



The Compassionate Friends Fayetteville Area Chapter



Volume 25, Issue 2

April 2021

It's Okay to Grieve

It's Okay to Grieve:

The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned. Such hurt! It's okay to grieve.

It's Okay to Cry:

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to level off and continue our cruise along the stream of life. It's okay to cry.

It's Okay to Heal:

We do not need to prove we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel guilty, for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death. It's a healthy sign of healing. It's okay to heal.

It's Okay to Laugh:

Laughter is not a sign of less grief. Laughter is not a sign of less love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh. It's okay to laugh.

Patricia Lufty Nevitt
~ TCF, Austin, TX



“So what do we do? Give ourselves **TIME**—to hurt, to grieve, to cry. **TIME** to choke, to scream. **TIME** to be ‘crazy’ and **TIME** to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress through grief against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.”

—Darcie D. Sims

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Words from the Editor

Our chapter has lost a founding member. It is with sadness and a heavy heart that I inform you of the passing of Hazel Smith. See page 7. I you would like to view a pictorial video of Hazel's life, go to <https://www.adcockfuneralandcrematory.com/obits>. and type in her name. Please keep her beloved Mickey in your thoughts and prayers. I would like to dedicate this newsletter to the memory of Hazel Smith.

We continue to have monthly ZOOM meetings. Everyone would prefer face to face meetings, but this is the next best thing. I am

really looking forward to being able to see everyone in person. I miss all the hugs. Hugs are therapeutic. Each month I say to myself “maybe next month we will be allowed to meet in person”. Surely with the Covid numbers improving and more people getting vaccinated, it will not be much longer. For now, take care, stay safe and stay healthy.

Jennifer German



love + eternity = eternal love for our angels

Mother's Day, "Before" and "After"

While sorting through boxes and bags, it is not unusual for me to find something unexpected. It happened just the other day. Sifting through a box, I came across a wrinkled, somewhat yellowed piece of lined school paper. I carefully unfolded it only to find a drawing of a stick-mom and stick-daughter standing alongside a mammoth daisy. The mom and little girl were holding hands with huge lop-sided grins on their faces. In her little girl just-learning-to-print handwriting were the words, "Happy Mother's Day, Mommy. I love you, Kristina."

Even six years later, little "gifts" such as these can bring fresh tears. It is times like these that I am glad that I was an incredible pack rat, especially when it came to saving things that my children have made. I can picture my then-blond, petite little Nina (her nickname), with the wispy hair, bent over the kitchen table, crayon in hand, creating that handmade card filled with love. Memories of breakfasts in bed, only to return to the kitchen after finishing the "gourmet" meal served with tender care, to find it in such disarray that it took hours to clean up! Even through the tears, these are the sweetest memories.

As I type this, I look at another gift from a Mother's Day past; a little statue of a harried mom, surrounded by mop, broom and bucket, that says, "World's Greatest Mom," chosen for me at a neighborhood garage sale. I came across it accidentally shortly after Nina's death, unearthing it from its hiding place. I wondered to myself, why had I packed it away. Did Nina know that I did and did she think that, by doing so, I hadn't appreciated her gift? Did I ever thank her for it along with the other garage sale items that she proudly brought home to me, or did it show on my face that I really didn't need anymore "junk" around the house? Sometimes resurrecting these treasures can bring unpleasant feelings of guilt as we wonder if our children knew how much their little gestures of love meant to us. When our child dies, it becomes easy to second-guess ourselves, trapped in our fixations and exaggerations of the negative things that may have occurred during our child's life.

The first Mother's Days after Nina died was a grief-numbing blur, as it occurred only three days following her death. Unlike previous joyful dinners out with my four children pampering their mom, we spent the day making funeral arrangements and choosing a casket for one of them. In the early evening, I overheard it said to someone else, "Happy Mother's Day." I turned to my own mother and apologized for having forgotten. I could not imagine ever celebrating another Mother's

Day again. I am sure the dads have these same feelings on Father's Day. My heart goes out to them, because I think we forget that they, just like us, grieve and hurt, too.

For those mothers and fathers who have lost their only child, I have been saddened by stories told to me by them of attending church on Mother's Day Sunday and when the pastor asked the mothers in the church to please stand, they were undecided on whether they should stand or not. I hope that they will always remember, and the fathers as well, "Once a mother, always a mother; once a father, always a father." We are forever their parents.

If we are fortunate to have surviving children, they are often forgotten as well. In the early days, we become obsessed with the one who is missing. My own children showed quiet patience with this. I often wonder if they thought "What about us? We're still here!" Now with almost seven Mother's Days behind me, I try to accentuate what I do have. This does not happen overnight. I found that in celebrating my surviving children, I could still honor Nina's memory and find ways to include her as well. I have developed a ritual where I get up early on that morning and bring flowers out to the cemetery. I bring a flower and a note to some of the mothers that I know who have buried children there to tell them I am thinking of them and their child. There is something very healing when reaching out to others. I then sit by my daughter's grave-site on the spring-green grass listening to the sweet call of a robin. I bring her a flower and write in her journal telling her how thankful I am to be her mother; how much I love and miss her. That is our private time together; the rest of the day is spent honoring my other children.

Mother's Day and Father's Day are holidays especially created for us. Try to get through them the best that you can, in whatever way feels right for you. Truly, only you know what that is. Whether it is alone those first few years or with people that you love and who understand, do something that you find comforting. It is your day, for you were the giver of a precious life—you held a miracle in your arms. Even as powerfully destructive as death is, even that cannot take those memories away from you—they are your child's gift to you.

With gentle thoughts and peace on your special day,

Cathy L. Seehuetter ~ TCF, St. Paul, MNL

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.

A Letter to My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here.
 Why? How can this be? Someone tell
 me the reason, the answer. How can I
 fill the void, the space once so full of
 life? What will I do? How will I be
 strong for others when the sting of
 pain is so real, so near? Though every-
 one seems calm, my soul screams at
 the injustice, the unfairness of losing
 you. I miss you. I think of you every
 day and feel you in my heart always.
 Whatever the reason for your leaving,
 I know your living had a reason.
 Despite the brevity of your life, you
 lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed
 us with your presence, your special-
 ness. I have only to think of you to
 feel the joy you've left as a legacy.
 You shaped the purpose of my life. I
 can see the world through your eyes.

Robin Holemon
 ~ TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL



*“The most beautiful
 things in this world
 cannot be seen or
 touched—they are felt
 by the human heart.”*

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



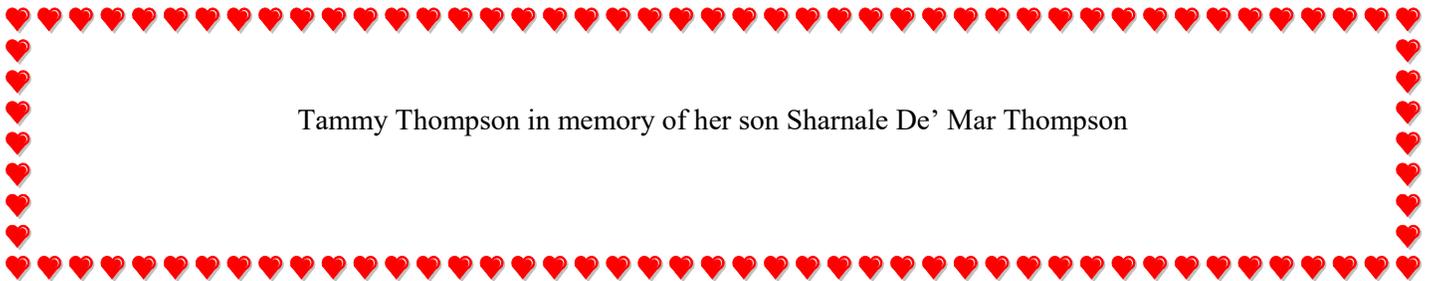
A Love Gift is a donation to honor a child who has died, or as a memorial for a relative or friend.

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.



Tammy Thompson in memory of her son Sharnale De' Mar Thompson



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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.

Saying Goodbye

It hurts me yet it heals me
 I see it and wish it were in its previous form
 I smile because it's visiting me,
 It's color is intense
 Yellow like marigolds,
 It gently flutters past me
 And I can feel its friendly affection,
 It is beautiful
 It brings to me strength for a new day,
 Its spirit is that of a girl I once knew,
 Drawing attention when in view,
 And as it drifts away
 I do something I never got to do,
 I say goodbye
 To my friend,
 To my angel,
 To that yellow butterfly.



by Caitlin Daniels in memory
 of Sarah Harvey

A Father Mourns Too

I just watched another TV commercial for cologne, which is the first sign of the approach of Father's Day. Like other fathers, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen—my son's life, an opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are his age, a chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead, I will get up on that day, having called my own father the night before to wish him a happy Father's Day, and I will go to the cemetery to place flowers on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time and then return home to my wife and new infant son. This year we will have a greater measure of peace because of the birth of our son, but I shall always have a hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I die. Like many bereaved fathers, I have felt misunderstood about how a father should mourn and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such a belief in the strength of maternal love and do such a good job ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at my son's memorial service was how was my wife dealing with this tragedy, to the longtime friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark commercial, it seems that many around us have difficulty understanding a father's grief. So, support and love is needed and needed badly. Of course, we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. I hope that bereaved fathers will not be forgotten on Father's Day. It is often said that we don't often talk of our emotional needs and are reluctant to show our pain, but we too need love when we hurt. Please remember us on Father's Day and remember that the cute little commercials that hurt mothers in May take their toll on fathers in June.

Doug Hughes ~ TCF, Las Vegas, NV



“A significant part of each parent died when our children died. Yet, a crucial part of each child lives in the hearts of every mother and father. Neither time nor death will erase that bond. It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.”

—Annette Mennen Baldwin

Bereaved Parents

Different ages
 Different stages
 Different issues
 Same pain
 Daily strain
 Occasional tissues
 Our children have died
 Often is all we know
 A fact we fear to hide
 Despite our ever-present woe
 We live with pride
 Though broken-hearted
 To love, remember, and grow



Victor Montemurro
 ~ TCF, Medford, NY

My April Child

When our daughters were growing up the arrival of springtime was a favorite time of the year, filled with anticipation of the coming of special days of family fun. The freshness of the air, the brilliant colors of springtime trees and flowers, and the song of the birds returned from their winter retreat resounded the message of hope and that life was good. We had survived another cold, snowy Michigan winter and were soon to be rewarded with blue sky, sunshine and temperatures well above freezing!

Birthdays in our family were a time of celebration together. Each year Larry, Anna, Debbie and I, and perhaps a friend or two, would celebrate Anna's April birthday by dining at her favorite Mexican restaurant. There would be lots of silliness and laughter. During her teenage years, Anna would always forewarn us not to have the staff come to our table to sing their crazy birthday song. Of course, since we always insisted that our role as parents was to embarrass our children, her threats and warnings could not stop our tomfoolery. I believe she secretly enjoyed the attention.

As Mother's Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories... That was before...

Then the unthinkable happened. My April child died. How could those special days of love and togetherness, laughter and fun become among the most-dreaded days a mother must face? How could those days that we had once anticipated with joy and excitement bring such unbelievable heartache and confusion, loneliness and tears?

During those first few years we were simply lost. This was new, undesired, and certainly not requested, territory that we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away on her birthday. For several years we did just that. With hearts filled with the numbness of fresh grief, our restructured family of three would hop in the car and head out-of-town. We would spend the day busying ourselves with whatever it took to survive. We would laugh half-heartedly, share memories, or cry together as we struggled to discover our new identity as a family without Anna's physical presence.

As always, only a few short weeks following Anna's birthday Mother's Day would arrive right on schedule. The traditions we had come to love and enjoy became intensely painful. It became an impossible task to attend church services or go out for brunch. Seeing families enjoying their togetherness pierced my heart with an endless ache. My tear-filled eyes burned at the thought of being surrounded by "intact" families. Feelings of anger and resentment overwhelmed my heart. On the inside I wanted to lash out at all those mothers and fathers who were surrounded by all of their children and those sisters and brothers who had no clue what it would be like to lose a sibling. As the day drew to a close, I felt tremendous relief that it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

It seems impossible that it has been nine birthdays and nine Mothers' Days since Anna died. In my heart it was only yesterday. I can still see her smile and hear her laugh. I can feel the warmth of a quick hug as she heads out the door. With each passing year comes a new reality of what it means to be a bereaved parent, of what it means to find a new normal for our lives. The pain continues to occasionally catch me off guard, but it is softer now. The tears still come, but less frequently. Warm memories bring joyful moments to the emptiness. I smile quietly to myself, reassured that Anna lives on in our hearts and lives, as well as in the hearts and lives of those around us. Once again, each April we celebrate the day of her birth, for her life has been a gift of unimaginable joy. Our traditional Mother's Day rituals have changed to new ones. There is more laughter now, fewer painful tears. I rejoice that I can celebrate that I am Debbie's Mom, and now Scott's mother-in-law, as well! Life is good.

The winter has been long and cold, as has been the winter of our grief. Springtime has arrived. The sunshine and blue sky, the purple crocus and yellow daffodils pushing through the warming earth bring hope of renewal and reassurance that life continues. Although there is an irreparable hole in my soul and an emptiness in my heart that will never leave, I am forever grateful that Anna lived with us for 23 years. I am eternally thankful that I am and I always will be Anna's Mom. May the warmth and brilliance of springtime fill your hearts with times of peace and hope and love.

Paula Funk ~ TCF, Petoskey, MI

Adjusted

“It's been several years since
your son died,”

They say, “Surely, you must
have adjusted by now.”

Yes, I am adjusted—

Adjusted to feeling pain

And sadness and grief and guilt
and loss.

Adjusted to hurting and
unexpected tears.

Adjusted to seeing people made
uncomfortable upon

Hearing me say “My son died.”

Adjusted to losing my best
friend because I'm not
always “up.”

Adjusted to people acting as if
grief is contagious.

And TCF meetings are
“morbid.”

Adjusted? Oh, yes, to many
things.

Knowing I won't hear his
voice but listening for it still.

Knowing I won't see him
drive his Toronado,

But staring at every one I see.
Adjusted to feeling empty on
his birthday

And wishing for just one
more time with him.

Adjusted: As life goes on—

To realizing I cannot expect
everyone I meet

To wear a bandage— just
because I am still bleeding.

Shirley Blakely Curle
~TCF, Central AR



I first met Hazel and Mickey Smith in 1996 when a group of twelve people met to discuss the formation of a TCF chapter in Fayetteville. They had lost their only child, Randy, at the age of thirty two on January 12, 1994 of viral pneumonia.

Hazel was a dear sweet friend. She and Mickey served the chapter for twenty two years as librarians and advisory board members. No matter what needed to be done, Hazel and Mickey were first to step forward. Hazel was the chapter historian. Keeping a notebook filled with everything from A-Z about the chapter. We became close friend both inside and outside TCF. Hazel was a kind and giving



person. Everyone loved her, she was so very sweet. I know she touched and helped hundreds of bereaved parents. Now she is with her beloved Randy, which makes me happy for her. Everyone who knew her will miss this sweet “angel”. I'm sure she is watching over us. Our love to Mickey. Hazel, until we meet again.

MEETINGS



Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, our face to face meetings are on hold. ZOOM meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:pm. An access code to the meeting will be emailed the week prior to each meeting and is also listed on the home page of the website. Notification of the return to face to face meetings will be handled in the same manor.

tcffayetteville.org.

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

“Those of us who have survived many years have learned that over the long run, the human mind chooses to recall only the best of memories—the happy ones, the humorous ones, the sentimental ones—and we learn that even the pain of unhappy memories diminishes.”

—Shirley Ottman

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:

April

Joey Jackson April 1
 Erran Dawson April 5
 Christine Gable Powell April 8
 Dustin Nerren April 10
 Anthony "Brian" Smith April 10
 Ralph Lanier April 14
 Chris Eggleston April 15
 Brandon "Astro" Huston April 16
 Amy Lynn Zinsser April 21
 Izhia Kraut April 23
 Scott Tyree April 26
 Andrew Beutelspacher April 29

May

Gregory Lovings May 7
 Allison Bennett May 8
 Thomas Payne Hollers May 22
 Michael Cline May 28
 Rachel Berry May 28
 Whitney Berry May 28



June

Michael Pizzarella June 5
 Kylon "Kyle" Smith June 7
 Amy Elizabeth German June 8
 Christopher Hrvoj June 8
 Melissa Lynn Thornton June 16
 Christopher Ortega June 20
 Joshua Hunt June 24
 Micah Paul Laymon June 25
 James "Randy" Smith June 25



*Grievers use a
 very simple calendar
 Before & After*



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.

April

Christine Gable Powell April 5

Spencer Walden April 5

Michael Cline April 9

Manzonian Hall April 9

Darrell Sweatt April 14

Glenda Hudson April 16

Carissa Gillis April 17

Jameine Clark April 18

Ian Redshaw April 18

Christopher "Chris" Hondros April 20

Izhia Kraut April 23

Lamont Saffore April 24

Miranda Butler April 24

May

Phillip Berry May 17

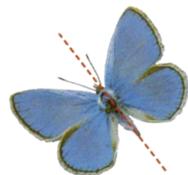
Derrell Lee Dean May 17

Thomas Payne Hollers May 22

Lexi Minyon May 25

Christine Bailey May 25

Amber Marie Hall May 26



Rachel Berry May 28

Whitney Berry May 28

Robert Stevens May 28

June

Joshua Hunt June 1

Chris Eggleston June 2

Querokee Vélez June 4

Randy Lee Dalton June 22

Keith Parker June 22

Timothy Bowman June 22

Wayne Tyner, Jr. June 26

Joey Jackson June 29

*"So when tomorrow starts
without me,
don't
think we're
far apart, For
every time you think
of me
I'm right here
in your heart."*

-David M Romano-

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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.**