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:
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 ic30044@flash.net or tcfgwinnett@yahoo.com
TCF Atlanta website: www.tcfatlanta.org
GA Regional Coordinator Sandra Stinson, sandrastinsontcf@yahoo.com
The Compassionate Friends National Office: 1-877-969-0010
www.thecompassionatefriends.org

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

We would love your input for the newsletter. Poetry, articles and comments submitted by parents, siblings and grandparents are an import part of each issue. Our next issue, 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 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 Collier  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

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.

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
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, because 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
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 and 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.
--
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 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 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 The cost for the T shirt quilts are $150-$400 depending on size and style desired.

**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 for more information.

**SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP**
Meets the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm at The Warehouse at Family Festival, 5095 Post Rd, Cumming, 30040. The Meeting Room is located past The Land of 1000 Hills Coffee Bar, down the hall, first door on the right. For info contact Sherry 404-660-0907, sherryunwala@yahoo.com or Karen, 770-355-1024, Karen_copi@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. www.rockgoodbyeangel.org

**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 or phone 770-598-5556, or call Gail Beard at 678-787-8967

**“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. 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
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 goodbye
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 McMain; 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.)