



Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, August 16, 6:30 p.m.
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

**See our announcements on page 3
for a map and details about our
new meeting location!**

Contact

Phone: (903) 258-2547
Web Site: www.TylerTCF.org
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Chapter LeaderTina Loper
Chapter Co-Leader.....Pat Settle
Newsletter/Web SiteMary Lingle
Steering Committee: Tina Loper,
Pat Settle, Sam Smith, Sherri Tutt
Margie Newman, Mary Lingle

TCF National Organization
Toll Free: (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

The Meeting Agenda

6:30 p.m.
Meeting will begin with refreshments
followed by announcement of birth-
days 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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My First Five Years as an Only Child

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I have aged 30 years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I have accomplished the many things of a typical young adult learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career. Every one of my accomplishments has been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone, and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews. The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I have learned to accept that he is not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.

My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changing to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I am angry about all the things that we have missed and all the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years, I have been forced to grow up too fast. I have been forced into a new outlook on life. I have felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. Maybe I am a better person because of what I have been through. Five years ago I never thought I would survive, but I am still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I have made it this far.

Kristin Steiner ~ TCF, Staten Island, NY

School Starts

Strange things happen to you when your child dies. You'll fail if you try to make sense of most of it.

Both my children had finished high school when my son died, yet I found the beginning of school—especially that first year—to be difficult. The bus stops in front of my home for the neighborhood children. Suddenly, as they all gathered to wait for the bus, I found myself reliving those simpler, happier days of old; longing for them actually. It was a painful time.

Now, if I, whose children are grown and gone, had a problem with school starting, those of you who do have school age children must know that your pain is normal. It's another reminder that life goes on—with or without our children—and acknowledging that it hurts! I came to the conclusion that it was all right to pine for happier times and it was nothing to get upset about. As with many remnants of grief, I recognize it, allow it and then get on with my life.

Maybe you're like me, you'll always be a little nostalgic about school starting. That would probably have been true even if my son had lived. Maybe you, too?

Mary Cleckley ~ TCF, Stone Mountain, Georgia

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.

“To spare oneself from grief at all cost can be achieved only at the price of total detachment, which excludes the ability to experience happiness.”
—Erich Fromm

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 (always the third Tuesday 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.”

My Testimony

(Stephanie’s mom and step dad, Glenna and Troy Nicholls, found “My Testimony” on their daughter’s computer after her death in 2004.)

My name is Stephanie Hester, and I am going to give my testimony through the computer so that when I die whomever reads this might get something out of it! I am 13 years old and was saved when I was eight years old, but come to find out I really wasn't saved. One night at a church lock in I re-dedicated my life to the Lord. Ever since that night my life has been changed.

You are probably wondering what I mean by my life was changed, well granted I still wasn't perfect and I still did not do everything that I probably should have been doing! What I mean is that, when I sinned I felt it in my heart, for example when I lied to my mom about something, I felt guilty and depressed because the Lord was convicting my heart letting me know that what I did was wrong. Sad, but true, still to this day I don't read my bible near as much as I should and I don't give God the time he deserves. Sometimes I put the television or the telephone before God, but none of those things died for me...He did!

A lot of times I still do stupid things to act big or fit in when I am around some cute guy or some popular girl, but at night when I am lying in bed I feel so guilty and I pray to the Lord to forgive me and I beg him but there is really no need because the Lord loves us all so much that no matter what we do or say he will always forgive us!

Something I do quite often is ask for more. What I mean is, I have so much, food, a bed to sleep in, great parents, wonderful friends, loving siblings and I seem to never be satisfied because I always have to have the new type of shoes or jeans, the ones I have never seem to be ok and that is something I really need to work on! You know, I can think of lots of things that I would like to have and I know if my mom brought me home a pair of black doc sandals I would probably jump and be so happy.

Answer me this: why don't we do the same for Jesus, he gave us a million things so that our lives would be more enjoyable such as friends, family etc., but for some reason I (maybe some of you) don't get that excited about it and we really should!!! The Lord gave us these things so that life would be more enjoyable but he NEVER said that life would be easy, hardships will come and that is what the BIBLE is for, it has all the answers to all our questions but sometimes we just don't look in the right places for our answers and most of the time they are right in front of our eyes.

When I get sad, used to I would just sit and have a pity party but now I turn to my Lord for help, or his word. We should go to God with all of our problems and leave them with God, don't carry them with you. That means don't worry about them any more because God will take care of them and when you come to Him with your problems and then you still leave with them that is like saying you don't trust Him and that's upsets Him, and we should not upset our God.

I read a book once called She Said Yes, it was about a girl who had a gun put to her head and asked if she believed in God. She stood up for her Lord and she firmly, without question said YES! What would you have done in the situation? I personally cannot answer that question because it would be especially hard to answer that if your life might be taken, but then again He died for us and we should always stand up for what we believe. Now, she is in heaven with Him and happily living in her mansion. For anyone who is reading this testimony, if you're not saved what are you waiting for?

I have been watching the news and His return is very soon, are you prepared?? I know I am, I am going to heaven and I sure hope to see you there. If you don't

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We need not walk alone.

“Those who weep recover more quickly than those who smile.” —Jean Giraudoux



Love Gifts

Jack & Julie LePelley in memory of Trey LePelley

David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy Terrell

James & Dina Defenbaugh in memory of Neil Defenbaugh



I don't know why.
 I'll never know why.
 I don't have to know why.
 I don't like it.
 I don't have to like it.
 What I have to do is make a choice about my living.
 What I do want to do is accept it and go on living.
 The choice is mine.
 I can go on living, valuing every moment
 in a way I never did before,
 or I can be destroyed by it and,
 in turn, destroy others.
 I thought I was immortal.
 That my family and my children were also.
 That tragedy happened only to others.
 But I know now that life is tenuous
 and valuable.
 So I am choosing to go on living,
 making the most of the time I have,
 valuing my family and friends
 in a way never possible before.

From the book, My Son, My Son, by Iris Bolton, whose son Mitch died by suicide

Newsletter Submissions

TCF Tyler welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to:

TCF Tyler • 5401 Hollytree Drive, 1204 • Tyler, Texas 75703
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 3rd Tuesday 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: Please notify us if any of your information is incorrect.

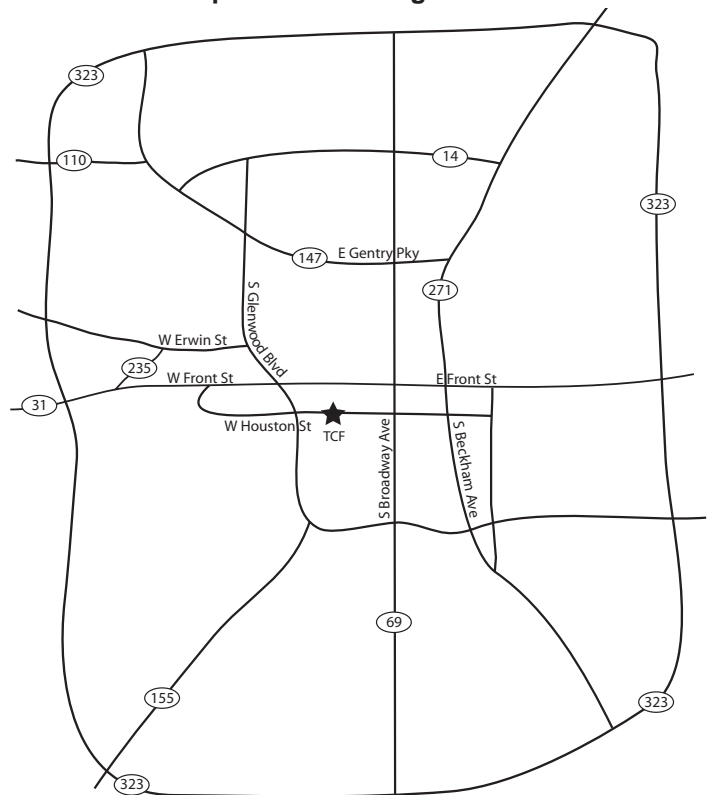
Announcements

The Compassionate Friends of Tyler has a new meeting location! We will be meeting at 707 W. Houston St., see map below. The new TCF phone number is (903) 258-2547.

Don't forget about our first Friday of the month dinner meeting. This casual night out will be held at El Charro's on Fifth Street on August 5. We hope to see you there!

Other dates to remember: October: Green Acres Craft Fair; **November:** Lacks Furniture Christmas Tree and Canned Food Drive; **December 11:** World Wide Candle Lighting

Map to New Meeting Location



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know the Lord, you can come talk to me because I know how you feel, I was there once and the escape from hell is by salvation. John 3:16 is my favorite verse, it sums up the whole BIBLE in a few words, but there are hundreds more great verses in the BIBLE and each time I read one I learn something new that lots of times helps me to stay on the right path. So please if you are reading this letter right now, God loves you, and He will never let you down He will always be there, all you have to do is ask Him, or if you are already saved then pray!

That is all I can say, the rest is up to you...

I love you as a brother/sister in Christ but he loves you more.

~Stephanie Carol Hester~



We need not walk alone.

"My tears are not a sign of weakness or a lack of hope or faith. They are symbols of the depth of my loss and, I am told, a sign that I am recovering."
—Marcia Davis

August Birthdays



Brennen Applegate
8-10-69 ~ 1-22-01
Son of C.R. & Kathryn Applegate



Gena Forest
8-22-62 ~ 12-9-98
Daughter of Joice Bass



Crystal Greene
8-6-82 ~ 11-13-01
Niece of Audrey & Claude Mapps



Tosha Nichole Minatrea
8-11-82 ~ 12-30-99
Daughter of Tim Minatrea



Ron Mitchum
8-3-70 ~ 4-15-00
Son of Glenda Mitchum



Christal Murphy
8-14-72 ~ 4-22-03
Daughter of Debbie Johnson



Scottie Baker
8-3-86 ~ 11-29-04
Son of Steve Baker



Visit us online at www.TylerTCF.org

August Anniversaries



Michael Holdway
6-18-52 ~ 8-3-93
Spouse of Kathy Dowdy Holdway



Justin Dover
9-14-89 ~ 8-15-02
Son of Stacey Dover



Jill Rozell
3-14-84 ~ 8-2-02
Daughter of Peggy & Terry Rozell



Shannon Scheffler
12-21-70 ~ 8-22-03
Daughter of Dolly Mobley

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 Web site and more!

The Long Forever

You left us so quickly;
there were no goodbyes.
How long this forever,
your death and our lives.
The sadness, the anger,
the loneliness of three,
preferring four always,
how small, this new we.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
From Stars in the Deepest Night
—After the Death of a Child

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



We need not walk alone.

“Eventually we can relive our memories with real joy, grateful for them and even more appreciative of the time we had together. If you are in the midst of painful memories at the moment, take heart that it will not always be so.”
—*Shirley Ottman*

Tears on Their Shoulders

Thank God for friends. Can you imagine your life without your close friends? I have never been one to have a great many friends. I know many people who I care for and love, but there are only a few people that I consider close friends. A true friendship goes far beyond just knowing and caring for someone. A true friend is a person you feel comfortable sharing your deepest feelings with. A true friend is one who does not mind a few of your tears on their shoulder.

Since the death of my daughter, I have had the opportunity to meet and talk with many other bereaved parents. There are far more of us than most people realize—far more than I ever realized until I became one. The grief of losing any loved one is hard to overcome. The grief of losing a child is the hardest to overcome. In fact, I dare say that we never overcome it. We simply learn to deal with it. If we are blessed to know the truths of Jesus, we deal with our grief by leaning on Him, and by trusting that we will see our children again. (For those who do not know Jesus, I have no idea how they ever deal with their grief.)

One of our greatest gifts as bereaved parents is close, understanding friends. Most of us find that developing friendships with other bereaved parents gives us more comfort than any other relationship. Hopefully, our friendship with our spouse will deepen and give us that comfort; but I have found that does not always happen. I am sure there are psychological reasons why bereaved husbands and wives cannot always be as comforting to each other as we wish we could, but I know it is true in many cases. Perhaps it is because we are trying so hard to be strong for each other that we hold back some of our emotions. I suppose every couple is different, depending on their personalities and situations. The point is, very often we are not as comfortable sharing or expressing our grief with our spouse as we are with a special friend. I would really like to hear other bereaved parents' points of view and opinions about this subject.

The point of this writing is the importance of loving friendships. I have talked to so many bereaved parents who state that they just do not have anyone that they feel comfortable talking to about their grief. It is not that they do not have friends and relatives, they just don't have any that they can or will share their feelings with. They feel isolated and alone in their grief, and to me that would be unbearable. That is one of the many reasons that I am so happy to have found The Compassionate Friend's. Through T.C.F., I have met people that I consider true friends—friends that never mind a few tears on their shoulders—friends that I never mind feeling their tears on my shoulder. In my opinion, a good cry with a friend that has gone through the loss of a child—a friend who knows how it feels—is more healing than anything else I can imagine. Thank God for counselors and therapists, but without understanding friends with loving shoulders to cry on, I believe we miss out on deep, healing grief relief.

We miss our children. Our lives are forever changed without them. There is a void in our souls that nothing can fill, and in many ways we don't want it filled. But we do want relief, and true friends that don't mind our tears on their shoulders are one of our greatest sources of that relief. May the Lord lead you to that special friend, a compassionate friend, with whom you can share your deepest thoughts and feelings, one who will always offer you a shoulder to cry on when you need it. May you offer your shoulder to someone in need as well. There is blessed healing to be found with loving friends who are happy to allow tears on their shoulders.

Dr. Sam Smith, Butterfly Ministry

**Please detach and return completed donation form to:
The Compassionate Friends of Tyler • P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711**

We rely entirely on voluntary donations to support our group. With your help we can continue to provide our valuable services to everyone affected by the loss of a child.

Yes, I would like to make a donation in the amount of \$ _____ . (Please make check payable to TCF)

My donation is made in honor and in memory of _____ .

Tyler TCF greatly appreciates your support. These 'love gifts' are used to provide our monthly newsletter, printed materials, website, special events, our library and more.



I don't think you ever stop giving. I really don't. I think it's an on-going process. And it's not just about being able to write a check. It's being able to touch somebody's life. —*Oprah Winfrey*





THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711



We need not walk alone.



www.TylerTCF.org