

Remembering
By Elizabeth Dent ©

Go ahead and mention my child
The one that died, you know.
Don't worry about hurting me further
The depth of my pain doesn't show.
Don't worry about making me cry
I'm already crying inside.
Help me to heal by releasing
The tears that I try to hide.
I'm hurt when you just keep silent,
I'd rather you mention my child,
Knowing that he has been missed.
You asked me how I was doing.
I say, "pretty good" or "fine."
But healing is something ongoing
I feel it will take a lifetime.

Too often we find that what hurts most is that people stop talking about our children or they change the subject when we do. As long as we can talk about our children that keeps them alive and a part of our lives.

One of our greatest fears is forgetting. Forgetting the smell of our child, forgetting their laughter, forgetting the things they said or did.

An important part of our support group to help us remember is sharing stories and talking about our child. We appreciate and enjoy hearing of each other's children.

For some who have not experienced the death of a child it makes them uncomfortable—they fear doing or saying the wrong thing. So without trying to hurt our feelings, it is easier for them to avoid this unfamiliar area. This is why public education on how to support the bereaved parent is so important. This is what our support group is all about.



“Who better to softly bind up the wound of one, than he who has suffered the wound himself?”
—Thomas Jefferson

History

Founded in England in 1969, TCF was established in the U.S. in 1972, with 501C(3) not-for-profit incorporation in 1978. There are over 600 chapters under the TCF umbrella.

TCF is a national non-profit organization which has no religious affiliation. There are no membership fees or dues, and all bereaved family members are welcome. We do not discriminate against age, cause of death, race or income. We espouse no specific religious or philosophical ideology.

TCF of Tyler was first organized in March 2000. Our chapter is operated entirely by volunteers dedicated to furthering the work of TCF. We are non-profit and 100% of all contributions are given directly to TCF's operating costs, books and resources for the bereaved. Your voluntary, tax-deductible donations enable us to reach out to families grieving the death of their child.

Leadership

We serve in memory of our children.

- Chapter Leader:
Tina Loper in memory of Christopher
- Co-Chapter Leader:
Pat Settle in memory of Stephanie
- Newsletter/Web site:
Mary Lingle in memory of Candice
- Steering Committee Members:
Margie Newman in memory of Jeremy
Sam Smith in memory of Stacey
Sherri Tutt in memory of Lisa

We are parents who have had a child die, some were infants, some were in their 40s. We are reaching out, to lend a hand and heart to other parents whose child has died. We are here to help make the road you must now walk a little easier by offering you our support.

The Compassionate Friends of Tyler
P.O. Box 9714 • Tyler, TX 75711
(903) 581-2831 or (903) 780-7104
info@TylerTCF.org • www.TylerTCF.org

Please call for directions to our meetings, or visit our Web site for location and an interactive driving map.



The Compassionate Friends

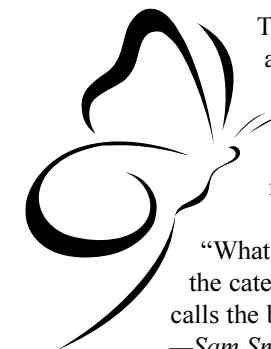
Our Mission

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families following the death of a child. Our primary purpose is to assist them in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

We accomplish this mission by offering parents support through many resources:

- Monthly support group meeting held the third Tuesday evening of every month
- Monthly newsletter and phone friends
- Library and Internet resources
- Annual Butterfly Release in May
- Annual Candlelighting Ceremony in December

We will do our best to connect you with the right resources, depending on your individual needs and circumstances.



The butterfly becomes a special symbol to most parents who have lost a child. It represents transformation and new life.

“What the world calls the death of the caterpillar, the Heavenly Father calls the butterfly.”
—Sam Smith

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many causes. But our love for our children unites us. Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds. We are young and we are old.

Some of us are far along in our grief but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength. Some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children.

We're all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.



“There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than 10,000 tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition and of unspeakable love.” —*Washington Irving*

The Secret of TCF By Dennis Klaus, PhD ~ TCF, St. Louis, MO

The secret of The Compassionate Friends is simple: There is no line between helped and being helped. In the early months of peoples' membership in TCF, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying and letting the grief flow, and “learning the ropes” of being a bereaved parent.

The next step is reaching out to others and helping them. It is not a big step, for listening to another person sort out their life helps us to sort out our life too. But it is an important step because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed. All of the energy had been going inward. We had been feeling so empty inside that we kept withdrawing into ourselves.

But the point when we turn around is the point when we first listen to another, speak the words of comfort and hope, share our pain instead of just feeling our pain. At that time the real healing has started.



We share a bond between one another that is hard to put into words. It seems when those closest to us don't understand what we feel, we find comfort in our Compassionate Friends as they walk the same road and understand what we are going through. Please join us for a meeting.



We need not walk alone.

It is very important during the grief process to find a safe environment that offers a *safety net* where we can say exactly how we are truly feeling. As time goes on we start wearing a *mask* where we put on a smile and tell people “Yes, we are doing better,” yet inside we are screaming.

It is important to know and understand that you truly aren't losing your mind. When your child died your brain just went on vacation. It is nice to be reassured that you are sane.

Grief is both emotional as well as physical. If we internalize our grief and try to handle it all by ourselves it can cause health problems. It is very important to talk with others through your grief. Remember, you are not alone. There are other parents who hurt too, who have learned how to rebuild their lives and will offer open arms to you.

There is no difference in the pain of a parent who has lost a newborn child or a parent who has lost their 40-year-old child. Our children are always a part of us. One does not love their child any less because of age.



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, Greater Omaha, NE