



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHAPTER

Phone: 318.388.1660  
Fax: 318.388.2368  
Web: [www.tcfnortheastla.org](http://www.tcfnortheastla.org)  
Email: [tcfnortheastla@aol.com](mailto:tcfnortheastla@aol.com)

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2005

## THE MAGIC LIGHT OF DAY

Often, when I think of you  
It's in the morning light.  
Or other times, I find that  
It is in the soft twilight.

Somehow in those early hours  
Or in the dusk of day-  
I feel our connection soundly,  
From your place so far away.

There's something very special  
About soft and dim sunlight  
That lets me know you're by my side  
And everything's alright.

Not many would believe it's true,  
For heaven is far away.  
But all I know is – there you are,  
With me everyday.

You walk with me and comfort me,  
And somehow let me know.  
You'll guide the way along my life  
And meet me when I go.

Kathie Winkler  
TCF Middleburg Heights, Ohio

## YOU WILL

You will live  
Although you feel like you are dying.

You will laugh once again  
Although you feel that emotion is lost forever.

You will think clearly again  
Although you feel very confused most of the time.

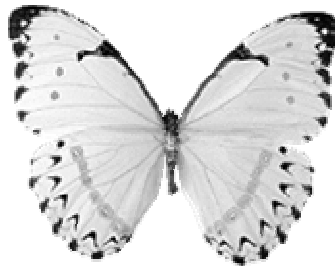
You will celebrate your child's life  
Although now you are enveloped in the whys and if  
Onlys of your child's death.

You will somehow make your way through this  
rough work called grieving  
Although today you feel you are slipping backwards.

You will find love, understanding and caring with  
The Compassionate Friends  
Although today you are lonely, isolated and  
withdrawn.

Choose the "You Will."  
I did, and it is helping with that large hole in my  
heart.

Carol Joyce  
TCF Fort Lauderdale, FL



## A LOVE SONG

The mention of my child's name  
May bring tears to my eyes,  
But it never fails to bring  
Music to my ears.  
If you are really my friend,  
Please don't keep me  
From hearing the beautiful music.  
It soothes my broken heart  
And fills my soul with love.

Nancy Williams  
TCF Central NJ

### Monthly Meetings

1st Thursday of each month

**September 1 / October 6**

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 [tcf siblingrep@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:tcf siblingrep@compassionatefriends.org) for the password

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## A THOUSAND FACES

I walked in wearing your jacket, my arms linked between Mom and Dad.

My hand trembled around the folded pages of my speech.

I could barely breathe as we sat down in front of your coffin.

I had asked to speak first. One thousand sets of eyes watched every step of my careful pace to the podium.

My heart pounded, my hands shook the unfolded pages, and tears began to stream down my cheeks.

I stood beside your silence. And listened to the echo of my grief into the sobbing crowd.

I wanted to fall to my knees, pound the wooden floor and scream for answers. I wanted to lay down into the madness that your death brought me to. But you had always taught me to be strong.

I took a deep breath and continued as if you were standing beside me—

I spoke of your sarcasm, your love for chicks, our childhood fights, and our developed friendship. And my memories were joined by a laughter that reminded me to remember your smile and not this day.

I wiped my eyes and folded the pages that said goodbye to the sixteen years that I spent looking up to you.

Your favorite song began and echoed from the walls of the same gymnasium that used to chant your name on game day.

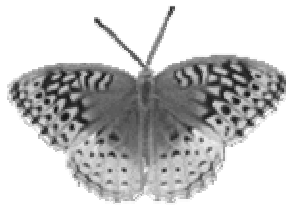
I watched your best friends file around you and looked into eyes that I had never seen shed tears until today.

A thousand hearts broke for the shaken spirits of the boys that led your procession.

My hand trembled around the folded pages of my speech.

And I followed your lead for the last time.

Alexandra  
TCF Portland, OR



## BROTHERS

Brothers grow together with wind in their hair, wild schemes in their heads, and with mud in their raggedy pants.

They look back into one another's eyes, with spirits burning from a common flame. They wrestle life with such similar hands.

No tree is too tall or hill too high to climb, for those whose bonds are flesh and set together through time.

Yet the song ever told us that dragons live forever but not the little boys.

Suddenly one of us is all alone, clinging to the memories of wind and mud and hills of stone.

We're still together in our own way, if not but in a burning little flame.

Ken  
TCF Salem, OR

## COMPASSIONATE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION

The Compassionate Friends is eager to recognize the wonderful companies that have shown a high degree of compassion toward parents, siblings, and grandparents who have suffered the death of a child. If you are the spouse of or the bereaved employee to whom the company showed exemplary compassion, please submit your employer for the Compassionate Employer Recognition.

### Criteria for Compassionate Employer Recognition might include:

1. Companies that supported your bereavement needs.
2. Companies that arranged for additional time off, beyond the familiar three days.
3. Companies that provided support services and/or time off.
4. Companies that demonstrated a general caring attitude.
5. Companies that showed flexibility in work assignments and evaluating job performance.
6. Other acts of compassion.

Nominations can be made using the on-line form found at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) or by a form that will be available at our monthly meetings which can be mailed to the TCF National Office. Nomination forms must be received by November 30, 2005 to be considered for the 2006 Compassionate Employer Recognition.

## 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 teacher's face they 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 too 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

## 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP & COOKOUT

Make plans to attend The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Louisiana 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fellowship & Cookout on Thursday, October 6, 2005. The cookout is tentatively scheduled to be held at Forsythe Park. This event will be our October meeting. All parents, grandparents, and siblings are welcome.

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

Additional details will follow in a separate announcement.

## AS LONG AS I CAN

As long as I can,  
I will look at the world for both of us.  
As long as I can,

I will laugh with the bird,  
I will sing with flowers,  
I will play to the stars,  
For both of us.

As long as I can,  
I will remember how many things  
On this earth were your joy.  
And I will live as well  
As you would want me to live,  
As long as I can.

Sascha



### 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

## WHY WE STILL GO TO TCF

*“Are you still involved with that group? Aren't you over it yet? Why do you go?”*

These are questions I often hear now that it has been more than seven years since Mark died. I suspect you hear them too. There are easy answers. But not everyone understands, unless you have been there. Here are ten I can think of:

1. Because we never want the world to forget our child, so what we do we do in his or her name.
2. Because when we reach out to help someone else, we also help ourselves.
3. Because someone was there for us when we needed it most; now the best way to say “thank you” is to pass it on by being there for others.
4. Because it is the one thing we do that can bring something positive out of tragedy.
5. Because we have found in TCF better friends and closer bonds than we ever thought possible. Here we can cry and hug people even if we don't know their last name or what they do for a living. And it doesn't matter.
6. Because few people are qualified to walk up to a newly bereaved family and say, “I know how you feel.” And because we can, we must.
7. Because sometimes we need to talk, too, and to remember and share. We are further along than many around us, but we never forget.
8. Because many of us believe that one day we will meet our child or brother or sister again, and he or she will ask, "So what did you do with your life after I left?" And we will have an answer.
9. Because our presence might help newly bereaved families understand that they will survive and even laugh again.
10. Because we love cold coffee, cookies, and hard metal chairs.

Richard Edler, TCF National President  
TCF South Bay/L.A., California Chapter



### LOUISIANA/MISSISSIPPI REGIONAL CONFERENCE

*We Remember You With Love*

*“To Live in the Hearts We Leave Behind is Not to Die”*

When: Saturday, October 8, 2005  
Location: North Oaks Diagnostic Center  
Brent Dufreche Convention Center  
15837 Paul Vega, MD Dr.  
Hammond, LA  
Cost: \$50 or \$45 each for two in same family

Those registering will be able to attend three workshops, receive a bag lunch and receive one butterfly for release at the closing ceremony. This conference is open to adults and siblings over 18 years old. For information, call Johnny James at 322-3024 (home) or 665-4511 (work). Registration forms will be available at our monthly meeting of The Compassionate Friends.

### CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL PARK

The first step toward the reality of having our Children's Memorial Park built in Forsythe Park has been taken. French & Marilyn Smith along with Johnny James met with city officials to get approval for the park. After seeing the landscape architectural design created by Laurie Schween, city officials said things looked good, and they would be getting back with us for the final approval.

Funding of this project will be quite an undertaking, and the **generosity** of all TCF members is highly encouraged. Donations for the park should be mailed to:

**TCF Children's Memorial Park**  
**P.O. Box 6114**  
**Monroe, Louisiana 71211**

Any questions may be directed to French Smith at 388-1660.

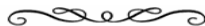
*Additional information will be forthcoming.*



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.



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 SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Melissa Kovac	09/02/72	Mildred & Ken Kovac
Eric Galloway	09/04/76	Lisa & Gary Galloway
Luke Patton	09/06/79	Lana & Minor Patton
Fred Page	09/08/58	Charlotte Colquette
Pamela Ford	09/08/74	Leona Lipton
Trey Linzay	09/13/89	Cindy & Wayne Linzay
Karen Carlton	09/13/83	Gail Dupuy
Johnnie Miller	09/15/80	Maureen Horn
Rodney Saxon	09/15/64	Claudine Saxon
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 Kindrix	09/05/02	Jo & Gorden Kindrix
Kenneth Wall	09/06/99	Beverly & Charles Wall
Kaye Shields	09/06/04	Lila & R.L. Hargrove
Steve Wicker	09/06/95	Ralph Wicker
Samuel Foust	09/07/02	Cindy & Scott Foust
Elizabeth Thompson	09/07/04	Brenda Owen
Amy Hill	09/11/04	Diane & Richard Hill
Brent Lockhart	09/11/95	Ann & Jim Lockhart
Ben Caldwell	09/27/01	Emily & Douglas Caldwell
Kim Smith	09/29/97	Jackie Bailey

## **OUR CHILDREN'S OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS**

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Martha Mickel	10/05/53	Ruth Mickel
Katelee Hart	10/07/94	Vonda & Alvin Hart
Matthew Manning	10/08/81	Cecil Manning
Martha Husmann	10/09/52	Betty & Harry Stone
Larkin Gibbs	10/10/81	Pam Gibbs
Don Redden	10/10/63	Glenda & Levy Redden
Jeremy Barnhill	10/15/84	Kathi & Terry Barnhill
Kenneth Wall	10/26/59	Beverly & Charles Wall
Mike Hightower	10/28/66	June Hightower

## **OUR CHILDREN'S OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES**

<u>Child</u>		<u>Parent(s)</u>
Paula McCaa	10/03/99	Norma & George Campbell
John Bruscato	10/05/96	Dianne & Frank Bruscato
Sonja Gilispie	10/12/01	Dianne & Jr. Roberts
Marquez Ellis	10/16/04	Belinda Hollis
Wendy Williams	10/19/99	Nell Williams
Dana Sallis	10/21/99	Joanna Sallis
Charles Smith	10/25/04	Brynie Smith
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.

**WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE  
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

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Return Service Requested