



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northeast Louisiana Chapter  
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## MY SPRING BOUQUET

### RAINING TEARS

It rained today and the angels cried.  
That's what I once was told,  
When I was just a small child  
That my mother still could hold.

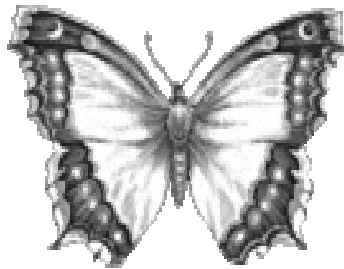
I now know that the angels do cry,  
As I do, many a day.  
For the special one I loved so much  
Who died one day in May.

Tears pour down for the loss of one  
Who shouldn't have left so soon.  
His struggles here were too much for  
him  
And he left one afternoon.

And even though his place is grand,  
In heaven high above,  
We mourn him so, down here on earth  
Because of the bonds of love.

Every time the angels cry,  
I'll too be raining tears.  
For I'll be always missing him  
For many, many years.

Kathie Winkler  
Middleburg Heights, Ohio  
*Bereavement Magazine January/February 2004*



The rain poured so often,  
The bulbs I planted bloomed in profusion.  
I cut them all to take to your grave,  
Leaving my yard as empty of blooms  
As your death left our life and our hearts.

It was a grand bouquet of flowers,  
Like our lives when you were here, son.  
From the bulbs new flowers will soon  
bloom again.  
I was sad, but also hopeful.  
I know harsh lessons of nature are true.  
Cut like flowers, I will again bloom too.

Marilyn Arvizo  
TCF So. Bay, LA, CA

### THE PROMISE OF SPRING

When February comes, there is finally  
an end in sight to the long winter.  
Sometimes melting snow reveals 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  
would intrude. And as the hours and months dragged  
on, 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.

Maryann Kramer  
TCF Arlington Heights, IL

### Monthly Meetings

1st Thursday of each month

**May 5 / June 2**

6:30 PM  
St. Francis Enaut Conference Center  
408 Hall Street  
Directly behind Saint Francis Medical Center

# 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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## GRADUATION—A TIME TO REMEMBER

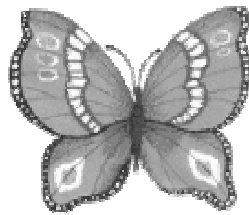
I was driving down the road the other day, thinking of how the retail market makes any event an opportunity for revenue. Graduation seems to fall into that category, with cards and gifts for every Graduate. This time of year reminds me that my graduation from high school was a bittersweet time.

Really, it was the first time I had “surpassed” my older brother, David, in anything significant. I turned the age that he was when he died, 18, in the beginning of my senior year of high school. That year was difficult for me, as I felt that I was getting to move past where he had been cut short. Graduation day was no exception. I was happy to be getting out of high school, and looking forward to that coming August when I would go to college. But why was I getting to do these things, and not David? What made me so special that I got to stay here and experience these things? I still am not quite sure of the answer to those questions.

Graduation from high school was really just the first of many events which I have gotten to experience that David never will. College graduation, my wedding, and the birth of my two children are examples. And for me, each event has been a bit bittersweet.

The good news is this: that while time does make it easier to bear day-to-day activities without your sibling, each major event in your life

presents itself as a new opportunity to remember your brother or sister, as well. For me, figuring that out was a huge relief, as it meant that my fear of forgetting David was not something I needed to worry about any more. His memory is just as alive for me today, 15-1/2 years later, as it was when I took that walk across the stage to accept my high school diploma.



Amy Baker Ferry  
Heart of Florida TCF, Longwood, FL

## MY BROTHER'S EYES

I search for my brother's eyes in my son and in me I see his smile.

With my offspring all around me I hold on to him for awhile.

Although He died so long ago he continues to live still.

In this one's laugh and that one's hand – I always feel a thrill.

My family laughs when I find the likeness – the features that remind.

They say I'm making it all up and that I must be blind.

But I have memorized it all and find him in little ways

His eyes, his smile and gestures are still with me today.

Nina Danielson, Cape Cod, MA  
*Dedicated to my brother Moss*

## MOTHER'S DAY

Even in my sorrow I feel special for I know the true meaning of the word

-Mother.

I have reached the Ultimate, from the joy of birth, to the sorrow of death. I belong to a special group who truly know the meaning of the word

-Mother

Would I have not accepted the gift if I had known the terrible loss I would feel by having it taken away from me? I would still hold out my hands and accept such a precious gift, for to love and to cherish, even for a short while, is worth every tear.



This year on Mother's Day, I'll shed my tears, but let them be as a soft summer's rain. A rain that nourishes the earth, tears that heal and cleanse my heart.

Vera Babb  
TCF St. Louis, MO

## A MOTHER'S DAY GIFT TO GOD

Lord today is Mother's Day, but our hearts are split in two  
Half is with the child still here, the other with the child that is there with you.

All the lovely presents are a nice surprise  
But the one thing we want most is missing, and tears fill our eyes.

We know when you sent them Lord, you didn't promise how long they would stay  
All you said was to love them and treasure each and every day.

But Lord it crushed our hearts, when you called for their return

We feel like half a Mom, as we ache weep and yearn.

But Lord tell them we love them just as much as we did before

And could you please make a window, so they can see through heaven's floor.

Let them see that they are missed and thought of with each breath

And that a Mother's love begins before life, and

does not end with death.  
So on this Mother's Day the greatest gift we give to you  
For Lord we know you missed them, and you love them too.

Sheila Simmons  
TCF Atlanta Online

## THEIR SONG OF LOVE

Remembering on this Mother's Day the melody your child etched in your heart.  
The sweet song of love that only your child could place there.

As this special day brings their song to you, may the warmth of their eternal love fill your heart once again.

For their song is never ending.

Patty Erdman  
TCF Longview, WA

## MEMORIAL DAY

For each grave where a soldier lies at his rest;  
For each prayer that is said today out of love;  
For each sigh of remembering someone who died;

Let us also give thought to the mothers and fathers,  
the brothers and sisters,  
the friends and the lovers,  
whom death left behind.

Sascha Wagner

### 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, Newsletter Editors

Sandy Chester, TCF Regional Coordinator

## A FATHER'S PRAYER

I am a man, God, and I have been taught that I should be strong and show no weakness. My wife needs me to be strong; I cannot and I must not be weak and lean on her. It is only with you that I can be honest, Lord, and even with you I am ashamed to admit it, but I want to cry. I can feel the tears securely dammed up behind eyes that want to burst. There is a voice in me that shouts, BE STRONG! BE A MAN! SHOW NO WEAKNESS! SHED NO TEARS! But there is another voice inside that speaks softly and somehow I feel it is your voice, Father.

Is it you who tells me that I am also a feeling human being who can cry if I need to? Is it your voice that tells me that maybe my wife needs the tenderness of my tears more than she needs the strength of my muscles? You are right, Lord, as always. My wife needs to see my grief, she needs to feel the dampness of my tears and know the aching in my heart. Then, just as we became one to create this life, we become one in our grief which mourns this death. I think I understand now, Lord, it is in sharing the awful pain of my grief that I become an even stronger man. It is in sharing my tears that I share my true strength.

O God, help me communicate my deepest and most sensitive feeling to my wife so we may become whole together.

Norman Hagley  
TCF Omaha, NE

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Make plans to stay at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel, site of the 2005 National Conference, located in Boston's Back Bay.

Hotel Reservations:

Marriott Copley Place Hotel  
110 Huntington Ave.  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116  
Phone: 617-236-5800  
(Reservations must be made directly with the hotel.)



If you would like to receive an individual 2005 TCF Conference Registration form, please send a #10 business size, self addressed stamped envelope to:

TCF Conference 2005  
PO Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

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Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the newsletter to keep our chapter going strong. Please contact Johnny James 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.

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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 MAY BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Marc Fogleman	05/02/61	Joy & Justin Fogleman
Steve Wicker	05/05/55	Ralph Wicker
Brad Robinson	05/07/74	Geraldine Robinson
Justin Petty	05/07/82	Julie & Danny Petty
Melissa Blankenship	05/08/65	Peaches Cathey
Jason Hutts	05/12/81	Carol & Greg Hutts
David Book	05/17/81	John Book
Jill Machen	05/21/82	Cynthia Machen
Russell Bates	05/23/52	Mary Bates
Brent Lockhart	05/23/81	Ann & Jim Lockhart
Marquez Ellis	05/23/84	Belinda Hollis
Susan Papa	05/24/50	Pat & Harold Lary
Veronica Barber	05/25/69	Maureen Barber
Sonja Roberts	05/26/67	Dianne & Jr. Roberts
Brian Gregory	05/28/73	Frances & Jim Gregory
Scott Thompson	05/29/78	Tammy Thompson
Derek Smith	05/29/91	Jennifer & Jamie Smith

### OUR CHILDREN'S MAY ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Mickey Roberson	05/01/04	Melba Roberson
Josh Porter	05/07/97	Dianne Porter-Lord
Hunter Aitken	05/08/02	Nora Aitken
John Young	05/12/04	Sandy Dietle
Michael Cannon	05/13/86	Rodney & Sara Cannon
Newton Freeland	05/22/04	Lori Freeland
Justin Petty	05/26/01	Julie & Danny Petty
Amanda Miller	05/27/02	Chuck Miller

### OUR CHILDREN'S JUNE BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Caroline Cole	06/11/70	Ann & Henry Cole
Michael Cain	06/11/84	Danny Cain
Nathan Hollingsworth	06/13/83	Vicki & Jim Hollingsworth
Andrew Rinicker	06/16/72	Dale Rinicker
Michael Carter	06/16/75	Brenda & David Carter
Corey Otwell	06/16/86	Karen & Frick Otwell
Alice Rains	06/18/70	Marie Rains
Jackson Kennedy	06/18/00	Jonann & Jeff Kennedy
Mike Hayes	06/20/63	Margaret & George Hayes
Paula McCaa	06/21/64	Norma & George Campbell
Michael Hicks	06/21/04	Bess Williams
Jessica Smith	06/22/84	Trish & Greg Smith
Kelly Chapman	06/23/78	Judy & Bennie Chapman
Trey Sullivan	06/27/78	Vickie Sullivan
Joseph Monfette	06/30/85	Melba & Craig Monfette

### OUR CHILDREN'S JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Mike Hightower	06/04/82	June Hightower
Leslie Ann Blanton	06/06/96	Lynda Blanton
Corey Otwell	06/07/03	Karen & Frick Otwell
Michael Cain	06/08/02	Danny Cain
Melissa Blankenship	06/14/04	Peaches Cathey
Corey Barr	06/15/98	Pam Barr
Carlos Wardlow	06/16/03	Hortencia Wardlow
Scott Neal	06/17/03	Wanda Neal Corey
Veronica Barber Smith	06/26/98	Maureen Barber

### 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**

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Return Service Requested