



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

## THE PROMISE

Cold winds blow across the frozen pond.  
Snow lies deep upon the fields.  
But the change has begun.

Daylight hours increase slowly.  
With each passing day later sunsets are more  
apparent  
Winter is ending.

For bereaved parents  
The change is awfully slow  
The progress is not always apparent  
But the promise is the same.

Winter will end.  
Spring will return.

Betty Stevens,  
TCF Baltimore, MD

## A SPECIAL VALENTINE

A touch of your hand;  
A smile on your face  
Another time, another place.

You were my girl  
I was your Mom  
Together we met the world head on.

Death cannot dim  
the memories so fine  
Your place is there  
this world is mine.  
But you will always be  
My SPECIAL VALENTINE!

Arlene Burroughs  
TCF Pikes Peak, CO

## A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Now the holidays are over, and once again a new year faces us—for some, the first one without that precious loved one—for others, another one of many. The loss is still remembered, no matter how many others we have faced.

What will we do in the coming months? Each hour seems so long and the days seem to stretch ahead forever, as if another year cannot possibly ever come to an end. But friends, it will and we will survive.

The road at times is hard and the pain is so hard to bear, but each year we realize that the pain has eased. We never will be totally without this pain of love and shattered dreams, but we will be able to live. This love that is stored in us for our missed child can be spread out to others to help us to ease their pain.



So, in this New Year, let's make a new resolution—that our love for our dead child will be brought out of our hearts and given with our best effort to others to help them ease their pain. In so doing, we will find our pain is eased also.

Thelma Richardson  
TCF Mesa County, AZ

*Perhaps, they are not stars in the sky, but rather openings where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are happy.*

*Eskimo Legend*

### Monthly Meetings

**Thursday, January 3**

**Thursday, February 7**

6:30 PM  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
1901 Lexington Ave.  
Enter through the back parking lot off Milton St.

# For Siblings

An outlet for siblings is the TCF Sibling Forum. It is available online and is a place where siblings from all over can share and help each other cope with the unique grief of losing a brother or sister. Siblings are able to ask questions, make a comment or leave a thought for others to respond.

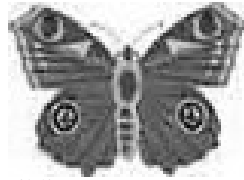
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Visit the Sibling Resources Page at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
Email [tcfsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:tcfsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org) for the password

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## MY FIRST FIVE YEARS AS AN ONLY CHILD

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I've aged thirty years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I've accomplished the many things of a typical young adult -learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career. Every one of my accomplishments have been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children, or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews. The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I've learned to accept that he's not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.



My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changed to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I'm angry about all of the things that we've missed and all of the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years, I've been forced to grow up too fast. I've been forced into a new outlook on life. I've felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. That person is locked away and is gone forever. Maybe I'm a better person now because of what I've been through. Five years ago I never thought I'd survive, but I'm still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I've made it this far.

Kristina Steiner  
TCF Staten Island, NY

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

One of the most notable characteristics of bereaved siblings is their ability to help others who are grieving. In research studies, this particular characteristic is mentioned again and again. However, bereaved siblings are often unable to help themselves with their own grief.

One of the patterns of dynamics that is often seen in bereaved siblings is as follows. The surviving siblings have been so hurt and become so vulnerable that they cannot tolerate their own feelings. They would like to disown their own vulnerability. So they project their feelings onto others who are grieving, and then take care of the other person. If this dynamic is operating in your life, you need to work on self-care. Withdrawing the projection from others, and accepting your own vulnerability is not easy, but is essential for healing.

In order to take care of yourself, you have to know yourself and know what your needs are. Sometimes we spend more time trying to get someone else to take care of us than we do in actively caring for ourselves. First, you must learn what your needs are. Everyone knows about needs—we know that babies need love and attention as well as food. Needs do not go away when we become adults. Some of the needs that we all share are: needs for food, security, love, acceptance, beauty, order, appreciation, and self-expression. Get to know yourself and what it takes to make you happy.

TCF Special Edition Sibling Newsletter

## NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS

I will try not to expect so much understanding from others who have not walked the same path.

I will be kind to myself - health, physical appearance, and some time...just to myself.

I will remember that I owe it to myself to try to enjoy life.

I will try to be more considerate to my spouse, children and parents. They, too, are coping.

I resolve, in memory of my child, to do something to help someone else. For I know that in doing this, my child will live through me.

TCF Mobile, AL

## WHEN FEBRUARY COMES...

...there is finally an end in sight to the long winter. Sometimes melting snow reveals the green tips of an early crocus or even the exquisite blossom itself—a soft flower of hope invading a harsh landscape of graying snow and biting wind and ominous sky—a small promise of new life to come.

My heart, grieving for my son who died, was like that image of winter. For somehow even during the darkest, coldest moments, an unexpected sign of hope appeared. As days and months dragged, my heart finally learned once again to be open to the promise of new life. Painful memories melted into loving ones. Life that seemed forever dormant once again sprang forth from my heart. In living hopefully and lovingly, the season of the heart can change. The loving memories of your child, like the flower in the snow, can be the beginning of the end of winter.

Nancy Ann Dramer  
TCF Arlington Heights, IL

## I WILL LOVE YOU

As long as I can dream,  
As long as I can think,  
As long as I have a memory...  
I will love you.



As long as I have eyes to see  
and ears to hear  
and lips to speak...  
I will love you.

As long as I have a heart to feel,  
A soul stirring within me,  
An imagination to hold you...  
I will love you.

As long as there is time,  
As long as there is love,  
As long as I have a breath  
to speak your name...  
I will love you.

Because I love you more than anything  
in all the world.

Daniel Haughian  
TCF Massillon, OH

### Chapter co-leaders

Marilyn & French Smith

### Steering Committee

Henry Cole, Facilitator

Beverly & Charles Wall, Treasurer

Dianne & Frank Bruscatto, Library

Ann Cole & Marilyn Smith, Hospitality

Frances & Jim Gregory, Outreach

Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

Betty Jean & Johnny James, Memorial Park

Sandy Chester, TCF Regional Coordinator

*Tears have a wisdom all their own. They come when a person has relaxed enough to let go and to work through his sorrow. They are the natural bleeding of an emotional wound, carrying the poison out of the system. Here lies the road to recovery.*

*F. Alexander Magoun*

## WISHES FOR BEREAVED PARENTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

*To the newly bereaved:* We wish you patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

*To the bereaved siblings:* We wish you and your parents a new understanding of each others' needs and the beginnings of good communication.

*To those of you who are single parents:* We wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone with your loss.

*To those experiencing marital difficulties:* After the death of your child, we wish you special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

*To those of you who have suffered the death of more than one child:* We wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.

*To those of you who have experienced the death of an only child or all of your children:* We offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

*To those of you who are plagued with guilt:* We wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances, and that your child knew that.

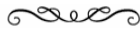
*To those of you who are deeply depressed:* We wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow."

*To all fathers and those of you unable to cry:* We wish you healing tears and the ability to express your grief.

*To those of you who are exhausted from grieving:* We wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

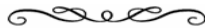
*To all others with special needs that we have not mentioned:* We wish you the understanding you need and the reassurance that you are loved.

Joe Rousseau – TCF President 1990  
TCF Bridgewater



Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the newsletter to keep our chapter going strong. Please contact Julie Petty with your ideas. 553 Hwy 596; Lake Providence, LA 71254  
Phone: 559-1762

Also, remember you can bring your child's favorite snack for refreshments to our monthly meeting or do a flower arrangement for the table. Please contact Marilyn Smith one month prior to the meeting.



If you do not wish to receive the newsletter, please contact French Smith or email: [tcfnortheastla@aol.com](mailto:tcfnortheastla@aol.com) to be removed from the mailing list.

# Our Children Always Loved and Remembered



A special table is set up at our meetings to honor children whose special days are in that month. We invite you to bring a picture or memento of your child to share during that significant month.

## **OUR CHILDREN'S JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Eddie Foreman	01/03/60	Jenny Rodgers
Brandi Spradlin	01/05/78	Rita & Terry Colgate
Tricia Smith	01/08/74	Brenda & Randy Smith
Stephen Smith	01/08/76	Marilyn & French Smith
Dana Sallis	01/12/78	Joanna Sallis (sister)
Amanda Maxwell	01/17/86	Angie Maxwell
Patrick Loflin	01/18/71	Katie & Pat Loflin
Hope Johnson	01/18/94	Fran Johnson
Kimball James	01/24/71	Betty Jean & Johnny James
Stephen Sivils	01/25/77	Veda & Leon Sivils
Seth Lowery	01/26/84	Joyce Lowery
Norman Craig	01/28/64	Pat Craig
Timothy Maurer	01/29/72	Shirley & Nick Maurer

## **OUR CHILDREN'S JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Austin Williams	01/01/02	Loretta & Larry Williams
Martha Husmann	01/09/90	Betty & Harry Stone
Scottie McLarrin	01/09/99	Mary McLarrin
Ashley Taylor	01/10/06	Valerie & Doug Taylor
Jackson Kennedy	01/11/02	Jonann & Jeff Kennedy
Benjamin Box	01/13/06	Erlene & Jack Box
Timothy Maurer	01/16/06	Shirley & Nick Maurer
Richard Bryan	01/25/02	Linda & James Bryan
Fred Page	01/26/98	Charlotte Colquette
Carl Alexander	01/26/04	Valerie & Billy Matejowsky
Caroline Cole	01/30/88	Ann & Henry Cole

## **OUR CHILDREN'S FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Todd Bates	02/26/72	Sheila Bates

## **OUR CHILDREN'S FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Tricia Smith	02/05/06	Brenda & Randy Smith
Greg Dennis	02/06/05	Camille Dennis
Eddie Foreman	02/15/99	Jenny Rodgers
Kelly Boies	02/18/07	Paula Gilliam
Jesse Chilton	02/23/07	Cheryl & Ronnie Chilton
Adam McKenzie	02/28/03	Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie

## **TO OUR LONG TIME MEMBERS:**

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting when new parents arrive with a fresh hurt and frightened eyes, I remember how we felt at our first meeting. Think back ... what would it have been like for you if there had not been any "oldies" to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, "your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer." They were the ones who wanted to really listen when you talked about your child. Can you be an "oldie" for someone else? By helping someone else, you help yourself and share your child with someone who never got to know them. Come out and share with newly bereaved parents to help them heal. Our own healing happens when we are reaching out to others.

**WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE;  
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

## 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.  
Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes,  
but our love for our children unites us.  
Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope.  
We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.  
We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds.  
We are young, and we are old.  
Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh  
and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope.  
Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength;  
some of us are struggling to find answers.  
Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression;  
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 our children.  
We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,  
but we are committed to building a future together  
as we reach out to each other in love  
and 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.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
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Return Service Requested