

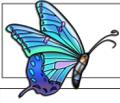


The Compassionate Friends Fayetteville Area Chapter



Volume 21, Issue 1

January 2017



The Holidays are Behind Us



It is the new year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of both, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there among all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also a thankfulness for the memory.

Now we look out at the winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet underneath the hard crust, the energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness of a grief so fresh that we feel numb - a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard, our throats tight from tears shed or unshed,

our chests banded tightly by our mourning heart.

If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days. Yet, as we live these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we too, in our searching, find places of warmth and change and love and growth deep within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be armed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved ones, to talk about even that first dim shape of new hope or of new acceptance or of new understanding or of new love.

These are the new roots, born of our love for our child, that are forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deep way.

~Marie Andres TCF So. MD
Chap., MD

A NEW YEAR WISH

I wish you all a blessing
As the New Year approaches us all
May this year bring
gentle memories
Of our child that God has called
I wish you all some sunshine
That clouds can cover
on some days
I pray your hearts will mend
As mine has along the way
I thank God for our TCF "family"
and the Online Sharing each day
For so many are always there
To help so many find their way
I wish I could take each one of you
And show you what I've learned
As time has helped my own heart
Your feelings are my concern
The Holidays are the hardest
As you all very well know
Yet we can find healing
As the New Year unfolds
May you all know I'm thinking
About each and every one of you
I give you all my blessing
And hope the New year is
gentle for you

Sharon Bryant,

TCF Atlanta Online
Sharing (Alabama)

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Winter Dreaming

Winter sun slants down, no
warmth in it's rays
Warm spring is sleeping, under
the snow she lays.
Barren tree branches dance in
time to the cold winds song
Nights are dark and oh so long.
But your memories are my
blanket of warmth
And I pull them close to me, wait-
ing for spring to come forth.
A time of warm breeze, to chase
away the cold
But now in the winter, warm
memories I hold.

by Sheila Simmons, TCF Atlanta

***Death leaves a
heartache
no one can heal,
Love leaves a
memory
no one can steal.***

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.

New Year, Old Memories

Sun going down in the
 western sky
 A lonely feeling of dread inside.
 On this eve of the old year,
 the new waiting to be
 I reflect on days past, and ponder
 the new ones I wait to see.
 What will they bring, will
 they be like the old?
 I wait and wonder for
 them it unfold.
 Another year gone, one
 more mark on time
 Yes another year gone,
 But you remain on my mind.
 I gather the memories of
 all the days past
 For I know in this new
 year they will still last.
 Into this new year I timidly step
 Along with the love so
 precious kept.
 New Days will come,
 old ones will pass.
 But my love for you
 will forever last.

by Sheila Simmons,
 TCF Atlanta
 In Memory of my son Steven

A Love Song

The mention of my child's name
 May bring tears to my eyes,
 But it never fails to bring
 Music to my ears.
 If you are really my friend,
 Please, don't keep me
 From hearing the beautiful music.
 It soothes my broken heart
 And fills my soul with love.

~Nancy Williams, TCF NJ



I'M AN ANGEL

(A Child's reply)

Where I am now you cannot see,
 For I am spirit, fancy free.
 Where shadows end,
 no day or night;
 I am in heaven, in the light.
 And so wherever you may roam,
 Remember now that I am home.
 Quite different to the one I left;
 It's sad to see you're still bereft.
 So here I stay where
 there is peace.
 No hurt, no pain, just
 sweet release.
 I was the product of your love
 A child sent down from up above,
 To walk a brief time
 there with you;
 A life of hope and meaning too.
 I know you wanted me to stay
 And even though you
 knelt to pray,
 The angels came and lifted me
 High up above the clouds to see
 Another time, another space
 Where love surrounds
 this holy place.
 Remember me but do not grieve,
 I'm happy now, you must believe.
 So keep the faith
 although it's hard
 For you to go that extra yard.
 I am at peace, I'll say again
 There is just sunshine here,
 no rain.
 So live your lives so full and free
 And maybe sometimes cry for me;
 You're only human proud and tall,
 Whilst I'm an angel after all.

John Bartlett TCF
 Queensland Australia

Celebrating Life Is a Better Way to Cope with Death

Today marks a week since my youngest brother's birthday. But instead of recalling memories of the family all here together eating cake and ice cream and celebrating the joyous occasion, my mind conjures up images that only seem to surface twice a year, on Jeffrey's birthday and on the anniversary of his death. Seven years ago Jeffrey committed suicide. Though I was only 14 at the time and so many years have passed since his death, when his birthday rolls around each year, so does the pain. Today, however, is my last day for mourning. About three years ago I decided that instead of fighting back my emotions or feebly attempting to act as though everything is okay, on his birthday and on the anniversary of his death, I would allow myself a week to mourn and heal. I have even developed a ritual. On these two occasions I dress all in white, sit in a private place with the lights turned off, put on Bette Middler's "Wind Beneath My Wings" (the song she sang in the movie "Beaches," right after her best friend died), light a single white candle, and sort through old photographs of Jeffrey and the family. The color white, for me, has always represented light, rebirth and newness. So wearing all white is my way of saying, "Instead of mourning his death, I will celebrate his life." Lighting a single candle stems from our Catholic faith. It is a way of showing that the fire of his spirit is still alive. And with the heat of the candle I can feel the warmth of his presence. Listening to Midler's song helps me say all the things I didn't get a chance to say. Especially when I carefully listen to the words and realize how much they apply to Jeffrey and me. The song seems to have been written for us. When we were younger, I was the star of the family. The straight-A student who sang in the church choir and excelled in academic and athletic competitions. Jeffrey was the quiet one. He was reserved, an average student, and spent most of his time reading or practicing Ninjitsu. So it was no surprise that I commanded most of the attention from my parents. This didn't seem to bother Jeffrey, however. He was easy going, a good listener, and best of all, he always supported me in everything I did. I thought he was the perfect brother. Losing him was extremely hard for me. Everyone kept telling me to cry and let out the grief I was feeling. Someone even said that a year from now I wouldn't remember how painful this experience was. But even now I remember how hard it was to return to school and my everyday life and pretend that everything was fine, acting as though I was dealing with his death and would be okay. I know they meant well by sharing their condolences and advising me on the best way to deal with my grief. But in the end I realized that no one could truly understand what I was going through, and their remedies for relief may have worked for them, but for me, I needed something more. The first birthday after his death was especially hard, and I dealt with it in a very different way than I do now. I spent the entire month wearing black, closing myself off from everyone around me and crying every time I had the inclination. I don't regret dealing with his death that way, but I do find solace knowing that seven years later, I can silently mourn without wearing black, without shutting myself off from the outside world and without wearing a mask of happiness. I have healed at my own pace and in my own time. And I understand now that is the only advice I could ever give someone experiencing a similar tragedy: Take your time and deal with it in your own way. Only your way is the right way. Now I deal with Jeffrey's death the best way I know how--by celebrating his life. And in that, I am at peace.

--Karma Lowe, Brazosport Chapter, Lake Jackson, TX
Lovingly lifted from
TCF Atlanta Jan/Feb 2001 Newsletter

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.



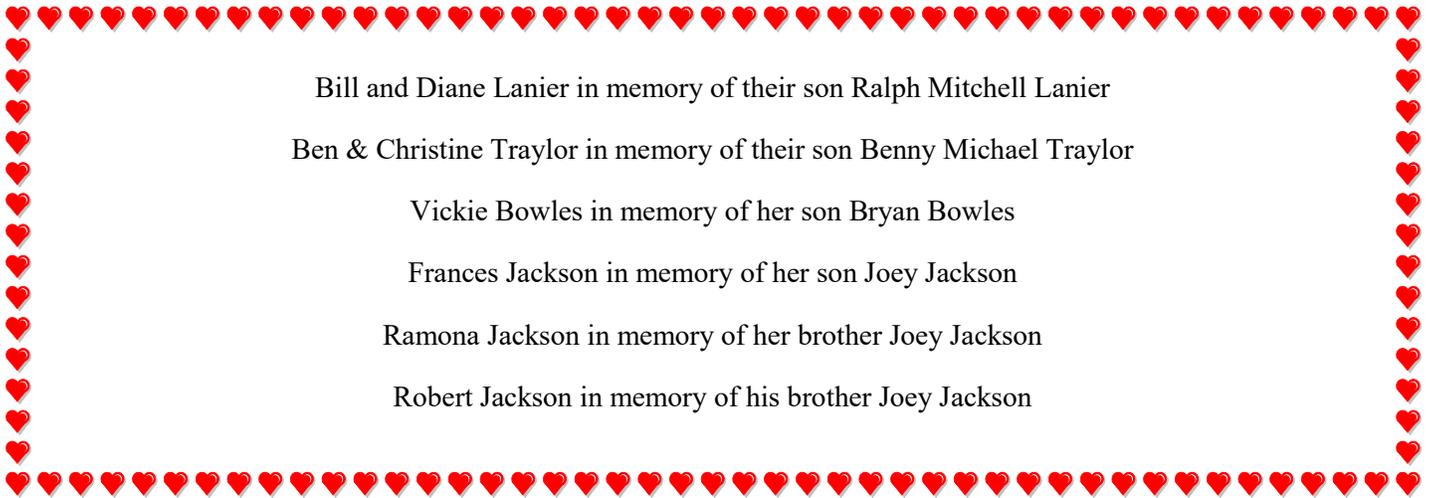
Love Gifts



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.



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

Ben & Christine Traylor in memory of their son Benny Michael Traylor

Vickie Bowles in memory of her son Bryan Bowles

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



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Regional Coordinator for the Fayetteville Area Chapter of TCF

Donna & Ralph Goodrich
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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.

SYMBOLS

We are fast approaching Valentine's Day, filled with symbols of love ... hearts and roses. As a young schoolgirl, I can remember wishing I would get a valentine from someone special. My friends and I would count how many valentines we had received, feeling certain that the more you received, the more it indicated your popularity. As I grew older, I was thrilled when I received flowers from that special someone. Surely this was, true love. As a married woman, Valentine's Day was always special. Glen and I usually went out to dinner, and I often received flowers or a special gift that said, I love you! While those gifts were much appreciated, I would be hard pressed now to tell you what we did or what I received. However, one Valentine's Day will stay frozen in my memory forever, February 14, 1983. Glen took my arm and steadied me as I walked into a mortuary to view the body of our 17 year old son Nathan, who had been killed by a drunken driver on February 10. We had ordered a spray of seventeen red roses to be placed on his casket. When I ordered those flowers, I was stunned to discover how high priced roses are on Valentine's Day! At first, I had decided I would be content with carnations. Then the florist saw in my eyes how much I wanted my last gift to my son to be the very best...red, long stemmed roses. The florist promised she would provide us with roses, regardless of how little we could afford to pay. That afternoon, I drank in every detail of my boy, his hair, the bruise on his face, the National Honor Society pin on his lapel, those wonderful, strong hands. Then I pulled myself together for a very special appointment. I was the Academic Counselor at Nathan's high school, and we had arranged a special viewing for the students prior to the general visitation. I watched as young girls brought beautiful bouquets of red roses they had received from their boyfriends, but now they were placing them below our son's casket. Their final act of love for a very dear friend. It has taken me a long time to be able to actually celebrate Valentine's Day in a normal fashion. In fact, I guess I never will be able to do that. Valentine's Day is no longer a superficial type of holiday where I just send cards or give candy or flowers without much deliberation beforehand. The symbols are still there; I just see them differently now:

THE ROSE: A symbol of love that cannot be separated by death.

THE HEART: Broken, bruised, and bandaged, but not defeated. And now, there's one more symbol:

The HAND: As we offer our hands to each other in friendship, in understanding, in strength, we are saying:

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE,

WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS!

May your Valentine's Day be filled with roses that will encourage your broken heart and give you strength to offer a helping hand to others who are grieving.

--By Marilyn Heavilin TCF Redlands

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

SHARED THOUGHTS ON "MEMORIES of GRIEF"

Our son, Douglas, died 15 years ago on February 7th. Time does not erase the memory of those early years when my pain was so intense. I began each day with a prayer that the world would end, so there would never be another bereaved parent. I did not want anyone to experience the degree of agony I was enduring. I never once regretted having Doug. I've always felt the joy he brought was greater than the death. SO, as I look back, that was a foolish wish. Had the world ended, all those beautiful subsequent children would never have been. I was looking for a quick fix to my pain.

Frequently, we get caught up in hurrying our recovery. Our pain is so intense, we feel we can't endure one more day. Once the natural order has been violated, a deluge of fears overcomes us. It is very normal to be out of control in such an abnormal situation. It is important to recognize our grief, for much of it can be resolved through expressing ourselves. When talking to other bereaved parents and siblings, we realize our feelings are very natural reactions.

There are many books on grief that can offer a sense of direction. There are also many guidelines that warn of pitfalls. These are great tools to aid in our healing. But I feel nothing is as comforting as another bereaved person saying "I know". If you have been there, you fully understand. The love you give is unconditional and this type of support is what sustains us.

If we devote time to grief work, and deal with our problems as they arise, it helps to clear our hearts and minds so we can make room for the new situations that we must handle. If we shelve our feelings, we soon have such an insurmountable load, that we can't deal with any of it. We must always take one day at a time, and face it little by little. Some days we may have such little strength that we not only did not gain ground, but we have slipped back. Don't run away from it, meeting it head on, helps to gain a better foot hold.

We slowly begin to heal, the happy memories will bring some smiles rather than pain. Our sorrow softens, and the death becomes less important. The life of our loved ones become more important. We appreciate the beauty and happiness our loved ones brought. We can not expect to return to the way we were. Life will be different as we deal with the "memories of grief". But that is a far cry from dealing with grief itself. We will always regret the death. After surviving the grief, the scar we carry becomes tolerable.

I enjoy life again. My vacations are wonderful. I look forward to each new day. I enjoy being creative. I look forward to family gatherings. I feel life is worth hanging around for. Believe me when I tell you I dreaded each of these in my early grief. I could not even feel complete joy when my first granddaughter was born. I just couldn't feel anything. There wasn't any "complete joy" to be had. This particular grandchild has brought me so much joy in subsequent years, and now I know it was my grief that denied me these pleasures.

I wish for you that your grief will turn to "memories of grief", and happiness will fill your lives again....
God Bless.

by: Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge
January February 2002 TCF Atlanta Area Newsletter

"It is better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all."

The Sower's Seeds

There is an old Chinese tale about a woman whose only son died. In her grief, she went to the holy man and said, "What prayers, what magical incantations do you have to bring my son back to life?"

Instead of sending her away or reasoning with her, he said to her, "Fetch me a mustard seed from a home that has never known sorrow. We will use it to drive the sorrow out of your life." The woman went off at once in search of that magical mustard seed. She came first to a splendid mansion, knocked at the door, and said, "I am looking for a home that has never known sorrow. Is this such a place? It is very important to me." They told her, "You've certainly come to the wrong place," and began to describe all the tragic things that recently had befallen them. The woman said to herself, "Who is better able to help these poor, unfortunate people than I, who have had misfortune of my own?" She stayed to comfort them, then went on in search of a home that had never known sorrow. But wherever she turned, in hotels and in other places, she found one tale after another of sadness and misfortune. She became so involved in ministering to other people's grief that ultimately she forgot about her quest for the magical mustard seed, never realizing that it had, in fact, driven the sorrow out of her life.

Brian Cavanaugh, T.O.R.

~lovingly lifted from Provo TCF Chapter Newsletter -

A Love Story

Once upon a time, there was an island where all the feelings lived: Happiness, Sadness, Knowledge, and all of the others including Love. One day it was announced to the feelings that the island would sink, so all repaired their boats and left. Love wanted to persevere until the last possible moment. When the island was almost sinking, Love decided to ask for help.

Richness was passing by Love in a grand boat. Love said, "Richness, can you take me with you?" "Richness answered, "No, I can't. There is a lot of gold and silver in my boat. There is no place here for you.

"Love decided to ask Vanity who was also passing by in a beautiful vessel, "Vanity, please help me!" "I can't help you Love. You are all wet and might damage my boat." Vanity answered.

Sadness was close by so Love asked for help, "Sadness, let me go with you." "Oh....Love, I am so sad that I need to be by myself!"

Happiness passed by Love too, but she was so happy that she did not even hear when Love called her!

Suddenly, there was a voice, "Come Love, I will take you." It was an elder. Love felt so blessed and overjoyed that he even forgot to ask the elder his name. When they arrived at dry land, the elder went his own way. Love realizing how much he owed the elder and asked Knowledge, another elder, "Who helped me?"

"It was Time," Knowledge answered.

"Time?" asked Love. "But why did Time help me?"

Knowledge smiled with deep wisdom and answered, "Because, only Time is capable of understanding how great Love is."



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



MEETINGS



First Tuesday of each month
At 7:00pm;

January through May 2017 meetings will be held in room 224 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

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 Grahan 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
 Janes 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

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

(Correction)

Sean Payne, Jr. September 27

Sean's birthday was listed incorrectly in the last newsletter. My apologies to his parents Sean and Cris.



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
 Karlie 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
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Secretary/Treasurer



The Compassionate Friends
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Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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We're on the Web
www.tcffayetteville.org
And on Facebook too

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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.**