



**Monthly Group Meeting
Tyler Area Meeting**

Monday, February 17, 6:30 p.m.
New Location! 1901 Ricketty Ln., Tyler

Contact

Phone: (903) 258-2547
www.TylerTCF.org • info@TylerTCF.org
P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711

Chapter LeaderTina Loper
SecretaryPat Settle
Newsletter/Web SiteMary Lingle
Tyler Meeting Facilitators: Leslie &
Don Dixon

Steering Committee: Pat Settle, Sam
Smith, David & Theresa Terrell, Carol
Thompson, Carol Johnson, Mary
Lingle, Lisa Schoonover, Cheri Zucca,
Ellen Jenkins, Pam Pickett, Don &
Leslie Dixon, Janet Majors, Margaret
Hall, Robin Mitchell, Jancy Lovelace,
Stuart Gilpin, MaryAnn Girard

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
refreshments followed by announce-
ment of birthdays and anniversaries
and reading of the Credo. We will then
have open discussion.
8:00 p.m. - Meeting will close by recog-
nizing our childrens' names. Feel free
to visit after the meeting or check out
books from our library.

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But You're Absolutely Normal!

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it shows up in many ways you might not expect. If you've...

- been angry with doctors or nurses for not doing enough,
- been sleeping too much or not enough,
- noticed a change in appetite,
- felt no one understands what you're going through,
- felt friends should call more or call less or leave you alone or invite you along more often,
- bought things you didn't need,
- considered selling everything and moving,
- had headaches, upset stomachs, weakness, lethargy, more aches and pains,
- been unbearable, lonely, and depressed,
- been crabby,
- cried for no apparent reason,
- found yourself obsessed with thoughts of the deceased,
- been forgetful, confused, uncharacteristically absentminded,
- panicked over little things,
- felt guilty about things you have or haven't done,
- gone to the store every day,
- forgotten why you went somewhere,
- called friends and talked for a long time,
- called friends and wanted to hang up after only a brief conversation,
- not wanted to attend social functions you usually enjoyed,
- found yourself unable to concentrate on written material,
- been unable to remember what you just read,

...you're normal.

These are all common reactions to grief. They take up to two years (or more) to pass completely, but they will pass. You'll never forget the person who has died, but your life will again become normal, even if it is never exactly the same.

Take care of yourself. You will heal in time.

Joanne Bonelli ~ TCF, Greater Boise Area, Idaho

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

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.

“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” —Francis of Assisi

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 (national home page)

Also offers grief support for **siblings** and **grandparents**
<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

Children Are A Gift Foundation

<http://www.childrenareagift.com>

GriefShare

<http://www.griefshare.org>

MADD East Texas (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

<http://www.madd.org/local-offices/tx/east-texas>

Smith County Victim Services Division

<http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs/counties/smith.html>

The Hospice of East Texas

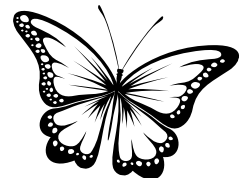
<http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org>

The University of Texas at Tyler Psychology and Counseling Training Clinic

Located at the Bethesda Health Clinic
409 W. Ferguson
Tyler, Texas 75702
903-592-2348

Victim Services Division - Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Online Resource Directory

<http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs>



“When your mind cannot find an answer,
open your heart and ask for peace.” —sascha

Annual Butterfly Release

**Our Butterfly Release will be held May 17, 2014
at the First Baptist Church, Tyler south campus.**

**If you would like to help with this
beautiful and peaceful event this year,
please contact us online (tylertcf.org)
or call 903-258-2547.**





We need not walk alone.

“With the passing of years, I have learned that if I can hang on for just a little longer, these emotions—strong as they are—will pass and I can live again with the longing hidden deep inside my breast.” —*Shirley M.*

Love Gifts



Diane Howard

Mary & Erin Lingle in memory of Candice



Thanks to the following members who have made a rent donation for our meeting place this month:

Merri Walsh in memory of Chris O’Leary

Martha Lewis in memory of Burke

Tina, Johnathan & Heather Loper
in memory of Christopher

Carol & Shane Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets



Thanks to the following people who make a MONTHLY LOVE GIFT to TCF of Tyler:

Dale & Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad

David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy -
use of a storage building

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 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 903-258-2547. 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 Tina or Pat so that we may email you announcements and updates about TCF of Tyler. Tina’s email: lil-bluebutterfly6@gmail.com ~ Pat’s email: beachbum2201@gmail.com

General Assembly: Join us each month to assemble the newsletter and mail out cards. We hope to get some new volunteers to help with this monthly project. Call 903-258-2547 for details.

Visit us online at www.tylertcf.org

Announcements

Tyler TCF Meeting: The meeting in Tyler is held on the third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m., at **1901 Rickety Lane** in Tyler. For more information, please call 903-258-2547.

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! For more information about our next meeting, call 903-258-2547.

You don’t have to be a Steering Committee Member to meet with us on occasion to help assemble the newsletter or mail out thank you notes! Please join us!

MADD Heart meets 2nd Tuesday of the month at the MADD office, 215 Winchester Dr. Ste., 100, Tyler, TX 75701. For more info call 888-665-6233 or email Melissa at melissa.granberry@madd.org.

Looking forward: Dallas will host the Compassionate Friends National Conference in 2015. Our regional coordinators, Joan and Bill Campbell, are looking for volunteers who would like to help with this event. You can contact Joan and Bill at 972-935-0673 to let them know of your interest in participating. They are planning a great two-day conference and welcome help from all Texas chapters. This is a great opportunity to help others who are grieving and grow through your own grief as well! You can check the national Compassionate Friends website www.compassionatefriends.org for conference event planning details.

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 of Tyler Memorial Quilt

If you would like to have your child's photo included on a TCF memorial quilt, please mail a \$25 donation to P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711. For more information contact us at (903) 258-2547, or email us at info@TylerTCF.org. Thanks to Teresa and David Terrell for donating their talent and time on these beautiful quilts which are displayed in our meeting room and special events.

Plan to attend The Compassionate Friend’s 2015 National Convention in Dallas!

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!



We need not walk alone.

"In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love." —Mother Theresa

February Birthdays



Justin Clakley
2-25-83 ~ 5-15-03
Son of Teri Clakley



Michelle "Missy" Green
2-09-69 ~ 1-30-93
Daughter of Elena Glasscock



Craig Howell
2-25-77 ~ 2-11-12
Son of Pat Howell



Jayson La'Drake Austin
2-9-00 ~ 2-2-02
Son of Jauron Jacobs



Dylan Corey
2-21-97 ~ 1-24-01
Son of Christy Corey



Colleen Herriage
2-23-67 ~ 5-14-83
Daughter of Ruth Herriage



Caleb Scott Jones
2-27-86 ~ 7-24-03
Son of Lee Ann Colwell



Shane McDade
2-17-85 ~ 4-12-03
Son of Gina McDade Culligan



Jason Brown
2-7-69 ~ 1-7-03
Son of Pam Pickett



Christopher Bullock
2-2-90 ~ 10-10-11
Son of Chip & Rachel Bullock



Walter Dale "Skipper" Winningham
2-23-68 ~ 7-02-85
Son of Lucy Winningham



Kody Maner
2-10-87 ~ 4-16-06
Son of Lauri Maner



Sean Smith
2-2-87 ~ 10-27-01
Son of Randy & Judy Smith



Mary Jennifer Stone
2-22-81 ~ 9-21-96
Daughter of Dick & Denise Stone



Alexandria Conway
2-29-92 ~ 4-28-10
Daughter of Robert & Trisha Taylor



Justin Goodman
2-11-84 ~ 11-19-11
Son of Kelly Goodman



Chasen Sean Shirley
2-13-82 ~ 7-3-06
Son of Debbie Shirley



Cynthia Harper
2-27-54 ~ 11-16-04
Daughter of Jackie & Roland Young



John Andy Terrell
2-11-72 ~ 11-25-03
Son of David & Teresa Terrell



Cheryl Heardt
2-22-71 ~ 2-22-81
Granddaughter of Larry Batte



Robert Ryan White
2-26-85 ~ 10-1-03
Son of Bethany White



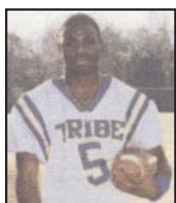
Ty Foster Mabry
2-17-97 ~ 11-25-11
Son of Casey & Shad Mabry



Jeremiah Barker
2-11-78 ~ 6-17-91
Son of Betty Fiederlein



T.J. Anderson
2-8-77 ~ 10-5-09
Son of Ron & Mona Anderson



Ijuan Deshaun Simms
2-20-79 ~ 11-7-01
Son of Sharon Simms



Candice Lingle
2-21-91 ~ 11-8-93
Daughter of Mary Lingle



Karen Lowe
2-13-59 ~ 12-5-09
Daughter of Muriel Rogers



Scarlet Lynne Smith
2-20-86 ~ 4-17-12
Daughter of Kirby & Lisa Smith



James Arthur Jenkins
2-16-79 ~ 8-19-05
Son of Becky & Eddie Jenkins



Roger Lee Rush
2-14-02 ~ 2-14-02
Son of C.R. & Judy Rush

Continued on next page.





We need not walk alone.

"Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts." —Charles Dickens

February Birthdays Cont.



David Matthew (Matt) Morris
2-9-77 ~ 3-24-10
Nephew of Marla Plocheck



Natalie Whitehead
2-9-87 ~ 5-9-05
Daughter of David & Susie Dorman



Steve Short
2-13-57 ~ 8-18-13
Son of Judy Stilwell



James Snyman
2-20-96 ~ 12-23-00
Son of Peggy



Kayla Denise Wager
2-23-94 ~ 7-8-11
Daughter of Erin & Helen



Caleb Cecil Luther
2-14-95 ~ 1-24-13
Son of Cynthia Riley

February Anniversaries



Josh Chambers
7-20-73 ~ 2-18-07
Son of Joan Curtis



Austin Dixon
10-20-88 ~ 2-19-07
Son of Don & Leslie Dixon



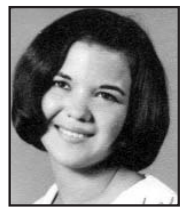
Lori Campbell
8-27-78 ~ 2-28-00
Daughter of Pam Johnson



Cheryl Heerd
2-22-71 ~ 2-22-81
Granddaughter of Larry Batt



Richard Heerd
10-31-76 ~ 2-22-81
Grandson of Larry Batte



Jackie Heerd
6-30-46 ~ 2-22-81
Daughter of Larry Batte



Ryszard Spakovsky
12-2-80 ~ 2-20-98
Sherrell & Greg Smith
(Foreign Exchange Parents)



Tiffany Johnston
12-29-81 ~ 2-20-98
Daughter of Sherrell & Greg Smith



Darell Bolton
7-21-61 ~ 2-22-03
Brother of Kathey Bolton-Polk



Andrea Young
3-15-56 ~ 2-1-97
Daughter of Roland & Jackie Young



Austin Arvizo
5-14-01 ~ 2-9-06
Son of Vincent & Paula Arvizo



Brandon Krpec
3-27-79 ~ 2-11-08
Son of Larry & Debby Krpec



Michael Schmidt
3-11-83 ~ 2-10-03
Son of Patricia Jeffery



James Brady Langston
10-13-96 ~ 2-15-01
Son of Jamie Langston Dacus



Jasmine Dezereah Pruitt
7-3-96 ~ 2-20-11
Daughter of Tracy & Michelle Glasco



Chance Aaron Chandler
9-21-05 ~ 2-15-10
Son of Christina Chandler



Roger Lee Rush
2-14-02 ~ 2-14-02
Son of C.R. & Judy Rush



Carly Smith
7-14-88 ~ 2-1-11
Daughter of Beth Page



John Wallace
7-1-80 ~ 2-2-99
Son of Barbara Wallace



Adam Thomas Pritchard
9-21-82 ~ 2-21-04
Son of Thomas & Ginger Pritchard



Jayson La'Drake Austin
2-9-00 ~ 2-2-02
Son of Jauron Jacobs



Karrie Voyles
4-15-96 ~ 2-20-11
Daughter of Anthony & Delayne Voyles



Craig Howell
2-25-77 ~ 2-11-12
Son of Pat Howell





We need not walk alone.

“I had to accept the reality that I would never be the same person, that some part of my heart, perhaps the best part, had been cut out and buried with my sons. What was left? Now there was a question worth contemplating.”
—Gordon Livingston, MD

Grief: A Lifelong Process

When my son was killed I was certain that I would die. My life went on autopilot, my heart was broken, my will to live was gone and I could see no meaning in the world.

Six months later I was still in a bad place. I could not vary from a routine, I became angry very easily, I rarely laughed and I didn't communicate with many people.

On the first anniversary of my son's death I was a zombie. I dreaded the day. I remembered the last conversation; I went over his death in my mind a thousand times. I started asking myself what if I had done this or that....would my child still be alive? I felt a misplaced guilt that was sadistically hammered home by the wrongful death lawsuit of my former daughter in law and her accompanying attitude that can only be described as purely malevolent. My husband, who was driving the vehicle when my son was killed, spent hours in self-recrimination, hours with attorneys doing depositions, hours quietly sobbing and my response was that we had to buck up. We had no choice. I hardened on the exterior, but inside I was broken into pieces.

I continued to go to Compassionate Friends meetings, became active in our chapter and read books on grief, death, dying and coping strategies. I leaned heavily on my Compassionate Friends as I endured the pain of losing my son and any possibility of a normal relationship with his children. I know the excruciating pain of intentional cruelty and the radiant warmth of compassion. 18 months after my son was killed, I decided that I had to quantify my progress. I began to soften, to give positive reinforcement to those around me. I reached out to others. I stopped thinking of the negatives within myself and began searching for the positives. I began taking down my emotional wall and allowed some people inside.

It has been 3 years and 3 months since Todd was killed and, in hindsight, I can see the progress I have made. Initially each step was difficult. Now I move forward much like an amputee, progress is steady, but it is slow. I will never be the same again. A part of me has been confiscated by death. This is my reality.

I can laugh now, I can enjoy other people, I can see the beauty in each child I meet, each sunrise and each day. But I can also see and acknowledge the ugly side of this world. There is much cruelty in our world. There is much sadness. Some days I focus on the beauty and joy and some days I look at the cruelty and ugliness.

But the choice is mine to make. If I have a day that is good, it is because I have willed it to be so. If I have a bad day, I have also chosen this.

For I have discovered that grief is a lifelong journey. Our children are with us forever. I close my eyes and see my son. I dream of him at night; our conversations are very interesting, very reassuring. He is with me. And because I always told him that the world is what you make of it, then I must also tell myself the same thing. My world is what I make of it.

Yes, I still grieve. I still miss my child. To hear his voice would be a gift worth more than my life. But I have my memories...memories of raising a beautiful son who became an exceptional man. Our time together was the most meaningful experience of my life. I knew it then, I know it now. There is a void in my life that will never be filled.

My world was never perfect. It certainly will never be perfect. Each day I ask myself what kind of day I want this to be. Sometimes I want it to be a bad day. My sadness overwhelms me and I choose to exorcise it with a bad day. I have the right to have a bad day: my only child is dead. But these days I usually want it to be a good day...the kind of day my son would have enjoyed.

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





We need not walk alone.

"We quickly realize there are no words to describe the experience after losing a child. For those who have not lost a child, no explanation will do. For those who have, no explanation is necessary." —*Mary Lingle*

Just Let Me Be Sad

We live in a world where—if you have the means—pain and suffering are to be avoided at all costs. We are always looking for the next "quick fix" to alleviate discomfort with the least amount of effort required. In many cases, this means treating the symptoms while ignoring the root cause of the problem. In the United States, we live in a society so uncomfortable with emotional pain that when someone dies, society expects the outward mourning period to end once the funeral is over. When the bereaved do not cooperate with these prescribed time tables, they are often accused of "wallowing" in their grief. They are indignantly told to "move on" and "get over it."

Do these statements mean prolonged outward grief is a sign of weakness? Maybe self-pity? Perhaps it means they think the bereaved secretly enjoy the pain, and the attention it brings? For those of us who have lost someone dear to us, we know that it could not be further from the truth. If we could, we would give ANYTHING to not feel this pain. The hidden meaning behind these statements is that our outward projection of sadness is an unwelcome reminder of all the negative emotions they've managed to stuff deep inside until the pain went away. I see it kind of like "out of sight, out of mind."

So which is healthier? To bury the pain, only to have it lie dormant until some tragedy unearths it again—but this time stronger and more painful? Or to acknowledge that there is no quick fix to alleviate the overwhelming pain of losing someone you have built your life—and in some cases, your identity—around?

I would equate the first option to following the latest fad diet to lose weight quickly without exercising or changing your eating habits. Maybe you'll pop some appetite suppressing pills and lose weight in the short term, but the chances of you keeping the weight off are slim, and the reality is that the next time you try to lose weight, it will likely be harder than the time before. The second option would mean facing the harsh reality that transforming your body to a stable, healthy weight requires permanently changing your eating habits and amount of regular exercise. It probably even requires you to readjust your expectations of what your ideal body should look like (sadly, most of us will never look like supermodels or pro athletes). In other words, the second option is HARD WORK, but it has the greatest likelihood of becoming a permanent reality.

But if I'm being honest here, I have to admit that given the opportunity, I would have gladly chosen to bury the overwhelming pain when my daughter died. Suppressing pain and emotions is what I had done my whole life until that point. The fact is that the pain of losing someone I loved MORE than my own life was too much to bury. I reluctantly—and resentfully—took on more pain than I could bear. I did so because I had no other choice.

For the first time in my life, I learned how to slowly take small steps with that unbearable load on my back. I learned that by sharing my story and my pain with others—whether it was support groups, counseling, or with other bereaved individuals - the load was reduced, even if it was only a very slight amount each time. By reducing the load over months and then years, it became easier to carry. I have since come to understand that the load will never fully go away, but I have learned how to balance it with the rest of my life. And as time goes on, the balance will become easier still. That is not to say that occasionally, the load won't suddenly feel nearly as heavy as it did when my grief was new. And when it does, I'll remember how to go back to taking small, careful steps until it feels lighter again.

To all those who cringe in discomfort when they see me experiencing outward emotional pain, I say this: just let me be sad. My intention is not to make you feel uncomfortable. I don't expect—or want—you to follow in my footsteps. But I do expect you to respect the path I have been forced to take on my journey through life. I truly hope you never have to carry this load yourself.

*Maria Kubitz, TCF Contra Costa County, CA
In Memory of my daughter, Margareta*

In loving memory of
Scarlet Smith
 Daughter of
 Kirby & Lisa
 Smith



In loving memory of
Kayla Wager
 Daughter of
 Erin & Helen
 Wager



In loving memory of
Andy Terrell
 Son of
 David & Teresa
 Terrell



Thanks to these families for their continued support of TCF of Tyler.





We need not walk alone.

“Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work—you don’t give up.” —Anne Lamott

Austin Dixon

10-20-88 ~ 2-19-07

Austin,

Your beautiful smile and wonderful sense of humor left our world 7 years ago this month. What remains are cherished memories, unabashed pride in being your parents, and the love that will never fade over time.

We love you and miss you more than mere words can ever describe.

Mom and Dad



**This month’s printing of our newsletter sponsored by Don & Leslie Dixon.
Call (903) 258-2547 to sponsor a monthly newsletter.**

Candice Lingle

2-21-91 ~ 11-8-93

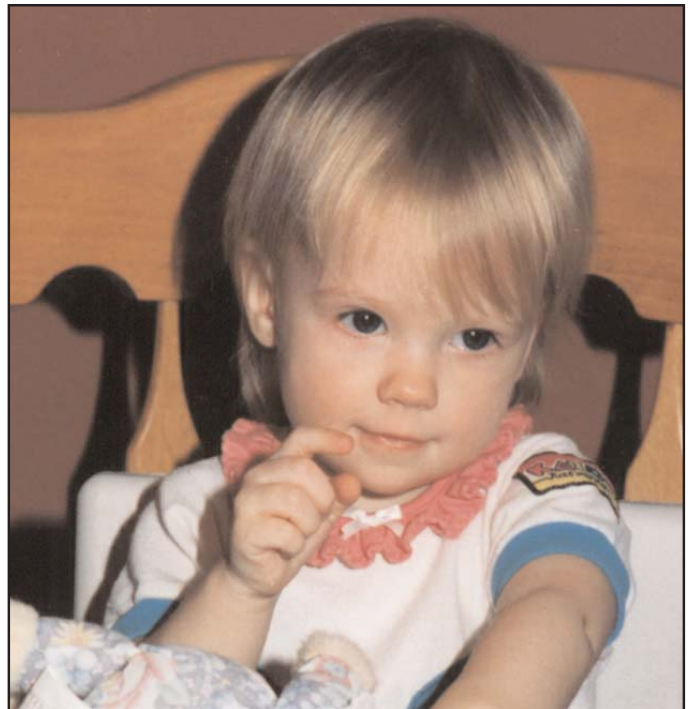
When we think of Candice, we are reminded of her gentle spirit, ability to tell and get a joke and how she seemed to put other people before herself at such a tender age.

She loved her mom and dad and big sister, Erin, and her cousins. She liked to hold hands while driving in the car or walking Erin to school. She loved to dance and was in her sister’s gymnastics class.

With Erin, we always said, “We love you most!” and with Candice, “We love you best!” It’s true—we love Erin and Candice the most and the best, and that love will never change.

We miss you dearly, sweet Candice.

Love, Mom, Dad and Erin



**This month’s printing of our newsletter sponsored by Mary & Erin Lingle.
Call (903) 258-2547 to sponsor a monthly newsletter.**



We need not walk alone.

"The pain of grief is still there, but I am living life one-day-at-a-time, enriched because my son came through my body into my life." —*Helen Godwin*

Ashley

When I think of Ashley, I think of all the good times. And some of the stupid little fights that we had. Maybe those fights used to feel dumb but now I miss them. I love and will always hang on to the good times. My biggest fear is that I will forget her. If I don't think I'm going to remember, I dig out old memories.

I think of her death sometimes as we're sledding down a hill, which is our life, and the sled is getting faster to the end of her life, or the bottom of the hill, but my sled isn't going as fast as hers. I know she can see me, but I can't see her. I hear her calling my name, but no words are coming out of my mouth to call her. This is how I sometimes feel.

*Hannah Childs
Northeast Baltimore*

Journaling to Heal

Each time I look back over my grief journey, I remember the important role that journaling played in my first and second years of grief. Handwritten entries, some sentences, sometimes just a few words describing my emotions, helped me to define where I was in my daily life. As I review the tear-stained pages, I am reminded of the deep, deep pain and the catharsis of the journal. Whether I was angry, in pain, deeply depressed or just too exhausted to think, I wrote a few words, maybe even a few lines each day. I saw it as my connection to my son.

As time progressed, my journaling became writing and eventually I returned to the computer and began forming coherent thoughts and sentences, with subjects and messages to my child, myself and to others. But the process started with the healing of the journal. I learned to be very honest with myself in my journal because I never shared it with anyone. I didn't put on a mask or rationalize in my journal, as no one else would be reading it. I was completely candid, and I soon recognized my weaknesses, regrets, strengths and successes. Pure honesty and great insight were achieved in my journal's conversation with myself.

Grief therapists recommend journaling to bereaved parents quite frequently. Some people are able to find an outlet for their daily roller coaster of emotions through journaling. Some seek answers and others seek questions. Many parents feel they are connecting with their child through their journal. There are as many reasons to journal as there are types of journals.

While journaling may not be for everyone, we encourage each of you to at least attempt it for a week. Give it your best effort. If, as some have found, it offers you nothing and is a chore, not a treasured time, then stop and seek other forms of outlet. But if, as many have found, it offers you a place for your thoughts, your messages, your self-revelation and self-evaluation as well as a refuge from the world, then by all means, continue to journal.

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

In loving memory of
Ashton Yates
Son of
Kim Yates



In loving memory of
Cody Maner
Son of
Lauri Maner



In loving memory of
Lori Campbell
Daughter of
Pamela Johnson




In loving memory of
Alex Conway
Daughter of
Robert & Trisha
Taylor



In loving memory of
Jason Brown
Son of
Pam Pickett



In loving memory of
**Virginia Barnes
Richardson**
By Phil & Ann Brown



Thanks to these families for their continued support of TCF of Tyler.



We need not walk alone.

"I don't think of him every day; I think of him every hour of every day."
—Gregory Peck, in an interview many years after his son's death

Benchmarks

Good bye would be too difficult,
 Although I know you are gone.
 Instead, I keep you in my heart
 And your memory lives on.
 I have redefined my purpose, son,
 Since you are no longer here.
 With your death I faced a choice
 To die, exist or to live free.
 My life has changed forever, child,
 I'm redefined each week,
 You would call these "benchmarks"
 Of goals set and then achieved.
 And so I set my benchmarks,
 Achieving many, reshaping some...
 But everything is different now
 Except your mother's love.

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

Missing You

I just can't believe it...
 The sun still rises and sets,
 The moon and stars still shine,
 The flowers still bloom,
 The birds still sing.
 I expected a change in everything.
 I just can't believe it...
 It still gets dark and light,
 The ocean still has waves,
 The rain still rains,
 The wind still blows,
 Is it because they do not know?
 I just can't believe it...
 I thought the world would stop
 When in my house
 I found an empty chair,
 A missing smile.
 I thought it would stop
 For just a while.
 I just can't believe it...

Gretta Viney ~ TCF, Yakima, WA

Grief, You and Me

Grief, you are my mate
 my constant companion.
 wrapped around me,
 close as a lover
 limbs entangled
 heaps of appendages
 interwoven in intimacy

Some days
 I try to disentangle,
 disengage from you
 in irritation, picking and plucking you from me
 like fleas on a cat's fur.

Some days
 I try to push you away
 shut you out
 slam shut the cellar door
 and walk away into the kitchen
 and cook a big meal
 only to notice you sitting at the dinner table

Sometimes
 I just let go completely
 and fall into you
 head first, heart first,
 defenseless before your gigantic tsunami of ache.
 Pummeled and tumbling in directionless white water
 I cry out
 Grief, you are much bigger than me
 taller, stronger, fiercer,
 you will outlive me, exhaust me, overpower me!
 Will I ever find my way back to up?
 where is the air?
 which way is air, and sun, and life?

Sometimes
 I wonder
 will we someday merge
 as old married couples do
 no longer having distinct identities, you and me.
 Maybe you will seep into my bones
 and we will just grow older and sweeter
 together

*Nadine Gregg
 TCF Santa Cruz, CA
 In Memory of Lucian*

The Compassionate Friends of Tyler

P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, TX 75711

We are happy to send our newsletter to you. We hope that it is helpful to you to be kept informed of chapter resources and activities and that you still wish to receive our newsletters that contain excellent material relating to grief issues.

To keep our mailing list current, we do ask to hear from you each year making sure that our information is correct and that you still wish to receive our mailings. If we did not hear from you in the last year please indicate any appropriate choices below and return the form to the address at the bottom of this page.

Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____ Cause of Death: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please check any of following that apply.

Please continue sending the newsletter.

No thank you, I'd prefer to stop receiving the newsletter. (Newsletters are posted monthly on our Web site.)

Please include my child's name and picture in the slide presentation at the Candle Lighting Ceremony.

Please include my child's picture and information on the TCF Tyler Web site. (www.TylerTCF.org)

I am enclosing a memorial to support The Compassionate Friends in the amount of _____

Please make check payable to TCF

In memory of _____

Please use this gift for: TCF Newsletter Butterfly Release Candle Lighting TCF Events

The continuation of this chapter's work depends on donations. If you have not taken the opportunity to give a donation in memory of your child please consider taking this time to give a gift that will help reach out to other newly bereaved parents.

We must have your written permission on file to use your child's name and/or picture in the newsletter, Web site, Candle Lighting Ceremony or any other TCF event. Permission may be withdrawn at any time by written request. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only utilized for Chapter activities such as the newsletter.

(Signature) Date: _____

Please return completed form to: The Compassionate Friends of Tyler, P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711



We need not walk alone.



www.TylerTCF.org

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