



Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, October 17, 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

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711

Chapter LeaderTina Loper
Chapter Co-LeaderPat 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 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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As the Holidays Approach

When the holidays are fast approaching, we who are bereaved always have mixed emotions about having a nice holiday when our child or loved one is no longer with us. We wonder if we will ever be as happy and if we can ever again celebrate the holidays or any meaningful family occasion, especially the first birthday, first thanksgiving, or first Christmas since our loss. We try to look ahead to how we are going to feel when the time arrives, but it is usually not as hard as we had anticipated. Still, the occasion may not be as enjoyable as we'd like it to be or as we remember it from the past.

I would like to offer a few ideas for what we can do to make our holidays a little better. Consider buying gifts for less fortunate children, adopting a child/family at Christmas time, or inviting a lonely person to share your holiday meal. Make your child's favorite foods and discuss your loved one as you share the meal. Some people like to volunteer to serve holiday dinners for the homeless. Some bereaved parents want to visit familiar places their child loved to go, while others want to travel where their child had never been.

Several of our Compassionate Friends members put a small Christmas tree at the cemetery and decorate the graves with Christmas flowers and/or a grave blanket. Making a grave blanket is very fulfilling; we did that for 10 years after our daughter Teresa died. Attending a Candlelight program is a wonderful way to honor your child or loved one.

These suggestions are things we feel we can still do for our child, but they are not reserved for bereaved parents only. All of them can be done for any member of a family or a friend who has died. After someone dies we must keep going and doing things that lift us up. We can't always try to please any people who feel we should act in a certain manner.

The Compassionate Friends is for Sharing

Many people may think that meetings of The Compassionate Friends consist of bereaved people who sit and cry most of the evening, but that is certainly a misconception. It is normal to shed tears as we talk about our child's death, and we would expect a newly bereaved person to cry. We understand that completely. But we don't just sit and cry. Would you believe that most of the time we spend in our sharing group circle we may enjoy hearing others' stories about their children, or even sharing our own? Our meetings are usually about our memories, our questions and also telling what has helped us to cope with it all. We all have ideas that we share with others in the hope that they may reach a point of "good memories" instead of bad memories of the child's death.

A support group should be very comforting and welcoming to those who attend and should always have non-judgmental members. We are less concerned at how the child died (even though we do care) and we are more concerned that we be there for the parents, siblings or grandparents who need us. They have a desire to talk and share about their loved one. We want to let them lean on us in their time of pain, just as we had others before us who let us lean on them. It does come full circle.

Jackie Wesley ~ TCF, East Central Indiana & Miami-Whitewater Chapters

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.

"Hope is the feeling that the feeling you have isn't permanent." —Jean Kerr

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.”

Quiet Courage

I have seen much courage in my life. Many types of bravery have inspired me. I am astonished by the courage of the elderly widow who buries her husband, quietly sells most of her personal belongings, furnishings and home and moves into a tiny apartment so that she can survive until death takes her, too.

I am distressed by the youthful courage demonstrated every day by soldiers who were high school kids heading for homecoming last year but who now serve in dangerous, hostile places fighting an enemy who is invisible in the crowd. The law enforcement memorial in Washington, D.C., speaks of the many brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty to keep anarchy at bay. The EMS and fire fighting people who hold strong to tradition and put themselves in harm's way each day to save others amaze me with their dedication and devotion to duty.

The single mother who works two jobs, raises her children, cares for them in times of illness, keeps a home, cooks, cleans and still finds time to bake cookies for the PTA fundraiser is a heroine who is doomed to remain faceless and unknown. Yet the courage to start each new day in the hope of making a better life for her children drives her forward.

There are all types of courage in this life. All are impressive, all are worthy of praise and all set standards for us to emulate.

But the deepest, most compelling courage I have seen in my life is that of the parent who has lost a child to death. Each has experienced total helplessness and real physical pain in their loss. Raw in their grief, they join our Compassionate Friends group. I am struck by how weakened in spirit these parents are, how tenuous their hold on sanity must surely be. Yet these parents quietly enter our meeting room and face the unknown with tears in their eyes and tremendous weight in their hearts. Their world is upside down, their children have died and the pain and loss seem insurmountable. They have been snatched out of their former reality and slammed into the depths of hell by a cosmic force more intense than a tsunami. These moms and dads who have lost their beautiful child listen quietly as others talk of children who have lived for years in their parents' hearts. Each parent tells a story, each voice breaks, each heart breaks as a lost child's name echoes in the quiet room. The courage to acknowledge and face this new reality and look for hope in the midst of this infinite despair is a pure wonderment.

What pain is in this room? What deep, agonizing loss is systemic within this group? What will I say? How can I relate when I cannot even remember what day it is? How can I go on for one more day? These are the agonizing feelings of the newly bereaved parent. The Compassionate Friends meeting is the place they have chosen to begin their journey into what they perceive as a hideous, horrible, dark and unknown future. Yet their courage to face this, the greatest loss any human could possibly endure, is extraordinary. The power of the mind to begin to see reason, to begin to seek hope, to climb this mountain of trauma and travail cannot be overstated. This power is pure courage, raw courage, desperate courage, but courage in its purest form.

Each meeting brings the dread of facing the reality of their child's death. Yet the parents who have lost so much return to talk, to listen, to understand, to move into the light of hope. Gradually an understanding develops. Slowly each parent learns we must continue to live and honor our child. They light candles, visit cemeteries, fund scholarships, write poetry, raise funds to help others.....all in memory of their precious children. They reach out to other parents who are newly bereaved, listening, talking and listening again with their hearts. Occasionally they smile. Then one day they laugh. The journey is long, the grief work is difficult, the pain is forever, yet they keep on moving forward into the light. There are no medals, no press releases, no television appearances, no accolades, no parades. The deepest, soul-permeating, life changing and amazing courage is found here. As I look at my Compassionate Friends I am awe-struck by the rare and quiet courage that fills this room.

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





We need not walk alone.

“In spite of the bleak picture, our hearts do have the capability of healing, in due time. They may never work as they did before the tragedy, but they should be able to attain a level of functioning that we can be comfortable with. The key words are *in due time.*” —Karyl Chastain Beal

Love Gifts



Margie & Victor Newman in memory of Jeremy Newman

Carolyn Love in memory of Kathy Robertson

Danny, Pat & Stephen Settle in memory of Stephanie Settle

Tina Loper in memory of Christopher Loper

Charlotte Nelson in memory of Wade Goetze

Sharon Peymon in memory of Michael Peymon -
refreshments for the meeting

Charisse Smith in memory of Benjamin 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



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 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!

Announcements

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.

We are accepting canned food at the meetings through November for the Lack's Christmas tree food drive.

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.

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.



**TCF of Tyler has
"Forever in My
Heart" wristbands.**

You can get your wristbands at the monthly meetings, or send your check for \$3 to:

The Compassionate Friends of Tyler
P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711



We need not walk alone.

"Even though we no longer have a physical connection with our daughter, our eternal connection will forever be with us. I reached a point in my grief that I had to say a final 'good-bye' to an earthly life with my child, but I NEVER had to say 'good-bye' to Kristen!" —*Deb Lee Gould*

October Birthdays



Cindy Dingler
10-18-57 ~ 9-6-99
Daughter of Lynda Hanna



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



Joey Moore
10-30-79 ~ 10-4-98
Son of Sarah Dolan



Jeremy Mark Lawler
10-25-73 ~ 4-19-97
Son of Mark & Sue Lawler



Brittany Butler
10-4-84 ~ 1-21-01
Daughter of Shelly Butler



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

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

After Their Death

by Judith Pordon

You might be covered
by eyelids closed
over your whole being,

or reach with desperation
for something alive
to hold onto.

Your fingertips will hide
in a fist. No more palms
open to life.

Humbled, the very ground
will seem so large. Someday
the earth will own you.

Or you see there's no time
to waste, and plow
into previously feared goals.

Try to be patient
if it takes you years
to return.

This is the exit from Eden,
when you have chosen life
while wanting to die.

This is the fall that gives
wisdom, perspective, gratefulness.
It is worth the crawl back to life.



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



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



Randy Rounsavall
10-14-51 ~ 6-19-03
Son of Margaret Rounsavall



Neil Defenbaugh
10-20-81 ~ 3-27-04
Son of James & Dina Defenbaugh



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



We need not walk alone.

"We will never be apart whilst you dwell in my heart." —*Faye Kilday*

October Anniversaries



Stacey Smith
9-8-72 ~ 10-4-88
Daughter of Sam Smith



John Patrick Carnahan
4-17-65 ~ 10-13-03
Son of Rod & Shirley Carnahan



Joey Moore
10-30-79 ~ 10-4-98
Son of Sarah Dolan



Kathy Robertson
4-23-57 ~ 10-23-01
Daughter of Carolyn Love



Wade Goetze
11-29-76 ~ 10-28-01
Son of Charlotte Nelson



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



Erica Smith
12-21-88 ~ 10-25-03
Daughter of
Todd & Sabrina Thoene



Mikel Conway
11-17-57 ~ 10-11-01
Son of Viola Conway
Brother of Margie Newman



Madeline Joy Kearney
7-15-86 ~ 10-6-05
Daughter of
Melody Kearney Burnett



James Lee Lary
4-20-83 ~ 10-30-05
Son of Elgin & Ann Lary

Trial by Fire - 9 Tips for Grieving Couples

by Lisa Church

You will often hear that grief and loss bring couples together, but it can actually do just the opposite. It is possible to emerge on the other side of grief with a closer marriage, but it does take work.

- 1. Give each other the freedom to grieve in an individual way.** Resist the temptation to feel that your way is the only way to handle loss. Do not be fooled if it seems that your spouse has not been affected by the loss.
- 2. Remember the good times.** Think about activities you enjoy as a couple and make time to do them- even if you do not feel up to it yet.
- 3. Expect tough times.** Be tolerant with your mate and understand that you are both going to fail each other during this turbulent time.
- 4. Do not lash out at one another.** In a weakened state of grief, this will only push you apart. Find constructive ways to release the stress and anger of grief.
- 5. Prepare for change.** Loss and grief change people and it will change the face of your marriage. Decide together that this trial will bring you closer and commit to your relationship.
- 6. Reach out.** Resist the urge to spend time away from your mate or reach out to others who better understand your grief.
- 7. Avoid placing blame.** Tossing accusations at your spouse will only place a wedge in your relationship. Understand that feelings of guilt, anger, and confusion are normal during this time.
- 8. Love each other.** Be sure to offer the hugs, cuddling, and love that each partner needs to feel secure and supported. Be sure to resume your physical relationship as soon as possible.
- 9. Seek information and support.** Educate yourselves on grief and try to understand one another. If you are having difficulties resolving your grief as a couple and you feel your marriage is in trouble, get help immediately! Do not wait until it is too late to seek help.

There are no easy answers for couples dealing with pregnancy loss. It is crucial that you make the decision to put your marriage first and then do it!

Lisa Church is author of [Hope is Like the Sun: Finding Hope and Healing After Miscarriage, Stillbirth or Infant Death.](#)



We need not walk alone.

"This is the fall that gives wisdom, perspective, gratefulness.
It is worth the crawl back to life." —*Judith Pordon*

From Heartache to Hope

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." [2 Corinthians 1:3-4]

What have you been through in your life that has been the hardest to endure: a debilitating disease or injury, the loss of a spouse, the death of a child, raising a child with severe birth defects or disease? Most of us have experienced some tragedy or hardship in our lives.

Have you ever considered that your particular experience can qualify and enable you to help others who have experienced a similar hardship? In fact, helping others who have been through a similar trial can be very healing for you. Through God's grace and guidance, you can turn your tragedy into a blessing for someone else.

This quote for Thomas Jefferson asks a very profound question, "Who can so softly bind up the wound of another as he who has felt the same wound himself?" I was first introduced to this question when I began to work with The Compassionate Friends, a grief support group for bereaved parents. I have found, as so many other bereaved parents have, that there is great healing from our grief to be found in helping others find healing for their grief. This principle can apply to any tragic loss of hardship, for once we have been there, we have a unique perspective.

When my daughter, Stacey, died in 1988, we were contacted by so many people who sincerely wanted to help us with our grief. Many times the best in people comes out when we are trying to console others. I was most touched and moved by the outpouring of love from other bereaved parents, for I knew that their compassion was coming from a place that only they could understand. All the condolences were cherished, but theirs helped us and inspired us the most. They had suffered the same, deep wound, and they were in the unique position to bind ours and offer us hope.

For anyone who has lived through any kind of heartache or tragedy, the same idea holds true. Whatever has required the deepest level of faith and trust in God to allow you to survive and heal can provide you with the compassion to help others who are going through the same trial. If you are a cancer survivor, you are in a unique position to help those who have cancer. If you have reared a disabled child, you can help other parents in a special way. If you have survived the death of a loved one, you can help those who are grieving a similar loss. God will use your tragedy to help others heal, and in doing so He will help you heal.

For many, a natural human response following a tragedy is to withdraw and separate themselves from others. That may be appropriate for a season, but prolonged isolation and separation can be devastating. Consider finding ways to help others who have experienced a similar hardship. They are not hard to find. Your church can lead you to them. There are support groups for almost every situation. You will find, as so many others have found, that you can receive supernatural healing for grief and heartache by helping others with theirs. Pray for God to guide you and lead you to those who can benefit from your unique situation and perspective. You may be the very person who holds the key to another's healing. He can turn your heartache into someone's hope.

"For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows."
[2 Corinthians 1:5] Amen.

Dr. Sam Smith, Butterfly Ministry

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)

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



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

P.O. Box 9714
Tyler, Texas 75711



We need not walk alone.



www.TylerTCF.org