



The Compassionate Friends

Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

MARCH & APRIL 2014

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

Monthly Meeting:

April 9, 2014

Always the second Wednesday

Time: 7:30 p.m.

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

Topic: Mother's Day & Father's Day

**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

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Marguerite Ward

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Love Gifts should be sent to:

Treasurer

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YOU CAN'T IMAGINE...

...the good things that can happen days, months, years later after your child's death. How could something good come out of something so horrible?

You can't imagine, in the early years, friends of your child calling you and chatting about him, telling you stories you never knew.

You can't imagine his friends stopping by to bring some pictures you have never seen.

You can't imagine the healing, uplifting feelings!

You can't imagine an old girlfriend of his arriving with the pair of Champaign glasses used in their high school prom.

You can't imagine that same friend offering to set up a memorial page on the web. Amazing! Now, she often brings her family—from Alaska! We cry and laugh together...and heal.

Another friend comes by to tell us about drama classes they took together—Rob's favorite part of school—and the fun they had—the parties she attended at our house. Then, her sister died and we took her to our TCF meetings. We grieved together, hugged and healed.

You can't imagine what friendships will develop out of TCF. We had a flood inside our home and needed help cleaning up and painting, etc. Who offered help? Our TCF friends replaced our laminate floor and painted walls.

You can't imagine how much easier life is when TCF Chapter members surround you with love.

And miracles *do* happen, too. We lost one son to cardiac arrest—SADS. (Sudden Adult Death Syndrome). Fifteen years after Rob's death, his 18-year old son—who had been adopted—found us. Nathan lives in Tucson and visits us often.

You may be sad now, but **you can't imagine all the good times ahead.**

*Phyllis Turner, Rob's mother
Tucson TCF*

Celebrating Our Children's Birthday		
Birthday	Child's Name	Parents/Family/Friend Name
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The mission of the Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive. We are grateful for the faithfulness of parents, grandparents and friends who remember beloved children with love gifts. Our chapter is operated entirely by volunteers dedicated to furthering the work of TCF.

Your voluntary tax deductible donations honor your loved one(s) in a meaningful way by enabling us to offer resources, such as this newsletter, books, brochures and special programs to bereaved families in our area. 100% of the funds are used for this outreach. Donations, along with the name of the person being honored may be sent to our chapter's treasurer. You may also contribute by linking to the Kroger's Share Card (enrollment letter available). If you have any questions, please contact our chapter treasurer:

Douglas Ledkins, 1830 Landmark Drive
 Richmond, TX 77406 (281) 341-5985
 Doug_Ledkins@whitetucker.com

A Birthday Table is set up each month so that you can display a picture and/or any other small memento in honor of your child's birthday.

If your child is not listed on our birthday/angel anniversary lists and you wish them to be, please contact Marguerite Ward at mjward@elc.net or call her at 979-335-6070

Button Making Machine

A button making machine has been given to our chapter in loving memory of Brandi Ward. It is available for anyone who wishes to have a picture button made of their child. If you would like to have a button made, please contact Marguerite Ward at 979-335-6070 or by email at mjward@elc.net.

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.

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Grief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will ever do. While we all wish for the pain to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved intensely. It is unrealistic to expect the grief to ever totally go away because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed.

—Elaine Grier (TCF, Atlanta, GA)

Our Children Remembered On Their Angel Day

Angel Day	Child's Name	Parents/Family/Friend
Personal Information has been deleted from the Internet version of this newsletter		

*Hold on to what is good
 Even if it is a handful of earth
 Hold on to what you believe in
 Even if it is a tree which stands by itself
 Hold on to what you must do
 Even if it is a long way from here
 Hold on to life
 Even if it is easier to let go
 Hold on to my hand
 Even when I have gone away*

Pueblo Indian prayer

SPONSOR A NEWSLETTER IN MEMORY OF YOUR CHILD.

We are now offering members an opportunity to sponsor the publishing of a newsletter in memory of their child. By offering sponsorships, not only does it help defray the costs but it is also a wonderful way to honor your child. See prices below:

Full page spread—\$200
 Half page spread—\$100
 Quarter page spread-\$50
 Small Picture with Name/Dates -\$25

If you are interested in one of the sponsorships above, please contact Marguerite Ward at mjward@elc.net or call her at 979-335-6070.

Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.

Helen Keller

Meeting Dates and Discussion Topics*

March 12, 2014—”Forget Me Not”
April 9, 2014—Mother’s Day & Father’s Day

(We do not always stay on the topic offered for our meetings. We are here to discuss whatever you need to discuss to help on your grief journey.)

LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

By Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D.

"Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing." Sound familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouches" can compare with the hurt we now feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child. Yet, most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have. So...we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few commonly recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guide-lines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable... some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child... the first word, first tooth, first date, first car... now we don't have that measure anymore. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse. So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, and to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be "crazy" and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.

Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and their moments... but don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over

grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable.

Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost – try thinking the good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child...HE/SHE DIED. We didn't lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very, very glad I loved.

Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

The Keepers

You make friends because you have things in common. We are friends because of our children.

The older ones, the younger ones, the ones who never even had a chance to breathe. They are our reason for being...our heartbeat, our life's blood.

Whether we have lots of memories or only a few, we are joined by an unbreakable bond. We are the ones left behind, to remember and carry the torch for those we remember so lovingly. We are there for ourselves and each other...because we understand the pain of loss.

We must also be there for those who unfortunately join our ranks. Because we are the parents of lost children, the bruised hearts, the keepers of memories.

-Cheryl Pelletier, TCF/Concord NH

Darcie Sims- A true champion for bereaved parents

“Thanks For the Little While” – Today our hearts are broken, our dear friend Darcie Sims has died. Darcie was my mentor, but the story of how she affected my life could be echoed by thousands of others in the TCF family whose lives have been equally touched by her incredible gift of loving guidance.

This woman was simply in a league of her own in the world of grief education. Darcie’s ability to take the complex subject of grief and simplify it so that all could easily understand it made her the best at what she does. Her books, videos, workshops, and radio and television work have helped tens of thousands of people find hope on their grief journey.

Darcie has been a true friend to TCF. She has served our organization as a chapter leader and as a member of our National Board of Directors. Her willingness to give was extraordinary as she returned to many national and regional conferences over the years to speak and present workshops for us.

Today we offer our heartfelt condolences to Tony, Darcie’s sidekick and the man behind the curtain keeping the Darcie Sims show on the road all of these years. We offer our condolences to Allie and Greg and to the junior Ms. Darcie. Oh how Darcie loved and adored her family.

Those of us who have had the honor of knowing Darcie will never forget this amazing woman. She was a superstar in our world, and though we loaned her out to the rest of the world, there was no doubt that she was “our” superstar. Darcie was one of us, she listened to our stories, she felt our pain, she walked our walk, she was Big A’s mom.

Darcie left you and I many treasures, she taught each of us how to laugh and cry at the same time, she taught us that we all grieve differently and the best gift we give each other is the gift of tolerance. Darcie left us the gift of her wonderful memories.

Many of us are in great pain today; it hurts deeply

as we try to wrap our minds around such a profound loss to our TCF family. I know Darcie would want us to take the time to grieve and be sad for our loss today...but I am betting she would also want us to take a moment to remember that she lived...and oh boy did she live. So, as the tears come, grab a roll of toilet paper and stick it in your pocket, at your next TCF meeting remember to touch knees with the person next to you....and as you do these things...look upward to where Darcie is once again holding her precious Big A and say.... “Thanks, For The Little While.”

We’re going to miss you sweet friend,
Alan Pedersen,
TCF Interim Executive Director
www.compassionatefriends.org

I Am Spring

I am the beginning.
I am budding promise.
I spill cleansing tears of life
from cloudy vessels
creating muddy puddles
where single cell creatures abide
and splashing children play.
I am new green growth.
I softly flow from winter’s barren hand.
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.
With compassion, we feather nests
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream
I whisper truth – life is change.
I am spring.
I bless long, dark wintry days.
I crown mankind's pain
with starry skies
in deepest night
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy
as the wheel of life turns ‘round and ‘round.

*By Carol Clum
(written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox,
author of ‘Finding What You Didn’t Lose’ and ‘Poetic
Medicine’.)*

"You cannot prevent the birds of sorrow from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair".
-- Old Chinese Proverb

"
"Grief is itself a medicine"
William Cowper (1731-1800)

GRIEF

Grief: is sometimes silent, like snowflakes falling on a dark winter's night... but never peaceful or serene or pretty like the pure white snow. When grief is silent, the tears seem to turn to ice, like the snowflakes, before they reach our eyes.

Grief: is sometimes raging, like a monstrous thunderstorm with all its fury and lots of lightning striking our hearts at every angle. When grief is raging, the tears come on torrents, like the rain, and flood our soul.

Grief: whether it be silent or raging... Hurts.

~Verne Smith, TCF, Ft. Worth, Texas

"There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept, things we don't want to know but have to learn, and people we can't live without but have to let go. "
~ Author Unknown

Although the world is
Full of suffering,
It is full also of
The overcoming of it.

Helen Keller

The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again."

-Simon Stephens, founder of
The Compassionate Friends

Butterfly Soul
(Birth into the Afterlife)

Cocoon of flesh
From which we are born
Knowledge is our nourishment
Love, our purpose
Growth, our decision
Time weakens the shell
As it strengthens the soul
Corporeal bounds no longer needed
Metamorphosis complete
We emerge to spread our wings
Ultraviolet scales caressed
By the breath of afterlife
Daybreak beckons us
Follow the dawn
And fly

By Sara Danielski
Shawn's Mama
Shawn Flew Home
February 14, 2004



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Sugar Land—SW Houston Chapter
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**Honoring 20 Years of Support and Friendship
for Bereaved Families**



MARCH AND APRIL 2014



Spring Thaws the Wounded Heart

Alice J. Wisler
Inspired by the life of Daniel Paul Wisler
8-25-92 ~ 2-2-97



That first spring
came too soon
why did daffodils
show sunny faces
around the grave stone
why did warm breezes blow
clouds away
my world, a gray dismal
had no room
for this season.

Now years later
the blossoms of love,
hope and healing
have broken through
grounds of utter despair
warmed by memories of you

I join the daffodils
bringing my own smile.

