



Volume 12, Issue 9

Tyler, Texas

September 2011

Monthly Group Meeting Tyler Area Meeting

Monday, Sept. 19, 6:30 p.m. 3600 Old Bullard Rd., Bldg. 1, Ste. 101B, Tyler Jacksonville Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 6, 6:30 p.m. Sam Smith's office, 1401 E. Rusk **Lufkin Meeting**

Thursday, Sept. 15, 6:30 p.m. Southside Baptist Church, 1615 Tulane Drive

Contact

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

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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There is No Better Friend

For over 40 years, I have had the best friend you could ever have. When I told my best friend that I was fat, she never said, "I just lost three pounds without even trying."

When we went to a sock hop together in college and she was offered a ride home, she never ditched me.

When I gave myself a home permanent and left it on too long, she was the only one to sit with me in the bathroom until it grew out.

When I told my best friend my husband gave me two snow tires for our anniversary, she never said, "You should be happy he remembered."

When I was pregnant and my stomach looked like a tray on a car door in a drive-in, she never said, "There's a glow about a pregnant woman."

When I had a miscarriage and everyone else in the world said, "There will be other babies." She cried with me over the one I lost.

When she told me she was staying home for the summer, I wouldn't have dreamed of sending her a card from Spain telling her what a great time I was having.

When her mixer broke down, I never asked her if she had sent in the warranty card so she'd be covered.

When I moved 3,000 miles away, she never once told me what I was doing to her.

When her mother died, I never said, "She had a rich, full life and she was in her 70s."

When I argued with my husband and begged her advice, she kept her mouth shut. She just listened.

When we couldn't get a sitter and had to bring the kids along to her house for dinner, she never fell apart.

When I left my first autographing party and no one showed up, she never once suggested, "They probably didn't see the ad."

When her political candidate lost and mine won, I never said, "Ha, ha, I told you so."

Every time we got together, neither of us had to say, "I'm glad to see you."

Recently, my best friend lost her child. He was her youngest and was in his 20s. I listened to her. I cried with her. I felt pain that I had never known I could feel before. But not once did I say to her, "I know how you feel."

Erma Bombeck

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.



"He held me in his arms and made me share it and accept that his sorrow was as great as my own. He simply wouldn't allow my grief to divide us...push us apart, which is what happens so often where there is a loss like that. And for as long as I live, I will respect and appreciate my husband for the strength of his understanding."

—Barbara Bush

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 vour arief 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."

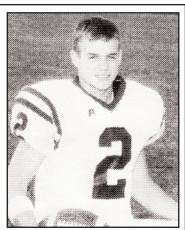
To Aaron In Memoriam

Fixed stars there are, familiar sights And guiding lights through all our nights. Planets, too, who come in view To kindle friendships new. But once upon a time I have in mind, A lovely streak so new and briefly bright As dazzles with delight, For one lingering moment, blazing white And then goes softly, silent back to night, Beyond our sight. And, lovingly, my heart cries "Thank you, Lord" For memories of that lone, brief, splendid, Precious light.

Aaron's Grandfather, Ned Haubecker ~ TCF, Springfield

This month's printing of our newsletter sponsored by Doyle & Sherry Smith.

In loving memory of **Scottie Baker** $8-3 \sim 11-29$ Grandson of **Doyle & Sherry Smith**



This month's printing of our newsletter sponsored by Carol Thompson.

In loving memory of Sarah Kathryn **Thompson** 1-3 ~ 9-8 Daughter of **Carol Thompson**



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



"Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice, but—for those who love—time is eternal." —Henry Vandyke

Love Gifts



Sam Smith in memory of Stacey

Martha Lewis in memory of Burke
Lisa Schoonover in memory of Jake

Sherry & Doyle Smith in memory of Scottie Baker

Carol Thompson in memory of Sarah















Thanks to the following members who have made a rent donation for our meeting place this month:

Merri Walsh in memory of Chris O'Leary Tina, Johnathan & Heather Loper in memory of Christopher

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

Claudette Brown in memory of Terry Wayne
Dale & Phyllis Cavazos in memory of Chad
Sam Smith in memory of Stacey use of his office for the Jacksonville meeting
David & Teresa Terrell in memory of Andy use of a storage building

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

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: lilbluebutterfly6@gmail.com ~ Pat's email: beachbum2201@gmail.com

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

Tyler TCF Meeting (New Location): The meeting in Tyler is held on the third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m., at 3600 Old Bullard Rd., Bldg. 1, Ste. 101B in Tyler. For more information, please email beachbum2201@gmail.com or lilbluebutterfly6@gmail.com, or call 903-258-2547.

Jacksonville TCF Meeting: The meeting in Jacksonville is held on the first Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m., at Sam Smith's office, 1401 E. Rusk, Jacksonville. For more information, please email beachbum2201@gmail.com or lilbluebutterfly6@gmail.com, or call 903-258-2547.

Lufkin TCF Meeting: Join us at the Lufkin meeting held at 6:30 p.m. every 3rd Thursday of the month at Southside Baptist Church, 1615 Tulane Drive, Lufkin, TX 75901. For more information, contact Lauri Maner at 936-854-2002 or Sherri Tutt at 936-404-9517.

The Touched by Suicide meeting is held the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the same, new location as TCF, 3600 Old Bullard Rd., Bldg. 1, Ste. 101B in Tyler. Anyone who has lost someone they love to suicide is welcome to attend this peer support group. For more info please call 903-330-0678 or visit www.touchedbysuicideeasttexas.org.

Save the Date! 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! Call 903-258-2547 for details.

General Assembly: Join us each month to assemble the newsletter and mail out cards. We hope to get some new volunteers to help with this monthly project. Call 903-258-2547 for details.

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.



Visit us online at www.TylerTCF.org

September Birthdays



Justin Dover 9-14 ~ 8-15 Son of Stacey Dover



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



Jon Lee Hardwick 9-29 ~ 5-7 Brother of Vicki Johnson



Theresa Kay Talley 9-16 ~ 12-20 Daughter of W.A. & Ruby Talley



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



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



Michael R. Peymon 9-18 ~ 1-2 Son of Tom & Sharon Peymon



Austin Hague Cheek 9-2 ~ 8-3 Son of Tracey Bales



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



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



Ava Faith Knight 9-20 ~ 9-20 Daughter of Christine Knight



Betsi Marie Wyatt 9-4 ~ 1-3 Daughter of Ricky & Linda Wyatt



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



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



Amanda Claire Miller 9-11 ~ 10-17 Daughter of Joanne Williams



Leah Zucca 9-3 ~ 5-10 Daughter of Jim & Cheri Zucca



Aaron Willman 9-23 ~ 8-12 Son of Robin Mitchell



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



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



Joshua Washburn 9-23 ~ 3-26 Son of Kimberly Boswell



Jake Schoonover 9-15 ~ 10-29 Son of Lisa Schoonover



Lee Sammons 9-4 ~ 12-10 Son of Martin & Martha Sammons

September Anniversaries



Tim Cole 4-15 ~ 9-15 Son of Mary Miller (deceased)



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



Cason Gimble 10-21 ~ 9-9 Son of Lynn & Kalisa Gimble



Jonathan Lee Daniel Sanders 1-4 ~ 9-8 Son of Lisa Dunford & Donald Sanders



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



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



Joshua Brandon Wilcox "Josh" 3-17 ~ 9-7 Son of Melanie Wilcox



Michael Angelo Perez 5-16 ~ 9-28 Son of Victoria Gonzalez



Mary Jennifer Stone 2-22 ~ 9-21 Daughter of Dick & Denise Stone



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



Ashlee Ann Davis 8-27 ~ 9-4 Daughter of Regina Davis



Cameron Weatherly 7-3 ~ 9-25 Son of Ike & Diana Weatherly



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



Robert Attaway Jr. 9-11 ~ 9-11 Grandson of Nancy Cooke



Seth Henry Porter 6-24 ~ 9-22 Son of Linda Porter



A.J. Frazier 12-29 ~ 9-18 Son of Leslee Frazier



Cobin Frazier
7-2 ~ 9-18
Son of Leslee Frazier



Sarah Thompson 1-3 ~ 9-8 Daughter of Ted & Carol Thompson



Jared Sheets 5-14 ~ 9-27 Son of Carol Johnson



Ava Faith Knight 9-20 ~ 9-20 Daughter of Christine Knight



John Shade 7-9 ~ 9-29 Son of Julie Clifton



D Anriloten Bennett-El 6-29 ~ 9-28 Son of Deric Bennett



"I made a choice. I picked up the remains of my life—my aching heart and wounded spirit, my broken dreams and disbelief—and wrapped them carefully in my blanket of grief. Holding them closely to me, I walked steadfastly ahead into the storm with faith in the promise of peace on the other side." —Sharron Cordaro

On Sibling Grief

From a Grieving Sibling

I am a surviving sibling. Fifteen months ago I was not even familiar with the term—now I am one! How am I doing? What are the guidelines to measure my progress? Why can't I remember when I was told of my brother's death—or the days following the accident for that matter? Did I go crazy? Was it yesterday, or was it over a year ago? Did I laugh just today when I never thought I would laugh again? What is this peaceful feeling that I feel from time to time? Is it healing?

Lee, 29, was my little brother. I remember trying to alternately protect or tease him, make him laugh or make him cry. He was like having a real live baby doll to play with since I was 10 years older than he. (Our Mother said he was the cleanest little boy in the neighborhood. I guess having 3 older sisters is the reason for that!)

How can I explain the pain I felt on learning of his accident. I wanted to go to him right away to see that he was OK, but our cousin, Judy, said that wasn't possible. I guess that was when I was told that he was dead—but I don't remember that. I only remember screaming.

When was it that I began to heal? Probably at the same time that I thought I was going totally, certifiably crazy! Then, someone told me about The Compassionate Friends and what they did. I wondered if they could help me but doubted that they could. After all, how could they understand how much I hurt at having lost my precious baby brother or how close we had always been and how he always helped me. Whey should they even care about me? But, you know what—they did help. With the help and support of this group of wonderful caring people, I am alive today and working toward a fruitful life. I will never be the same as I was before June 18, 1992, but I truly believe I have become a better person.

While Lee's life taught me so much, his death taught me some invaluable lessons. I have learned to become more aware of life and my own mortality and am more attuned to other needs. I no longer take anything for granted. I miss him terribly but take solace in the belief that he is happy in his new world and that one day we will be reunited.

Sibling grief takes a tremendous amount of time and work. Sometimes just thinking of my brother, looking at his picture, or hearing his favorite song, "God Bless America," reduces me to a teary mess. Sometimes these same things make me smile. But, I am surviving and have developed a new perspective on life. I am closer to and cherish my family more than ever and realize how very important they are. I am dedicated to helping other surviving siblings work through their grief. I pray daily for peace, not only for myself and my family, but for everyone making this journey through grief.

One thing that I have found to be most helpful during the past fifteen months of grief work has been to talk about and to be honest about my feelings. I encourage siblings (and parents) to try to hook up with a support group such as The Compassionate Friends to talk out your feelings and concerns. After all, we've already paid an extremely high price to join this group—the life of our loved one—so why not take advantage of what they have to offer. You may even find yourself helping someone else (even though you might not believe that now.)

Sunday Lee Stanton, Wyoming Valley, PA

Dealing With Rage

One of the most important ways of dealing with rage is trying to forgive yourself and others. Note: forgive contains the word give. You give yourself the opportunity to place behind you those past agonies that diminish your strength and vigor.

You give yourself new energies to move on and meet new challenges. You give yourself permission to live in an unfair, disappointing world.

Forgiveness offers a very powerful way to pull yourself out of the negative spiral of bitterness and hard feelings.

From "Straight Talk for Teenagers" by Earl A. Grollman

"Believe me, we know where the bottom is, we've been there. We can learn to smile again; we can even learn to live again, once we have let go of some of the pain. Be patient, this doesn't happen soon. If it has not been long enough for you to see progress, look at those at The Compassionate Friends meetings, who have moved ahead in their grief." —*Marie Hofmockel*

Dear Jared

Dear Jared,

I've needed to write this to you for almost six years now. Usually I'm not such a procrastinator but each time the thought came that I need to write to you I felt like I might suffocate. I have no idea how I have survived almost six years without my beautiful boy; seeing your smile, hearing your laugh. Even holding you while you cry. The last time that happened was when your brother left for Army Boot Camp. At the time I didn't understand your anguish, but I guess you knew it'd be the last time you saw him. He loved you, you know, and still does.

We all do. A light has gone out in our family without you here. We're still 'tight,' still taking care of each other, but nothing is complete without you. Brandon is home now from the Army, finished with that part of his life. Safe and healthy, thank God. Mawmaw and Pawpaw are going great, still healthy and okay. It has taken me a few years to get over the guilt I felt because you hurt them (all of us) so badly. Good therapy has slowly helped me realize that we all have our pain, and there is nothing I can do to change theirs.

Speaking of therapy—wow. Don't guess I realized before (everything now is "before Jared died" or "after Jared died") how important it can be to the healing process. And to learning about myself and growing. Sometimes I rebel with my heart and don't want to heal or learn or grow. But . . . I always go back. Others have certainly shown that they can do it, so I can, too. Without the brave souls who pioneered the act of sharing their grief with the world who knows what might have become of the rest of us? 'Parents of Suicides', 'Alliance of Hope', 'The Compassionate Friends' . . . these names are such a part of my being now. They have shown me and countless others that part of healing is sharing. Geez Louise Jared—do you know how hard that's been??? To learn that it's okay for others to see my tears, my broken heart? It is still not easy, but I'm working on it. How else am I supposed to make something positive come from your death if I don't learn how to help others? It's an awesome responsibility, and sometimes it really pisses me off.

Yes, pisses me off. But, I am such a better person because you were my son. You taught me true unconditional love, and the fact that it can exist even when you're not physically here. Our love for each other does exist and always will. Though I've been terribly hurt and disappointed by people I thought were my friends, I've also been generously blessed with new friends and the strength of those who've stood with me. Including a wonderful husband. Man, I wish you'd been around long enough to get to know Shane and to let him be the Dad you never really had. And his family! There is not a one of them who are not precious and tender-hearted. And funny . . . don't forget funny!

Yep, compared to some I am especially blessed. My family is awesome, I married into an awesome family, I have a job I love and critters I adore. There should be no complaints, but I will always long for you Jared. Maybe life would have been just too perfect with you still here, and I didn't deserve perfection.

I will always love you my darling, and you are still precious to my heart.

Mom ~ Carol Johnson ~ TCF, Tyler, TX

A Moment of Help

After I lost my son Nino to a drowning accident, a young scientist walked into my office at Denver University. He was always extremely detached in his interactions with people, so I was not surprised that he asked almost casually whether I was feeling better.

I could not answer his question, because I had already started to cry. "Would you rather not have had a son at all?" he wanted to know. I shook my head and cried harder.

He handed me his handkerchief and said firmly, "I suppose you need to cry yourself well." And without even a hint of emotion, he sat down facing me.

In the presence of so much detachment, I managed to recover my "composure." But the visitor took my hand and held it silently, until I began to cry again. Then he said, "Keep crying. You are not well yet."

I will not forget this encounter. It told me two things when I very much needed to hear them. First; the expression of grief is necessary. And second; after a great sorrow, we can expect—in time—to be "well" again.

Sascha Wagner

"The pain did soften, and eventually I was glad there was a tomorrow. I did not believe that this was possible in my early stages of grief; you probably won't believe it either, but I have to tell you anyway." —Marie Hofmockel

Grief is Like a River

My grief is like a river— I have to let it flow, But I myself determine Just where the banks will go. Some days the current takes me In waves of guilt and pain, But there are always quiet pools Where I can rest again. I crash on rocks of anger-My faith seems faint indeed— But there are other swimmers Who know that what I need Are loving hands to hold me When the waters are too swift. And someone kind to listen When I just seem to drift. Grief's river is like a process Of relinquishing the past. By swimming in Hope's channel. I'll reach the shore at last.

Cynthia G. Kelley ~ TCF, Cincinnati, OH

A Part of Me

You were not just my brother, but you were my friend as well.
You were supposed to be here always Or till the world came to an end.
I know that we argued and Seemed to disagree,
But I could always count on you
To be there for me.
You may be gone from this world I see,
But you will always be a part of me.

Donna Montville ~ TCF. Gardner. MA

Silent Grief

I smile but remain silent.
Do you not feel the ache
That never leaves my heart?
Can you not see
The faraway look in my eyes,
The tear that falls beneath the
lowered lash?
I look but do not see
The going-on around me;
and time goes on,
But I am standing still—
suspended in a moment of time.
One year has passed.

Cathryn Haywood, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada

Random Reflections

It's been a year now
And the books say I should be
Getting back to "normal."

But I still can't pass your picture
On the bookcase without
Touching your face.

I still wake up in the night Sometimes and can almost Hear your voice in the quiet.

I still run to the window when the Dogs bark at night with the hope In the back of my mind that somehow You've wandered into the yard.

I still whisper your name into the wind When I walk down our lane in the still Of evening and strain to hear an answer.

When I'm troubled and upset
I still talk to you like
I always did and
Imagine the advice you'd give me.

I still stop on our dark country road Sometime and turn off the car engine And lights and wait and hope that I can see or hear you.

It's been a year now and the Memories are still so vivid That I can almost touch them.

It's been a year now and I know
With all my heart that your
Presence will never fade in my mind.

Tammy Walmann ~ TCF, Miami Co., KS

Reminders of Joy

I'm learning to live without her, but with many fears and tears.

She is but a memory away, in our minds of many mirrors.

There's not a day goes by, that something isn't a reminder.

Of the joyful thoughts of yesterday, that seemed always to surround her.

Carolynn Sula ~ TCF, Joliet, IL

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:	l's Name:		Relationship:	
Birth Date:	Death Date:	Cause o	Cause of Death:	
Address:				
			Zip:	
Home Telephone:				
E-mail:				
Please check any of follow	ving that apply.			
☐ Please continue sending	g the newsletter.			
☐ No thank you, I'd prefe	er to stop receiving the newsletter. (N	Newsletters are posted mor	nthly on our Web site.)	
☐ Please include my child	I's name and picture in the slide pres	sentation at the Candle Lig	ghting Ceremony.	
☐ Please include my child	I's picture and information on the TO	CF Tyler Web site. (www.	ГylerTCF.org)	
☐ I am enclosing a memo	rial to support The Compassionate F	Friends in the amount of		
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			Date:	
(Signature)				

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

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"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



P.O. Box 9714 Tyler, Texas 75711





www.TylerTCF.org

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