

A special THANKS to the First Christian Church on S. Broadway for allowing us to meet at their facilities.

We need volunteers to keep your Compassionate Friends chapter afloat. Please contact us to help in any capacity—once or for a few months or more. Any help will be greatly appreciated!



www.TylerTCF.org

Thanks to Skillern's Business Systems for printing our newsletter!

Skillern's Business Systems
1604 Grande Blvd., Tyler, TX 75703
903-561-5591 • www.skillerns.com

Please join us at 900 S. Broadway Ave. Tyler, TX 75701.
We hope to see you at our next meeting!

We need not walk alone.



Tyler, Texas 75711
P.O. Box 9714

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS




*The
Compassionate
Friends*

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



We need not walk alone.

Volume 22, Issue 4

Tyler, Texas

April 2021

Monthly Group Meeting

Tyler Area Meeting
First Christian Church
4202 S. Broadway
Tyler, TX 75701

3rd Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Find us on Facebook @TylerTCF

Contact

Phone: (903) 422-0358
www.TylerTCF.org • info@TylerTCF.org
P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711

Chapter Leader: Heather Ogg;
Secretary: Trish Mann Taylor;
Newsletter/Website: Mary Lingle; Tyler
Meeting Facilitator: Heather Ogg

Steering Committee: Cheri Zucca, Janet
Majors, Trisha Mann Taylor, Barbara
Barton, Carol Johnson, Heather Ogg,
Kim Cathey, Mary Lingle

Joan & Bill Campbell, Regional
Coordinators: (972) 935-0673
TCF National: (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

The Meeting Agenda

6:30 p.m. - Meeting will begin with announcement of birthdays and anniversaries and reading of the Credo. We will then have open discussion.
8:00 p.m. - Meeting will close by recognizing our childrens' names. Feel free to visit after the meeting or check out books from our library.

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Remember When

Remember when:

- you cried at the mention of her name
- you could not bear to look at her picture
- watching home movies of too heart-wrenching to even consider
- everything you saw reminded you of her....and it hurt so bad
- you dreaded going to sleep for fear of dreaming of her
- you dreaded waking up
- you dreaded-----life
- you wanted to go where she was

How about now?

- you can talk about her without crying
- you love to meet anyone who remembers her
- you love to hear them say her name
- you can laugh at the funny things she said
- you have picture albums of her, and you love to share them
- you love watching those movies [they are tears of joy]
- you love to dream of her
- you pray to dream of her
- you even went through her hope chest—and lived to tell about it

There is no time limit on grief. You have your way, and I have mine. I can truly say after all these years, I am better. And I feel confident in telling you, "You will get better, too." My best advice as a "seasoned griever": don't try to do it alone. Let other bereaved parents help you. It helps you, and it helps them. You will find unbelievable compassion among those who have been through what you are going through. They can help, and in time, so can you.

Cherish the days between "remember when" and "how about now." Make a list similar to mine. You have come much further than you think.

God bless you.
Sam Smith, TCF, Tyler, Texas

**Meeting Location:
First Christian Church
4202 S. Broadway • Tyler 75703**

Please park behind the sanctuary in front of the
Christian Life Center. Every 3rd Monday at 6:30 p.m.

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.



We need not walk alone.

"A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed." —Nancy Green

Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to those who attended their first TCF meeting last month.

We deeply regret the circumstances that brought you to our TCF Chapter. The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, not-for-profit, self-help organization that offers support and understanding to families who have experienced the death of a child. You are cordially invited to attend our monthly meeting (held the third Monday of the month). The meeting is open to everyone and free of charge. You are free to talk, cry or to sit in silence; we respect the individuality of mourning. Comments shared in the meetings remain confidential.

Our chapter is operated entirely by volunteers dedicated to furthering the work of TCF. Your voluntary, tax deductible donations honor your loved one(s) in a meaningful way by enabling us to print and mail this newsletter and meet other expenses involved in reaching out to other grieving families (100% of funds are used for this outreach). Donations, along with the name of the person being honored, may be sent to:

The Compassionate Friends of Tyler
P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711

To Our New Members

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But, you have nothing to lose and much to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person—or just the right words spoken that will help you in your grief work.

To Our Old 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 we have new parents. 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."

Grief Resources

Note: Some resources are based on individual opinion and experience and are not officially endorsed by the organization. The hope is that you may find a grief resource helpful to you and your family. We will continue to build on our resources column. Please let us know of any of your personal recommendations. Thank you.

Compassionate Friends (International Website) compassionatefriends.org
Also offers grief support for **siblings & grandparents**

The Childrens Park: www.childrensparktyler.org
Glory Babies meets the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at Alison house next to The Children's Park of Tyler: www.glorybabies.com

GriefShare: www.griefshare.org

Smith County Victim Services Division
www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs/counties/smith.html

The Hospice of East Texas: www.hospiceofeasttexas.org

Victim Services Division - Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Online Resource Directory
www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs

Survivors of Suicide: www.allianceofhope.org

Samaritan Counseling of Tyler: www.scctyler.org

Tyler Counseling & Assessment, LLP: www.tyler-counseling.com

Angel Layettes brings comfort to families grieving over the loss of an infant from miscarriage, stillbirth or death shortly after birth, and honor and dignity to the memory of the precious baby. Angel Layettes provides without charge custom designed burial layettes and keepsakes. angellayettes.org • 903-534-5212

University of Texas at Tyler Psychology and Counseling and Training Clinic: 903-593-2348

The Cope Foundation: www.copefoundation.org

Grief Camps for Kids: www.moyerfoundation.org/programs

WINGS was established through Hospice of East Texas in 1993 to help children navigate the grieving process. WINGS, "a comprehensive bereavement program that provides both emotional support and grief education," offers a camp (Camp G – grieve, grow and go forward) twice a year. For more information or to register for a grief support program, contact the Hospice of East Texas Bereavement Department at 903-266-3400 (Extension 127) or call 1-800-777-9860.

Group Meetings for Survivors of Trauma and Survivors of Suicide Loss, sponsored by Michael's House of Hope at the New Life Worship Center, 18535 Hwy. 69 S., Tyler, room 620. Call Dr. Timothy M. Roddam at 903-681-3161 for more information. Survivors of Trauma meets the second Thursday of each month from 6-7 p.m.



We're on Facebook! Search for The Compassionate Friends of Tyler and Like our page.



We need not walk alone.

"The hurt never goes away. We never forget. We never get over it. We don't want to. We hurt so much because we loved so much. But the focus on death and the event fades and the warmth of good memories replaces it." —Richard Edler

Should We Have a Credo for Friends?

We are the friends of those who lost their children to death. We want to be part of your grieving by helping you, our friends, through this very difficult time. We do not know what to say and might inadvertently say the wrong thing. We need you to help to tell us when this happens. Most of all, we want you to know that we hurt with you. You are our friends and we feel helpless.

We do not want to force you to hurry with your grieving, but we want you to make us part of it. We do not know your pain and hope that we never will, but we feel your pain because we care for you.

We are here to listen, so you may talk to us about your loved one. If we were not privileged to know your child, tell us about your child so we also understand the special person he or she was. Most of all, trust us, we are here when you need us.

We will not ask you to show a happy face when sadness is in your heart. We will not diminish your grief by uttering useless phrases like "God must have wanted your child more than you." We know that in time we will once again see you smile. But we are willing to wait until you are ready. We are "The Friends of those who Grieve" and we have compassion for your loss.

Karin Powell, TCF, Volusia/Flagler, FL

Please share your stories,
poems or love messages for
inclusion in our newsletter.

Thanks for your donations and continued support of TCF of Tyler.

Thanks to anonymous for sending a check/donation to support our group!

In loving memory of Sarah Thompson by Carol Thompson



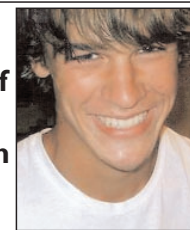
In loving memory of Burke Lewis by Martha Lewis



In loving memory of Alex by Robert & Trisha Taylor



In loving memory of Chris O'Leary by Mary O'Leary Walsh



In loving memory of Leah Zucca by Jim & Cheri Zucca



In loving memory of Chad Cavazos by Dale Cavazos



In loving memory of Tanner Douglas by Heather Ogg & Zach Reed



In loving memory of Christopher Loper by Tina Loper



In loving memory of Andy Terrell by David & Teresa Terrell





We need not walk alone.

"The Compassionate Friends meeting won't make the pain go away, but it is a place where you can honestly and truly believe when someone says, 'I know how you feel.' They mean it and their eyes prove it." —Janice Lopez

April Birthdays



Matthew Thomas Crooks



Jarren Moser



Kyle Monroe Foster



Jeremy Newman



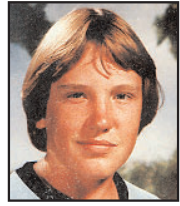
Timothy Treadwell



Pablo Salinas



Christopher Loper



John Patrick Carnahan



Leon Wayne Lasiter



Brady Bryant



Brian St. Clair



Wayne Clinton Davis



Tim Cole



Kaila McKinsey Payne



James Permenter



Collin Ray Sheffield



James Lee Lary, II



Joel Tucker



Cheryl Cook



Kathy Robertson



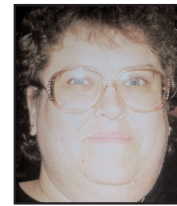
Eric Branch



Margie Starkey



Herby Parr



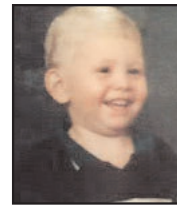
Maryn McIntire



Daniel Wayne Thornton



Cheyenne Ramirez



Cameron Lee Robinson



Derek Nolan Simoneaux



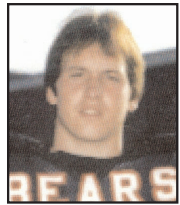
Russell McGilvray



Isaih Eli Moa



Allen Price



Christopher Baggett



Joe Maland



Karrie Voyles



Jeremy Kersh



Joshua Walker

Continued on next page.



We need not walk alone.

"That's what Compassionate Friends do—they help to bring our children into our lives even though our children are no longer alive. For a few hours each month, our children return to us." —Annette Mennen Baldwin

One Foot in Yesterday

Yesterday my child was here, on this planet, alive. Yesterday life looked promising. Yesterday morning I woke up looking forward to the day. Today I awake peacefully and then I remember my child is dead, and I cannot breathe. I am jolted from head to toe. My child has been dead for a day. I wonder what my child was thinking in the last moments. I remember all the wonderful times. I remember the joy. I think of my child's life and how his life changed me forever. I remember the last time I saw my child. I remember the last goodbye. I sob and breathe.

I am lost for days. Final arrangements are made. The platitudes float past me—these words have no meaning. A memorial service for my child. People with sad faces. Hugs, words, tears, head shaking. I can see it in their eyes—they are thankful isn't their child. They are uncomfortable. Time heals, they say. There's a plan, there's a reason. I cannot respond. They understand. No, they don't. My child is dead. This is not my parent, my husband, my sibling. This is my child. My child was supposed to outlive me. I thank them for their good intentions. I have no interest in their words. A few friends say nothing. This is the better choice, the wiser action. Be there, be there for me. Understand my unspoken words. See my broken heart. Understand. Listen to my story, a story of my child. Remember his life, remember his death.

Annette Mennen Baldwin TCF, Katy, TX; In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

Walking the Lonesome Valley

One of my favorite gospel songs is "You've Got to Walk That Lonesome Valley" which is attributed to various composers in the early 20th Century. Many adaptations have been made to the words, yet all seem to fit.

This gospel song is particularly poignant for bereaved parents. We must take our grief journey alone. We must take our grief journey on our own terms and in our own way. I found myself humming and then singing this gospel song after my son died over nine years ago.

I was never really alone in this lonesome valley, however; many are taking this same walk, in their own ways and on their own terms. In TCF, we learn from other parents who walk the lonesome valley. We receive hope from those who take this journey with us. Some bereaved parents choose to return to the darkest places in the lonesome valley and help our newly bereaved parents as they define their own personal journey. Gradually, after thousands of steps, the bereaved parent comes to the place of resolution and emerges from the valley into the gauzy sunlight of hope and peace.

Reach out for assuring words and thoughts and ideas and hope. Take comfort in knowing that each of us is walking the lonesome valley.

You've got to walk that lonesome valley
You've got to walk it by your self
There's no one here can walk it for you
You've got to walk it by yourself
I must walk this lonesome valley,
I have to walk it by myself,
Oh, nobody else can walk it for me,
I have to walk it by myself.
I must go and stand my trial,
I have to stand it by myself,
O, nobody else can stand it for me,
I have to stand it by myself.

Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF Katy, TX; In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen





We need not walk alone.

"Perhaps laughter is also the beginning of Nature's way of mending, of healing us." —Dave Ziv

April Anniversaries



Shane McDade



Jeremy Mark Lawler



Andy Hall



Sally Snodgrass Ryan



Chad Cavazos



Kody Maner



Quinn Martin Muirhead



Christal Murphy



Lindsey LeMon



Tripp Barton



Deanna Holcomb



Joshua Carl Tucker



Lindsey Stewart



Ron Mitchum



Jessica Maureen Nix



Charlie Clakley



Russell McGilvray



Jamye Marie Crawford



Zackery Browne



Heath Hopson



Alexandria Conway



Ashley Allison



Shanette Bland



Kristi Diaz



Sarah Harvey



Jill Tompkins



Stephanie Carol Hester



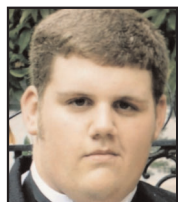
Bobby Knott



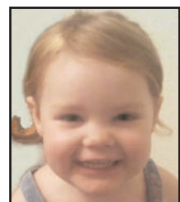
James Rowland Allen



Brandon Whitfield



Patrick Bowman



Sydney Jane Farris



Caleb Herrera



Zain Hussain



Tommy Gresham



Melinda Orr

Continued on next page.



We need not walk alone.

"We have learned to laugh again—to participate in life again. But today, oh today—how sad I felt. How quickly the tears came when my husband said, so sincerely, so quietly, 'You don't know how much I miss having someone to throw the football around with . . .'" —Fay Harden

April Anniversaries cont.



Rachel Wilder



Melissa Helsel



Colin Ray Sheffield



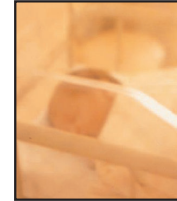
Trisha Thomas



Vanessa Wilcox



Larkin Grace Allen



Kathryn Michelle Grimes



Jiree Mobley



Madelyn Moore



Jeff Irvin

Find us on Facebook at: [Facebook.com/TylerTCF](https://www.facebook.com/TylerTCF)

The Roller Coaster

As a child I enjoyed the thrill of the roller coaster: gliding up the giant track, reaching the top with a momentary anticipation and the thrill of the quick dropping roll to the bottom of the track. The deep turns, first to the right and then to the left were designed to heighten the anticipation of the next climb and drop. In my childhood mind, these curves, climbs and drops were an isolated experience, temporary and fun. The ride would end.

A few months after my son's death, I dreamed of the roller coaster. But this time it wasn't fun. It was a nightmare of fear, anxiety and pain; I was so paralyzed that I couldn't breathe. That dream was the simple symbolism of life since my son died. Now I ride a different sort of roller coaster. The climb to the top is a slow, difficult rise to normalcy. The rapid descent to the bottom is yet another terrible setback. I hang onto the bar of sanity on the curves, first one way, then another. I really want to stop this ride, but it is forever. This ride won't end.

Today I recalled that roller coaster dream, in all its vivid detail, and I compare it to the roller coaster that is my life now. Are the highs lower and the lows higher? Are the curves softening? Yes, I believe they are. It's been two years and two months since Todd died. I still weep. Tiny tears still fall unexpectedly. I still have anxiety. I still feel as if the earth has dropped from under me. I still miss talking with my son. I miss seeing him. I ache for that special hug that only my child can give. Yes, I miss my only child very much. My heart has been shattered, my definition of myself has been altered and my loneliness is incomprehensible. But something has changed on the roller coaster of this life.

That something is, of course, me. I work through my grief in many, many ways. I have consciously shifted the paradigms of my life. I have learned to evaluate people from a different perspective. I have become so sensitive to the pain of other parents that I feel it as if it were my own. I have stopped anticipating how I will handle stressful events, anniversaries, birthdays, holidays. I have learned to live without being a part of my grandchildren's lives. I have learned to keep negative energy and negative people at a far distance. I have learned that a routine provides necessary structure. I have learned to live in the moment, to take joy in simple things, to talk openly about my child's life and to acknowledge the things I cannot change.

As time moves forward, I will continue to accept what is given and give what I can. I know the roller coaster will level out eventually. For as long as I live, I will keep my child with me, in my heart. That's all I can do as I ride this changing roller coaster that is now my life.

Written in memory of my son, Todd Mennen, Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF, Katy, TX





We need not walk alone.

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."
—Dale Carnegie



We need not walk alone.

"Because of him, I am choosing to let the anger go. I have read many times in The Compassionate Friends newsletter to be gentle with myself. Now, as times goes by, I'm learning to be gentle with others, too. Jonathon would be pleased with the progress I'm making." —Margaret Baird

Alex Conway

In loving memory
of Alex

by Robert & Trish Taylor



Thanks, Robert & Trish Taylor, for your generous donation.

Newsletter sponsorship is \$75. Contact us if you'd like to be a sponsor in memory of your loved one.

April Birthdays cont.



Jason Bollard



Kathryn Michelle Grimes



Samuel Cade Castleberry



Ana Danniell Franklin



Jordan Deon Mims



Noah Bass



Jennifer Musick



Kappy Lane Kolb



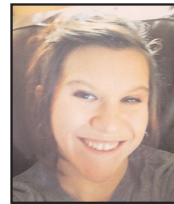
Megan Parrish



Patrick Bowman



Derek "Lance" Moss



Antonia Rothrock



Johnny Snyder



Chris Cagle



Michael Gonzales

"Hope is the feeling that the feeling you have isn't permanent."
—Jean Kerr

Chris Molnari

In loving memory
of Chris

by Aunt Kim &
Uncle Tom



Thanks, Kim Cathey, for your generous donation.

Newsletter sponsorship is \$75. Contact us if you'd like to be a sponsor in memory of your loved one.

A Letter to My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer. How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near? Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always. Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness. I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

Robin Holemon, TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

We need volunteers to keep your Compassionate Friends chapter afloat. Please contact us to help in any capacity—once or for a few months or more. Any help will be greatly appreciated!





We need not walk alone.

"As you travel your own and personal journey of grief, let in the love and support of others. Believe that tomorrow will be a kinder day." —Richard A. Berman

Acceptance

by Gwen Flowers

It isn't letting go. It's going on.
It isn't only shadows, and it isn't only dawn.
It isn't getting through it, it's letting it come through me.
Not living in the darkness, though the darkness I can see.
It's living with the sorrow but finding memories sweet.
It's knowing that it takes both sides to make it all complete.
It's soaking up the sunshine along with the rain.
It's learning to let laughter live side by side with pain.
It's knowing that the years won't change a love that's real.
Or take away the joy you brought, or the sorrow that I feel.
It's knowing tears and laughter can live on the same face.
And your impression in my heart can never be erased.

You Think

You think it won't happen to you, but it does.
You think your life could never be this way, but it is.
You think you should have recognized
that he was dying, but you didn't.
You think your grief is so huge
that you'll forget to breathe, but you don't.
You think the sun will forget to come up, but it doesn't.
You think the tears will stop coming, but they don't.
You think you can't handle the pain, but you do.
You think you'll lose hope, but you don't.
You think you'll never be happy again, but you will.
You think you'll be alone forever, but you won't.
You think that you'll never laugh again, but you do.
You think you can't live without them, but you learn how.

Angelia K., TCF Chapter, Seattle, King County

To My Sister

You touched us all, you loved us all,
Forever giving, forever caring,
Forever forgiving.
Never wanting in return.
Blessed are those who shared your life.
Rich are those who carry your memories.
Please rest now; your chores we will finish.
'Til we meet again...

Cindy Keltz ~ Arlington Heights, IL

Spring Thaws The Wounded Heart

Alice J. Wisler
Inspired by the life of Daniel Paul Wisler
8-25-92 ~ 2-2-97

That first spring
came too soon
why did daffodils
show sunny faces
around the grave stone
why did warm breezes blow
clouds away
my world, a gray dismal
had no room
for this season.
Now years later
the blossoms of love,
hope and healing
have broken through
grounds of utter despair
warmed by memories of you
I join the daffodils
bringing my own smile.

When I Must Leave You

by Helen Steiner Rice

When I must leave you
For a little while—
Please do not grieve
And shed wild tears
And hug your sorrow to you
Through the years,

But start out bravely
With a gallant smile;
And for my sake
And for my name
Live on and do
All things the same,

Feed not your loneliness
On empty days,
But fill each waking hour
In useful ways,

Reach out your hand
In comfort and in cheer
And I in turn will comfort you
And hold you near;

And never, never
Be afraid to die
For I am waiting for you in the sky!



We need not walk alone.

"Don't wait for a light to appear at the end of the tunnel; march down there and turn the darn thing on yourself." —Sara Henderson

Newsletter Submissions

TCF Tyler welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to: The Compassionate Friends of Tyler, P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, Texas 75711. Or e-mail text and photos to: info@TylerTCF.org; We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content.

Deadline for submissions is the 5th of each month. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source.

Errors and Omissions: We try very hard to be sure that all of the names and dates of our children are correct. If you see an error in the newsletter, please contact TCF at 903-422-0358. We want to get it right and will correct the information for future use. Thanks very much.

Email Addresses: If we do not have your email address or it has changed, please email it to info@tylertcf.org so that we may email you announcements and updates about TCF of Tyler.

Sign up for email notifications of events and to be notified when the newsletter is posted online at: www.tylertcf.org

Donations Appreciated!

Please consider making a donation to your local TCF group, which serves East Texas. Donations help pay for meeting location fees, electric, mailing and paper cost of our newsletter, bank fee, P.O. Box fee, office supplies and more.

We are thankful that Skillern's Business Systems has printed our newsletter at no cost for years. If you need office automation solutions, please contact them and tell them TCF sent you. Visit them online at www.skillerns.com, or call 903-561-5591.

Announcements

Meeting Info: Our meeting is held at the First Christian Church, 4202 S. Broadway, Tyler 75703. Please park behind the sanctuary in front of Christian Life Center. Our meeting is held on the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. For more information, please call 903-422-0358.

Steering Committee Meeting: If you are interested in participating in our chapter by serving on the steering committee, please plan to attend a steering committee meeting. Anyone who would like to become more involved in TCF and serve on the steering committee is welcome to come! Email us at info@tylertcf.org to get involved!

News from National: Compassionate Friends National offers webinars for the public on grief related topics. Upcoming public webinars will include Death of a Child By Suicide, Pregnancy and Infant Loss, The Death of a Special Needs Child and How Can I Help When A Child Dies? Check

TCF Quilt Announcement!

We are compiling names and photos for our 7th quilt! Please mail your \$30 donation for a square, child's name, and make sure we have a quality picture of your child that will show up well. Let us know quickly as we anticipate the list of 30 will fill up fast. You can mail your donation to TCF Tyler PO Box 9714 Tyler Texas 75711, please note on your check what it is for. Photos or questions can be emailed to info@TylerTCF.org.



Remember to visit our website for a long list of TCF newsletters: www.tylertcf.org Also, TCF's National website has lots of great resources: www.compassionatefriends.org