



Volume 18, Issue 3

# The Compassionate Friends Fayetteville Area Chapter



October 2014



## Change Happens



### IMPORTANT NOTICE

As of October 17, 2014 our meeting address will change to the Cape Fear Valley Medical Center Education Center, 3418 Village Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28304

The entrance to the Education Center is just past the Emergency Room on Village Drive. our November 4th meeting as well as the special meeting with Mitch Carmody speaking, will take place in the Magnolia Room at the new location.

If you have questions or need more information contact Jennifer German at 910-245-3177 or Email at [jojegerman@outlook.com](mailto:jojegerman@outlook.com)

### Upcoming Special Events

Speaker  
Mitch Carmody

**Wednesday November 12, 2014**  
7:30pm

Fayetteville Area TCF  
Candle Lighting  
December 14, 2014  
(see page 3 for details)



**The Compassionate Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all  
children who have died

**Worldwide  
Candle  
Lighting®**

... that their light  
may always shine.

**Sunday, December 14, 2014**  
7 PM Around the Globe



TCF World Wide Candle Lighting is an annual event where persons around the globe, united in the loss of a child, light candles for one hour the second Sunday in December. Candles are first lit in New Zealand at 7pm, local time. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lit in the next. This creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world.

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### Quarterly News



Yes we just had a newsletter last month, but with the change in meeting location I felt another newsletter was needed. Leigh McNeill has agreed to be our hospital employee representative, otherwise we would not be allowed to use the Education Center. Thank you Leigh. For information on the new meeting place location, visit our website [tcffayetteville.org](http://tcffayetteville.org) and click on the meetings tab. On that page you can click on the (Directions) button for more detailed information or obtain a map by clicking on the button (click here for location map).

At our October meeting there was a discussion about having light refreshment for November 12th when Mitch Carmody will be speaking. This will be discussed in more detail at the regular meeting on November 4th. Let me know if you would like to participate.

Where has the time gone, I can't believe it is the middle of October. Read about the Candle Lighting Service on page 3. Please contact Sharon Jackson-Davis (910-850-4998 or [sharonjdavis1@aol.com](mailto:sharonjdavis1@aol.com)) if you would be willing to help with the service. The service starts at 2 pm so arrive early enough to drop off your food items and picture in the reception hall prior to the service. The deadline to add pictures to the slideshow is December 1st.

Jennifer German

**Our Credo**

We need not walk alone.  
 We are The Compassionate Friends.  
 We reach out to each other with love,  
 With understanding, and with hope.  
 The children we mourn have died at All  
 ages and from many different Causes,  
 but our love for them 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, creeds and  
 relationships.  
 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;  
 While some of us are struggling to find  
 answers.  
 Some of us are angry,  
 Filled with guilt or in deep depression;  
 While 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 the children who have died.  
 We are all seeking and struggling  
 To build a future for ourselves,  
 But we are committed to  
 Building that future together  
 We reach out to each other in love  
 to 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.

**Close By**

I'll always be close to you  
 I'm around you everywhere  
 When the winter snows come  
 And covers the earth all white  
 I'll be watching you Mom  
 Everything's going to be  
 all right  
 When Christmas time arrives  
 And you feel saddened  
 missing me  
 I'll not be far away  
 For your heart is where I'll be  
 I'll be there when you're  
 saddened  
 On lonely nights when you feel  
 alone  
 I'm never far away mom  
 I'm in my Father's home  
 I'm ok mom, I really am  
 So please don't cry  
 I'm never far from you or dad  
 I'm the angel by your side  
 So when you look around you  
 And see beauty everywhere  
 Just remember I'm beside you  
 In your heart, I'm always there

The beauty that surrounds me  
 Is something you will one day see  
 I can't wait until you share  
 This wondrous beauty with me

God promised us eternity  
 And that promise was kept  
 I've made it to His home  
 I have no regrets  
 So please don't worry mom  
 I'm happy and I'm fine  
 One day you will understand  
 When you cross that thin line  
 Love,  
 Your child

Sharon J. Bryant  
 In Memory of my son,  
 Andy Dunbar  
 Jan. 22, 1972 – Oct. 24, 1977  
 I'm his mom and  
 he's my angel forever  
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**MEETINGS**

First Tuesday of each month  
 7:30pm;  
 Cape Fear Valley Medical Center Education Center  
 3418 Village Drive  
 Fayetteville, NC 28304

The November 2nd & 12th and the  
 December 2nd meetings will be in the Magnolia Room  
 Check our website [tcffayetteville.org](http://tcffayetteville.org) under the meetings tab  
 For future meetings as meeting rooms may change within the  
 Education Center

If you have questions contact Jennifer German  
[jojegerman@outlook.com](mailto:jojegerman@outlook.com) or (910) 245-3177



And tail is in the air



**The Compassionate Friends  
Candle Light Memorial Service  
December 14, 2014 at 2PM  
Second Baptist Church, 522 Person Street,  
Fayetteville, NC 28301**



**The service is open to bereaved families and friends who have experienced the death of a child at any age and from any cause.**

**Please come and bring a picture or an item of remembrance for the memory table.**

**We will have refreshments after the service.**

**Please bring your favorite refreshment (finger foods, deserts, etc.) to share.**

**There will be a slide show presentation of our children during the service. If your child's picture was not in last years slide show and you would like it added for this year please contact**

**Jennifer German at (910) 245-3177 or [jojegerman@outlook.com](mailto:jojegerman@outlook.com).**

**The deadline to add pictures is December 1, 2014.**

**Please arrive early, the service will start at 2 pm**

**For more information or questions call  
Jennifer German at (910) 245-3177 or  
Sharon Davis at 910-850-4998**

***Sibling Walking  
Together***

(Formerly The Sibling Credo)

We are the  
surviving children of The Compassionate Friends.

We are brought together by the  
death of our brothers and sisters.

Open your hearts to us. But have  
patience with us.

Sometimes we need the support of  
our friends.

At other times we need our families  
to be there.

Sometimes we feel we must walk  
alone, taking our memories with us,  
continuing to become the individuals  
we want to be.

We cannot be our dead brother or  
sister; however, a special part of  
them lives on with us.

When our brothers and  
sisters died, our lives changed.  
We are living a life very different  
from what we envisioned, and we  
feel the responsibility to be strong  
even when we feel weak.

Yet, we can go on because we  
understand better than many others  
the value of family and the precious  
gift of life.

Our goal is not to be the forgotten  
mourners that we sometimes are,  
but to walk together to face our  
tomorrows

as surviving children  
of

The Compassionate  
Friends.





## Love Gifts



A Love Gift is a donation to honor a child who has died, or as a memorial for a relative or friend.

The Compassionate Friends depends entirely on voluntary contributions from individuals and organizations to meet chapter expenses.

TCF is a 504(c)(3) non-profit organization: all donations are tax deductible.

100% of every dollar donated goes toward chapter expenses.

We thank the following for their kind generosity, love and sharing.  
There are no dues. We have already paid the ultimate price to be a member.

David & Kathy Cole in memory of their son Johnny Cole

Leigh McNeill in memory of her son Derrell Lee Dean

Vickie Bowles in memory of her son Bryan Bowles

Sharon Jackson-Davis in memory of her daughter Crystal Dawn Jackson

Jody & Jenniffer Hall in memory of their daughter Amber Marie Hall

Mike & Petra Syfrett in memory of their son Archie Kagy

Travis & Kimberly Minyon in memory of their daughter Lexi Minyon



### **The National Office of The Compassionate Friends**

P.O. box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

Web Site: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) Toll free: 877-969-0010

### **Regional Coordinator for the Fayetteville Area Chapter of TCF**

Donna & Ralph Goodrich

704-822-4503 or [iluvu2lauren@gmail.com](mailto:iluvu2lauren@gmail.com)



TCF Mission Statement: 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.

## Christmas Past, Christmas Present

As the holidays approach, most bereaved parents feel anxiety, apprehension and some little bit of fear. The past is gone along with our beautiful children. We live in the now, the new reality, of holidays without our children.

This will be my fifth Christmas without my son, Todd. It will be my fourth Christmas without his children. And yet, I find that on some small level, I am looking forward to the holiday. I imagine the Christmases of the past when Todd was growing up and after he started his family. I also imagine Christmases of the future where Todd's children share in the traditions that their Dad so dearly loved. But that won't happen. I have come to accept that wives and children go on with their lives. I have come to accept that my son's children will not be a part of their father's family, his heritage or his legacy. That is the reality.

But I have also found that wonderful people can help make the holiday special. I do very little at Christmas. Some shopping...most of it on the Internet, a little in local stores. I send cash to my son's children. I don't know who or what they are these days, but cash is far better than something that has no significance to them. I do get pleasure in few things. I buy small toiletries for nursing home residents. I buy a gift for my dad's sister who is now 88. I buy for my mom's sister, my cousin, her husband and her daughter. I buy for my best friend. That's enough buying. My husband and I decide whether we want something special for the two of us and, if so, we buy it. Otherwise, we skip the gift giving. We won't be decorating this year, but we haven't decorated for five years.

We have changed our traditions...traditions that Todd loved so much. It is simply too painful to do this alone. We spend time with my family and a few friends. We marvel at the wonder that is Christmas for children. John and my aunt cook and my cousin, her daughter and I clean up in the big country kitchen of my cousin's home. Gifts are exchanged. There is no Christmas tree, but the three acres in front of the house are decorated with all kinds of lights and lighted figures. Santa and his reindeer are in the front garden, close to the road. Angels, reindeer and more gather in the west pasture and front yard. The house is framed in lights. It's quite lovely. For me that is enough.

Christmas will never be what it once was, but I no longer dread the holidays as I once did. Some of my Compassionate Friends have returned to old traditions with their surviving children and maybe even with grandchildren. Each of us learns to deal with Christmas in our own way. Each year I am a different person with a new perspective on the holidays. Next year I may decide to skip it all or immerse myself in the season. My truth is ever changing.

Find what is right for you. Pressures from others mean nothing. You choose whether a celebration is in order. You choose how to celebrate. You choose the old traditions or you choose some new ones....maybe you choose nothing and decide to go with the flow of the moment. As bereaved parents, you will always remember your child at Christmas, but as the years add up and grief starts to release its grip on your soul, you may find that you can keep our child in your heart and have room for the spirit of Christmas as well.

The holidays do get better. Life does get better. The days will gradually become softer and sweeter. The nights will ease into gentleness. Friendships will again have luster, and relationships will become deeper and more meaningful. That is the future for each of us. The present is driven by where we are in our grief. So for this and every Christmas Holiday season, be who you are and mark the day as you choose.

May we all have serenity throughout the Holiday season and in the years ahead.

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

## Butterflies in November

Thanksgiving was Chad's favorite holiday. He loved the food and the football games without the hassle of all the Christmas going ons. I have so many memories of Thanksgivings past. I remember the last Thanksgiving we were together. Chad called me from Alabama and said he and Mandy were on their way to Atlanta and to please save him something to eat. I said "of course I will save you something to eat, but I thought you were eating with Mandy's family?" Chad said "Mom, I think they make their stuffing with "GRITS"....need I say more? Just save me some."

That really made me feel good. He loved my Southern Cornbread Dressing, Turkey, Ham, and all the fixins. We enjoyed so much just being together and preparing the dinner and enjoying the meal.

Chad died in September of 1996. Thanksgiving came way too fast. For those who have gone through their first Thanksgiving you know the feelings I am describing. Everything seems to go in slow motion with the inability to move forward....the heaviness and the physical and mental fatigue...the pain in your heart, the lump in your throat and the tears in your eyes. No, I did not want Thanksgiving to come this year or ever again. My daughter was away at school and I knew she would be coming home. My mother was struggling with lung cancer and I knew there would not be many more Thanksgivings with her. What do I do? I think we all decided that if we could just go through the motions it would be better than doing nothing and I think we all did it for each other.

I cried the whole time I was preparing the meal. I do not remember anything other than the tears. Several friends wanted to join us for Thanksgiving that year and they volunteered to bring a turkey and dessert. I readily accepted their offer.

We gathered together at noon, my husband said the blessing (which I really had a hard time with) and then I wanted to read a poem in Chad's memory. I asked everyone if they would bear with me as I read this. Several times I could not speak. The words would not come, but I was determined that I was going to read this poem. When I neared the end of the poem I felt the lump in my throat and I knew I was going to start crying out loud. As soon as I finished I got up from the table and left the room.

There was dead silence. No one spoke a word. Then I heard one of our friends say "Look at that butterfly. I can't believe there is a butterfly this time of year. And he looks at though he wants to come in. He is hitting himself against the glass door."

My tears turned from sadness to tears of joy. I knew that was Chad. I knew he had come to get some of my Cornbread Dressing. The only regret that I have is that I did not let him come in. I knew if I went back to the dining room and told my friends that was Chad they really would think I was crazy. If I had to do it over again....it wouldn't matter but at that time I had not gotten involved with TCF or did not know another bereaved parent....so to me my "crazy thoughts" were just that and I thought they probably were not normal.

We do not have butterflies in Atlanta in late November. I choose to believe it was a sign from my son. This will be our fifth Thanksgiving without him. The pain has softened. My tears do not come as often. The memories are sweeter. My heart is a little lighter. My love for my son is as strong as ever. I feel his presence in everything I do. I do not fear I will forget anymore. I know he is with me.

*Continued on page 7*



*Continued from page 6*

We do not have butterflies in Atlanta in late November. I choose to believe it was a sign from my son. This will be our fifth Thanksgiving without him. The pain has softened. My tears do not come as often. The memories are sweeter. My heart is a little lighter. My love for my son is as strong as ever. I feel his presence in everything I do. I do not fear I will forget anymore. I know he is with me.

This Thanksgiving my plan is to make a LARGE pan of my southern cornbread dressing along with Chad's favorite Ham recipe and take these to the hospital to share with my daughter, who is an RN, and all the staff in the PICU at Children's Hospital-Egleston Campus and the parents who are spending Thanksgiving with their children in the

Intensive Care Unit. For some, this will be their last Thanksgiving with their own children.

The staff at the Children's Hospital work very long and stressful hours. They are away from their own families on this holiday to take care of the children who are in the hospital. I feel this is a way I can help others and also include some precious memories of my Thanksgivings past with my own son and daughter. I am looking forward to this very much and I am thankful I can be with my daughter.

I wish for those of you who are facing your First Thanksgiving that you can read this and know that it will get better. You will find joy again. There is hope. The love will always remain and your child will always be with you. Of course, it is not like we hoped it would be but it can be good. Our children will always be a "present" part of our lives....they will not be forgotten.

I pray you find peace this holiday season. I pray your sorrows will soften and your memories bring smiles. I pray you will be able to enjoy your other family members. I pray you know you are not alone.

Jayne Newton  
TCF Atlanta, GA

In Memory of my son, Chad Gordon 5/21/72 - 9/3/96 and All Our Children

### **A Christmas Wish**

I'll miss you at Christmas  
When laughter's everywhere,  
When church bells chime  
In merry rhyme  
And warmth is in the air.  
I'll think of you at Christmas  
Of when you were with me,  
Of simple joys and silly toys  
And days that used to be.  
I'll miss you at Christmas  
When children's faces glow,  
And gaze in childish wonderment  
At Santa and presents in a row.  
I wish a Christmas miracle  
Could bring you back this way,  
And we could be together  
For one more Christmas day.  
Lily deLauder

### **Remember**

Light a quiet candle  
Send a quiet kiss  
Say a quiet fare-thee-well  
To the one you miss.  
Light a quiet candle  
Shed a quiet tear  
Sing a quiet lullaby . . .  
And the quiet  
Christmas Star will hear.  
Sascha Wagner  
TCF Des Moines



### **To Start a New Year**

If I can concentrate on the  
moral and spiritual side of  
the holidays  
I can make it through.  
If I can absorb the love and  
warmth that was the  
beginning  
I can give love back.  
If I can share the grief and  
love that is in me  
through these holidays  
I can start a new year.  
Tom Spray  
TCF Ventura, CA

The Compassionate Friends  
 Fayetteville Area Chapter  
 703 Rosebud Court,  
 Vass NC 28394



**The Compassionate Friends**  
*Fayetteville Area Chapter*  
 Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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**We're on the Web**  
[www.tcffayetteville.org](http://www.tcffayetteville.org)

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#### Love Gifts

There is no charge for our newsletter, meetings, or lending library, and we depend solely on your contributions. Love gifts can be made in memory of your child, grandchild, or sibling. Your love gift will insure that all who need our newsletter, will receive it.

I wish to make a donation in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_

Donated by \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to make a donation please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends,  
 and mail to TCF Fayetteville Area Chapter, 703 Rosebud Court, Vass, NC 28394

Please send form with check. **A donation is not required to submit items for the newsletter.**