



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## SUGAR LAND/SW HOUSTON CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2013

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

### Monthly Meeting:

**September 11, 2013**

Always the second Wednesday

**Time: 7:30 p.m.**

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

**Topic: Sweet Memories of your child**

**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**  
[donalldraysdad@Yahoo.com](mailto:donalldraysdad@Yahoo.com)

**Marguerite Ward**

### Chapter Contact

Sandy Crawford  
(281) 242-5015

### Chapter Email Address

[sugarlandtcf@gmail.com](mailto:sugarlandtcf@gmail.com)

### Newsletter Editor

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

Love Gifts should be sent to:

### Treasurer

Douglas Ledkins  
1830 Landmark Drive  
Richmond, TX 77406  
**Phone (281) 341-5985**  
E-mail:  
[Doug\\_Ledkins@whitetucker.com](mailto:Doug_Ledkins@whitetucker.com)  
All contents © The Compassionate Friends

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

## Tissues, Tears & Treasures

A circle of chairs and boxes of tissues,  
A roomful of tears and emotional issues.  
Frightening at first, I did not want to enter  
Into this strange group, and be in the center.

What I soon learned, as we sat side by side,  
We were bound by the love of our children who died.  
Each shattered heart,  
desperately seeking a moment of peace,  
from the pain and weeping.

So many things different, and yet all the same,  
Hearts lost in a fog of loss and pain.  
Those who have journeyed, much further than me,  
Reached out in comfort, listened quietly.  
Each shattered heart spoke, and the tissues were passed,  
We never avoid speaking of the past.

This circle of friends, have found a bond,  
And here I'm still known  
As "Tony's Mom."  
Slowly, I've found  
I can reach out to others  
Who are newly bereaved, fathers and mothers.  
Strength I have found in this  
Circle of chairs,  
To grieve and to heal  
And to show that we care.

Diane Barta  
TCF Portland, OR  
In Memory of my son, Tony

### When

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

Sascha Wagner  
© The Compassionate Friends





### 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 for Internet version of 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.

*People will forget what you said,  
people will forget what you did,  
but people will never forget how  
you made them feel. ~*

Maya Angelou

#### 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](mailto:amennenbaldwin@hotmail.com)

### Autumn

In the fall  
When amber leaves are shed,  
Softly—silently  
Like tears that wait to flow,  
I watch and grieve.  
My heart beats sadly in the fall;  
'Tis then I miss you most of all.

Lily de Lauder  
TCF Van Nuys, CA



**WHAT IS LEFT?**

When a child dies, you ask, among other questions, what is left? A beautiful, sensitive, intelligent child has died. What can be left after such a crushing blow? Others will point out that you have a spouse, other children or grandchildren, perhaps relatives or friends, that are left.

You read books on bereavement, scarcely remembering what you have read; you attend meetings, talk with others who have suffered a loss like yours. If you are fortunate, you have one or two friends who, while they cannot fully understand, are there to love and listen. Perhaps there is a therapist who guides you in your search for an answer. But, for a long while everything you read or hear has little meaning and certainly cannot provide the answer to your question.

Or can it? Does all that you have read and heard and experienced finally come together and answer the question of what is left? For me it does. The answer was 13 months in coming, but how clear it comes now. I am left. That's it! I am left and I have been left with the love of my child. It is a new love; it is different, more intense; it is understanding; it need not be reciprocated; there are no strings attached. I love this love of my child. It warms and comforts me. It is a wonderful love, but I cannot keep it. It is too precious to keep to myself. I am left with the love to spare and love to share. It will never run out. My child will always be with me to replenish it. I have found my answer. I am left to share my child's love with you.

*By Betty Stevens, BP/USA, Baltimore, MD*

***ON MEMORY .....***

*When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you,  
That I have left some mark of who I am on who you are.  
It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles  
may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you  
will know me, and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.  
For as long as you remember me, I am not entirely lost.*

*- Frederick Buechne*

**“I want a new language, a language of hope and healing instead of denial and death. I want to remember my child's LIFE first! And that is the new language of love!” —Darcie D. Sims**

## Getting Over It

This summer we'll commemorate the seventeenth anniversary of Peter's death. It doesn't seem possible that seventeen years have passed; that I have seventeen years of experiences that don't include Peter; that I am even alive. The truth is that seventeen years doesn't feel any different than ten years or fifteen years or, probably, twenty years. It does feel very different than one or two years or, even three, four or five years.

Mostly, people think I'm "over it." Well, in the words of a recent ex-president, it depends on how you define "it". Am I over the gut-wrenching, physical pain? Yes. Am I over the disbelief, the why's, the inability to breathe? Yes. Am I now able to organize my thoughts, put a sentence together, remember where I put my glasses? Yes, mostly (I still have trouble remembering where I put things). Am I over the incessant crying, screaming and mind-numbing despair? Yes, I am. The early intensity of pain, disbelief and breathlessness has been replaced with a deep unrelenting sadness, sadness for what Peter has missed and what his father and I are missing.

No one even suspects how difficult it is for us to celebrate the joys of our friends, but that's what life has become for us. As their children marry and have children of their own, we laugh with them and share their joy. But after each celebration, we retreat to our unwelcome solitude and share only with each other how painful the celebrations really are. We have no joy to share. The "neverness" of that often seems unbearable.

But if "it" is defined as the wonder that was Peter, I'll never be over it. Peter will always be our magical child. He will always be bigger than life to us and we will never get over that we had him or that we lost him. In the beginning my greatest fear was that I would forget-forget what it felt like to look forward to his coming home from school, to the sound of his voice, to how much he brought to my life. I was afraid life would make him a distant memory, but I was wrong.

Peter is a constant presence in our lives. His absence grows bigger with each passing day. As we've gotten older, we've watched our friends' lives seem to get bigger even as their years diminish. With weddings and grandchildren, their futures are extended. No need to even think about the end of days for those whose families continue to grow. For us, our future is immediate, short term. Now, it's all about us. While a day doesn't go by that we don't wonder about what Peter would be doing now, those thoughts are always accompanied by wondering what we should be doing now, now that we clearly see an old age devoid of children and grandchildren. We wonder how we should prepare for that.

So, people look at me and think I'm "over it". They see me laugh, but they never see me cry. They see me totally engaged in life and living, but they don't hear the conversations I have with Peter or his dad. They are comforted by apparent survival, and no one is forced to confront my sadness. The fact that sooner, rather than later, Peter and I will be together again might cause those who think I'm over it some discomfort and a need to assure me (and themselves) that I have a long time to live, and I should put such thoughts out of my mind. Talk like that will no doubt encourage those who survive me to one day say, "her son died very young, and she never got over it." In fact, they'd be right.

**Written by Marie Levine, TCF/Manhattan Chapter  
Grief Digest Magazine. 2011, Vol 8, Issue 3.**

Grieving is as natural as crying  
when you are hurt, sleeping when you are  
tired, eating when you are hungry, or  
sneezing when you nose itches!  
It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.

Rabbi Earl Grollman  
(Calhoun, Michigan TCF Newsletter)

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean. Tears from the depth of some divine despair, rise in the heart and gather in the eyes, in looking on the happy autumn fields, and thinking of the days that are no more.

- Lord Alfred Tennyson

**To My Child**  
*by Daniel Houghton, TCF/Massillon, OH*

As long as I can dream,  
 As long as I can think,  
 As long as I have memory...  
 I will love you.

As long as I have eyes to see,  
 And ears to hear,  
 And lips to speak...  
 I will love you.

As long as I have a heart to feel,  
 A soul stirring within me,  
 An imagination to hold you...  
 I will love you.

As long as there is time,  
 As long as there is love,  
 As long as I have a breath,  
 To speak your name...  
 I will love you.

Because I love you more than anything  
 in all the world.

*Grief is like the ocean; it comes on waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim."*

- Vicki Harrison

"Death ends a life, not a relationship"  
 - Jack Lemmon

"There is a light in the world, a healing spirit, more powerful than any darkness we may encounter. We sometimes lose sight of this force, when there is so much suffering and too much pain. Then suddenly, the spirit will emerge through the lives of ordinary people who care and answer in extraordinary ways.

- Mother Theresa

Sorrow makes us all children again — destroys all differences of intellect. The wisest know nothing.  
 ~Ralph Waldo Emerson



Reading Corner

**Beyond Tears**

*Living after Losing a Child*

Nine mothers who lost a child and met in a support group give comfort and direction to bereaved parents. They candidly share with other grieving parents what to expect in the first year and beyond.

This book can be purchased from the Centering Corporation. The Centering Corporation is the Nation's oldest and largest bereavement resource center. It is a non-profit center that offers thousands of grief resources for children and adults.

Visit their website at [www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org) or call 1-866-218-0101 to see all that is offered. Say you are with The Compassionate Friends and you will get free shipping.



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

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Stafford, Texas  
Permit No. 670

Honoring 20 Years of Support and Friendship  
for Bereaved Families



**SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2013**

---



## **FALLING APART**

I seem to be falling apart  
My attention span can be measured in seconds,  
My patience in minutes.  
I cry at the drop of a hat.  
I forget things constantly,  
The morning toast burns daily.  
I forget to sign the checks.  
Half of everything in the house is misplaced.  
Anxiety and restlessness are my constant  
companions.  
Rainy days seem extra dreary,  
Sunny days seem an outrage.  
Other people's pain and frustration seem  
insignificant.  
Laughing, happy people seem out of place in my  
world.  
It has become routine to feel half-crazy.  
I am normal, I am told.  
I'm a newly grieving person.



By Elise Cole  
Taken from a Greater Cincinnati Area Chapter Newsletter

