



Monthly Group Meeting

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

Contact

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

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

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

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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It's Okay to Grieve

It's Okay to Grieve.

The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned. Such hurt! It's okay to grieve.

It's Okay to Cry.

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to level off and continue our cruise along the stream of life. It's okay to cry.

It's Okay to Heal.

We do not need to prove we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel guilty, for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death. It's a healthy sign of healing. It's okay to heal.

It's Okay to Laugh.

Laughter is not a sign of less grief. Laughter is not a sign of less love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh. It's okay to laugh.

Patricia Lufty Nevitt ~ TCF, Austin, TX

Adjusted

"It's been several years since your son died,"
They say, "Surely, you must have adjusted by now."
Yes, I am adjusted—
Adjusted to feeling pain
And sadness and grief and guilt and loss.
Adjusted to hurting and unexpected tears.
Adjusted to seeing people made uncomfortable upon
Hearing me say "My son died."
Adjusted to losing my best friend because I'm not always "up."
Adjusted to people acting as if grief is contagious.
And TCF meetings are "morbid."
Adjusted? Oh, yes, to many things.
Knowing I won't hear his voice, but listening for it still.
Knowing I won't see him drive his Toronado,
But staring at every one I see.
Adjusted to feeling empty on his birthday
And wishing for just one more time with him.
Adjusted: As life goes on—
To realizing I cannot expect everyone I meet
To wear a bandage—just because I am still bleeding.

Shirley Blakely Curle ~TCF, Central AR

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.

“There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable—some day.” —*Darcie D. Sims*

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.”

The Promise

Your birth brought me star-shine,
the moon and the sun;
my wishes, dreams gathered
‘round my little one.

My life became sacred,
full of promise and light,
all wrapped in the girl-child
who brought love at first sight.

The years of your living
filled with laughter and tears,
excitement, adventure,
some boredom, some fears,
but ended too quickly,
ahead of its time.

The loss so horrendous,
such heartbreak was mine.

But from the beginning,
one thought rose so clear:
never would your death erase
the years that you were here.

I would not be defeated
or diminished by your death;
I would hang on, learn to conquer,
if it took my every breath.

For if your death destroyed my life,
made both our lives a waste,
‘t would deny your life’s meaning
and all the love you gave.

I vowed that years of sadness
would change, with work and grace,
to years of happiness, even joy,
in which you’d have a place.

Memories of you, like shining stars
in the patterns of my soul,
are beacons flashing light and love,
and with them I am whole.

In your honor, I live my life,
now living it for two.

Through all my life, you too will live.
You lived, you live, you do.



Poem submitted by
Pat Settle in
memory of Steph



Genesse Gentry, “*Stars in the Deepest Night - After the Death of a Child*”

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.





We need not walk alone.

"I am spring. I bless long, dark wintry days. I crown mankind's pain with starry skies in deepest night, lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round." —Carol Clum



Love Gifts

Randy & Judy Smith in memory of Sean Smith

Dr. Richard Liptak, UT Tyler

Donna Griffin in memory of Jake Higgins

Susie Gorman in memory of Kathy Tumminello

Teri Clakley in memory of Justin Clakley

Richard & Jolyn Harris in memory of Brian Harris

Angie Daniels in memory of Sarah Harvey

Danny, Stephen & Pat Settle in memory of Stephanie Settle

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

Thanks to all who helped paint butterflies
for the Annual Butterfly Release!



Hidden Emotion

Hidden deep inside my breast is a longing that has been suppressed. The feeling is always there—longing—longing to see you, to hug you, to know who you are at this time in your existence. It stays hidden for a period of time and then—when I least expect it—rises to the surface and must be tended to.

At times I feel as if I cannot breathe, as if I will suffocate trying to suppress the pain. At other times a tear comes from nowhere and trickles down my cheek. Occasionally, something inside of me explodes causing me to weep uncontrollably.

I can only guess what causes these unbidden emotions. Is it the song that's playing on the radio? Can it be the changing of the seasons? Do the budding trees beginning new life cause me to let down my guard? The longing never goes away.

I feel like a tight rope walker never knowing if I will make a misstep, causing me to fall into the stream of emotional pain that forces me to cry out, as I long to see you again.

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 Muller ~ TCF, Lafayette, IN

Announcements

We will be holding our **Third Annual Butterfly Release** on May 20th, 2006, at 1:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church south campus, 2813 and Hwy. 69 W. For more information, please contact Tina Loper at (903) 594-2132, Margie Newman at (903) 561-1447 or Pat Settle at (903) 570-8412. The butterflies with your child's photo are available for purchase after the ceremony. Please let us know if you would like to help this year in honor and in loving memory of your child.



In Memory of Jamie

Mrs. Powell, a first-grade teacher at New Summerfield ISD, learned about The Compassionate Friends of Tyler last year, and attended the May Butterfly release. In August, her school suffered a tragedy that really hit the first graders hard. One of their junior-high students was killed in a car accident. This student happened to be related to several of the first graders. Mrs. Parrot has this student's brother and Mrs. Powell had this student last year, as well as several of the cousins. Upon hearing of this tragedy, the first graders decided that when they studied the life cycle of butterflies they would like to donate the hatched butterflies to TCF of Tyler in memory of Jamie and in honor of the family members he left behind.

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 our 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.

The first quilt will be on display at the Butterfly Release in May.

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



We need not walk alone.

“So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME—to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be ‘crazy’ and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don’t measure your progress through grief against anyone else’s. Be your own timekeeper.” —*Darcie D. Sims*

May Birthdays



Stephanie Carol Hester

5-9-88 ~ 4-2-04

Daughter of Troy & Glenna Nicolls



Jamie Allen

5-24-75 ~ 7-8-01

Son of Cindy & Jim Allen



Donna Mae Morales

5-8-96 ~ 5-14-01

Daughter of Misty Morales



Tami Kay Brown Roberts

5-17-72 ~ 6-10-00

Daughter of
Kenn & Ann Somerville



Stephanie Harris Reed

5-18-79 ~ 9-5-98

Daughter of Rick & Susan Harris



Lance Alan Massey

5-16-80 ~ 7-16-05

Son of Cindy Massey



Brian David Stewart

5-16-56 ~ 7-8-56

Son of Joyce Stewart



Shanna Marie Redmond

5-5-85 ~ 7-30-94

Daughter of Patricia Miller



Blythe Madison Harper

5-2-03 ~ 3-8-06

Daughter of
Stephanie & Joshua Harper

While Waiting for Thee

Submitted by Caitlin Daniels in memory of Sarah Harvey

Don't weep at my grave, for I am not there,
I've a date with a butterfly to dance in the air.
I'll be singing in the sunshine, wild and free,
playing tag with the wind, while I'm waiting for thee.

We are as the wings of a butterfly,
bound together with the love of God.

Author Unknown



Saying Goodbye

by Caitlin Daniels in memory of Sarah Harvey

It hurts me yet it heals me
I see it and wish it were in its previous form
I smile because it's visiting me,
It's color is intense
Yellow like marigolds,
It gently flutters past me
And I can feel its friendly affection,
It is beautiful
It brings to me strength for a new day,
Its spirit is that of a girl I once knew,
Drawing attention when in view,
And as it drifts away
I do something I never got to do,
I say goodbye
To my friend,
To my angel,
To that yellow butterfly.

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





We need not walk alone.

"Those of us who have survived many years have learned that over the long run, the human mind chooses to recall only the best of memories—the happy ones, the humorous ones, the sentimental ones—and we learn that even the pain of unhappy memories diminishes." —*Shirley Ottman*

May Anniversaries



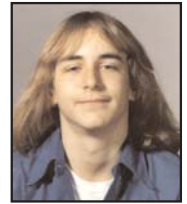
Brady Bryant
4-30-01 ~ 5-2-01
Son of Windy & Bradley Bryant



Daniel Anderson
12-27-79 ~ 5-15-95
Son of Kerry & Cheryl Anderson



Jaren Moser
4-28-00 ~ 5-31-05
Son of Robert & Misty
Hendrickson



Jon Lee Hardwick
9-29-61 ~ 5-7-77
Sister of Vicki Johnson



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



Samantha Johnson
9-23-85 ~ 5-13-02
Daughter of
Dennis & Vicki Johnson



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



Joshua Jolley
9-29-78 ~ 5-12-02
Son of Brenda Jolley



Kenny Ivy
3-10-65 ~ 5-12-85
Son of JoAnne Ivy



Donna Morales
5-8-96 ~ 5-14-01
Daughter of Misty Morales



Stephanie Settle
12-22-81 ~ 5-27-98
Daughter of Danny & Pat Settle



Marshall Charles Donahue
10-18-65 ~ 5-18-00
Son of Joyce Neely



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



Kaila McKinsey Payne
4-6-03 ~ 5-28-03
Daughter of Keith Payne

New ways to donate to TCF of Tyler in honor and loving memory of your child:

- \$25 for a quilt square (More info on page 3)
- \$25 to sponsor one year with the Bullard Chamber of Commerce
- \$25 to sponsor one year with the Tyler Chamber of Commerce
- \$20 to sponsor one month of advertising on Northland Cable
- \$150 for artwork for a billboard
- Postage for mailing the newsletter one month
- Refreshments for monthly meeting
- Paper, print cartridges, etc.
- Library books
- Articles or poems for the newsletter
- Monthly phone bill - \$45
- P.O. Box rental - \$26 annual

Bereaved Parents

Different ages
 Different stages
 Different issues
 Same pain
 Daily strain
 Occasional tissues
 Our children have died
 Often is all we know
 A fact we fear to hide
 Despite our ever-present woe
 We live with pride
 Though broken-hearted
 To love, remember, and grow

Victor Montemurro ~ TCF, Medford, NY





We need not walk alone.

“A significant part of each parent died when our children died. Yet, a crucial part of each child lives in the hearts of every mother and father. Neither time nor death will erase that bond. It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.”
—Annette Mennen Baldwin

Mother’s Day, “Before” and “After”

While sorting through boxes and bags, it is not unusual for me to find something unexpected. It happened just the other day. Sifting through a box, I came across a wrinkled, somewhat yellowed piece of lined school paper. I carefully unfolded it only to find a drawing of a stick-mom and stick-daughter standing along side a mammoth daisy. The mom and little girl were holding hands with huge lop-sided grins on their faces. In her little girl just-learning-to-print handwriting were the words, “Happy Mother’s Day, Mommy. I love you, Kristina.”

Even six years later, little “gifts” such as these can bring fresh tears. It is times like these that I am glad that I was an incredible pack rat, especially when it came to saving things that my children have made. I can picture my then-blond, petite little Nina (her nickname), with the wispy hair, bent over the kitchen table, crayon in hand, creating that handmade card filled with love. Memories of breakfasts in bed, only to return to the kitchen after finishing the “gourmet” meal served with tender care, to find it in such disarray that it took hours to clean up! Even through the tears, these are the sweetest memories.

As I type this, I look at another gift from a Mother’s Day past; a little statue of a harried mom, surrounded by mop, broom and bucket, that says, “World’s Greatest Mom,” chosen for me at a neighborhood garage sale. I came across it accidentally shortly after Nina’s death, unearthing it from its hiding place. I wondered to myself, why had I packed it away. Did Nina know that I did and did she think that, by doing so, I hadn’t appreciated her gift? Did I ever thank her for it along with the other garage sale items that she proudly brought home to me, or did it show on my face that I really didn’t need anymore “junk” around the house? Sometimes resurrecting these treasures can bring unpleasant feelings of guilt as we wonder if our children knew how much their little gestures of love meant to us. When our child dies, it becomes easy to second-guess ourselves, trapped in our fixations and exaggerations of the negative things that may have occurred during our child’s life.

The first Mother’s Days after Nina died was a grief-numbing blur, as it occurred only three days following her death. Unlike previous joyful dinners out with my four children pampering their mom, we spent the day making funeral arrangements and choosing a casket for one of them. In the early evening, I overheard it said to someone else, “Happy Mother’s Day.” I turned to my own mother and apologized for having forgotten. I could not imagine ever celebrating another Mother’s Day again. I am sure the dads have these same feelings on Father’s Day. My heart goes out to them, because I think we forget that they, just like us, grieve and hurt, too.

For those mothers and fathers who have lost their only child, I have been saddened by stories told to me by them of attending church on Mother’s Day Sunday and when the pastor asked the mothers in the church to please stand, they were undecided on whether they should stand or not. I hope that they will always remember, and the fathers as well, “Once a mother, always a mother; once a father, always a father.” We are forever their parents.

If we are fortunate to have surviving children, they are often forgotten as well. In the early days, we become obsessed with the one who is missing. My own children showed quiet patience with this. I often wonder if they thought “What about us? We’re still here!” Now with almost seven Mother’s Days behind me, I try to accentuate what I do have. This does not happen overnight. I found that in celebrating my surviving children, I could still honor Nina’s memory and find ways to include her as well. I have developed a ritual where I get up early on that morning and bring flowers out to the cemetery. I bring a flower and a note to some of the mothers that I know who have buried children there to tell them I am thinking of them and their child. There is something very healing when reaching out to others. I then sit by my daughter’s grave-site on the spring-green grass listening to the sweet call of a robin. I bring her a flower and write in her journal telling her how thankful I am to be her mother, how much I love and miss her. That is our private time together; the rest of the day is spent honoring my other children.

Mother’s Day and Father’s Day are holidays especially created for us. Try to get through them the best that you can, in whatever way feels right for you. Truly, only you know what that is. Whether it is alone those first few years or with people that you love and who understand, do something that you find comforting. It is your day, for you were the giver of a precious life—you held a miracle in your arms. Even as powerfully destructive as death is, even that cannot take those memories away from you—they are your child’s gift to you.

With gentle thoughts and peace on your special day,

Cathy L. Seehuetter ~ TCF, St. Paul, MN





The Compassionate Friends of Tyler

Third Annual

Butterfly Release

May 20th, 2006, 1:00 PM

For Details please call 903-594-2132,

903-258-2547 or 903-570-8412

www.TylerTCF.org



**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