



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



*We need not walk alone.*

**Volume 7, Issue 7**

**Tyler, Texas**

**July 2006**

## Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, July 18, 6:30 p.m.  
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

### Contact

Phone: (903) 258-2547  
Web Site: [www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org)  
E-mail: [info@TylerTCF.org](mailto:info@TylerTCF.org)  
Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711

Chapter Leader .....Tina Loper  
Chapter Co-Leader .....Pat Settle  
Newsletter/Web Site .....Mary Lingle  
Steering Committee: Tina Loper,  
Pat Settle, Sam Smith, Sherri Tutt  
Margie Newman, Mary Lingle

Jim & Karen Roach, Regional  
Coordinators, (817) 244-0116

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

## The Meeting Agenda

6:30 p.m. ....  
Meeting will begin with refreshments followed by 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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## It Isn't Fair

It isn't fair (and there's a lot about life that isn't), but when a child dies, the responsibility for maintaining relationships falls on the shoulders of those who are grieving. It seems it should be the other way around, doesn't it? Most of us expect those who love and care for us to be the ones who will understand our needs, reach out to us and support us while we struggle to regain some balance in our lives. So it comes as a rude shock when we discover some of these people don't understand our needs any more than the old proverbial man in the street. We become angry and disappointed.

It is a mistake for grieving people to try to make important decisions too early in their grief. In an effort to escape some of the pain, and because of the anger inherent in the situation, we often make decisions that seem right at the moment, but in fact are not best for the long run. We sacrifice long-term pleasure for immediate gratification. Deciding who will and will not continue to be important and necessary in our lives from that time on certainly falls under the category of important decisions.

Think back now to the time before your child died. You must have known some bereaved people back there who were important to you. How well did you understand their feelings and needs? How good were you at being there for them through the long haul? Maybe you can remember feeling tongue-tied, inadequate and even cowardly, not because you didn't care, but because you cared so much that you couldn't cope with their pain. You felt inadequate, and so in their eyes you may have failed them, an assumption easy to make during the pain of fresh grief.

This is where the responsibility for relationships comes in. No important relationship should be severed during early bereavement without your having first made an effort to communicate your needs to those you love and who love you. Before you cut people out of your life, at least try to educate them. Give them a book to read that spells out some of what you are going through and how they can best support you. Tell them how important they are to you and how much you need them to just be there and listen, even without having any answers for you, when you need to talk. Impress upon them the fact that your grief for your child isn't going to be a short term thing for you, and ask for their patience, even if they don't understand.

Not everybody will be able to be there for you, no matter how hard you try to educate them. But if you salvage one important relationship, it will have been worth your time and effort. Down the road a way, when you've had the necessary time to make your adjustment, you will find that some of these "unnecessary" people you gave up on too early in your grief, really are a vital part of your life. It is difficult to go back and re-establish relationships that have been too long neglected.

No, it isn't fair, but we are the only ones who know how it feels to have been on both sides of the grief fence. Put that Ph.D. you've earned the hard way to good use. The payoff comes later for you when you have regained some equilibrium in your life and you still have about you some of those who really do matter.

*Mary Cleckley ~ TCF, Atlanta, GA*

**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.*

“...how complicated and individual mending is; the time required for healing cannot be measured against any fixed calendar.” —*Mary Jane Moffat*

## 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.”

## What Seven Years Feels Like

Grief is a journey. Seven years into this journey since your death, much of the time my feelings and emotions are very conflicting.

When surrounded by friends—I am lonesome.

In the midst of my joys—I am blue.

With a smile on my face—I have heartache.

When in a public place and I hear someone speak the name “Brian,” my heart skips a beat and I feel the tug of familiar tears.

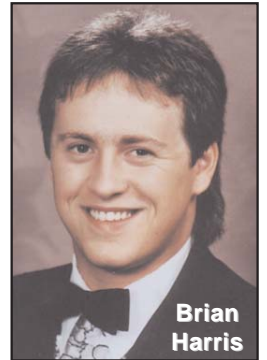
As I approach another birthday, I think about the birthday we should have celebrated last month—yours. I find myself wondering what your life would have been like today.

It has taken these seven years for your brother to once again speak of his memories of big brother Brian.

The long days of summer will always stir memories of your last days with us. It will always hurt to remember your suffering and amazing courage in the battle against the cancer, but I think I may have rounded a small bend in the road. Something has changed. I can now think about some of the funny things you used to do and say and I find myself actually laughing again.

In so many ways, whether it is marveling on a summer night at the star-studded sky or when driving in my car and a song you used to sing comes on the radio I feel you with me, my dear Brian.

*Jolyn Harris ~ TCF, Tyler, TX*



**Brian Harris**

6-8-72 ~ 7-29-99  
In loving memory of  
Brian Harris by  
Jolyn Harris

## His Room

Sun splinters through  
The stained-glass unicorn Still on the sill  
Splattering black walls with color  
Few things are as forlorn as a vacant room  
Furniture gone, awaiting definition  
Bare, yet there on the carpet  
Imprints of chair and waterbed  
And there is the hole he  
Accidentally shot through the wall  
And there and there and there  
Nail holes that held pictures and posters  
And eight-point antlers  
And there... God, how can a place  
So empty, be so full?

*Richard Dew, from “Rachel’s Cry—A Journey Through Grief”*



*We need not walk alone.*

"My grief and pain are mine. I have earned them. They are part of me. Only in feeling them do I open myself to the lessons they can teach."  
—Anne Wilson Schaef

## Love Gifts



Claudette Brown in memory of Terry Brown

Richard & Jolyn Harris in memory of Brian Harris

Juanita Blake in memory of Donna Morales

Margie & Victor Newman in memory of Jeremy Newman

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

College-Bound Solutions for allowing TCF of Tyler to use  
their facilities as our meeting place



## 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](mailto: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.

## Please Be Gentle

An Afterloss Creed by Jill Englar ~ Westminster, Maryland

Please be gentle with me, for I am grieving. The sea I swim in is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day. My heart is heavy with sorrow. I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path. Please, will you walk beside me?

*Reprinted with permission from Bereavement Magazine*

## Announcements

**We are still meeting at 707 W. Houston St. in Tyler**, but we're now using the facilities at the back of the property.

**Our Annual Candlelighting Ceremony** will be held on Dec. 10th, 6:30 p.m. at Carpenter's Cross Baptist Church, Hwy. 344 and 155 S. Please contact Tina Loper at (903) 594-2132 or Margie Newman at (903) 561-1447 for more information. The media is invited to attend. Please let us know if you would like to help this year in honor and in loving memory of your child.

**If you would like a phone friend**, please call Margie Newman at (903) 561-1447 or Mary Lingle at (903) 581-4566.

**Effective June 2006:** #2130 TCF of Sherman/Denison which met in Pottsboro, TX, has closed. Chapter Leader: Roger Thiltgen

## TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt

If you would like to have your child's photo included on the second 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](mailto:info@TylerTCF.org).

Thanks to Teresa and David Terrell for donating their talent and time on this beautiful quilt which will be displayed in our meeting room and at future special events.



## Is it Easing?

I heard your name today and my heart did not skip a beat, nor was my mind flooded with the emotion of losing you. I heard your name today and it did not bring back the terrible hurt feelings of when you first left me.

I heard your name today with a calmness that surprised me. Many another child carries your name, and it had been torture hearing it and seeing the smiling faces on those little girls.

But today I knew—I found out—what others in my footsteps found out and tried to tell me. The hurt will ease; but the memories, the love, the good times will never go away.

*Phoebe C. Redman ~ TCF, Bradenton, FL*





*We need not walk alone.*

"We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once."  
—Calvin Coolidge

## July Birthdays



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



**Robert Lynn McMahan**  
7-18-72 ~ 3-6-92  
Son of Dana Wright



**Ryan Delaney**  
7-10-80 ~ 7-20-03  
Son of Mary Delaney



**Terry Wayne Brown**  
7-13-69 ~ 5-27-03  
Son of Claudette Brown



**Andrew Moreno**  
7-25-05 ~ 7-29-05  
Grandson of Tawna Andrews



**Madeline Joy Kearney**  
07-15-86 ~ 10-06-05  
Daughter of  
Melody Burnett Kearney

### TCF Library Hours

Mon, Tue, Thur: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Wed: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Fri: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Library is located in our meeting location, the College-Bound Solutions offices, at 707 W. Houston Street, Tyler.



**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!



Visit us online at [www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org)

## You Are My Sunshine

As a child, I learned to sing on road trips in the family car. We sang "She'll be Coming 'Round the Mountain", "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and my favorite: You are my sunshine, my only sunshine, You make my happy when skies are gray. You'll never know, dear, how much I love you. Please, don't take my sunshine away.

Since my son's death, whenever I hear this song, I mentally change the spelling to 'son-shine.' When he left, skies surely turned gray. Gray skies continue to visit me in random moments of grief to the point that at times, it's impossible to see the sun. And when summer brings sunny days, it breaks my heart that he can't be here with me to light up my life.

Grief enhances our senses so that the absence of light allows us to perceive our need for light. A good example came one dark and dismal day as I sat reading, a part of me dwelling on my missing child. Ever so softly, warmth crept across my outstretched leg. I shot a glance in its direction and discovered a stream of golden sunshine. In my preoccupation, I hadn't noticed the parting clouds outside--the transformation from gloom to gleam. If I had not been sitting quietly, thinking of my child, I would have missed the gift--missed an opportunity to find joy in that brief moment when 'son-shine' paid an unexpected visit. What a blessed gift it is to remember my child with joy.

There's a scientific reason that a sunny day brings some joy and energy to our lives. Bright light makes a difference to the brain chemistry. Lack of light causes a condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder. SAD doesn't occur only in the dark winter months. If you work the night shift or you spend all day in an office, wear sunglasses outside, spend your days off in a dimly lit home you may not be getting adequate light. All the more reason to grasp at every golden moment that comes our way.

The true lifesavers in my grief journey are those small surprising occurrences that often go unnoticed. When memories arrive on beams of joyous sunlight, I'm learning to take notice, to savor, then stock pile the simple pleasures that somehow appear in spite of heavy days. Sometimes light comes from deep within our hearts. Sometimes friends arrive with small rays of hope, guiding us through the darkest hours. Summer brings moonlit evenings, the flash of lightening across an endless sky, fireflies in a Mason jar, the beam of a flashlight piercing the darkness, yellow butterflies at the break of day; all reminders that our children were bright and full of life.

We are on a dark journey. At the same time, we are on a righteous search for light, grasping at hope wherever we find it. When gray days return and winter seems endless, remember--it's not. As grief changes, we learn to survive the darkness, believing that light lies ahead. May sunshine bless you with small, precious moments of hope and joy in the coming summer days.

Carol Clum ~ TCF, Medford, OR



*We need not walk alone.*

"I knew that...the full acceptance of the finality of loss, and all the pain that goes with it, need not diminish life but could give it a new quality of fulfillment. I also knew that this could not be achieved without going through the agonies of grief and mourning." —*Lily Pincus*

### July Anniversaries



**Jamie Allen**  
5-24-75 ~ 7-8-01  
Son of Cindy Allen



**Caleb Scott Jones**  
2-27-86 ~ 7-24-03  
Son of LeeAnn Colwell



**Lance Alan Massey**  
05-16-80 ~ 07-16-05  
Son of Cindy Massey



**Shanna Marie Redmond**  
05-05-85 ~ 7-30-94  
Daughter of Patricia Miller



**Brian Christopher Harris**  
6-8-72 ~ 7-29-99  
Son of Jolyn & Richard Harris



**Ryan Delaney**  
7-10-80 ~ 7-20-03  
Son of Mary Delaney



**Kathy Jo Tumminello**  
03-19-59 ~ 07-20-04  
Sister of  
Susie Gorman



**George Washington Shaw III**  
10-18-78 ~ 7-3-05  
Son of  
Bobbie Williams



**Walter Dale (Skipper)**  
02-23-68 ~ 07-02-85  
Son of  
Lucy Winningham



**Renee Seale**  
12-21-63 ~ 7-13-90  
Daughter of Lana Kaye Taylor



**Brian St. Clair**  
4-24-60 ~ 7-26-97  
Son of Janet St. Clair



**Lisa Marie Tutt**  
3-20-87 ~ 7-30-04  
Daughter of Steve & Sherri Tutt



**Brian David Stewart**  
5-16-56 ~ 7-8-56  
Son of Melton & Joyce Stewart



**Andrew Moreno**  
7-25-05 ~ 7-29-05  
Grandson of Tawna Andrews



**Allison Carson**  
10-29-92 ~ 7-5-93  
Granddaughter of  
Phil & Ann Brown

### Beloved Brother: Losing You is Losing Me

Dearest Justin,

To lose a sibling is to lose oneself,  
For a part of me is gone...  
And now I'm left to reminisce  
As now I try to carry on.

The thought of you not being here  
Has torn my world apart...  
Yet every day I feel you near;  
Is a blessing to my heart.

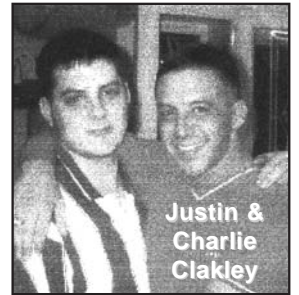
Your memory comforts me today  
In ways I wish you knew...  
But tears are falling from the pain  
That comes from losing you.

I see your face in the morning sun  
And in the moon at night...  
I wonder how you're feeling now,  
I pray that you're alright.

And one day when my time has come  
To soar with eagles' wings...  
We will be joined forevermore.

I Love You Forever & Always.

*Charlie Clakley ~ TCF, Tyler, TX*



In loving memory of  
Justin Clakley by  
Charlie Clakley



*We need not walk alone.*

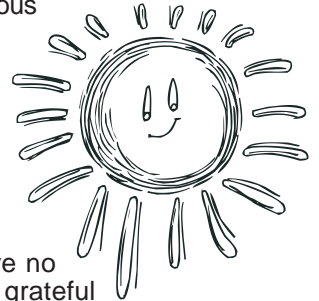
"This we owe our beloved dead, whether young or old: to wipe from our memories all that was less than their best, and to carry them in our hearts at their wisest, most compassionate, most creative moments. Is that not what all of us hope from those who survive us?" —Elizabeth Watson

## Summertime

It sounds so easy. A soft, warm word—time to run barefoot, time to leave windows open all night. Summertime. Somehow it seems, doesn't it, that it's especially meant for children. Children on beaches, children on swings, children in large pools, children in tiny tubs.

We who do not have all of our children with us may feel the summertime in two ways. One is to remember shared events and adventures—there were so many. Long rides in a hot car, a nap in the back seat. The famous question, "Are we there yet?" Everything from a heat rash to ice cream cones and sand castles.

For us, another way to feel summertime is the special emptiness brought about by children who are no longer on this earth. They used to trot along on hikes in the hills; they used to gather wood for an evening fire. Now summer brings us again the melancholy awareness of their absence. Have you ever walked on some unfamiliar path, surprised about not having been there with the children? Even when there's nothing to remember, we are reminded of the children's absence.



We have been diminished by death. Some of us may still have living children. Other parents have no children left. They have lost an only child, perhaps. Or all of their children died. And here we are, grateful for the warmth of summer mornings, aware of the ripe beauty of nature, trying to deal with our children's absence with all the grace of which we are capable. Often we do not want to burden others with our grief. Or we may be convinced that others don't wish to share our distress. We have learned, after all, that the world around us is not always able to understand how we feel.

Besides, we were taught to be brave. Many of us will do everything we can to appear "normal" after our loss. But we were also taught to be honest. And when you feel the hurt, when you seem almost to be lost in the shadows of this golden summertime, don't hide your sorrow. The grief of your spirit can perhaps be kept a secret on the outside. Yet, your deepest feelings, unexpressed, can burn into your existence with harmful force.

You can be both brave and honest. You know that it's brave to share grief, be it old grief or new grief. And revealing that sorrow is also honest. Of course, nothing can wipe away much of your pain, but sharing grief is helpful. You will know that after you have expressed the painful sorrow you once kept hidden, and you find yourself, finally, smiling at the memories and the blessings of past summertimes.

*Sascha Wagner*

## Grief is Not Quicksand

Often, a survivor fears that if he shows his sadness, there will be no end to it. If you are among those who feel that you do not know how intense, lengthy or deep your expression of grief may be, you may find yourself thinking that it would be impossible—or at least very difficult—for you to pull out of grief's deep pit to do all the things you need to do before or after the death. Being afraid of getting sucked down into a hollow of "no return" is not realistic. Grief is not quicksand. Rather, it is a walk on rocky terrain that eventually smoothes out and provides less challenge—both emotionally and physically. For example, you may think: I will fall apart and won't be able to function if I start to show how I feel. Replace such thoughts with the more realistic: I will let go for a time, release what I feel, and will be able to function better as a result of having vented the feelings that are an ever-present burden.

*Carol Staudacher*

## Family

A family has been described as a group of people whose trouble is that the youngsters grow out of childhood, but the parents never grow out of parenthood.

How true that is, and how painful when one is a grandparent whose grandchild has died. Grandparents carry dreadful burdens that are frequently never mentioned. When a child dies, grandparents bear the grief of the death of a loved boy or girl compounded by the pain of watching their own adult child, the dead child's parent, writhe in an agony they are powerless to ease.

It is a double grief.

*Harriet Sarnoff Schiff*



# 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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.

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](http://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 \_\_\_\_\_

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



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