



The Compassionate Friends

Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

MARCH/APRIL 2015

A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

Monthly Meeting:

APRIL 8, 2015

Always the second Wednesday

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Registration of new members and library opens at 7:00 p.m.

Topic: Coping with the Stress of Change

**First Presbyterian Church
502 Eldridge Road
Sugar Land, Texas**

Directions: Eldridge Rd. (FM 1876) intersects Hwy. 90A two lights west of the Sugar Land exit of Hwy 59. The church is north of 90A, just past the RR tracks, the second building on the right. Enter the double doors at the back of the building.

Chapter Co-Leaders

Tricia & Donald Scherer

donaldraysdad@Yahoo.com

Marguerite Ward

Chapter Contact

Sandy Crawford
(281) 242-5015

Chapter Email Address

sugarlandtcf@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Marguerite Ward
P O Box 231
East Bernard, TX. 77435
Phone: (979) 335-6070
E-mail: mjward@elc.net

Love Gifts should be sent to:

Treasurer

Douglas Ledkins
431 Old Colony Dr.
Richmond, TX 77406
Phone (281) 341-5985
E-mail:

Doug_Ledkins@whitetucker.com

All contents © The Compassionate Friends

This newsletter may be reproduced and given to anyone who may find comfort from it.



Springtime's Burden Becoming Promise

Seasonal changes are difficult for many bereaved parents. This is often most true as winter yields to spring. The land seems to throb with life once more as young buds emerge and robins return from their sojourn in the South. Lilacs bloom and the breeze carries their fragrance. Woodland animals begin to lose the leanness of winter hunting or quiet hibernation.

The day is longer and filled with renewed vitality to match its length. It is as if a cold hand had loosen its bitter grip and the earth is reborn. It is this quality of resurrection that seems so bitter. For as we struggle in the darkness of loss, all around us is the vigorous rush of life breaking forth in colors and song. But our children do not come forth. They dwell in the land of death and the netherworld of our anguish.

But, I believe we can see as well the promise inherent in spring's unfolding glory and grasp the continuity its return affirms. Last fall we saw an acorn, but this year we see the tender shoot of an infant tree. From gnarled, dead-looking stumps, the cut-back rose sends tendrils of green to drink the sun.

In each full cycle of our planet around its sun, we encounter irrefutable testament to renewal. In this, we sense the defeat of death. This is the time of year when twilight surrenders to darkness. We stand by the new earth, hear the chorus of night creatures and sense the rebirth that has no end. Stand silently then, beneath the constancy of the night sky and upon the rejuvenating earth and sense our children, constant and growing too, yet beyond our sight. Life continues. There are no endings. There are only beginnings. That is the promise of Spring.

-Don Hackett TCF, South Shore, MA

Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to those who attended their first TCF meeting or received their first newsletter last month. We deeply regret the circumstances that brought you to our TCF Chapter. The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, not for profit, self-help organization that offers support and understanding to families who have experienced the death of a child. You are cordially invited to attend our monthly meeting (always the second Wednesday of the month).

Meetings are open to everyone and free of charge. The purpose of our support group is not to focus on the cause of the death or the age of the child. It is instead a place to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with feelings and issues that evolve around the death experience of a child. You are free to talk, cry or sit in silence, we respect the individuality of mourning. Comments shared in the meetings remain confidential.

To Our New Members

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But, you have nothing to lose and much to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. It may be the second or third meeting before you find the right person—or just the right words spoken that will help you in your grief work.

To Our Old Members

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. Think back—what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldies” to welcome you, share your grief and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “Your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer.”

Lovingly Lifted from TCF –Tyler Texas Newsletter

LOVE SHARES

In Memory of	Given by
Personal information has been deleted from the internet version of this newsletter.	

Consider giving a Love Share in your child’s memory. Help us continue our mission to help grieving parents. All Love Shares are tax deductible.

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,
 Let me hear the
 Beautiful music of his name.
 It soothes my broken heart
 And sings to my soul.

-Nancy Williams, TCF New Jersey

National Headquarters

P.O. Box 3696
 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
 Phone: toll free (877) 969-0010
 Fax: (630) 990-0246
 E-mail:
 Nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

National Website:

www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Webmaster

Tricia Scherer

Sugar Land-SW Chapter Website:

www.sugarlandtcf.org

****Regional Coordinator**

Annette Mennen Baldwin
 19702 San Gabriel Drive
 Houston, TX 77084 281-578-9118
 Email: amennenbaldwin@hotmail.com

Shards of Grief Linger After Murder

On a dreary night in December, a knock came at our door with news that would forever alter our lives. The news was that Anne, our only daughter, had been kidnapped and brutally murdered by persons or a person unknown. The shock, disbelief, anguish and anxieties over the next several months, a small piece of the grieving process, were extraordinary, and I have often wondered how we survived?

There was the extreme rage at the person who was responsible for taking Anne's life for no reason except for the pure pleasure of destroying good. But we survived.

There was the awful anger against the legal system for being so callous and insensitive to the needs of the family and friends. The wounds from Anne's death were already deep and unhealing, but listening to and reading about the insinuations and innuendoes by the lawyers made the wounds grow deeper and deeper. The impression was given the family must endure punishment for allowing our daughter to be in the wrong place. This caused a feeling of guilt. But we survived.

There was the fear that Anne would become just another statistic, and the person responsible would go unpunished. Now the fear exists that the person will be released from prison to repeat his acts of violence. I am afraid that fears are addictive and one replaces another. Perhaps the worst fear is, when your faith in God is at its lowest ebb, that you will never be able to respond to normal stimuli again and regain all that faith. All the fears are real; but so far we have survived.

These, I suppose, are normal reactions as the result of a violent act. I believe these anxieties delay a normal (so-called) grieving period until after the culprit has been found, tried and sentenced. After these three things happened, I do know a terrible burden was lifted from our shoulders, and we could restart living our lives. Somehow we survived.

How did we survive? After much reflecting, I firmly believe we survived by recalling the positive aspects of Anne's life and character. Each individual is endowed with

certain instruments, and we hear the music of their lives long after they are gone.

Anne's instrument of love of life was a blessing, and we still can hear the melodies of her song in the night. These melodies cannot be taken away, and they are more valuable than diamonds to us.

Anne's instrument of hope for a future in which to achieve her goals and have some effect on society was the backbone of her dream. The songs of hope in work, in life and the goodness of heart cannot be destroyed by evil or circumstances. Today is gone, but we still hear the songs of hope for tomorrow. These songs of hope, heard in the night, sustain us.

Anne's instrument of faith that she would lead a productive life and achieve both her spiritual and material goals was music in her heart. The faith she had in herself, her family and her friends transmits to us, urging us to proceed with our lives. The music of her faith is still a beacon in the night.

We will not believe Anne's dreams have ended, but we believe they will find their place in the world to come. The music that was set in motion by her love, hope and faith will move, everlasting, in sweet memories forever. The wounds from the loss of a loved one cannot be healed by words or deeds. These terrible burdens are borne by each of us in our own way and, hopefully, we survive.

Bill Boggs ~ TCF, Atlanta, Georgia

What I Need

A lot of time!
 A little space,
 A kind of quiet
 Resting place,
 Are what I need
 At times like these
 A special spot
 Where I can grieve.

Beth Pinion ~ TCF, Andalusia AL

Living Life Is Still An Effort

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when it came time to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year. I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted—such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something prophetic.” What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see the sorrow in each parent. I see parents whose children have been

gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well-balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

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

Believe

Believe.
Crocuses poke their heads
through the crusty snow
to let us know
the long, bleak winter is ending
and Spring will come again.

So, too, the long bleak winter of
your aching, breaking heart will end
and spring will come again one day.
Be patient—but believe it—
You spring will come again.

—Betty Stevens, TCF Baltimore, MD

**MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND TCF NATIONAL
CONFERENCE IN DALLAS, TEXAS**

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Dallas, Texas, will be the site of the 38th TCF National Conference on July 10-12, 2015. "Hope Shines Bright ... Deep in the Heart" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great national Conference experience. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. We'll keep you updated with details on the national TCF website as well as on our TCF/USA Facebook Page and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

The Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas, 300 Reunion Blvd., Dallas, TX 75207, is now accepting reservations for TCF's National Conference. To make your reservation, please access the following link, which will take you directly to TCF's reservation portal on the Hyatt's website. Conference attendees are receiving a discounted room rate of \$129. We anticipate a large attendance for the conference, so we encourage you to make your reservation as soon as it is convenient for you.

The weird, weird thing
About devastating loss is
That life actually goes on.
When you're faced with a tragedy,
A loss so huge that you have NO IDEA
How you can live through it,
Somehow, the world **KEEPS TURNING**
The seconds **KEEP TICKING**.

-James Patterson

There's no way around grief and loss:
You can dodge all you want,
But sooner or later you just have to go
Into it,
Through it,
And, hopefully come out the other side.
The world you find there
Will never be the same as the world you left.

-Johnny Cash

GUILT is
perhaps the
most painful
companion
to death.

-Elisabeth Kubler Ross

Grief is not a **DISORDER**,
A DISEASE or
A SIGN OF WEAKNESS.
It is an emotional, physical,
And spiritual necessity,
The price you pay for love.

The **ONLY** cure for grief
Is to grieve.

-Earl Grollman

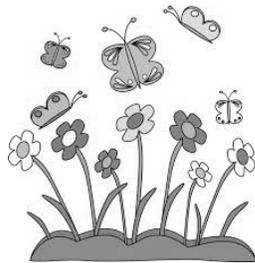
ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER

Chapter members are encouraged to write about their grief journey and submit for publication in this newsletter at mjward@elc.net.



The Compassionate Friends
Sugar Land—SW Houston Chapter
P. O. Box 231, East Bernard, TX. 77435

Honoring 20 Years of Support and Friendship
for Bereaved Families



MARCH/APRIL 2015

HOPE SHINES BRIGHT

DEEP *in the* **HEART**

38TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE |  **The Compassionate Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

DALLAS, TEXAS JULY 10-12, 2015