



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



*We need not walk alone.*

**Volume 5, Issue 10**

**Tyler, Texas**

**October 2004**

## Monthly Group Meeting

Tuesday, October 19, 6:30 p.m.  
Clinical Associates of East Texas  
2010 Sybil Lane, Tyler, Texas

### Topic

Masking Grief

### Contact

(903) 581-2831  
(903) 780-7104

Web Site: [www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org)  
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Chapter Leader .....Tina Loper  
Chapter Co-Leader.....Pat Settle  
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## National Organization Information

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## The Meeting Agenda

6:30 p.m.....Fellowship  
7:00 p.m. ....Welcome; Announcements;  
Introductions; Topic  
7:15 p.m.....Open Forum  
9:00 p.m. ....Additional Fellowship &  
Refreshments

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## Grieving

Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you are hungry or sneezing when your nose itches.

It's nature's way of healing a broken heart.

A cut finger is numb before it bleeds. It bleeds before it hurts. It hurts until it begins to heal. It forms a scab and itches until finally, the scab is gone and a small scar is left where once there was a wound.

Grief is the deepest wound you will ever have. Like a cut finger, it goes through stages and leaves a scar.

When you try to help someone heal from their pain, chances are you are probably healing yourself. Listen to the words within your own heart.

*Patti Fillion ~ The Compassionate Friends*

## Chapter Chat

This month children all over get to be anyone or anything they want to be for one night. A night of make-believe and fantasy, tricks and treats. Little girls dressed like princesses and kitty cats. Little boys dressed as ninjas and blue M and M's.

I am grateful for the nights of fantasy I was able to share with my three children. I am not ashamed to admit the nights of make-believe have lost a little of their luster for me in the almost four years since Christopher has been gone.

My oldest son is "over it" and gets more enjoyment in the tricking aspect of it all. My daughter has been some form of animal (usually a cat) for the last five years straight. I need to come up with a creative way for her to be a cat again this year.

I am not complaining—but like everything else—it is just different now. I know that all of the parents out there can relate. There are things that no matter how similar they seem—they are just different.

For those parents who never got to dress their beautiful daughters up like a fairy princess or create a pirate costume for their rambunctious little boys, I know that you feel cheated. For those parents who were blessed with some years of this magic—we feel cheated. For parents whose children "got over it" long before they were taken from you—you feel cheated.

And we have every right to feel that way. In all my years as a child dressing up, a preteen/young adult looking to have some fun, or a parent watching the excitement and anticipation on my children's faces, never once did I ever dream to be wearing the mask I wear today: the mask of a bereaved parent.

Sweet memories,  
*Tina, Pat and Mary*

**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.*

“But there was no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bore witness that a man had the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer.” —Viktor E. Frankl

## Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to those who attended their first TCF meeting in September.

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.”

## Please Ask

Someone asked me about you today.

It's been so long since anyone has done that. It felt so good to talk about you, to share my memories of you, to simply say your name out loud.

She asked me if I minded talking about what happened to you—or would it be too painful to speak of it.

I told her I think of it every day and speaking about it helps me to release the tormented thoughts whirling around in my head.

She said she never realized the pain would last this long. She apologized for not asking sooner.

I told her, "Thanks for asking."

I don't know if it was curiosity or concern that made her ask, but told her, "Please do it again sometime—soon."

*Barbara Taylor Hudson*

## In Our Circle

In our circle, we noticed that the temptation can exist for Christians to sugarcoat everything and act like bad things are really good things in disguise.

"Gifts come in all kinds of packages," someone said to me recently in reference to the painful things we face in life.

I don't think I will ever reach a place where I could consider [my son] Seth's death a "gift" any more than I consider rape or child abductions, terrorist attacks, murder, genocide, or famine "gifts."

While it is true that the strength or the insight we gain from God to get through these times could be considered as gifts, the event itself is not, and I believe that God grieves just as much as we do.

Why can't we just admit that painful things are painful?

Why can't we just sit down with people and cry along with them as we admit that what happened is cause for tears?

We don't need people to rush in and frantically try to wrap it all up pretty with a bow, like it is something we should savor.

In time, we may see goodness that seeped out of badness, but we should leave it to God to show us that, when our eyes are not so full of tears and we can see more clearly.

*Elizabeth A. Price, in Helping the Bereaved: A Few Basic Rules, Bereavement Magazine*

*In Loving Memory of Mary Miller*

*A dear member of the TCF family went to be with her beloved son, Tim Cole, on August 25th. We will miss you Mary.*





*We need not walk alone.*

"Vulnerability to death is one of the given conditions of life. We can't explain it any more than we can explain life itself. We can't control it, or sometimes even postpone it. All we can do is try to rise beyond the question, "Why did it happen?" and begin to ask the question, "What do I do now that it has happened?" —Harold S. Kushner

## Announcements

Hospice of East Texas is offering **Wings Children's Grief Regional Workshops**. Look for information on page four of our newsletter, or visit [www.hospice-etex.com](http://www.hospice-etex.com) for details.

**Dr. James Motlagh** will be speaking to our group at our October meeting from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. His talk will be on life after death from a Bahá'í perspective.

**Our Annual Candle Lighting Memorial** will be held in December. If you would like to volunteer to help or need more information, please call (903) 581-2831, (903) 780-7104 or visit our Web site at [www.TylerTCF.org](http://www.TylerTCF.org).



## Love Gifts

Karen & Paul Tompkins in memory of their daughter Jill Tompkins

Janet St. Clair in memory of her son Brian St. Clair

Charlotte Nelson in memory of her son Wade Goetze

Misty Morales in memory of her daughter Donna Morales

Donna Griffin in memory of her son Jake Higgins

Margie & Victor Newman in memory of their son Jeremy Newman

Barbara Miller in memory of her daughter Amanda Stone

Todd & Sabrina Thoene in memory of their daughter Erica Smith



## 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.

## Now that I am gone

Now that I am gone,  
remember me with smiles and laughter.  
And if you need to cry,  
cry with your brother or sister  
who walks in grief beside you.  
And when you need me,  
put your arms around anyone  
and give to them what you need to give to me.  
There are so many who need so much.  
I want to leave you something—  
something much better than words or sounds.  
Look for me in the people I've known  
or helped in some special way.  
Let me live in your heart  
as well as in your mind.  
You can love me most  
by letting your love reach out to our loved ones,  
by embracing them and living in their love.  
Love does not die, people do.  
So, when all that's left of me is love,  
give me away as best you can.

*Author unknown*

## Times of Remembrance

I have found in the years that have passed that I am most vulnerable at times of remembrance.

The word "anniversary" no longer holds a promise of celebration. Instead, holidays and birthdays, family gatherings and otherwise joyous occasions contain an undertow of sorrow.

If I get caught up in it, I quickly get pulled under and wind up gasping for breath.

It is ironic that the presence of an absence can be so emotionally devastating.

*Bill Jenkins*

## YOU ARE INVITED...

to a Compassionate Friend's potluck dinner at Margie Newman's home. Please join us for this casual get together with food and friends. Everyone is welcome! Just bring your choice of food dish. To RSVP and for directions, please call 903-561-1447.





*We need not walk alone.*

"When we walk to the edge of all the light we have and take a step into the darkness of the unknown, we must believe one of two things will happen: there will be something solid for us to stand upon or we will be taught to fly." —Anonymous

### October Birthdays



**Cindy Dingler**  
10-18-57 ~ 9-6-99



**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



**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

### October Anniversaries



**Mikel Conway**  
11-17-57 ~ 10-11-01  
Son of Viola Conway



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



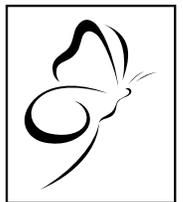
**Wade Goetze**  
11-29-76 ~ 10-28-01  
Son of Charlotte Nelson



**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



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



A Community Service Offering from:

#### HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS

Main Office: 4111 University Blvd. Tyler, TX 75701

#### Wings Children's Grief Regional Workshops

- October 2, 2004: ATHENS
- October 23, 2004: MARSHALL
- November 6, 2004: TYLER

These half-day Saturday workshops are for children and families grieving the death of a loved one. To register and for more information, please call: Laura Mattheis, Bereavement Coordinator: (903) 566-9023 or (800) 777-9860 [www.hospice-etex.com](http://www.hospice-etex.com)

Six months, but the grief is still raw, open to the bone, in the most unlikely places: the dentist's, restaurants, creative meetings, sitting on the john—I can still be engulfed in sobs.

In public I have to excuse myself or pretend something's gone down the wrong pipe. Once, in L.A., a guy actually gave me the Heimlich maneuver. I could hardly tell him it was okay, I was only choking on grief.

*Tony Hendra*



## I brake for butterflies!

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

Our new bumper stickers are available for a \$2 donation. You may get them at our monthly meetings or by sending a request to: TCF of Tyler, P.O. Box 9714, Tyler, TX 75711.



*We need not walk alone.*

The only courage that matters is the kind that gets you from one moment to the next.

—Mignon McLaughlin

## Friend

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand.

The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief or bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing, and face us with the reality of our powerlessness—that is a friend who cares.

*Henri J. M. Nouwen in Out of Solitude; Three Meditations on the Christian Life*

## Undo it, Take it Back

Undo it, take it back, make every day the previous one until I am returned to the day before the one that made you gone.

Or set me on an airplane traveling west, crossing the date line again and again, losing this day, then that, until the day of loss still lies ahead, and you are here instead of sorrow.

*Nessa Rapoport in A Woman's Book of Grieving*

## One Way Ticket

For my daughter Kathy Robertson

You left your home in heaven to come to me,  
You were everything a mother would want her daughter to be.

There were fun times and some sad,  
But in all they weren't so bad.

I didn't realize time was going to be short with you,  
You stayed with me till your time was through.

You had a one-way ticket and even flew free,  
To be back home with Jesus where you were meant to be.

I miss you and love you—wish you were here,  
And I even shed a tear.

Good-bye my sweet daughter—I'll see you soon,  
When Jesus calls me home to you.

*Carolyn Love ~ TCF, Tyler, TX*

## Grief Comes in One Size

Grief comes in one size: Extra Large. If we tuck it away in the bottom drawer where it never sees the light of day, it remains exactly the same.

On the other hand, if we wear it, feel it, talk about it and share it with others, it is likely that it will become faded, shrunk and worn, or will simply no longer fit. When grief has served its purpose, we are able to recognize the many gifts we have gained.

*Dianne Arcangel*

## A Different Light

It may be quite possible that we are not necessarily undergoing 'unresolved loss' when a past death comes up for us. Instead, this could be our opportunity to experience the older loss in a different light, one with some perspective and yes, even wisdom.

Even if the feelings that come up are quite painful, this may not mean that you didn't do 'grief work' right the first time! It may just be that now is the time for you to experience that loss and your current one at a deeper level, given who you are today and what you now know about yourself.

Many of us still have parts of our losses that may remain on some level 'unresolved.' However, a more empowering notion is to recognize that triggers of prior losses may mean that we can re-grieve, healthily and holistically.

We may still be asking sometimes unanswerable questions about older losses, but perhaps how we ask them has changed significantly. And perhaps we have a greater comfort level for these questions being unanswered. And perhaps, we have a greater tolerance for ourselves in not having all the answers.

*Joan Hummel, Bereavement Magazine*

## My Son, My Son

For a long time I was obsessed with why Mitch had ended his life. I thought that I needed to discover the real cause of his hopelessness.

I studied and analyzed what I believed to be his suicide note. Finally, I perceived that a death by suicide is a result of factors too numerous to count.

I wanted to know why, but I didn't have to have an answer in order to go on living my own life.

Even the most experienced and astute investigators are finally forced to make what at best is only an educated guess.

It is important, however, to ask why. It is important to worry about why, because one finally exhausts possibility after possibility and ultimately one tires of the fruitless search.

Then it is time to let it go and to start healing.

*Iris Bolton in My Son...My Son: A Guide to Healing After a Suicide in the Family*

Grief is neither an illness nor a pathological condition, but rather a highly personal and normal response to life-changing events, a natural process that can lead to healing and personal growth. The transition through this difficult time is the courageous journey.

*Sandi Caplan and Gordon Lang, in Grief's Courageous Journey: A Workbook*



*We need not walk alone.*

They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies.  
—William Penn

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## Dear Survivor: A Letter to You

It is said that death is part of life; that it is the other side of birth. I believe that death can also give meaning to life, a meaning that may escape you now while your grief is fresh and raw, but which may someday bring a special quality of peace to your spirit.

As terrible as your loss seems now, you will survive it even though that may seem unbelievable right now. Once that happens, you will have touched upon a new and incredible inner strength. But for now you may be a mixture of thoughts and feelings. Despair, longing, anger, guilt, frustration, questions and even understanding, tumble over each other, striving for but not quite reaching comprehensible sense and shape.

You seek relief—you need to heal. It is a journey, and you must work on it. And so, cry.

The pain is real, but the tears are healing. Often we must struggle through an emotion to find the relief beyond. And so, talk.

Talk to each other about your loss and pain. Don't hide or deny real feelings. Tell others that you need them. The more you deny something or address it in silence, the more it can claim destructive power over you. And so, search.

Over and over, you will ask "Why?" It is a question you must ask. Though you may never find an answer, realize that it is still important to wrestle with the "why" question for a time. Eventually, you will be content to give up the search. When you can willingly let go of the need to question "why," it will lose its hold over you, but it will take time. And so, speak.

Speak as often and freely of your loved one as you need to. He or she will always be a part of you. Not to speak of the deceased denies his or her existence. To speak of the deceased affirms his or her life. Believe that in time, the pain of loss fades and is replaced by precious memories to be shared. And so, grieve.

This time of sorrow can be used to draw a family together or pull it apart. You may be one who needs to feel and express guilt so that eventually you will gain a more balanced view of your actual responsibility. You may need to give yourself permission to feel and express anger even though you think it's inappropriate. And so, grow.

We know we cannot control all that happens to us, but we can control how we choose to respond. We can choose to overcome and survive it. When we choose to grieve constructively and creatively, we come to value life with a new awareness. And so, become.

Become the most you can become. Enter into a new dimension of self-identity and self-dependence as you come to love others more fully and unconditionally. In letting go of love, we give it freedom to return to us. Become all that your loved one's death has freed you to become. And so, accept.

Accept that in some strange way, his or her death may enable you to reach out with a new understanding, offering a new dimension of love to others. I believe in a loving God Who is with us, offering strength, guidance and solace as we struggle with our anguish. I believe as we regain balance and meaning in our shattered lives, we can come to see that death can indeed bring a new meaning to life. This is my prayer for all of us.

*Eleanora Ross in Bereavement Magazine*

# 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.

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

Please do not send the newsletter.

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



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