were the giver of a precious life – you held a miracle in your arms. Even as powerfully destructive as death is, even that cannot take those memories away from you – they are your child's gift to you.

With gentle thoughts and peace on  
your special day,  
*Cathy L. Seehuetter, TCF/St.  
Paul, MN*



## Watch for New Look

### to National TCF Web Site

In order to serve the public and TCF leadership better, the national TCF Web site – [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) – is undergoing a major redesign. The new look is expected to be completed this summer.

The redesigned site will offer a number of expanded services. For visitors, it will include a Spanish language page, an area for friends, relatives and co-workers to learn about the impact on a family when a child dies, and they'll also list more in-depth information about local chapters. Chapter leaders will find forums and specific areas for newsletter editors, fundraising, treasurers and outreach.

It's a work in progress and they have invited our feedback. If you have suggestions you'd like to pass along, e-mail Pat Loder: [Pat@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:Pat@compassionatefriends.org).

## Helping Your Grieving Adolescent

Parenting teenagers...it's a tough job under the best of circumstances. But when a teenager is grieving as well, four dynamics place additional stress on the situation.

First, grieving families often feel a need to pull together for support. Since adolescence is increasingly a time of breaking away and relying on peer support, these conflicting needs can place parents and teens at odds with one another.

Second, adolescents are keenly aware of parental reactions and, when parents are grieving, often try to protect them from further pain.

Most commonly, this takes the form of not talking about it. Third, simply because they've experienced the death of a loved one, grieving teens tend to feel different from their peers. In an attempt to fit in, they may try to ignore their own grief reactions. Nevertheless, their normal grief reactions seethe beneath the surface, waiting for expression – healthy or unhealthy, at appropriate or inappropriate times.

Fourth, the stress of bereavement adds to the physical and emotional swings already common in adolescence.

So what's a caring parent or caregiver to do? Here are four strategies for helping your adolescent through bereavement.

1. Provide an environment the adolescent perceives as safe. Like adults, if they don't feel safe, young people can't do the necessary grief work. They need to know that they can

trust themselves as having grief reactions that are normal, their peers and adults to be supportive, and parents to be a dependable safety net.

You can help through structure, discipline and education. Structure and maintaining routines provide adolescents with a subtle, daily sense of continuity and permanence at a time when everything else seems up for grabs.

Discipline – reasonable and caring, but consistent and firm – reassures adolescents that someone is in control and will save him or her from serious harm.

Education can transform a neutral environment into a healing one for your teen. Make sure the adults in his or her world (school personnel, coaches, bosses, clergy, etc.) know that a death has occurred. Share with them printed materials about normal grief responses and what grieving people need. Use health classes and all-school assemblies to educate peer groups about bereavement.

And educate your child about normal reactions to grief so that he knows he is not going crazy and can trust the way his body, mind and emotions are responding. If he pulls back from discussion, provide books or movies that illustrate normal grieving.

2. Encourage your teen to express what the grief experience is like for him or her. Recognize and affirm that her experience is likely to be different from everyone else's in the family. Provide "emotional coaching" for your child by modeling appropriate emotional responses to loss.

If your teenager is a quiet or private person, encourage other methods of expression. Helpful ways of expressing emotion include playing music or musical instruments, writing (songs, poetry, diaries, letters to the person who died), sports (including martial arts and punching bags), art and photography.

3. Facilitate an ongoing connection with the person who died. Tell stories about the person. Give your adolescent a photo of him or her with the person. Support him in visiting the gravesite if that is meaningful to him. Make sure he has a memento of the person who died – a favorite tool or sports or hobby item, a piece of jewelry, a book, a sweater or robe – by which to stay connected.

And make sure you remember (in discussion, in prayer, by way of a small gift) to include the memory of the person who died in your celebration of important events in your child's life, such as graduations, getting a driver's license, participating in his or her first school play or first varsity sporting event.

4. Encourage your teenager to participate in normal adolescent life as she feels able. Grieving takes enormous energy, so your child may need to slow down a bit while she works on her grief. However, it's important for her to



know that you don't expect her to take on an adult role now that someone important has died. Let her know you love and accept and support her – just as she is now, with all the normal living and loving and learning she has yet to do.

*Lovingly lifted from the TCF newsletter, Delaware County, DE*

## Please See Me Through My Tears

You asked, "How are you doing?"  
As I told you, tears came to my eyes...and you looked away and quickly began to talk again, All the attention you had given me drained away.

"How am I doing?"...I can do better when people listen, though I may shed a tear or two.  
This pain is indescribable. If you've never known it you cannot fully understand.  
Yet I need you.  
When you look away,  
When I'm ignored,  
I am again alone with it.  
Your attention means more than you can ever know.

Really, tears are not a bad sign, you know!  
They're nature's way of helping me heal...  
They relieve some of the stress of sadness.

I know you fear that asking how I'm doing brings me sadness ...but you're wrong.  
The memory of my loved one's death will always be with me,  
Only a thought away.  
My tears make my pain more visible to you, but you did not give me the pain...it was already there.

When I cry, could it be that you feel helpless, not knowing what to do?  
You are not helpless,  
and you don't need to do a thing but be there.  
When I feel your permission to allow my tears to flow, you've helped me.  
You need not speak. Your silence as I cry is all I need.  
Be patient...do not fear.

Listening with your heart to "how I am doing"  
relieves the pain,  
for when the tears can freely come and go, I feel lighter,  
Talking to you releases what I've been wanting to say aloud,  
clearing space  
for a touch of joy in my life.

I'll cry for a minute or two...  
and then I'll wipe my eyes,

and sometime you'll even find I'm laughing later.  
When I hold back the tears, my throat grows tight,  
my chest aches, my stomach knots...  
because I'm trying to protect you from my tears.  
Then we both hurt...me, because my pain is held inside,  
a shield against our closeness...and you,  
because suddenly we're distant.

So please, take my hand and see me through my tears...  
then we can be close again.

*Kelly Osmont*

## TCF Meeting to be Held Tuesday, April 8: Topic is 'Show & Tell'

"Show & Tell" is the topic for the April meeting of the Atlanta Chapter of TCF. For those who would like to do so, please bring something that you'd like to show the group that has special meaning to you because of your child or represents something special about your child.

Our April meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 8, from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church of Atlanta, 4532 LaVista Road, Tucker, GA 30084.



We have both a group for parents and a group for siblings (ages 11 and up) that meet at this time/location.

For more information about our chapter meetings, contact one of our chapter leaders. Names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses are located on the front page of this newsletter.

We hope you will join us on Tuesday.

## Special Birthday Table

Our chapter has a monthly Birthday Table. This is a special table set up for those who have a child, grandchild or sibling's birthday in that month. Please bring a photo/memento and share a special memory of your child.

You are also welcome to bring your child's favorite food or birthday cake to share with the group. We hope you will take this opportunity to share your child with us.

For more information, please call Tamie Dodge at 770-982-2251 or [Dodgecat2001@yahoo.com](mailto:Dodgecat2001@yahoo.com)

## *Gifts of Love*

A love gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends of Atlanta. 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, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of our chapters. The following donations are in support of the Atlanta Chapter newsletter, candlelight service, Web site and other outreach.

All chapters within TCF are totally dependent on funds from our families. We DO NOT receive funds from our National Office. Everything we need to operate our local chapters are paid directly from our local resources and our local family contributions. Thank you to all who contribute and support your local chapters. Some people contribute in memory of other's children.....this is a wonderful way for others to say "I am remembering your child." Other "Gifts of Love" are evident by all the compassionate and giving volunteers we have within our TCF Atlanta organization.



Love gifts to the Atlanta Chapter of TCF should be made payable to The Compassionate Friends and mailed to our treasurer: Jayne Newton, 808 Brentway Court, Lilburn, GA 30047.

In Loving Memory of Charles Pilgreen, from his mother Brenda Shiplet, Birmingham, AL  
In Loving Memory of Stephanie Weber, from her parents John and Cecilia Weber, Roswell, GA  
In Loving Memory of Doc Brown, from his mother Lillie Brown, Charlotte, NC

In Loving Memory of Michael Btembke, from his father Ghakarhi Btembke, Norcross, GA  
In Loving Memory of Shana Rosenwald, from her mother Eleanor Rosenwald, Decatur, GA  
In Loving Memory of Matt Crowell, from his parents Doris and Glenn Crowell, Lilburn, GA

In Loving Memory of Megan Murphy, from Doris and Glenn Crowell, Lilburn, GA  
In Loving Memory of Chris Simpson, from his parents Kenny and Tricia Simpson, Auburn, GA  
In Loving Memory of Chris Simpson, from his grandmother Elizabeth Luke, Auburn, GA

In Loving Memory of Matt Meehan, from his father Michael Meehan, Stone Mountain, GA  
In Loving Memory of Ryan Jones, from his father Stephen Jones, Cumming, GA  
In Loving Memory of Ronald Taus, from his mother Dena Hubbard, Lilburn, GA



## *O*n the Road in 2008 . . .

Alan Pedersen's Web site notes that he and his wife Brenda left Feb. 2 in their 1995 conversion van now affectionately known as Ashley's Butterfly Bus to begin a two-year concert tour.

He says, "Brenda and I want to play music for as many bereaved parents as we can the next two years. We are calling this the 'Celebrate The Children Tour.' It has all been inspired by the countless children whose faces, stories, and lives have been brought to life for us by their grieving parents, grandparents and siblings who have hugged us, cried with us, and shared their loss with us. This is not our journey alone, it is for all the families who walk in our shoes...we truly do share each other's pain as well as each other's healing and triumph. We are honored to do this work."

To read Alan's stories from the road, go to: <http://www.everashleymusic.com/news.html>

And, join us Friday, May 2, at 7 p.m. at the First Christian Church of Atlanta for a potluck dinner and Alan's concert stop for our Atlanta chapter! (see story on page 2 of this newsletter for details)

## NEW SUBSCRIPTION - RENEWAL - CHANGE FORM - DONATIONS

If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time...everyone within The Compassionate Friends Organization wants to say .... We are sorry you have the need for this publication but we are glad you found us and we hope our newsletter will be helpful on your journey. Someone may have lovingly sent you the newsletter...and if so and you find it helpful, please complete the data sheet enclosed and return it so that we may add you to our newsletter database for future mailings. This is to insure that all the information we have is correct and complete. *This is for internal use only.*

**Please print, filling in all applicable blanks/boxes:**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (including area code) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you prefer to receive the newsletter by (check one):  Mail  E-mail (provide e-mail address above)

Child's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male  Female

Child's Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause of Child's Death (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Child's relationship to you (e.g. son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild) \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of all surviving siblings living with you:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- How did you find out about The Compassionate Friends? Please circle one: (1) Friends (2) Family (3) Hospital (4) Church (5) School (6) Funeral Homes (7) Internet (8) Newspaper (9) Employers (Human Resources) (10) Other \_\_\_\_\_

Note: **The information you have given above will be confidential (used for internal purposes only) unless you answer "yes" to one or more of the following questions:**

1. Do you want your child's name to appear in the newsletter's "**We Remember You**" section of birth and death dates? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
2. Do you want to receive the daily e-newsletter from TCF Atlanta? If so, please include your email \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you wish to have your child's name included on the Wall of Memory on our TCF Atlanta Web Site? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
3. May we include the above information in the TCF Atlanta Chapter directory? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Voluntary donations are TCF Atlanta's only source of income. The Compassionate Friends needs to be here for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

**Yes, I want to help with TCF outreach...a donation is enclosed in Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to apply my donation toward the following outreach: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ newsletter (2) \_\_\_\_\_ birthday/angel date cards
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ newly-bereaved packets (4) \_\_\_\_\_ annual candlelight remembrance service (5) \_\_\_\_\_ TCF Atlanta Web site
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_ library (7) \_\_\_\_\_ general expenses

**Make Checks Payable to:** The Compassionate Friends

**Please return to:** The Compassionate Friends, c/o Jayne Newton (treasurer), 808 Brentway Court, Lilburn, GA 30047  
**Or Make Donations Online by Pay Pal** <http://www.tcfatlanta.org/donationdataform.html>



®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 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 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. ©2007



The Compassionate Friends Atlanta Chapter  
1364 Sanden Ferry Drive  
Decatur, GA 30033

Honoring 28 Years of Support and Friendship for  
Bereaved Families

**Spring 2008 Newsletter**