A special THANKS to Melissa at Landmark Business Park for discounting our rent so that we can continue meeting at our current location!



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 17555 Hwy. 155 S. (off Loop 49), Flint, TX 75762. We hope to see you at our next meeting!









Volume 21, Issue 12

Tyler, Texas

December 2020

Monthly Group Meeting

Tyler Area Meeting 17555 Hwy. 155 S. (off Loop 49) Flint, TX 75762 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, Debra Ritchie, 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.

In This Issue...

Welcome2
Grief Resources2
Announcements3
Birthdays4-5
Candles in the Night5
Anniversaries6-7
Survivors of Suicide7
Christmas Without My Child8
Newsletter/Rent Sponsor9
Poems10
As We Near the Special Season11
Donations11

Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony in December

If you would like to join us online for this special virtual event, watch for an email with details from our chapter leader. If you're not on our email/newsletter list, please subscribe at www.tylertcf.org. You can also visit the national website on the day of the event.

We still have new shirts from our Annual Candle Lighting Event



Call or email to place your order: (903) 422-0358 or info@TylerTCF.org

Or, you may fill and cut out the form below and mail your check to P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711 to purchase T-Shirts.

Child's/Children's name(s):	
	(required)
Number of T-shirt's to purchase(\$25 ea) Shirt sizes:	
Your name:	(required)

"Thank you" to TCF leadership and members for providing resources, friendship, light and glimpses of life-giving hope over the last 15 years.

—Carol Thompson

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.

"As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being." —Carl Jung

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 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.







"To weep is to make less the depth of grief." —William Shakespeare

As We Near the Special Season

As we near the special season that stirs up feelings of heritage, patriotism, thanksgiving, and our relationship with God, we are instantly reminded that it doesn't seem to fit together for us; our personal sense of well-being is suffering. Our hearts and spirits are undergoing the trauma of painfully fresh wounds in some cases, while others are coping with the scar tissue of older grief that refuses to heal or restore comfort to their lives. This season reminds me we are living with extra stress that must be resolved. I offer a few thoughts to each of you, along with my love, in hope that feelings of peace and purpose will return to bring you comfort.

First, be careful in agreeing to take on the traditional extra work that goes with holidays. You are coping with grief that will take much of your usable energy.

Second, be especially kind and patient with yourself. The need for physiological rest is vital at this time; regular sleep and rest hours will help.

Third, be aware that holidays and alcohol have become traditional companions; extra caution may be necessary to prevent the depressant effects of alcohol from further aggravating your grief anxiety.

Fourth, it's okay to change past practices that are especially painful reminders of what can be no more; do something different if you have to.

Finally, allow yourself private time as you need to, but also remember it's important to allow others to try to bring you comfort and give you extra help during the holidays. Loved ones need feedback that says: "I'm trying to recover, and I appreciate your help." Peace be with you.

Ann Frost, TCF, Middle Georgia Chapter

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

In loving memory of Burke Lewis by Martha Lewis



In loving memory of Christopher Forzano by Barbara Zimmerman



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



The Compassionate Friends

Tyler, Texas

The Compassionate Friends

Tyler, Texas

The Compassionate Friends

"This Winter of your life will pass, as all seasons do. Stay in your season of Winterness as long as need be, for everything you feel is appropriate. There is no right way to grieve. There is just your way. It will take as long as it takes." -Rusty Berkus, from To Heal Again

December Birthdays













Logan Alexander







Christopher John













Jessica Noelle

Tiffany LeAnn Tanner



Jeremy Simpson







Brandon Weatherly James Rowland Allen









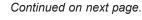
David LaTrell Milton











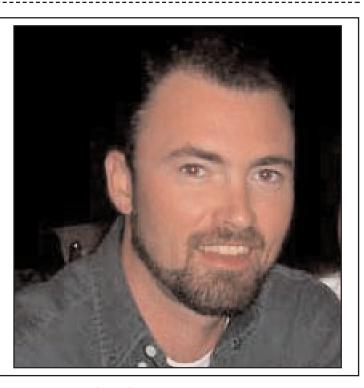


"I do not believe that sheer suffering teaches. If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers. To suffering must be added mourning, understanding, patience, love, openness and the willingness to remain vulnerable." —Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Burke Lewis

In loving memory of Burke

by Martha Lewis



Thanks to Martha Lewis for your generous donation.

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

Christopher Jeffers Forzano

In Loving Memory of Chris

by Mike & Jan Forzano and **Barbara Forzano** Zimmerman & John Zimmerman



Thanks to Barbara Zimmerman for your generous donation.

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

"Sometimes love is for a moment. Sometimes love is for a lifetime. Sometimes a moment is a lifetime." —Pamela S. Adams

We need not walk alone.

"You may give them your love but not your thoughts. For they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies but not their souls. For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams." -Kahlil Gibran

December Anniversaries

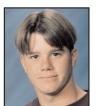


Christopher Loper



Felicia Hobbs





Jessica Noelle

Kirkpatrick





Tosha Nichole Minatrea

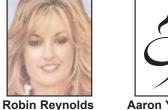


Antonia Rothrock



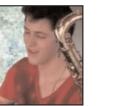
Wrangler Akin

Suzanne Glover



December Anniversaries Cont.

Aaron Yarbrough



Troy Saunders





Cheryl Graebner





Theresa Kay Talley

Jocelyn McCormick

Ashton Wayne Yates



Guthrie, III

Kelly Ann Campbell



Mike Loughmiller

Margie Starkey



















poems or love messages for

inclusion in our newsletter.

Please share your stories,

Parents and siblings of a young person who has completed suicide face an almost overwhelming burden of emotions. It is one of the cruelest tragedies that can happen to a family. To pull oneself out of the emotional wreckage is a mighty struggle. Each parent can be utterly devastated and unable to be supportive to their mate or to surviving children. Other family members are shocked and unable to cope with the event. They do not know how to console or help us. Our friends wonder, "How could such a thing happen?" They too, do not know how to help us. We struggle with the "Whys?"...the unanswered questions and painful memories.

We, who count ourselves as survivors—we've made it a year, two years, some of us are in the third year—would like to share a few thoughts. First, you are not alone. We understand whatever you may be feeling for we have been there! Suicide can intensify the feelings of shock, denial, guilt, anger, depression—all a part of the grief process. The course of recovery is up and down. Give yourself plenty of time. You need a great deal of support, at least through the first year. The suicide of one's child raises painful questions and doubts and fears. We can find ourselves in a spiritual crisis. We question our beliefs and may feel cut off from God. Through sharing with others and listening to others who have walked the same path, you may gain some understanding of your reactions and learn some ways to cope.

But most of all, we, who are in the process of rebuilding our lives, have not forgotten the dark hours of those early days and weeks when we thought we could not live again. We cannot offer you any shortcut through the pain. There isn't any. But you can help yourself along the way to healing. We can offer you support, encouragement, and the hand of friendship.

JoAnn Dodson, TCF, Louisville, KY

Thank you for your generous donations to TCF of Tyler. These 'love gifts' allow us to provide our local chapter with special events, the TCF Newsletter, our website and more!

Matt Thomas Crooks



Gauge Austin Thomas



Joey Green

Jason Lee Eubank

Jeremy Simpson

Brown



Lindsev Goen



Continued on next page.



"Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. Love still stands when all else has fallen."

Christmas Without My Child

Last night we held our Compassionate Friends chapter meeting for November: the topic was Holidays and Grief. We met in small groups to discuss how we are going to get through this most difficult of times. While we found no single answer, we did make some discoveries about ourselves. We also found some basic ways to take control of our lives.

In our group of eleven were several newly bereaved parents. Deep sorrow and anxiety were apparent in each face as we opened the dialogue—a discussion of the holiday season without their children. This anxiety and deep sorrow immediately became mine; I am that parent, I am still on the first leg of what may be a long journey without my child. Their tears were mine as we talked.

As the discussion progressed, I could see a bit of each parent's tension slowly release. I felt as if I could read their minds: give me some answers, tell me I will survive this, tell me how you did it. The answers were all different; the reassurances of parents who had lost their child and survived that first heartbreaking holiday were there. Some of the answers came from the newly bereaved as they explored their inner feelings.

We found consensus on one important factor: we must give ourselves permission to do what makes us most comfortable. We are not the caretakers to the world right now; we must take care of ourselves. If established traditions bother us, then we must turn to something else. What is the point of pouring salt into this open wound? Perhaps next year or the year after, when the wound is not so fresh, we will want to return to former traditions. Perhaps not.

Through tears and some light laughter, we realized that we are not invincible. We are not responsible for the happiness of friends and extended family. We do not have to meet the expectations of others. We must accept our emotional limitations and the psychological and physical toll that grief takes on us. We must slow down and change our perspective. We must do what is right for us, especially during the holidays.

Most of those who had been through at least one holiday season without their child felt that making changes for the first year or two was a positive step forward. We found that talking honestly with our family about our feelings might make them feel temporarily uncomfortable but it did clear the air about expectations. We agreed that limiting our casual social relationships negated the need to make explanations regarding our lack of interest in holiday celebrations. By "dropping out" we also eliminated obligations in many areas. This gives us the freedom to choose simplicity over stress, essentials over hassles and flexibility over anxiety. This gives us the opportunity to live in the moment, go where our emotions take us and listen to our hearts.

While we all agreed that the holidays are overwhelming for parents whose children have died, we also agreed that we are each individuals and we each perceive the world differently. Some of us want and need the old traditions during the holiday season. Some of us need to be with people who are not part of our grieving process. Others among us felt that solitude and simplicity were the answer.

The answer to the question of how we get through the holidays is found within each one of us. We each have our own truth. The challenge, we decided, is to honor that truth and hold the line against external pressures. A few of our newly bereaved parents could barely choke out a word or two. Others were more vocal. While grief consumes some of us for many, many years, others appear to "go with the flow" of life very early in their grief. What feels right for one of us may be abhorrent to someone else.

One universal truth did emerge from our conversations: we miss our beautiful children and love them as deeply as when they walked beside us. We live in this purgatory each day of the year, but during the holidays it seems most oppressive. Our children have been torn from our lives forever. Daily life and special traditions will always reflect the deep void that has become our reality. We need our Compassionate Friends at the holiday season. We need to know that others have walked this road, have lived this nightmare and have managed to survive. We each continue to rediscover hope through our Compassionate Friends. And in finding that hope we have given and received the purest gift of the season: the possibility of peace.

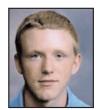
Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF, Katy, TX In memory of my son, Todd Mennen November 9, 2005



"You loved; therefore, you grieve. You may succeed in postponing your grief for a time, but it will resurface some day in some way. You are encouraged to deal with it now so that it won't be waiting ten or fifteen years down the road for you." —Mary Cleckley

.....

December Birthdays Cont.



Gregory Thomas Davis Jr.





Tim Fry



Alec Heath Thigpen



Sarah Wheeler



Justin Turbeville



Jennifer Massey



Wrangler Akin



Allison Hiett



Shelby Williams



Christopher Forzano



Derek Russell



Britney Trahan



Kaleb Mize



Kevin Paul Elbert



Troy Saunders



Evelyn Faith Buchanan

Candles in the Night

A heart broken by the death of a child can never be healed. As parents we try every way that can be thought of to cope with the loss, but the void will always be there. At first that emptiness seems to take your breath away and most times we wish it would.

This becomes different with the passage of time. It never goes away, but at some point we learn to live with it, and in fact this horrible feeling becomes a lifeline of sorts. One of our biggest fears is to forget our children. Forget how they looked or how their voices sounded. The smiles and tears that blur together to make a child. This emptiness in effect becomes a constant yearning to remember our children.

Our hearts force us to find ways to fill that void to maintain our role as parents. Some are as simple as visiting the cemetery and some are as complex as changing our entire lives, dedicated to the memory of our child. In between are the many rituals we create or borrow from others to honor the memories and to keep our child's name alive.

Lighting a candle and saying a child's name keeps their memory burning bright. It means we are struggling to cope with this unwanted role of bereaved parent in the only positive manner we can. We will most certainly shed tears every time and we will still miss our child, but we are doing something that allows the world to hear our child's name and for that one moment the candle means so much more than anyone else could ever understand.

For a fleeting second that is our universe and every memory we have comes flooding back to us as we see the flame through tears, distorting it into something magical. It's the only gift we can give our children. This is as close as we can get to our child now. A tiny, flickering flame that can warm the heart and it's nice to think that perhaps they can see it also. It's a beacon, our light in the window, our shining star in the darkness. It's an opening of our hearts and a way to share our grief.

We gather to honor the memories of our children and to share this bond of lighting a candle for the children all over the world. We miss them so much.

Jim Lowery, TCF, Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter



"When your mind cannot find an answer, open your heart and ask for peace." -sascha

A Christmas Story

When I was just a little girl Around the age of three I remember a Christmas When Santa came to see me

A doll wrapped up In a pretty bright red bow Long golden hair to stroke Oh my, how my heart glowed

And then came a Christmas Later on in time When I shared my first Christmas With a son that was all mine

A few years later down the road When he was only five I didn't know it would be The last Christmas in my life

Now on Christmas As many in all these years I spend my days at a grave Shedding many tears

The Holidays come every year That, I cannot change But through all my memories My memories I can rearrange

I can remember all the good years That he and I had shared I can still here the giggles When he got that talking teddy bear

I can remember the hugs and squeals of "OH MOM" As each gift he opened on that day I can sit back and smile remembering Before the angels took him away

> Now I am older than I once used to be But my mind drifts back To what once was on Christmas When my son was on earth with me

I tuck my head to fight the snow As I wade through the fenced in graves I've got my gift to give to him On this years' Christmas Day

Sharon Bryant In Memory of my son, Andrew Frank Dunbar (Permission for TCF chapters to reprint granted by the author)

Candles in the Night

Candles flame in darkness, flicker, steadily glow, bringing light from shadows and help to soothe me so. My daughter, like the candles, gave my life true light. I use the candle's beacon to connect us in the night. As I light the candles, my wish and my request is that she'll see my signal and know my love's expressed. As her light joins my lights, our worlds touch and flame. As I snuff out the candles, I softly say her name.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry from Stars in the Deepest - After the Death of a Child

First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas without her being here. Yet the world is singing round me, joyful tidings and good cheer.

Though I try to put on armor and brave the sights and sounds, a few moments worth of shopping, and the tears are spilling down.

I pray for strength to do it, find a path through holidays, look for shortcuts, good ideas, some directions through the maze.

Then I find at last the answer: I'll include her symbolically. And the giving becomes perfect; her love's flowing down, through me.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry from Stars in the Deepest - After the Death of a Child

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



"When I come to the end of my journey and I travel my last weary mile, just forget, if you can, that I ever frowned, and remember only the smile." —Author unknown

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 rent, 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: The meeting location is 17555 Hwy. 155 S. (off Loop 49), Flint, TX 75762. 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 out www.compassionatefriends.org for dates and times.

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