



The Compassionate Friends

Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

JAN/FEB/MARCH, 2019

A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

Our chapter no longer offers monthly meetings. Our next event will be our TCF Annual Balloon Lift-Off Wednesday, May 8, 2019

Registration will be at 6:00 p.m.
Program starts at 6:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church
502 Eldridge Road
Sugar Land, Texas

Directions: Eldridge Rd. (FM 1876) intersects Hwy. 90A two lights west of the Sugar Land exit of Hwy 59. The church is north of 90A, just past the RR tracks, the second building on the right. Enter the double doors at the back of the building.

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This newsletter may be reproduced and given to anyone who may find comfort from it.

“Another”

Another birthday
Another year on their date of death
Another holiday
Another new year

There is a keen awareness when “another” is looming. The awareness can be worse than “another” itself. The days and weeks leading up to “another” can be distressing. These days and weeks start a season of additional grieving. We grieve our loss but that there is “another.”

It’s as if our grief has a rewind mechanism. The grieving is not the same as the first days, weeks, or months but it sometimes can be as intense. The uncertainty of how I will feel on “another” leaves me sometimes feeling nauseous. It’s as if I’m on a merry-go-round of agony and heartache.

There’s internal pressure that I should not feel as badly as I did on the previous “another.” But “another” seems to be taking me farther away from my loved one. “Another” seems to purposefully try to dim my memories. There’s external pressure placed that “another” should not even be significant anymore. “Another” to outside others must surely mean I am somehow less affected by this forever loss. Life does not stop to let me fully prepare.

“Another” sometimes brings along its partner of sleeplessness, irritability, and impatience. Though many have tried, “another” cannot be escaped no matter how hard one tries. “Another” unnecessarily reminds me of my forever, unending loss.

If there’s anything I am certain of with “another” it is that I am not alone. I know all my compassionate friends are going through the same thing on their “another’s.” I know they understand “another” and that “We need not walk alone.”

Tony's Mom, Debbie Rambis

FIVE LESSONS GRIEF TEACHES

By Maria Housden

Posted on the National TCF website on January 4th, 2019

Twenty-two years of grief changes a lot of things. I am a new person every day. I never expected to survive my daughter's death. For months after, I prayed to die. More than once, I considered taking my own life, though I could not leave all I love here.

There is no good way or time to lose a child. When someone you love dies, everything unnecessary falls away. I have learned to see grief as a spiritual practice, and it has taught me to see life in new ways.

TRUTH: telling it and living it

My daughter Hannah died of cancer at the age of three. This is the first true moment in my human story. Everything I am begins with this. The truth of Hannah's death is fierce and unrelenting. I cannot change it, but I can change the way I live with it.

When Hannah died, my life entered a 'no bull sh*t, no drama' zone. I only had time and energy for the few things that mattered. I lost my politeness and learned to tell the truth. I let the phone ring and stopped reading fiction.

Pretending not to grieve does not make our children less dead. When tears are not seen as weakness, sorrow becomes a wise teacher. I also see now that truth is mutable. Truth changes as we change, and it waits until we are ready to see it.

JOY: Finding it in the darkest places

For a long time after Hannah's death, I was afraid to laugh or smile. I didn't want to betray her suffering by feeling happy. As time passed, this feeling lifted. I smiled more and cried less. I noticed signs and synchronicities that reminded me of Hannah.

Joy is fleeting when grief makes a home in your life. I learned to find it in the darkest places. Saying 'yes' at the moment reveals unexpected happiness. I rarely make plans ahead of time now, as I can't be certain how I will feel. This way of seeing allows us to release the need for everything to be perfect. Joy is the possibility of happiness in every moment, the feeling that we are right where we need to be.

FAITH: from "my will be done" to "thy will be done"

Three months after Hannah's death, I stood by the side of a road, prepared to take my own life. I was not afraid of death; no matter what happens Hannah is already there. As a truck approached, I suddenly became aware of my lungs breathing. I forgot about the truck and focused on my breath. I realized that something in me is

still choosing life. I stayed alive to find out why. There are no words to describe the space left absent when a child dies. The love you feel has nowhere to go. The longer your child is gone, the more you miss them. This missing becomes a part of you. In my grief, I began to explore other religions and belief systems, hungry for validation of life after death. The God I believe in now is not the God that I grew up with. Though Christianity remains the first language of my faith, I now see threads of truth connecting many understandings. For me, God is a force of a thousand names and one love. Hannah's spirit lives on as part of everything.

Strange comfort this holding of everything in one place. Yet I see an intelligence beyond imagining which orchestrates life and nature. While it is painful to accept Hannah's death, I also see her life making a difference in this world. Someone once described the Earth as the planet for slow-learners. Faith trusts and breathes when it's all we can do.

COMPASSION: from specialness to belonging

I do not know why Hannah died and other children didn't. At first, I felt a sense of specialness. No one could know the depth of my pain. For a while, I didn't want to speak with anyone unless they had lost a child. Gradually, I began to connect with other people.

Forgiveness is key throughout the journey of grief: forgiveness of those who live and of those who die. As I learn to forgive myself, I find it easier to forgive others. Our intent in harnessing grief makes transformation possible. 'Grief' shares the same root as 'grave,' 'gravity,' and 'gravitation.' It is a force with weight. Once engaged, it can be redirected.

When Hannah was first diagnosed, one of her doctors gave us good advice. He said, "Remember, no matter what happens, make the best decision you can with the information you have AT THAT TIME." Of course, we would change things if we knew then what we know now.

There is no solace in blaming ourselves and others for not knowing.

Although I sometimes have less patience for other people and their problems, I see each of us is a unique lens in a shared experience. Compassion softens our gaze and allows us to appreciate new perspectives. When we reach beyond our specialness, we realize we are not alone.

WONDER: from needing to know to letting go

There was a house in our little town which was painted pink from top to bottom. Hannah loved this house. In the last year of her life, each time we passed it, she would say, "That's where I am going to live!"

FIVE LESSONS GRIEF TEACHES CON'D FROM PG. 2

A year and a half after Hannah's death, my daughter Madelaine was born. One day, when Madelaine was almost three-years-old, we were driving to the grocery store. Suddenly Madelaine started shrieking from the back seat, I turned to see what was happening and saw her pointing to the pink house. "Mommy," she exclaimed, "That's the house where Hannah and I played in heaven before I was born!"

I had no idea how she knew, and in that moment I didn't need to. Hannah's death opened me to realms I never knew existed. Having watched my Father and my daughter take their last breaths, I remember a peaceful presence entering the room. This energy called life is where I feel our children's presence is, and their spirits still make themselves known.

Maria Housden is a lecturer and author of *HANNAH'S GIFT: Lessons From A Life Fully Lived* (Bantam 2002) and *Unraveled* (Harmony Books 2005). She has been featured on the Today Show and Dr. Phil. Her first book, *HANNAH'S GIFT*, the story of her daughter's life and death from cancer, is being made into a full-length feature film and is translated in 16 languages.

Accepting the Unacceptable

"I will never be able to accept the death of my child." Does that sound familiar? Have you said that? Not surprising. That is one, if not the most, difficult thing we have to do to get to the other side of the long dark tunnel of grief.

What does "accept" mean? One parent told me he would never accept his daughter's death, because he said "accept" means to "agree, approve, to consent to". Obviously, in that context no one in their right mind would "accept" their child's death. But there are other meanings to "accept", "believe to be true," "acknowledge." We do not like the sound of those words either, but at some point, accept them, in order to get on with our lives.

By stating we will not accept it, what is accomplished? Will it make it not true? If only it were that simple. Then I would be 100% in favor of denial. But it doesn't work that way. There are some things that cannot be changed, no matter how hard we may want them to be.

One example: My husband had a heart attack a little more than a year after Eric's death. He vehemently denied he had had a heart attack. ... He continued on with his HEAVY smoking. Then came his stroke. He is now badly paralyzed on his left side. He cannot deny his stroke. And he cannot go back, and accept his heart attack, change his way of living and perhaps avert the stroke. So what did his denial accomplish? It made things worse.

So it is with us. Denial won't work. At some point in

time, we know it has happened. I realized for myself, it was when I could say "Eric died." I could say the word "dead." It took quite a long time. I could say "I lost a son" but not "he died." One day it just came out. It actually shocked and upset me. But afterwards, looking back, I realized that was a big step for me. Not a happy one, but it was one of my turning points.

All of the "stages" of grief that we go through are hard. There is nothing easy about it. As Darcie Sims said... "grief hurts." That almost seems like too mild a statement. The feeling is impossible to put in words. It's devastating!!

"Grief work" takes time and effort. I wish there was an easier way for all of you. I can only give you the hope and encouragement that you, too, can make it. Be kind to and patient with yourself. God Bless!

Mary Ehmann
TCF Valley Forge, PA
In Memory of my son Eric

The truth is, that hole in your heart shaped exactly the size and shape of your child WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY. But the love that oozes from it has more power to change the world than anything I've ever known.

Angela Miller

Valentine Message

I send this message to my child
Who no longer walks this plane,
A message filled with love
Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to skip a beat
When I ponder your early death
As I think of times we'll never share
I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love
And for those who receive love, too
For a parent the perfect love in life
Is the love I've given you.

I'm thinking of you this day, my child,
With a sadness that is unspoken
As I mark another Valentine's Day
With a heart that is forever broken.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen

STIGMATIZED LOSS

BY SARA TAGGET

Posted on January 11th, 2019

TCF National Website Blog

My journey surviving a stigmatized loss started seven and a half years ago when my eldest child died by suicide. Katrina was 21 years old and about to graduate from college. It has been an emotional roller coaster of grief trying to understand Katrina’s decision and learning to live without her.

The definition of stigma is: “a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality or person.” A stigmatized loss for those of us in grief often brings with it experiences and feelings of shame, blame, hopelessness, distress, and reluctance to seek and/or accept help.

Initially, in the aftermath of Katrina’s death, family and friends were supportive bringing us meals, calling or stopping by to see how we were, posting thoughts and stories about Katrina on Facebook, and listening to us. After a while, the support waned as everybody’s lives but ours moved forward. Although we understood that people didn’t know what to say, the silence of supportive voices and the absence of caring actions only served to further our stigma.

When someone dies in a stigmatized manner, people tend to forget the life that was lived and instead focus on the manner of death. Those close to us stay silent because talking about subjects like suicide, murder or a drug overdose is a taboo topic. I didn’t necessarily have any expectations of my friends and family; I was just trying to survive, but soon we noticed that many friends avoided us.

We did have acquaintances who surprised us by being more supportive than some of our closest friends and family. Usually, the friends and acquaintances who stick with us have experienced a stigmatized loss within their own lives and can relate to our pain.

Guilt, anger, and blame seem to be the three pillars of a stigmatized loss. My days were filled with the question of why. Why did Katrina do this? Why didn’t we know? I was constantly second guessing myself with the “would have,” “could have,” “should have” and “if only” game. Eventually, I had to work at accepting that I will never know all the answers to my questions.

I have learned that feelings of guilt, shame and anger can scar us. In my situation, the biggest emotion was guilt. A parent is supposed to protect their children and keep them safe. When Katrina left for college, I made

sure to discuss the potential dangers and how to keep herself safe, but suicide was not discussed because we didn’t know it was a possibility. I wondered if I was a bad mother.

Feelings of guilt for those of us who have experienced a stigmatized loss are only exacerbated when people say, “you must have known” or “why didn’t you know?” If you don’t know the signs and when the symptoms of the illness are subtle and hidden, how can you know? Like many who die by suicide, Katrina was highly functioning and the symptoms of her depression were well hidden from us.

With a stigmatized loss, grief can be complicated because there is always a cloud of distrust, suspicion, and ignorance from those who don’t understand. I accept that there will always be people who may think that Katrina’s suicide was my fault, or that Katrina was a flawed person and deserved to die.

I have turned my grief into advocacy for mental illness education and suicide prevention. My advocacy helps me to continue being a nurturing mother by sharing her life. On those difficult days, I keep going because I know that I am the only one who can tell Katrina’s story as only Katrina’s mom can. Katrina has died, but she had a life that mattered, and I am still Katrina’s mom forever.

Grief doesn't have a plot. It isn't smooth.
There is no beginning and middle and end.

Ann Hood

TO MY MISCARRIED BABY

Out of our love you came,
Planned, wanted, welcomed.
Your announcement created excitement, joy.

Friends and family inquired,
Do you want a girl or boy?
Will you take Lamaze?
What colors for the nursery?
Then suddenly you're gone — and silence.
No one talks about a baby that won't be.

Were you real or a dream?
I feel alone and empty.
Where can I put my love that was for you?
Now what does it mean?

Betty Ruder
TCF North Shore Chapter, IL

A SPECIAL LOSS: LIVING WITH THE LOSS OF A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD

BY DAVID HINES

Posted on November 28th, 2018 TCF National Website

I do not believe there is any experience in life as traumatic or life-altering as the loss of a child. The loss of a special needs child often brings a unique twist to this excruciating experience.

Those who have not been lucky enough (yes, I said lucky enough) to have a special needs child in their life may not understand the unique circumstances that are presented by such a situation. Most parents, despite themselves, when they learn they are to be parents start to dream about the life of their new offspring. Nobody envisions their baby as less than perfect, their child's life as less than blessed. When parents learn their child has developmental issues, disorders that will equate to "special needs" all its life, they are thrown into a state of grieving for both their child and themselves. This is true for every parent whenever they learn this news. It may be at birth or even in the womb, or later as development lags or an injury or disease creates damage to the brain or central nervous system. Most overcome this and begin to do the work needed to give their child the best life possible.

It is indeed hard work to care for a special needs child. It can consume every minute of every day and result in a life given only to the needs of that child. Every parent faced with this does what they can as they are capable physically and emotionally. That child and its care become your life, in many cases quite literally. But those parents are rewarded. It is incredible to see the world through the eyes of one of these children. My daughter was that child. Nobody or anything I have ever experienced in life taught me more than my daughter Erin did. No matter how hard my day was, coming home to Erin and her smile made everything right and the world brighter. I was able to marvel at small things that because of her I realized were major experiences and great achievements that few others even noticed. The world with Erin in it was brighter, happier, filled with hope and offered more opportunity than we probably deserved.

That is the beauty of a special needs child. Others may see them as needing and taking but those of us fortunate enough to live in their presence understand they are mostly giving. When these special people give they also give with all they have and give freely with no caveats or expectations. They

are the personification of pure joy.

When that life is taken from us it leaves a huge hole, a chasm of emptiness. It changes our lives as parents immediately and immeasurably.

Everything, out of necessity, revolved around them. That hard work we came to almost cherish, the mindset of worry and care that was our constant companion are gone in an instant. Selfishly, I also immediately missed the brightening Erin brought my life. My ability to mirror her in smiling at life and appreciating even the smallest wonder was gone. It was at that moment that my wife and I realized how much we needed her. We were "special needs" parents. For 25 years we had lived each day with this as our blueprint for life. In the blink of an eye, it was gone with Erin.

Other people, meaning well, would tell us it was a blessing that we no longer had to deal with all that. They could not have been more wrong. It is eleven years since Erin's death and I still find myself seeking to find a new meaning, a defining vision to replace my life as Erin's parent and caregiver. There are other wonderful things in our lives but none rise to the level of our time with Erin and I now believe they never will.

Yet, thanks to her, I go on and see life for what it is. I remember how she marveled at small things that others might miss, I experience something that would have made her laugh and I laugh. I look into the eyes of other special needs people when I come upon them and in their eyes, I see her reflected back on me. I tell their parents they are lucky. Some understand and smile, others look puzzled until I explain how much I miss my special girl. They are lucky and I hope they cherish every minute of their time with that special child. I now look back and I cherish every memory of every minute of my time with Erin. I am so thankful today for that time. My loss is real and deep but I still count myself lucky to have been a "special" dad to a truly "special" girl.

David Hines served as a police officer for 29 years in Minnesota, 23 years in investigations, 12 years as a coordinator for juvenile programs and a community restorative justice program. He also co-authored two curricula for training in restorative justice and written several articles on the same in various journals on criminal justice. He and his wife Colleen raised three daughters; Heather, Erin and Amy. Erin was a special needs child who died somewhat mysteriously at the age of 25 in April 2005. That event introduced David and Colleen to the St. Paul Chapter of TCF, an experience very much needed and appreciated. Today the Hines family lives in Lake Elmo, MN and has added three glorious grandchildren to the family.

Shards of Grief Linger after Murder

On a dreary night in December, a knock came at our door with news that would forever alter our lives. The news was that Anne, our only daughter, had been kidnapped and brutally murdered by persons or a person unknown. The shock, disbelief, anguish and anxieties over the next several months, a small piece of the grieving process, were extraordinary, and I have often wondered how we survived.

There was the extreme rage at the person who was responsible for taking Anne's life for no reason except for the pure pleasure of destroying good. But we survived.

There was the awful anger against the legal system for being so callous and insensitive to the needs of the family and friends. The wounds from Anne's death were already deep and unhealing, but listening to and reading about the insinuations and innuendoes by the lawyers made the wounds grow deeper and deeper. The impression was given the family must endure punishment for allowing our daughter to be in the wrong place. This caused a feeling of guilt. But we survived.

There was the fear that Anne would become just another statistic, and the person responsible would go unpunished. Now the fear exists that the person will be released from prison to repeat his acts of violence. I am afraid that fears are addictive and one replaces another. Perhaps the worst fear is, when your faith in God is at its lowest ebb, that you will never be able to respond to normal stimuli again and regain all that faith. All the fears are real; but so far we have survived.

These, I suppose, are normal reactions as the result of a violent act. I believe these anxieties delay a normal (so-called) grieving period until after the culprit has been found, tried and sentenced. After these three things happened, I do know a terrible burden was lifted from our shoulders and we could restart living our lives. Somehow we survived.

How did we survive? After much reflecting, I firmly believe we survived by recalling the positive aspects of Anne's life and character. Each individual is endowed with certain instruments, and we hear the music of their lives long after they are gone.

Anne's instrument of love of life was a blessing, and we still can hear the melodies of her song in the night. These melodies cannot be taken away, and they are more valuable than diamonds to us.

Anne's instrument of hope for a future in which to achieve her goals and have some effect on society was the backbone of her dream. The songs of hope in work, in life and the goodness of heart cannot be destroyed by evil or circumstances. Today is gone, but we still hear the songs of hope for tomorrow. These songs of hope, heard in the night, sustain us.

Anne's instrument of faith that she would lead a productive life and achieve both her spiritual and material goals was music in her heart. The faith she had in herself, her family and her friends transmits to us, urging us to proceed with our lives. The music of her faith is still a beacon in the night.

We will not believe Anne's dreams have ended, but we believe they will find their place in the world to come. The music that was set in motion by her love, hope and faith will move, everlasting, in sweet memories forever. The wounds from the loss of a loved one cannot be healed by words or deeds. These terrible burdens are borne by each of us in our own way and, hopefully, we survive.

Bill Boggs
In memory of Anne
TCF, Atlanta, GA

WHY ME? - The Unanswerable Question

Most of us have pondered this question at some time in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grievers found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

Polly Moore
TCF Nashville, TN

March

A little bit of warm spring
Breaking its way out of the earth?

Today I see snowy flakes which remind me
That still again one season is passing into the next

Another layer of chilling rain, ice and snow
Another layer of flowers fresh from
bloom fallen to the ground.

Another layer of long, dry days with too much sun
Another layer of autumn leaves
fallen damp to the ground.

Seasons continue to run ahead while
my heart and spirit are slow to follow.

March is on the calendar to remind me
that it's time for still more changes.

Carol Thompson, TCF, Tyler, TX.
Always Remembering Sarah
Cold Wintry January 2, 2011

The Mask

I have a face I put in place;
It's what I wear when folks are there.

For those only who want to see
The way they think I ought to be

I live in times that have no light,
Just cloudy darkness, endless nights.

I no longer see the sun,
I laugh but never feel the fun.

When I arise to start a day,
I stumble as I make my way.

I don't know who's really me,
I'm not the one I used to be.

I have no heart to fill with joy,
I lost it when I lost my boy.

The future is so bleak to me,
I choose to not let others see.

So when people stop to ask,
I hide behind my smiling mask.

Written by—Dianna J. Brendle

My Grief is Like a River

By Cynthia G. Kelly

My grief is like a river, I have to let it flow
But I myself determine just where the banks will go.

Some days the current takes me in waves of guilt and pain,
But there are always quiet pools where I can rest again.

I crash on rocks of anger, my faith seems faint indeed,
But there are other swimmers who know that what I need.

There are loving hands to hold me when the waters are too
Swift, and someone kind to listen when I just seem to drift.

Grief's river is a process of relinquishing the past;
Swimming in hope's channels, I reach the shore at last.

"Memory is a way of holding
on to the things you love, the
things you are, the things you
never want to lose."

from The Wonder Years

What is there to do when people die
—people so dear and rare—
But to bring them back by remembering.

-May Sarton

"I can never lose one whom I have loved unto
the end, one to whom my soul cleaves so firmly
that it can never be separated, does not go away
but only goes before."

-St. Bernard of Clarvaux.

LOVE SHARES

In Memory of	Given by
Rhonda Andrews	Marie Chance
David A. "Bubba" Scott	Mr & Mrs David Scott
Kimberly Lewis	Mary & Richard Lewis
Keven Lewis	Mary & Richard Lewis
Jacob Leen	Patti & Jim Leen
Chris Crum	Lonnie & Kathy Crum
Arturo Monsanto	Bonnie Monsanto
Elena Monsanto	Bonnie Monsanto

Consider giving a Love Share in your child's memory. Help us continue our mission to help grieving parents. All Love Shares are tax deductible and can be sent to our Chapter Treasurer:

**Douglas Ledkins, 431 Old Colony Dr.
Richmond, TX 77406 (713) 515-9906
Doug_Ledkins@whitetucker.com**

Button Making Machine

A button making machine has been given to our chapter in loving memory of Brandi Ward. It is available for anyone who wishes to have a picture button made of their child. If you would like to have a button made, please contact Marguerite Ward at 979-335-6070 or by email at mjward0123@gmail.com

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. We are grateful for the faithfulness of parents, grandparents and friends who remember beloved children with love gifts. Our chapter is operated entirely by volunteers dedicated to furthering the work of TCF.

Your voluntary tax deductible donations honor your loved one(s) in a meaningful way by enabling us to offer resources, such as this newsletter, books, brochures and special programs to bereaved families in our area. 100% of the funds are used for this outreach. Donations, along with the name of the person being honored may be sent to our chapter's treasurer. If you have any questions, please contact our chapter treasurer:

**Douglas Ledkins, 431 Old Colony Dr.
Richmond, TX 77406 (713) 515-9906
Doug_Ledkins@whitetucker.com**

TCF ONLINE SUPPORT

The Compassionate Friends 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.

PRIVATE TCF FACEBOOK GROUPS

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. If you are waiting approval, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

These groups can be found on the National TCF website at <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/>

Dear Chapter Members,

It is with regret we must inform you that the **Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter of the Compassionate Friends** **has become inactive.** We have not been able to find someone to step up into leadership roles and our current leadership can no longer do it. Our steering committee met and decided to no longer offer monthly meetings. We will, however, still have our annual TCF Candle Lighting program as well as our annual Balloon Lift-Off for at least the next year or so. We will also continue to provide a newsletter to our members but have changed it to be quarterly instead of every two months. We will now offer phone support to those who need it as well as information on monthly meetings provided by other local TCF chapters. We hope to continue to offer support to bereaved parents in some small way. If you are interested in taking on a more active role in our chapter, please contact either Tricia Scherer at 832-541-4959 or Marguerite Ward at 979-533-0099.

With Compassionate Friends You Need Not Walk Alone

Telephone a Friend..... If you need someone to talk to and can't find a TCF meeting to go to, please call one of our volunteers below. They are a little farther down the road in their grief journey and would be glad to talk to you.

Child Loss - (Tricia)	832-541-4959
Child Loss - (Marguerite)	979-533-0099
Child Loss - (Sandy)	281-242-5015
Support for Fathers - (Doug)	713-515-9906
Murdered Child/Sudden Death - (Michelle)	832-603-7112

TCF—Katy Chapter meets 2nd Tuesday of each month 7:00 pm

Website: <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/chapter/tcf-katy-tx-chapter/>

TCF of Houston Inner Loop Chapter meets 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm
(Newly bereaved meeting at 6:30)

Website: <http://www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfhoustoninnerloop/index.html>

**To locate a TCF Chapter located in your area with monthly meetings please go to the national TCF website at - <https://www.compassionatefriends.org>.

National Headquarters

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Next Event Date**

**May 8, 2019—Annual TCF
Balloon Liftoff**

**** Our chapter no longer has monthly meetings. Please go to the National TCF website to find chapter meetings in your area.**

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org>



Remembering Our Children's Birthday



Birthdays hold treasured memories and are especially difficult for surviving parents and siblings; TCF offers a wonderful venue to honor and celebrate the precious life-story of your loved one. Taking a few minutes to share a picture, memento, award or even their favorite toy is a gentle reminder to all that love continues and grows with each passing year.

Birthday	Child's Name	Parents/Family/Friend
1/6	Avinash "Avi" Miranda	Donald & Maria Miranda
1/6	Amber Jeffrey	Scott & Amy Jeffrey
1/7	Patrina Jurell Nurse	Ms Pearlle Nurse
1/10	Ryan Joseph Pineda	Rachel Pineda Harbuck
1/14	Charles Callaway	Eileen & Randy Eldred
1/15	Aminah Chanel Richardson	Danielle & John E. Richardson
1/25	Tureko Chantal Lofton	Caroline Caleb
1/25	Joshua (Josh) Tubbsville	Tommy & Linda Parkhurst
1/25	Makaila Marie Hamilton	Martha and De'Ederick Hamilton
1/31	Jessica Jackson	Andrea Shockency
2/1	Darren Savay Williams	Courtney & Kandic Waller
2/4	Julianne Allen	Joe & Susan Allen
2/5	Samara Denise Harris	Sara Reiley & Marcus Harris
2/6	Jennifer Severson	Deborah Russel & Robert Severson
2/7	Kaden Jimmy Rivas	Jolie Mixon
2/11	Kimberly Lewis	Mary & Richard Lewis
2/12	Christopher Gaona	Michelle Cruz
2/14	Nolan Brian Zale	Dr. Brian & Tracey Zale
2/17	John Fernandes	Agnes Fernandes
2/18	Keith Morgan	Lisa Morgan
2/19	Ryan Daniel Jones	Rick & Rosalyn Jones
2/19	Chih-yen Chen	Tina Chen
2/23	Gregory Gerrod Parker	Brenda Parker
2/26	Robert Bradley (Brad) Petras	Brenda Petras

Birthday	Child's Name	Parents/Family/Friend
3/3	Alli June Glass	Angela & Justin Glass
3/4	Nicholas (Nick) Alexander Wellington Lang	Yolanda & Gary Lang
3/9	Daphne Colette Sauseda	Dion Sauseda & Barbara Lacy
3/10	Tracie Brast Porcheddu	Dawn & David Brast
3/13	Brian Walleck	Donna Walleck
3/13	Brian Walleck	Tom Walleck
3/17	Joseph Stavinoha	Jo Ann Dietz
3/23	Gina Garcia	Stella Garcia
3/25	Patrick Green	David & Kathryn Green
3/27	Sage Austin Sanders	Sherelle and Allen Sanders
3/27	Brian Randall Martin	Becky and Henry Martin
3/27	Arturo Monsanto	Bonnie Monsanto

IT WILL BE ANOTHER BIRTHDAY WITHOUT YOU

The sun will shine
 roses bloom, geese fly
 throughout the sky
 stocks will trade,
 the weatherman predict
 politicians debate
 it'll seem like another day
 just a day, same 24 hours
 not a special holiday
 But to this mother
 who will stand at the grave
 lifting balloons into the sky
 serving angel food cupcakes
 with rainbow icing
 coated with tears
 fluctuating between emotions:
 the grief over death
 the celebration over birth
 For this mother
 it will be yet
 another birthday without you.

In Memory of Daniel

Alice J. Wisler, TCF Wake County, NC

"Don't cry because it's over.
 Smile because it happened."

Dr. Seuss

Our Children Remembered On Their Day of Passing

Date of Passing	Child's Name	Parents/Family/Friend	Date of Passing	Child's Name	Parents/Family/Friend
1/2	Alexandria Anette Charbeneau Phillips	Norman and Anette Phillips	3/1	Stephanie Blaine Turner Powers	Lora Turner and Joseph Frybert
1/3	Mariana Ayala	Maria Smith	3/2	Chad Crawford	Sandy Crawford
1/3	Richard (Rick) Michael Teltchik	Ann & Ernie Teltchik	3/3	Alli June Glass	Angela & Justin Glass
1/6	Ja'Nya Smith	Tanishia Smith	3/3	Alli June Glass	Susan Chenault
1/9	Chris Jaquay	Jane and Mark Erwin	3/6	Jessica Jackson	Andrea Shockency
1/8	Kaden Jimmy Rivas	Jolie Mixon	3/7	Natalie Assee	Thelma Chung
1/15	Ashley Nicole Wilson	Renee Coulter	3/9	Daphne Colette Sauseda	Dion Sauseda & Barbara Lacy
1/15	Aminah Chanel Richardson	Danielle & John E. Richardson	3/12	Nolan Brian Zale	Dr. Brian & Tracey Zale
1/16	Keith Morgan	Lisa Morgan	3/13	Jessica Eldred Callaway	Eileen & Randy Eldred
1/17	Ty Cavazos	Tina Cavazos	3/14	Jeremiah Pascual	Rebecca & Eugene Pascual
1/17	Emil Lamont Harris	Monty & Jean Harris	3/15	Joseph Sebastian DiMare, IV	Karen and Joe DiMare
1/25	Tureko Chantal Lofton	Caroline Caleb	3/17	Calvin Christian (Chris) Dillard	Arcinia Burley
1/26	Joseph Stavinoha	Jo Ann Dietz	3/17	Amanda Ramirez-Velazquez	Cynthia Cruz
1/27	Anthony Charles Jones	Deshunna Harvey	3/17	Eric Jevon Hall-Hicks	Helen Hicks
1/28	Kenzayah Washington	Courtney Washington	3/20	Julia Andrea Dearborn	Sandra and Russ Bridges
1/30	Ruth Ann Svihla	Ryan & Rita Svihla	3/22	E'Aida Coletta Bonnett	Rosie and Jimmie Bonnett
2/4	Zachary Stephen Glover	Lauren Nagel	3/22	Xavier Antonio Alvarez	Al & Sybil Alvarez
2/4	Jeffrey Paul Walker	Marianne and Paul Walker	3/24	Patrick Green	David & Kathryn Green
2/4	Darlene E. LaPorte	Jane Maneen	3/25	Amber Rachelle	Diana & David Gajewsky
2/5	Samara Denise Harris	Sara Reiley & Marcus Harris			
2/6	Evan Thomas Miles	Matt & Christie Miles			
2/9	Charles Callaway	Eileen & Randy Eldred			
2/9	Jacob Leen	Jim & Patti Leen			
2/9	Donald Ray Scherer	Patricia and Donald Scherer			
2/9	Charles Callaway	Randy and Eileen Eldred			
2/13	Sarah Charlotte Harper	Chuck & Marcy Harper			
2/16	Cameron Michael Powers	Tom and Eva Donalson			
2/17	Brandi Nicole Ward	Marguerite Ward			
2/20	Jerry Paine Fife	Jimmy & Shirley Fife			
2/24	Matthew Phillip Dolezal	Mary Ann & Phillip Dolezal			
2/25	Sewit Tekle	Medmin & Haile Tesfagiorgis			
2/26	Kris Gonzalez	Raquel & Juan Gonzalez			
2/28	Nneka Ijeoma	Nwanna Ijeoma			

My Child Died Today

I double over from the pain in my midsection and heart. I sob. I cannot breathe. I count the minutes since my child was alive. Shock freezes my body, paralyzes my mind and permeates my soul. My sense of reality is now the deepest fog. I know I will not survive this. I am ready to die. I think I am dreaming, and I will wake up. My child will be here. But I am awake. My child is dead. My child has died. A primal scream begins deep within me and rushes upward, piercing the early morning air. I know I will perish, and I look forward to a quick end. Can I live without my child? Do I want to live?

My mantra becomes breathe deeply, hold and exhale. This is my only reality. I feel that I am fading into the fog. I force myself to drink water. I cannot eat. My mind wanders and then returns to this place; I am physically jolted into my body each time I grasp the finality of my child's death. The people around me are a blur. I aimlessly pace the floor. I cannot remain still.

Anxiety has conquered my mind. I cannot think, talk, communicate, understand or comprehend.

What are they saying? Why do I care? Where is my child? I want to be with my child. I must be with my child. Somebody medicates me. I fall into dreamless and fitful sleep, sliding, sinking, falling.

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



The Compassionate Friends

Sugar Land—SW Houston Chapter
P. O. Box 231, East Bernard, TX. 77435

Honoring 22 Years of Support and Friendship
for Bereaved Families



JAN/FEB/MARCH, 2019

Winter Sun

And then it happens, from a bitter sky,
a timid sun strides to his silent battle
against the gray and hostile universe.

It changes ice to roses, sky to song.

And then it happens that your heart recalls
some distant joy, gladness from the past.

A slender light, then larger, braver,
until your mind returns to hope and peace.

Let memories be beauty in your life,
like song and roses in the winter sun.

Sasha