



Volume 15, Issue 11

Tyler, Texas

November 2014

Monthly Group Meeting

Tyler Area Meeting
3rd Monday of Each Month
1901 Rickety 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 & Teresa 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, Trisha Mann Taylor

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 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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Thanks

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say: "There is a group in town that might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."

Thanks to the mother who went to that first meeting knowing it would really hurt to talk—and talked.

Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back—but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help."

Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies—for her "Compassionate Friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people—who became a facilitator.

Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men—and didn't say he was sorry.

Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know—next month.

John DeBoer ~ TCF, Omaha, NE

To sponsor a Butterfly Release Sign with your child's name on it there will be a one-time fee of \$60 per sign. If you want the sign with your child's name placed at a particular business or location, written permission must be obtained by you from that business and sent to the TCF office to keep on file. The sign will be placed at that location about a month prior to the release and taken down the week after by a representative of TCF and remain the property of TCF Tyler to reuse yearly.

Make checks payable to Tyler TCF and in the memo location please note who the sign(s) is for.



Thanks to all who have sponsored a Butterfly Release sign!

Don & Leslie Dixon for Austin Jim & Cheri Zucca for Leah Tina Loper for Christopher Danny & Pat Settle for Steph Sam Smith for Stacey Margie & Victor Newman for Jeremy Charlotte Nelson for Wade Melissa Love for Payton Carol Thompson for Sarah Lana Kaye Taylor for Reneé Seale

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.



"Most of us know that our deceased children would want us to go on. Through our grief, we can grow and become more understanding, loving and compassionate and aware of the real values in life." —Margaret Gerner

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
www.compassionatefriends.org

Children Are A Gift Foundation: www.childrenareagift.com

GriefShare: www.griefshare.org

MADD East Texas (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) www.madd.org/local-offices/tx/east-texas

Smith County Victim Services Division www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs/counties/smith.html

The Hospice of East Texas: www.hospiceofeasttexas.org

Victim Services Division - Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Online Resource Directory www.tdcj.state.tx.us/divisions/vs

Survivors of Suicide: www.allianceofhope.org

Samaritan Counseling of Tyler: www.scctyler.org

Tyler Counseling & Assessment, LLP: www.tyler-counseling.com

Angel Layettes brings comfort to families grieving over the loss of an infant from miscarriage, stillbirth or death shortly after birth, and honor and dignity to the memory of the precious baby. Angel Layettes provides without charge custom designed burial layettes and keepsakes. www.angellayettes.org • 903-534-5212

University of Texas at Tyler Psychology and Counseling and Training Clinic: 903-593-2348

The Cope Foundation: www.copefoundation.org

Grief Camps for Kids: www.moyerfoundation.org/programs

Notice About Our Annual Butterfly Release, May, 2015!

After holding our Annual Release at the same location for the last 11 years, we are looking at a new location. The Shriner's have offered to let us hold our Release starting next year, located at 10027 St., Hwy. 31 in Tyler. We'll provide more details in future newsletters.



"Is this not our goal, to heal, to find strength to love both yesterday and today? Our children have been the richest part of our lives and today should reflect the grace of that love in all that we are today." —Don Hackett

Love Gifts

See more love gifts on page 6.





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

(For monthly donors we will post photos of your children on their Birthday and Anniversary dates.)

Victor & Margie Newman in memory of Jeremy - rent
Merri Walsh in memory of Chris O'Leary - rent
Martha Lewis in memory of Burke - rent
Carol Thompson in memory of Sarah - rent
Carol & Shane Johnson in memory of Jared Sheets - rent
Danny & Pat Settle in memory of Stephanie - rent
Claudette Brown in memory of Terry Wayne - rent
Sue Roberts in memory of Jake Schoonover - rent
Dale & Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad - newsletter

Tina, Johnathan & Heather Loper in memory of Christopher - TCF Phone David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy - use of a storage building







See more love gifts on page 6.

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 email 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: bluebutterfly6@gmail.com ~ Pat's email: beachbum2201@gmail.com

Save the date! The 38th National Compassionate Friends Conference will be July 10-12, 2015 in Dallas.

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.

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.



"I would say to those who mourn—look upon each day that comes as a challenge, a test of courage. The pain will come in waves, some days worse than others, for no apparent reason. Accept the pain. Do not suppress it. Never attempt to hide grief from yourself." — Daphne DuMaurier

November Birthdays



Wade Goetze



Rusty Welch



Randall Thorton, Jr.



Nathaniel Bolom



Shane Crim



Christopher Jordan Pope



Mike Loughmiller



Brandon Whitfield



Lindsey Stewart



Erik Scott McKinney



Kayla Smith



Bobby Knott



Mary Adams



Missy Rogers



Kristi Diaz



Jill Tompkins



Mikel Conway



Haylee Lee



Blake Owens



Lorie McLain



Austin Lane Phillips



Whitni Ray



Brytnie Leah Stithem



Christina Boyd



Gaaron Hicks



Beerline

Lucy Meredith





Doug Norton



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!

"To all of you hurting people who have never attended a TCF meeting, I urge you to give it a try. Attend two or three meetings and see if some of the 'magic' doesn't rub off on you. What have you got to lose? You can't hurt any worse than you already have." —Steve Perez

November Anniversaries



Thomas 'Chuck' Carroll



Salvador Estrada



Erika Stafford



Austin Lane Phillips



Shane Crim



Scottie Baker



Jonathan Reynolds



Cameron Lee Robinson



Nathaniel Bolom



Randy Cannon, Jr.



Candice Lingle



Ijuan Simms



Ty Foster Mabry



Ronald Gary Smith



Crystal Greene



Cynthia Harper



Timothy Treadwell



Justin Goodman



Michael Ritchie



Derek Brown



A.J. Huggins



Calan Cameron Decker McKeethan



Brooke Wallace



Andy Terrell



Patti Ann Gage



Burke Warren Lewis



Kyle Foster



Carolyn Love



Chad Everett Guill



Bridget Munson



Payton Herrington



Stephanie Mata



Patricia Ann Edwards



Michael Chapman



The Crayola Desk

I did something today. Something I was pretty certain I would not do—did not want to do to be honest. I took my very first step, after almost 13 years, to prepare to part with some of Christopher's things. A light bulb went on over my head suddenly. I realized that most of these "things" I have clung to—almost desperately—would have been gone a long time ago. I understand much like with my son and daughter still here, these things would have been outgrown or simply lost their appeal. He would be a 19-year-old young man—experiencing his college years, working a job or maybe just plain trying to figure out what he wanted to do. He certainly would not be sitting at his Crayola desk drawing or coloring, playing with the power rangers or pokemon—figures he so dearly loved. And that old Gameboy—it would have undoubtedly been traded up for a newer model.

As I cleaned up the desk, I recalled how excited he was the day we gave it to him. How many times he sat in the little blue and red spinning chair making himself dizzy then trying to see if he could draw a straight line. He loved how the drawing area lit from below allowing him to trace his favorite coloring book pages, his tongue hanging out to the side between his teeth in intense concentration.

I took a magic eraser and started to clean that little desk. I never dreamed I would be unable to wipe away the marks and drawings made with his crayons. I kept thinking no one is going to want this if I can't get it looking like new. There is a lazy susan of sorts for the crayons in the lower right corner. Little holes in a plastic turntable, the perfect size for a crayon to stand on end and spin around making them easy to access. Instead of utilizing this item for its intended purpose, Christopher thought it would be more fun to stick marbles in those holes. Here I was standing over my kitchen counter with an array of screw drivers, a pocket knife and butter knife, trying over and over again to pry each of those well lodged marbles out of their holes. I think only for a second that I have a hundred other things to do, that I am spending too much time trying to clean up "this mess."

Immediately I can't help but miss all the other messes I missed out on. I find myself wishing there had been a thousand more. I wonder if I had attempted to do this when he was still here if I might have scolded him. Instead I find myself smiling, with my tongue out to the side between clenched teeth, grateful to get to clean up "his mess."

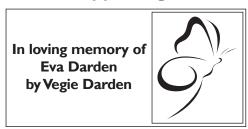
In memory of Christopher, Tina Loper, TCF Tyler, TX

Happy Birthday

We do it all the time, send good wishes and thoughts to those we love who are separated from us. It may be across town, across the state, across the world or in another time. We cannot help thinking about them and sending them our love. It is only natural. We may do it by card, by telephone, by email, or just by thought. If we are separated by time, instead of distance, thought is the only way to send our love. To those who have never experienced the death of a child, it may seem morbid or like a waste of money to celebrate one's child's birthday. Those same people probably think nothing abnormal about visiting the grave of a favorite relative (mother, father, etc.). These are considered acts of love, and for me, (at least one way; maybe one of these days, two-ways) with a sorely missed and loved daughter. So, whatever anyone else may think, I will continue to celebrate my Sarah's birthday. I will do so by releasing balloons, planting a rose bush, making a donation to organizations that either she participated in or that I believe are helpful in some ways to foster understanding, love and tolerance. In doing so, I tell her one more time, I love you, Sarah, Happy Birthday.

Printed with permission from "Where Are All The Butterflies?" R.D. Cayer, Bereaved Father, Denton TX

Thanks for supporting TCF of Tyler.





"This is now the heart I must learn to live with. Starting all over because it is nothing like what it was since the moment I heard my sweet boy Douglas passed away. Days and months pass and I can't say how I live from one day to the next—they just keep happening." —Janella Otell

How Long Does It Take?

As long as it takes—that's how long it takes.

It's not about forgetting. It's about hurting.

And I know that if I am alive twenty years from now, and I happen to look at a blue sky with puffy clouds and think of my son, Fred. And figure how old he'd be, what he'd be doing, and what his children would be doing—I'll hurt.

And know that if I can switch my train of thought from what is not, to what was, a happy memory, I'll be able to smile through the tears.

We don't stop hurting, ever. But so many things occur each day. So many events and thoughts and happenings intervene, that our focus is shifted. The death of our child changes from the main concern in our life, to one of many.

A life may stop—but the loving goes on. To love deeply is to be vulnerable.

For all our days.

Joan S., TCF Central Jersey Chapter, NJ

Burke Warren Lewis In loving memory of Burke.

Martha Lewis



This month's printing of our newsletter sponsored by Martha Lewis. Call (903) 258-2547 to sponsor a monthly newsletter.

"We quickly find there are no words to describe the experience of 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

Andy Terrell

In loving memory of Andy.

David & Teresa Terrell



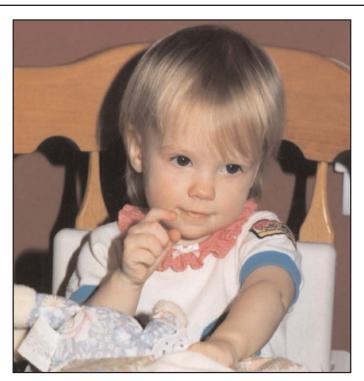
This month's printing of our newsletter sponsored by David & Teresa Terrell.

Call (903) 258-2547 to sponsor a monthly newsletter.

Always missing and always loving, Candice Lingle.

We love you best!

Mom & Erin



This month's printing of our newsletter sponsored by Mary Lingle.

Call (903) 258-2547 to sponsor a monthly newsletter.

"We had in our lives a person whom we loved and cherished and who loved and cherished us for twenty-seven years. We are lucky to have shared a large part of our lives with such a wonderful person. Our only logical choice now is to do our best to create happiness again." —Scott Mastley

Thanksgiving Marks Beginning of Holiday Madness and Sadness

In our society we have turned the holidays into a never ending round of parties, shopping, cooking, preparations for guests or travel and stress, lots and lots of stress. It begins in October with the not so subtle reminders from our friendly retail stores. Most of us dread this time of year because as members of Compassionate Friends, we have one more item on our list and it invariably is at the top.....my child is gone.....how can I handle the holidays?

This will be my third Thanksgiving without my son. We had 35 wonderful Thanksgiving celebrations together, and now it's just me. My only child is gone, my grandchildren now live solely in their mother's world. I am not a part of that world.

But I am learning to cope with this reality. I am learning that I can hold on to the traditions that don't cause me sadness and let go of those that do. As bereaved parents we fall into a unique category. As humans we accept that the loss of parents, spouses, aunts, uncles, siblings, friends and acquaintances is inevitable. But never, never, were we taught or conditioned to the idea that our children would or could precede us in death. The very notion of this shook us to our core.

Now we have lost our child to death. Nobody prepared us for this mind numbing loss. The rules have been broken. We have no coping skills. Our friends usually can't help. Our families try, but until one endures a loss of this magnitude, the ability to fully comprehend the never ending rounds of sadness is simply not there.

We do have a support system.....we can choose to participate or simply be there, in the moment, at our Compassionate Friends meetings. Here we find our most meaningful and helpful connection with other parents.....parents who are walking the road we now walk. These bereaved parents are here to help us on this unfamiliar road. They cannot answer every question because the answers don't exist to most questions. When will this pain end? When will life go back to "normal?" There are different types of pain and new kinds of normal. We gather each month to help each other, to lean on each other, to find hope in each other's ability to function. From this meeting of kindred souls we do derive some solace, some peace and some hope.

I have watched the newly bereaved, raw in their sadness when they first attend a meeting. As the months move forward, I begin to see a change in these parents. Each changes in a different way, for each experiences their loss and their grief process in a different way. Some changes aren't apparent for months, even a year or two. Learning that we are not alone in the grievous burden of our loss is comforting. Learning that others have developed ways to cope with the holidays, the birthdays, the death anniversaries and other special occasions gives us the hope that we, too, will one day feel comfortable in our new "normal."

I have chosen to accept this group of gentle, kind and compassionate friends as an integral part of my life. The first holidays were horrible. I learned that I had to do what I felt was right. I learned to let go of the expectations of others and live in the moment. Even if I plan to do something and change my mind, I feel no guilt. I learned that those who truly love me understand. I have found that I am truly becoming myself....my new self. It is a slow process. There are setbacks.

Holidays are extremely difficult for every parent who has lost a child......it matters not how long ago our child died. The pain is fresh, new and raw at this time of year. This is the season for leaning on our compassionate friends, for asking questions, expressing fears, anxieties, doubts, depression and anger and for finding the comfort, hope and understanding that each of us so desperately seeks.

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



My Compassionate Friend

So glad I know you, so sad why, my Compassionate Friend. Although we walk a separate trail, we'll pass then meet again.

This path we're on is a figure eight, if you picture in your mind, parts of which we must walk alone, then together we're one we find.

I may have met you once or twice, perhaps we spoke at the door.

All's understood in that wordless glance; there's really nothing more.

Amazement at the depths we've shared in our quest for calming peace!

The secret fears, the choked back tears, at last flood our hearts in release.

Time's moving on for each of us, our children have gone before.

That lasting peace and final joy with them we have in store.

If I have helped you along the way, remember you too held my hand.

You made sure that I "need not walk alone" on my road of quivering sand.

So glad I know you, so sad why, my Compassionate Friend. Although we walk a separate trail, we'll pass and meet again.

Carol Thompson, TCF Tyler, TX Always Remembering Sarah

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

There Used to be Four

I see three pairs of shoes by the front door.

There used to be four.

I see three place settings on the dining room table.

There used to be four.

I see three bath towels in the laundry room. There used to be four.

I hear three voices echoing in my head.

There used to be four.

I feel my broken heart that still has to pick up the shoes, wash the dishes, do the laundry, and try to survive.

Because no matter how hard I try—

I will never hear your voice again.

Mary Lingle, TCF Tyler, TX, 1993 In memory of Candice

20 Questions

It is smaller than a breadbox. It is larger than a car.
It is rain bowed, striped, and polka-dotted
but colorless by far.

Its memory's like an elephant. It's forgetful as a fish.
It's emotional as a postcard
and hopeful as a wish.

It is busy as an ant. It is lazy as a bee.
It is weak as flavored gelatin
but hardy as a snow-pea.

It's hated as a jelly fish. It's loved as family.
It's plain as a doughnut
yet hidden as your keys.

It is ordinary as paper. It is creative as a kid.

It is loose as a shoe
and stuck as a lid.

It is Grief. It is Love. It is Hope.

Jacqui McPeck TCF of Spokane, WA In Memory of my brother Zachary Ian McPeck

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:	Relationship:		
Birth Date:	Death Date:	Cause	Cause of Death:		
Address:					
City:		State:	Zip:		
Home Telephone:					
E-mail:					
Please check any of follow	ring that apply.				
☐ Please continue sending	the newsletter.				
☐ No thank you, I'd prefer	r to stop receiving the newsletter. (N	Newsletters are posted mo	onthly on our Web site.)		
☐ Please include my child	's name and picture in the slide pres	sentation at the Candle L	ighting Ceremony.		
☐ Please include my child	's picture and information on the To	CF Tyler Web site. (www	T.TylerTCF.org)		
☐ I am enclosing a memor	rial to support The Compassionate F	Friends in the amount of			
☐ In memory of			Please make check payable to TCF		
Please use this gift for: \Box	TCF Newsletter Butterfly Rele	ase 🗖 Candle Lighting	☐ TCF Events		
	apter's work depends on donations.	•	opportunity to give a donation in memto other newly bereaved parents.		
Lighting Ceremony or any	-	be withdrawn at any time	are in the newsletter, Web site, Candle by written request. This information is er activities such as the newsletter.		
			Date:		
(Signature)					

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







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