



**Monthly Group Meeting**

Tuesday, September 20, 6:30 p.m.  
707 W. Houston St., Tyler, Texas

**See our announcements on page 3  
for a map and details about our  
new meeting location!**

**Contact**

Phone: (903) 258-2547  
Web Site: [www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org)  
E-mail: [info@TylerTCF.org](mailto:info@TylerTCF.org)

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

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

**The Meeting Agenda**

6:30 p.m. ....  
Meeting will begin with refreshments  
followed by announcement of 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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**Living Life Is Still An Effort**

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when it came time to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year. I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted—such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic." What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see the sorrow in each parent. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well-balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

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

**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.*

“Grief is not an illness that needs to be cured. It’s not a task with definable, sequential steps. It’s not a bridge to cross, a burden to bear or an experience to ‘recover’ from. It is a normal, healthy and predictable response to loss.”  
—*Donna L. Schuurman*

## 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.”

## Shards of Grief Linger After Murder

On a dreary night in December, a knock came at our door with news that would forever alter our lives. The news was that Anne, our only daughter, had been kidnapped and brutally murdered by persons or a person unknown. The shock, disbelief, anguish and anxieties over the next several months, a small piece of the grieving process, were extraordinary, and I have often wondered how we survived?

There was the extreme rage at the person who was responsible for taking Anne’s life for no reason except for the pure pleasure of destroying good. But we survived.

There was the awful anger against the legal system for being so callous and insensitive to the needs of the family and friends. The wounds from Anne’s death were already deep and unhealing, but listening to and reading about the insinuations and innuendoes by the lawyers made the wounds grow deeper and deeper. The impression was given the family must endure punishment for allowing our daughter to be in the wrong place. This caused a feeling of guilt. But we survived.

There was the fear that Anne would become just another statistic, and the person responsible would go unpunished. Now the fear exists that the person will be released from prison to repeat his acts of violence. I am afraid that fears are addictive and one replaces another. Perhaps the worst fear is, when your faith in God is at its lowest ebb, that you will never be able to respond to normal stimuli again and regain all that faith. All the fears are real; but so far we have survived.

These, I suppose, are normal reactions as the result of a violent act. I believe these anxieties delay a normal (so-called) grieving period until after the culprit has been found, tried and sentenced. After these three things happened, I do know a terrible burden was lifted from our shoulders, and we could restart living our lives. Somehow we survived.

How did we survive? After much reflecting, I firmly believe we survived by recalling the positive aspects of Anne’s life and character. Each individual is endowed with certain instruments, and we hear the music of their lives long after they are gone.

Anne’s instrument of love of life was a blessing, and we still can hear the melodies of her song in the night. These melodies cannot be taken away, and they are more valuable than diamonds to us.

Anne’s instrument of hope for a future in which to achieve her goals and have some effect on society was the backbone of her dream. The songs of hope in work, in life and the goodness of heart cannot be destroyed by evil or circumstances. Today is gone, but we still hear the songs of hope for tomorrow. These songs of hope, heard in the night, sustain us.

Anne’s instrument of faith that she would lead a productive life and achieve both her spiritual and material goals was music in her heart. The faith she had in herself, her family and her friends transmits to us, urging us to proceed with our lives. The music of her faith is still a beacon in the night.

We will not believe Anne’s dreams have ended, but we believe they will find their place in the world to come. The music that was set in motion by her love, hope and faith will move, everlasting, in sweet memories forever. The wounds from the loss of a loved one cannot be healed by words or deeds. These terrible burdens are borne by each of us in our own way and, hopefully, we survive.

*Bill Boggs ~ TCF, Atlanta, Georgia*



*We need not walk alone.*

“The people we meet in Compassionate Friends understand us. They *are* us. They listen and speak with their hearts. They have each experienced the loss of a child. They hurt with us, and their pain is as real as ours. We learn from each other.”  
—Annette Mennen Baldwin



### Love Gifts

Sherri & Steve Tutt in memory of Lisa



### Where Do I Go?

Now that you're gone, where do I go  
to see your fair smile  
to hear your tingling giggle  
to smell your dank hair after a swim  
to listen to your questions  
to touch your gentle cheek  
to feel your bear hug?

Where do I go  
to share all my years of wisdom  
to find someone who'll tell me truth  
to answer the phone that won't ring  
to tell you I'm sorry  
to know that I am loved and  
to pour out my love and my tears?

I shall go  
to the pictures that hold you forever  
to the books we shared  
to the music you taught me to love  
to the woods we explored as one  
to the memories that never fail  
to the innermost reaches of my heart  
to where we are always together.

Marcia Alig ~ TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey

### Newsletter Submissions

TCF Tyler welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to:

TCF Tyler • 5401 Hollytree Drive, 1204 • Tyler, Texas 75703  
Or e-mail text and photos to: [info@TylerTCF.org](mailto:info@TylerTCF.org)

We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content. Deadline for submissions is the 3rd Tuesday of each month. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source.

Errors and Omissions: Please notify us if any of your information is incorrect.

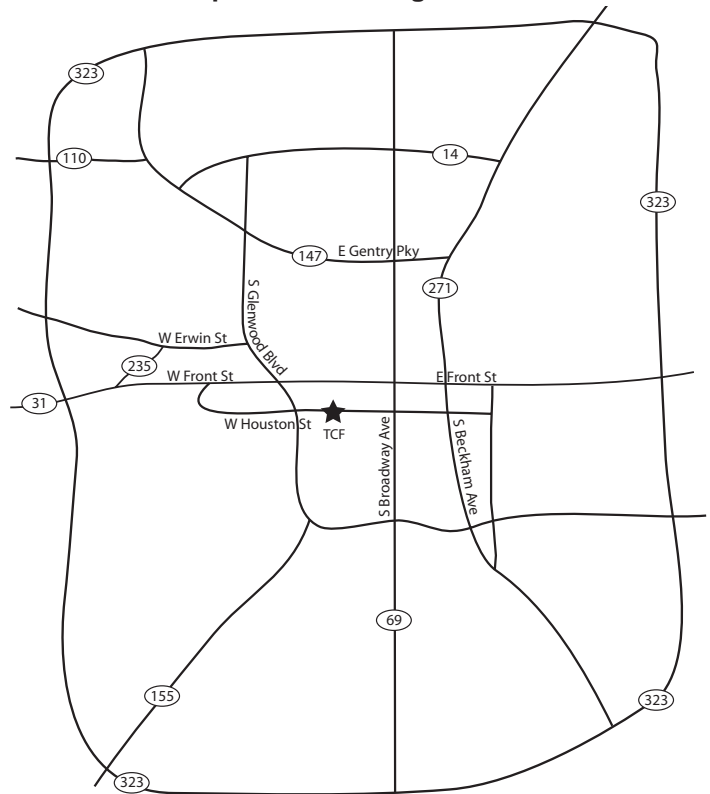
### Announcements

Hospice of East Texas will be offering **WINGS CHILDREN'S GRIEF WORKSHOP** on Saturday, November 12, from 10:00 a.m.-1:30 pm; A **WINGS CHILDREN'S GRIEF WORKSHIP** will also be held Tuesday evenings from 6:30-7:30 p.m., October 4-November 8. Please call (903) 266-3447 or (800) 777-9860 for more information.

**The Compassionate Friends of Tyler has a new meeting location!** We will be meeting at 707 W. Houston St., see map below. The new TCF phone number is (903) 258-2547.

**Other dates to remember: October:** Green Acres Craft Fair; **November:** Lacks Furniture Christmas Tree and Canned Food Drive; **December 11:** World Wide Candle Lighting

Map to New Meeting Location



### What I Need

A lot of time!  
A little space,  
A kind of quiet  
Resting place,  
Are what I need  
At times like these  
A special spot  
Where I can grieve.

Beth Pinion ~ TCF, Andalusia AL





*We need not walk alone.*

"Are we dwelling on our loss? Absolutely. But we are learning to dwell on it constructively, to dwell on it without guilt and without the isolation we have all felt. We learn how to reach out (in time) to others with a compassion that brings healing to others as well as to ourselves." —Philip Barker

### September Birthdays



**Chad Cavazos**  
9-24-86 ~ 4-20-01  
Son of Dale & Phyllis Cavazos



**Justin Dover**  
9-14-89 ~ 8-15-02  
Son of Stacey Dover



**Robert Attaway**  
9-11-99 ~ 9-11-99  
Grandson of Nancy Cooke



**Shantrice Willingham**  
9-11-02 ~ 9-11-02  
Daughter of Thelma Washington



**Joshua Jolley**  
9-28-78 ~ 5-12-02  
Son of Brenda Jolley



**Gary Dean Arnold**  
9-17-57 ~ 3-7-04  
Son of Betty & Harold Arnold



**Robert Attaway**  
9-11-99 ~ 9-11-99  
Grandson of Nancy Cooke



**Stephanie Harris Reed**  
5-18-79 ~ 9-5-98  
Daughter of Rick & Susan Harris



**Shantrice Willingham**  
9-11-02 ~ 9-11-02  
Daughter of Thelma Washington



**Tim Cole**  
4-15-69 ~ 9-15-97  
Son of Mary Miller



**Holli Steward**  
9-2-02  
Daughter of Kathy Rachal



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



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



**Douglas Johnson, Jr.**  
9-24-97 ~ 3-18-05  
Son of Douglas & Shelley Johnson



**Mary Stone**  
2-22-81 ~ 9-21-96  
Daughter of Dick & Denise Stone



**Toni Wood**  
3-10-79 ~ 9-29-03  
Daughter of Tami Wooldridge



**Adam Thomas Pritchard**  
9-21-82 ~ 2-21-04  
Son of  
Thomas & Ginger Pritchard



**Samantha Johnson**  
9-23-86 ~ 5-13-02  
Daughter of  
Dennis & Vicki Johnson



**Amanda Stone**  
3-25-85 ~ 9-7-03  
Daughter of  
Mary Kay & Glenn Stone

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





*We need not walk alone.*

"The closest analogy I can think of to explain this whole experience is that I am like a child whose nose is pressed up against the window pane of life when all of a sudden, the window shatters. I am so busy trying to pick up the pieces to protect the others and insure that no one else gets hurt that I do not realize until much later that my arms and hands are bleeding heavily." —*Kim Bernal*

## How Would Their Life Have Been?

In the past few years I have had many encounters with other parents who have lost children. There are many more than one might expect, and everyone I meet has their own unique way of dealing with their loss. One thing I am sure of: the ones who have a strong, personal relationship with Jesus Christ are far better able to handle their loss than those who do not. I have said this many times; I cannot imagine living through the loss of a child without Jesus—but so many do not know Him, and their hope is very limited, or non-existent.

I recently read a letter from a bereaved parent who was wondering what her daughter's life would have been like had she lived. After reading her letter, I realized how many times I have thought the same about my daughter; and I imagine every bereaved parent has had the same thoughts.

My daughter, Stacey, was 16 when died, three weeks after her 16th birthday. She was a beautiful, fun-loving, energetic, intelligent teenager—full of life and looking forward to the future. She had just started the 10th grade. She had just gotten her driver's license and her first car, a 1975 Camaro [a little old, but clean]. She had just started her first job, working in a restaurant. The last evening we talked, she was telling me about her new job. Her first assignment had been cutting lemons. She had a colorful way of describing things, and she said, "Dad, you ought to see me slicing those suckers." (I wish I could have seen her slicing those suckers.) She had her whole beautiful life ahead of her. She had great plans, but they were not to be.

For several years, I would not allow myself to think about how her life might have been. It was too painful, but the last few years I have begun to allow myself to think about it. She would be 33 years old. That is so hard to imagine. We always remember our kids the age they were. To me, Stacey is forever 16. I wonder. Would she be married? Would she have children? I try to imagine how her children would look, how they would sound, how they would behave. I imagine holding them, hearing them call me Grandpa. I wonder what she would have done with her life. What would she have been: a teacher, a doctor, a nurse, a coach, a secretary? Would she have had a happy life, or a life of troubles and sadness? The questions are endless.

I wonder how the rest of her high school years would have been. I imagine her dressed for the prom, with her corsage and her hair all up in ribbons. I see her on graduation day, in her cap and gown, walking across the stage to get her diploma. I think of the day-to-day things: going to school in the morning, doing her homework, watching T.V., listening to music, hanging out with her friends. All the things that teenage girls do that we will never get to see her do. We had so little of her life to enjoy. How would the rest of it have been?

Usually, about this point in my imagining, I start to get really sad and cut off the imagery. But now I imagine something else. I imagine her in heaven. If I thought she was beautiful here, imagine how beautiful she is there? I see her with my momma and my dad, and all the other relatives who have gone on. I see her with the angels in a place too magnificent to imagine—perfect paradise. And when I can really allow the Holy Spirit to free my mind, I see her with Jesus. I feel a portion of the overwhelming love that she must be feeling—every moment in a place where there are no moments—just beautiful eternity. I see her forever 16, praising and worshipping the Lord. No pain, no sadness, no worries—just eternal joy and peace and love. And once I imagine her there like that, I no longer need or want to imagine the rest of her life here. I love her and I miss her more than I can ever explain, but when I think of her in the splendor and beauty of heaven, I would not bring her back—even if I could. I feel perfect peace about her. I know where she is, and I know that she is happy.

And that, my sisters and brothers, is the peace that can only come from believing the truths of Jesus Christ; the lamb that died so that we could be assured of the place that I know Stacey will enjoy forever. And because of Him I will be with her again forever. Oh, the wonder of His love. Do you know Him? If you don't know Him, don't wait another moment to ask Him in to your heart and to be Lord of your life. If you do know Him, tell everyone you see.

How would the rest of their life have been? It is my deepest prayer that any parent who is asking that question of their child can feel the peace that can only come from knowing the love of Christ, and know that their child is resting in the loving arms of our Savior—eternally. Amen.

"NOW WE KNOW THAT IF THE EARTHLY TENT WE LIVE IN IS DESTROYED, WE HAVE A BUILDING FROM GOD, AN ETERNAL HOUSE IN HEAVEN..." (2 Corinthians 5:1)

*Dr. Sam Smith, Butterfly Ministry*

**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  
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*We need not walk alone.*



[www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org)