



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

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JULY/AUGUST 2007

WHO KNEW?

Our eyes are red and grief makes us blue.
We never quite know who to tell your story to.

We ponder our lives without you being here,
To give us purpose, laughter and often a tear.

It seems impossible these days we must endure,
Emptiness, helplessness and some fear for sure.

Having no doubt that we'll not make it through,
Then we remember just how much we love you.

We celebrate your life with us here on earth,
No matter how long you lived after your birth.

Our lives have been blessed by just knowing you,
Because of your love, we'll make it. Who knew?

Dan Gardner
TCF Nashville, TN

FOR THE NEWLY BEREAVED

One day you wake up and realize you must have survived it because you are still here, alive and breathing. But, you don't remember the infinitely small steps and decisions you took to get there. Your only awareness is that you have shed miles of tears on what seems to be an endless road of sorrow. One day... one glorious day, you wake up and feel your skin tingle again and you forget, just for an instant, that your heart is broken... and it is a beginning.

Susan B.
TCF Kingston, Canada

*The last time I saw your face
I remember the time and the place.*

*The last time I saw you smile
I remember, though it has been awhile.*

*The last time you shook my hand
You did it like I taught you
You did it like a man.*

*If I had known it was the last time when we
said goodbye,
Could I have changed things
And not had all these tears to cry.*

*The answer to that, we'll never know.
I just hope you knew, that I love you so.*

*Try as I may I can't get it in my mind that the last
time,
Has to last me a lifetime.*

*Love and Miss You Lad,
The Old Man*

THE TEARS

The tears streamed down, and I let them flow as freely as they would, making a pillow for my heart.

On them I rested. Thank you, Lord, for the healing gift of tears.

Augustine
"Confession" IX:12

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, July 5

Thursday, August 2

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.

Visit the Sibling Resources Page at www.compassionatefriends.org
Email tcfsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org for the password

EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, and the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me...NEVER.

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality.

Forget? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere—love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say—nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be: Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this.

People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer. "I am mad. Dave died at the age of 17. I'm angry that my parents have to go through this. I'm confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I'm fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be STRONG."

Lisa Ann Jones
TCF Avoca, PA

A WISH

I wish upon a rainbow
In every single dream,
And hope with my entire heart
You will be here again.

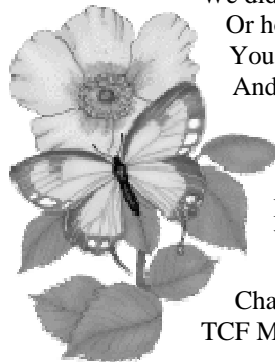
I wish upon its colors
That together we will be,
For you are my brother
And I want you here with me.

It's the way the color blends
That gets my hopes so high.
I know you didn't mean it
When you left without a good-bye.

We didn't understand your feelings
Or how sad you were inside.
You drank until it killed you
And your friend right by your side.

If only the world could be a rainbow
Maybe they would see,
But even though you're gone
You're forever a part of me.

Chasitie Sharp, Sibling
TCF Marion, OH



"...when a good or a great person's life comes to its final sunset, the skies of this world are illuminated until long after he is out of view. Such a person does not die from this world, for when he departs he leaves much of himself behind...and being dead, he still speaks."

Henry W. Beecher

PRECIOUS MEMORIES

Memories, memories, memories
Are all I have of you,
Precious, precious memories
of a daughter who died too soon.

Some of my memories are visible
And some of them are not.
But all are treasured in my mind
And deep within my heart.

Memories, memories, memories
They help me face each new day,
Precious, precious memories
Can never be taken away.

With Love—Momma

Peggy Wood Nolan
TCF Nashville, TN

SAND DANCER

When my daughter lived, I secretly thought of her as my little sand-dancer. On many a quiet lovely beach she would mark out a square in the sand, and while her dad fished, she would perform her impromptu dances for me, her audience of one.

I remember a pang of sadness when she outgrew her uninhibited frolics in the sand, but knew the memory would be with me forever.

In life, new memories are constantly added and lovingly stockpiled. When that precious life is cut short, existing happy memories are all we are left with, to be brought out at will, anywhere, anytime.

Somehow, the dreadful memories of disbelief, loss, pain, and the awful struggle to go on, must not be permitted to overshadow the joyous ones, as without these, it would be better had our child never existed.

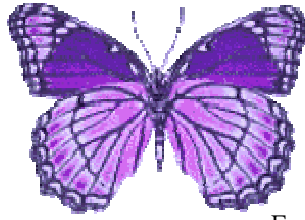
My little sand-dancer will go on dancing forever in my heart, and I will treasure this special time in our lives.

Shirley Watt
TCF Camberwell, Australia

MEMORIES

Memories are heartbeats
Sounding through the years,
Echoes never fading
Of our smiles and tears.

Moments that are captured,
Sometimes unaware,
Pictured in an album,
Or a lock of hair.



Images that linger
Deep within the mind,
Bits of verse we cherished
Once upon a time.

Through the musty hallways
Of the days we knew,
Ever comes the vision
Beautiful and true.

Memories are roses
Blooming evermore,
Full of fragrant sweetness
never known before.

Life must have a meaning,
Goals for which to strive,
Memories are lights that burn
To keep the heart alive.

TCF Roselle, NJ

*The death of a child divides life forever into before
and after.*

Marie Graham
TCF SW Manitoba

Chapter co-leaders

Marilyn & French Smith

Steering Committee

Henry Cole, Facilitator

Beverly & Charles Wall, Treasurer

Dianne & Frank Bruscato, 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

FIREWORKS ARE LIKE THE LOVE IN OUR HEARTS

July brings Central Oregonians lingering blue skies, lazy afternoons and the Fourth of July celebration, complete with the grand fireworks finale bolting from the top of Pilot Butte.

This was one of my son's favorite holidays. When he was six I asked him why fireworks were so special to him. He said, "The lights explode in the dark and make the whole sky light up!" That was obvious. I said "Hum?" He gave me one of his "Oh mom" looks, then went on to say "The fireworks are like the love in our hearts, we should always try to spread our love out to others". I knew then and I still am aware today that profound wisdom comes from the lips of our children.

From the summer on, in my mind, fireworks have been a triumphant testament of love's enduring power and wonder. I miss my son, Joshua terribly. I comfort myself knowing that his wisdom and kindness were precious gifts in my life.

Wherever you are on the Fourth of July, I hope that the splendor of sparkling fireworks might comfort as you acknowledge that the love you hold dear for your child is the light that is able to shine through you. We all have known grief well, yet as compassionate friends we need not walk alone in the darkness. We can lighten the path for others. Grief can cripple and destroy us, but as we gather to share each other's burden, we are able to gain strength. Love for our children is our common flame, sharing and caring keep the flames afire. I look forward to our next meeting and the opportunity to hug and listen to my comrades.

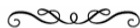
Jane Oja
TCF Central Oregon Chapter



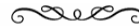
HELPFUL HINT

Taking a vacation without your child with you can seem overwhelming. One family came up with an unique idea of including their departed child on their yearly vacation. First, they start by writing a short note describing how their daughter loved flowers and sharing the beauty of them with others. By attaching it to a packet of flower seeds and leaving them where someone else was sure to find it, they felt they were sharing a part of their child with someone else. Now they look forward to finding the perfect place to "plant" their gift to another in their child's memory.

TCF South Bay LA



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 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 JULY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Bonnie Allen	07/04/58	JoAnn & Ernest Cowart
Don Shlosman	07/04/78	Margie Godwin
Amiee McIlveene	07/07/78	Rhea & Danny McIlveene
Greg Dennis	07/08/60	Camille Dennis
Lonnie Matheson	07/20/68	Dorothy Matheson
Lauren Hemphill	07/26/78	Kitty McDougall & Tommy Hemphill
Jordon Gooding	07/27/89	Juanita & Bruce Gooding
Scottie McLarrin	07/30/87	Mary McLarrin

OUR CHILDREN'S JULY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Karen Carlton	07/01/01	Gail Dupuy
Lonnie Matheson	07/03/06	Dorothy Matheson
Andrew Rinicker	07/03/04	Dale Rinicker
Derrick Sadberry	07/15/06	Belinda Sadberry
Steven Wisdom	07/15/06	Dee Wisdom
Spencer Ramsey	07/17/06	Cindy & Billy Ramsey
Mike Hayes	07/19/97	Margaret & George Hayes
Stephen Blanchard	07/26/06	Tracey & Steve Blanchard

OUR CHILDREN'S AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Heather Greer	08/01/83	Kim & Heath Greer
Kim Smith	08/02/75	Jackie Bailey
Adam McKenzie	08/04/68	Cheryl & Jerome McKenzie
Chad Byrd	08/13/79	Janice & Randy Byrd
Spencer Ramsey	08/13/90	Cindy & Billy Ramsey
John Bruscato	08/19/74	Dianne & Frank Bruscato
Michael Hoyem	08/26/54	Dorothy & Don Hoyem
Jesse Chilton	08/29/80	Cheryl & Ronnie Chilton
Benjamin Box	08/30/63	Erlene & Jack Box

OUR CHILDREN'S AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Don Shlosman	08/01/00	Margie Godwin
Chad Byrd	08/03/05	Janice & Randy Byrd
Beth Ann Smith	08/06/06	Judy & Randy Smith
Joel Rundell	08/09/90	Sharon Rundell
Heather Greer	08/13/03	Kim & Heath Greer
Paul Hayes	08/14/03	Patty & Paul Hayes
Brandon Dempsey	08/15/06	Belinda Enterkin
Stephen Sivils	08/19/03	Veda & Leon Sivils
Jason Hutts	08/22/99	Carol & Greg Hutts
Brian Perry	08/22/02	Clara & Don Perry
Alice Rains	08/28/94	Marie Rains
Brandon McGehee	08/30/02	Teddi & James McGehee

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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WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

www.tcfnortheastla.org

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Northeast Louisiana Chapter
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Return Service Requested