



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

P.O. Box 6114, Monroe, Louisiana – 71211
(318)-388-1660 Fax: (318)-388-2328

website : www.tcfnortheastla.org
email : tcfnortheastla@aol.com

January / February 2005

MONTHLY MEETINGS



The 1st Thursday of each month
(January 6th / February 3rd)

Place: St. Francis Enaut Conference Center
408 Hall Street (Directly behind SFMC)

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, Editors – Newsletter

Sandy Chester, TCF Regional Coordinator

28TH NATIONAL TCF CONFERENCE



"Lighting the Way"



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

28th National Conference
July 1 - July 3, 2005
Boston, Massachusetts

July 1st - July 3rd, 2005

The Marriott Hotel At Copley Place

Boston, Massachusetts

See Page # 4 for details

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Light Service

December 12, 2004

The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Louisiana held its Candle Light service in conjunction with the worldwide candle lighting at Grace Episcopal Church. Candles were lit at 7:00 p.m. in celebration of the lives of all our children who are no longer living on this earth.

Memorials were made in honor of our beloved children and it was a very successfully attended service. The beautiful and moving music was provided by D.H. Clark, organist and Jim Malson, vocalist. We sincerely thank both of them for their time and talent.

THE NEW YEAR

*The New Year comes
When all the world is ready
For changes, resolutions-
Great beginnings.*

*For us, to whom
That stroke of midnight means
A missing child remembered,
For us, the New Year comes
More like another darkness.*

*But let us not forget
That this may be the year
When love and hope and courage
Find each other somewhere
In the darkness
To lift their voice and speak:*

Let there be light

*Sascha Wagner, TCF
Des Moines, IA*

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.

Email tcfsiblingrep@compassionatefriends.org for the password.

There is also Sibling Resources Page at www.compassionatefriends.org

To My Sister

Not long ago
In fact, just the other day.
I saw a young girl
Who looked my way.

I glanced several times
As she stood by my side.
It sent cold chills
Up and down my spine.

Her eyes just like yours
Danced and sparkled in the light.
Bold and fearless they showed
No evidence of fright.
Her smile was friendly.
Anybody could see
She was a special friend
Like you used to be.

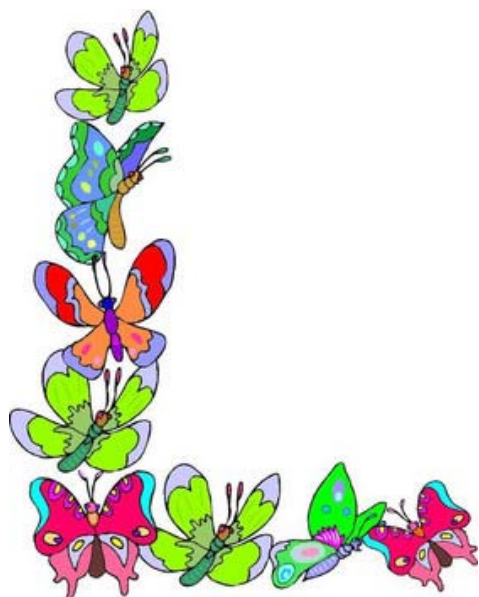
As I watched her leave
Dragging her feet and shuffling away,
I could remember when
You walked the same way.

This was a special
And extraordinary day.
When out of the blue
This girl came my way.

Once again I was reminded
Of the never-ending sorrow
That is with me today
And every tomorrow.

I wish I could tell the driver
That chose to drive drunk that day,
The pain, sorrow, and anguish
That never goes away.
Although I try to remember
You're in a place far better than I
Still there's so many things to tell you.
Most of all...
"I love you and goodbye."

—by Lori Zimmer, MADDvocate, summer 1992



MEMORIES

*As I watched her leave
There is a place
That we call Memory—
A province by itself
which, though unseen,
is home and haven
to the heart—
and there,
in peace and beauty
waiting,
are those with whom
we shared our yesterdays.*

—Nancy Cassel, TCF Holmdel, NJ

The Mender Hart

The heart is oh so fragile; although the muscle's strong.
It goes on beating even though continued life seems wrong.
When devastation makes its mark and chisels in the pain,
It seems as though the heart will not ever know joy again.

Good news! The heart will mend itself, but not just like before,
Remember, like a broken bone, the original is no more.
There is a tender spot in both where once the gap was wide.
The beating heart that gives us life has courage on its side.

And as the broken bone may ache because of rain and cold,
The heart may ache with longing
for the one whose bell has tolled.
There is no guarantee that life will ever be the same,
But when you do find joy in life,
the heart should feel no shame.

-Karen Longbrake, TCF Ada OH

There's a Valentine Waiting for You

By Mary Cleckley

There's a Valentine waiting for you,
That's different from all the others.
It's there every month at our meetings.
Of heartbroken fathers and mothers.

Its envelope is made of caring.
The glue of understanding seals it tight.
This non-judgmental group who've "been
there"

Help to take away your fear and fright.

So, come join with us together,
Read your living message printed clear.
In not only this month's valentine,
But all those throughout the year.

Resolutions for Bereaved Parents

I will grieve as much as and for as long as I feel like grieving, and I will not let others put a timetable on my grief.

I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.

I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now".

I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.

I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how it feels.

I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.

I will not be ashamed or afraid to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.

I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and I won't feel compelled to explain this communication to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.

I will know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy, and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.

I know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time.

I will let myself heal and not feel guilty about feeling better.

Continued...

I will remind myself that the grief process is circuitous—that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that “slipping backward” is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods, too, will pass.

I will try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.

I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me.

Even though my child has died, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

Nancy Mower, TCF, Honolulu, Hawaii

28th National TCF Conference

July 1st – July 3rd, 2005



The Marriott Hotel At Copley Place
Boston, Massachusetts

The 2005 TCF Conference Registration forms will be mailed to all chapters in January 2005. If you would like to receive an individual form, please send a #10 business size, self addressed stamped envelope to:

TCF Conference 2005

PO Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

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 to your child to share during that significant month. Also you can bring your child's favorite snack for refreshment or do a flower arrangement for the table by letting Marilyn Smith know a month prior to the meeting.

Our Children Always Loved and Remembered

JANUARY/FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

<i>CHILD</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>PARENT(S)/Sibling(S)</i>
Brandi Spradlin	1/05/78	Rita & Terry Colgate
Stephen Smith	1/08/76	Marilyn & French Smith
Jacob Foster	1/11/81	Pam Foster
Dana Sallis	1/12/78	Joanna Sallis (Sister)
Amanda Maxwell	1/17/86	Angie Maxwell
Mike Nolan	1/12/52	Dot Nolan
Beau Wicker	1/20/54	Ralph Wicker
William Lang	1/21/64	John Lang
Michael Cannon	1/21/59	Sara & Rodney Cannon
Kimball James	1/24/71	Betty Jean & Johnny James
Elois Jackson	1/24/72	Elizabeth Jackson
Stephen Sivils	1/25/77	Veda & Leon Sivils
Norman Craig	1/28/64	Pat Craig
Allan Bickham	2/05/77	Yvonne & Toby Bickham
Josh Porter	2/06/79	Dianne Porter-Lord
Jason Parnell	2/11/83	Linda Creed
David Clements	2/21/62	Juanita Clements

JANUARY/FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

<i>CHILD</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>PARENT(S)</i>
Phyllis Aulds	1/01/98	Vickie Sullivan
Kirk Anderson	1/03/03	Becky & Howard Anderson
Melissa Kovac	1/06/01	Mildred & Ken Kovac
Scottie McLarrin	1/09/99	Mary McLarrin
Martha Husmann	1/09/90	Betty & Harry Stone
Jackson Kennedy	1/11/02	Jonann & Jeff Kennedy
Jane Kight	1/20/83	Sandy Casteel
Fred Page	1/26/98	Charlotte Colquette
Richard Bryan	1/25/02	Linda & James Bryan
Caroline Cole	1/30/88	Ann & Henry Cole
Rusty Thomas	2/04/03	Donna Thomas
Jason Parnell	2/09/01	Linda Creed
Allen Bickham	2/10/00	Yvonne & Toby Bickham
Jessica Martin	2/19/03	Trish & Greg Smith
Chad Heckford	2/23/03	Gay & Jessie Heckford
Adam McKenzie	2/28/03	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. 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