



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

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SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2007

WHAT IS A COMPASSIONATE FRIEND?

The dictionary definition is, "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to help alleviate the suffering." Friend is defined as "a supporter or sympathizer." My "heart" definition of a compassionate friend is someone who "gets it" and never, ever forgets it. The power of a compassionate friend's empathy in the face of the tornado of agony that is the newly bereaved parent's life can be critical to their healing. If we, as healing bereaved parents, are willing to step in to the role of caregiver for the broken soul of another bereaved parent, it's important not to lose touch with our pain. Not to lose touch with that kick in the stomach we felt when we first learned of our own child's death. As our hearts heal, it can be easy to fall into the role of a teacher where we start to advise or pass judgment on how another bereaved parent grieves. If we want to help others heal, we must continue to relate to that instant that our child died. Love has undeniable power when given with a clear and pure heart, where nothing is expected in return and in a compassionate, caring way. In other words, like a compassionate friend.

Rob Anderson
Sugar Grove, IL
excerpted from Grief Digest, Vol. 2, Issue 3

4th ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP & COOKOUT THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2007

Make plans to attend The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Louisiana 4th Annual Fellowship & Cookout on Thursday, October 4, 2007. This event will be our October meeting and will be held at St Paul's United Methodist Church. All parents, grandparents, and siblings are welcome.

Please call French Smith at 388-1660 if you plan to attend.

STRENGTH

In the early days of my grief,
a tear would well up in my eyes,
a lump would form in my throat,
but you would not know – I would hide it,
for the strong do not cry –
And I am strong.

In the middle days of my grief,
I would look ahead and see that wall
that I had attempted to go around,
as an ever-present reminder of a wall yet
unscaled.
Yet I did not attempt to scale it for the strong
will survive –
And I am strong.

In the later days of my grief,
I learned to climb over that wall,
step by step; remembering, crying, grieving.
And the tears flowed steadily as I painstakingly went
over.
The way was long, but I did make it,
For I am strong.

Near the resolution of my grief,
a tear will well up in my eyes,
a lump will form in my throat,
but I will let that tear fall
and you will see it.

Terry Jago
TCF Camden County, NJ

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, September 6

Thursday, October 4

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 tcsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org for the password

NAMASTE - THE LIGHT IN ME SALUTES THE LIGHT IN YOU

I believe that we are here on this planet to experience what it means to be a Spirit in a physical body. The greater the experience, the deeper it touches our soul. This includes pleasure and pain, happiness and sadness, hope and despair, lightness and darkness. For we cannot know one without the other. This is a time to experience our grief. I pray that we all give ourselves that right and honor our grieving process. Through grief we heal. These are the things that I grieve for:

I grieve for the loss of my only brother.

I grieve that I will never come home to see him sitting in the living room to say hello.

I grieve that we will never laugh together again, that I will never again experience that rich and unique humor that only he and I shared.

I grieve that this world will no longer get to enjoy his humanness and his many gifts.

I grieve that I will never see my brother in love, that I will never see him as a father or with a family of his own.

I grieve that we will no longer share and inspire each other with the music that we love.

I grieve that we will never get to work on a creative multi-media project together. This was a vision I held for the future.

I grieve that I didn't share enough of my life experiences with my brother, and that I could have opened my heart even more.

I grieve for all the people that Jason touched and the feelings of pain and loss that they are experiencing.

This is what I grieve for. Through death new life is birthed and though we cannot see it now, from

Jason's death we will all experience new life. If we allow ourselves to grieve fully, this new life will become apparent. I love the spirit who gave me the privilege and pleasure of being my brother and I am grateful to experience 24 years of his beauty on this planet.

Jeff Curnutt
in Honor of His Brother, Jason Curnutt
November 26, 1974- April 11, 1999



BELOVED BROTHER: LOSING YOU IS LOSING ME

Dearest Justin,
To lose a sibling is to lose oneself,
For a part of me is gone...
And now I'm left to reminisce
As now I try to carry on.

The thought of you not being here
Has torn my world apart...
Yet every day I feel you near;
Is a blessing to my heart.

Your memory comforts me today
In ways I wish you knew...
But tears are falling from the pain
That comes from losing you.

I see your face in the morning sun
And in the moon at night...
I wonder how you're feeling now,
I pray that you're alright.

And one day when my time has come
To soar with eagle's wings...
We will be joined forevermore.
I Love You Forever & Always.

Charlie Clakley
TCF Tyler, TX

SCHOOL DAYS

Again a new school year is upon us, with it, it brings on a new feeling of our loss. Even though Steven was long out of school, it still brings on the memories. So if you are dreading the sight of the yellow buses, know I am thinking of you.

The summer is mellowing as the days grow shorter.
The green on the trees seem to droop, and
look a little duller.

The lazy days of summer take on a busy
hustle
As families shop for school, each gets a new
book satchel.

Soon the quiet streets will be filled as children gather
waiting.

The yellow bus to pick them up. OH! The
anticipating.

Another teachers face the greet upon their arrival
But the same old lessons to be learned, to them seems
so trivial.

New friends to make, and old ones too
Make their days fly past to soon.

But back at home a mother weeps for the child that
this year misses
No new clothes to buy, no more good-bye hugs and
kisses.

For her this joyful time just brings on more heartache
Another school year starts, another milestone the
child cannot make.

So she dries her eyes and tries to go on for the
children that remain
But each new start, breaks her heart, it's hard to see
the gain.

So if the yellow school bus brings on tears for you
this year
Don't forget your Compassionate Friends, we are
always standing near.

Sheila Simmons
TCF Atlanta, GA

WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING TONIGHT, MY SON?

What would you be doing tonight my son
If your life wasn't cut short, and you were still here
to have fun

Would you be out on a date, or watching a movie
Or outside playing Frisbee with your sweet dog
Buddy

What would you be doing in the morning my
son

When the alarm clock goes off and the work
day has begun

Whose computer would you fix whose disaster
would you resolve

Would your day go smooth and would you still love
your job.

What would you be doing for lunch my son
Eating with your friends or grabbing something on
the run

Would it be Mexican, Chinese, or some nice little
place

Oh what I'd give once more just to see your face.

Who would have thought I would be writing you
poems

Or sitting on your bed crying and in mourning
You were young and a great man my son
You will be missed until my day too is done.

Lydia F. Burns
TCF Atlanta, GA

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



WHAT SEVEN YEARS FEELS LIKE

Grief is a journey. Seven years into this journey since your death, much of the time my feelings and emotions are very conflicting.

When surrounded by friends—I am lonesome. In the midst of my joys—I am blue. With a smile on my face—I have heartache. When in a public place and I hear someone speak the name “Brian,” my heart skips a beat and I feel the tug of familiar tears.

As I approach another birthday, I think about the birthday we should have celebrated last month—yours. I find myself wondering what your life would have been like today.

It has taken these seven years for your brother to once again speak of his memories of big brother Brian. The long days of summer will always stir memories of your last days with us. It will always hurt to remember your suffering and amazing courage in the battle against the cancer, but I think I may have rounded a small bend in the road. Something has changed. I can now think about some of the funny things you used to do and say and I find myself actually laughing again.

In so many ways, whether it is marveling on a summer night at the star studded sky or when driving in my car and a song you used to sing comes on the radio I feel you with me, my dear Brian.

Jolyn Harris
TCF Tyler, TX



DIFFICULT TIME

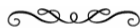
I used to have a very difficult time, then some difficult times, then some difficult days, then a difficult day at times, but now it's difficult moments in a day now and then.

I would not have believed that possible 10 years ago, nor did I care if I even had another day, of any kind, at that time. It sounds so trite to say that time helps heal, but surviving this moment, then the next and the next, and then tomorrow, is what helped me to know that I'd be OK.

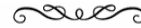
I'm very different, I'll never “get over it”, but I am surviving and going on with this life and after a while I've learned to acknowledge and accept good moments and the good times even more.

Thanks to Compassionate Friends for being there.

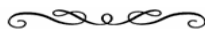
Kathy Mattocks
TCF Palo Alto, CA



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 SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Fred Page	09/08/58	Charlotte Colquette
Pamela Ford	09/08/74	Leona Upton
Karen Carlton	09/13/83	Gail Dupuy
Stephen Blanchard	09/15/88	Tracey & Steve Blanchard
Ashley Taylor	09/15/98	Valerie & Doug Taylor
Ann Avery	09/16/77	Jerry Lindsay
Aaron Akers	09/23/93	Allison Woods
Joel Rundell	09/26/65	Sharon Rundell
Richard Bryan	09/28/79	Linda & James Bryan

OUR CHILDREN'S SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

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

OUR CHILDREN'S OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Martha Mikel	10/05/53	Ruth Mikel
Martha Husmann	10/09/52	Betty & Harry Stone
Jeremy Barnhill	10/15/84	Kathi & Terry Barnhill
Gabriel White	10/25/77	Lela & Anthony White
Kenneth Wall	10/26/59	Beverly & Charles Wall

OUR CHILDREN'S OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Travis Lowery	10/03/94	Joyce Lowery
John Bruscato	10/05/96	Dianne & Frank Bruscato
Jake Raborn	10/05/06	Staci & Don Raborn
Jon Bowman	10/09/06	Jill Puckett
Wendy Williams	10/19/99	Nell Williams
Dana Sallis	10/21/99	Joanna Sallis
Stephen Dupuy	10/22/05	Polly & Butch Dupuy
Aimee McIlveene	10/26/01	Rhea & Danny McIlveene

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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Return Service Requested