



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



We need not walk alone.

Volume 8, Issue 6

Tyler, Texas

June 2007

Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, June 19, 6:30 p.m.
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

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Toll Free: (877) 969-0010
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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How Dad Copes

It will be four years on May 31 this year since our son Nicholas passed away. Wow. I never imagined in a million years this would happen to us. It is difficult to deal with the aching pain I still feel in my heart. Nicholas's friends are getting married and having children. Though we are happy for them, our sadness deepens with the thought of how different it could be if he were still here.

The anxiety that begins to build in the latter part of April in preparation for the anniversary of Nicholas's passing gets stronger and stronger as the day comes near.

Past years were shock years. I couldn't figure out how to deal with it all. I would listen to other parents that are further along in their grief for coping strategies, but it did not seem to help. How could anyone help me heal my heart after it was broken into a trillion pieces?

I have found that speaking about Nicholas to friends, family, and new acquaintances helps me tremendously. At first it was difficult to do because it does make some people uncomfortable. The more I do it, the easier it gets, and the better I feel. Talking about my son has been like a pressure relief valve for me.

I also make time to think about Nicholas and release my emotions. This time alone to reflect and weep brings overwhelming, though temporary, relief. Dads tend to hold back tears and feelings. We like to think we can maintain control. My advice is don't try. Instead, let your feelings go in private at a time and place of your choosing.

Thinking back to the beginning of this tragic event in our lives, I should have sought counseling from a grief therapist. My wife and I both should have done this. I truly believe this would have helped us develop better coping skills. At that time I didn't think private counseling would help. I was wrong.

Finally, The Compassionate Friends (TCF) volunteers are available to us all. TCF volunteers understand your loss and the dual problem of "maintaining control" for the sake of our family. Our chapter newsletter lists names and telephone numbers of other fathers and mothers ready and willing to assist us. I am one of the parents who volunteers to talk with grieving fathers. I have even become active in the administrative aspects of our chapter. Now, I tell parents, "we sincerely regret the circumstance that has brought you to this group." This is a club none of us dreamed we would ever join. I thank TCF for helping my family and me and for allowing me to help others.

*Albert Tapia, TCF ~ Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Nicholas Albert Tapia*

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.

“By stating we will not accept it, what is accomplished? Will it make it not true? If only it were that simple. Then I would be 100% in favor of denial. But it doesn't work that way. There are some things that cannot be changed, no matter how hard we may want them to be.” —*Mary Ehmann*

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.”

Real Men Do Cry

by Carrie Kears

On January 19, 1996 my life was forever changed when my brother, Carl died. I will never forget the moment a family friend called me out of my chemistry class to give me the awful news of Carl's death. Time stood still as I listened in disbelief as I was told how he was found at the bottom of a radio tower. Those few endless minutes triggered a series of painful recollections and realizations which surface from time to time in quiet moments as well surfacing suddenly at inopportune times. Such painful recollections do not occur as frequently today as they did in the days and weeks following his death. Others who have walked through the early days of grief and those currently walking amidst the swirling haze of early grief know the continual bombardment of pain and memories as the permanence of loss is painfully realized.

My early days of grief brought me home for a week away from my new existence as a college freshman which seemed suddenly so distant. While home for the week I sought to escape my thoughts by watching television, such brief respites from my intense pain were not only necessary, but few and far between. As I walked into the den, I caught my father sitting on the edge of the couch in the grip of his own painful moment of grief. I could see him facing the stark realization that his son would never again walk through the door, ask to go deep sea fishing, try to weasel a couple of bucks before rushing out the door. I sat quietly down beside him, not quite knowing if he would be receptive or embarrassed by my presence. I slipped an arm up over his shoulders which began to shake silently before my arm could even come to rest. The silent shakes of his shoulders gave way to heart wrenching, gut churning, whole body sobs. I reached up across his chest to grasp his opposite shoulder and lowered my cheek onto the shoulder nearest me; feeling his tears fall across my forearm. I couldn't tell you how long we sat there sharing our tears, our pain.

It was the first time I had ever seen my father truly break down, the first time I witnessed something more than a single stoic tear trickle down his cheek. As I look back on the experience I recognize it as a turning point in our relationship. His intense pain did not create for me a greater burden in my grief. I was not frightened. My world did not cave in because my father allowed me to see him grieve. In all honesty, my world was enriched because my father not only allowed me to see him grieve, he allowed me to grieve with him, beside him in a moment which laid the foundation of our current relationship. His actions let me know it is alright for me to allow myself to feel pain, but to share it with my family. I do not hesitate to call my parents, or show up at their doorstep when I am desperately missing Carl, or grieving the loss of our unrealized future. I desperately want Carl to know my daughter; to be an uncle to her as just as much as I desperately desire to be an aunt to the children he will never have. Grief is not only missing what was, but missing what would have been.

I am grateful to my father for showing me I am not alone in my grief. Only time can lessen the pain of grief, but my pain is more bearable when I share my grief. I have grown up with the knowledge of people who believe real men don't cry. Maybe they haven't lost a son. Maybe they haven't had a chance to be an example to the daughters who share their grief. As General Schwarzkopf said in an interview with Barbara Walters when asked if he was afraid to cry, “I'm afraid of any person who won't cry.”



We need not walk alone.

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

Love Gifts



- Kalisa Gimble in memory of Cason Gimble
- Melton Brown in memory of Terry Wayne Brown
- Donald Sanders in memory of Jonathan Sanders
- Clayton & Pat Turner in memory of Mark Turner
- Dorothy Rawlinson in memory of Jonathan Sanders
- Lisa Dunford in memory of Jonathan Sanders
- Ted & Carol Thompson in memory of Sarah Kathryn Thompson
- Cecil & Cindy Cook in memory of Leo Cook
- Bobby & Virginia Knott in memory of Adam & Bobby Knott
- Christi McMillan in memory of Joshua Renaud
- Carolyn Kuhn in memory of Phillip Kuhn
- Sam Smith in memory of Stacey Smith
- 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 -
in memory of Nathaniel Peter Bolom



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.

TCF of Tyler Memorial Quilt

If you would like to have your child's photo included on the third 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 will be displayed in our meeting room and at future special events.

Announcements

Thanks to all who participated in the 4th Annual Butterfly Release held on May 19. Thanks to Charisse and Miranda Smith in memory of Ben, David and Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy, Carol Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets, Carolyn Kuhn in memory of Phillip, Julie LePelley in memory of Trey, Shelly Johnson in memory of Douglas, Carol Thompson in memory of Sarah, and Kathy and Krystin Bridges in memory of Mikel Conway and Jeremy Newman. **Special thanks as always** to Tina Loper in memory of Christopher, Pat Settle in memory of Stephanie, Margie Newman in memory of Jeremy and Sam Smith in memory of Stacey.



The TCF Beaumont Chapter, #2267, meets the 4th Monday of every month from 7 p.m.-9 p.m. at 655 8th St. Beaumont, TX 77704. Contact Jessie Guillory or Gloria Nabors, 462 Yorktown RD, Beaumont, TX 77707. They can be reached by phone at (409) 866-1788.

A Name for My Pain

I have given a name to my pain—
it's called "Longing."

I long for what was,
and what might have been.

I long for his touch and smell of sweat;
I long to hold him one more time.

I long to look on his beautiful face
and impress it upon my memories and heart.

I long to return to the day before
and protect him from his death.

I long to take his place,
so he may live and have sons too.

I long for time to pass much faster,
so my longing and pain will lessen.

Will they?

June Williams-Muecke, TCF ~ Houston West Chapter

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





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As General Schwarzkopf said in an interview with Barbara Walters when asked if he was afraid to cry, "I'm afraid of any person who won't cry."

June Birthdays



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



Thomas "Chuck" Carroll, II
6-2-73 ~ 11-13-93
Son of Linda & Thomas Carroll



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



Trey LePelley
6-10-82 ~ 3-13-05
Son of Jack & Julie LePelley



Jake Higgins
6-29-77 ~ 12-4-03
Son of Donna Griffin



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



Joshua Andrews
6-21-88 ~ 3-14-04
Son of Tawna Andrews



Matt Mears
6-7-83 ~ 7-16-06
Son of Norma & Kerry Mears
Wife of Ashley Mears



Visit us online at www.TylerTCF.org

Catching Butterflies

It often hurt to come upon reminders of
my son
Tho' often since I lost him I would search
around for one
Which always brought on sadness and
the tears that I would shed
Were caused by names or faces, all
things that I would dread.

But then one day I came upon a man
who'd lost his son
I found that things I ran from, he
wouldn't even shun.
But rather he would treasure and I said
I wondered why
He told me that he called them "Catching
Butterflies."

This view of his intrigued me; I wanted
to hear more
And learned that he took all of them and
carefully would store
All of the reminders that I chose to push
away
He would tuck deep down inside his
heart each and every day.

Now a name or likeness when catching
me off guard
Does not upset me as it did and I don't
find it hard
For now instead I see these times as
opportunities
To see my son awakened in these new
fresh memories.

Dottie Williams ~ TCF, Pittsburgh, PA

What Candice Would Say

I'm sorry big sister, I can't play with you.
I'm sorry grandpa, I can't go to the zoo.
I'm sorry daddy, you can't kiss me goodnight.
I'm sorry mommy, you can't hold me tight.

No one knows why, no one can guess.
But I can't play right now,
I've gone to rest.

Mary Lingle ~ TCF, Tyler, TX



We need not walk alone.

“Although our greatest wish can’t come true, there are many things that we can do to honor our children’s lives. We can still hold them close to our hearts. As the keepers of their memory, we can guarantee that, by sharing their lives with others, our children will never be forgotten.” —Cathy L. Seehuetter

June Anniversaries



Roozbeh Arianpour
3-25-80 ~ 6-6-03
Son of Farideh Arianpour



Christopher John Fisher
12-18-82 ~ 6-22-03
Grandson of Grace & Tom Fisher



Kyle Beck
7-21-89 ~ 6-23-05
Son of Angela Yates



Gabe Levi
5-2-79 ~ 6-25-06
Son of Deborah Hunt



Joshua Renaud
1-18-86 ~ 6-9-06
Son of Christi McMillan



Michael A. Rucker
1-18-93 ~ 6-1-02
Son of Brandy Rucker Pearson
& Grandson of Shelba Putnam



Bryce Ramirez Cooksey
6-4-04 ~ 6-4-04
Son of Shalina Ramirez



Mark Turner
10-3-66 ~ 6-19-97
Son of Clayton & Pat Turner



Tami Kay Brown Roberts
5-17-72 ~ 6-10-00
Daughter of Kenn & Ann Sommerville



Christopher Pope
11-10-90 ~ 6-16-03
Son of Brenda Pope



Jodi Lynne Attaway
3-8-72 ~ 6-5-94
Daughter of Cindi Attaway-Gill



Ricky Edmiston
4-26-00 ~ 6-29-06
Son of Woody & Barbara Edmiston



Amber Glasco
1-30-91 ~ 6-16-05
Daughter of Chris & Julie Glasco

Forgive Until Forever

Grieving is a fierce and overwhelming expression of love thrust upon us by a deep and hurtful loss. Yet, grieving is frequently such an entanglement of feelings that we often fail to recognize that ultimately forgiveness must be an integral part of our grief and our healing. For what is LOVE, if forgiveness is silent within us?

We learn to forgive our children for dying, ourselves for not preventing it. We begin to forgive God or the fate we see ruling the universe. We start to forgive friends and relatives for abandoning us in their own bewilderment over the onslaught of emotions they sense in our words and behavior.

I believe we must be open to the balm of forgiveness. Through its expression in our lives, be it through thought, word or deed, we find small ways to seek life once more. Deep within us, forgiveness is capable of treading the wasteland of our souls to help us feel again the love that has not died.

It is the beginning of release from the dominance of pain, not from the continual hurt of missing those we have lost, but from lacking the fullness of the love we shared with our child. That love lives with strength inside ourselves, and yet our beings are so entrapped in a whirling vortex of anger, despair, frustration, abandonment and depression that we often feel it only lightly.

Let us all heed the quiet message heard so softly in that maelstrom of the spirit. Forgive...forgive...forgive until forever. Let love enfold our anguish, helping us to learn to grow and strive beyond this hour to a rich tomorrow.

Don Hackett ~ TCF, Hingham, Massachusetts



We need not walk alone.

"You can't start healing until you've allowed yourself to feel the hurt of the loss of someone you loved better than yourself. So, if you have reached that place in your grief, see it as a positive, for it means you have forsaken unproductive things and have made a giant step forward in your journey to a place where your pain eases and you learn to live with your loss more comfortably." —*Mary Cleckley*

It is Time to Forgive

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive your sins." [Mark 11:25]

This is a long time coming. I have been studying, learning and teaching the importance and the power of forgiveness for many years. There are few things more freeing than forgiveness, and as Christians, we know that God expects us to forgive others as we pray for Him to forgive us.

Every time I hear another lesson on forgiveness, I search my heart and soul to sincerely try and find anyone I have not forgiven in my life. For years I have thought that I had forgiven everyone that I believed had ever hurt me or wronged me in any way. This morning, as I heard yet another sermon on forgiveness, I realized that I have been harboring unforgiveness toward someone I don't even know or have ever met. I have repressed it so deeply that I haven't even really thought about it in years, and I now realize that it is a hindrance to my walk with my Lord. I am telling you about it now in hopes that it will prompt you to search your heart, and if you find any unforgiveness there you will be able to free yourself, too.

In 1988 my 16-year-old daughter Stacey, died from injuries sustained in a car wreck. She was riding with some friends on their way to lunch from high school. It had been raining, and as they topped a hill a pickup was in the middle of the street and forced them off the road. They ran through a wooden fence, and a 2x6 struck Stacey in the head and face, causing fatal injuries. The driver of the truck that forced them off the road did not stop. No one was able to identify the driver, and to this day we do not know who it was. People that witnessed the accident knew it was a young person, a boy they think, but no one has ever told us who it was—and I think it best that I never knew.

As I write this, I cannot describe the feeling I have in the pit of my stomach. Some things about that day I simply cannot allow myself to dwell on, and I now realize that I have not permitted myself to think about the driver of that truck. In repressing those thoughts, I know I have never gone through the process of forgiving him or her, and I know God expects me to do it now. Why now and not sooner? I really don't know, but I imagine one reason is so I will write about it now in order for someone reading about it to find the healing that I know I will experience. I can think of no better reason, can you? As painful as it is to write about this, I have to tell you this: I feel a weight lifting off my shoulders and my heart at this very moment. I have needed this far too long. Someone reading this needs it just as much. If it is you, please don't miss what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. Allow Him to reveal to you whatever and whomever you have been harboring resentment towards, and pray for the strength to forgive them. We no longer have to live with the pain and the strain that unforgiveness causes. God want us to be free from it, and now is the time to let it go. Go to your Bible and study all that is written about forgiveness. If you still can't let it go, go to your Pastor or some strong Christian friend that you can talk to. Don't pass up this opportunity to receive the healing that the Lord has for you. I know it will make your life better.

One more thing: If by any chance the person who was driving that truck that September day in 1988 should read this article, please accept the forgiveness I am offering. If you have been suffering from feelings of guilt, I ask you to forgive yourself. I know it was an accident, and from the deepest part of my soul I pray for you to feel forgiveness and peace. If you do not know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, I pray that you would open your heart to Him. If you do know Him, I pray this brings you closer. God bless you.

For everyone else, if the Spirit has revealed anyone that you need to forgive, I pray that you will forgive them now. You will find supernatural peace and healing when you do. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." [Colossians 3:13]

Dr. Sam Smith, Butterfly Ministry

The above article won second place for the 2006 Amy Writing Awards Program. The Amy Foundation awards Christian writers whose writing appears in secular media. You can find them online at www.amyfound.org.



2007 Butterfly Release

Photos courtesy of spotted.tylerpaper.com.





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