



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Meg Avery, Editor

WINTER 2012/2013

December, January & February

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month. **next meetings: Dec. 20, Jan. 17 and Feb. 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](mailto:jc30044@flash.net) or [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com)

TCF Atlanta website: [www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org)

GA Regional Coordinator Sandra Stinson, [sandrastinsontcf@yahoo.com](mailto:sandrastinsontcf@yahoo.com)

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

[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

Dear Friends,

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

We would love your input for the newsletter, Poetry, articles and comments submitted by parents, siblings and grandparents are an import part of each issue. Our next issue, Spring 2013 will cover the months of March, April & May.

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



The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause, is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they walk the grief journey. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings and issues that evolve around the death experience of a child.

### *Our Credo...*

*We need not walk alone.*

*We are The Compassionate Friends*

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

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

*Your pain become my pain,*

*Just as your hope becomes my hope.*

*We come together from all walks of life,*

*From many different circumstances.*

*We are a unique family because we represent many races,  
creeds and relationships. We are young, and we are old.*

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

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

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

*We need not walk alone.*

*We are The Compassionate Friends.*

*Copyright 2007*

## Coping with Grief: Winter Blues

When the weather gets colder and the days get shorter, we often find ourselves feeling low. Some people call this the Winter Blues. When you are grieving, those blues can feel overwhelming. Grief itself is hard to cope with and cold winds and longer nights can make those feelings seem more intense. Here are a few ideas that may help you cope with the Winter Blues:

- Winter only lasts a few months. Use this time to reflect on your relationship with the person who died. Sometimes in our efforts to deny our loss, we rob ourselves of precious memories.
- Reach out to friends or family when you can. Often our isolation is worse because we do not allow ourselves time with others. You are not alone. There are many other people going through a similar experience. Although your relationship with your loved one is special, other people can understand. Take the risk to ask someone over for coffee or tea. Share with them.
- Take time to look through picture albums. Gather family to share stories. Make a new tradition during the dreary months of winter for family to gather for an evening of remembering. The holidays are over and the pressure is off. Maybe other people are feeling the same way and are afraid to talk about it.
- Try a grief support group. Sometimes all we need is to know other people hear us and understand. A group can help you to know you are normal.
- Read ... favorite stories, comedies, novels, or information about grief to understand your own reactions better. Somehow reading about such topics helps us know we are not alone. You can look for grief materials in your local library, church, or local TCF chapter.
- Take good care of yourself. Eat right, rest and pamper your body. This goes for any season. Your body is under a tremendous amount of stress in adjusting to your loss.
- Since grief affects us physically, paying attention to our bodies is important. Whether you prefer to do things alone or with others, physical activity helps. Taking a walk, doing simple aerobics, indoor swimming, playing racquetball or other activities can help you keep your body ready for the continued adjustment to loss. Feeling better physically can make a difference.

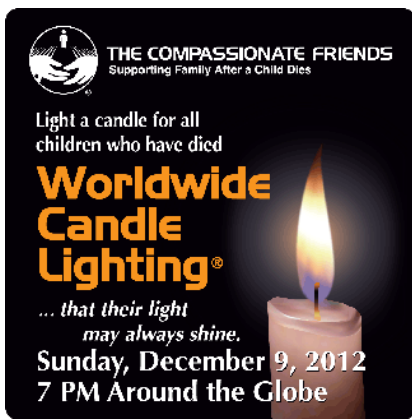
- If you feel sad and need to cry, know that is a normal reaction. You are not weak if you need to show your emotions.
  - Write a letter to your loved one. Sometimes we need to communicate with them. Going to the cemetery is okay and normal. If the weather prevents that, a letter can be very helpful.
  - Remember that you will survive this loss. The pain and ache can seem like it will last forever. The intensity will lessen in time, although you will always remember your loved one. Time does not necessarily "heal" all wounds, but it can help us adjust to the change. Take it minute by minute ... then day by day.
- From TCF Newsletter, Pittsburgh, PA

### *Heartfrost*

Does it not seem  
As if in wintertime  
Your mind remembers  
All those sunny things  
That warmed you once?  
And does it seem  
As if you have not smiled forever?  
Now take your hands,  
One in the other hand,  
And do remember  
All those sunny things again.  
Again.  
And let them warm you now.  
~~ The smile will find you.

By Sascha Wagner  
From "The Poems of Sascha Wagner"





## National Children's Memorial Day

Sunday, December 9, 2012

Last year we had a small informal gathering on National Children's Memorial Day, which is always the second Sunday in December. The Compassionate Friends has a World Wide Candle Lighting Ceremony on this day at 7 pm in every time zone for one hour, creating a continuous wave of light around the world in memory of our loved ones. TCF Gwinnett met last year at the Lawrenceville Historic Courthouse Gazebo at 7 pm. Depending on the weather, we will try to have a **"Gathering at the Gazebo" at 7 pm on Dec. 9** for one hour. There is electricity in the gazebo so we were able to have music last year and will plan on the same this year. Hopefully the weather will cooperate so we may gather together and light candles in memory of the love & spirit of our child, children, siblings and/or grandchildren whom we love, miss and remember, especially during the holiday season.

Information will be shared via email as it gets closer to Dec. 9. If you have not ever received an email from TCF Gwinnett, then you are not on that mailing list. Please send an email to [tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com) to be included on chapter email monthly reminders and announcements.

## Worldwide Candle Lighting

All of our lost children, young and old,  
We gather now and gently hold,  
Remembering with our every breath,  
That love never ends, not even in death.

A heartbroken group of fathers and mothers,  
With a sorrow unimaginable to others,  
Struggling to overcome the most devastating blow,  
Bonded in grief we never thought to know.

With each candle that we light,  
We feel our children's spirits burning bright,  
Every beloved child's face we see,  
Forever in our memory.

In the candles' golden glow,  
Even though our tears still flow,  
We cherish every moment we had with you,  
Though the days were far too few.

We love you now, we'll love you forever,  
As your parents we will always treasure,  
The blessing of our daughters and sons,  
Our dearly loved precious ones.

By C.A. Stevenson, written in loving memory of our son,  
Graham Thomson Stevenson, age 22  
From We Need Not Walk Alone,  
The Compassionate Friends Magazine, Winter/Spring 2009-  
2010



## Monthly Meeting on December 20

At our TCF Gwinnett meeting on Dec. 20, we will have a candle lighting ceremony before our sharing groups. Please bring a photo of your loved one, a candle and if you'd like, his or her favorite Christmas decoration or ornament. Our candles will burn throughout our meeting that evening. Please join us for our special December meeting starting promptly at 7:30 pm.

## *December, January & February 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

### *December*

Jonathan Hesfeld	Dec. 2
Arnessa Royster	Dec. 3
Jessica Rose Riley	Dec. 3
Bryant Lawrence	Dec. 5
Johnia Berry	Dec. 6
Rachael Fouquet	Dec. 7
Frankie Ortiz	Dec. 13
Tim Walton	Dec. 15
Don Walton	Dec. 15
Connor Devine	Dec. 16
Patrick Kelley	Dec. 20
Terry O'Donnell	Dec. 21
Christopher Patterson	Dec. 22
Julie Lyn Donaldson	Dec. 23
Adyson Claire Smith	Dec. 23
Norma Mucha	Dec. 25
Samantha Mucha	Dec. 25
Matthew Turner	Dec. 26
Michael LeVierge	Dec. 27
Brannon Springer	Dec. 28
Michael Rivero	Dec. 28
Jason Pettus	Dec. 30



### *January*

Gary Pruitt	Jan. 1
Gabrielle, Malachi & Xavier PierreLouis	Jan. 1
Clayton Shadinger	Jan. 2
Jeff Bradley	Jan. 4
Karissa Palmer	Jan. 7
Hope McKenzie	Jan. 7
Kimberly Lange	Jan. 11
Justin Todd Stephens	Jan. 11
Jayla Cook	Jan. 11
Clayton Olvey	Jan. 12
Brandon Harper	Jan. 16
David Whitley	Jan. 17
Michael Dale	Jan. 19
Christina VauTrot	Jan. 20
Amanda & Logan Mills	Jan. 20
Natalie Sparks	Jan. 22
Ryan Gilbride	Jan. 28
Shylah Crown	Jan. 29
Kimberly Dawn Marshall	Jan. 30
Amy Hannigan	Jan. 30

### *February*

Christian Pach	Feb. 3
Olivia Rodriguez	Feb. 4
Jamie Ann Quillen	Feb. 9
Jimmy West	Feb. 11
Dee Cooper	Feb. 11
Michael Faulkner	Feb. 11
Fara "Nicole" Choate	Feb. 13
Clayton Sechrist	Feb. 20
Chris Moise	Feb. 24
Kathryn Collier	Feb. 24
Matthew Jones	Feb. 26
Kapri Bradley	Feb. 27



### *Our Children*

I like to think that they are encircling us,  
Sunlight in their hair,  
Starlight in their eyes,  
Holding hands in love.  
The older ones nurturing the younger,  
Helping them to grow.  
I like to think that they are one,  
As we are ONE,  
A family of love!

By Gloria Grant, TCF Miami, FL

## WE REMEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

### December

Christina VauTrot	Dec. 1
Xavier Williams	Dec. 2
Connor Devine	Dec. 3
Tim Walton	Dec. 6
Mark William Evans, Jr.	Dec. 6
Shylah Crown	Dec. 6
Lindsey Marie Townsend	Dec. 13
Amanda Mills	Dec. 15
Jimmy West	Dec. 15
Jessica Norwood	Dec. 16
Donelle Blackwell	Dec. 17
Cristina Jane Vargas Howerton	Dec. 18
Kyle Copija	Dec. 20
Patrick Kelley	Dec. 20
Robert West	Dec. 21
Michael Faulkner	Dec. 24

### January

Ryan Pilgrim	Jan. 1
Terry O'Donnell	Jan. 2
Linda Strauss	Jan. 4
Michael Dale	Jan. 6
Brandon Harper	Jan. 7
Tiffany Maxwell	Jan. 18
Jessica Bryl	Jan. 19
Tyler Ivey Rice	Jan. 28
Christopher Boyd	Jan. 29
Christian Pach	Jan. 30
Justin Ellington	Jan. 31

*Where are you? I have been searching for your  
continuation in a space that seems finished. I have  
wanted to believe you still exist somewhere else,  
somewhere separate, but near to me.*

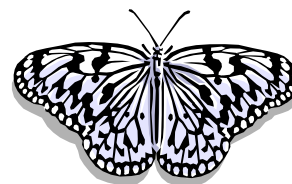
*I need only to look inside. I will find you there, bright  
and whole, shining steady at the end of a silver thread  
of love that will connect us forever to the most  
powerful truth that has ever been or will ever be.*

From "Safe Passage – Words to Help the Grieving Hold Fast  
and Let Go" by Molly Fumia

## February



Clayton Thomas Sechrist	Feb. 1
Kimberly Lange	Feb. 5
Matthew Turner	Feb. 5
Clayton Shadinger	Feb. 8
Ronald "Scott" Long	Feb. 9
John Andrew Sims	Feb. 12
Dee Cooper	Feb. 14
Christopher Patterson	Feb. 15
Cameron McClure	Feb. 16
Brenden Elbaz	Feb. 16
Xavier PierreLouis	Feb. 17
Drew Adams	Feb. 20
Stephanie Fortner	Feb. 21
Bryant Lawrence	Feb. 24
David Whitley	Feb. 26
Julie Duncan	Feb. 27
Max Fiandt	Feb. 27
Gerard Robertson	Feb. 28



## Birthday Invitation

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



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



## Our Crystal Christmas Tree

A six foot tree, tons of colored lights, and hanging from each branch a collection of ornaments collected over 23 years. The kids made some in grade school with their names and pictures and hand prints, we bought personalized ones of all colors and shapes, and every year the day after Christmas, we would get up early and go shopping for the half priced Hallmark ornaments. This shopping spree resulted in our new stash of decorations for the next year. 23 years of tradition and seasonal ritual evolved from decorating our tree. For 23 years we couldn't wait to put up the tree. For 23 years we would carefully repack the decorations to be safe for the next year. Then before the 24th holiday, our son Ben died. That family tradition and ritual came to a screaming, neck-breaking halt. The holiday season in general and Christmas in particular became an instant painful non-event. Our first two Christmases after Ben died we did not even think of a tree; the traditional stash was left packed away so as not to bring back those painful memories. We were pretty sure that if we ever gave Christmas any attention, it would have to be completely different than before. The third Christmas I started to miss the tree, but Jane was not quite ready. As we walked through the malls we saw different colored artificial trees, white, silver, pink, and even black; we didn't bother looking at green trees. For a while we thought about a black tree to match our feelings but we finally wound up buying a tree online and we put up a 4 ft artificial pink tree for Christmas. Talk about change, WOW! It was still too hard, though, to unpack those ornaments collected over those 23 years. Everything brought back a memory, and they were all accompanied by pain. We had a pink tree but no decorations; there didn't seem to be an answer that we could both live with. The answer came in gradual intertwined steps. Over the years I had become infatuated with the concept of stars. I found multiple grief quotes about stars; I used a star background for our Candle Light program; I wrote an essay about the stars that was published in *We Need Not Walk Alone*; I helped make a picture board of our children on a star background to display at the TCF

conference in Michigan; and I even put some glow in the dark stars on the ceiling over my bed in the shape of Orion. I could not get stars out of my mind.

Meanwhile, with our bare pink tree in our living room, I was browsing through the Sunday ads and saw an ornament in the shape of a star that surrounded a globe. The star had little studs of crystal imbedded in it. Off we rushed to the store. I loved it. I wanted to buy several but Jane convinced me to wait till they went on sale to get more than one. Of course the ornament was a big hit and they sold out almost immediately. We still laugh today about waiting till something goes on sale.

The tiny crystal pieces in the ornament were from a company called Swarovski. Researching this firm, I discovered a world I was never exposed to, crystal collectibles. To make it even more exciting, they design a crystal star ornament each year. Immediately, I bought the current 2006 edition. Soon afterward, I started to wonder about the 2004 ornament since that was the year Ben died. To my surprise the 2004 design was a star surrounded by smaller stars - E-bay to the rescue. A Christmas tree is back in our house, the tree is decorated with stars and white lights (not colored) and annually we look forward to a new ornament. Each year we carefully repack the stars. We will probably never go back to the traditional green tree with colored lights and that's OK. Our new world tradition is evolving. It's all the same, just different, and that is something we are learning to live with.

## Ben's Dad - Herb

TCF Huntsville Co-Leader

*Season's Greetings  
Leave your life open  
To the memories,  
And to the promises,  
Of Christmas.*

By Sasha Wagner  
from "The Poems of Sascha Wagner"



# Chanukah

At this season of life we  
remember the light you brought  
into our lives:

The light of your laughter.

The light of your wit and  
intelligence.

The light of your love.

May the time be not distant when the memory of  
these lights will illuminate our hearts and minds and  
eradicate the darkness within.



Stephanie Haas  
TCF Rockland County NY

## Only December

Feelings heavy,  
Tears and tears.  
Will the darkness last?  
Or is it ~  
Only December?

Hadn't past months  
Brought peace and hope?  
Where is the strength  
Of October –  
And November?  
Lights, carols, ornaments on trees,  
Cards from friends.  
Happy times in seasons past.  
We remember,  
We remember.

Will January bring  
Light at last?  
Will we be stronger then,  
For making it through  
This December?  
When people ask,  
How I'm doing, I say,  
"Well,  
You know,  
It's December..."

By Genessee Bourdeau Gentry from her book  
Stars in the Deepest Night

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hurrahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try.



But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year? I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at The Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, be-cause that is truly a way to help ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

Dory Rooker  
TCF, Upper Valley, VT

## NEWS FROM TCF GWINNETT

### *New Chapter Leader*

Hello TCF Family!

I may have met some of you at the last TCF meeting. My name is Candace Jordan and my son Marcus Reid was killed in 2007. Meg introduced me as the person willing to come in an assist, help, serve as the Chapter leader for the Gwinnett Chapter. I wanted to personally introduce myself. I moved to Georgia in December of 1988. Marcus was three then. We moved from Buffalo, NY and most of my family remains there. I can count the number of family members here in Georgia on one hand!

We both loved Georgia and quickly made it our home. I worked for AT&T for nearly ten years before my layoff, and now I work for Wyndham Garden Hotels in Duluth Ga. Marcus left behind a son, Tristan Reid who is now six. He has 4 siblings so I claim to be a grandparent of five! What a blessing to me they are.

I haven't created new Holiday traditions yet, as I have not found that stable balance. Over the past 5 years, my friends and limited family do their best to make sure I am not alone. (The loneliness I have to muster through) I pray the same for all of you today and this season.

Other things I am involved in are: GNLI (Gwinnett Neighborhood Leadership Institute), PLI-Gwinnett Stopp (Parent Leadership Group that fights for school aged kids who are troubled/disabled), Gwinnett NAACP, Certified Community Organizer, and Youth Mentor. I am currently working with a friend whose son got himself involved with Gang Activity and is facing stiff sentencing- where we are creating a program for Crime Victims affected by Gang Activity. We are in the early stages of planning and brainstorming; but we both feel the effects of the damage it does to families, communities and the economy.

I hope that my participation in TCF will be a long one. I promise not to come with all the answers, but I will give my heart.

Be well, and be in touch- we will NOT walk alone.

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Candace L Jordan

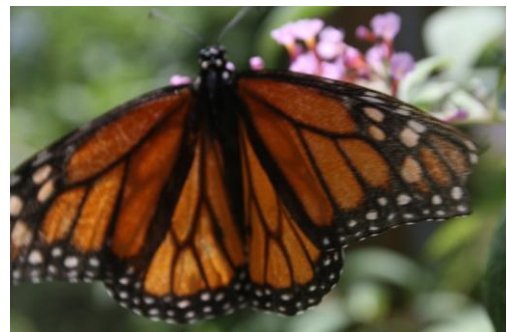
678-499-9587, candace1288@gmail.com

*Note from Meg Avery:* After 10 years as chapter leader, I truly believe that this is the time for change and Candace is the right person to help TCF continue on the path of help, hope & understanding for bereaved parents. TCF was, and still is, a lifesaver to me since my 14 year old son James died in September, 1997. I will continue as newsletter editor. It has been helpful and healing for me to receive support & guidance from so many TCF parents and in turn, to offer hugs and encouragement to those who find TCF. It is true, that we need not walk alone. My life has been enriched and blessed by all I've met in this wonderful organization that I wish none of us had reason to join. Please offer Candace Jordan your help when she begins as your TCF Gwinnett Chapter Leader in February 2013.

### **Steering Committee Meeting**

There are opportunities to give back and to help out with the "behind the scenes" efforts for our local chapter. We need new volunteers to successfully continue the efforts begun when the Gwinnett Chapter was created in 1994. Volunteer opportunities range from helping to set up a meeting, becoming a facilitator, and making phone calls.

This is a great way to give back in memory of your child after you have found hope, encouragement and strength from TCF to survive & thrive in spite of life's worst tragedy. Making the change from needing help & finding help to giving help & support to new parents is another healing milestone. **Our annual Steering Committee Meeting will be held in mid-January or early February. Please call or e-mail Meg Avery, 770-932-5862, tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com if you would like to attend our meeting.**





## 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. The death of a child of any age, from any cause, is a shattering experience for a family. The Compassionate Friends understands that grief for a child lasts longer and is more intense than society commonly recognizes. Other grieving parents can offer empathy and understanding of this loss, while also recognizing that each person’s grief is unique.

## Grief Support For Siblings

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

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

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and go to Resources/Siblings.

## To All Siblings This Holiday Season...

Be guided by the reality that there is no right or wrong way to celebrate the holidays after your sibling has died. Do what you need to do to get yourself through the holidays. We grieve differently than our parents do. Yes, we need to respect their grief, but we need to remember ours. Our siblings would want us to laugh and sing the Christmas carols, but we just may not be ready yet.

Guilt? Oh, yes, we will feel that this holiday season. But we may also celebrate their lives in our own special way. Whatever you choose to do, do what’s good for you. Everyone is at a different stage in their grief. The holidays make the reality of loss even harder. I hope this holiday season you can find peace and love in memories. Please know you are not alone.

*By Vera, Sara’s sister, from the TCF St. Paul Chapter Newsletter*

## THE VILLAGE SIBLING SUPPORT GROUP

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

## 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](mailto:debra@katesclub.org) or phone 404-347-7619.

Would you like to order a quilt made of your child's tee shirts? Deana Martin, Amanda & Logan's mom, had a beautiful quilt made and is sharing the information with us.

Elizabeth Longbrake makes these wonderful high quality quilts. She can be contacted by telephone at 678-377-9404 or by e-mail at

[elizlongbrake@aol.com](mailto:elizlongbrake@aol.com) The cost for the T shirt quilts are \$150-\$400 depending on size and style desired.



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

### **GAINESVILLE SUPPORT GROUP**

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

### **“GOOD GRIEF” Support Group in Jefferson**

Meets the first Saturday of every month at 10 am at the Integrity Counseling & Personal Development Center, phone 706-387-0573, [www.integrityofjefferson.com](http://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](mailto:deana.martin@merial.com)

### **SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP**

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

### **Support Group in Gainesville Rock Goodbye Angel**

We are a family of bereaved parents who have come together to provide an organization serving and assisting those who have experienced a loss due to miscarriage, stillbirth, perinatal loss or neonatal loss. If you or someone you know needs support during this time, please contact us. The group meets every Monday at 7 pm at Lanier Park Campus, 675 White Sulphur Road, Gainesville. For info, contact Angela at [angela@rockgoodbyeangel.com](mailto:angela@rockgoodbyeangel.com). [www.rockgoodbyeangel.org](http://www.rockgoodbyeangel.org)



## Valentines Day

If I could write a letter to heaven  
And send it up to you,  
I would drop everything I am doing  
To show how much I miss you  
The letter would not be very long  
In fact, only a few sentences that need to be said.  
Because I would only write what's in my heart  
None of the questions in my head.  
Questions like why did you leave  
Why did this happen to you  
Why didn't I get to say good-bye  
Or why were our days together so few.  
No, if I could write a letter to heaven,  
And send it up to you,  
This is exactly what I would write  
And exactly what I would do....  
"to my dear child who left too soon  
I want you to know I miss you oh so much  
I can't wait to see your smile  
I can't wait to feel your touch  
I am surviving down here  
I look for more strength in any way  
I think about you all the time  
Every minute of every day,  
But the most important thing  
The one thing I really need to say  
Is that I love you to heaven and back  
In my heart you will always stay."  
I would place a kiss upon the page  
And fold it up real tight  
I would place it in the mailbox  
And send you one every night  
So if I could write a letter to heaven  
And send it up to you  
That is what I would say  
With every word so true  
It's short and sweet  
But straight from my heart  
The very place that you will always be  
Until we are no longer apart.  
~unknown~



From the Grieving Mothers Facebook page

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

### 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:*

Robert Coltman, from his dad, Barnet Coltman

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

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

*Donations may be mailed to our treasurer:*

**Barbara Dwyer, 4905 Pond Ridge Lane, Cumming, GA 30041.**

(Please make checks payable to TCF Gwinnett.)