



The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Published Bimonthly by The Topeka TCF Chapter

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NEWSLETTER - Issue #1
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National TCF Website:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter Website:
www.tcftopeka.org

January ~ February 2014
Editor: Susan Chan
3448 S.W. Mission Ave.
Topeka, KS 66614-3629
(785) 272-4895

JANUARY MEETING

Monday, January 27, 2014
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

What Makes Me Angry - Regardless of the circumstances of our child's death, for most of us, anger and guilt are a part of our grieving. We may not always be able to label these emotions or to acknowledge them, but they are there and we must deal with them. Failure to do so often results in our experiencing worse physical and emotional problems later on. This meeting will give us the opportunity to talk about what makes us angry, who are we angry with, and how we can find nondestructive ways to release our anger and the negativity that often comes from it. The same is true for guilt - a common emotion with bereaved parents, but also one that needs to be acknowledged and let go of so true healing can begin.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Monday, February 24, 2014
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Forgiveness - Many bereaved people find that issues of forgiveness can play a big part in their healing process. Sometimes the inability to forgive can prove a stumbling block towards growth and healing on your grief journey. Let's talk about forgiveness - do we feel the need to forgive ourselves for something we may have said or done while our child was still alive? Do we need to be able to forgive those we may feel were in some way responsible for our child's death? Do we need to forgive our child for actions they may have taken that resulted in their death? Forgiveness can be a complex topic and we will try and explore some of the reasons why forgiveness can be a healing element of our grief work.

Meetings are always held on the fourth Monday of each month unless otherwise noted. Listen to radio & TV for cancellations due to severe weather conditions.

This newsletter is sponsored by:

*Margaret Kramar in loving memory of her son
Spenser Thomas Good who was born on January 30th*

*Leonel & Judy Urdaneta in loving memory of his daughter Carmen Christina
Urdaneta who was born on February 13th and died on February 3rd*

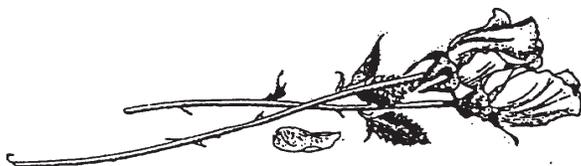


The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purposes are to promote and aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experience following the death of a child of any age, from any cause; and to foster the physical and emotional health of all bereaved parents, grandparents and surviving siblings.

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Mark Your Calendars!

4th Annual Memorial Walk to Remember
Saturday, April 12, 2014
Snyder's Cabin in Gage Park
Details and Registration Form in this Newsletter



We Need Not Walk Alone

From the Chapter Coordinator

Local Topeka TCF Chapter contact info:
Phone - 785-272-4895; Email - chanx2@cox.net)

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

We have begun a new year, and for many of you, it will be the first year since the death of your beloved child, grandchild or sibling. We hope you will be open to the help and support that is available to you through the Topeka TCF Chapter. If you have not yet attended a support group meeting, we hope you will give it a try. You are never required to participate or speak at a meeting, but many newly bereaved people find it helpful to listen to the discussion from those who are farther down the road on their grief journey. It is very empowering to be with other people who understand what it means to have a child die. Our lending library and free hand-outs offer you lots of helpful information on the many aspects of grief related to the death of a child, grandchild or sibling. The dates, times and topics of each month's meetings can be found on the front page of this newsletter or on our Chapter website. You are always welcome.

I hope many of you have had the opportunity to check out our new Chapter website - www.tcftopeka.org. The site contains lots of good information and links to many other online bereavement resources. You can also check out the upcoming meeting dates and topics and information on our Chapter's special Memorial Events.

Our December Memorial Candle Lighting event brought together about 65 people to remember and honor the lives of all those children who left too soon. Once again we featured the Memorial Photo Tribute coordinated by Damon Tucker. We want to continue to expand this slide show and encourage you to submit a photo of your child to be included at future Chapter events. Information on how to submit a photo may be found elsewhere in this newsletter. The Memorial Candle Lighting offered us a time amid the hectic hustle and bustle of the holiday season to stop and remember that special life. Many thanks to all those who helped with this event and participated in the Program of Remembrance.

Finally, please check out the two inserts in this newsletter. The Blue Insert contains information and a registration form for our TCF Chapter's 4th Annual Walk to Remember to be held on April 12th at Snyder's Cabin in Gage Park. We encourage you to not only register for the Walk to Remember, but please also think about asking friends and family to sponsor you for the event. Also, think about asking your employer if they would consider becoming a Sponsor for the event. All of the money raised on the Walk is used for Topeka TCF Chapter expenses including the printing and mailing of this newsletter, our First Contact outreach to newly bereaved families, our Lending Library and other Chapter expenses.



The Yellow Insert is our annual newsletter mailing list update. If you wish to continue to receive our free newsletter and do not fall within the One Exception Category, you will need to return the form in order to remain on the list after May 1st. If you are able, we also appreciate you sending a Love Gift or Newsletter Sponsorship in memory of your loved ones to help us offset the costs of producing and mailing this newsletter which is currently sent to over 350 bereaved families and 125 caring professionals. TCF never charges any individual dues or fees and we rely strictly on donations to keep our programs going. All the work for the Chapter is done by volunteers who are themselves bereaved parents, grandparents or siblings. Thank you in advance for any help you may be able to give.

*There's a valentine waiting for you
That's different from all the others.
It's there every month at our meetings
For fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers.*

*Its envelope is made of caring
The glue of understanding seals it tight.
This non-judgemental group who've been there,
Help to take away your fear and fright.*

*So, come join with us together,
Read your loving message printed clear,
In not only this month's valentine,
But all those throughout the year.*

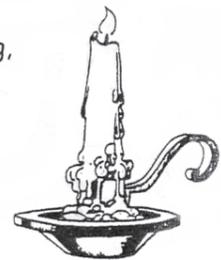
~ Mary Cleckley, TCF Atlanta, GA

In Love They Are Remembered. In Memory They Live.

Until next time, be patient and let the healing happen

~Susan Chan, Coordinator

When darkness seems overwhelming,
light a candle in someone's life
and see how it makes the darkness
in your own and
the other person's life flee.
--Rabbi Harold S. Kushner



Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

Saturday, April 12, 2014 - Topeka TCF Chapter's 4th Annual Walk to Remember - Snyder's Cabin in Gage Park (Registration at 12 noon and Walk begins at 1 p.m.) See details in this newsletter, including Registration Form.

July 11-13, 2014 - 37th National Compassionate Friends Conference in Chicago, IL - see further details at www.compassionatefriends.org

September 27, 2014 - 21st Annual Memorial Picnic and Dove Release at Lake Shawnee at Shelterhouse # 3 on Memory Lane. From Noon - 3 p.m. Watch for further details in this newsletter and on our Chapter website at www.tcftopeka.org

Love Gifts

Your Love Gifts Help Spread the Message of Hope & Healing ~ Won't You Help Today?

What is a Love Gift? A Love Gift is a gift of money (or books, etc.) to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child, grandchild or sibling who has died, but it may be from individuals who wish to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanks that their children are alive, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help. The Compassionate Friends charges *no individual dues* or fees and depends on such Love Gifts to meet the Chapter's expenses, including the printing and mailing of this newsletter. When you make a donation, make sure to check to see if your employer may have a "matching gifts" program as this could double the amount of your donation. If you are not sure whether your company has such a program, check with your Personnel Department. This month we thank:

♥ *Don & Carlyn Brentlinger in loving memory of their son Monty Brentlinger who was born on February 6th*

♥ *Richard & Robin Heuer in loving memory of their granddaughter Alexis "Lexie" Diane Salmon who was born on July 11th and died on June 5th*

♥ *Potwin Presbyterian Church in support of the work of the Topeka TCF Chapter with bereaved families in our area*

♥ *Jeff and Misty Tate in loving memory of their daughter Sydney Diane Tate who was born on April 30th and died on December 28th*

♥ *Damon & Collene Tucker in loving memory of their daughter Brittany Nicole Tucker who died March 11th*

Thank you for your gifts which enable us to print this newsletter and reach out to newly bereaved families. Donations are our only source of income and are **tax deductible**. If you would like to sponsor a newsletter, the cost is \$30.00. If we have more than one sponsor, we recognize all of them. If you wish to send a Love Gift, any amount is appreciated. It is whatever you feel you can give. Donations of books that you have found helpful to the Topeka Chapter Library are also greatly appreciated, and it is a nice way to remember your child or other loved one. If you would like to send a Love Gift or a Newsletter Sponsorship, you may do so by sending it to: The Compassionate Friends, c/o Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. For Newsletter Sponsorships, please indicate which issue you wish to sponsor (Jan/Feb, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, or November/December). Makes checks payable to "TCF".

DO YOU NEED TO TALK? LOVING LISTENERS AVAILABLE

Yvonne Albright - Sudden Infant Death
Leader, Infant Loss Group (785) 246-3298

Carol Cummings - Heart Surgery
Former Coordinator (785) 272-2155

Donna Martin - Accident
Former Coordinator (785) 286-0538

BeBe Bahr - Bicycle/Car Accident
Advisory Board (785) 234-2897

Tom and Carolyn Voth - Cancer
Former Coordinator (785) 235-5406

Susan Chan - Motorcycle Accident
Current Coordinator (785) 272-4895

Leslie Johnson-Wingert - auto accident
and SIDS (785) 840-0512

Debi Harvey - Drug Overdose
(785) 806-2836



Submit a Memory Page

Remember your child, grandchild or sibling in a special way by submitting a Memory Page to be published in the Topeka Chapter Newsletter. You may include a photo, drawing, a poem, letter to your child, etc - just about anything you would like to put on it in memory of your child. You do not have to put the page together - I can help you with this from the materials you select to use. Memory Page submissions should be sent to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. Photos will be returned, but DO NOT send a photo of which you only have one copy. No charge for page.

TCF National Office email:
nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Compassionate Friends web address:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter NEW web address:
www.tcftopeka.org

Kansas Regional Coordinator:
Tom & Carol Weatherd - (785) 283-4704

Our Thanks to:

Midland Care Connection for giving us a mailbox and Most Pure Heart of Mary Church for allowing us to meet at their facility.

TCF Mission Statement: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

And We Remember.....

Because of the potential for the hurtful crime of identity theft, TCF Chapter Newsletters will now only publish the date of a child's birth or death without listing the year of each event. This is a directive from the National TCF Office to protect all TCF members.

Ian Arthur Atchison, son of Martha and David Atchison and brother of Meg Atchison, died March 18th

Kathy Bahr, daughter of LeRoy and BeBe Bahr, born March 26th

Errick M. Baldwin, son of Roxanne Baldwin, died February 23rd

Jeff Balch, son of Dan and Pam Balch, who died on March 30th

Daiana Barber, daughter of Barbara and Tim Barber, died on February 27th

Anne J. Cameron Barton, daughter of Alan and Alice Cameron, born February 11th

Brandee Earlene Bastian, daughter of Robert Bastian and Cary Roudybush, who died on March 1st

Logan Monroe Baublitz, son of Sandra Baublitz, who was born on March 6th



Michael Bidinger, son of June Bidinger, who died on February 22nd

Samantha Jo Bishop, daughter of Denise Bishop, died March 19th

Richard Blair, son of Kenny and Jodi Blair, born Feb. 7th; died March 25th

Brian Lynn Blecha, son of Lynn and Alice Blecha, born February 9th

Aubrey Jane Brabb, granddaughter of Doug and Tammi Brabb, stillborn on February 24th

Monty Brentlinger, son of Don and Carolyn Brentlinger, born February 6th

Devin Brungardt, daughter of Deb Ballard, died February 25th

Alexia Elaine Buessing, daughter of Arthur and Lori Buessing, born and died February 4th

Gary D. Burkett, Jr., son of Gary D. and Linda P. Burkett, died February 6th

James Dean Cavin, son of Robert and Roberta Cavin, born March 21st



Rachael Reneé Chan, daughter of Gary and Susan Chan, died March 17th

Kenneth Dean Chapman, son of Richard Chapman and Mildred (Chapman) Toburen, died February 3rd

Brianna Michelle Clark, daughter of Ryan and Kimberly Clark, born March 30th

Brianne Clark, daughter of Leanna Clark, died on July February 16th

Andy Conger, son of Leon E. and Suzanne Conger, born March 4th

Stephanie Nicole Corbett, granddaughter of Emery and Judy Corbett, born March 8th

Patrick Cummings, son of Carol Cummings, born March 30th

Wendi Sue Cushing, daughter of Scott and Denise Cushing; sister of Deana and Dylan Cushing, born March 17th

Corey Allen Davis, son of Tammy L. Davis, died February 2nd

Mitchell Davison, son of Wilbur and Peggy Post, born February 25th; died March 1st



Lt. David K. Dillon [Douglas Cty. Sheriff's Dept.], son of John and Joyce Dillon, born on February 18th

Michael Bert Doud, son of Mary A. Doud, died February 9th

Trudy Elizabeth Douglas, daughter of Carole A. Rost and stepdaughter of Tom Rost, died February 20th

Timothy Lynn Drayer, son of Donald W. Drayer (deceased) and Vada V. Drayer, died March 4th

Evan Douglas Epoch, son of Nancy S. Epoch, born March 10th

Emilio Felipe Esquibel, Jr., son of Julie A. Nolting and Emilio F. Esquibel, Sr., died March 18th

Denny Warren Ferrin, Jr., son of Mary G. Tidwell, born February 4th

Luke Edwin Forsberg, son of Gene and Peggy Forsberg, who died on March 25th

Garen Lee Gideon, son of Shawn and Renee Gideon, born February 11th



Augustine Isaac Samuel Gomez, son of Deborah Ortega, stillborn on March 4th

James C. Graber, son of Walter J. Graber and Theresa M. Murrey, died March 8th

Kelli Rae Grauer, daughter of Harold and Marilyn Grauer, born March 27th

Kenneth Hagen, son of Pat Nichol, died March 25th

Trever Antwan Harness, son of Tonie R. Harness and John K. Perkins, born February 5th

John Carl Harrington, son of Mary Harrington died March 18th

Jaime M. Harrington, daughter of Mary Harrington, born and died February 3rd

Terry Harris, son of George and Polly Harris, born February 1st

Gary Hayes, son of Ed and Judy Hayes, born February 4th

Ronald Max Herbel, son of Norris Herbel and Peggy Herbel Blanding, born February 14th



Melissa Ann Hernandez, daughter of Cathy Lorraine Hernandez, died February 19th

Robert R. Herrick, Jr., son of Phyllis Ashcraft, died March 9th

Donnie L. Higbee, son of Susan Vega, who was born on March 11th

And We Remember.... (Cont'd)

Charles "Chaz" Ronald Hill II, son of Charles R. Hill and Shondi L. Ward, born and died February 27th

Conner Jonathan Hitchens, son of Jared and Sarah Hitchens, born on February 24th and died on February 28th

Nason John Hobelman, son of Dee Hobelman, who was born on February 14th



Timothy Hopkins, son of Dorothy C. Hopkins and brother of Michelle Eakes, born on March 24th

Zachary James Hudec, son of Greg and Liz Hudec, died March 25th

Dennis Earl Hunt, grandson of Velma Ogle Smidt, died March 18th

Dylan Michel Hynek, son of Lori and Mike Hynek, born and died March 18th

Rodney Jennings II, son of Sharon Harris, born March 2nd

Nicholas Johnson, son of Janet Johnson, born on February 16th

Madeline Ruth Jones, sister of Sara Hobbs, died February 12th

Abbey Jordan, daughter of Don and Joanie Jordan, who died on March 1st

Scott Daniel Jordan, son of Terry and Julie Jordan, died February 17th

Karen Kay Karnes, daughter of Wilson and Maxine Karnes, born March 2nd

Andrew Kohake, son of Joe and Denise Kohake, born March 4th

Lawrence Alan Kout, son of Murlyn and Lucille Kout, who died on March 24th



David M. Lackey, son of Galen and Marilyn Lackey, who was born February 5th

Charles Duane "Chuck" Lawson, son of Charles and Patsy Lawson, born March 2nd

Austin Isreal Lewis, son of Amy Marker and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Smallwood, born February 2nd

Richard L. "Rick" Linder Jr., son of Richard and Patricia Linder, died February 15th

Gregory Scott Longbine, son of Jeff Longbine and Gwen Yarnell-Longbine, born March 11th

Gylmn Guerry Lough, son of Billy D. and Inez G. Lough, who died on February 21st

Billy Lucas, son of Bernie and Jeanette Bialek, who died on February 18th

William Henry "Hank" Lumpkin, son of Joe and Penny Lumpkin, who was born on February 1st

Amy Lundin, daughter of Ralph and Judy Lundin, who was born on February 16th



Tara Lee Stilson Lyman, daughter of Terry and Connie Stilson, who died on February 10th



Kirk William Manwaring, son of Kimberly Manwaring, who was born on March 26th

Stuart McKinnon, son of Sandra McKinnon, who was born on March 16th

Michael L. McQuilkin, son of Wilson and Margaret McQuilkin, who was born March 28th; died February 12th

Gregory Dean Michael, son of Lawrence J. Michael and Marianne Michael Carlson, born March 22nd

Tracy Kevin Michael, son of Lawrence J. Michael and Marianne Michael Carlson, died March 22nd

Emily Caroline Mulanax, daughter of Douglas and Jamie Mulanax, stillborn on March 1st

Madison "Maddie" Rae Naill, daughter of Lori Neddermeyer and Eric Naill; step-daughter of Mark Neddermeyer; sister of Jesse and Allie Naill; step-sister of Cale and Braden Neddermeyer; and granddaughter of Bruce and Ginny Miller and Allan and Marge Neddermeyer, died on March 19th

David Ogle, son of Velma Ogle Smidt and brother of Janice Hunt, born February 18th; died March 3rd

Chad O'Leary, son of Patricia Shomaker, who died on March 24th

Shaun Ostertag, son of Nancy Meyer, who died on March 3rd

Michael Dean Patterson, son of Rosalie A. Bearce, born February 17th; died March 12th



Zachary Patton son of Terry & Debbie Patton and grandson of Ester D. Coe, died March 26th

Jeremy Pechanec, son of Tobias and Pamela Pechanec, who died on February 22nd

Jamie Barks Pursley, daughter of Dave and Kathy Barks, who died on March 29th

Kiley Ramey, daughter of Gary and Linda Ramey, who was born February 28th

Michael Wayne Reece, son of Arthur C. and Marilyn K. Reece, who died on February 18th

David Wayne Reese, son of Tom and Bonnie Reese, who was born March 12th

Nancy Laverne Reives, sister of Carol Daughenbaugh, who was born on February 16th



Michael Lee Reser, son of Donald L. and Mary L. Reser, who died on February 20th

Chris Riddle, son of Henry and Carolyn Riddle, born March 13th

Daniel Rusher, son of Joe and Helen Rusher, born March 24th

Lauren Rosso, daughter of Erin Lesser, who was born on March 11th

And We Remember..... (Cont'd)

Jordan Alexander Ryans, son of Dwayne Ryan and
Patty Worthington, born February 6th; died February 17th

Trisha Dawn Shay, daughter of Mark A. Shay and Carol S. Lang,
who was born on February 14th

Anita Sheffel, daughter of Irving & Beth Sheffel, born March 8th

Scott Edward Sobba, son of Harold and Linda Sobba,
who was born on February 20th



Ansley Spencer, granddaughter of Loren and Beth Mitchell,
who was born on March 12th

Shane Sterrett, son of Michel and Lois Sterrett; brother of Shannon
Schenk who died on March 28th

Natalie Nicole Stucky, daughter of Morris and Diana Stucky,
who died on February 20th

Peter Andrew Swalm, son of Mike and Jan Swalm,
who was born on February 5th

Rachel Swanson, daughter of Del and Kim White, born March 7th

Gladys Ann Stewart Tipton, daughter of John and Arletia Stewart,
who died on February 7th

Neil Bradley Stroh, son of Ronald R. and Kay L Norris; brother of
Kristy D. Stroh, who died on February 22nd

Michelle Studebaker, daughter of Kathy Studebaker; sister of Jeff
Studebaker and Julie Hafenstine, who was born on February 9th

Gregory D. Talley, son of Garland and Carol Talley,
who was born on March 8th

Brittany Nicole Tucker, daughter of Damon and Collene Tucker,
who died on March 11th



Tom Uhl, son of Dwight and Doris Uhl, died March 20th

Carmen Cristina Urdaneta, daughter of Leonel and Judy Urdaneta,
born February 13th; died February 3rd

Jason R. VanDam, son of Will and Kay Hasty, born on March 25th

Mary Jane Varner, daughter of Will and Kay Hasty,
who was born on February 8th

Cody Vines, son of Rebecca Percival and Brad Vines,
who died on February 28th

Clint Wahquahboshkuk, son of Timothy Ramirez
and Jackie Mitchell, born February 26th



Larry Eugene Walters, son of Hubert and Margaret Walters,
who was born February 14th

Christopher Wempe, son of Dan and JoAnn Wempe,
who was born March 9th

Jacob Wessel, son of Mark and Susan Wessel, born on March 15th

Victoria Nicole White, daughter of Kalila Boldridge and Robert A.F.
White, who was born March 25th

Taylor William Clay Watson, son of Terry and Kathy Watson,
who died on March 16th

Baby Boy Williams, son of Todd and Kathleen Williams,
stillborn on February 23rd

Melissa Wingert, daughter of Allan and Patricia Dalton,
who was born on March 27

Amanda Wohlgeomuth, daughter of Penny Alton,
who died on February 2nd

Robb Zeller, son of Robert and Sherry Zeller,
who died on February 20th



(Use the form below to submit your listing if you have not already done so. Once you have submitted your listing you **do not** have to do so every year. Your child's name and dates will remain on the We Remember database unless you request their removal. This month's listing includes birth and death anniversary dates for February and March)

And We Remember - If you wish your child, grandchild or sibling included in the We Remember section of this newsletter, please fill out the form below and return to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may also email the information to chanx2@cox.net< We do not automatically list your information just because you are receiving this newsletter. We only list information for those parents requesting it. If you have previously submitted your child's information and it has appeared in the newsletter during the past year, you **do not** need to resubmit it. If you have just begun receiving this newsletter, or have never submitted this information, you will need to do so in order for it to be included. **Please type or print clearly.**

Child's Name _____ Son__ Daughter__ Grandchild__ Brother__ Sister__

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Father _____ Mother _____

Note: Please list your address and phone number. You will only be contacted if there is a question about your listing.

Is this a change of address for you? (please circle) YES NO



JANUARY

January is the month when we reflect on the past year and look to the future ... Many of us have traditionally made resolutions - this is the year we will stop smoking, lose weight, organize those closets, improve our lives. But for bereaved parents, the New Year's promise is less enticing, and the resolutions feel hollow and trivial. All the things that once seemed so important fade as we realize this is a year our child will not be with us and a year we must move forward without them. It's hard to think about the future when it is the past we wish to embrace, the past when our loved one was alive. But moving forward doesn't mean forgetting - it means moving with memory, carrying our love for our children with us into 2014, allowing their banner to follow our path as we continue to rebuild our lives. The only resolution we need make is a simple one: I will survive this year. As you face this new year, remember, you are not alone, TCF is here. May we be nourished by memories and the knowledge that their love lives on through us all.

~ By Mary Clark TCF, Sugar Land / SW Houston, TX

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*



Wishes for Bereaved Families for the New Year

- To the newly bereaved, we wish you patience - patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, and even years ahead.
- To the bereaved siblings, we wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginning of good communication.
- To those of you who are single parents, we wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.
- To those of you who are plagued with guilt, we wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances and that your child knew that.
- To those of you who have suffered multiple losses, those who have experienced the death of more than one child - we wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.
- To those of you who are deeply depressed, we wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow".
- To those experiencing marital difficulties after the death of your child, we wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.
- To all fathers, we wish you the ability to express your grief, to move beyond society's conditioning, to cry.
- To those with few memories of your child, perhaps because you suffered through a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or infant death, we wish you the sure knowledge that your child is a person and that your grief is real.
- To those of you who have experienced the death of an only child or of all your children, we offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.
- To those of you unable to cry, we wish you healing tears.
- To those of you who are tired, exhausted from grieving, we wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.
- To all others with special needs, that we have not mentioned, we wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.

~ Joe Rousseau, Former TCF National President



A Special and Important Message to Our New Compassionate Friends

If you are newly bereaved and have recently attended your first Compassionate Friends meeting, you may have left the meeting feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heavy load of grief you are carrying, you cannot bear to hear about all the pain shared at meetings. Consequently, you may have decided not to return. We would like to let you know that these feelings are common to all our members, many of whom resolved not to expose themselves to such anguish again, but were drawn back by the knowledge that they were among those who "know how you feel".

Please give us at least **three** tries before you decide whether or not the meetings are for you. You will find a network of caring and support which will help you as you travel your grief journey, and most assuredly, you will find hope along the way. We truly care about you and want to make certain that no bereaved parent ever needs to walk this path alone.

---Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee

CALL FOR PHOTOS

If you would like your loved one's photo included in our TCF Chapter's memorial slide presentation, please do one of the following:

1. If you have computer access and can send a jpg file of your child's photo electronically, please send to dtucker35@cox.net. Be sure to include your loved one's full name, birth and death dates.
2. If you are not able to send a photo file electronically, you may send a photo print (do not send the only copy you have!) so that we may scan it into digital format. Send the photo plus the full name, birth and death dates for your loved one to: Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of your photo. We will continue to collect photos throughout the year to add to the slide presentation. If you already sent in a photo, you need not resend one.

Do You Have a Book Checked Out of the Topeka TCF Library?

If you have checked out a book(s) from the Topeka Chapter Library, we would greatly appreciate it if you could return it (them) as soon as possible. We want to keep the books available for others to use. We ask that you keep Library materials no longer than two (2) months. You may return books at a regular monthly meeting or leave them in the Most Pure Heart main Office. Please place books in a sack marked "For Susan Chan, Compassionate Friends". It is very expensive for us to try and replace missing materials so your cooperation is greatly appreciated. THANKS!

Join TCF on Facebook®

TCF's Facebook Page is a proven support area for bereaved family members to come and talk about their grief. Stop by and visit with some of our more than 26,000 Facebook members!!

Phil: *Awesome site, when I'm having a bad day I can turn here for support. It is comforting knowing that we can help support each other.*

Christine: *This site is better than any therapy. I find so much comfort and understanding here and I am truly grateful.*

Donna: *Here is the place where I know I won't be judged for my emotions . . . I can say what I feel and be me . . . Thank you Compassionate Friends for walking with me . . .*

Melanie: *It is comforting to share my feelings with so many like me . . . no judgement, no 'get over it' attitudes, just understanding . . .*

Please join our TCF/USA Facebook family. Tell us about your child, sibling, grandchild, or other loved one and find support in the words and concern of others. Check out the Discussion Boards! Every day we also provide thought provoking questions, grief quotes, and links to grief stories, as well as TCF news, such as updates on the Worldwide Candle Lighting, TCF National Conference and other TCF programs.

Additional Support Group Resources

HEALs - Healing after loss of suicide offers support to all survivors affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide. Meetings are at 7 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. Pozez Center (north side of Stormont Vail). Contact Information: Jay Sheer 785-220-1368 or Sandy Reams 785-249-3792.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Group - Meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 6-8 p.m. at the Pozez Education Center. The group, which has regular meetings to share information and experiences, also has a blog for members that offers communication, resources and support. If you are interested in learning more about the blog, please email lrosen@stormontvail.org. For information call (785) 354-5225.

ForTheSurvivors - this website offers resources, support and connection for those who have experienced the death of a child. See <http://www.forthesurvivors.org/>

Are You Moving?

If you move, please let us know your new address so you can continue to receive this newsletter. It costs the Chapter 65 cents every time a newsletter is returned by the Post Office with an outdated address. Please send address changes to: Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may email address changes to chanx2@cox.net< We appreciate your cooperation as this will save the Chapter money which can be better spent on bereavement outreach. If, for any reason, you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list, please drop me a note or email and I will take your name off the list.

I Am Joy

I am joy.
I once was easy to know.
A hug from your child, a ride to school
or a birthday party and I was there.
I was easy.
I was obvious.
I lived with you, brought you a smile
and a happy heart.

And then your child died
and I was buried under the avalanche
of your grief and sorrow.
I was beaten down and lost.
You may think I had died too.

But I am not dead.
I am resting gently in your heart and
I am patient.
I will wait for you to feel me again.
I will wait for you forever.

Where once I was easy and
at your fingertips,
You must now work to find me.
You must grieve and heal and
grieve and heal
And search for me, fight for me.

If you do your work, I will come back to you.
You will find me in the life of your child.
I will be in your memories
and I will lighten your heart.

Do not forget me, for I have not
forgotten you.
I will wait for your healing heart to find me.
And you will be glad.

~ Rob Anderson

Sugar Grove, CO TCF

Understanding Mourning

The idea of mourning is extremely old, and has been preserved in two of humanity's most ancient languages. The root meaning in Sanskrit is "to remember" and in Greek is "to care". Mourning is an emotion that results from the universal experience of loss. I use the word to mean the way in which mourners adapt from what **was** to what **is**.

To grieve (to be burdened by sorrow) and to be bereaved (to be robbed of someone or something precious) are part of--but only part of--the mourning process. Mourning is the process that takes you on a journey from where you were before the loss to where you will be as you struggle to adapt to changes in your life. ~ *Dr. Glen Davidson, MD*

Another Interpretation of the Meaning of Both Grief and Mourning

(Editor's note: In an interview with a reporter, Dr. Alan Wofelt, Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, CO, answered the following question.)

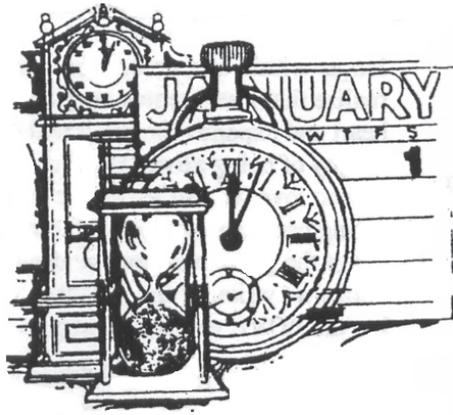
There seems to be a lot of confusion about "grief" versus "mourning." Can you explain the difference?

"Grief is the constellation of internal thoughts and feelings we have when someone we love dies. Think of grief as the container. It holds your thoughts, feelings, and images of your experience when someone you love dies. In other words, grief is the internal meaning given to the experience of loss.

Mourning is when you take the grief you have on the inside and express it outside of yourself. Another way of defining mourning is "grief gone public" or "the outward expression of grief."

When families make the choice to not just grieve but also authentically mourn, they muster the courage and confidence to integrate the death into their ongoing lives. By authentic mourning, I mean openly and honestly expressing their thoughts and feelings from the inside to the outside – no pretense, no repression, no inhibitions. Somewhere in the collision between the heart, which searches for permanency and connection, and the brain, which acknowledges separation and loss, there is a need for all of us to authentically mourn."

See more at <http://www.centerforloss.com/>



Sorrow

~ By P. G. White

She rises out of nowhere, like a wave from the sea,
Slowly at first, then crests and peaks;
Still I have no choice
I can turn away, go to work, watch a movie,
play a game...
But I know sorrow well.
Though I turn away, she will wait,
Perfectly patient,
Until I am still,
Then crush me with all of her accumulated power.
Once I had angry walls to shut her out,
But her incessant pounding tore them down.
Sorrow, when she rises,
I turn to her and say,
Here I am, I know you, sorrow.
She crashes on my shoreline,
And sorrow and I are one
Until, trailing frothy whitecaps,
She sweeps away.



Balancing Time

You were seven years and ten months.
It had been seven years and ten months.
There was a poetic justice in this
Delicate balance of time.
I was poised at the center of the cosmos
Sad History at my left,
Uncertain Future at my right
I didn't want the day to pass.
I didn't want to have lived without you
Longer than I had lived with you.
And yet the clock deliberately
Counted off the moments,
Soon the much dreaded point in time
Would arrive and pass.
Only I would mark its passing;
Only I would know the loss,
And now I am on the other side,
Your memory becoming a dark profile
Dimming with each moment
Shrinking with each mile
Until I cannot see you at all.
I will only know you are there.
In the heat of the shadeless summer
Sweat and tears mixing with dust,
I will hear your cry in the stillness,
I will carry you limp to your grave.
But in the crimson peace of Autumn
Soft as a whisper of the wind,
Across brittle leaves dead to summer
Your memory lingers with me.
And in the white hush of winter
Your memory dusts the earth
Cushioning my footsteps upon your grave
Marking my presence at your stone.
Warmth will return with the Spring-
And hope will push gently through the sod.
I will see your face in each blossom,
I will sense your presence on the breeze.
You will come to me young and innocent
And I will walk with you once again.
Through each season your memory will linger ...
You will be here. You will be here.

~ By Pat Sweeden

in memory of Vance (8/21/176 - 6/24/84)

February: An Arrow Through the Heart

In the month of February, we are still in the firm grip of winter. Bone-chilling winds whip around bleak, bare trees, gray days alternate with bright, blue skies, but little warmth. Having survived January, we have learned to conserve our energy, and we have grown accustomed to the weather.



Though we may still intensely dislike the wintertime, we have learned to take pleasure in the bright sun and the clear, blue sky. The stark landscape may even be appreciated for its unique beauty. Why does this happen? Why do we accept the bundling up and the shivering of winter?

How is that we can find pleasure and beauty in our misery? The answer is a paradox; we have a choice, and we have no choice. We can continue to wish for balmy air, laden with the scent of flowers, or we can mumble about the cold and grumble about the necessity for bundling up to face the chilly days. If we focus only on what we don't have, or long for the past warmth of summer or the future rebirth of spring, we tend to lose any ability to notice the aspects of this month that might engender some pleasure. Try as we might, it is impossible to change the course of nature. We cannot bring back the summer anymore than we can fast-forward the seasons. By focusing on what no longer is, we lose the capacity to find beauty, happiness, or pleasure. If we continue to bang our heads against unchangeable situations, it only increases our feelings of helplessness and futility.

Our alternative is acceptance. By February, we recognize that hoping, wishing and dreaming will not bring back the summer's warmth, so we accept what is. We learn to live with reality of the situation. It's not that we don't remember the various beautiful times of the summer, it's not that we don't yearn at times for them again; but now, we recognize that has passed. Though our souls may be warmed by the memories of summer, summer is gone. Now, we are free to live in the reality that is today. We enable ourselves to find beauty and joy in February. The mid-winter landscape has a quieter and more tranquil beauty. Rarely flamboyant, it does not overwhelm the senses; and the ability to recognize and appreciate this soft beauty can give us a sense of peace.

The month of February is similar to the completion of that long, middle phase of bereavement that results in acceptance of what has occurred. The memories of precious times will always be there to warm our hearts, and they will continue to bring tears and pangs of yearning, but realization of the finality of the loss has also occurred.

It takes a long time to accept situations that we do not want as permanent. It takes much time and heartache to recognize that we cannot change situations. It is a long process during which evolves a changed concept of ourselves, the world, and our place in it. It is not that the world has really changed, but with the death of a loved one, OUR world has changed. Again, we have a choice. That long and painful middle portion of bereavement process may remain with us for a very long time as we struggle to maintain our old ways of being in spite of the agonizing loss.

If we become fixed or stuck at this time, there is a double tragedy. Life is lived in the past and the present is filled with yearning for

what should have been and what has been stolen from the survivor. Certainly, we are not "happy" about the situation, but slowly we realize that things will never be the same and that as survivors, we must go on. After a time, which varies from situation to situation, we accept the finality of our loss. With this acceptance, the ability occurs to perceive beauty without feelings of disloyalty.

Though Valentine's Day does not have the same tradition and resultant dread of Christmas and other holidays, it can still bring a great deal of pain. The very symbol of this day, Cupid's arrow piercing the heart, can feel quite literal for the bereaved whose hearts feel as if they have been broken. Old, tattered, cherished cards will be wept over, as well as bits of lace, red satin ribbon, and the poetry of a spouse, parent, child or sibling that is especially precious.

Red roses and red valentine hearts are symbolic of the invisible blood that the bereaved have shed over their loss. When we feel despondent, isolated or cheated on Valentine's Day (or any other day), the pain we are feeling is because of the great love we had. The experience of that love will never die, the memory of that love, of that loved one, will live on in our hearts. We must now live on - for the sake of ourselves and our loved one.

We must give ourselves permission to enjoy again, even through tears. Let's remind ourselves of the blessings that we have had, despite the deprivation, and let's not deny others their blessings.

We should seek things that will bring us peace. A snow-covered landscape can be beautiful, glistening, and pure. Any view of a situation takes on the meaning that we assign to it. If we choose to believe that a scene or a situation is bleak, it will be bleak. If we focus on one aspect of beauty, we see beauty.

~ By Dr. Susan Arlen, M. D., medical director of the Hospice at Somerset Medical Center (New Jersey)

*In times of darkness...
Love sees
In times of silence...
Love hears
In times of doubt...
Love hopes
In times of sorrow...
Love heals
And in all times...
Love remembers.
May time soften the pain
Until all that remains
Is the warmth of the memories
And the love.*

~Author Unknown

The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter, c/o Midland Hospice Care., Inc.
200 S.W. Frazier Circle, Topeka, KS 66606-2800

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

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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 they 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 a 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.