



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

Phone: 318.388.1660
Fax: 318.388.2368
Web: www.tcfnortheastla.org
Email: tcfnortheastla@aol.com

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 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 night.

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.

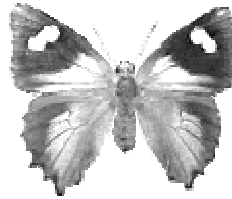
So when people stop to ask,
I hide behind my smiling mask.

Dianna J. Brendle
TCF Greenville, SC

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

As long as it takes; that's how long it takes. It's not about forgetting. It's about hurting. And I know that if I am alive twenty years from now, and I happen to look at a blue sky with puffy clouds and think of my son, Fred—and figure how old he'd be, what he'd be doing and what his children would be doing—I'll hurt. And know that if I can switch my train of thought from what is not, to what was, a happy memory, I'll be able to smile through the tears. We

don't stop hurting, ever. But so many things occur each day. So many events and thoughts and happenings intervene, that our focus is shifted. The death of our child changes from the main concern in our life, to one of many. A life may stop; but the loving goes on. To love deeply is to be vulnerable for all our days.



Joan S.
TCF Central Jersey Chapter, NJ

FOURTH OF JULY

Each Year on the 4th of July we celebrate the birth of a great nation - a nation of people "united" in a dream. It was through hope, determination and a bonded strength that the people of America strived to achieve their dream of freedom to be a free nation. Nothing, however, is achieved without a strong will. We, too, as bereaved parents are fighting a battle to be free - free of the pain that has become a part of our waking days. We want to be happy. We want to be able to enjoy life again. You are one of those proud Americans. Refuse to give up. Fight for your dream. There is peace to be found in freedom!

written by a member of TCF Homdel, NJ

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, July 7

Thursday, August 4

Thursday, September 1

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

TRIBUTE TO MY SISTER

You always held within your heart a strength and purpose that few others would have known. My success in life and joy I owe to you for helping me along the way. When I was ignorant, you taught me. When I lacked experience in life, you gave me new challenges. When I stumbled and fell, you gently helped me up again. When I was lost in the darkness of depression, you were the beacon on which I focused to find my way again. When I had gained strength, you trusted me to help you with your own difficulties. And, always, when I needed a friend, you were there.

Throughout the years you were always my family. You honored me with your love and trust, and accepted me just as I was. More than my own flesh and blood, you were my sister, and I will always cherish the time we had together. We have laughed, complained, and sometimes wept, but we always persevered. The good times, the bad times, the joy and sorrow, will always bind our hearts as long as I am able to draw my breath.

We traveled together for awhile and our journey was fulfilling, but now our paths have diverged and we had to say goodbye. To my years with you, I bid farewell. Ahead of me lies a life without you, a new definition of myself. For all that I may someday become, you will always be a part of me.

On some distant day, when something reminds me of you, I will lovingly think of you and remember the smile you had. From time to time, I will remember the years spent with you and what we have shared. I will always miss your sweet voice and your unconditional support and endless companionship. May we carry that beyond the grave.

For all the smiles and tears, for all of the love and laughter, and above all, for being the person that you were, I will carry you in my heart. I will always, always love you.

In Loving Memory of Ashley Marie Sockwell
January 31, 1978 to October 22, 1996

from your sister, Lisa Sockwell Meredith
Snellville, Ga



WHAT TO DO ON ANNIVERSARIES....

On my brother's 1 year anniversary of his death my entire family met at church. It was a Sunday so we thought we'd all go to church and then we went to brunch at a restaurant. At brunch we talked about my brother and enjoyed the time we had together as a family. After that we went to the cemetery and held hands and formed a circle around his grave and we prayed.

My other brother played a song that we listened to which was very moving. He gave us all copies of the song. The song is called "Dear John" by Styx. My brother's name is Rich so we changed the words a little bit -- mine is on the refrigerator.

My brother will be gone 4 years this July. I miss him dearly. He'll always be my big brother and remain in my heart where he never left.

Mary K. Rakytiak, surviving sibling
TCF online sharing

WAITING

The house is silent, your music no longer plays
Your art work and trinkets, remain on display.

Your bed made up, with soft comforter of down
Waiting for you, with the sheets turned down.

Clothing folded, put neatly away
Lillie, your kitten waits patiently, maybe today?

Little reminders of you everywhere
But without you here it's so empty and bare.

All remains, as if waiting your return
OH! For the reunion our hearts so yearn.

But the sound of your steps eludes our ear
No longer your voice calling, "anyone here"?

The days are long, nights longer still
Wishing for your presence a space only you can fill.

We gaze at your picture, as if you are there.
Yes you are gone, but you remain everywhere.

Should we take it all down, put it all away?
Pretend it didn't happen, that you'll return someday?

We may fool our minds, but our hearts give it away
You'll not be returning, the emptiness is here to stay.

In loving memory of our son,
Steven W. Simmons 1970 - 1999

Sheila Simmons
TCF Atlanta, GA

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

Chapter co-leaders

Marilyn & French Smith

Steering Committee

Henry Cole, Facilitator

Johnny James, Treasurer

Dianne & Frank Bruscato, Library

Frances & Jim Gregory, Outreach

John Dobbs, Outreach

Anna Ruth Hill, Outreach

Betty Jean James, Outreach & Hospitality

Julie & Danny Petty, Newsletter

Betty Jean & Johnny James, Memorial Park

MUSINGS

Isn't it strange that things we once took for granted, have changed so much? Things like the soft wings of a brilliant colored butterfly, or the radiant colors in the sky at dawn and sunset or perhaps a song we heard in passing or a movie, we once took for granted. But now, these very same things can bring on tears and leave us feeling a deep sense of longing. Why? Are these not the same as before? What changed? We did. The things we once took for granted are now viewed with much more than human eyes. We now experience these things through the eyes of a broken heart.

I believe grief gives us a very different view on things. A heart bruised and broken by loss has a new tenderness and compassion. Just look inside yourself at how your views have changed. I also believe this is our children speaking to us saying...look at the beauty and know that I am still near.

In Memory of my son Steven Simmons

Sheila Simmons
TCF Atlanta, GA



NEWLY BEREAVED ... BURDEN OF GRIEF

As I struggle with words to find answers, reading and writing my pain.
The pages grow blurred before eyes that are tired from this crushing emotional drain.

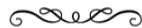
The relief that comes from the writing, parallels what I feel when I read.
To open myself to the torture of loss, seems to soothe this unbearable need.

There's no pleasure in life at this moment. It's an effort to get through the day.
And I labor to stay above water ... but the shoreline is so far away.

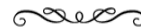
So I pick up a pen or a book about grief – and it serves as a raft for a while.
And I hope, as my tears fall on pages of pain, that I'll learn once again how to smile.

As I swim toward the shore of acceptance – I pray for the peace of belief.
That heaven's your home and you're waiting for me, then I'll finally be free of this grief.

Sally Migliaccio
TCF Babylon, NY



Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the newsletter to keep our chapter going strong. Please contact Julie Petty with your ideas.



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.

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

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Amiee McIlveene	07/07/78	Rhea & Danny McIlveene
Don Shlosman	07/04/78	Margie Godwin
Greg Dennis	07/08/60	Camille Dennis
Milton Scarborough	07/11/89	Tina Scarborough
Lonnie Matheson	07/20/68	Dorothy Matheson
Lauren Hemphill	07/26/78	Kitty McDougall & Tommy Hemphill
Scottie McLarrin	07/30/87	Mary McLarrin

OUR CHILDREN'S AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
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
Dylan Smith	08/18/77	Joan Taylor
John Bruscato	08/19/74	Dianne & Frank Bruscato
Seth Hunt	08/24/88	Susie Shivers
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 SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Dwain Whitehead	09/05/66	Mary & Ralph Whitehead
Fred Page	09/08/58	Charlotte Colquette
Pamela Ford	09/08/74	Leona Upton
Leigh Ann Carlton	09/13/83	Gail Dupuy
Stephen Blanchard	09/15/88	Tracey & Steve Blanchard
Ashley Taylor	09/15/98	Valerie & Doug Taylor
Emilie Posey	09/16/82	Kathy & Mark Posey
Donald Timothy Acree	09/20/64	Fran Acree
Paul Hayes	09/20/77	Patty & Paul Hayes
Amber Nicole Tamburo	09/21/88	Barbara & Gerald Tamburo
Wesley Canterberry	09/23/84	Dewanna Canterberry
Aaron Akers	09/23/93	Allison Woods
Josh Sumrall	09/24/91	Chasity Sumrall
Joel Rundell	09/26/65	Sharon Rundell
Kody Spann	09/27/84	Cindy & Larry Spann
Richard Bryan	09/28/79	Linda & James Bryan

OUR CHILDREN'S JULY ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Leigh Ann Carlton	07/01/01	Gail Dupuy
Lonnie Matheson	07/03/06	Dorothy Matheson
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 ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Don Shlosman	08/01/00	Margie Godwin
Hope Johnson	08/02/05	Fran Johnson
Chad Byrd	08/03/05	Janice & Randy Byrd
Beth Ann Smith	08/06/06	Judy & Randy Smith
Joel Rundell	08/09/90	Sharon Rundell
Codye Mardis	08/11/09	Julie Beckley
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
Greg Gilstrap	08/24/07	Jean Gilstrap
Alice Rains	08/28/94	Marie Rains
Brandon McGehee	08/30/02	Teddi & James McGehee

OUR CHILDREN'S SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Child</i>		<i>Parent(s)</i>
Amanda Maxwell	09/01/02	Angie Maxwell
Kenneth Wall	09/06/99	Beverly & Charles Wall
Kaye Shields	09/06/04	Lila & R.L. Hargrove
Corey Hayman	09/11/03	Linda & William Hayman
Colby Wixson	09/23/06	Laura Scriber
Kim Smith	09/29/97	Jackie Bailey

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.

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

www.tcfnortheastla.org

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Northeast Louisiana Chapter
P.O. Box 6114
Monroe, Louisiana 71211

Return Service Requested