



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

Linked Together

Newsletter of the Atlanta Chapter

Summer 2006

"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

TCF Atlanta Newsletter

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The Atlanta Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the second Tuesday of each month at the:

First Christian Church of Atlanta,
4532 LaVista Road, Tucker, GA
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

July 11 – July Meeting

August 8 – August Meeting

September 12 – September Meeting

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.

122 Names to be Carried on Atlanta Chapter's Walk to Remember Banner

The names of 122 children of Atlanta Chapter members have been placed on the banner to be carried by chapter members in the annual Walk to Remember at the National TCF Conference this month in Dearborn, Mich. The conference will be held July 14-16.

Dan and Betty Bryl and Trish Maham will be carrying the banner for our chapter. If other members of the chapter will be attending the conference and participating in the Walk to Remember, please contact Cindy Durham (cindy_durham@bellsouth.net) so we can connect you with

those chapter members who will be carrying our banner. We'd love for you to walk with them and help carry the banner on Sunday, July 16.

Trish Maham will give the chapter a report back from the conference at the August chapter meeting. Please be sure to join us at the August meeting – to be held Aug. 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church of Atlanta.

The names listed on the Atlanta Chapter's banner are:

Ricky Ainsworth	Russell Scott Ellers	William "Trey" Price
Amy Lynn Alsofrom	Christopher Faller	Steven "Mike" Price
Jon Michael Altier	Chad Gordon	Demarcus Ramey
Jennifer Altman	Shawn Marie Gordon	Xavier Khamani Ray
Julie Studzinski Anglavar	Aidan Catherine Grew	Angela Dawn Ricci
James Avery	Jennifer Megan Gryzinski	Ryan Douglas Romanoski
Joseph Scott Beatty	Alyssa Haag	William James Sansalone
Adam Robert Belcher	Billy Hawley	Evan Sheffield
Jennifer Lorraine Breaux	Micki Henderson	Elijah Jerome Sheppard
Matthew David Brooks	Jason Highet	Allen Palmer Shugart
Kara Leigh Broughton	Matthew Hinson	Christopher Simpson
Cain Brown	Tom Holmes	Tony Ray Smiley
Lori K. Brown	Shelly Denise Huddleston	James Daniel Smith
Jessica Bryl	Joshua Samuel Hughes	Tammy Renee Smith
Michael G. Btembke	Ashley Lauren Hull	Steven Kent Sorrow
David Burran	Kristopher Ryan Hundt	Brandon James Springer
Cory Bute	Carissa Ellen Hunsaker	Shruti Srinivasah
Joey Capron	Dustin Davenport Carter Inman	Ed Stempien
Wesley Carithers	Crystal Dawn Jackson	Amanda Nicole Sullivan
Kelly James Carmody	Hannah Grace Keeton	Brian Miller-Sutton
Richard Alan Cartin	Karla Leija	Matthew McMichael Taylor
Landon Dean Caseman	Joey Long	Amber Leigh Thompson
Sylvia Marie Nunez Cassidy	Jason Maham	Melanie Brooke Thompson
Michael Luke Chrissie	Robert Malkin	Evan Throckmorton
Jason Daniel Cirafisi	Chad Martin	Tia Shuri Townsend
Michael Anthony Coon	Mandi Lynn Mast	Michelle Stanton Turner
Johnny Roy Corbitt	Kathy J. Maynard	Amy Elizabeth Uhland
Javus Crane	Caleb Jackson McCrary	Jessica Jean Ussery
Robin Ann Craney	Tony McLemore	J.J. Wade
Jennifer Dailey	Daniel Nardin	Lynn Wade
Jessica Erin Davidson	Charlie Nash	Michele Wade
Allen "AJ" Devol	Anthony "Tone" Nelson	Sheila Faye Wade
Thomas Deziel	Paula Joanne Normore	Amanda Christine Warnock
Jessica Dodge	Ricky Otter	Jason Lee Webb
Nicholas E. Donley	Felipe A Pagan	Nina Westmoreland
Joseph "Joey" Edward Doyle	Gracie Parrish	Chip Whitley
Preston Jack Drummond	Brian Joseph Parker	Allison Louise Williams
James Anthony Durham	Timothy Patrick Parker	Jason Wilshe
Geoffrey P. Edwards	Jefferey A. Patterson	Lauren Woodbury
Kathy Edwards	Jason Kent Pettus	Sharon E. Zick
Toby Edwards	Derrick Plankenhorn	

Author to Attend July TCF Meeting

I Walked a Mile with Sorrow

By Mary S. Cleckley

Published by The Centering Corporation

By Elizabeth B. Estes
Augusta Chapter, BPUSA

Readers of The Bereaved Parents of the USA and The Compassionate Friends newsletters are no doubt familiar with the author's name since she is one of the most reprinted writers in the grief field. Her common-sense, sensitive approach to coping with the death of her son has helped countless bereaved parents deal with their grief.

I Walked a Mile with Sorrow is a compilation of Mary's best articles about the grief journey all bereaved parents will take. She delves into the many facets of early grief and the still painful stages that follow. Many of her writings are based not only on her coping techniques, but also on the experiences of other parents with whom she has talked and counseled in her 15 years of serving as former newsletter editor for the TCF Atlanta Chapter and nine as president. She also has presented numerous workshops for both TCF and BPUSA.

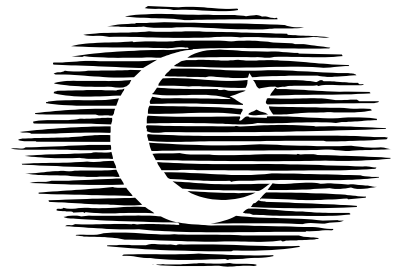
Although many books are available on surviving the death of a child, this book is unique in that the articles in it were often written in response to specific concerns expressed by bereaved parents. The book offers encouragement that will assist the bereaved in finding what will become their new "normal" in a life turned topsy-turvy by grief and may help in the transition to acceptance and renewal.

If, as a bereaved parent, you think you're losing your mind, wondering how to cope with your changed life, puzzling about your relationships with your family and friends, confused by the up-and-down paths of grief, and dreading every holiday and the anniversaries of your child's birth and death, you will find hope and consolation in this book. You will also learn how others have managed to survive what has to be the most shattering event a person can experience. Sometimes what you learn will be couched in an almost-humorous, upbeat way, but the wry tone does not diminish the message of hope and healing.

I Walked a Mile with Sorrow is available from The Centering Corporation, 7230 Maple Street, Omaha, NE 68134 or from the author at 133 Summit Ridge Drive,

Lawrenceville, GA 30245. The cost is \$11.95, plus \$3 postage and handling.

Copies of "I Walked a Mile with Sorrow" also will be available at the July meeting of the Atlanta Chapter of TCF. Mary Cleckley will talk briefly during the opening session of the July meeting about her book and signed copies will be available for anyone who would like to purchase one.



What would you be doing tonight, my son?

What would you be doing tonight my son
If your life wasn't cut short, and you were still here to have fun
Would you be out on a date, or watching a movie
Or outside playing Frisbee with your sweet dog Buddy

What would you be doing in the morning my son
When the alarm clock goes off and the work day has begun
Whose computer would you fix whose disaster would you resolve
Would your day go smooth and would you still love your job.

What would you be doing for lunch my son
Eating with your friends or grabbing something on the run
Would it be Mexican, Chinese, or some nice little place
Oh what I'd give once more just to see your face.

Who would have thought I would be writing you poems
Or sitting on your bed crying and in mourning
You were young and a great man my son
You will be missed until my day too is done.

Lydia F. Burns
Atlanta Chapter, TCF
February 22, 2006

July, August and September Birthdays

Child's_Name	Birthday	Angel Date	Relationship	Family
Matt Halloran	7/2/1980	3/11/1997	son of	Marti Goldring
Amber Gilstrap	7/3/1979	11/7/2003	daughter of	Kathleen Cornog
Tommy Boyert	7/5/1976	8/18/1994	son of	Tom and Mary Boyert
Christopher Kuzela	7/7/1967	4/24/1988	son of	Ed and Pat Kuzela
Jason Curtis	7/8/1976	3/6/1999	son of	Sharon Curtis
Jim Randall	7/10/1967	8/18/2004	brother of	Kate Randall
Sean Krider	7/12/1974	10/12/2004	son of	Linda L. Samuel
Derric Burgess	7/21/1984	10/25/1999	son of	Angel and Robert Burgess
Paul Perry	7/25/1961	7/13/2005	son of	Mary L. Perry
Nicholas Ryan Gardner	7/25/2002	1/8/2005	grandson of	Pilar Turk
Matthew Thomas Crowell	7/27/1982	5/24/1999	son of	Barry and Doris Crowell
Wytocha Foster	7/28/1981	2/19/1999	daughter of	Bonita Foster
John Sistrunk	8/10/1981	4/16/2002	son of	Sarah Smith Sistrunk
Paul Abraham	8/13/1975	6/5/2004	son of	Alan and Deborah Abraham
Duane Clinton Byrd	8/19/1986	1/2/2002	son of	Linda Byrd
Margie Ann Lind	8/21/1963	6/10/1979	daughter of	Bette and Bob Lind
Christopher Lee Simpson	8/22/1978	5/9/1995	grandson of	Elizabeth Luke
Chris Simpson	8/22/1978	5/9/1995	son of	Tricia and Kenny Simpson
Jennifer Smith	8/24/1981	4/14/1998	daughter of	Linda Smith
Rachel Diane Trotti	8/27/1991	3/15/1994	daughter of	Joy-Lyn and James Trotti
Thomas 'Tommy' McDonald	8/31/1971	9/22/1998	son of	Jerri McDonald
Donald R. Hudson, Jr.	9/5/1974	10/12/2005	son of	Carol Hudson
Xavier Khamani Ray	9/7/1995	4/24/2004	son of	Stephanie Ray
Michael Hill	9/10/1972	11/10/1996	son of	Linda Hill
David W. Burns	9/11/1972	7/2/2004	son of	Lydia Burns
Dominic Alan Nwoye	9/13/1996	6/25/2002	son of	Juanita Bell
Christopher Robinson	9/15/1984	12/4/2002	son of	Freddie Green
Mark East	9/22/1971	1/25/2004	son of	Jeff East
Jessica Dodge	9/25/1987	1/14/2004	daughter of	Dan and Tamie Dodge
Sherry Engel	9/25/1967	1/12/2004	sister of	Andrea Huskey
Sherry Engle	9/25/1967	1/12/2004	daughter of	Lou Ellen Huskey
Jimmy Ryce	9/26/1986	9/11/1995	brother of	Martha Ryce

Strength

In the early days of my grief,
a tear would well up in my eyes,
a lump would form in my throat,
but you would not know – I would hide it,
for the strong do not cry –
And I am strong.
In the middle days of my grief,
I would look ahead and see that wall
that I had attempted to go around,
as an ever-present reminder of a wall yet unscaled.
Yet I did not attempt to scale it
for the strong will survive –
And I am strong.
In the later days of my grief,

I learned to climb over that wall –
step by step –
remembering, crying, grieving.
And the tears flowed steadily
as I painstakingly went over.
The way was long, but I did make it,
For I am strong.
Near the resolution of my grief,
a tear will well up in my eyes,
a lump will form in my throat,
but I will let that tear fall –
and you will see it.

Terry Jago (Lovingly lifted from the June newsletter of the Camden County, N.J., chapter of TCF)

July, August and September Angel Dates

Child's_Name	Angel Date	Birthday	Relationship	Family
David W. Burns	7/2/2004	9/11/1972	son of	Lydia Burns
George E. Williams III	7/2/2002	11/11/1971	son of	Deborah Denise Williams
Paul Perry	7/13/2005	7/25/1961	son of	Mary L. Perry
Padraic Dirr	7/15/1969	4/20/1969	son of	Jim Dirr
Autumn DuBose	7/19/1990	11/5/1972	daughter of	John and Faye DuBose
James Anthony Durham	7/22/2004	12/3/1986	son of	Cynthia W. Durham
Allen Palmer Shugart	7/23/2005	3/4/2002	son of	Kelli and Henry Shugart
Shemariah Tafari Downer	7/25/2001	3/26/1980	son of	Barbara H. Forbes
Dr. Thomas Brown IV	7/27/1999	4/8/1961	son of	Lillie Brown
Michael Btembke	8/3/2003	4/1/1985	son of	Ghakarhi Btembke
Kimberly Florence	8/3/2003	5/23/1976	daughter of	Kate Florence
J'Muar Taylor	8/4/2003	12/30/1982	son of	Cheryl A. Taylor
Darren Avery	8/7/2000	3/6/1967	stepson of	Lillie Austin
Donald Wesley Carithers	8/8/1998	6/10/1978	son of	Susan and John Carithers
Reezin N. 'Chip' Swilley, Jr.	8/9/1985	3/18/1969	son of	Reezin and Elsie Swilley
Ronnie Kieth Batchelor	8/14/1994	10/30/1977	son of	Ron and Judy Batchelor
Mandi Lynn Mast	8/15/2000	6/29/1980	daughter of	Diane and Daniel Mast
Amanda Kay Rose	8/15/2004	12/17/1981	daughter of	Barbara and Jim Sinke Rose
Jason Maham	8/17/2004	4/28/1975	son of	Trish Maham
Tommy Boyert	8/18/1994	7/5/1976	son of	Tom and Mary Boyert
Jim Randall	8/18/2004	7/10/1967	brother of	Kate Randall
Clarissa Cuningham	8/20/2002	12/8/1976	daughter of	Winston and Judy Cunningham
Brian Patrick Devine	8/21/2005	6/26/1982	brother of	Colleen Devine
Brian Patrick Devine	8/21/2005	6/26/1982	son of	Eileen and Patrick Devine
Annie Hope Shlevin	8/21/2004	3/15/1980	daughter of	Barbara Shlevin
J.C. 'Chip' Woodward III	8/22/2005	1/29/1953	son of	J.C. 'Woody' and Marion Woodward
Daniel Smith	8/26/1991	11/6/1981	son of	Judith Smith
Chad Gordon	9/3/1996	5/21/1972	son of	Jayne and Wayne Newton
Ashley Butler	9/10/2001	2/9/1990	daughter of	Mishell Butler
Spencer McCrea Oedel	9/11/2005	6/10/1986	son of	Amy Lighthill
Jimmy Ryce	9/11/1995	9/26/1986	brother of	Martha Ryce
Carter Martin	9/12/2004	11/20/1996	son of	Scott and Leigh Ann Martin
Mark Cozine	9/14/2002	11/6/1961	son of	Anne Franzen
Thomas 'Tommy' McDonald	9/22/1998	8/31/1971	son of	Jerri McDonald
Sharon Elizabeth Zick	9/25/2005	1/12/1987	daughter of	Paul and Rebecca Zick
Michelle Reeves	9/26/2004	10/28/1983	daughter of	Jim and BJ Reeves
Bill Hawley	9/27/2004	3/15/1983	son of	Bill and Carol Hawley
Matthew Meehan	9/30/2003	2/26/1983	son of	Michael Meehan
Matthew Meehan	9/30/2003	2/26/1983	son of	Vicki Webb

Dear Friends,

June 29 would have been my only daughter, Mandi Lynn's 26th birthday! August 15 she will be gone 6 years! On one hand seems like time has flown by but on the other hand, it seems as if she has been gone forever! There isn't a day goes by she isn't on my mind. I do go to her grave once a week to visit her and tell her what has been going on. I'm sure she probably knows. I can't wait till I can see her again! My son was only 15 when she passed away; he is now 21. Mandi, I hope you have a wonderful birthday in heaven. You are missed so much on earth!

Love Mom, Dad, and brother Eric (Diane, Daniel and Eric Mast)

A Message to Bereaved Grandparents

We Must Allow our Children to Grieve in Their Own Way

By Margaret H. Gerner
TCF, St. Louis, Mo.

I sat with a young bereaved mother who was pouring out her pain and utter desolation to me. She was angry and hurt that those around her couldn't understand what was wrong with her. After all, it had been eight months since her two-year-old son had died.

She should be better by now. To her, they implied she was wallowing in her grief and not trying to "get over it." Between sobs she said, "Even my mother and father now seem to avoid me. They don't even mention his name, and they change the subject when I talk about Tommy. That hurts so much."

As I listened, I remembered how much I had wanted my parents' help when my son died, but they lived 600 miles from me. I also thought, "How would I be able to help my own grieving daughter today if I hadn't experienced my own child's death almost 13 years ago, and didn't KNOW what she was going through?" I could see how desperately this young mother needed her parents. I could also see how frustrated and helpless they must feel, how painful it must be for them. If only they knew how important they could be in helping their daughter, how they, of all people, were needed by her, and how they had the opportunity to add a lasting element to their relationship with their child.

I wanted to tell them how very much she simply needed them to listen to her talk about her child and her pain. I wanted them to listen to her pour out her agony, without one word from them of how she should or should not feel.

The subject of death and grief is uncomfortable for all of us. We will accept anyone's discussion of happy things, but we shy away from talk of grief and death.

One of the reasons for this is that, in some way, it makes us aware of our own death and mortality. For those of us who are older, it is even more true. We need to recognize how this unconscious fear might be one of the reasons we avoid discussing our own grandchild's death.

Grandparents who have not lost a child cannot know the depth of the grief their child is experiencing. We may have lost parents or spouses, but the intensity of parental grief is so much greater. We talk of how we felt when our parents or spouses died and say we know how it feels. We do NOT know how it feels if we ourselves have not lost a child. We are most helpful if we admit this to our child.

To be a helpful parent to a grieving parent, we should learn about what our child is experiencing. We can learn of that by reading the books on grief, especially *The Bereaved Parent* by Harriet Schiff. When the children were growing up we read *Baby and Child Care* by Benjamin Spock or Haim Ginott's *Between Parent and Child*. Why not now read Harriet Schiff's book or Earl Grollman's *Living When A Loved One Has Died?* We need to know what the symptoms of parental grief are so that we, ourselves, are reassured that our child is not emotionally disturbed.

We need to know there is no timetable for grief. We should be careful of our expectations of how our child "should be doing" at this time. In the early months of grief, our bereaved children may appear to be doing well. Then, at four to six months they seem to "fall apart." It is reassuring to know that this is normal. In the early months our children do fairly well because they have not yet accepted the full reality of their child's death. It isn't until one faces that reality that real grief begins. This is the most painful and the longest part of the grief process. This is the time we are expecting them to "get better," and when they get worse we can't understand it, and we fear for their sanity. At this time others turn away from them because they can't understand. This is the time our children need us the most. How desolate they must feel if the two people they could always rely on now turn away from them.

Grandfathers are needed at this time more than ever. Fathers have always been the ones who could solve every problem for their children. They are the strength in the family, and the bereaved child needs to tap that strength now. Fathers used to provide the biggest, warmest lap for comforting. Now their arms can provide the safe harbor that most grieving children crave at times.

Grieving is not done on a consistently upward path. We may talk to our children on a good day and rejoice that they were finally improving, only to find they have taken several steps backward when we next see them. We need to realize that the normal process of grief is a constant ebb and flow of terrible and not so terrible days. Even though our bereaved children seem to revert to more painful grief at times, they are not going back to where they started. They do, however, need extra support and understanding on the bad days.

We must allow our children to grieve in their own way, according to their own personality. Some of our children are more verbal in expressing their emotions. Others may keep it all inside of themselves until something causes it to come out in a torrent. We accepted their personality

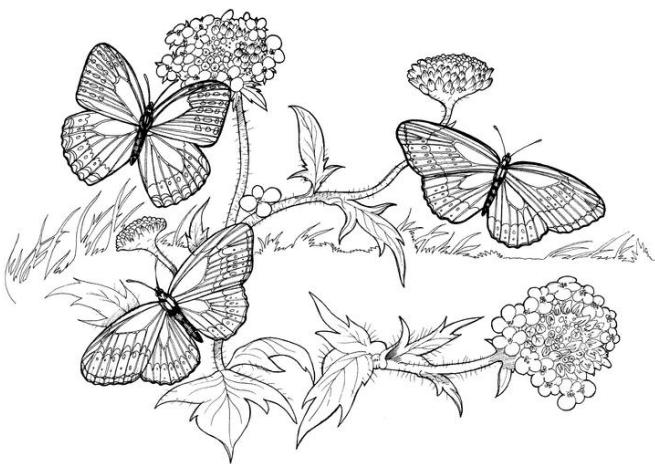
differences from the time they were little children. We must accept them now.

Some of us, for whatever reason, are not able to be of help to our children. Maybe we simply cannot face our children in their misery. It may be more pain than we, ourselves, can take. Some of us cannot accept the fact that to grieve openly and with others is the “right” way to do it. For some of us, our own personalities will not allow us to express our emotions or tolerate such expression in others. As hard as it may be to admit, we can at least be helpful to our children by being open and honest and telling them that we cannot help. As cruel as this may seem, letting them know of our inability to help saves them from the repeated disappointment of our backing away from them when they come to us.

Our grieving children need us. When our children hurt, we hurt. It has been said that a grief shared is a grief halved. No! We cannot take half of our child’s suffering, as much as we would like to do so. But I can say from personal needs that were not met when my own child died, it can sure make it a lot easier. Over the years of rearing our children, we suffered many times for them or because of them. Now we are being asked to do it again. It was not easy then, and it will not be easy now. But because we love our children, we can do it.

Margaret Gerner is a bereaved parent whose son Arthur died at the age of 6. She became a bereaved grandparent when her 3-year-old granddaughter Emily died in 1982.

Reprinted from the Denver Front Range Chapter’s July 2006 Newsletter



Atlanta Chapter’s Candlelight Service to be Held Saturday, Dec. 2

Mark your calendars for Saturday, Dec. 2 – the date for this year’s annual Candlelight Service, held by the Atlanta Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. The service will be held at the First Christian Church of Atlanta (same location as in previous years) at 7 p.m. A reception will follow the service.

We will put together a planning meeting soon to start making plans for this year’s service. If you can help, we would appreciate it!

We need someone creative to help us with centerpieces for the reception. We need help planning food for the reception, set-up and clean up for the reception, music for the service and the program itself. If you know someone who you’d like to suggest as a speaker (we will have two speakers – a parent and a sibling), please send us your suggestions. Or, feel free to nominate yourself.

To volunteer, e-mail cindy_durham@bellsouth.net and tell us what you’d be most interested in helping with. We’ll follow-up with you as soon as a date is set for the planning meeting.



®Sibling Credo

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us. When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life.

Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

Mom Shares Daughter's Poetry in Memoir Written About Her Life

Claudia Vellozzi's daughter, Monica, was killed in November 2002 at the age of 12 while horseback riding.

"We discovered, after she died, that she wrote poetry since she was 10 and kept it in a journal," Claudia said. "We have had some of her poetry published in a memoir I wrote about her – most of the book is her poetry and I just wrote a story around the poetry."

The book, called *Tomorrow Raising an Angel* contains poetry about life, love and loss, as seen through the eyes of a 10-year-old. The story of her short life, as foreseen in her poetry, was written by her mother.

The book can be found at www.littletreasurebooks.com. All proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit Tsunami survivors in Indonesia. Proceeds will be donated to the Monica Anne Averhoff Fund for the Education of Orphans and Homeless Children in Indonesia through the Friends of Jakarta International School Foundation.

One of Monica's poems from the book is reprinted below, with permission of her mother.

The Flight of the Sparrow

In the vast field,
I spot a sparrow.
It is floating overhead,
with its wings slowly moving up and down like a leaf
swaying in the breeze.

It is unusually quiet almost as if all the life has
gone,
but if you lay down and stretch out on the
carpeted desert,
you can hear the frogs croaking and the insects
buzzing.
The mice pattering and the snakes slithering.

I have drifted away from reality,
I can see myself standing in a glittering palace
filled with animals
each making their own and unique sound.

Every direction I turned,
there is a habitat for different animals.
Desert, ocean, meadow, swamp, river, creek,
mountain,
rain-forest, forest, ice, trees.

I am awakened by the sound of a sparrow.
It seems as though calling to someone,
but it is only known to the spirits of the meadow.

I was surprised to see a cloud of sparrows
soaring through the sky.
Their wings flapping wildly at their sides.

I stared up in bewilderment at the angels of the
meadow, all dancing through the sky.

I wanted to call out to one of them,
ask them to take me with them on their
extraordinary adventure.
Over many meadows, oceans, deserts.
How at that moment I wish I could fly!

Then, one came swooping low,
too low,
It seemed to be motioning to me to come and ride
on its back.

I stood motionless,
not knowing what to do.
It didn't seem to want to waste any time.
It glided through the air closer, closer...

And before I knew it,
I was gliding up above the clouds,
on the back of a sparrow.
All around me was blue,
a cool breeze rippled through my hair.
I was free!
I had a new freedom.

When I had gotten over my sensation,
we were in a glittering palace filled with animals,
each making their own and unique sound...

The After Loss Credo

Special thanks to Hallbrook Polite Jr., a member of the Atlanta Chapter of TCF, for sharing the following with our chapter.

“The After Loss Credo” is condensed from *AfterLoss, A Recovering Companion for Those Who Are Grieving* by Barbara LesStrong.

The After Loss Credo

I need to talk about my loss.

I may often feel the need to tell you what happened – or to ask you why it happened.

I may frequently need for you to listen while I explain what this loss means to me. Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself face the reality of the death of my loved one.

I need to know that you care about me. I need to feel your touch, your hugs. I need you just to be with me. And I need to be with you.

I need for you to believe in me and in my ability to get through this grief in my own way – and in my own time.

Please don't judge me now.
Or think that I'm behaving strangely.
Remember I'm grieving. I may be in shock.
I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage.
I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt.
I am experiencing a pain unlike
any I've ever felt before.

Don't be concerned if you think I'm getting better and then suddenly I seem to slip backward again. Grief makes me behave this way at times.

And please don't tell me you know just how I feel or that it's time for me to get on with my life. I am probably already saying this to myself. I just need for you to be patient now and to try to understand.

Finally, allow me the time I need to grieve and to recover. I want to get on with my life – but I know that first I must walk through the dark shadows of my grief. And, although it is almost impossible for me to believe this now, I know that one day my grief will end.

Most of all, thank you for being my friend.
Thank you for caring, for helping, for understanding.
Thank you for praying for me. And remember,
In the days or years ahead – after your loss – when you

need me as I have needed you, I will understand,
and then I will come and be with you.

July Chapter Meeting

We reach out to you with the understanding and love only another bereaved parent can offer. Attending meetings and learning from others what has helped them is one way to ease the pain of losing a child. We welcome you to join us at the Atlanta Chapter of TCF.

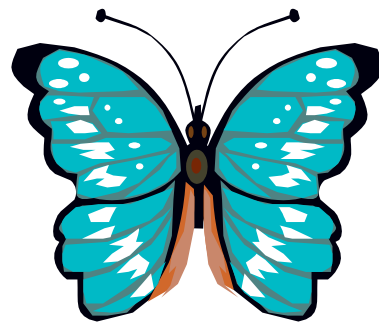
Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 11, at the First Christian Church of Atlanta, 4532 LaVista Road, Tucker, Ga. The meeting time is 7:30-9:30 p.m. Our sibling group (ages 12 and up) meets at the same time and place.

Lending Library and Book Reviews

We have a large lending library at our meetings. We also welcome book donations. If you have grief books you would like to donate, we will include inside the front cover of the book a “Donated in Memory of _____” And include your name and your child or sibling's name.

We also welcome “book reviews”. If you have read a book which you felt was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles, poems, pictures and remembrances to Cindy Durham for submission in our monthly newsletter. Email cindy_durham@bellsouth.net or mail to The Compassionate Friends, 1364 Sanden Ferry Drive, Decatur, GA 30033.

Also, a friendly reminder, if you have books at home you have checked out and are finished reading them, please remember to return them to our library.



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, our birthday table coordinator, at 770-982-2251 or

Dodgecat2001@yahoo.com

Birthday and Angel Date Cards

Cards are created by
Carol Hawley
In Memory of her son, Billy Hawley
3/15/83 – 9/27/04
Norcross, GA

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 Brett Naumann and all the children, from Larry Connelly, Decatur, GA
In Loving Memory of Brett Naumann, from his parents Walter and Mary Elizabeth Naumann, Suwanee, GA
In Loving Memory of Brett Naumann, from Linda and Page Fried, Timonium, MD
In Loving Memory of Brett Naumann, from James and Julia Hall, Duluth, GA

In Loving Memory of Jennifer Dailey, from her parents Bob and Joanne Dailey, Lilburn, GA
In Loving Memory of James Daniel Smith, from his mother Judith Smith, Tucker, GA
In Loving Memory of David Parker, from Michael and Luella Ledford, Jasper, GA

In Loving Memory of Chris Kuzela, from his father Ed Kuzela, Clarkston, GA
In Loving Memory of Stephanie Weber, from her father, John Weber, Roswell, GA
In Loving Memory of Bo Tuggle, from his parents Johnny and Connie Tuggle, Snellville, GA

In Loving Memory of James Daniel Smith on his Angel Anniversary, from his mother Judith Smith and brother Adam Smith, Tucker, GA
In Loving Memory of Charles Pilgreen, from his mother Brenda Shiplet, Birmingham, AL
In Loving Memory of Elijah Samuel Marcus, from his parents Eric and LaPrecious Marcus, Atlanta, GA

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) _____ Email: _____

Do you prefer to receive the newsletter by (check one): Mail Email (provide email 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) _____ library (6) _____ 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.
Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children 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 and creeds. 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 we feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength; some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; 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 our children.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,
but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and
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



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

Honoring 26 Years of Support and Friendship for
Bereaved Families

Summer 2006 Newsletter