



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA
GWINNETT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER**

Meg Avery, Editor Summer 2014
June, July and August

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.

“When a child dies at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or daughter, brother or sister, or grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.”

CHAPTER MEETING AND CONTACT INFO:

Gwinnett Chapter- 7:30 PM on the 3rd Thursday of every month. **next meetings: June 19, July 17 and August 21.**

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

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

For TCF Gwinnett: contact June Cooper by phone 770-757-4927, or email jc30044@flash.net or tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com

TCF Atlanta website: www.tcfatlanta.org

GA Regional Coordinator Sandra Stinson, sandrastinsontcf@yahoo.com

The Compassionate Friends National Office:
1-877-969-0010

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. 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, Autumn 2014 will cover the months of September, October & November. 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.

TCF Transitions

TCF Gwinnett Chapter has more changes ahead! As we all know, life can change in an instant and we learn how to navigate those welcome, and unwelcome, new beginnings. What a blessing our TCF support is here to offer each other hope, understanding & friendship which needs to continue for the long-term.

Chapter Leader Candace Jordan has announced that she has accepted a wonderful new job as Assistant Manager of the Marietta Metro Extended Stay, which requires her to live on site, starting June 9th. Therefore, it is with great regret that Candace is resigning as Chapter Leader of TCF Gwinnett. As bereaved parents, we understand the “bittersweet” moments in life and our steering committee shares in Candace’s excitement for her new position, but also we are sad to see her leave. Candace has given much of her time, dedication & heart to the Gwinnett Chapter and hopes to be able to leave with the leadership in good, capable hands. The steering committee will be stepping in to help at the monthly meetings, but it is essential that the leadership be turned over very soon to either a chapter leader or a team of two co-leaders. According to the bylaws of the national organization, each chapter must have a leader who can offer organization, guidance and support to the steering committee and new members. This is not a demanding, full-time volunteer position! We need a leader or 2 co-leaders who currently are, or have been, TCF members and are willing to lead TCF Gwinnett to insure the continued growth & progress of this chapter. Without leadership, the chapter will not be able to offer the resources and support that newly bereaved parents need. We hope that as you are reading this, you will give serious consideration to giving back to TCF. Newly bereaved parents receive help from TCF and parents who have walked many seasons on this grief journey are a valuable inspiration & assistance to all parents. Please call Candace at 678-499-9587 to ask any questions and find out more information.

Life did not prepare me for August 15, 2001. In one moment on a very ordinary day, the world as I knew it inexplicably changed. I answered the phone to the panicked voice of a friend telling me that my 18-year-old and only daughter Ashley had been killed in an automobile accident. Little did I know that this one single moment in time would become the demarcation point in my life. Time just stopped, I felt frozen and in disbelief, I was paralyzed and in shock.

Somehow I stumbled through the fog and within a few days of Ashley's death, we gathered together family, friends, music, and food for what we were calling a celebration of Ashley's life. I spoke with calm and clarity at Ashley's service and spent hours hugging and comforting those who attended. Shock is an amazing anesthetic when you are in deep and early grief as it allows you to function. People commented on how strong I was that day. Little did they know that just a few months later, I would become nearly [incapacitated by the trauma of my grief](#).

My Mind, My Heart, My Spirit, My Body Were Broken

Shock kept me from fully feeling the magnitude of my loss, but in time shock gave way to the reality of all that I was facing. Grief wore me down until I became a shell of the man I once was. My mind was broken, leaving it scattered and unable to focus. My heart was broken because it hurt so badly I could barely breathe. Grief broke my spirit because it made me question God and anything good in this life. Grief broke my body by zapping it of its energy and leaving me with aches and pains.

Well-meaning family and friends were of little help as I spiraled deeper into the darkest days of my grief. I began to choose isolation over confrontation with those who would marginalize my struggle by suggesting that I take comfort in the fact that God has another angel or that Ashley is in a better place. I began to wonder if I was crazy.

Like most people, I had very little understanding at that time about what grief is, and the real and devastating impact it can have on those of us who are thrust into its path. Many of us do not know

what we can do to help ourselves or others when a loved one dies or when we face the grief that comes from a divorce or other losses, such as a job, mobility, health, or our independence. My inability [to cope](#) caused me to reach out and seek support.

Living My Life, Honoring My Love for Ashley

I first reached out to my local chapter of [The Compassionate Friends](#), a peer-to-peer support group for parents, grandparents, and siblings [after a child in their family has died](#). The first monthly meeting I attended helped so much. I met others walking this same journey who validated my feelings and who understood my pain. It was there when I learned that I did not have to walk this journey alone and where I found the hope to believe that I could survive. My group of new compassionate friends became my trusted family who were willing to walk with me and hurt with me for as long as I would need.

I also sought support from a 12-week grief education program. It was here that I learned what grief really is, what it does to our lives, and how it affects us mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Ashley's [death has left me with much unfinished emotional business](#), and this program helped me to process my pain in constructive ways.

My grief work was hard work, but it began paying off as I was able to emerge from the darkness a stronger person with a clear focus on helping others. Grief has been a transformational teacher. Grief taught me to live in the moment, to value each friendship and relationship, to cherish the gift I am given each day to love and to be loved. Grief taught me to honor the love I will always have for Ashley (pictured at right) by living my life.

Today I am proud to serve as the executive director of The Compassionate Friends/USA. With nearly 700 chapters and a highly visible Web site and online presence, we are able to offer support and hope to nearly 750,000 grieving individuals who access one of our services each year.

Alan Pederson, TCF Director & Ashley's dad

WE REMEMBER BIRTHDAYS



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



June

Justin Todd Stephens... June 1st
Xavier Hayes... June 6th
Natascha Roebuck.... June 6th
Jamie Ann Quillen.... June 7th
Emanuel Mitchell... June 10th
Scott Michael Malone.... June 17th
Britney Knoch.... June 17th
Matthew Jones.... June 19th
Mitchell Dean Orr.... June 19th
Christopher Reed.... June 22nd
Josiah Murphy... June 23rd
Christian Nicolae Moise.... June 24th
Stephen Varzaly... June 24th
Joseph Beatty.... June 25th
Nathan Self.... June 25th
Ryan Michael Sharp.... June 26th
Brian Devine.... June 26th
Adam Lee Jones.... June 27th
Jessica Rose Riley.... June 29th

July

Monta Hunt "Tay" ... July 1st
Adyson Claire Smith.... July 1st
Amanda Lynn Harned.... July 6th
Rileigh-Jacqueline Clebert.... July 7th
Amanda Heath.... July 8th
Bristol Kempton.... July 8th
Bailey Amanda Kempton.... July 9th
Justin Cates.... July 12th
James R. Avery, III.... July 15th
Johnathan England.... July 17th
Christopher Gabriel Patton.... July 17th
Fara "Nicole" Choate.... July 27th
Adam Sawyer... July 28th
Michael Clayborne Montgomery.... July 29th
Noreen Keenan.... July 29th
Monique Marlowe.... July 29th
Genna Watson.... July 30th
Arnesa Darlene Royster.... July 31st

August

Calvin Joel Duda.... Aug. 3
Jessica & Von Justin Windsor... Aug. 3rd
Daniel Green.... Aug. 5th
Gabrielle Pierre Louis.... Aug. 6th
Clint Price.... Aug. 6th
Ronald Bruce West.... Aug. 6th
Jacob Meadows.... Aug. 10th
Amanda Sullivan.... Aug. 14th
Stephen Owens.... Aug. 14th
Wendy McMain.... Aug. 18th
Justin Evans.... Aug. 19th
Ryan Gilbride Aug. 19th
Jarod Robert Wills.... Aug. 22nd
Todd Wehunt.... Aug. 23rd
Edward Leonard Stempien.... Aug. 24th
Gavin Burke.... August 24th
Jeremy James White.... Aug. 25th
Rachael Fouquet.... Aug. 25th
Michael LaVierge.... Aug. 27th
Brittany Hopkins ... Aug. 28th
Brian Hatchett... Aug. 29th



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.

June, July & August 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

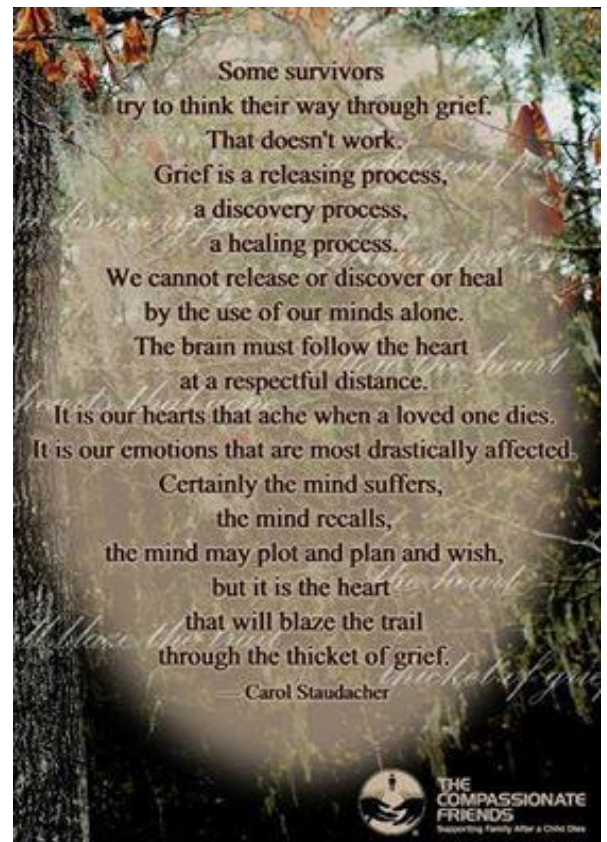
June 1 st	Richie Petzel
June 2 nd	Nathanael Tate
June 6 th	Xavier Hayes
June 8 th	Billy Foulke
June 10 th	Mia Penoyer
June 12 th	Heather Helms
June 13 th	Bailey Amanda Kempton

June 14 th	Linda Strauss
June 16 th	Matthew Hinson
June 16 th	Richie Yee
June 18 th	Scott Michael Malone
June 20 th	Cory Bute
June 23 rd	Josiah Murphy
June 28 th	Angelo Larocca "Al"

July 3 rd	Aaron Stephens
July 4 th	Jennifer Hardy
July 4 th	Jeremy James White
July 5 th	Kyle Harrison
July 12 th	Stephen Varzaly
July 12 th	Genna Watson
July 13 th	Jonathan Ayers
July 14 th	Michael Dunn
July 19 th	Misty Autumn Dubose
July 20 th	Bristol Kimpton
July 23 rd	Christopher Boyd
July 23 rd	Amanda Heath
July 28 th	Noreen Keenan
July 28 th	Melissa Morrow
July 30 th	Ronald "Scott" Long



August 1 st	David Arthur Braund
August 1 st	Brett Lykins
August 3 rd	Jessica & Von Justin Windsor
August 5 th	Michael Clayborne Montgomery
August 9 th	Blake Hinson
August 9 th	Calvin Joel Duda
August 11 th	Clint Price
August 13 th	Chris Morrow
August 19 th	John Andrew Sims
August 20 th	Emanuel Mitchell
August 21 st	Jenny Gryzinski
August 21 st	Brent Rose
August 22 nd	Jeffrey Lopilato
August 24 th	Jessica Norwood
August 27 th	Trevor Aaron Jones
August 28 th	Ryan Michael Sharp
August 30 th	Amanda Lynn Harned
August 31 st	Todd Wehunt
August 2012	Chelsea Hutchinson



Father's Day

Fireworks

You used to run around with a sparkler in your hand,
pretending you were a Minute Man or a Patriot
drummer. It didn't matter, there was time for all.

You'd wrap a rag around your head and take your toy
drum, and tromp around the yard. Whatever you
were on those wonderful nights, you loved it!

And we watched and laughed as you waved your tiny
flag, thinking maybe you were the one who really
understood what we celebrated.

Now the drum is gone and no one gets sparklers any
more. The yard is quiet on the Fourth of July. Do
you still march and play the drum for others?

Author unknown



THE BOYS & GIRLS OF SUMMER

The boys and girls of summer,
No longer in our sight
Those sun-kissed happy faces
Now fill our dreams at night.
Long years ago they played and swam
Their laughter echoed along the lake.
Fishing, camping and firelight talks,
Youthful dreams of the life they'd make.
Those boys and girls of summer,
Now swim on a distant shore.
The memory of their faces,
Bring summer's joy to the fore.
Boys and girls of another time,
Now crowd the sands at the lake.
Laughing, splashing, in sun and spray,
Unaware of hearts that watch and ache.

~ Arleen Simmonds

Warm and sunny day in June

Father's Day

Children, small and grown

Give gifts to father

Say thanks to father

Say I Love You.

But there are fathers

Whose children are not her

To give gifts and say thanks

And say I Love you.

Remember the fathers

Whose children are gone,

Because they always will be

Fathers at heart.

By Sascha Wagner from her book "Wintersun"

Dear Amy

*If you were here, I would tell you that I am
enjoying life for us, living for the moment and
loving life as you did.*

*If you were here, I would tell you that I
embraced the pain, moved through it, and now
sedate myself with beautiful memories of you.
If you were here, I would tell you that I can
now count the gifts of friendship, love, and
support that I have received as a result of your
death.*

*If you were here, I would tell you how you
continue to be there when a special loving
touch is needed.*

*If you were here, I would tell you that I have
learned that sharing our story and helping
others has healed my broken heart.*

*If you were here, I would tell you that I now
listen with my heart and feel you near to me
and know that we shall be together again.*

*Amy, I believe that God would be satisfied with
the quilt that I have made from the pieces of
our life and love.*

By Howard Hill, in memory of his daughter, Amy

Summer Memories

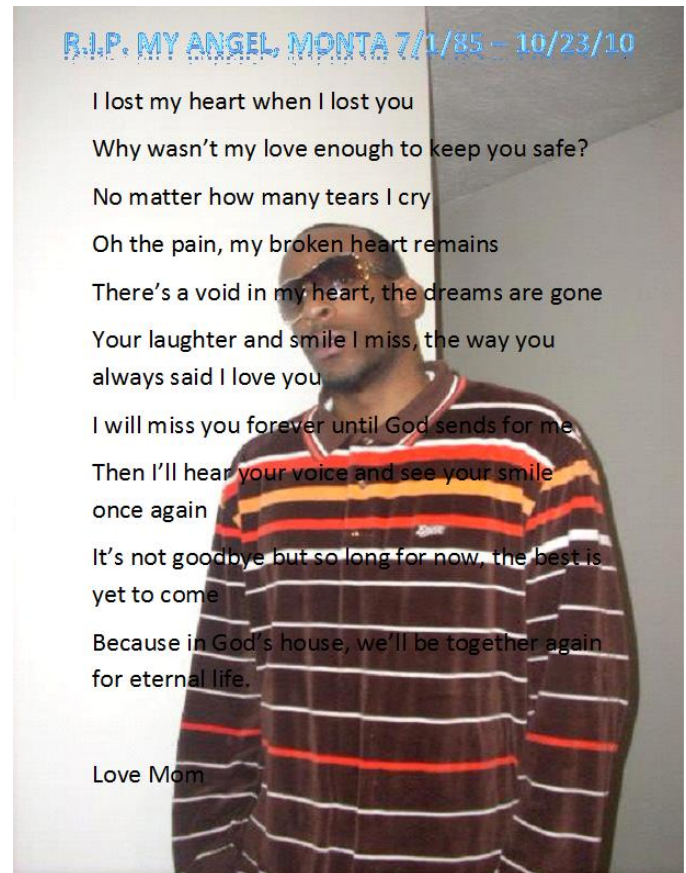
Summertime is a happy time for most people in this country: vacations, holidays, family reunions, relaxed days at the pool, evenings in the backyard talking with family and friends, the smell of a fresh rain, the long days, the cooling nights, fresh mown grass and flowers that bloom profusely. Despite Houston's heat, summer has become a treasured time for me. My son was a child of summer. Born in May, he loved the summer sun on his face and the wind in his hair as he first rode a tricycle, then a bicycle, then drove a car. Those were wonderful times for him. The summer solstice on June 21 was a favorite day for us both. Since the summer solstice is the longest day of the year, Todd particularly loved to watch the sunrise and sunset. I found myself doing that again this year. As I looked at the sun directly overhead at noon (1:00 DST) I made the comment that this is the one perfectly balanced day of the year. Later as I watched a beautiful solstice sunset, I remarked to my husband about the light...the gorgeous light. I was seeing Todd in that light. He was laughing, chasing lightening bugs, running and spinning and turning, filled with the joy of summer. He was happy.

I listened to the neighbors' children playing, and I thought about all the wonderful summer days I had spent with my son. I am thankful that I had that time. I am thankful that my child was a son of summer. He found much joy in nature, in the outdoors, in activities that took him out of the ordinary and into the sublime.

That's how it is for bereaved parents. We eventually come to a place where we realize that our joyful memories have overtaken the pain of the loss of our child to death. We wouldn't trade the time we shared with our children for anything or any other experience. We have many relationships in our lives, but the unique nature of the parent-child relationship is so special, so deep, so life changing, that we endure and even embrace the pain because we had, for that time in our lives, a relationship of pure love and pure joy with our child. There is no way to measure the depth, width or volume of a parent's love. It exceeds every other human relationship. Yes, we miss them terribly. We weep silently into our pillows at night. We light candles, take flowers to the cemetery, wear their favorite colors, treasure pictures of our children and keep them forever in our hearts. This is a big part of life for every bereaved parent.

Somehow, on the summer solstice, I felt my child's presence in the light of the day and the beautiful rose color of the solstice sunset. I could hear his voice, see his smile and feel his emotions. Peace slips into our hearts in extraordinary ways.

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



Submitted by Mina & Quintin Ramsey
in loving memory of their son,
Monta "Tay" Hunt, 7/1/85 - 10/23/10

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).

All TCF National Conferences & many regional conferences offer workshops and other activities specifically geared for bereaved siblings. 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 and go to Resources/Siblings.

Siblings Walking Together
(Formerly the 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.

©The Compassionate Friends

Justin's Heart Grief Group

A place for the bereaved to gather to support each other in times of loss. Meets the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 – 8:30 at the Loganville First Baptist Church. Contact Steve Williams at 678-670-3549. This support group was organized by Kayleigh Ellington, in memory of her brother Justin. Their mom, Kathy Ellington, belongs to TCF Gwinnett.

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 Lanier Park, Gainesville. Contact Jennifer Sorrells at 770-219- 0271 or Jennifer.sorrells@nghs.com for more information.

THE WAVE

Tidal wave
Heat wave
Sonic wave
Whatever you call it
Here it comes again
We just got past
The first set of waves
Swim fast
Swim strong
Let's get over the top
We have been hit hard
And sure enough
Here comes another one
No time to rest
Even take a breath
It seems we have
Been caught in a
Rip tide
Tossed, turned and twisted
Upside down
We thought that we
Were ready
For whatever comes our way
Here comes the wave
It's just another day
~*Richard Leach- South Bay/L.A., CA*
in memory of his grand-children,
Frankie & Vanessa Castania

Big Part of Me

by Natasha B. McFadden

You're my big brother,
the one who's always there.
But because I've never met you,
no one realizes how much I care.

God called you back home,
before I was even alive.
How could he let this happen,
when you were only five?

My love for you is unconditional,
though we've never met.
When I think about never meeting,
I can't help but get upset.

You give me courage,
and help me to stay strong.
You give me the confidence to keep going,
when my days seem way too long.

And even when I don't show it,
and no one else can see.
You're always on my mind,
you're a big part of me.

From www.bereavement-poems-articles.com

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Chicago, Illinois, will be the site of the **37th TCF National**

Conference on July 11-13, 2014. "Miles of Compassion through

The Winds of Hope" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great national conference experience. The 2014 conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, just minutes from the airport. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience. Check

www.thecompassionatefriends.org for further details. Online registration started March 1. The Hyatt Regency O'Hare, 9300 Bryn Mawr Ave., Rosemont, IL 60018, is accepting reservations for TCF's National Conference. Conference attendees are receiving a discounted room rate. We anticipate a large attendance for the conference, so we encourage you to make your reservation as soon as it is convenient for you.



Development Center, phone 706-387-0573, www.integrityofjefferson.com Deana Martin, TCF member and mom to angels Amanda & Logan helps coordinate and organize this group. You may also contact Deana at deana.martin@merial.com

TCF Gwinnett 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".

We are here to provide hope and encouragement, understanding & friendship as we all travel the grief journey. Our lives have been turned inside out & upside down and we are the walking wounded who must now figure out where to go from here, how to put our lives back together to some degree, and share coping skills and survival techniques. 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.

Kate's Club

Kate's Club is a non-profit organization that empowers children and teens facing life after the death of a parent or sibling. By creating friendships with kids and young adults that share the experience, Kate's Club guides children through their grief journey in a comfortable, safe & uplifting setting. For information, contact Debra Brook, Program Manager, at debra@katesclub.org or phone 404-347-7619.

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 or Karen, 770-355-1024, Karen_copija@att.net

GOOD GRIEF" Support Group in Jefferson

Meets the first Saturday of every month at 10 am at the Integrity Counseling & Personal



HELP WANTED!

As we all know, the death of our child, no matter what age or circumstance, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, to whom does a family turn for the emotional support they will need during the grief journey that lies ahead? If you are reading this newsletter, you have already learned that The Compassionate Friends understands that grief for a child lasts longer & is more intense than society commonly recognizes. Together as grieving parents we can offer empathy and understanding of this loss, while also recognizing that each person's grief is unique.

However, there are many families who have not found TCF and may need the support & friendship our chapter can offer. We all read about accidents, crimes, illnesses and our hearts ache because we, better than others, realize what the parents of that child are now going to have to cope with.

We are in need of a **Community Outreach Volunteer**, who will reach out to funeral homes, social services, hospices, etc. to create awareness of our TCF Chapter. We have a Special Edition Newsletter available for new parents that can be mailed or given to organizations. It may be as simple as sending emails, or making phone calls, and/or mailing the special newsletter. The internet is a great resource and aid for creating education & awareness of TCF Gwinnett for families and organizations. If you would be interested in filling this volunteer role, or if there could be a team of 2 or 3 people to work together in this effort, please contact Candace Jordan by email, tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com

Thank you to Clare Norwood, who has volunteered to help create & mail Remembrance Cards in memory of her daughter, Jessica.

TCF Gwinnett Chapter Leadership Changes

TCF Gwinnett Chapter has more changes ahead! As we all know, life can change in an instant and we learn how to navigate those welcome, and unwelcome, new beginnings. What a blessing our TCF support is here to offer each other hope, understanding & friendship which needs to continue for the long-term.

Chapter Leader Candace Jordan has announced that she has accepted a wonderful new job as Assistant Manager of the Marietta Metro Extended Stay, which requires her to live on site, starting June 9th. Therefore, it is with great regret that Candace is resigning as Chapter Leader of TCF Gwinnett. As bereaved parents, we understand the "bittersweet" moments in life and our steering committee shares in Candace's excitement for her new position, but also we are sad to see her leave. Candace has given much of her time, dedication & heart to the Gwinnett Chapter and hopes to be able to leave with the leadership in good, capable hands. The steering committee will be stepping in to help at the monthly meetings, but it is essential that the leadership be turned over very soon to either a chapter leader or a team of two co-leaders. According to the bylaws of the national organization, each chapter must have a leader who can offer organization, guidance and support to the steering committee and new members.

This is not a demanding, full-time volunteer position! We need a leader or 2 co-leaders who currently are, or have been, TCF members and are willing to lead TCF Gwinnett to insure the continued growth & progress of this chapter. Without leadership, the chapter will not be able to offer the resources and support that newly bereaved parents need. We hope that as you are reading this, you will give serious consideration to giving back to TCF. Newly bereaved parents receive help from TCF and parents who have walked many seasons on this grief journey are a valuable inspiration & assistance to all parents. Please call Candace at 678-499-9587 to ask any questions and find out more information.

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: **Candace Jordan**, Chapter Leader, in memory of her son **Marcus Reid**; **June Cooper**, Parent Phone Contact, in memory of her daughter, **Wendy McMMain** & in memory of her sister, **Noreen Keenan**; **Meg Avery**, Newsletter Editor in memory of her son **James Avery**; **Barbara Dwyer**, Chapter Treasurer and **Leo Dwyer**, group facilitator in memory of their son **Matthew Dwyer**; **Terry Sparks**, provides newly bereaved packet info & as group facilitator, in memory of his daughter, **Natalie Sparks**; **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 & facilitator in memory of her son **David Whitley**; and **Sandy Lavender**, Database Maintenance in memory of her daughter **Ashley Lauren Hull**.

Excerpt from *Living the Loss on Father's Day*:

Through the loss of my son, and other family members, I have learned much on the journey. I found that I love deeper, I smell flowers longer, and I savor the sunsets more. I feel the best when helping others, and I thank God for my every breath. These are all good things to have come to me in the midst and aftermath of horrific pain. How sad it would be if we were not compensated in some way for our tragic loss, for life would then truly seem meaningless would it not?

Through the loss of my father and my son, I discovered the randomness of death. Death can hit anyone, anytime, regardless of genes, the environment, or the best of efforts to stave off the sting of its reality. There is nothing we can do that can adequately prepare us for a loss of our loved one.

Do I feel sad on Father's day? You bet I do. Do I celebrate it? Yes I do. I am proud to have been my father's son for 15 years and proud to have been a father to my son for 9 years. I am proud to be a father for my surviving daughter for 26 years. I am proud to be a grandfather. Everyday is Father's Day when you find yourself surrounded in love from this world and from the next. Feel the sadness of *your* Father's day; feel the pain, feel, the joy, feel the love that alone makes it possible to feel the pain.

~ by **Mitch Carmody**, author of ***Letters from My Son: A Journey Through Grief***

Thoughts on evolving as a Bereaved Parent

How quickly the years roll on by. For me as a bereaved parent it has been seven years already, not a day goes by that I don't think of Marcus. Because of The Compassionate Friends and other Support Groups I'm a part of, I often think of your kids too. I think about a new group of parents I am bonding with because of the unthinkable tragedy we share.

What this group has done for me has made me more aware of the need we have to bond with other parents in order to "do life" together well. Those who don't share this pain may not even realize that we are among their number. Then when aware, the way they interact with us may change; what do I say now, how do I approach her, is she okay, can she still do her job, etc... I've learned over the years I am in a position to help the outside world understand my world. I am still a wonderful person who still likes to have fun; I now have to manage the pain of losing my child into my lifestyle schedule. I want to be included in parties, events, voluntarism, and casual conversation; I don't want someone else deciding for me what's best because of how my life has been altered. I also intend for the loss to teach people to be more sensitive about the gift life and beauty of humanity.

It is important for our friends and neighbors to share in our pain because we want no one to feel uncomfortable talking about loss. Loss comes in various forms, and no one is immune to loss. The challenge is discussing it. It's unpleasant. It's sad. It leaves you speechless; but it has purpose.

I am a stronger person now. I am a leader in my community. I have a responsibility to strengthen my peers. I have a stage to raise awareness about causes that matter to us, in a way assertive enough to not force my opinion, but to open up new insights on how to foster discussions about loss. We all will someday experience it.

Candace Jordan, in loving memory of Marcus Reid

This is the link to the TCF Marietta Spring Newsletter. If you would like to create an online newsletter for TCF Gwinnett, please send an email to Meg Avery, tcfnewsletter@outlook.com

http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1113097891905-79/Spring+2014_FINAL+1234.pdf

TCF Email Account

We have experienced problems with our email account, tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com and have had to recreate our contacts. Hopefully you are still receiving news & announcements via email. We also now have tcfnewsletter@outlook.com expressly for the quarterly newsletter distribution. Please contact Meg Avery, Newsletter Editor, at that email, if you ever have any submissions for the newsletter. If any of your contact information has changed, please be sure to send an email to one of those accounts, or a handwritten note to Meg Avery at 4575 Forest Green Drive, Sugar Hill, GA 30518.

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 *Austin Coker*, from his mom, Nancy Coker

In loving memory of *Braden Grimes*, from his mom Georgia Grimes

In loving memory of *Jenny Gryzinski*, from her grandmother, Dolores Gryzinski

Cards for Remembrance Cards were donated by Meg Avery, in memory of her son, *James*

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

Five bags of mulch for our Memorial Garden were donated by Michael Lippman in memory of his son
Shawn

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 or general account. You may also choose to donate a book to our Lending Library, or cards to be used for our Remembrance Cards. If you would like to donate cards, please bring them to a meeting and labels will be added to the back of the card "card donated in memory of _____ (your child's name).

\$\$\$ Where does the money go? \$\$\$

Our chapter is self-supporting and donations fund our chapter activities. We pay \$300 annually to Trinity Christian Fellowship Church for the use of our meeting space and \$100 annually to TCF National Office for yearly dues. Funds from the general account pay for: remembrance cards, postage, labels, printing, postage & labels for our newsletter, picnic pavilion rental, supplies for 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 or to receive this newsletter.

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

Barbara Dwyer
TCF Gwinnett Treasurer
4905 Pond Ridge Lane,
Cumming, GA 30041.
(Please make checks payable to **TCF Gwinnett.**)

Name _____
Address: _____

In Memory
of: _____