



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Summer 2010

Newsletter of the Atlanta Chapter

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

Atlanta Area Website

www.tcfatlanta.org

TCF Atlanta Newsletter

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

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

**Upcoming Chapter Meetings:
July 13, August 10, and September 14**

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**

Announcements

Chapter Newsletter has New Editor

By Cindy Durham

I am pleased to announce that Abigail Arthur-Chillman has agreed to serve as our chapter's newsletter editor, effective with this issue. As always, your contributions to the newsletter will be warmly welcomed and can be sent to Abigail at newslettereditor@tcfatlanta.org.

I've enjoyed serving as your newsletter editor for a number of years, but it is time to pass this role to another chapter member. And, I'm appreciative of Abigail's willingness to give back to her chapter in this way.

Please join with me in letting her know how much we appreciate her work to assist our chapter.

Meet the New Editor

By Abigail Arthur-Chillman



helped me to heal.

For those who have not met me, I am Abigail Arthur-Chillman, a *compassionate friend* since February 2008. On January 26th, 2008, my husband and I lost our second child Katherine when she was forty days old. Over the past two years, this chapter has

With respect, I graciously accept the role of newsletter editor and welcome the opportunity to get to know your children, grandchildren, and siblings through your photos, poems, and memories.



Candlelight Service Set for December 4, 2010

Be sure your calendars are marked for our chapter's annual Candlelight Service, to be held Saturday, Dec. 4, at 7 p.m.

More information about the Candlelight Service will be included in the Fall newsletter, which will be published the first week of October.

We will hold a Candlelight Planning meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 8 at Cindy Durham's house. We will be discussing possible speakers, music, etc. If you have suggestions that you would like the committee to consider – or would like to serve on the planning committee – please e-mail Cindy Durham at cindy_durham@bellsouth.net.

TCF Newsletter is Now Green

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

If you did not receive this copy by e-mail, and would like to, please send your e-mail address to jayne@tcfatlanta.org. We'll add you to our e-mail distribution list.

If you don't have easy access to e-mail, and would prefer to continue receiving the newsletter through the mail, send Jayne Newton a note at 808 Brentway Court, Lilburn, GA 30047.

Create a Permanent Memorial Website

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that it has partnered with the premier Internet memorial website Legacy.com

to give you a unique way to remember and pay tribute to your child, sibling, or grandchild. When you sponsor a memorial [through this link](#), you will be creating a

timeless and touching remembrance of a special child. You will also be happy to know that a portion of the proceeds from the memorial website you create will go to support The Compassionate Friends and its many national programs designed to aid families going through the natural grieving process following the death of a child.



With these unique, easy-to-create memorial tributes, you can:

- Customize the design, yet create the site in 5 minutes using Legacy.com.'s 4-step process
- Include photos, videos, stories, and more
- Invite family and friends to contribute and join in celebrating the life of a child
- Add music and much more

The Compassionate Friends understands how important it is to honor and pay tribute to the memories of our children, siblings, and grandchildren and is pleased to be able to offer you this unique remembrance opportunity! [Click here to learn more!](#)

If you are unable to attend the conference, we encourage you to follow along with us on Facebook at [The Compassionate Friends/USA](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Compassionate-FriendsUSA/90757574245) (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Compassionate-FriendsUSA/90757574245>). Our intent is to provide you daily updates from the conference – posts and pictures! When the conference has completed, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Verizon, you will be able to watch a conference highlights video.

135 Names to be Carried on Atlanta Chapter's 2010 Walk to Remember Banner



The names of 135 children or siblings 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 Virginia. The conference will be held July 2nd – 4th.

The banner will be carried by chapter members attending the conference. Candace Walker along with Mitch Carmody, Ingrid Otter, Kelly Jameson, Kristy and David Turner, Pat Bradley and Denise Armstrong are carrying the Atlanta Walk Banner in Arlington, Va., on the 4th of July.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Anika Vai Alford
Jon Michael Altier
Amanda Jo Bailey
Desha Beamer
Kathleen Beamer
Ned Behnke
Jonathan Aaron Blumenfeld
Michael Brantley, Jr.
Aylah Brewer
Kara Leigh Brougham
Averil T. Brown
Cain Brown
Derek L. Brown
Elliott V. Brown
Lori K. Brown
Jessica Lyn Bryl
Michael Btembke
Ashley Curt Buchanan
David Burns
Jacob Allen Butler
Joey Capron
Kelly Carmody
Julian Oliver Carter
Richard Alan Cartin
Tommy M. Childress
Katherine A. Chillman
Jason Daniel Cirafisi
Alex Costley
Robin Ann Craney
Jason Curnutt

Ashley Regina Danelutt
Jennifer Elisa Danelutt
Joshua Todd Davis
Michael "Kyle" Davis
Timmy de St. Aubin
A.J. Devol
Matthew A. Dobbs
Jessica Dodge
Preston Drummond
James Anthony Durham
Anthony Eck
Geoffrey P. Edwards
James Esker
Angie Espeche
Christopher Faller
Anke Furber
Kristin Gillis
Toby Michael Gizzonio
Chad Gordon
Shawn Marie Gordon
Mark Joseph Gore
Jenny Gryzinski
Theresa Lena Hanna
Shari Norton Harlan
Billy Hawley
Charles Hearington
Micki Henderson
Lynley Elyse Herbert
Adam William Hess
Matthew Hinson
Jesse Noah Bowen Hinton
Joseph Hobbs
David Hoegler
Jonathan Diondre' Holloway
Summer Holyfield
Brendon Hope

Jeffrey D. Houg
Eddie Hughes Jr.
Carissa Ellen Hunsaker
Kanda Jacobs
Corey James
Michelle James
Mathew Jameson
Kennon Jernigan
Arthur B. Jordan
Hannah Grace Keeton
Derrick M. Kelly
Joshua Klug
Brittany Knoch
Kellie Louise Larivee
Aaron "A.J." James Lauter
Karla Leija
Matthew Marcus Long
Tyler Andrew Lumpkin
Jason Maham
Candi Gaye Marshall
Mathew Scott Marshall
Mandi Lynn Mast
Kathy J. Maynard
Harold James "Bubba" McCarty
Nikki Mendoza
Jake Miller
Vikki Lynn Mooneyhan
Christi Michelle Nowak
Ricky Otter
Brian Joseph Parker
Timothy Patrick Parker
Jefferey A. Patterson
Richmond Matthew Petzel
Derrick Plankenhorn
Carrie Ann Plumley
Nick Posey

Connor Warren Pym
Michelle Ala Reeves
Tracie Denise Schultz
Brian C. Schuster
Christopher Shim
Allen Shugart
Christopher Lee Simpson
Tammy Renee Smith
Demetrius O'Neal Span, Jr.
Kali Sparks
Karen Michelle Spurgin
Kimberly Lynn Spurgin
Justin Steinhoff
Robert Stokes
Reesin N. "Chip" Swilley, Jr.
Jennifer Tant
"CJ" Baxter-Thomas
Evan Throckmorton
Dennis Christopher Tucker
Michelle Stanton Turner
Amy Elizabeth Uhland
J.J. Wade
Michele Wade
Clinton Ron Walker
Eddie Walls
Porter Watson
Jason Webb
Matthew Weeks
Kristina "Nina" Westmoreland
Emily Grace White
Terrell Lamont Wilson
Aaron Michael Woodruff
Andy Zebrowitz



Coping and Caring: The Process to Healing

The following column was written by Yvonne Clark, founder of It's Okay to Cry, a non-profit organization founded in 1999 in Houston,

Texas, after the death of Clark's husband.

Clark says her sons were in great need of grief counseling and support following this horrific loss – and little help was available. It was in this period of determination and helplessness, with no resources available that Clark decided to return to college to obtain a degree in counseling. This became her mission: to focus on becoming the resource needed for parents and children in dealing with grief – grief of any magnitude. It's Okay to Cry, Inc. addresses children, adolescents and young adult's grief related to death and separation.

Since the conception of It's Okay to Cry, Clark has worked with children of all ages, families, city and county law enforcement agencies, mental health agencies, hospitals, churches, funeral homes, and school districts providing grief support resource materials, workshops, and parent meetings validating that children of all ages grieve. For more information about her organization, go to www.itsokaytocry.org.

Grief is a strange emotion. It is a pain that bores down to our souls when a spouse or child, mother or father, sibling or friend is taken from our life. It is a storm of tears and anger, a string of unanswered questions. It is what remains after funeral and memorial services, when we are left to face the hole in our families. The hole in our life.

The emotional health and well-being of our children are clearly concerns that are both serious and decisive. When a death occurs, it affects every aspect of a child or adolescent's existence, the emotional distress and pain of grief can be almost impossible to ignore. We must assist the grieving child or adolescent in ways that will support recovery if we are to avoid the death of academic learning, emotional growth, personal potential, of optimism, hopes, and dreams.

Grieving children need permission to mourn. Sometimes what they need most from adults is an awareness that it is OK to talk out and play out their many thoughts and feelings. If their suffering is avoided, denied or repressed by adults surrounding them, children will feel abandoned at a time when he or she most needs the presence and support of loving adults. We must also remember that children mourn intermittently. Moving at times toward and then away from the depth of the loss. Respecting and accepting a child's grief means understanding this wave-like quality in their capacity to mourn. Most important it means remaining available to a grieving child long after the event of death or separation.

Telling a child about the death or separation of a loved one is the beginning rather than the end of a long process of sharing. When answering a child's questions about death and grief, be open and honest and communicate in language the child understands. It is not unusual for children to ask the same question again and again. Caring parents, relatives, and friends can help children by responding to the young person's questions in a way that shows you care.

At some point, children will face the complicated task of trying to understand a loss. As adults, our ideas about death change as we add to our life experiences. Children are just beginning this complex journey. We can help children learn appropriate responses by being open and available and by our own example.

I was still teaching when my grandmother died, when I returned to school after the funeral I asked my students if they knew why I was absent. Some of my students thought they knew, several actually knew, and there were a few students that did not realize I had been absent for three days. I told my class I was absent because my grandmother had died. Once they got over the shock "she had a grandmother" they starting asking me questions and sharing his or her individual loss experiences. We talked for about 5-10 minutes then went on with our day. This was at 8 o'clock in the morning. At the end of the school day, a student came back to me and said, "Mrs. Clark my father died." I said, "Beth when did your father die?" She said, "Right before Christmas, December 20th." I said, "Before Christmas when, what year?" Her answer to my question was this past Christmas.

The day I got back to work from my grandmother's funeral was January 16th; I share this because this was an adolescent who needed to talk about her dad and her emotions, but was not give that opportunity "permission" until I was open about my loss. Beth was a six grader when her father died, we set in motion a long process of sharing from that moment until she graduated eighth grade.

Grief is a healthy, natural reaction to a loss. Tears are a natural part of grief, and they help relive stress. We must give a child or adolescent permission to cry. This is a part

of being human. Suppressing one's tears may even be physically harmful.

We do not want to allow a grieving child to be afraid to laugh or feel guilty about laughing. Laughter is healthy and is often needed to relieve tension. Laughter is the sunshine of the soul. Laughing doesn't mean the child or adolescent is not grieving or missing his or her love one.

Let us keep in mind to allow the grieving child to feel his or her pain and accept their emotions. Pain and emotions are part of grief. The pain is part of the healing process. Help the young person to understand that death ends a life, but it does not end a relationship; remind them memories go on in their mind.

Grief can be a prolonged, intensely painful experience and can result in significant emotional distress. Grieving kids need adults to give them permission to mourn. Children and adolescents facing the emotional pain and distress of grief should be allowed to talk out their many thoughts and feelings. Kids need adults who will listen and learn from the grieving child and grieving kids need large doses of patience and understanding.

Adults do not have to instantly have the answers to questions a grieving child may ask; but can find answers to the child's questions or tell the grieving child; they can find the answers together. Young people want to know the truth in age-appropriate language. As a supportive adult, accept as true the child's feelings, whatever the feelings may be and help the child to clarify those feelings.

I believe what is most important for grieving kids are adults to validate their emotional pain. This task can be accomplished by providing a warm silence that encourages the child to do the talking. Allow the child or adolescent to be the teacher about his or her grief experience.

Yvonne Butler Clark
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If a child is old enough to love...
They are old enough to grieve.
www.itsokaytocry.org
www.info@itsokaytocry.org

Five things a Firefighter/Medic Wants you to Know

By Aaron Espy, firefighter/paramedic

Aaron Espy is a Firefighter/Paramedic in Kitsap County, Washington. A professional firefighter since 1980, he is also a freelance writer and poet.

Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national publication of The Compassionate Friends.

Moms and Dads, can I talk to you for a minute? I was too busy during the emergency, and afterward – well, you both had more important matters to attend to. It doesn't matter whether you live in the Pacific Northwest or Florida, Maine or Kansas City. If your child was taken from you suddenly, there was probably someone like me in attendance who fights fire and delivers medical aid for a living. Chances are, they've struggled with the same feelings I struggle with. Here are five things I'd like to tell you. It's my hope that something I say will make your struggle through grief a little easier to manage.

#1 - Your Child Was Not "Just Another Patient"

Perhaps you assume that because I've seen thousands of patients in my career, I wouldn't remember your son or daughter. Not true! Only the loss of a fellow firefighter affects us more profoundly than a child's death. When I lose a child in the line of duty, I don't leave the experience at the station. Your child's face comes home with me. I see him when I'm fishing, working in my garage, or just drifting off to sleep. I can still recall vividly the hour I spent with a little girl from a car accident almost fourteen years ago. She has a permanent place in my memory, just like your little one.

(It's the inability to come to terms with these memories that drives many a firefighter from his or her career. Those of us who are old-timers in emergency medicine have learned to deal with the tragic cruelties of life we must face. Some exercise vigorously. Others, like me, write about our experiences. Sadly, there are some who are unable to cope with the pain and turn to drugs or alcohol.)

#2 - I Did More Than Provide Medical Care

When I am fighting to save a child, I talk to them. It doesn't make any difference whether they're responding or not. I reassure and attempt to comfort them. If they're awake and very young, I give them a stuffed animal to hold. I do one other thing. I tell them that their mom and dad love them very much. I do this because several years ago, a mother told me "I would've given anything to tell my son I loved him just one last time." Since then, I try to tell every child that you, their parents, love them very much.

#3 - I Struggle With Feelings of Failure and Inadequacy

When a firefighter/paramedic loses a child, he or she may struggle with personal feelings of failure. So often we repeatedly ask ourselves "what if" questions. "What if I'd been at a closer station? What if I'd arrived five minutes sooner? What if I'd tried another course of treatment?" It's these feelings of inadequacy that often keep a medic from approaching the parents of his patient. If a firefighter seems to be avoiding eye contact, he likely is not only struggling with his emotions, but possibly struggling with the feeling that he has failed. It's a common occurrence, despite the fact the medic may have performed flawlessly.

#4 - I Grieve With You

Macho as we'd like to portray ourselves, we are by nature a group of men and women sincerely touched by the sorrow and suffering of others. That's one of the reasons we are drawn to the fire service in the first place. We have a deep, burning drive to make a difference, to alter tragedy in the making if we possibly can. Maybe it's because we feel we have an image to uphold. Whatever the reason, we firefighters tend to be good at holding our grief in check until we are alone. We present a tough-as-steel facade and inevitably do our crying in the station's hose tower or the compressor room where no one can hear us.

#5 - I'm Available to Answer Questions

So often there are procedures or treatments you may not understand. They are almost always done for a very good reason, and with your child's best interest in mind. Almost without exception, the firefighters and medics who fought to save your child would be happy to answer any questions you may have. We also need to be informed when we unknowingly make comments that hurt or offend.

I won't make the mistake of telling you I know how you feel. I can try to imagine your pain, but I'm sure I could never know how it really feels unless I'd lost one of my children. I can tell you that I, and all my fellow fighters, do care. It is the chance that we will save the next victim of tragedy that keeps us doing what we're doing in the face of so much sorrow. We wish for you strength and peace on your journey.

Planning a Wedding for a Surviving Sibling

By Paula Funk, Anna's Mom
TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, Petoskey, MI

Of all of the events we look forward to enjoying with our children, I think weddings have always been pretty high on my list. So many images come to mind: colorful dresses on smiling bridesmaids; pretty bouquets of freshly scented flowers, a radiant bride walking arm in arm down the aisle with her proud dad; a nervous groom in awe of his beautiful bride. New beginnings; sacred moments to be cherished forever; friends and family gathered to witness and celebrate the union of two lives.

Four years ago we were preparing for the marriage of our younger daughter, Debbie. She was engaged in the fall and was planning for a wedding the following spring. A wedding to plan, so much to do, so much to look forward to – however, for our family this was the beginning of yet another bittersweet time. Debbie's only sibling, Anna, had died suddenly from brain cancer six years previous.

Those were very traumatic, life-changing years for our family and close friends. Every area of our life was touched by the bitter pain that loss brings, as we slowly adjusted to the reality that Anna's earthly presence was no

longer with us. There were constant reminders that all the hopes and dreams we had for her had died, as well. Oh, how she loved weddings. She recorded every wedding ceremony broadcast on television. As parents, we grieved that fact that she would never marry. We would never share in the joy of planning and celebrating her wedding day.

In those early years of grief, I felt as if I would never find joy again. I certainly felt that I would never have the energy to help in planning a wedding for her younger sister. The thought of witnessing and celebrating Debbie's marriage only brought pain and tears. My heavy heart was sorrowful and ached over the losses Anna's death brought to her sister. Now the time had come. Debbie was engaged, and we had work to do!

Much to my surprise, the next several weeks and months of planning were the most joyous times I had experienced since Anna's death. As mom and daughter, Debbie and I made many memories together – and Anna was always with us. She was always part of the process. We would frequently find ourselves remarking, "If Anna were here she would take care of this," or "Anna would not like wearing that dress." It was as though she was guiding our every step.

Including the deceased child in the wedding can be a difficult topic. Most of the moms I have talked with regarding the marriage of a surviving child, express the need to somehow have the deceased sibling remembered in some way. Sometimes the surviving child is afraid to discuss this with the parent, for fear of stirring up emotions. The bride or groom-to-be need not fear addressing the subject. Most parents have these thoughts right below the surface, and there usually is much relief when the issues are openly discussed. It could also be the other way around. The parent might be afraid to bring up the subject with the surviving child. Communication is important, so that everyone's feelings can be expressed. Working through these feelings before the wedding will help the actual day to be more of a time of happiness and celebration, rather than sadness and pain.

As Anna's mom, I was relieved, excited and grateful that Debbie wanted to remember her sister on this important day. I can honestly tell you that this did not detract in the least from the happiness and excitement of the wedding day. This was Debbie's day, and my day to be "mother-of-the-bride." There was sadness that Anna was not physically present, but she was there making sure that this was a day filled with joy, love and hope. It was so much fun from beginning to end.

If you are a bereaved parent with a surviving child who is planning a wedding and want to remember someone who has gone too soon, I would like to share some of the ideas that others have used to incorporate the memory of their loved one into the day.

- When one of Anna's college friends married, she had a floral arrangement around the unity candle that included things that reminded her of deceased

loved ones. These persons were listed in the program. She had a purple crayon for Anna. (Anna taught preschool – purple was always a favorite!)

- Another of Anna's college friends had a votive holder with five candles that she and the groom lit in memory of loved ones, including Anna.
- Anna's college roommate had a single candle of remembrance for all her loved ones who had died, and released butterflies following the service.
- Our Debbie did not have a maid of honor, only bridesmaids. She asked her only surviving grandfather to step in for her sister to sign the marriage license as a witness.
- Debbie had a maid-of-honor bouquet made up for Anna, to be placed on her grave.
- Debbie's sister and the couple's deceased grandparents were listed in the program under a picture of a butterfly, with the words, "Forever in our hearts." Pictures of these persons were also included on a bulletin board during the reception.
- Debbie "borrowed" the necklace and earrings that her sister wore to her junior prom. She carried an "old" hankie that belonged to her grandma, and a piece of her other grandma's wedding dress was sewn onto her tiara.
- One couple had a bouquet of white roses, each representing a loved one who had died. Another couple had individual pillar candles on a table with flower rings around them. These were lit before the service began.
- At another wedding reception, the bride and groom made a toast to all those loved ones who had died, stating their names, and expressing gratitude for the ways they had touched their lives.

Most importantly, talk about this subject well ahead of time. As a parent, make your needs known. However, respect the desires of the bride and groom. This is their day and their choice. Even if the deceased sibling is not remembered in a tangible way, be assured that she/he continues to live on in the hearts and minds of all who knew and loved her/him.

I add a couple of suggestions for the bereaved. When you are a bereaved parent, grandparent or sibling, weddings can be like a time bomb. Know that this day has the potential for many emotions to surface. It is ok to have a few tears of sadness, as well as joy – carry tissues! It is also ok to enjoy yourself and have fun – wear comfortable shoes. It is also alright not to join in absolutely everything – know your limits. When your friends ask how they can help, delegate! Save your energy for what is really important. While keeping your deceased child close in your heart, enjoy this time with your surviving child and make some new memories together.

If you feel the need for extra support during your grief journey, attend a meeting of The Compassionate Friends where you will find that you need not walk alone.

Wishing you many warm memories,

Paula Funk, Anna's Mom

The Gift of Giving

In the Hope of Helping Others – The Compassionate Friends

From Catching the Light – Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child by Genesse Gentry and previously published in We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.

After the death of our daughter Lori, I was completely devastated. Everything I believed about life was tossed out the window and I was filled with despair. It felt as if grief would destroy me.

Much of that time is now a blur, too painful to remember. But I do recall clearly my feeling of disconnection from most of the world of the living. My life had been ruined and I had no idea what to do. The friends with whom I'd surrounded myself before Lori's death had no way of knowing how to befriend me in this and I had no idea how to ask for the help I needed. So into my overwhelming grief was added hurt and loneliness because friends who didn't know what to do or say often opted to do and say nothing.

Then my husband and I found the monthly meetings of The Compassionate Friends (TCF) a support organization for families that have experienced the death of a child. I won't say the meetings were immediately a perfect fit for me, because they weren't, or that I felt comfortable as I attended, because I didn't. I was a very private person; I had had no experience crying on anyone's shoulder. My tears had always been in solitude. I'd never learned to express my feelings in words. So when someone asked me how I was feeling, I'd almost panic. How DID I feel? And after listening to the others in the circle, by the time my turn came, I was often overwhelmed with feelings. Like many others, I can't cry and talk at the same time, which caused people to have to wait as I tried to get the words out . . . I hated all the eyes on me while I tried to gain enough control to speak.

So why did I keep going? At the beginning it was because my husband, Bill, wanted to go and it was there that I learned more about how he was feeling. I was also learning from the more seasoned grievers ways of coping with my loss. All too soon I learned that TCF was actually a sanctuary, the rare place where I could try to explain my feelings or talk about Lori and her death without people trying to change the subject because they were being made uncomfortable by my words. And it was such a relief to find out that not only was it ok to voice my darkest thoughts and feelings, but others often felt the same way too. They understood! Some months I had to overcome my lethargy to get into the car and drive the half hour to get to the meetings, but every time I went I was thankful that I had. Looking back now, I realize that the meetings, and the friends I made at the meetings, probably saved my life.

But by the spring before the second anniversary of Lori's death, we were no longer attending every meeting. I regularly spoke with TCF friends, but didn't feel I needed to go every month. I had come to the point, as so many do, where I felt I'd received most of the help I would get from TCF. I might soon have stopped going to the meetings altogether. Now I can't even imagine who I would have become if that had happened. Instead I was given a gift, a reason to keep attending the meetings. Our facilitator was moving out of the area and I was asked to facilitate the local meetings. I said yes and found there was a whole new world of healing when I stopped going only for myself and began to attend meetings to help others. I can't overemphasize the importance of this turning point in my life.

From then on, every month I had to look outside myself into the hearts and minds of others and try to give them hope. I found the intensity of my own raw pain began to take a backseat to that of others more newly bereaved than I. Because I needed to find words for THEM, to try to help ease THEIR pain, a floodgate was gradually opened in me and words, amazing words, began to fill my life. Feelings, with the words to describe them, began to well up from my innermost being, feelings from the past, from those first months after Lori's death, and feelings in the present, words in the form of poetry, poems to help me understand myself and poems to help others. Truly, I believe this would not have happened if I hadn't opened my heart to my newly bereaved compassionate friends.

I believe there is the potential for something like this to happen to all who become actively involved in the "helping" aspect of The Compassionate Friends. I don't mean that everyone begins writing poetry. But I do believe that the greatest healing derived from TCF is this outward movement, this growth away from the self-centeredness, self-absorption of grief, towards the open hearted hope of helping others.

It comes to me that parenthood, itself, does something like this. From our self-centered, self-directed lives before our children are born, we learn the awesome responsibility of another person's life when we first gaze upon them. Our lives change focus and their survival and growth become our highest purpose; our hearts become larger because our children are in them. When our children die, we not only hurt because the most important, most loved people of our lives are gone, but that intense focus is gone and our sense of great purpose. We wander in a wasteland, searching for what has been lost.

When Lori died, we still had our 15-year-old daughter Megan at home, but I felt so crippled as a mother. How thankful I am that Megan was somehow able to get through those early years with a mother so distracted by grief – and emotionally distanced by fear. I was half a mother in more ways than one.

Now, because of TCF, I began to find a new focus for my maternal instincts and a new way to grow back into the loving mother I'd been before Lori died. As I tried to grow

to the task of helping those more newly bereaved than I, just as I'd had to grow to the task of being Lori and Megan's mother, I was benefiting three-fold. First, my "mother" energy, which is a huge part of me, was again flowing outward. Second, as I was learning ways to help others heal, I was learning them for myself. And third, once again, I began to feel that I was doing something important with my life, that my life mattered, that my life had purpose.

When I look at other bereaved parents who seem to have survived this great loss the most successfully, I find that they too have again found purpose. And often that purpose has something to do with the child who has died. Sometimes they work towards eradicating the reason their child died: drunk driving and cancer are two examples. Some start foundations in their child's name. Some take up and even finish the work that their child started.

Many bereaved parents, like me, have regained a sense of purpose through The Compassionate Friends. My work in TCF has given me a great sense of purpose, satisfaction in helping the newly bereaved at our monthly meetings, being part of the Steering Committee, a vital part of my chapter, and Chapter Leader. As Regional Coordinator I also try to give support to my region's chapters, and the ripples go out from there.

And just as important to me, besides this sense of purpose, TCF has allowed me to keep Lori more visibly in my life. Wherever I go, whatever I do for TCF, Lori's name is mentioned; Lori is not forgotten. Because what I do for TCF matters, and because all I do for TCF, I do in her name, Lori's life continues to matter, all these years after she left this earth. Through TCF, Lori remains in the forefront of all I do, the guiding star in the direction of my life. I could not have found a more loving or fitting way to honor her than I have through The Compassionate Friends. My grief and TCF have forced me to grow in ways of which I had never dreamed. And Lori has been with me every step of the way.

Healing the Grieving Heart Web Radio Show Is a Special Tool for Parents

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

Gentle, calming voices stream through your computer speakers as you listen to the archived and live web radio shows that comprise the "Healing the Grieving Heart" series. Live shows are at Noon ET on Thursdays. The archives are available 24 hours per day on the Compassionate Friends website.

Dr. Gloria Horsley, a professional adviser to The Compassionate Friends national organization, is the host of this web radio show. Dr. Horsley, who lost her son in a

vehicle accident, brings the professional insight and the unique experience of losing a child, to her broadcasts. Guests on her show are usually bereaved parents who have written books, or are professionals or active long time members of The Compassionate Friends. Each guest offers a unique perspective and helps to facilitate a distinctive flow of information and ideas.

The main message of this series is hope. While listening to the gentle voices of Dr. Horsley and the numerous guests and callers, I began to realize that losing a child changes us profoundly and forever, yet we will not stay in this darkest of places for the rest of our lives. We can and do move forward, not away, from the death of our child. We keep the memory and spirit of our child forever as a treasure within ourselves. We realize that life will never be the same, for our child is gone from our side. But we also realize that we will grow, become someone different, because of our loss and are destined to one day find a "new normal" with which we are at peace.

Archived shows can be found on the TCF website: compassionatefriends.org. Once at the website, cursor down the left side of the page. You will find "Healing the Grieving Heart" link here. The link contains information about the show, the host and a list of shows that are archived so that you can listen to them over and over at your leisure.

Of all the tools that I have found, this one is surely one of the best. While I read a great deal, listen to various web radio broadcasts throughout the day while working, write from time to time about my emotions and the loss of my child and attend monthly TCF meetings, this medium brings a new dimension to my coping options. The "Healing the Grieving Heart" broadcasts present a stream of soft voiced parents who have rediscovered themselves following the death of a child. When I want or need to hear words of hope, I listen. Before this show debuted, if I was in a particularly bad place or seeking hope, there was little I could do at that very moment.....nothing could ease my emptiness or give me solace. This show offers what I need at the time that I need it. The professionals offer gentle suggestions for coping, moving forward, making a bad day a little better and so much more. I have listened to five of the archived shows and plan to listen to each one. This is an outreach of soothing voices, wise suggestions and experienced empathy that each of us should experience as we continue life without our precious children.

We know life will never be the same. But now we do have hope that one day life will become a little bit sweeter, a little bit brighter and little bit happier for ourselves and our compassionate friends.

Update: *Healing the Grieving Heart* can be heard on the Web live at www.health.voiceamerica.com every Thursday at Noon EST and many of the shows are also archived on TCF's national website. Shows are also broadcast at 11 a.m. EST Sundays on a number of radio stations across the country and streamed online simultaneously at www.HealthRadioNetwork.com.

Choosing Life

*By Marcia F. Alig
TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey*

"It will never be the same. Never." As a bereaved parent, you have often heard or said these words to express grief's profound feelings of sorrow and disorientation. Your life has suddenly taken an unexpected course that appears both uncharted and endless. Bewildered, you vainly search for pathways back to your former life, until you confront the reality that there is no way back. Your child is dead forever. It is then that you may say, "...never the same."

This is the aspect of grief that Simon Stephens calls "The Valley of the Shadow." It is that very long time between the death of your child and your reinvestment in life. *Between*. It is not supposed to be a permanent resting place. Although some people do take up residence in the valley, it is a transition from the death of your child to life with renewed purpose.

The key to this transition is yourself. You must choose between life and the valley. You and only you can decide. And you must make that decision again and again, each day.

Giving in to the hopelessness of the valley is tempting. Choosing to move on toward life requires a great deal of work. You must struggle with the pain of grief in order to resolve it. It is a daily struggle full of tears, anger, guilt and self-doubt, but it is the only alternative to surrendering yourself to the valley.

Little by little you choose to move on. Little by little you progress toward the other side of the valley. It takes a very long time, far longer than your friends or relatives suspected. Far longer than you had believed – even prayed – that it would be. When one day you find yourself able to do more than choose merely to live but also how to live, you will know you are leaving the valley of the shadow. There will still be more work to do, more struggle and choosing. The valley, however, stretches behind rather than in front of you.

When you have resolved your grief by reinvesting in life, you will be able to realize that nothing is ever "the same." Life is change. We would not have it be otherwise, for that is the valley of the shadow. Change has the promise of beginning and the excitement of discovery.

Life is never the same. Life is change. Choose life!

OS OS

"It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens, but it's never gone."

~ Rose Kennedy

As Long As I Can

By Sascha. (Sascha's son Nino drowned at age 3; years later, her daughter Eve died by suicide at age 21.)

As long as I can, I will look at the world for both of us.
As long as I can, I will laugh with the bird, I will sing with
flowers, I will play to the stars, for both of us.

As long as I can, I will remember how many things on this
earth were your joy. And I will live as well as you would
want me to live, as long as I can.

Wounded Heart

*By Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
In Loving Memory of My Angels...
Michelle, Jerry & Danny
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*"Your broken heart requires at least as much care as a
broken bone. With proper care you can be confident that
you will heal. The same powerful forces that mend a broken
bone will heal your emotional pain, but a wounded heart
needs time and proper care to heal."*

~Harold Bloomfield, MD~

~~~~~

If someone fell and broke a leg, people would rush to  
their aid. They wouldn't stop to even think about it. Yet,  
when it's our hearts that are broken, few rush to our aid,  
and even fewer understand.

At first, we receive the cards and phone calls wishing  
us well and telling us "if there's anything I can do" ... but  
they soon taper off to a trickle. Then we begin to hear that  
we must "get on with our life," "we can't let it get us  
down," and we're told just how soon we should be "back to  
normal"... we're given a deadline of sorts. When we don't  
follow the acceptable standards for healing, we are thought  
to "need help"... the professional kind ... and we're told that  
we are "in denial."

These same people, who seem to have all of the  
answers, not only have never experienced the loss of a  
child, but also tend to not want to get too involved ...too  
close to our pain. They would rather stand off to the side

until we're back to our old selves ...whatever that is!  
They're uncomfortable when we speak of why our hearts  
are broken and they don't mention it for fear of reminding  
us of how our hearts broke in the first place... as if we could  
ever forget.

When they ask us, "How are you?"... it's more a  
greeting than a question. They don't want to hear how we  
ache inside, how lonely and empty we feel how desolate we  
feel. Why ... because they can't fix it. They can't make us  
whole again. And unlike a broken bone that's healed, we  
will never be as good as new.

We will be forever missing a part of what made us the  
person that we once were. When our child died, so did a  
part of our heart and where that piece was, now there is  
nothing ... only a gaping hole that nothing and no one can  
ever fill.

Unlike a broken bone, we will not mend in a few  
weeks ... in fact, we will never fully mend. We learn to live  
without that piece of our hearts ... to live with our loss, to  
survive ... one day at a time!

## TCF 'Online Support Community' Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing

The Compassionate Friends national website offers  
"virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community  
(live chats). This program was established to encourage  
connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and  
siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child.  
The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship.  
The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among  
friends; friends who understand the emotions you're  
experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as  
well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy  
and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under,"  
"Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "No Surviving Children,"  
"Survivors of Suicide." There are also sessions for  
surviving siblings.

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

# I Would Love to Make New Memories with You, but You're Gone and So I Never Will

By Lydia Burns, David's mom  
TCF Atlanta Chapter

My son David, age 31, was taken from us Friday, July 2, 2004. He was born Monday, September 11, 1972. Here are some memories and his picture.

I remember sitting and having breakfast with you. French toast, bacon, and coffee. I can almost smell the vanilla and cinnamon in the air.

I remember having lunch with you at Applebee's. It was the last eating out before you died. You were afraid to order something big because I was paying, but I made you. I am glad I did.

I remember cooking dinner and you came over the Sunday before you died. I made steak, mashed potatoes, corn, and an apple pie. I always enjoyed watching you eat. You enjoyed it so much. Yes, I did put 40 pounds on you; I am sorry for that, well sort of.

I remember going to see *Lord of the Rings*, three years in a row. I didn't understand these would be the last movies we'd see together – the four of us. Now we just don't go to the movies together, but there are so many.

I remember you eating my dad's Valium when you were two and thinking they were *M & Ms*. Oh, how sick you were. I'm glad you didn't do that again.

I remember the several times you walked off; you were found, and returned. I was so happy I just hugged you so. I would love to do that now.

I remember you trying to kick a chicken off the front porch and fell off busting your lip. You couldn't suck your thumb for awhile.

I remember how you always protected Heather. When you were six, you pushed down a little kid because he reached out and touched her. Who will protect her now?

I remember when Lou Brock broke your nose with a baseball. You bled and bled. However, you did get an autographed ball. You were cool with that.



I remember you going to Boy Scout camp and making biscuits (or was it corn bread?) and adding 3 cups of oil instead of a third of a cup. You learned how to read recipes after that. I can almost smell the campfire on your clothes.

I remember you breaking your thumb while riding your bicycle. You know what? I still have the cast.

I remember you were playing in the yard and Heather came running into the house telling us you had a stick stuck in your throat. And you did. Ouch.

I remember at Boy Scout camp that you volunteered to help the kids in other troops start their campfire.

I remember your rollover accident. You had a concussion. You couldn't remember anything, but you remembered us. I will always remember you too.

I remember when you were in high school, bringing Mike home, because he had no place to go. He stayed with us for almost three months.

I remember your high school prom, all the parades and football games, and you playing drums in nightclubs. I remember it all, but it's not the same. I want to do it all again with you – except maybe slower – and hold on to each moment.

I remember when you drove to Gainesville with a ring for Shannon and she broke your heart. I felt so bad. Heather and I mixed you a drink. God, it was awful, but you tried to drink some of it. We all cried with you.

I remember when you got in trouble in high school for wearing that BLTD t-shirt. Several others had one on also, but only you were singled out. I was called to school. That was their mistake.

I remember you skipping school and being spotted by my parents. Oh, and John called the house to see how you were.

I remember all the band practices at the house and the music was always so wonderful I would fall asleep. Boy can I use that now.

I remember going to Respectibles to watch Backwash play and you had a cigarette hanging out of your mouth. You said woops, because you told me you quit. I still have that caricature of you playing drums.

I remember going to work and seeing you in the parking lot of the Department of Financial Services building. God, how I miss seeing you.

I remember you asked for a list of things we might want for Christmas and you didn't pick anything out – you bought them all.

I remember all the kindness you showed to others, your friends, and your family. The special things you did that will always stay with me, but I want more.

I remember the love you gave, the hearts you broke and the girls that broke yours. My heart is broken and will never heal or be free of the pain.

I remember the many times you got sick. I always believed it when I told you that you would be fine and would get well. Why didn't I know this last time how bad you hurt? I would have held your hand and would have done something, but I was away for work.

I remember the good times, the bad times, and all the times we shared. I just want one more time, with you. Oh God, please, just let me make one more memory with my son!

David, I love you and miss you so.

Mom 7/1/2009

## I Remember September

*By Tracy Wilson, Mother of Terrell Wilson  
TCF Atlanta Chapter*

A cold and chilly Friday evening.

This day, I won't forget because – since then – not a day goes by that I don't feel like screaming.

You came in from your game, we talked, we laughed and we planned our events for the next day.

We had a good time that night I must say. I went to bed and you did the same.

The next conversation we had, you said you were in pain. I tried to gather my thoughts and remain calm at the same time.

I couldn't watch you sick, I had to get help on the line. I watched my baby fight with everything he had.

He even tried to protect me, as if this ordeal was not so bad.

As my baby struggled hard to beat whatever it was attacking him.

I stood there powerless 'cause this battle for him I couldn't win. He was holding onto his mommy's voice. It was all I could do for him; I had no choice.

There we were alone like we had been so many times before, but this time it was different. He was lying in my arms, and I'm waiting for the ambulance to walk through my door.

He let out this really long gasp and I let out a loud cry. Oh God, are you kidding me? Did my baby just die?

How could this be? My baby, my child. He was so young; there was not even one sign.

God, please, I'll do anything. Just turn back the hands of time. Bring him back to me this child of mine.

For I will never forget, I will always remember that chilly day back in September.

## July 4th—'Freedom' for Bereaved Parents?

*By Wayne Loder  
Lakes Area MI TCF Chapter*

July 4th ... Independence Day ...

A day most Americans celebrate their freedom. For bereaved parents, unfortunately, freedom of the body is far different than freedom of the mind.

Before our children died we knew we had the freedom to ...

- Watch them take their first step.
- Listen for their first word.
- Watch them step onto the school bus for the first time.
- Watch them go on their first date.
- Watch them graduate.
- Watch them walk down the aisle to be married.
- See our grandchildren be born.

**For bereaved parents these freedoms are gone forever.**

Why did we have to lose these freedoms?

Sometimes we lose these freedoms because the world has the wrong priorities. Sometimes we lose them because people abuse their freedoms.

What freedoms must be changed?

- The freedom of cancer to strike our children.
- The freedom of a drunk driver to be put back on the road with a slap on the wrist.
- The freedom of AIDS and other diseases to run rampant.
- The freedom of criminal students to obtain guns and kill their classmates.
- The freedom of drivers to ignore the speed limits with impunity.
- **And on and on and on.**

When these freedoms are exercised and we are unable to stop them, the deaths of our children destroy our freedom to pursue happiness in our lives.

Our country, of the people, by the people, and for the people, must wake up to the fact that freedom is a fragile commodity. As bereaved parents, we have become a living testimony to this fact.



## July, August, and September



**Amber Gilstrap**  
**July 3**

*Daughter of Kathleen Cornog*

**Mechelle A Murphy**  
**July 3**

*Daughter of Brenda J. Murphy*

**Tommy Boyert**  
**July 5**

*Son of Tom and Mary Boyert*

**Kay Cee Herring**  
**July 7**

*Daughter of David and Ginny Herring*

**Christopher Kuzela**  
**July 7**

*Son of Ed and Pat Kuzela*

**Jenny Moriarty**  
**July 12**

*Daughter of Larry Moriarty*

**Mervyn Lanier 'Corky' Twyman**  
**July 16**

*Son of Carol McNeal*

**Vernon Philipe Battle**  
**July 17**

*Son of Barbara Knox  
Brother of Glorqua Tarantine*

**Stephanie Christele Simon**  
**July 23**

*Daughter of Sandra Simon*

**Nicholas Ryan Gardner**  
**July 25**

*Son of Michelle and Dewey Gardner  
Grandson of Pilar Turk*

**Paul Perry**  
**July 25**

*Son of Mary L. Perry*

**Matthew Thomas Crowell**  
**July 27**

*Son of Barry and Doris Crowell*

**Michael Rice Lee**  
**July 29**

*Son of Anthony and Amber Lee*

**Arnessa Darlene Royster**  
**July 31**

*Daughter of Carolyn Gordon*

**Genna Watson**  
**July 31**

*Daughter of Gene and Mari Watson*

**Amanda Irene Smith**  
**August 1**

*Daughter of Earl and Paulette Cagle*

**Rachel Elizabeth Apperson**  
**August 2**

*Daughter of Frank and  
Julianne Apperson*

**Julian Oliver Carter**  
**August 12**

*Son of Bryan and Julie Carter*

**Paul Abraham**  
**August 13**

*Son of Alan and Deborah Abraham*

**Mashanda Nicole Taylor**  
**August 13**

*Daughter of Michelle Taylor-Scott*

**Natalie Marie Webb**  
**August 16**

*Daughter of Jennifer Webb*

**Taylor Arianna Mills**  
**August 17**

*Daughter of Zeporice Mills*

**Duane Clinton Byrd**  
**August 19**

*Son of Linda Byrd*

**Margie Ann Lind**  
**August 21**

*Daughter of Bette and Bob Lind*

**Christopher Lee Simpson**  
**August 22**

*Son of Tricia and Kenny Simpson  
Grandson of Elizabeth Luke*

**Brayden Michael Eanes**  
**August 27**

*Son of Kelly Eanes  
Grandson of Al and Jan Pittman*

**Brittany Ann Hopkins**  
**August 28**

*Daughter of Denise Hopkins*

**Brandon Marquis Williams**  
**August 28**

*Son of Selena Randolph*

**Joshua Todd Davis**  
**August 30**

*Son of Judy Davis*

**Demetrius O'Neal Span, Jr.**  
**September 2**

*Son of Calvin and Tammie  
Washington*

**Bradley James Peerson**  
**September 5**

*Son of Pam and Jon Peerson  
Grandson of Jackie Fuller  
Brother of Blake Peerson*

**Anthony Chad Willis**  
**September 6**

*Son of Mark and Ginger Willis*

**Xavier Khamani Ray**  
**September 7**

*Son of Stephanie Ray*

**David W. Burns**  
**September 11**

*Son of Lydia Burns*

**Raymond Ira Buckner**  
**September 15**

*Son of Vera R. Morrison*

**Anita Marepally**  
**September 15**

*Sister of Archana Vemulapalli-  
Marepally*

**Samuel Thomas Peek**  
**September 19**

*Son of Carol L. & Bobby Peek*

**Dane Tolson**  
**September 21**

*Son of Jeanie Lovelady*

**Mark East**  
**September 22**

*Son of Jeff East*

**Jessica Dodge**  
**September 25**

*Daughter of Dan and Tamie Dodge*

**Hadiyah Rasheedah Evans**  
**September 25**

*Daughter of Patricia Evans*

**Sherry Engel**  
**September 25**

*Daughter of Lou Ellen Huskey  
Sister of Andrea Huskey*

**Georgia Wimberly Pierce**  
**September 29**

*Daughter of Michael and Anna Pierce*

**Kawasiki S. Ricks**  
**September 29**

*Son of Beverly Ricks*





## July, August, September



**David W. Burns**

**July 2**

*Son of Lydia Burns*

**Meleia Warren Willis-Starbuck**

**July 7**

*Daughter of John and Kimberly Starbuck*

**Nichelle Yvette 'Nikki' Twyman**

**July 10**

*Daughter of Carol McNeal*

**Genna Watson**

**July 12**

*Daughter of Gene and Mari Watson*

**Paul Perry**

**July 13**

*Son of Mary L. Perry*

**Janice Benator**

**July 13**

*Daughter of Carol Wolper*

**Padraic Dirr**

**July 15**

*Son of Jim Dirr*

**Zekia M Rhodes**

**July 17**

*Granddaughter of Beverly Ricks*

**Autumn DuBose**

**July 19**

*Daughter of John DuBose*

**James Anthony Durham**

**July 22**

*Son of Cindy Durham*

*Brother of Katie Durham*

**Allen Palmer Shugart**

**July 23**

*Son of Kelli and Henry Shugart*

**Dr. Thomas Brown IV**

**July 27**

*Son of Lillie Brown*

**Shemariah Tafari Downer**

**July 25**

*Son of Barbara H. Forbes*

**Michael Btembke**

**August 3**

*Son of Ghakarhi Btembke*

**J'Muar Taylor**

**August 4**

*Son of Cheryl A. Taylor*

**Mechelle A. Murphy**

**August 7**

*Daughter of Brenda J. Murphy*

**Donald Wesley Carithers**

**August 8**

*Son of Susan and John Carithers  
Brother of Brooke Carithers and  
Jennifer Carithers Sanders*

**Reezin N. 'Chip' Swilley, Jr.**

**August 9**

*Son of Reezin and Elsie Swilley*

**Ronnie Keith Batchelor**

**August 14**

*Son of Ron Batchelor*

**Mandi Lynn Mast**

**August 15**

*Daughter of Diane and Daniel Mast*

**Amanda Kay Rose**

**August 15**

*Daughter of Barbara Rose and Jim Sinke*

**Jason Maham**

**August 17**

*Son of Trish Maham*

**Tommy Boyert**

**August 18**

*Son of Tom and Mary Boyert*

**Clarissa Cuninghame**

**August 20**

*Daughter of Winston and Judy Cuninghame*

**Brian Patrick Devine**

**August 21**

*Son of Eileen and Patrick Devine*

**Jennifer Gryzinski**

**August 21**

*Daughter of Lisa Mary Katz*

**Carrie Ann Plumley**

**August 21**

*Daughter of Deborah Plumley*

**Annie Hope Shlevin**

**August 21**

*Daughter of Barbara Shlevin*

**Antwain Danta Whatley**

**August 21**

*Son of Gloria Whatley*

**James Daniel Smith**

**August 26**

*Son of Judith Smith*

**Anita Alford**

**September 2**

*Daughter of Selma Calaman*

**Chad Gordon**

**September 3**

*Son of Jayne and Wayne Newton  
Brother of Lisa Gordon Remshik*

**Joshua Todd Davis**

**September 8**

*Son of Judy Davis*

**Spencer McCrea Oedel**

**September 11**

*Son of Amy Lighthill*

**Carter Martin**

**September 12**

*Son of Scott and Leigh Ann Martin*

**Mark Cozine**

**September 14**

*Son of Anne Franzen*

**Michael Moskowitz**

**September 14**

*Brother of Arnie Moskowitz*

**Terrell Lamont Wilson**

**September 15**

*Son of Tracy Wilson*

**Dane Tolson**

**September 16**

*Son of Jeanie Lovelady*

**Sharon Elizabeth Zick**

**September 25**

*Daughter of Paul and Rebecca Zick*

**Marcellus Montez Richardson**

**September 26**

*Son of Paulette Perry*

**Michelle Reeves**

**September 26**

*Daughter of Jim and BJ Reeves*

**Ashley Craig**

**September 27**

*Son of La Tangie Craig*

**Billy Hawley**

**September 27**

*Son of Bill and Carol Hawley*

*Brother of Alan Hawley*

**Brittany Ann Hopkins**

**September 27**

*Daughter of Denise Hopkins*

**David Underwood**

**September 29**

*Son of Sunny Underwood*



## TCF National Organization Now on Facebook

Please visit and help promote The Compassionate Friends National Organization's new Facebook page by becoming a fan. You can get there by clicking on the link from TCF's national website home page at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). Or, you can log into Facebook and search for The Compassionate Friends/USA.

"We want this to be both an informative and supportive place for those of us who are mourning the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild," says TCF's Executive Director Patricia Loder. "All are welcome to leave messages and talk about the child and their grief. As in our meetings, we especially appreciate shared insights about anything that has brought you comfort, hope, or some measure of peace."

Our Facebook page will provide a forum for free and open conversation. While messages will be reviewed, they will not be screened before they are posted. So we are asking members to be gentle and respectful of one another and to use common sense in their posts – no offensive language, no overt selling of products or services and no religious proselytizing. Also, keep in mind that all opinions expressed are those of the individual poster and do not necessarily reflect those of The Compassionate Friends, Inc. or its sponsors.

In addition to the social support aspect, The Compassionate Friends/USA Facebook page will have information about upcoming events such as conferences, the Walk to Remember, and the Worldwide Candle Lighting. Please visit often and contribute to the conversation.

In the near future, TCF will also be expanding our social media presence in Twitter. Watch for an announcement. These social media initiatives are important to TCF because they will help increase public awareness about our organization and better enable us to fulfill our mission to help bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents.

For more information, you may call TCF's National Office toll-free at 877-969-0010 or write [Wayne@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:Wayne@compassionatefriends.org).

## TCF Atlanta:

The Compassionate Friends of Atlanta is also on Facebook. We invite you to join.

For more information, click the following [link](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=43057397614): <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=43057397614>

You will need to log into Facebook to join the group. You will also need a Facebook account (it's free).

Our hope is that you will be able to connect to someone to help you in your grief journey. Remember "We Need Not Walk Alone."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

*If love could have saved you,  
you would have lived forever*  
~ **Author Unknown**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

*People will forget what you said,  
people will forget what you did,  
but people will never forget how you made them feel.*  
~ **Maya Angelou**

## 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 chapter.

The following donations are in support of the Atlanta Chapter newsletter, candlelight service, Website and other outreach.

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

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



## Love Gifts

In Loving Memory of Michael Btembke, from his father Ghakarhi Btembke, Norcross, GA

In Loving Memory of Michael Moskowitz, from Gayle Brown, Atlanta, GA

In Loving Memory of Joey Capron, from his mother Carmen Capron, Atlanta, GA

In Loving Memory of Ronald Taus, from his mother Dena Hubbard, Lilburn, GA

In Loving Memory of Christopher Lee Simpson, from his grandmother Elizabeth Luke, Auburn, GA

In Loving Memory of Bo Tuggle, from his parents Johnny and Connie Tuggle, Snellville, GA

In Loving Memory of Ashley Craig, from her mother La Tangie Craig, Hampton, GA

**All Walk to Remember donations are listed on page 3.**

## TCF Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends.

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NEW SUBSCRIPTION - RENEWAL - CHANGE FORM - DONATIONS

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

Please print, filling in all applicable blanks/boxes:

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

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

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

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

Do you prefer to receive the newsletter by (check one): \_\_\_\_\_Mail \_\_\_\_\_E-mail (provide e-mail address above)

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

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

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

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

Names and ages of all surviving siblings living with you: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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

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