



The Compassionate Friends Fayetteville Area Chapter



Volume 19, Issue 1

January 2015



Resolutions



Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this new year shouldn't be better.

Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself.

Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you

would not necessarily get a very good idea of what our meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you

can become more involved in our chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs.

Have a happier New Year!

Pat Akery
TCF, Medford, OR



Inside This Issue		Our Quarterly News	
<i>Resolutions</i>	1	<p>The December Candle Lighting service was beautiful. Even though our mischievous little angels played a trick on us and stopped the slide show midway through. Jenniffer Hall was able to get it restarted after the computer cooled down. I would like to thank her and all the others who took part reading poems, reading credos and lighting the five candles. Also thanks to everyone who brought refreshments. The service would not have been possible without the help of everyone.</p> <p>Cape Fear Valley Medical Center will no longer be able to allow TCF meetings to be held at Cape Fear Valley due to space limitations. Our next four meetings will be in room 210 of the General Class Room Building at Fayetteville Technical Community College. The address is 2817 Ft. Bragg Road, Fayetteville, NC 28303.</p> <p>This building is adjacent to the one that our January meeting was in. Parking is available in front and on the side of the building. Our new meeting time will be at 7:00 pm. Hopefully this will turn into a long term location for us.</p> <p>Well we all made it through another holiday and I know some of you had your doubts. My new year's wish for you is one of Hope. Hope that the coming year is easier, brighter, your grief is more manageable and the year is filled with sweet happy memories.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jennifer German Secretary/Treasurer</p>	
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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.

Catching Butterflies

It often hurt to come upon reminders of my son
 Tho' often since I lost him I would search around for one
 Which always brought on sadness and the tears that I would shed
 Were caused by names or faces, all things that I would read.
 But then one day I came upon a man who'd lost his son
 I found that things I ran from, he wouldn't even shun.
 But rather he would treasure and I said wondered why
 He told me that he called them "Catching Butterflies."
 This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to hear more
 And learned that he took all of them and carefully would store
 All of the reminders that I chose to push away
 He would tuck deep down inside his heart each and every day.
 Now a name or likeness when catching me off guard
 Does not upset me as it did and I don't find it hard
 For now instead I see these times as opportunities
 To see my son awakened in these new fresh memories.

Dottie Williams
 TCF Pittsburgh PA

To Start a New Year

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

Tom Spray
 TCF Ventura, CA

MEETINGS

First Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm
 February through May meetings will be held in room 210 of the
 General Class Building at Fayetteville Technical Community
 College. 2817 Ft. Bragg Road, Fayetteville, NC 28303 (across the
 street from the Barbeque Hut). Meeting location and information
 will always be posted on our website www.tcffayetteville.org
 Contact Jennifer German at (910) 245-3177 or
jojegerman@outlook.com if you have any questions.



*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.

When

When your mind cannot find an answer, open your heart and ask for peace.

Sascha Wagner
 © The Compassionate Friends

Choosing Life

“It will never be the same. Never.” As a bereaved parent, you have often heard or said these words to express grief’s profound feelings of sorrow and disorientation. Your life has suddenly taken an unexpected course that appears both uncharted and endless. Bewildered, you vainly search for pathways back to your former life, until you confront the reality that there is no way back. Your child is dead forever. It is then that you may say, “...never the same.”

This is the aspect of grief that Simon Stephens calls “The Valley of the Shadow.” It is that very long time between the death of your child and your reinvestment in life. *Between*. It is not supposed to be a permanent resting place. Although some people do take up residence in the valley, it is a transition from the death of your child to life with renewed purpose.

The key to this transition is yourself. You must choose between life and the valley. You and only you can decide. And you must make that decision again and again, each day.

Giving in to the hopelessness of the valley is tempting. Choosing to move on toward life requires a great deal of work. You must struggle with the pain of grief in order to resolve it. It is a daily struggle full of tears, anger, guilt and self-doubt, but it is the only alternative to surrendering yourself to the valley.

Little by little you choose to move on. Little by little you progress toward the other side of the valley. It takes a very long time, far longer than your friends or relatives suspected. Far longer than you had believed – even prayed – that it would be. When one day you find yourself able to do more than choose merely to live but also how to live, you will know you are leaving the valley of the shadow. There will still be more work to do, more struggle and choosing. The valley, however, stretches behind rather than in front of you.

When you have resolved your grief by reinvesting in life, you will be able to realize that nothing is ever “the same.” Life is change. We would not have it be otherwise, for that is the valley of the shadow. Change has the promise of beginning and the excitement of discovery.

Life is never the same. Life is change. Choose life!

Marcia F. Alig
 TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey

TO MY SISTER

You touched us all, you loved us all,
 Forever giving, forever caring,
 Forever forgiving.
 Never wanting in return.
 Blessed are those who shared your life
 Rich are those who carry your memories.
 Please rest now; your chores we will finish.
 'Til we meet again . . .

Cindy Keltz
 Arlington Heights, IL



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

Inga Hondros in memory of her son Chris Hondros

Mike and Petra Syfrett in memory of their son Archie Kagy

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

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

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

Frances Jackson in memory of her son Joey Jackson

Kimberly Minyon in memory of her daughter Lexi Minyon



The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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

Regional Coordinator for the Fayetteville Area Chapter of TCF

Donna & Ralph Goodrich

704-822-4503 or iluvu2lauren@gmail.com



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.

Marilyn Heavilin
TCF Redlands, CA
In Memory of my son, Nathan

Valentines in Heaven

Are there Valentines in Heaven?
Are there Red Hearts everywhere?
Do they line the golden streets,
Or is that very rare?
I wish that I could send you one,
Right through Heaven's Gate,
To say how much we miss you,
On this special date.
I'd like to send a Candy Heart,
That is printed, "I Luv U,"

And maybe you would whisper back,
"I know, I Luv U too."

Marilyn Rollins
TCF Lake-Porter, IN
For All Our Children

Our First Born Child

No words can express,
How he meant to us,
Our first born child,
Who we both loved dearly

As unique as he was,
Clever and fun,
He was more than just a son.

His jokes were hilarious,
His dance moves in comparison,
Making everyone laugh,
And feeling loved.

So our dear little boy,
We will miss you so,
Greater than you will ever know

But thank you for the memories,
Forever in your legacy
We will never forget you,
From your parents,
To our son

Ellaine and Alex Miralles and Family
TCF Guam Chapter
In Memory of Alexander John F. Miralles



A Grief Journey in Review

As I write this I am listening to Johnny Horton singing “Whispering Pines.” This is a melancholy song, yet a sweet one. It reminded me of the day that my son died and the journey I have taken since then.

Todd was in a car accident in mid-December.....almost on the winter solstice. He died on December 19. This is significant to me. I was raised in the cold, snowy part of the country. My son was returning from that area when the accident that took his life occurred. I remember recounting the events second by second when my son died. I remember how Todd disliked the shortened daylight of winter. How ironic that his death came on what was nearly the shortest day of the year.

We have just passed summer solstice. Todd has been gone for over 4 ½ years. I still miss him, and I think about him each day. I am a different person since my son died. My life has changed dramatically. The cast of characters in my life has changed somewhat. Solitude has become an important part of living for me. I no longer weep endlessly and fall asleep from exhaustion. I no longer walk the floor at night. The periods of manic rearranging of my house have slowed to something approaching normal for me.

Somewhere on this horrible journey of grief my subconscious mind accepted the fact that I will never see Todd again. I have accepted his death. I am rarely jolted by the sudden thought that Todd is not on this plane. My beautiful child, the baby who grew to be such a special man, is gone. This is part of who I am now. I now keep Todd in my heart. I talk about him with strangers as if he were still alive. With those who know me, I speak of the loss of my only child with quiet acceptance, and I share the many joys of my child’s life.

Life has begun to improve. I am even thinking of a vacation next year. I am making more plans than I have in over four years. I have accepted what I cannot change. This is a milestone for me, because I have always been able to change the variables, to make things right, to bring back normalcy. But I won’t be able to change the fact that my son has died.

Along the way I have had moments of epiphany.....only brief ones, but epiphanies of various sorts. Most of the change has been gradual. Talking with other parents, reading, writing, listening to music, to radio programs, to speakers, going to seminars, watching movies.....all of these efforts have helped me. But it was up to me to take those first steps. It was my choice to remove the crepe and add a colorful wreath to the front door. It was my choice to reach out for help and accept what those who shared my grief journey offered.

Much has changed in my life since that first year of grief. Much will change in the future. I have learned that change is the essence of life. I have learned from wonderful people; I have learned from negative people as well. Each person who transcends my life has taught me something about grief, about living, about moving forward into the light.

I don’t know where I will be in five years or ten years. I dream about my son. We often have great conversations in those dreams. Sometimes he is a small child, sometimes a grown man. When I awaken I feel as close to Todd as I will be on this earthly plane.

Shortly after the summer solstice this year, a strange thing happened. My grandson and his girlfriend came home early which was odd because they planned to be out late. I was reading and listening to a news show. “Don’t freak out, Nanny”, my grandson said. “We were in an accident.” I just looked at him.

Then I asked if he was hurt. “No, but the guy who was driving jumped out of the truck and ran away. He was doing 80 mph in the rain. He hit a curb, fishtailed, braked and spun around twice. Then the truck smashed into a utility pole. Annalee hit her head on the door panel. I bounced around in the back seat....I didn’t have a seat belt on.” The “What, what. What have you learned tonight?” I responded. “I’m never riding with him again.

I’m never riding with anyone who is drinking. I’m never riding with anyone who drives like a spaz or drinks,” he said, summarizing the situation.

That was good. I smiled. Just shortly after summer solstice my grandson escaped death. The truck was a total loss. The driver was nowhere to be found. But Todd’s son was alive, unhurt. His girlfriend was fine. I later confirmed with a deputy on the scene that it was a real miracle anyone walked away. Yet they did. They walked away from that mass of twisted steel and smashed plastic.

I like to think that my son is still on this earthly plane in some form. Watching.....watching over his children. That’s what he did in life.

And so my journey continues. I no longer “freak out” about the unchangeable. My child would be glad to know this. “You’re acting like Dad,” my grandson said. “He was always cool.”

“I guess I’m cool now. But there was a time.....”

I’ve changed. My perspective is the unique one of a mother who has lost her only child. And the journey continues until I, too, meet the angel of death.

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

Our Children & Siblings Remembered on Their Birthday's

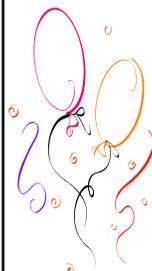
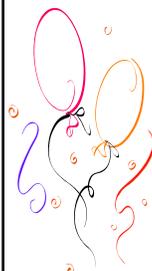
Each month some of our members face special but very painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents, grandparents, and siblings of the following children's:

January

Cynthia Turner January 7
Jeremiah Davis-Kraut January 9
Erica Graham January 10
Melba Ross August 19
George Perry January 14
Benny Traylor January 15
Wendy Hair January 25
Manzonian Hall January 25
Christine Bailey January 28

February

Victor Spearman February 1
Patrick "Pat" Shea February 2
James Campbell February 5
Juliana Wilkins February 6
Allen Arnette February 12
Amber Marie Hall February 13
Chase Shambach February 15
Pierce Matthews February 16
Daniel "Adam" Clark February 22
Ian Redshaw February 23



March

Corey Fullwood March 1
Joe Dan Rumley March 3
Robert Stevens March 4
Kyle Harris March 7
Dennis Tart March 9
Stephen Bruno March 10
Christopher "Chris" Hondros March 14
Malachi Matthews March 18
Davis Turner March 18
Talisha Morris March 22
Akiana Lopez-Sellos March 25
Sean Thomas March 28
George Lee Perry March 31



Our 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, and siblings of the following children's:

January

RaMael McArthur January 1

Nancy Noga January 7

Jeremiah Davis-Kraut January 9

Randy Smith January 12

Sean Thomas January 15

Charles Cook January 17

Kevin Harlan January 21

Erica Graham January 24

Amy Lynn Zinsser January 24

Zach Grulion January 28

February

Dennis Tart February 5

Juliana Wilkins February 6

Omar Sharaf February 8

Chad Allen Arnette February 14

Corey Fullwood February 21

Michael Pizzarella February 24

Wendy Hair February 26



March

Cody McIendon March 2

Tammy Owens March 2

Melissa Thornton March 3

Dylan Mckelvey March 5

Sharnale Thompson March 13

Davis Turner March 16

Stephen Bruno March 18

Bryan Bowles March 26

Empty Places

I drove the old way yesterday.

It'd been a while, you see.

And there, without a warning,
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday
and sadness came on strong,
taken back by so much feeling,
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait

to summon up the tears,

to say remember yesterday,

those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played
are places where I cry.

These places hold the memories
that will live as long as I.

Genesse Gentry
TCF Marin County, CA
In Memory of Lori Gentry

In This Place

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled a dreadful distance. You have come, seeking solace, understanding, hope, threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone.

In this place you can relax and breathe . . . the coats of others' expectations taken off. Walk into these few hours as into an oasis where draughts of love and memories can be quaffed.

In this place all names can be spoken; in this place each one's story may be told. We will not be discouraged by your sorrow; in this place ALL feelings, we enfold.

Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting; we do not count how many tears are shed. Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage, for the long and winding road that is ahead.

And those we love are pleased we are together. They smile down on us, and bless this day, glad for every tiny step we're taking and send their light to guide us on our way.

Traveling with us as we journey onward, sending strength for what the miles may bring, they are a part of everything we do that matters - in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.



Genesee Bourdeau Gentry
from *Catching the Light –
Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child*
Written for TCF Meeting or Conference First Timers

Fayetteville-Fort Bragg Suicide Survivor Support Group

The goal of this group is to provide support for those who have lost loved ones to suicide. Loss of a loved one to suicide is often one of the most painful and confusing experiences a person can have. Many people have found that support groups to be tremendously helpful in the healing process.

Second Thursday of every month, 6:30 – 8:00 pm.
Dates: December 11, January 8, February 12
(and every 2nd Thursday thereafter)
Geraldine Myers Recreation Center
1018 Rochester Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28305

Who is invited: Any adult who has experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide or who wants to provide support to survivors of suicide. *This is an adults-only group.*

Cost: Free

Contact Information / Facilitator: Karen Lopez, Ph.D., Psychologist, 910-502-0467 karen.lopez.phd@gmail.com

What to expect: The opportunity to talk about your loss and listen to others. Attendees will be invited to participate only to the extent that they feel comfortable. It would be okay to attend just to listen.

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



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

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We're on the Web
www.tcffayetteville.org

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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.**