



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Meg Avery, Editor      SPRING 2012  
March, April and May

**A non-denominational self-help support group offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families who have experienced the death of a child at any age, from any cause.**

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

### CHAPTER MEETING AND CONTACT INFO:

Gwinnett Chapter- 7:30 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month. **next meetings: March 15, April 19 and May 17.**

**Trinity Christian Fellowship, 1985 Old Fountain Road, Lawrenceville, 30043.**

We meet in the 100 Building, the first building on your left.

For TCF Gwinnett information, contact June Cooper by phone 770-757-4927, or email [jc30044@flash.net](mailto:jc30044@flash.net) or [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com)  
TCF Atlanta website: [www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org)  
The Compassionate Friends National Office:  
1-877-969-0010  
[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

Dear Friends,

The Gwinnett Newsletter is available both in print and by e-mail. If you have received this issue in print and would prefer to receive e-mail instead, please notify us at [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com). This will help keep our postage and printing costs down. We welcome your suggestions to improve our chapter newsletter.

We would love your input for the newsletter, Poetry, articles and comments submitted by parents, siblings and grandparents are an import part of each issue. Our next issue, Summer 2012 will cover the months of June, July and August.

We will also continue to recognize birthday and anniversary dates as times of special remembrance within our TCF family. Please communicate these important dates to us if you have not already done so.

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has

experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause, is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they walk the grief journey. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings and issues that evolve around the death experience of a child.



### *Our Credo...*

*We need not walk alone.*

*We are The Compassionate Friends*

*We reach out to each other with love,  
with understanding and with hope.*

*The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many  
different causes, but our love for them unites us.*

*Your pain become my pain,*

*Just as your hope becomes my hope.*

*We come together from all walks of life,*

*From many different circumstances.*

*We are a unique family because we represent many races,  
creeds and relationships. We are young, and we are old.  
Some of us are far along in our grief, but other still feel a grief  
so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see  
no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of  
strength while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some  
of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression,  
while others radiate an inner peace.*

*But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The  
Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we  
share with each other our love for the children who have died.*

*We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for  
ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together.  
We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as  
the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as  
well as the doubts and help each other to grieve as well as to  
grow.*

*We need not walk alone.*

*We are The Compassionate Friends.*

## WE REMEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

### March

Lance Robert Malone....March 3  
Dallas Williams..... March 4  
G.W. Fox .... March 8  
Ian Sharpe .... March 10  
Amity Kozak .... March 11  
Brian Ernst..... March 11  
Jeff Bradley .... March 13  
Christopher Jordan "CJ" Godhard ... March 15  
Malachai Pierre-Louis... March 16  
Melissa "Kiki" Morrow.... March 16  
Samantha Mucha ... March 17  
Richard Kendell "Ken" McCurdy ... March 23  
Marcus Reid..... March 23  
Kevin Hamilton..... March 23  
Justin Jordan ... March 27  
Ashley Lauren Hull .... March 30

### April

Cory Bute ... April 2  
Morgan Alexis Burgess.... April 2  
Joey Robinson .... April 4  
Jenny Gryzinski .... April 7  
Aaron Stephens .... April 9  
Norma Mucha .... April 11  
Bo Tuggle .... April 12  
Elizabeth "Beth" Rihm .... April 13  
Ben Ellerd ... April 15  
Gary Pruitt .... April 18  
Kathryn Collier .... April 18  
Ryan Oliver .... April 19  
Matthew Hinson .... April 24  
Robert Coltman ... April 24  
Ricky Ainsworth ... April 25  
Kristina Oliver .... April 25  
Richie Yee .... April 28  
Brett Lykins .... April 28  
Rhett Lykins .... April 28  
Billy Foulke .... April 28

## Birthday Invitation

Every month we have a Birthday Table and you are warmly invited to please come share your child's birthday with us when his/her birthday is that month. This is your chance to tell us a favorite story, or share a poem or thoughts that either you or your child wrote, or whatever remembrance you choose in memory of your child. Our child's or grandchild's or sibling's birthday will forever be a very special day and we at TCF know how important that day is and how helpful and healing it can be to share with others.



Please plan on attending the meeting of your child's birthday and filling our Birthday Table with pictures and/or mementos. You are also more than welcome to bring his/her favorite snacks.

### May

Amy Hannigan .... May 2  
Jonathan Ayers .... May 4  
Michael Rivero .... May 6  
David Braund .... May 8  
Natalie Sparks .... May 11  
Kyle Harrison... May 12  
Thomas Michael Pattillo .... May 14  
Karissa Palmer.... May 19  
Chad Gordon .... May 21  
Joshua Waggoner .... May 25  
Richie Petzel .... May 27

### I Celebrate You

Barry, my beloved son, I celebrate you  
I celebrate your birth, a joyous occasion,  
And your childhood, full of favorite memories,  
I celebrate your teen years,  
as you showed such promise of great things to come,  
I grieve your loss always,  
But rejoice in the 17 years you were with me,  
And hold these cherished memories,  
Forever in my heart.

By Jean Fisk, TCF Contra Costa County, CA  
In Memory of her son Barry, born August 6

### *March, April & May Anniversaries*

So that their lives may always shine, our children are remembered. As long as we live, they too shall live for they are part of us in our memories

Max Fiandt	March 3
Wendy McMain	March 4
Marcus Hamrick	March 4
Alan Parish	March 11
Thomas Michael Pattillo	March 11
Julie Duncan	March 13
Donelle Blackwell	March 14
Elizabeth "Beth" Rihm	March 14
Brian Ernst	March 16
Dallas Williams	March 18
Robert West	March 21
Shawn Lippman	March 23
Richard Kendell "Ken" McCurdy	March 25
Joshua Waggoner	March 26
Charles Whittington	March 27
Andrea Nicole King	March 28

Morgan Alexis Burgess	April 2
Tyler Ivey Rice	April 2
Jessica Bryl	April 3
Gerard Robertson	April 6
Marcus Reid	April 8
Tiffany Maxwell	April 11
Brian Hatchett	April 20
Eric Montag	April 22
Christopher Jordan "CJ" Godhard	April 24
Joshua Stulick	April 27
Cameron McClure	April 30

Stephanie Fortner	May 2
Rhett Lykins	May 4
Wynne Wilson	May 5
Grant Nelson	May 5
Amanda Christine Warnock	May 6
Hayden Navarrete	May 9
Joseph Beatty	May 11
Adam Sawyer	May 15
Ian Sharpe	May 15
Justin Jordan	May 16
Justin Cates	May 17
Tom Waters	May 19
Daniel Gilbride	May 20
Dawann Wright	May 20
Blake "BJ" Jolly	May 23
Quavonte "Tae" Combs	May 28
Lance Robert Malone	May 29
Amity Kozak	May 30

### **Full Circle**

Find a little time for spring,  
Even if your days are troubled.  
Let a little sunshine in –  
Let your memories be doubled.

Take a little time to see  
All the things your child was seeing –  
And your tears will help your heart  
Find a better time for being.

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

### **Spring Thaws the Wounded Heart**

That first spring came too soon  
Why did daffodils  
show sunny faces around the gravestone?  
Why did warm breezes blow clouds away?  
My world, cold gray and dismal  
Had no room for this season.

Now years later,  
The blossoms of love, hope and healing,  
Have broken though grounds of utter despair,  
Warmed by memories of you,  
I join the daffodils,  
Bringing my own smile.

By Alice J. Wisler  
In memory of Daniel



## Grief Support For Siblings

When a child has died, siblings are often referred to as “the forgotten mourners.” While parents usually receive much support, siblings usually receive little—often being asked “How are your parents doing?” The Compassionate Friends is an organization that is not just for bereaved parents. It’s also for bereaved siblings (and grandparents). Some chapters have sibling subgroups while many welcome adult siblings to their meetings. Contact your local chapter to find out their policies on siblings and their meetings. On The Compassionate Friends national website, you will find support in a number of different ways.

[Online Support Community](#) (live chats) allows you to talk with other bereaved siblings from across the country during the Online Support Community sessions held every week. These sessions are limited in number of participants and have trained monitors who are also siblings. Check out [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and go to Resources/Siblings.

### LIGHT RAYS ~ SURVIVING LIFE AFTER THE LOSS OF A SIBLING

I “lost” my brother nearly three years ago. He was part of my core, my bedrock since the day I was born until I was 34. It’s hard to put to words or to quantify the value of sibling relationships. Because they are generally a peer within ten years or so of your own age, one never expects to lose a sibling at a young age or before you lose your elders such as parents or grandparents. A sibling grows and develops with essentially the same world view as you, therefore the relationship is unique and special. Siblings are built with unbreakable bonds of shared parents and childhood experiences. The household culture including family philosophy, humor, secrets and other traditions such as religion and food are sacred to one’s definition of self. “Blood is thicker than water” as are the genetic sequences inherited from parents which all siblings equally share.

There are countless ways in which a sibling loss is devastating for the surviving sibling(s). For me, the hardest part of my initial stages of grief were seemingly selfish. I kept wondering, “how am I supposed to go on without Ray?”. I felt a pendulum swing of emotions from sadness for my mother an intense longing to hear his voice (I still wish for this each and every day, as a matter of fact), anger with God for taking him all too early, doubt that God even existed and on rare occasions, relief that perhaps he is in a better place after all. I felt tremendous guilt for living far away and for not being able to reach him by phone the day before he died (due to poor cellular reception from where I was). One of the harshest burdens I endured was about re-defining myself and learning how to walk again without Ray.

My brother was always a part of the psyche of me. He had been since the day I was born, the day our dad died and he was supposed to be with along with me in this journey of life for 80 years or so. At some points in our

life we were much closer than others, but our love, trust and respect for one another was never questioned. Sibling relationships do require maintenance work, as do all relationships, but they are rarely ever at risk of disintegration.

A part of me died when Ray passed onward. I woke up in terror many nights reaching out to hug him and to hear his voice. I was also terrified of time passing and growing older. How was I to continue my life’s journey without Ray? Even more terrifying, who will I be or how will I define myself when my Mom inevitably passes? Absent other siblings, absent a sister-in-law and absent nephews and nieces, I felt devastatingly alone. I frantically reached out to other family and my husband’s family in search for a new “tribe”.

This can sound selfish when everyone around is saying, “what about the surviving parent?”. Yes, my Mom’s loss is devastating and tragic beyond words and that subject is a whole other book that I could write. But, a parent loss should not be measured as greater than a sibling loss and should not diminish the surviving sibling(s) feelings. Often times surviving siblings stay quiet as they don’t want to be seen as selfish during the initial stages of grief. I write this with the intention of helping others heal, as it’s my responsibility now that I am finally on the mend to healing. I will never stop loving or missing Ray, but I will find a way to see my blessings and to go on living life filled with my mom, husband, children, family, and friends’ love; it’s what Ray would have wanted.

If you are a surviving sibling, please share your feelings with someone. If you know a someone who recently lost a sibling, don’t just ask about the deceased person’s surviving parents, wife and/or children, ask the sibling how they are doing.

~ Leigh Ann Ahmad, Ray’s sister  
TCF/St. Paul Chapter

### Sibling Bonds

You are my brother and always will be  
Not even death can take that away from me  
The love we share is everlasting  
A bond that can never be broken.

I hate saying I miss you,  
But it’s true every day,  
The fights, the chats, the small things,  
Mean even more now that they’re gone.

I hold onto my memories,  
Never do I want to forget your life,  
You are my brother and always will be,  
Not even death can take that away from me

By Tabitha Jayne, from Open to Hope, finding hope after loss, [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)



## **Tears are Hot**

I never really noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. Sure I have cried many times before you died; but you leaving made time stand still and life feel so surreal.

Shock, numbness, nausea, and pain so severe I was certain I would die. Can't they see it? Surly they can. No one acts as if they can see it. My heart hurts so badly, my soul aches; my breasts hurt yearning for my children, how can that be? Why can't they see it? Why can't they help?

Who am I now that my children have gone? Where am I now that your voices are nowhere to be heard? There are no phone calls with crisis to fix. No more reasons to give you money today. No problems that only Mom knows the answers to.

It's been a year now since you went home, and I find myself feeling so alone. Who will care for me when I am old? What of my future? Where have my dreams gone, your college graduations, your careers, your weddings, the holidays at your homes?

Since you left I struggle with so many questions. Am I still a Mom? I have no children now, so how could I possibly be a Mom? What if I had bought 4 new tires for the car instead of 2? What if I had not given you gas money to take the trip?

I never noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. As I cry for missing you both as I often do, the tears fall in slow motion- symbolic of how today it's still so unreal.

It seems like yesterday I received that dreaded call; I hate to have to tell you this, he said on the phone. At that moment I knew what I was about to hear would change my life forever. I knew what he was about to say I could not bear.

But for some reason I did not know you were dead; I thought mothers were to know those things, a feeling, a hunch. I had so much guilt that I didn't know my babies had died when I was in that meeting at 10:30 that day.

My first thought when I heard his voice was that you made him call because your daughter/niece "our baby girl" had died and you could not tell me yourself for your broken hearts and your personal shock. But then I heard those dreaded words that I will never forget the gist.

Amanda and Logan have been killed in an accident, or maybe he said, Amanda and Logan are dead, or possibly even, there has been an accident and Amanda and Logan didn't make it, I don't recall but the end result was all the same.

I never noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. As I cry today a year later, I cry more for me and our little girl not having you in our lives for I know you are home now and we will be together again one day.

I thank you for leaving your baby girl here with me; I thank God daily she was in the car behind you. We have each other and we will make it through and create a new life together as you meant us to.

Caring for her has helped me to heal that part of me that asked if I am still a Mom. My answer today is yes, I am a Mom of 3, 2 of my children live in heaven and I have one precious little girl who lives here with me.

The year has gone so fast; I can't believe I write this now a year later and in some ways I feel no different. The pain is still immense; my heart still hurts, my soul still aches, the physical pain still remains.

But the difference is today I have seen the other side; I have experienced joy where last year I knew I never would again, I have laughed and smiled and played as we used to do. I strive daily to go on in your memory, with your love as my inspiration as you would want me to.

Some days I even forget to notice the temperature of the tears as they fall down my face, for once more they are healing tears, tears of joy, tears of anger and tears of sadness, they are not only the tears of a Mother's broken heart.

In Loving Memory of  
Amanda Suzanne Mills 12/15/85-1/20/11  
and  
Logan Robert Mills 5/27/89-1/20/11  
One year after their transition home.  
Written by their Mother  
Deana L. Martin (TCF Gwinnett)



## While waiting for the sun to appear

I saw stars twinkle through my tear  
I felt the light mist of rain hit my face  
And then it was gone without a trace  
It was like you and how you left me  
How I hoped you were finally free  
I think of you more than anyone knows  
You are always in my thoughts  
no matter where I go  
I can't help but cry about what I miss  
That big smile or just a kiss  
I look back at what I had  
It makes me happy when I thought I was sad  
I had so much left to say and do with you  
To give you the hugs and love that was true  
Why someone we love has to be taken away  
When we always ask for just that one more day  
You think there still is time waiting for us to be  
Then I look around and there's just me  
There's so much more I have to say  
But I think I'll save it for another day  
So I hope you're happy and never sad  
Just remember I love you always,  
Goodnight from Dad

By Chuck Hatchett, TCF Gwinnett  
In Memory of his son Brian, 8/29/80 – 4/20/09

## March

### The Month of In-Between

In between winter and in between spring  
Your death has left me feeling in-between  
In between this world and in between the next

Since you died, nothing is the same,  
I no longer feel like I belong.  
Yet, I haven't wings for Heaven,  
And I have no heart for Earth,  
So, I'm somewhere with March,  
I'm somewhere in-between.

By Naomi Holzman  
TCF Volusia/Flagler Florida

March is a month of reflection and remembrance. Winter's days are numbered. Solitary flowers push upwards through snow-covered hills. My thoughts linger in the cold atmosphere; unsmiling eyes recognize signs of advancing spring months. I need the warmth of spring, but am reluctant to admit that need. I wander through depressing, barren fields moist with tears, unaware of the sun's touch on my back. Animals emerge, throwing off covers of twigs and branches that have protected them in these bitter cold days. Ground is broken under full moon's light to prepare soil for yet another planting. I realize that I must shed the heavy, lingering, depressing robes I wore in days past to experience the emergence of a newer, lighter, warmer time.

~ Anita Morehead, TCF/Mercer, NJ

Would you like to order  
a quilt made of your  
child's tee shirts?

Deana Martin, Amanda &  
Logan's mom, had a  
beautiful quilt made and  
is sharing the  
information with us.

Elizabeth Longbrake  
makes these wonderful high quality  
quilts. She can be contacted by  
telephone at 678-377-9404 or by e-mail  
at [elizlongbrake@aol.com](mailto:elizlongbrake@aol.com) The cost for  
the T shirt quilts are \$150-\$400  
depending on size and style desired.



## Small Sharing Groups

Monthly support group meetings are the heart of The Compassionate Friends. These gatherings provide a safe and caring environment in which bereaved parents and siblings can talk freely about the emotions and experiences they are enduring. Parents receive the understanding and support of others who have "been there." *Our small sharing groups would like to focus more on the issues and topics that bereaved parents face each day, from what to do on a birthday, how to handle tough questions, how to find the will to go on, what works and what doesn't work during the grieving journey & why or why not, to ideas on how to reinvest in living, how to rediscover joy & how to carry our child's memory and legacy through our daily lives.*

We are here to provide hope and encouragement, understanding & friendship as we all travel the grief journey. Together we can share our ideas and emotions, the questions and trials and tribulations that we have found ourselves in the very unwelcome world of bereaved parents. 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.

There are opportunities to give back and to help out with the "behind the scenes" efforts for our local chapter. We need new volunteers to successfully continue the efforts begun when the Gwinnett Chapter was created in 1994. Volunteer opportunities range from helping to set up a meeting, becoming a facilitator, and making phone calls. Most especially, we need a new co-leader to help out with the organization, details and paperwork involved with our chapter. This is a great way to give back in memory of your child after you have found hope, encouragement and strength from TCF to survive & thrive in spite of life's worst tragedy. Making the change from needing help & finding help to giving help & support to new parents is another healing milestone. **Please call or e-mail June Cooper, 770- 757-4927, [jc30044@flash.net](mailto:jc30044@flash.net), or Meg Avery, 770-932-5862, email [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com) if you have questions or if you'd like to volunteer.**

**THANK YOU!** Many parents give back to TCF through volunteer opportunities as a means of honoring their child. Without volunteers our group would not exist. We are grateful to these volunteers: **June Cooper**, Chapter Co-Leader, in memory of her daughter, **Wendy McMain** & in memory of her sister, **Noreen Keenan**; **Meg Avery**, Chapter Co-Leader & Newsletter Editor in memory of her son **James Avery**; **Barbara Dwyer**, Chapter Treasurer and group facilitator and **Leo Dwyer**, group facilitator and community outreach, in memory of their son **Matthew Dwyer**; **Terry Sparks**, provides newly bereaved packet info & as group facilitator, in memory of his daughter, **Natalie Sparks**; **Terri Dale**, creating & mailing Birthday & Anniversary Remembrance Cards in memory of her son, **Michael Dale**; **Diane Wolcott**, Memorial Garden Committee Chair in memory of her son, **Jeffrey**; **Gary Fox**, facilitator, in memory of his son, **G.W. Fox**; **Joy Crowe**, Steering Committee Member in memory of her son **Brenden Elbaz**; **Claudine Nickens**, Steering Committee Member in memory of her son **David Whitley**; and **Sandy Lavender**, organizing & setting up the library in memory of her daughter **Ashley Lauren Hull**.

## Remembrance Walk & Balloon Release

**When: Sunday, May 20, 2012**

**Where: Rhodes Jordan Park  
Pavilion 3**

**Time: 3:30 pm**



TCF Members, family & friends, please join us for our second Spring

Gathering for a **Remembrance Walk and Balloon Release**. Finally the renovations are complete at Rhodes Jordan Park and we can return to this park where our TCF Children's Memorial Garden is. Pavilion 3 (formerly the Stanley Gunter Pavilion) is in back of the garden close to the lake. This is the



same area where we held our fall picnics. We will meet at Pavilion 3 at 3:30 and start our Remembrance Walk at 4:00 pm. Balloon Release will be at 5:15 and hot dogs will be grilled afterwards. Please bring a dish to share. Please bring your own balloon

(s) and wear your child's photo on a button or tee shirt. Butterfly sunglasses, colorful spring attire, fun outdoor gear optional! Come prepared to celebrate our child's life and walk in his/her memory. The new walking trail at Rhodes Jordan is 1.1 miles. Daily we walk our grief journey & take one day at a time, one step at a time. Let's honor our child and walk for him or her and for each other to symbolize that .... *We Need Not Walk Alone.*

## MOTHER'S DAY

As Mother's Day approaches, I go back to my box of memories and seek out my mementos of days past. I go back to the times when there were two cards, some homemade of construction paper with crayoned verses proclaiming me the "greatest Mom of all." They were made at school with some S's reversed and with no semblance of order, but brought home and presented to me with great pride and accepted in the same vein. Later, more sophisticated cards, store bought, but the message was the same and the love was still there. I accepted them, loved being made to feel special, and tucked them away, never realizing how valuable they would become. Now there is one card. There seems to be a double portion of love in that card, and I recognize and appreciate that effort. I am thankful there is one card, and I value very much what I have left. My heart goes out to those of you who have no card this Mother's Day. But even with the pain, I'll bet if you were given the choice of no child/no pain, you would, like me, gather up as many memories as your child's life span permitted and hold them close to your heart, sorry there wasn't time for more, but never for one moment, willing to exchange for no pain the pleasure of his or her company for however long you had them. When all is said and done, the memories are the most important thing. Relish them, but gather about you all those you have left and who love you, and let them help you through this special day. Know that this day takes patience, but that you will survive and go on to better days. I hope your Mother's Day is a peaceful one.

Mary Cleckley, TCF  
Atlanta, Georgia

## IF ONLY OUR CHILDREN WERE EASTER EGGS

If only our children were Easter eggs,  
hidden safely in the grass,  
we could search for them and pick  
them up,  
and hold them within our clasp.  
We'd have a heavenly Easter egg hunt,  
all with baskets in our hands,  
searching with a broken heart,  
only WE can understand.  
"Oh, look I found your child over here",  
"Hey, did anyone find mine?"  
They are so beautifully colored,  
As they sparkle and they shine...  
These aren't your usual Easter eggs,  
They each have their own special glow  
That comes from way down deep within,  
Only a grieving parent would know.  
We gather up our special eggs,  
With excitement all around, for the gift that we've been  
given, for the treasure we have found.  
We all now stare with wonderment,  
At our children that have died.  
We want to hold them once again,  
And release them from inside.



But we all begin to realize,  
We have to crack their beautiful shell,  
the one that makes them sparkle and glow,  
The one they have earned so well.  
We know we can't destroy their beauty,  
And take them from their place, so we give them An  
understanding kiss, as a tear runs down our face.  
One by one we take our baskets,  
With our beautifully colored eggs, and place them  
gently in the grass, as we turn and walk away.  
We look back in amazement, as our eggs begin to sing.  
We see them flutter and move about.  
"Look, our eggs all now have wings."  
Then the Golden Egg begins to speak...  
"Your children are safe with me."  
"You'll be with them when the time is right,  
Together for all eternity."  
We stand there in a circle of love, as we look up to the  
sky, watching our radiant eggs take flight,  
Knowing our children didn't die.

By Christine Ross, TCF Frankfort, KY  
in memory of Lucas Christopher Ross, 1979 –  
2001



## Another "Mother's" Day

This poem is dedicated to all grieving moms

Another "Mother's" Day without  
your loving child is here,  
No matter how long since your child has died,  
the pain is always near.  
I watch the expression on her face,  
As she rises in the morning,  
something is out of place.  
She tries to smile as she hides her terrible pain,  
The tears in her eyes begin to fall like a gentle rain.  
Mother's Day was always a day of  
happiness and joyful bliss,  
After her child's death, she cries  
as she longs for their gentle kiss.  
No more hand made cards  
or gifts to make her smile,  
She treasures the past memories  
that will bring her peace for a little while.  
Watching all those other children and families  
lovingly embrace their mom,  
Leaves her feeling so jealous,  
angry and ready to explode like a bomb.  
She can't help feel like she is out of place,  
You can see the sadness her face.  
Her other children feel her deep pain too,  
It is so hard, they know not what to do.  
Their love for their mom will always be true,  
She knows how much she is loved,  
though, she is blue.  
Mother's Day should be a day  
of enjoying her happy children behave,  
Not a day of shedding tears  
at her beloved, dead child's grave.  
For all moms who has had a child die,  
We love you and understand why you cry.

We wish you much love, comfort  
and peace each and every day,  
We know that you love  
and miss your beautiful child on,  
Another "Mother's" Day.

Wishing you all continuous peace and healing,  
John-Danielle's Daddy

By: John Plourde 2008, from [www.webhealing.com](http://www.webhealing.com)

## GAINESVILLE SUPPORT GROUP

The Northeast Georgia Medical Center has a grief support group for parents. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month from 5:15 – 6:45 pm. The meeting is held at 2150 Limestone Parkway, Suite 222, Gainesville. Contact Jennifer Sorrells at 770-219-8528 or [jennifer.sorrells@nghs.com](mailto:jennifer.sorrells@nghs.com) for more information.

## SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP

Meets the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm at The Warehouse at Family Festival, 5095 Post Rd, Cumming, 30040. The Meeting Room is located past The Land of 1000 Hills Coffee Bar, down the hall, first door on the right. For info contact Sherry 404-660-0907, [sherryunwala@yahoo.com](mailto:sherryunwala@yahoo.com) or Karen, 770-355-1024, [Karen\\_copija@att.net](mailto:Karen_copija@att.net)

## Support Group in Gainesville Rock Goodbye Angel



We are a family of bereaved parents who have come together to provide an organization serving and assisting those who have experienced a loss due to miscarriage, stillbirth, perinatal loss or neonatal loss. We provide Hope, Compassion, Understanding and Love for families to honor our little angels who have been 'Rocked Goodbye' to our Heavenly Father.

There are many struggles associated with a premature loss. If you or someone you know needs support during this time, please contact us.

The group meets every Monday at 7 pm at Lanier Park Campus, 675 White Sulphur Road, Gainesville. For information, contact Angela at [angela@rockgoodbyeangel.com](mailto:angela@rockgoodbyeangel.com).  
[www.rockgoodbyeangel.org](http://www.rockgoodbyeangel.org)

## TCF Johns Creek Chapter

The TCF Johns Creek Chapter meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Johns Creek United Methodist Church, 11180 Medlock Bridge Road, Johns Creek at 7 pm. For information contact Margy Nelson by email, [support@tcfjohnscreek.org](mailto:support@tcfjohnscreek.org) or phone 770-598-5556, or call Gail Beard at 678-787-8967

## CAMP SOS For Survivors of Suicide

**Helping Families Rebuilding Lives One Camper at a Time** A loss by suicide forever changes lives, but having access to tools that support the journey can help.



Camp SOS for Families is designed for mothers, fathers, siblings, sons, grandparents, aunts – whoever means family to you. The camp is open to any family that has experienced a loss by suicide before January 2012.

Registration is now open for camp scheduled for March 30 - April 1, 2012, at Camp Twin Lakes in Winder, GA. Thanks to the generosity of donors of SPAN-GA, Camp SOS for Families is offered free of charge, aside from a small registration fee of \$40 per family.

At the camp, families can share their feelings of loss and grief with each other, with trained counselors, and other families in similar situations. All facilitators are trained in grief and bereavement issues. In addition, specially trained volunteers are present throughout the weekend to listen, talk and play with the campers.

Campers are given a safe environment where they can have fun together while expressing their grief. Activities include arts and crafts, fishing, boating, activities for the adults, family evening activities, and group sharing. Each family has its own cabin.

To attend, please download the registration form, (from the website: [www.span-ga.org](http://www.span-ga.org)) complete it and send it with a check for \$40 payable to SPAN Georgia to: SPAN-GA, PO Box 2096, Woodstock, GA 30188

Attendance is limited to 30 families. For information contact Camp Director, Sheri McGuinness at 770-354-7616 or [spangeorgia@aol.com](mailto:spangeorgia@aol.com)

## 35th TCF USA National Conference & 5th International Gathering

in Costa Mesa, California from **July 20-22, 2012.** This will be a very special conference and gathering attended by bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings from around the world. The conference will be held at the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa Hotel and TCF has a large block of rooms set aside. A final lineup of popular keynoters has now been announced. In addition, those wishing to attend and stay at the host hotel may now make reservations.



35<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE,  
5<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL GATHERING  
July 20-22, 2012 | Costa Mesa, California

Lois Duncan is the prolific and award winning author of 48 books. But, the most difficult one she ever had to write was *Who Killed My Daughter?*, the story behind her search for the truth in the death of her 18-year-old daughter Kaitlyn Arquette in what police called a random drive by shooting.

Kathy Eldon, journalist, author, producer, activist, and mother found her life changed forever when her 22-year-old son, Dan Eldon, A Reuters photographer, was stoned to death by an angry mob as he did his job in Somalia in July of 1993. Among her books are *Angel/Catcher: A Journal of Loss and Remembrance* and *The Journey is the Destination*.

Darcie Sims, always popular international keynote speaker, brings her wit and wisdom as a bereaved parent and certified grief management specialist to the podium in Costa Mesa. Co-founder of Grief, Inc., an international grief consulting firm, Darcie is a well known and respected author and speaker.

The Reverend Canon Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends worldwide and bereaved sibling, will travel from his home in Moscow to share his thoughts with the large International and U.S. crowd that is expected to gather.

"We welcome to this conference all who are grieving the death of a child, for grief is a universal language and one that TCF'ers around the world know all too well," says TCF/USA Executive Director Patricia Loder. More than 100 workshops will be held on most topics related to grief after the death of a child. Details can be found at: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on the link under News & Events for the National/International Conference.

## BREAKING DAWN – A WALK FOR HOPE

Saturday, April 14, 2012  
Windermere Park, 3355  
Windermere Parkway,  
Cumming, GA 30041  
5:00 AM - 8:00 AM

BREAKING DAWN: A WALK FOR HOPE



The purpose of this walk is to honor and remember those we love and lost to suicide!

We will do this by walking at the break of dawn and into the new day, with a renewed and hopeful spirit.

Registration is at 5:30 am and the walk will begin at 6:00 am. ...

Please bring a picture of your loved one. We will have a table to display the photos during the event.

All proceeds from this walk will benefit SPAN-GA, a local organization committed to the prevention of suicide and promoting aftercare for those left in the devastating wake of suicide. Please check out SPAN-GA at [www.SPAN-GA.org](http://www.SPAN-GA.org)

For more information, contact Karen Copija at 770-355-1024 or at [karen\\_copija@att.net](mailto:karen_copija@att.net)

### Gifts of Love

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

#### *In Loving Memory of:*

Kyle Copija, from his mom, Karen Copija

Ian Sharpe, from his mom, Becky Sharpe

Amanda Lynn Harned, from her dad, Mikey Harned

Robert Coltman, from his parents,

Barnet & Ellen Coltman

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

Cards were donated by Nancy Long in loving memory of her son, Joe Beatty

*Grief garden work's not easy, but from deep inside the soul will come strength and deep compassion with love and care it will take hold. And our children watch the growing; somewhere they are growing too. And the tears that flood the garden create rainbows and clear views. With our gardens we pay tribute to our children who have gone. Their memorials are our gardens; through our gardens they live on.*

By Genesee Bourdeau Gentry from her book "Stars in the Deepest Night – After the Death of a Child" in memory of her daughter Lori Ann Elizabeth Gentry,

TCF Gwinnett is extremely grateful to Diane Wolcott, Jeffrey's mom, who has volunteered to organize our TCF Gwinnett Children's Memorial Garden committee. Now that Rhodes Jordan Park is open again, we have access to our garden, which is in need of plenty of TLC, weeding, and renewing. Diane will bring her horticulture expertise to give our garden a fresh new start. Diane has already contacted Gwinnett County Parks & Recreation and also has a crew of TCF parents ready & willing to help.



If you make a monetary donation to TCF Gwinnett, (which is tax-deductible) you may specify whether you would like your contribution to go toward the memorial garden account, newsletter account or general account. Funds from the general account pay for remembrance cards, postage, labels, the annual picnic, expenses associated with monthly meetings and for information packets for newly bereaved parents. We do not receive funds from The Compassionate Friends National Office and we are always extremely appreciative for any contributions. Please be assured, however, that there are no financial dues to be a member of TCF.

*Please fill out the information below, clip and mail with your tax deductible donation to: **Gwinnett TCF, Barbara Dwyer, 4905 Pond Ridge Lane, Cumming, GA 30041.***  
(Please make checks payable to **TCF Gwinnett.**)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify if you would like your donation added to the Children's Memorial Account, Newsletter Account, or General Account.