



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Spring 2010

## Newsletter of the Atlanta Chapter

"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

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Toll Free 1-877-969-0010

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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

### Upcoming Chapter Meetings:

April 13, May 11 and June 8

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!”

YOU NEED NOT WALK ALONE.  
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



# 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 4, in Arlington, Va., 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 more than 1,000 people 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 are invited to include their child's name on our "**Atlanta Walks**" banner carried by members of our local Atlanta TCF Chapter attending the 2010 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 – 2010 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 2008 Walk at the Nashville Conference  
"Atlanta Walks...  
In Memory of Our Children and Siblings"*

## TCF Parent Group Welcomes New Facilitators, Seeks Added Support

Four additional parents from the Atlanta Chapter have stepped forward to serve as facilitators at our monthly chapter meetings.

Joining Ghakarhi Btembke, Tamie Dodge and Joe Hobbs as discussion facilitators are:

- Abigail Arthur-Chillman
- Julette Carter
- Brigid Fintak
- Candace Walker

In the coming months, we will begin rotating duties as facilitators at our monthly meetings.

At the April meeting, we want to try something a little different – at least it will be different for those of you who are new to our chapter.

Instead of dividing the parent group into several smaller groups, we will all meet together. In the interest of being sure that everyone has a chance to share (while no one will be compelled to do so), we'll ask everyone to take about five minutes to bring up whatever is most pressing on their mind that evening.

Then, the full group can jump in with suggestions of what worked for them – under those circumstances. The Sandy Springs Chapter of TCF follows this format and it works very well for them. And, our chapter in past years also met as one large group. We will welcome your feedback at the end of the evening.

In addition to welcoming new facilitators, our chapter is in need of several additional volunteers.

- We would like to identify several more parents who would be willing to serve as chapter co-leaders ... and one to serve as the main chapter leader.
- We would like to identify someone to take over the duties of newsletter editor.
- And, we are looking for someone to serve as chairman of the 2010 Candlelight Service planning committee.

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

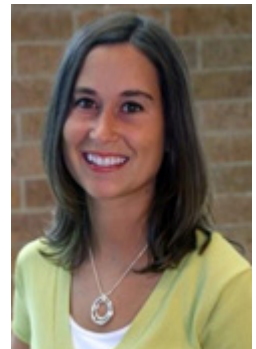
## TCF Sibling Group Introduces a New Co-Leader, as Jim Dirr Retires

TCF's long-time sibling group leader Jim Dirr has retired as a leader of our sibling group. He will be greatly missed and has our chapter's gratitude for many years of service – both to our siblings and to the parent group.

Jim: You've been a wonderful voice of support to all of us and we wish you the best. Come join us any time you are able to do so!

Stepping into a leadership role, and assisting Nina Florence and Rachel Woodruff as a sibling leader, is Denise Hoegler.

Denise lost her brother, David, in December 2003 in a car accident. She said: "He was just 1 ½ years younger than me and was two days shy of his 23rd birthday. This sudden and unexpected loss was devastating for me and my family, as we have always been very close."



Denise learned of TCF about a year into her grief and said she was "so comforted to know that such a great agency existed to support people like me and my family."

She says she looks forward to the candlelight ceremony each year and has found much healing and encouragement through attending some of the sibling group meetings. "It was an amazing feeling to be surrounded by people who truly understood what I was thinking and feeling."

Denise has a Master's degree in Social Work and has experience facilitating groups. She said she was eager to help out with TCF when she learned of our chapter's need for another leader. "This is a group that has truly touched my heart, and I look forward to giving back even a small part of what they have given me."

## TCF Newsletter is Going Green

Beginning with the July issue of our chapter newsletter, we are planning to distribute it by e-mail only – unless you specifically request that a hard copy be mailed to you.

If you received this newsletter by e-mail a day or two ago, we have your e-mail address and you don't need to do anything more to continue receiving it by e-mail.

If you did not receive it by e-mail, please send your e-mail address to [jayne@tcfatlanta.org](mailto:jayne@tcfatlanta.org). We'll add you to our e-mail distribution list.

If you don't have easy access to e-mail and would prefer to continue receiving the newsletter through the mail, return the flyer enclosed with this newsletter to Jayne Newton (address is on the form).

## Reserve Your Hotel Room Early for National Conference, July 2-4

"Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope" is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference, to be held in Arlington, Va., July 2-4. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City.

Independence Day will not only feature the annual Walk to Remember, but will include a world-class display of fireworks over the National Mall, visible from Arlington.

Room rates are \$129 for single or double occupancy, \$154 for triple and \$179 for quad. These are specially negotiated rates available only to those attending the national conference. The hotel always fills up quickly. If you are even considering attending, please make your hotel reservations immediately by calling 1-800-233-1234; specify that you are with The Compassionate Friends.

Our chapter also would like to identify those chapter members who plan to attend and can help carry our chapter's banner in the Walk to Remember. See the flyer in this newsletter about adding your child or sibling's name to the banner. June 15 is the deadline to return the form and have your child or sibling's name added to the banner.

Here's the national TCF Web site to watch for upcoming information about the conference:  
<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

## Online Support Community Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing

The Compassionate Friends national Web site offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats).

This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement and friendship. The friendly

atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing.

There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under," "Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "No Surviving Children," "Survivors of Suicide." There are also sessions for surviving siblings.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit the link below and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column:  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).

## One Moment in Time

By Annette Mennen Baldwin  
*In memory of my son, Todd M. Mennen*  
*TCF, Katy, Texas*

As bereaved parents, we have a line of demarcation in our lives. This line is like no other. Other people define their lives by that one big career step, move or degree. But in other people's lives, things are different. We are not like other people.

We experienced a clearly defined moment in time when everything changed. The tectonic plates of our lives shifted at one moment on one date of one year. Nothing will ever be the same. We definitively mark the time before and after our child died. Life was different before our child died. It was easy; it was filled with promises of tomorrow, accomplishments, setbacks, goals set and achieved and happiness that abounds in the natural order of life. But our basic assumptions were shattered and our world turned inside out at that one moment in time when our child died.

Can we ever feel as optimistic about life as we did before that moment in time? Will we ever again believe that one day we will feel balanced, optimistic and serene?

We certainly can, and most parents certainly do. As you read the articles in this month's newsletter about the journey through grief, consider the gentle optimism that presents itself in these parents' words. Each of these parents has walked this lonely road. Each has come through the darkest, rockiest valley into a gauzy sort of light which gradually crystallized into a true sunshine as time moved forward. How did they do it?

Insight is offered in these parents' stories. We must do our grief work, face our demons and stand them down. We must talk with others, set limits on what we will tolerate, and hold our line. We must seek counseling, attend seminars, attend TCF meetings or other offerings that give

us the support of parents who have lost a child or help us in acquiring skills to cope with our pain and loss.

We must take grief breaks in the beginning and for the first year or two. We must take care of ourselves physically, mentally and emotionally.

But most of all we must keep our child with us as we complete our life's journey. How we choose to complete our journey is unique. The common denominator that all of us share is the need to find a precious flicker of hope which we can nurture and coax to a radiant glow. We all find it in different ways and at different times on our grief journey. But, rest assured, we all find it. I call it "my little light."

One day you will feel the burden lifting. You will laugh about things your child said or did. That moment will gently envelop you. There is hope. Let your little light glimmer and then glow.

## A View 14 Years Later – Facing Grief in the Workplace

By John H. Stanley

TCF, Southern Piedmont Chapter, N.C.

*Reprinted with permission of the author and "We Need Not Walk Alone," the national publication of The Compassionate Friends.*

Monday, morning. I was down. As they say, "Rainy days and Mondays always get me down." But, this Monday was particularly despairing. Susan, our bright, blue eyed, blond haired 16-year-old child had died in an auto accident the previous Tuesday night. Having taken the customary three days funeral leave, this Monday was my first day back at the office.

It was awkward. Awkward for me and awkward for my fellow employees. People seemed apprehensive to talk about anything. How in the world does one co-habit with grief and work? There is no energy, no drive. How did other bereaved parents "get on" with their lives and grieve?

I remembered Guy. His 16-year-old son died in a car accident. Immediately, he stopped associating socially with those that he worked with. I wondered why. They had had so much fun. Within a year I heard that he changed jobs.

I remembered Al. He was a banker. After his 18-year-old son died, he threw himself into his work. He was in his office by 7 a.m., and he was at the office or at a community meeting until after 9 p.m. Within a year he was elected president of the Chamber of Commerce and within two years he was president of his Rotary Club. I wondered if this was what "they" called "denial?" The "word about town"

was that he and his wife were not getting along well. In conversations years later, he admitted that he absolutely refused to discuss the son. But, his wife had the need to share memories. He wished that he had been advised as to what to expect.

Within an hour, I was roused from this wondering by a visit from our senior vice president. He is a wonderful and compassionate fellow, and I am convinced that he meant well when he determinedly announced, "We have created several new programs and promotions for you to head up." Being a marketing manager, I should have found this an exciting and challenging opportunity. *Wrong.*

He obviously felt that I should have been kept busy so I would not mourn, or grieve. Little did he know that what I needed was rest. Or, that what I wanted was to have a heart attack. He could not have known that getting out of bed each morning and going to work was a major challenge. And, little did I know that I should have educated him and my fellow employees.

**Lesson #1.** I do not believe that we can hide from or run away from our grief by becoming workaholics, putting on an armor of "busy" as a defense. I believe that we simply delay the inevitable grief. Further, I believe that changing jobs and losing whatever support system that may be at our jobs could be devastating. It certainly would have been for me.

So here it was that really awful Monday. Within minutes I would be asked the same question that has been asked probably a million times to every bereaved father around the world, in every nation, and in every language, "*How is your wife doing?*"

**Lesson #2.** People speak in code. Question: "How is your wife/husband doing?" Translation: "How are you?" "How are you doing?" I believe that people honestly care, but they do not know what to say. It is up to us to educate them. In an outstanding article, "Facing Grief" in the April, 1996 issue of *Personnel Journal*, it was reported that a significant 74% human resource managers interviewed acknowledged that they were at a loss for words or that they were self-conscious about what to do for the bereaved.

**Lesson #3.** Acting as if nothing has happened does not work. I could not deny the existence of Susan Stanley. I remember standing in front of a mirror and saying over and over and over again, maybe five or ten minutes at a time: "*Our daughter died. Our daughter died.*" Why? Because in my job I meet new people constantly. And, I'll bet you know exactly the question that always comes up – that's right, "How many children do you have?" or, "Do you have children?" I had to be in a position of telling the truth. So, I had to confront myself with information.

**Lesson #4.** Since we have not control over our emotions

and the circumstances, we must learn to accept and manage that change. Managing this change means realizing what is going on. For instance, we bereaved may express a shortness of temper toward our fellow employees when they talk about their children and grandchildren. We may think this completely thoughtless of them, especially about 2:30 each afternoon when the office phones light up with sons and daughters calling to tell mom that they have had a wonderful day at school.

Here we are in an office situation. Our fellow office worker was talking on the phone that morning to her married daughter about their newly born grandchild. That afternoon that same coworker asked if we will help her with something. Bingo. The “buckshot effect.” We are mad with everybody and everything. We bereaved are depressed, and we scramble to find answers, to find peace, to find the “quick fix.” Pending holidays are horrible and birthdays and anniversary dates are especially difficult times.

**Lesson #5.** I believe we should meet grief on its own terms, that we should take control. This may mean taking vacation days on birthdays and anniversary days. It may mean saving vacation time during the holidays to take a trip.

Being in control means, I believe, calling on our supervisor to establish priorities and communicate exactly how we are doing and what we are feeling. I remember finding it very difficult to concentrate and I remember being fatigued. Being unable to concentrate, I found it helpful to sit with that senior vice president occasionally and review what I was working on and to set intermediate goals and priorities.

Is there a possibility of telecommuting from home via phone, modem, fax? Does the company offer flextime? Coming to work earlier than others and therefore, leaving earlier? Or, are there others who can pick up some of the more involved duties for a time?

**Lesson #6.** The real paradox: Only by allowing ourselves to feel the most intense and shattering pain can we move toward a life in which pain is not the center.

So how do we co-habit with grief and our careers? Do you remember when you started your career? Or, do you remember your first day on your job? We looked good. Our shoes were polished, our hair fixed. Our clothes pressed. But, at the same time everything was so unfamiliar. Strange. We started, we took those baby steps. We set small goals.

Well, guess what? Here we are again. Starting all over. Taking those baby steps ... trying to learn to live again ... setting those small goals. There is the knowledge that the vast majority of us survive the painful bereavement process, and many find new meaning and purpose to our lives. Many will themselves become the company bereavement specialist, nurturing employees who suffer the loss of a loved one, and advising co-workers on how they can best support their teammate.



## In This Place

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled  
a dreadful distance. You have come,  
seeking solace, understanding, hope,  
threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone.

In this place you can relax and breathe . . .  
the coats of others' expectations taken off.  
Walk into these few hours as into an oasis  
where draughts of love and memories can be  
quaffed.

In this place all names can be spoken;  
in this place each one's story may be told.  
We will not be discouraged by your sorrow;  
in this place ALL feelings, we enfold.

Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting;  
we do not count how many tears are shed.  
Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage,  
for the long and winding road that is ahead.

And those we love are pleased we are together.  
They smile down on us, and bless this day,  
glad for every tiny step we're taking  
and send their light to guide us on our way.

Traveling with us as we journey onward,  
sending strength for what the miles may bring,  
they are a part of everything we do that matters -  
in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry  
from *Catching the Light* –  
*Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child*  
Written for TCF meetings

## *April, May and June Birthdays*

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Family</u>
Michael Btembke	April 1	son	Ghakarhi Btembke
Matthew McMichael Taylor	April 1	son	Jim and Elaine Taylor
April Leshay Nesmith	April 5	daughter	Carla Adamar
Jennifer Gryzinski	April 7	daughter	Lisa Mary Katz
Charisma Tyar Inez Sanders	April 7	daughter	Marva J. Peters
Dr. Thomas Brown IV	April 8	son	Lillie Brown
Kennon Lamar Jernigan	April 9	son	Pam and Ken Jernigan
Kennon Lamar Jernigan	April 9	brother	Leah and Joanna Jernigan
Bo Tuggle	April 12	son	Connie and Johnny Tuggle
Bradford Gordan Lamkie	April 16	son	Laura Lea Lamkie
Padraic Dirr	April 20	son	Jim Dirr
David Ferguson	April 20	son	Christina and David Ferguson
Victoria Fields	April 22	daughter	Tricia Chasse
Mark Joseph Gore	April 22	son	Luis and Barbara Rodriguez
William Fielding Foulke, Jr.	April 28	son	Holly Foulke
Jason Maham	April 28	son	Trish Maham
Jennifer Lea Evans	May 6	daughter	Delores Evans
Elijah Samuel Marcus	May 9	son	Eric and LaPrecious Marcus
Damien White	May 17	son	Robin White
Aaron Marion	May 18	son	Denise Marion and family
Tom Runfola	May 19	brother	Karen Davis
Daniel Prescott	May 19	brother	Pam Gnanamani
Thomas Michael Runfola	May 19	son	Pat Runfola
Marc William Waidner	May 19	son	Mary Alice Wood
Chad Gordon	May 21	son	Jayne and Wayne Newton
Matthew Scott Marshall	May 22	son	Gena and John Ivester
Joey Capron	May 26	son	Carmen Capron
Henry Robinson Cart	May 27	son	Roberta and Rob Cart
Richmond Matthew Petzel	May 27	son	Cindy Garner
Ronald Taus	May 28	son	Dena Hubbard
Derek L. Brown	May 29	son	Denice and Gerald Brown
Jonathan Aaron Blumenfeld	May 30	son	Harriet Blumenfeld
Kameron Michael Dunmore	May 31	son	Karen A. Dunmore
Michael Moskowitz	June 2	brother	Arnie Moskowitz
Katherine Jane Wentz Williams	June 3	daughter	Jane and Clyde Wentz
Donald Wesley Carithers	June 10	son	Susan and John Carithers
Spencer McCrea Oedel	June 10	son	Amy Lighthill
Evan Sheffield	June 12	son	Cathy Spraeztz
Jennifer Hower	June 23	sister	Julie Fischer
Billy Snapp	June 23	son	Teal Snapp
John Allen Askins	June 24	son	Elaine Askins
Brian Patrick Devine	June 26	son	Eileen and Patrick Devine
Vanishia Shantee Jinks	June 26	daughter	Yuonne Jinks
Anika Alford	June 29	daughter	Selma Calaman
Mandi Lynn Mast	June 29	daughter	Diane and Daniel Mast
Aaron Woodruff	June 30	brother	Rachel Woodruff

## *April, May and June Angel Dates*

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Family</u>
Todd Kirk Stien	April 1	son	Lorann Stien
Derek L. Brown	April 2	son	Denice and Gerald Brown
Jessica Lyn Bryl	April 3	daughter	Betty and Daniel Bryl
Hallbrook 'Trey' Polite, III	April 9	son	Linda and Hallbrook Polite Jr.
Anthony Chad Willis	April 11	son	Mark and Ginger Willis
Matthew McMichael Taylor	April 13	son	Jim and Elaine Taylor
Jameka Deshon Holmes	April 14	daughter	Charlotte Hamm
Bradford Gordan Lamkie	April 19	son	Laura Lea Lamkie
Anita Marepally	April 20	sister	Archana Vemulapalli-Marepally
Christopher Kuzela	April 24	son	Ed and Pat Kuzela
Xavier Khamani Ray	April 24	son	Stephanie Ray
Rose Ann Thompson	April 25	daughter	Kevin Thompson
Raymond Ira Buckner	April 27	son	Vera R. Morison
Charlie Wellman	April 27	son	Mary Wellman
Charisma Tyar Inez Sanders	April 29	daughter	Marva J. Peters
Connor Brown	May 4	grandson	Kaye Hyde
Arthur Burt Jordan	May 6	son	Ann Asbell
Arthur Burt Jordan	May 6	brother	Emily Jordan
Amanda Christine Warnock	May 6	daughter	Amy Osier
Julian Oliver Carter	May 7	son	Bryan and Julie Carter
Christopher Lee Simpson	May 9	son	Tricia and Kenny Simpson
Christopher Lee Simpson	May 9	grandson	Elizabeth Luke
Elijah Samuel Marcus	May 9	son	Eric and LaPrecious Marcus
Brandon Burke	May 10	son	Charlene and Johnny Burke
Brandon Burke	May 10	grandson	Shirley A. Kendrick
Taylor Arianna Mills	May 11	daughter	Zeporice Mills
Kameron Rutherford	May 11	son	Judy and Khristopher Rutherford
Tyreek Seivwright	May 12	son	Donna Attride
Maeve Elizabeth Fintak	May 13	daughter	Steve and Brigid Fintak
Bradley James Peerson	May 15	grandson	Jackie Fuller
Bradley James Peerson	May 15	son	Pam and Jon Peerson
Bradley James Peerson	May 15	brother	Blake Peerson
Michael Rice Lee	May 17	son	Anthony and Amber Lee
Matthew Thomas Crowell	May 24	son	Barry and Doris Crowell
Jeremy William Frank	May 25	son	Sheila M. Frank
Matthew Marcus Long	May 28	son	Timothy Long
Amanda Irene Smith	May 29	daughter	Earl and Paulette Cagle
Sallie Scanlon	May 31	daughter	Jane R. Scanlon
Richmond Matthew Petzel	June 1	son	Cindy Garner
Joshua Polain	June 1	son	Kimberly Polain
Christopher James Downs	June 3	son	Jim and Joan Downs
Paul Abraham	June 5	son	Alan and Deborah Abraham
April Leshay Nesmith	June 5	daughter	Carla Adamar
Hayden Vann	June 6	sister	Whitney Horne
William Fielding Foulke, Jr.	June 8	son	Holly Foulke
Kaxon Harris	June 10	son	Karen Harris



## *April, May and June Angel Dates (Cont.)*

Margie Ann Lind	June 10	daughter	Bette and Bob Lind
Robert A. Lind, Jr.	June 10	son	Bette and Bob Lind
Keith Perry	June 11	son	Oveta Perry
Averil Brown	June 15	son	Carolyn Brown
Jenny Moriarty	June 16	daughter	Larry Moriarty
Brandon Jack Phillips	June 16	son	Susan and Jack Phillips
Jennifer Lea Evans	June 19	daughter	Delores Evans
Kawasiki S. Ricks	June 19	son	Beverly Ricks
Kennon Lamar Jernigan	June 20	son	Pam and Ken Jernigan
Kennon Lamar Jernigan	June 20	brother	Leah and Joanna Jernigan
Tom Runfola	June 21	brother	Karen Davis
Hadiyah Rasheedah Evans	June 21	daughter	Patricia Evans
Thomas Michael Runfola	June 21	son	Pat Runfola
Aaron Woodruff	June 22	brother	Rachel Woodruff
Evan Sheffield	June 23	son	Cathy Spraez
Jacob Martin Drollinger	June 29	son	John and Virginia Drollinger
Georgia Wimberly Pierce	June 30	daughter	Michael and Anna Pierce
Melvin Shannon	June 30	son	Lillian Smith
Melvin Shannon	June 30	brother	Juanita White

## News Briefs

The 2nd Annual Maeve Fintak Charity Golf Tournament will be held Saturday, April 17, at the Collins Hill Golf Course.

The goal of this foundation is to raise awareness of Noonan Syndrome, a complex genetic disease. Everyday there is a child born with this condition, yet many of them will go undiagnosed. Maeve's parents, Brigid and Steve Fintak, say that it is their mission to educate the public, as well as the medical community of this widespread syndrome that is associated with congenital heart disease. Donations and sponsorship through this golf tournament will help fund research and bring educational seminars to those who are unaware of the symptoms of Noonan Syndrome.

For more information about the tournament and sponsorship opportunities, visit [www.maevefintakfoundation.org](http://www.maevefintakfoundation.org).



The Clinton Ron Walker Foundation and The Atlanta Heart Specialist will team up on April 23rd to offer heart screenings for \$59. The test includes an Echocardiogram,

EKG and an ABI. The location for the screening will be the Abundant Life Church, 6440 Rock Springs Road, Lithonia, Ga.



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 (it's 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."

*A thousand words can't bring you back  
I know because I tried  
And neither can a million tears  
I know because I cried  
~ Sarah Ratliff*

# Life Can be Good Again

By Don Hackett  
Kingston, Mass.

For nearly 16 years, his voice has been silent. It is a span now nearly equal to the time it was heard. Never did I anticipate life without the sounds that marked his presence. Learning to survive that silence once seemed an impossible task, one so overwhelming I could find no hope or expectation of finding life once more.

He was our son, our only child. The tempo of his growing measured the cadence, the beat, for our own living. His passing left an existence without any value that I could immediately perceive. Ultimately, I came to recognize that I was wrong.

Life still had meaning, but it had fallen to me to find it, just as it had been in the years before his coming. Indeed, even as it had been throughout the time of his living, life still demanded my active participation, my own commitment to give it purpose and resolve.

Hindsight affords an ease in stating this realization that did not exist while struggling in the depths of bereavement. The steps taken to finally seize life again seem logical and ordered while intellectualizing the process but I know that this is much easier to write than it is to experience.

I confess, with both sorrow and gladness, that I can no longer summon the full measure of those savage feelings and the unremitting pain that engulfed me in those early years. Working through them was the most demanding challenge of my life, enacting tolls in physical health perhaps even greater than the long term effects on mind and emotion.

Today, however, I can reflect with gratitude upon a decade of mastery over the sadness. Control of my thoughts returned to me and I know freedom from the utter devastation of those early years.

Looking back reveals essential turning points on the road to healing. Some would seem to generalize easily for anyone. Others seem to respond to personal strengths and weaknesses more particular to an individual.

These points included:

- Self forgiveness for the many deficiencies found within on the endless soul journey that is our lot in the wake of our child's death.

- Forgiveness of others, relatives, friends and associates, who are less affected than are we, who seem unable to help us in our time of deep trouble and need.
- The accepting, at last, the finality of our loss, and that we must gradually unleash ourselves from our former lives and structure anew.
- Learn to communicate value to spouses, friends and surviving siblings, our love for whom seems shrouded behind the totality of our grief.
- Find ways to give expression to our need to somehow memorialize our child, be it through writing a book, planting trees, sustaining scholarships or any number of ways. Our need to preserve and safeguard our child's memory is real and deserving of our attention.
- A time comes for many to find new homes, jobs and purpose. These are often part and parcel of any significant change in our lives.
- Surrender to time, giving ourselves space within it to do our work. Use time to foster healing within, to enable us to grasp today and tomorrow with hope.

No recovery will return us to life as we knew it while our child lived. That life is forever gone and, to a certain extent, we may well have to accept that, as we perceive life today. The finest days of our lives may well be a part of our past. Somehow, we must recognize that this is not unique to surviving our child's death, but is often a portion of the human condition.

Olin is dead. As much as I would wish it otherwise, it will never be. He is not forgotten. His voice, his laughter, his joy, and his shortcomings live on in me.

No day passes without thinking about him. I am grateful for his touch upon my life. Yet, joy is again mine. Pleasure is no longer a forbidden or guilt-producing element in daily living. I live, gladly and with purpose, with Olin both behind me in time, but with me internally.

Is this not our goal, to heal, to find strength to love both yesterday and today? Our children have been the richest part of our lives and today should reflect the grace of that love in all that we are today.

*Reprinted with permission from an issue of "We Need Not Walk Alone," the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.*

# 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.

## Love Gifts

In Loving Memory of Nick Posey, from his mother Diana and William Posey, Lilburn, GA  
In Loving Memory of Sharon E. Zick, from her parents Paul and Rebecca Zick, Marietta, GA  
In Loving Memory of Michael Btembke, from his father Ghakarhi Btembke, Norcross, GA

In Loving Memory of Shana Rosenwald, from her mother Ellie Rosenwald, Bluffton, SC  
In Loving Memory of Reezin N. "Chip" Swilley, Jr., from his parents Reezin and Elsie Swilley, Sr., Atlanta, GA  
In Loving Memory of Nichelle Twyman, from her mother Carol A. McNeal, Stone Mountain, GA

In Loving Memory of Mervyn Twyman, from his mother Carol A. McNeal, Stone Mountain, GA  
In Loving Memory of Joey Capron, from his mother Carmen Capron, Atlanta, GA  
In Loving Memory of Michael Moskowitz, from his brother Arnie Moskowitz, Atlanta, GA

In Loving Memory of Ashley Craig, from her mother La Tangie Craig, Hampton, GA  
In Loving Memory of Bill and Billy Snapp, from Margaret Knutson, Loves Park, IL

**All Walk to Remember donations will be listed in the newsletter after the July 2-4 conference.**

## 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 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

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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>