



The Compassionate Friends Fayetteville Area Chapter



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Butterflies Make Me Happy



Sometimes in our grief we truly believe we are going crazy. We hurt so bad we don't think we can manage to go on living without our precious child here with us. Part of the grieving process is learning how to do just that. Some parents need the reassurance that their child is okay. I think the human mind can only take so much pain and jumps at the chance to see signs from their children, reassuring them that they are okay.

The way I look at it, if you get comfort from a dream or a sign...enjoy it. You've suffered enough, and believing in signs, butterflies, dreams or what ever else gives you comfort and hurts no one else, is your right as a bereaved person.

Are these signs real, or just in my imagination? Can I prove they are messages from my son? Does it even

need to be proven? No, I can't scientifically prove it. But I know that dreams, butterflies, signs and enjoyment in nature makes me feel closer to Eric and therefore I will continue to enjoy them. It hurts no one, I'm not obsessive about it and anyone who chooses to think I'm nuts for believing in such things, can think I'm nuts.

We've all heard how the butterfly is a symbol of rebirth. Whether it's our child moving from this world onto a higher plane, or a bereaved parent emerging from the cocoon of grief into a world without our child here. With us, butterflies are a comfort for many. When I'm missing my son and see a butterfly flittering from flower to flower, I smile and feel better. When I'm in a happy mood and see a

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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 13, 2015
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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Our Quarterly News



There were six members from our chapter to attend the National Conference in Dallas, TX. in July. I know everyone had a wonderful experience. There were so many workshops it was hard to choose. You will find pictures from the conference on the chapters Facebook page. Please check them out because when John and I do the "Walk to Remember" it is for all of our children. We walked with well over a thousand other people, most of which were walking for multiple children. In our case it was hundreds of children. Now imagine a candle lighting service with a thousand plus people then

add a bagpiper playing Amazing Grace. Need I say more?

Yes I did write **Facebook**, the Fayetteville Chapter of TCF has it's own Facebook page now. To get started, go to the chapter website <http://www.tcffayetteville.org/> and click on the Facebook icon at the bottom of the home page. Like us and start sharing!

The Fayetteville TCF Candle Lighting is scheduled for December 13, 2015 at 2:pm. The service will take place at Second Baptist Church on Person Street. See page 3 for full details.

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.

*Continued from page 1,
Butterflies Make Me Happy*

butterfly, I enjoy the beauty of such
delicate creature. Taking the time to
slow down and watch such a fragile
creature going about its business is
calming and I don't think anyone
should discount the benefits from hav-
ing a calming moment.

About four months after Eric died, I
had a dream about him. I woke myself
up from tears of joy running down my
face, I knew he was okay...what a
relief that was. I still hurt terribly and
missed him more than I thought I
could endure, but I felt comforted by
the dream. Some could say it was my
subconscious trying to sort things out,

but I choose to believe it was his way of
trying to comfort me. Either way, it
made me feel better.

Maybe it's because bereaved parents
walk around in such a fog and function
on automatic pilot that we are moving
slow enough to notice the signs that are
around us. Maybe dreams are one way
for us to accept messages we need to
hear and take into our hearts without
logically trying to interpret them. Maybe
faith is what we rely on when nothing
else makes sense and we instinctively
know we need something to hold on to.
Whatever it is, just give me a second
helping; I like feeling closer to my son!

Lynn Vines
TCF South Bay/L.A., CA
In Memory of my son, Eric



Autumn



In the fall
When amber leaves are shed,
Softly—silently
Like tears that wait to flow,
I watch and grieve.
My heart beats sadly in the fall;
'Tis then I miss you most of all.

Lily de Lauder
TCF Van Nuys, CA

MEETINGS

First Tuesday of each month
At 7:00pm;

September through December 2015 meetings will be held in room 210
of the General Class Building at Fayetteville Technical
Community College, 2817 Ft. Bragg Road, Fayetteville, NC 28303



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





**The Compassionate Friends
Candle Light Memorial Service
December 13, 2015 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. The deadline to add pictures is December 4, 2015.

Please arrive early, the service will start at 2pm

For more information or questions call Jennifer German at (910) 245-3177

***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.

Vickie Bowles in memory of her son Bryan Bowles

Mike & Petra Syfrett in memory of their son Archie Kagy

Brenda & Donald Melvin in memory of their daughter Talisha Morris

Brenda & Donald Melvin in memory of their son Jeremy Scott Melvin

Lucette & Leonce Boivin in memory of their son Lawrence Boivin

John & Jennifer German in memory of their daughter Amy German



The National Office of The Compassionate Friends

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Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

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Regional Coordinator for the Fayetteville Area Chapter of TCF

Donna & Ralph Goodrich

704-822-4503 or 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.

FALL

It is so hard to believe that summer is over! Even though summer is technically still here until September, the cool evenings we have been having, school starting, and football games being played are all signs that fall is here. And I love it!

To me, fall is the most invigorating time of the year. The crispness of the air, the beautiful coloration of the trees, the smell of leaf and wood smoke, the sky full of birds traveling south "talking" with one another as they go, are all part of this wonderful world we live in. I hope all of you will be able to feel and see the wonders of fall.

Sometimes we are so "down" and preoccupied with our child's death, and we are working so hard to just get through each day, that we are unable to appreciate what is going on in the world around us. Try to take a few minutes each day and look around. If you can focus on a beautiful tree or leaf, smell the chrysanthemums blooming in the garden or bite into a fresh apple just picked and enjoy doing this for just a few minutes, it will make your day seem brighter. And, if you are up to it, go to a high school football game or a band competition. The enthusiasm of the young people participating in these events is contagious.

Yes, it sometimes hurts. We want our children to be there also, enjoying these activities. But it also gives us renewed faith that life does go on, and there is happiness and excitement in the world. I hope you all can find some beauty and peace in the fall months ahead.

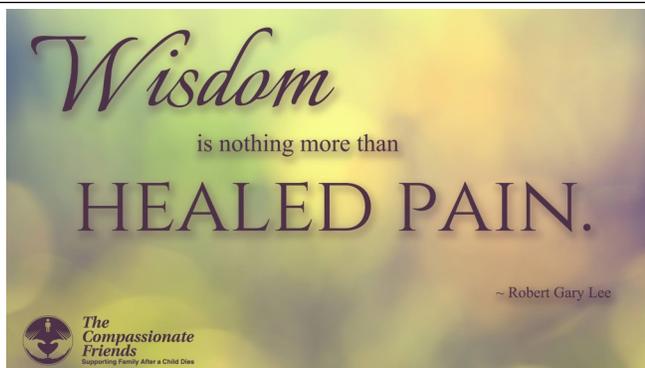
Peggy Hartzell
TCF Ambler, PA

Close By

When the morning dew sparkles
I'll be near by your side
When the afternoon sun fades
My love I won't hide
When the autumn leaves change
And fall is in the air
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 at 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
January 22, 1972 – October 24, 1977
I'm his mom and he's my angel... forever
Reprinted by permission of author



Christmas Without My Child

Last night we held our Compassionate Friends chapter meeting for November: the topic was Holidays and Grief. We met in small groups to discuss how we are going to get through this most difficult of times. While we found no single answer, we did make some discoveries about ourselves. We also found some basic ways to take control of our lives.

In our group of eleven were several newly bereaved parents. Deep sorrow and anxiety were apparent in each face as we opened the dialogue –a discussion of the holiday season without their children. This anxiety and deep sorrow immediately became mine; I am that parent, I am still on the first leg of what may be a long journey without my child. Their tears were mine as we talked.

As the discussion progressed, I could see a bit of each parent's tension slowly release. I felt as if I could read their minds: give me some answers, tell me I will survive this, tell me how you did it. The answers were all different; the reassurances of parents who had lost their child and survived that first heartbreaking holiday were there. Some of the answers came from the newly bereaved as they explored their inner feelings.

We found consensus on one important factor: we must give ourselves permission to do what makes us most comfortable. We are not the caretakers to the world right now; we must take care of ourselves. If established traditions bother us, then we must turn to something else. What is the point of pouring salt into this open wound? Perhaps next year or the year after, when the wound is not so fresh, we will want to return to former traditions. Perhaps not.

Through tears and some light laughter, we realized that we are not invincible. We are not responsible for the happiness of friends and extended family. We do not have to meet the expectations of others. We must accept our emotional limitations and the psychological and physical toll that grief takes on us. We must slow down and change our perspective. We must do what is right for us, especially during the holidays.

Most of those who had been through at least one holiday season without their child felt that making changes for the first year or two was a positive step forward. We found that talking honestly with our family about our feelings might make them feel temporarily uncomfortable but it did clear the air about expectations. We agreed that limiting our casual social relationships negated the need to make explanations regarding our lack of interest in holiday celebrations.

By "dropping out" we also eliminated obligations in many areas. This gives us the freedom to choose simplicity over stress, essentials over hassles and flexibility over anxiety. This gives us the opportunity to live in the moment, go where our emotions take us and listen to our hearts.

While we all agreed that the holidays are overwhelming for parents whose children have died, we also agreed that we are each individuals and we each perceive the world differently. Some of us want and need the old traditions during the holiday season. Some of us need to be with people who are not part of our grieving process. Others among us felt that solitude and simplicity were the answer.

The answer to the question of how we get through the holidays is found within each one of us. We each have our own truth. The challenge, we decided, is to honor that truth and hold the line against external pressures. A few of our newly bereaved parents could barely choke out a word or two. Others were more vocal. While grief consumes some of us for many, many years, others appear to "go with the flow" of life very early in their grief. What feels right for one of us may be abhorrent to someone else.

One universal truth did emerge from our conversations: we miss our beautiful children and

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love them as deeply as when they walked beside us. We live in this purgatory each day of the year, but during the holidays it seems most oppressive. Our children have been torn from our lives forever. Daily life and special traditions will always reflect the deep void that has become our reality. We need our Compassionate Friends at the holiday season. We need to know that others have walked this road, have lived this nightmare and have managed to survive. We each continue to rediscover hope through our Compassionate Friends. And in finding that hope we have given and received the purest gift of the season: the possibility of peace.

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

Giving Myself Permission

It has been nearly five years since my only child died, but this will be my sixth Christmas without his unique enthusiasm, anticipation and happiness at the prospect of the holiday season.

After two rocky attempts to handle the holiday season, I gave myself permission to do what I wanted to do. I am not accountable to anyone for my ups and downs at the holidays. Last year was easier than the previous year and that year was easier than the one before. But there is a reason for this: in talking with other members of our Compassionate Friends chapter, I realized that I owe no explanations. Therefore, I make it easy on myself and on those who love me.

Instead of getting caught up in the commercialism of the holiday, I contemplate the true meaning of the season and initiate activities that have little to do with the season. I intentionally avoid Christmas because it is, simply, too painful for me. Others in our Compassionate Friends group have returned to their normal celebrations with children and extended family. Some have modified their traditions; a few have chosen to take a trip and escape the holiday memories entirely.

We give ourselves permission to handle this time of year in a way that is most soothing to us. If we do not do this, we suffer setback after setback in our grief. We often make small concessions for others in our family, of course. But are we really in the spirit? Probably not. Does it really matter? Probably not.

Each year I now put a wreath on our front door. I buy a gift for an underprivileged child and include a card that is signed with my son's name. I send gift cards to those who I am morally obliged to remember and buy small gifts for friends and family who truly appreciate the thought and effort I have made.

That's Christmas now. I have given myself permission to handle it in the only way that keeps serenity, peace and hope in my heart.

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

Our Children & Siblings Remembered on Their Birthday's

Each month some of our members face special but very painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings of the following children following children's:

October

Bryan Bowles October 1

Jimmy Wallace October 2

James Page October 4

Sharnale DeMar Thompson October 8

Mark Draughon October 15

Kevin Harlan October 15

Ryan Malcom October 20

Sean Payne Jr. October 27

November

Preston Riley November 1

Ryan Stevens November 5

Elijah Caddick November 8

Carolyn Kapperman November 7

Baby Davis November 9

Renee Anderson November 11

Omar Sharaf November 11

Keith Parker November 12

Jeffrey George November 13

Charles Cook November 14

Zackery Hollister November 14

Johnny Cole November 15

Brianne Stewary-Goodrich November 18

Lamont Saffore November 21

Lawrence Boivin November 24

Brittney Stokes November 24

Kristen Wactor November 30

Matthew Guin November 30

December

Pam Tatum December 5

Crystal Dawn Jackson December 5

Zach Grullon December 6

Tammy Owens December 7

Kendra "Candy" Seay December 8

Christine Geier December 9

Ricky Diaz December 15

Derrell Lee Dean December 16

Nickolas Ross Hayden December 25

RaMael McArthur December 28

Lexi Minyon December 31





Children & Siblings Remembered On Their Angel Date's



Each month some of our members face special but very painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings of the following children.

October

Melba Ross October 1

James Page October 5

Carla Parker October 9

Valencia Fredrick October 10

Kirsten Wactor October 10

Pam Tatum October 11

Brittney Stokes October 19

Ralph Lanier October 20

Archie Kagy October 21

Johnathan "JD" McKenzie October 21

Christopher Ortega October 26

November

Kyle Harris November 6

Christopher Hrvoj November 7

Talisha Morris November 8

Kendra "Candy" Seay November 8

Baby Davis November 9

Patrick "Pat" Shea November 14

Zachery Hollister November 14

Joe Konen November 9

Patrick "Pat" Shea November 9



Zackery Hollister November 14

Lawrence Boivin November 15

Amy Elizabeth German November 16

Christine Geier November 20

Brianne Stewart-Goodrich November 22

December

Andrew Beutelspacher December 2

Stephen Dew December 12

Ryan Malcom December 14

Grant Miles December 22

Preston Riley December 23

Ryan Stevens December 30



The Compassionate Friends
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The Compassionate Friends
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We're on the Web
www.tcffayetteville.org
And Facebook

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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.**