



The Compassionate Friends Fayetteville Area Chapter

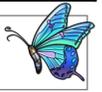


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The New Year: A Time of Hope



Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different

ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence

with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child.

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Meet Your New Chapter Leader

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I am the, "Big Sisser" to Dennis. He was 8, almost 9 when he choked on a rubber ball on February 5, 1986. In April of 1986, my mom, dad, and sister attended our first local chapter meeting in Raleigh. In June, my sister and I were told by our parents that we were going to attend a National Conference in Oklahoma. As teen girls, we were not looking forward to attending a grief conference. It was undoubtedly, the best decision my parents ever made for me. I have not missed too many National Conferences with the Compassionate Friends since then. I found the need through the organization to help others through becoming a workshop presenter.

Currently, I am the sibling representative on the Board of Directors for The Compassionate Friends. I have just recently taken on the chapter leader of the Fayetteville Area Chapter. I am looking forward to keeping this group going and growing to help each of you and others along the grief journey. It is my goal to work with each of you to expand the outreach of our group. I look forward to walking along this grief journey with each of you.

Cindy Tart, MSW
Presenter, BOD member with The Compassionate Friends
"Big Sisser" to Dennis

May love be what you remember
the most ~Darci Sims

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.

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The New Year: A Time of Hope

Others who knew your child
 will never forget. The proof of
 this is in our memories..
sweet memories that take
 us back to another time when
 our child was with us.

So this New Year's,
 whether you are a few months,
 a few years or many years in
 your grief, think about hope.
 You have not forsaken your
 child when you reach for hope.
 Your hope brings your child
 back in a positive way that will
 warm your heart. Reach for
 that hope. As you move
 forward in your grief in the New
 Year, reach for hope. Your
 child will still be with you. And
 one day you will find that your
 child's presence is sweeter
 when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
 In memory of my son,
 Todd Mennen

For the New Year

Where there is pain,
 Let there be softening
 Where there is bitterness,
 Let there be acceptance
 Where there is silence,
 Let there be communication
 Where there is loneliness,
 Let there be friendships
 Where there is despair,
 Let there be hope.

Ruth Eiseman
 TCF Louisville, KY

TCF, Katy, TX

Valentine Message

I send this message to my child
 Who no longer walks
 this plane,
 A message filled with love
 Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to
 skip a beat
 When I ponder your
 early death
 As I think of times
 we'll never share
 I must stop to catch
 my breath.

Valentine's Day is for
 those who love
 And for those who
 receive love, too
 For a parent the perfect
 love in life
 Is the love I've
 given you.

I'm thinking of you this day,
 my child,
 With a sadness that is
 unspoken
 As I mark another
 Valentine's Day
 With a heart that is
 forever broken.

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



Why Can't I Let Go

You were always my hero.
I always wanted to be like you.
You were my younger brother,
Still, I always looked up to you.

You were always there for me,
Even when things were at their worst.
You helped me through my hardest trials,
And we always made it through.

Now as I sit here, writing these words,
Remembering you and times gone by, I'm
Trying to say good-bye.

Nineteen years are just too many,
To just let you go,
I can't believe you're gone, you died,
And left me here alone.

Some days I'm fine, some days I'm low,
But most days, I just miss you so.
It was you and me,
But now, what do I do?

Each night I ask why?
Why I'm so angry?
Why I can't cry?
Why I can't let you go?

I know we'll see each other again,
But the years seem so long.
I long for the day I'll see you again.
Waiting for me with open arms.

Brother, I love you and miss you so.
But now I need you most.
This time in my life is oh so hard,
I just can't let you go.

Stephen Welch
TCF, St Louis, MO



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.



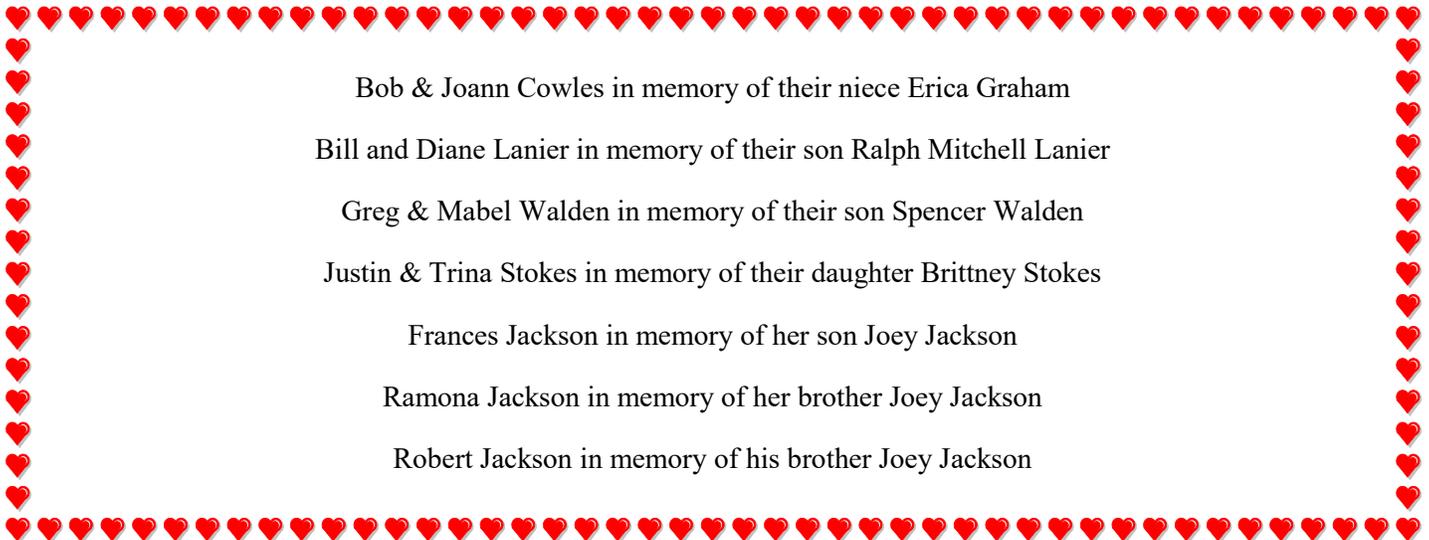
Love Gifts



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.



Bob & Joann Cowles in memory of their niece Erica Graham

Bill and Diane Lanier in memory of their son Ralph Mitchell Lanier

Greg & Mabel Walden in memory of their son Spencer Walden

Justin & Trina Stokes in memory of their daughter Brittney Stokes

Frances Jackson in memory of her son Joey Jackson

Ramona Jackson in memory of her brother Joey Jackson

Robert Jackson in memory of his brother Joey Jackson



The National Office of The Compassionate Friends

P.O. box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

Web Site: www.compassionatefriends.org Toll free: 877-969-0010
facebook.com/TCFUSA



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.

Frost

On a cold winter's day,
 Frost etches a beautiful artistry
 On every thing it touches, every blade of grass
 It glitters and sparkles, and for moments
 Before the sun comes out and the master piece evaporates
 before our eyes, we stand memorized cherishing the
 wondrous sight.
 Like frost, our children were only here for a brief moment
 But, while they were here
 Whether it was moments in the womb
 Days, months or many years
 They etched their beautiful artistry of love
 On our hearts and lives and all of those
 They touched.
 Unlike frost, what they etched is forever,
 It is something that we can cherish and hold onto always.
 We stand here tonight lighting a candle to remember children
 we will never forget.
 Their light, their spirits, their artistry lives on and like the
 flame of the candle gives warmth on a cold winter's night
 And light in the darkness
 The love our children gave us still remains.
 It keeps us warm when the cold winds of grief blow.
 It lights our way through the darkness and loneliness
 That we feel,
 And it gives us hope!

Julie Short
 2007 Southeastern TCF
 Candle Lighting Ceremony
 In Memory of Kyra



A Solitary Journey

By Helen Steiner Rice

Grief is a solitary journey.
 No one but you know the gaping
 hole left in your life when
 someone you know has died.
 And no one but you can
 mourn the silence that was
 once filled with laughter and song.
 It is the nature of love and of
 death to touch every person in
 a totally unique way.
 Comfort comes from knowing that
 people have made the same journey.
 And solace comes from understanding
 how others have learned to sing
 again.

Carrying Memories Into The New Year

With the church bells' ringing
 the new year enters
 echoing the days of yesteryear
 memories of happiness
 the smiles of our children
 the sunlight within each face
 Who will remember these dear ones
 far from our yearning arms
 Who remembers all they were
 the way she danced, the hat he wore
 With the old year gone, will they
 no longer be known?
 We will remember them, each one
 We will hold them in our hearts
 as we carry memories
 into this new year.
 We will allow the memories to
 make us laugh, to make us sing.
 Their lives will fill the air
 as the church bells ring.

---Alice J. Wisler

Precious Valentine Memories

The lace has grown yellow with age. The edges are tattered and the glue that held the pieces together has long dried up, leaving only a slight stain on the faded red paper. It is much smaller than I remembered. Perhaps time has caused it to shrink. It seems so fragile, resting here in my palm. The words have nearly faded and even the heavy crayon marks have lost their luster over the years. There's a smudge of unknown origin on the back, near where the paper was rubbed dangerously thin by the uncounted erasure marks. The name is barely legible, the pencil lines so weak that only the mind can read the letters.

I found it the other day, while doing one of those winter chores: cleaning closets. It's nearly 25 degrees below zero outside and it seemed like a good idea to clear away some of the trappings of a thousand years.

February is a middle-of-winter month and most of us have fewer choices in this month than in any other. For those of us here in the Great North, it is either shovel the walk or clean the closets, and it's warmer in the closet (although not by much!) So, armed with a dust rag, trash bag and the radio, I opened the door and slipped in...not really about what I might find. I thought I was just going to clean the closet.

But, that first box sent me spinning. I found things I hadn't even remembered I'd lost! I finally found the holiday gift bought for my sister last year and then so carefully had hid away. I found snow boots and sand pails, a beach towel, three old paperbacks, a pile of magazines (all saved because I wanted to clip something "important"). I found shoelaces for shoes no longer "alive" and several other things that had once been alive.

I found a half a chocolate-covered cherry and part of a deck of cards. It was quite a treasure box, filled with junk that once had had some meaning to someone, maybe even me.

I sorted through the coats and clothes, painfully aware that "someday" would probably not arrive in my life-time. The too short hemline and the too-small waist would not be mine again. I packed those things away, mindless of the hours and the drifting snow outside the windows.

When I found the box of scrapbooks, I sat down, now that the closet had some actual floor space. I touched the bindings, not quite sure I possessed the courage required to open the pages. The phone rang and forced me away from that decision. I left the closet and did not return until now.

That's when I found the old paper Valentine, tucked away between the pages of a life lived long ago. As I held that once sticky, but now only stained, piece of construction paper, I felt a connection with other valentines, in other lifetimes. I heard a whisper of another voice: my own mother's exclamation over my offered gift. It blended with my voice, speaking across the generations of children bringing home paper messages of love. OH! I had forgotten THAT....it had become lost in the pain of

It was a peaceful hour in that closet, listening to the sounds of my life, lived long ago and now remembered through the pages of the scrapbooks. I found my own laughter and that of my friend, joining the laughter of my own children, seeking the laughter of tomorrow's bearers of paper hearts. Time does pass on. Generations of hearts have been delivered and received. Generations of love have been shared just as generations of hurt have been endured. It felt timeless in the closet...as if when I opened the door, the gift of this Valentine would still be waiting!

.....Continued on page 7.....

.....Continued from page 6....
Precious Valentine Memories

Perhaps that is exactly what is happening, perhaps the engineers of all of our hurts and happiness are still waiting - waiting for us to claim that love and bring their light back into being. There were so many years when I could not bear this exchanging of paper hearts! There were so many years when I counted FIRST what was missing, never realizing that in the measuring of my losses, I was truly losing what I did have.

The snow had drifted deep across the yard: only the tips of my flamingos' knit-capped, covered heads are visible in the white. But my vision has been cleared somewhat this afternoon by a visit in the closet where I found a memory that no length of time could fade. The lace is faded, the edges tattered, but the heart always remembers and though the tears, the sounds of love given and received echo back to me.

So now, this little paper message from both my past and my future sits on my dresser, reminding me each morning to make room for the happy memories as well as the hard ones.

I had "lost" that Valentine from so long ago, but the bearer of that most precious gift of love has NOT been lost to me. Our loved ones die, but the love we share between us can NEVER BE DESTROYED. Love continues past all change and becomes the memory trace that guides the human spirit. Love isn't enough, but without it,

the world grows cold and frozen, and the sidewalks never get shoveled and the closets never get cleaned, and the memories get lost in the confusion of pain not healing.

Go find a Valentine, clean a closet, rummage through a drawer, search for some tangible evidence that, indeed, your love DID LIVE - and what a sweet treat that will be!

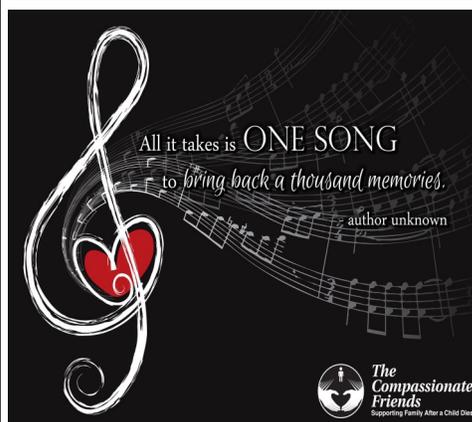
Darcie Sims
 Lovingly lifted from Sunflower
 Chapter, Wichita, KS Feb
 Newsletter

And can it be that in a world so full and busy, the loss of one weak creature makes a void in any heart, so wide and deep that nothing but the width and depth of eternity can fill it up!

~Charles Dickens

My Angel Day

*Yes Mom, this is my Angel Day
 From my earthly life, I know I left quite soon
 But only to enter my greatest reward in Glory
 Far beyond the moon
 Today you'll perform your loving rituals
 And do your best to keep my memory aware
 Yes Mom, this ritual is for both of us
 For I am both here and there*



MEETINGS

First Tuesday of each month
 At 7:00pm;

Meetings will be held in room 224 of the General Class Building at Fayetteville Technical Community College, 2817 Ft. Bragg Road, Fayetteville, NC 28303 (Unless otherwise stated on our website)

tcffayetteville.org.

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

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:

January

Michelle Andrews January 1
 Demetrius Jordan January 2
 R. Davis Turner January 7
 Jeremiah Davis-Kraut January 9
 Erica Graham January 10
 Eddie Santistevan January 10
 George Lee Perry January 14
 Benny Michael Traylor January 15
 Jonathan Black January 20
 Deborah Atkinson January 23
 Wendy Hair January 25
 Sherry McCordle January 25
 Manzonian Hall January 25
 Christine Bailey January 28
 Graylin Jackson January 29

February

Patrick Shea February 2
 Richard Miller III February 3
 James Campbell February 5
 Juliana Wilkins February 6
 Allen Arnette February 12
 Amber Marie Hall February 13
 Dustin Hunt February 14
 Mary Beth Snyder February 15
 Pierce Brantley Matthews February 16
 Erik Tornblum February 16
 Jackson Vogel February 19
 Tyler Clark February 21



Daniel "Adam" Clark February 22
 Ian Redshaw February 23
 Stephen Carroll February 27
 Leslie King February 28

March

Cory Fullwood March 1
 Joe Dan Rumley March 3
 Robert Stevens March 4
 Kyle Harris March 7
 Mikayla Brielle Watkins March 7
 Bobby Beller March 8
 Dennis Tart March 9
 Stephen Bruno March 10
 Sharon Washington-McBrydy March 12
 David Warlick March 13
 Christopher "Chris" Hondros March 14
 John Konen, Jr March 15
 Daniel McDonough March 15
 Malachi Matthews March 18
 R. Davis Turner March 18
 Logan Zimmerman March 18
 Jonathon Casey March 19
 Talisha Morris March 22
 Michael Hurt March 25
 Akiana Lopez-Sellos March 25
 Joshua Huggins March 26
 Sean Thomas March 28
 George Lee Perry March 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.*



January

RáMael McArthur January 1
 Melissa McCoy January 2
 Britany Solewin January 2
 Rodney Dietrich January 8
 Jeremiah Davis-Kraut January 9
 James "Randy" Smith January 12
 Duane May January 12
 Sean Thomas January 15
 Charles Cook January 17
 Dallas Locklear January 20
 Michelle Andrews January 21
 Kevin Harlan January 21
 Erica Graham January 24
 Amy Zinsser January 24
 Shermicka Grant January 25
 Zach Grullon January 28
 Joshua Huggins January 28
 Andrew Williams January 28
 Karlle Williams January 28
 Laura Williams January 28
 Karissa Williams January 28

February

Evelyn Copeland February 5
 Dennis Tart February 5
 Juliana Wilkins February 6
 Omar Sharaf February 8



Gregory Lovings February 10
 Chad Allen Arnette February 14
 Mark Draughon February 14
 Judith Bowman February 19
 Cory Fullwood February 21
 Lamar Beard February 23
 Michael Pizzarella February 24
 Shawn Leigh Watkins February 24
 Wendy Hair February 26

March

Cody Mclendon March 2
 Tammy Owens March 2
 Melissa Thornton March 3
 Dylan Mckelvey March 5
 Matthew Guin March 7
 Sharnale Thompson March 13
 Elizabeth Akins March 16
 R. Davis Turner March 16
 Cody Phillips March 17
 Stephen Bruno March 18
 Bryan Bowles March 26
 Stephen Carroll March 27
 Michael Heart March 30
 John Klemenko March 30

The Compassionate Friends
Fayetteville Area Chapter
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Secretary/Treasurer



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

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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.**