Forever in Our Hearts
Our Children, Loved & Remembered

REMEMBRANCE DAYS

Personal information deleted for internet edition.

BIRTHDAYS

Personal information deleted for internet edition.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Second Tuesday of each month, 7-8:30 p.m.
Chapelwood United Methodist Church
300 Willow Drive, Lake Jackson

May 11 – Coping with the Summer
June 8 – Ask It Basket (open questions)

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.

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Love Gifts

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Joey Gabriel Zuniga
Holly Linford
Stephanie Lauren Wyatt

GIVEN BY:

His parents, Sylvia & Dan Dickens
Her mother, Marianne Valenta
Her mother, Rena Wyatt

We are grateful for the kindness of parents, grandparents, and friends who honor their children with love gifts to our chapter. These gifts are tax-deductible and enable our chapter to offer resources such as this newsletter, books, brochures, and special programs to bereaved families. Memorial contributions may be made at any meeting or sent to: TCF Brazoria County Chapter, c/o Connie Mosier, P.O. Box 1395, Brazoria, TX 77422.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together,
Play, smile, think of me…
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.

- Henry Scott Holland, “What is Death?”

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 day of your child’s birth.
Because

Because you can't hear me,
Doesn't mean I don't speak.
Because you can't see me,
Doesn't mean I'm not there.
Because I am dead,
Doesn't mean I'm gone.

- Beth Oldani, TCF Arlington Heights, IL

Thought of you with love today, but that is nothing new,
I thought of you yesterday, and days before that too.
I think of you in silence, I often speak your name.
All I have are memories and a picture in a frame.
Your memory is a keepsake, with which I'll never part.
God has you in his keeping, I have you in my heart.

~Author unknown

from A Grief Observed
by C.S. Lewis

Getting over it too soon? But the words are ambiguous. To say the patient is getting over it after an operation for appendicitis is one thing; after he's had his leg off it is quite another. After that operation either the wounded stump heals or the man dies. If it heals, the fierce, continuous pain will stop. Presently he’ll get back his strength and be able to stump about on his wooden leg. He has ‘got over it.’ But he will probably have recurrent pains in the stump all his life, and perhaps pretty bad ones; and he will always be a one-legged man. There will be hardly any moment when he forgets it. Bathing, dressing, sitting down and getting up again, even lying in bed, will all be different. His whole way of life will be changed. All sorts of pleasures and activities that he once took for granted will have to be simply written off. Duties too. At present I am learning to get about on crutches. Perhaps I shall presently be given a wooden leg. But I shall never be a biped again.

Your absence has gone through me
Like a thread through a needle
Everything I do is stitched with its color.

~W.S. Merwin

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Mothers Day – May 9

Unfinished Mothers
By Clara Hinton

A mother is never “unfinished.” No matter how brief her time was with her child, the bond of love between mother and child was complete. A mother’s love for her child is unending. Dreams may shatter and circumstances may change, but a mother’s love remains strong. As a mother travels the path to healing, it is important for her to remind herself often that she is a mother forever. Her motherhood did not stop when her child died.

Many children go through life
without a mom like you

Oh how sad! For they don’t know
a mom’s love as I do

These words I write, I dedicate
to you my mom, so dear

Hold them close within your heart
through every passing year

Even when the Lord deems time
to call us home, above

Remember nothing separates
this child and mother’s love

- KJ Cochran

By Kathy Cochran, SpiritLyric.com

Butterfly hover near my mother,
Tell her that I really love her.
From the Heart

A tribute to those special lives that have changed who we are and the love that forever connects us...in loving memory of our children

The Best Gift Ever

“In strength and resolve and in vulnerability and tenderness...we will remember you
Always in deep sadness but with great love and thanksgiving for your life,
Holly Sue...we will remember you”

Born on Christmas Day, and what an ideal arrival for someone so full of gifts to unwrap in a lifetime. Holly Sue Linford was given her name in celebration of a holiday that brings bright hope into the world. “How could a baby be more special than a baby born on Christmas Day?” remarks her mother, Marianne.

Holly had a special way of taking in the world around her, with an expansive spirit that loved opening the gifts of beauty, knowledge, new people and places. Holly’s cousin expressed how Holly’s joy spilled over to others in generous and clever gift-giving, through her creative handmade quilts and needlework, photography, and talented writing. Her mom observes, “A walk through Holly’s home was to know Holly. A home full of color, sparkle, heirlooms, pictures and unusual collections. Everywhere you looked you could see her imagination; sometimes humorous, sometimes quirky, sometimes serious, but always meaningful and lovingly displayed.”

Holly’s gifts brought a bit of Christmas to every day, but perhaps most meaningful to her loved ones are the personal reflections framed in her writing. A few years before her passing from cancer, Holly wrote a Mother’s Day article for a local paper about five generations of women in her family and their legacies: “Mother’s Day for me is a celebration of all the gifts my mother has passed down to me. My love of family. My curiosity about the world. My determination to find joy in my work and life. The need to connect and tell the stories and lessons of the past to the next generation.”

Which is just what Holly has done. In her forty-one years, she generously gave others the one thing of lasting worth; for the best gift ever is the ongoing gift of herself.

In Honor of Holly Sue Linford and her mother, Marianne Valenta

- Robin Goddard, Brandon’s Mom
  TCF Brazoria County Texas

If you would like to include a “From the Heart” tribute for your child in the newsletter, please contact Robin Goddard at bhgoddard@comcast.net or 297-0544.
Fathers Day — June 20

The greatest gift I ever had
Came from God; I call him Dad!

- Author Unknown

Father’s Day

Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong – must not cry.

But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving and protecting has been able to stop our child’s death. And inside, we must ask ourselves about our failures, and we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father’s Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father it is a poignant reminder of bitter sweetness; sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost, child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of inability to stop what happened.

Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Oftentimes they are unable to do so, a remnant of childhood learning about the strength and stoicism of “big boy”. A father may even be uncomfortable opening up to his wife, and the wife who pushes him to talk may be pushing too hard.

Father’s Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, “I’m sorry we haven’t talked. Let’s do it now.” But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug, does something special, helps with the chores, and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. It is some of these things that he has lost with the death of a child. And, like Mother’s Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to a Sunday in June. It can be any day and every day. Fathers often show their hurts differently, often internally. But they do hurt.

- Gerry Hunt, TCF White River Junction, Vermont

“The world breaks everyone, and afterward, many are strong at the broken places.”

- Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms
Meditation

Returning from the wilderness a man becomes a restorer of order, a preserver. He sees the truth, recognizes his true heir, honors his forbears and his heritage, and gives his blessing to his successors. He embodies the passing of human time, living and dying within the human limits of grief and joy.

– Wendell Berry

When we are in the midst of grief, we would never recognize ourselves in these words of Wendell Berry. All we recognize is the wilderness.

But after a while – perhaps after a very long time and almost against our will – we recognize that some of the rest of this description fits us, too. While we are not grateful for the experience of loss, we may in time become grateful for the hard-won wisdom it can bring us – that we are, in fact, stronger, wiser, better equipped to deal with life, more helpful to others, more confident of our place and that of our loved one in the human stream.

But it is a wilderness. And there is a way in which it will always call to us: Come back. Remember how sad you were?

And we will go back. But we’ll go back stronger. And we won’t stay as long.

By Martha Whitmore Hickman, Healing After Loss

If part of my legacy from sorrow is new strength, I will embrace it. I will not turn away.

Love

My love for you cannot be measured in days
Outpourings of tears or visits to a grave
It is a continuous stream, constant and deep
Flowing from the very center of my being
And so I hope that in your newfound place
Surrounded by pure love and the radiance of grace
That you’ll take a swim whenever you’re near
Refreshed and remembered, my son, so dear

- Robin Goddard, Brandon’s Mom
When you are grieving the death of a child, oftentimes those you expect would give you the most support have the most difficult time knowing how to react to your loss. TCF’s National Conferences are a great place to go because everyone is the same - everyone is mourning the loss of a child. A TCF National Conference gives you an opportunity not only to open up about your loss, but also to learn from and share with others. Here’s some of what you can expect:

- Keynote speakers who will touch your heart and your soul
- More than 100 workshops covering most areas of grief experienced after a child dies
- Sharing sessions, hospitality suites, meditation room, butterfly boutique, bookstore
- Remembrance Candle Lighting
- Eleventh Annual Compassionate Friends Walk to Remember
- Sponsor a Reflection of Love

For additional information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org or on Facebook at The Compassionate Friends / USA.