



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Brazoria County Texas Chapter

Sept/Oct 2009

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

**September 8 – Photos & Memories
Button Machine Available**

(Buttons are 3 inches diameter. Photos printed on regular paper work best.)

October 13 – The Hills & Valleys of Grief

*Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month, 7-8:30 p.m.,
Chapelwood United Methodist Church, 300 Willow Drive, Lake Jackson.*

Doors open at 6:30 to register new members.

Directions: From Oyster Creek Drive, turn north on Willow Drive.
Chapelwood is on the right, past Willow Drive Baptist Church and Cardinal Street.
Meetings are held in the fellowship building behind the sanctuary.

To Our Newer Members: We do not always stay on the topic as planned.
We are here to discuss whatever you need to help you with your grief.

CHAPTER CONTACTS

Rosalind Woods (979) 798-5113

Connie Mosier (979) 798-6835 conster14@aol.com



Forever in Our Hearts
Our Children, Loved & Remembered

REMEMBRANCE DATES

Personal information deleted for internet edition.

BIRTHDAYS

Personal information deleted for internet edition.



Balloon Release – “Lifted by Love”

*Sunday, July 12
Quintana Beach Park*

The Compassionate Friends Balloon Release was a beautiful ceremony dedicated to our children. As we watched the balloons disappear into a golden pink sky, we were reminded that love reaches the heavens through our thoughts, our intentions, and the way we determine to continue living, until we see our children again.



“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. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.” -Frederick Buechner



THE BIRTHDAY TABLE

In the month of your child’s birthday, a table will be provided at our meeting where you can share photographs, mementos, your child’s favorite snack or a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers—anything you’d like to bring. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child’s birth and for us to become better acquainted.

Chapter Notes

Sometimes this newsletter seems to put itself together—I have no trouble finding material that touches my heart and that I hope will be meaningful to others too. But then there are other times, like this month, when nothing feels quite right. No poem or quote, no article seems to adequately express the sorrow we experience as bereaved parents or fully embrace the love we feel for our children.

So for this newsletter, I decided to just go with that; because untouchable, inexpressible feelings are an authentic part of this grief journey. We do the best we can with words, but sometimes silence is the truer language, like leaves drifting softly to the ground. I think that's why it's helpful to be with others who understand. Without trying to squeeze our feelings into words, we can know that we are not alone.

Whether you are years along the way or are receiving this newsletter for the first time, know that others walk with you. All are welcome to attend our monthly meetings, whether you choose to join the discussion or simply listen in quiet understanding.

We Need Not Walk Alone...

*Newsletter Editor – Robin Goddard
bhgoddard@comcast.net (979) 297-0544*

*“Silence is more eloquent
than words.”*

–Thomas Carlyle



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*

*No words capture her
No quote suffices
No image is complete
Yet she was
Yet she is
Yet she will be
Forever*

*- Steve Marsh...
Written for Jessica, sister of Courtney
and Robin, who also died*

TCF National Headquarters

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

National Website

www.compassionatefriends.org
Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Website

www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfbrazoriacounty
Chapter Webmaster – Bennie Goddard

*"I answer the heroic question 'Death, where is thy sting?' with
'It is here in my heart and mind and memories.'"*

- Maya Angelou

THE MYTH OF CLOSURE

"When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure?" grievors often ask. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievors hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one's room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual. Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes—*"surely then, we will have closure,"* we think. We pray.

The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us. Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain—turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course. Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings or for people we love.

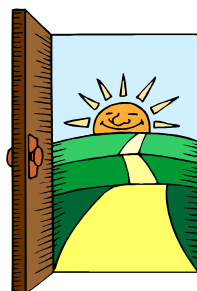
Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn't exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us—the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again.

But let's not ever think that we'll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

-Ashley David Prend, TCF Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter, Sept/Oct 2005

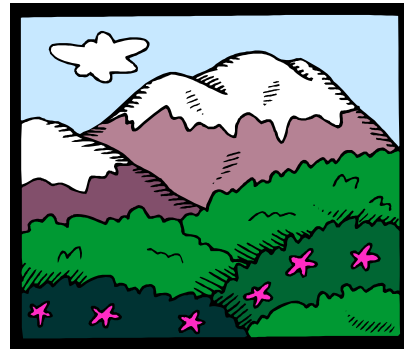


Friend, I have lost the way.
The way leads on.
 Is there another way?
The way is one.
 I must retrace the track.
It's lost and gone.
 Back, I must travel back!
None goes there, none.
 Then I'll make here my place.
(The road runs on),
 Stand still and set my face.
(The road leaps on),
 Stay here, for ever stay.
None stays here, none.
 I cannot find the way.
The way leads on.
 Oh places I have passed!
That journey's done.
 And what will come at last?
The road leads on.

-Edwin Muir

*Remember that grief is not
 something you get over,
 it is something you walk through.
 My shoes are worn and my feet
 hurt from this walk.*

- Author unknown
 (TCF Sugar Land Chapter newsletter, April 2008)



One Step at a Time, by Joseph Morris

In the morning with the journey all before us on the road,
 It takes courage to begin it, that is sure;
 For the first step is the hardest, and we always think the load
 May be greater than we've power to endure.
 When the first mile lies behind us we can say, "Now that is done,
 And the second and third will soon be past."
 So we trudge on through the noontime, and the setting of the sun
 Finds us coming to our stopping-place at last.

When a man would climb a mountain he's appalled to see the length
 Of the slope that reaches up into the sky;
 But he starts, and with the climbing he will find he's gained the strength
 To attain the very top, however high.
 For the climbing of a mountain takes but one step at a time—
 Who has the courage to do that will reach the goal;
 He will stand upon Life's summit and will know that joy sublime
 Which is his alone who dares to prove his soul.

Meditation



Her love is everywhere. It follows me as I go about the house, meets me in the garden, sends swans into my dreams. In a strange, underwater or above earth way I am very nearly happy.

-Sylvia Townsend Warner

In a strange, paradoxical way, the dead do seem to accompany us, like a shadow only slightly removed from our own being. I don't think this happens in any sustained fashion right away. Perhaps we have to wait a while, know the reality of separation, and give ourselves time for the components of our lives to sift down into their new patterns before we can begin to see that the relationship with the one who has died is not over. It is different, but it is not over. It is not what we would wish, but it has its own reality and comfort.

Perhaps our sense of the loved one comes unbidden; perhaps we invoke it by our thoughts. It comes to us in different ways—a sense of the person's presence, of warmth and love in the room. A dream that speaks directly to our need.

Long ago, when my grief was still quite new, I wondered aloud to my son about the origin and meaning of one of these experiences—Was it real? Could I trust it? And he said, “Why don't you just accept it as a gift?”

I will listen. I will welcome as gifts the memory and presence of love.

-Martha Whitmore Hickman, from *Healing After Loss*

“The present is the point at which time touches eternity.”

- C.S. Lewis



Especially for Siblings

After silence, that which comes closest to expressing the inexpressible is music.

—Aldous Huxley



IT'S THE MUSIC THAT BONDS THE SOUL

The room you once lived in
Doesn't look the same.
The people who used to call you
Never mention your name.

The car you used to drive,
They may not make them anymore;
And all the things you once treasured
Are boxed beyond closet doors.

The clothes you set the trends by
Are surely out of date.
The people you owed money to
Have wiped away the slate.

Things have changed and changed again
Since you went away,
But some things have remained the same
Each and every day...

Like this aching in my heart—
A scar that just won't heal—
Or the way a special song
Can change the way I feel.

Brother, you must know that the music
Bonds us and will keep us close;
Because secretly I know deep in my heart
It's the music you miss the most.

So let the world keep on turning,
And time can take its toll.
For as long as the music keeps playing
You'll be alive and dancing in my soul.

*Stacie Gilliam, bereaved sister
TCF, N. Oklahoma City, OK*



Social media is the new forefront of communications with those of similar interests and TCF is proud to announce the addition of a Facebook Page with which the National Organization can communicate information instantly with members. TCF's Facebook Page premiered in June and its fan base grows daily--now at more than 1100. We hope you will visit our Facebook Page, review the many posts we and our members have made and become a Fan. For more information, go to www.compassionatefriends.org.




The Compassionate Friends
Brazoria County Texas Chapter
P.O. Box 1395 Brazoria, TX 77422

Support & Friendship for Bereaved Families



Sept/Oct 2009

 **THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all
children who have died

**Worldwide
Candle
Lighting®**

*... that their light
may always shine.*

Sunday, December 13, 2009
7 PM Around the Globe

For many, the second Sunday in December has become a very special day because they can remember and honor their children who have gone too soon. Family members and friends unite to light candles in this beautiful ceremony which is observed around the globe. This year's Candle Lighting will be held *Sunday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m.* at Chapelwood United Methodist Church.