



The Compassionate Friends Of Southwest Dallas County

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE

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The mission of 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.

OUR CHILDREN, SIBLINGS AND GRANDCHILDREN REMEMBERED AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

SIERRA

Granddaughter of David and Joyce

SEAN

Son of Ross and Tracy

TOMMY

Son of Debbie

MATTHEW

Son of Frances

KYLE

Son of George

JENNIFER

Sister of Sharon

BROOKE

Daughter of Shawn and Donna



SIERRA

Granddaughter of David and Joyce *Son of Willie and Connie*

CALEB

Son of Craig and Marilyn

QUINTON

Son of Randy and Pam

MARINO

Son of Eusebio and Connie

ROBERT

DEON

Son of William and Dorothy

CHRIS AND CAREY

Children of Brenda and Stan

CHARLES

Son of Lucious and Gwen



**To Our Son,
My Father,
Our
Brother
Deon Jones
1967 - 2007**

It's been almost two years since you have been gone but it seems as though it

was yesterday. Oh how it broke our hearts to lose you, the day God called you home. Part of us went with you, you did not go alone. A million times we longed for you, a million times we cried, and if love could have saved you, you would never have died. But I know you are at peace because you're safe in the Master's arms.

Love Always,
William, Dorothy, Deja, Andre, and Devin

I HAVE NOT GONE

You think I've gone, that I am dead,
and life has lost its will.
But look around, I am right there,
living with you still.
I watch your tears, I feel your pain,
I see the things you do.
I weep as well, each time you cry
my soul it lives with you.

It gives such joy to hear you laugh,
and do the things you do.
And when you smile o'er bygone days,

I smile right with you too.
For we're still together, just you and me, one mind, one soul one being walking forward into life,
though only you are seeing

And in the stillness of the night,
when the pain it really starts,
Stretch out a little with your mind
and draw me to your heart.
For I am always right in there,
always by your side.

For you have been, all my life's days,
my joy, my love, my pride!

Author Unknown
Submitted by Connie Aleman

**Robert
Daniel
Langston
1984-2007**

Rob, You've been gone two years but it seems just like

yesterday. I come home everyday and still expect to hear your voice and see you standing in the doorway, asking how my day was. What I miss the absolute most is your giving me a hug, kissing the top of my head and telling me "I love you Mom". No matter how old you got or how many of your friends were around you were never embarrassed to show me affection. All of our Love.

"I Miss You Mijo"

Love,
Mom, Mark, William, Kain, Dad,
Louise, Mat and Aunt Bea



Sean McBride



It gets no easier writing articles about our son, Sean. Sean died two years ago in June, 2007, and he would have been 24 years old on this birthday this August. We, as parents, continue to memorize the wonderful thoughts of our lost children. Tracy and I have so many wonderful memories and thoughts about how Sean lived his life. Recently, I had an occasion to go through many of the cards, letters, emails and notes sent to us immediately after Sean died. There's nothing nicer than seeing comments about your child that fortify your positive memories. This year, we would like this opportunity to share a couple of notes we received as our part of honoring Sean on his 24th birthday.

"Sean spent the entire day before he died with my husband at your home. They were working on my car, the same kind of car Sean had.... I will think of Sean a lot now when I drive my car.... I met him one of the few times I joined my husband for the Friday night car club get-together. That night, when we left, I mentioned to (my husband) that I thought Sean was such a 'beautiful man'; his wonderful blue eyes and fine features. He...was a joy to be around and I instantly like him. Around my house, I called him "Pretty Boy" because that is how I remembered him. When (my husband) came home that Friday after working with Sean on my car, I asked him how much he had paid Sean and he told me Sean had only wanted twenty dollars and I was shocked. I told him that surely Sean's time was worth more than that! He told me that that was how Sean was; he didn't help people for money but rather for the enjoyment. If only we had known then that the next day would be his last. Take care of yourselves right now and take comfort in knowing that Sean touched so many of us in his short life and a little piece of him looks over me when I drive my car. But, I believe people come into our lives for a reason and to teach us something. Sean taught me we are not promised a tomorrow. Fondly, JMP."

At Sean's memorial, I was honored that Sean touched so many generations of people. Not just the young people his age, but also the young kids and much older adults. Standing up to speak were people from his age, a man more than ten years older that talked of Sean giving him advice that saved his marriage and the headmaster of a school Sean attended until the fifth grade that spoke of how Sean always lit up the school when he arrived in the morning.

This excerpt is from a letter we got from the father of one of Sean's girl friends:

"Sean is and always will be a beautiful, sweet and loving soul; that will always be!! You both bear the loss of the world because most of the world did not realize when Sean touched their lives directly or indirectly.... Continue to give Sean to the world through future thoughts and actions and his loss can then be minimized to our world and our time. Thanks for touching our lives with such a beautiful man."

I can remember how brokenhearted John was in the days after Sean died. I see pictures of John and Sean and can see the love they had for each other and how close they were.

While sharing this is what makes us able to go on, it has been a brutal experience. I've stopped and started so many times to wipe away countless tears. Happy Birthday, Sean. Your Mom and I are joined by so many others that will always miss you. Let me end with a saying we found on a Hallmark card:

**What touches us is the joy they brought.
What comforts us are the memories we share.
What lasts.....
is love.**

**Those we love remain with us,
for love itself lives on,
And cherished memories never fade
because a loved one's gone...**

**Those we love can never be more than a thought apart,
For as long as there is memory, they'll live on in the heart.**

It Will Be Better

Recently, a mother whose child died about 2½ years ago called, as she has done many times in the past few months. It was 9:00 p.m., and she wanted to know if I would meet her someplace for an ice cream cone. She said she had something she wanted to tell me, and knowing that she usually calls only when the day is really bad, I quickly agreed to meet her. I expected to find a sad face; instead I found a smiling one.

It wasn't until we were sitting in her car eating our ice cream that she would tell me her news. She said, "You know, I didn't deal with the reality of my son's suicide for the first year and a half, but I have been coming to The Compassionate Friends meetings for the past seven months, and I have been in your group each time. You always say before the sharing group ends, "Remember, it will be better."

I have always thought you said that because it had gotten better for you, but I didn't believe it would ever be better for me. My grief was different, I thought. I wanted you to meet me tonight because I wanted to share with you, in person, the news that as of today I believe it really will be better, and I do see the light at the end of the tunnel. I know that I will be depressed again (*and she will*) but I have had this day, and I know now I will have it again."

She took a giant step forward without even so much as a "May I?" She asked me to do one thing for her, and I am doing that now. She wants me to keep telling you, "It will be better." It won't ever be the same, but it will be better than now as you struggle with the pain of fresh grief. It happened for her and it will happen for you, too. IT WILL BE BETTER! Write that down.

*Mary Cleckley, Atlanta, Georgia
Former TCF Board Member*

Relaxation Through Breathing

You can practice this deep-breathing exercise as a relaxation technique when you are feeling stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed. This can be done on your own by focusing on your breathing, taking several deep breaths, and trying to release any tension you might have in your body.

Find a comfortable position in your chair. If you would like, close your eyes, or just look down at the floor. Take a few moments to settle yourself. Now, become aware of your body. Check for any tension, beginning with your feet and moving up slowly to your head. Notice any tension you might have in your legs, stomach, hand and arms, shoulders, neck, and face. Let go of any tension you might be holding.

Now, become aware of your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as it enters and leaves your body.

Take a deep breath. Notice your lungs expanding. Now slowly exhale through your nose. Again, take a deep breath. Fill your lungs and your chest, notice how much air you can take in. Hold it for a second. Now release it slowly; inhale slowly and fully one more time. Hold it for a second, and release.

Continue breathing in this way for another couple of minutes. Continue to focus on your breath. With each inhalation and exhalation, feel your body becoming more and more relaxed. Use your breathing to wash away any remaining tension.

When you feel you are ready, open your eyes.

How was that? Did you notice any new sensations while you were breathing? How do you feel now? This exercise can be practiced at work, at home, on the subway, while waiting in line, even while walking. Deep breathing can be used as an effective relaxation technique and can be applied to a variety of situations.

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. The second, third or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person - or just the right words spoken that will help you in your grief work. It is so much like 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. We have new parents at each meeting. 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."

Sibling Survivor Guilt: What It Is, How It Works

By Bob Baugher, Ph.D.

We know that guilt is a part of the human condition; and it is certainly part of most people's bereavement process. If you experienced survivor guilt when your brother or sister died, join the crowd. Let's look at some of the common types:

Being alive. Knowing that your brother or sister will never experience life again while you continue to live day after day may bring guilt feelings. You can't understand why your sibling's life was cut short and you continue to live.

Surpassing the age he/she was. Survivor guilt can be especially difficult when you reach and surpass the age to which your sibling lived. Every day you live beyond that date may somehow feel strange, unfair, or even a relief.

Using his/her things. For some bereaved siblings, using items that belonged to their deceased brother or sister brings comfort and produces feelings of closeness. Others report that using items brings feelings of unworthiness. When an item inevitably wears out or becomes unusable, you may feel badly that yet another piece of your brother or sister has faded from use. Other people may not understand this significance.

Doing things he/she never got a chance to do. This is a quite common source of survivor guilt and it becomes especially poignant when you see the look on your parents' face that says, "I wish your brother/sister could have done this or been here for this."

Experiencing pleasure. Here you are enjoying yourself at a party, on vacation, at the beach, the movies, or out to dinner and suddenly it hits you: "How can I be having fun like this when she can never do this again?" Friends may notice your sudden change of mood, but you may not want to tell them for fear of spoiling their fun.

Seeing your loved ones cry. One of the most difficult aspects of death is watching those around you grieve the loss and realizing there is not much you can do to ease their pain. You may have had the awkward experience of standing there and having the desire to say, "Hey, I'm still here!" You feel guilty for standing there, being alive, and realizing your existence has little effect on easing your loved ones grief.

Taking risks you shouldn't. If you are or were a normal adolescent, you engaged in activities you knew were unsafe. However, because of your brother or sister's death, you also know better than most of your friends that a young person can die and leave their family devastated. Yet, there you were, taking risks and feeling guilt as a result.

Feeling like it should have been you. This is another common one, especially when you are feeling down on yourself or when your parents have criticized you. If you are having thoughts such as these it is very important that you call a friend, a counselor, your parents, the crisis center, or some other person who can listen to you. These are thoughts that may indicate you are depressed

Not doing enough to keep his memory alive. Here you are going through the course of your day, when it hits you that you have not been thinking of him/her. Or you find that you aren't remembering some of the ways he did things. Then you kick yourself for "forgetting". Do you realize that you will never forget your brother or sister? One way to help with this guilt issue is to begin writing down all your memories. If you're not a writer, then talk into a tape recorder. It's a great way to ease this aspect of survivor guilt: stories are the way we best remember.

Before I get to the last type of survivor guilt, I want to offer some ways that you might ease some of your guilt:

1. Go back through the list and circle the ones that are relevant to you.
2. Find someone who will be a good listener and not judge you. Tell this person that you wish to talk about some guilt that you have been feeling around your brother/sister's death. Most importantly tell this person that you want them to listen without trying to "fix" it, and without saying, "don't feel guilt." You simply want someone who will listen. There is something positive about "getting out" your guilt feelings and not letting them eat away at your insides.
3. Next, focus on the positive. Tell your friend all the good things you've done since your sibling died. Don't be modest. Omit the term "I should have" from your vocabulary because you can never fix the past. You can only work on the present.
4. Ask yourself the following question: "What would it take to forgive myself?" And do something to work on this.

Now, here's the final category of survivor guilt:

Not living up to his/her standards. Someone said it well years ago, "The dead have it easy-we are reluctant to say bad things about them and, unlike us, they make no further mistakes in their life." In other words, your brother/sister was a hard act to follow. So, you feel more guilt because you are not this ideal person. Your challenge is to live up to your own realistic standards and allow yourself to make mistakes.

A good method to follow the next time you make a "stupid" mistake is to say, "What would I say right now if my best friend made the exact same mistake?" And then say that exact thing to yourself. I challenge you to treat yourself as well as you would your best friend! Besides, I bet that's what your brother/sister would want for you. Don't you agree?

Adolescent Grief

What's Going On Inside?
Teens have told us about...

Their feelings:	Their thoughts and questions:	Their behaviors:	Their Physical Signs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confused ▪ Lost ▪ Alone ▪ Sad ▪ Shock ▪ Anger ▪ Depressed ▪ Guilty ▪ Shy ▪ Empty ▪ Robbed ▪ Jealous ▪ Unmotivated ▪ Rage ▪ Denial ▪ Blamed ▪ Numb ▪ Regretful ▪ Anxious ▪ Disbelief ▪ Relief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why me? ▪ Why now? ▪ Why him/her? ▪ Who's responsible? ▪ Who can I trust? ▪ Who's next? ▪ What now? ▪ What's next? ▪ What am I going to do? ▪ What did I do to deserve this? ▪ How can I go on? ▪ How could this happen? ▪ I blame God ▪ I'm going crazy ▪ I didn't get to say goodbye ▪ I want to die ▪ There is no one to talk to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can't sleep ▪ Sleep too much ▪ Acting silly ▪ Running away ▪ Staying busy ▪ Mad at everything ▪ Defensiveness ▪ Short temper ▪ Mood swings ▪ Overly helpful/nice ▪ Drinking/drugs ▪ Gang involvement ▪ Fighting ▪ Driving carelessly ▪ Doing "dumb stuff" ▪ Crying ▪ Cussing ▪ Acting selfish ▪ Withdrawal ▪ Pushing people away ▪ Listening to heavy music ▪ Acting mean ▪ Yelling ▪ Grades slipping ▪ Worry ▪ Not caring about anything ▪ Perfectionism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Depression ▪ Shaking ▪ Appetite changes ▪ Sleep pattern changes ▪ Increased sickness ▪ Nightmares ▪ Weight loss ▪ Weight gain ▪ Headaches ▪ Dizziness ▪ Inability to relax ▪ Irritability ▪ Increased energy ▪ Decreased energy ▪ Panic attacks

Some Ways to Help...

- Listen
- Don't judge
- Honor all their feelings and emotions
- Remember that grief is uniquely experienced
- Recognize and help to make them aware of their existing strengths and coping skills
- Don't try to make it okay, but give hope that things will eventually be better
- Be honest with them...don't hide information
- Provide a safe place for them to express themselves
- Don't rush them...grief can be a long journey
- If desired, involve them in planning (memorials, funeral, etc)
- Encourage expression of feelings through writing, art, music, etc
- Encourage realistic memories
- Encourage positive rituals of remembrance
- Monitor behaviors and physical signs...find additional resources if there is a need

ANNOUNCEMENTS



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Walk to Remember
Portland, Oregon
August 9, 2009

Friends Asking Friends® Fundraising Program

Whether or not you are attending the national conference this year, you may still participate in the Walk to Remember. Just go to www.tcfwalktoremember.org and join the TCF SW Dallas Team. After you join you can create personal page in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling.

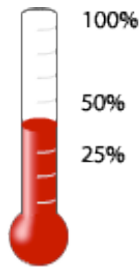
You may also access the site through our website www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfswdallas and follow the following instructions:

First: Click on "2009 Walk to Remember" in the links section on the left. You will be directed to the Walk to Remember main page. Click on "Event Enrollment" Then choose "Join a Team." Scroll down and choose "TCF Southwest Dallas"

Second: As an individual participant you create a personalized web page with pictures and stories, and set a fundraising goal.

Third: Attain your fundraising goal by inviting friends and family to visit your web page and provide support.

If you need assistance, send me an email at: tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net.



Chapter goal: \$2000
Raised to date: \$1090

LIBRARY



Our library is available to you. Please take time to look at the available resources. If you have checked out a book or video, please return it when you are through so others may use it.

NEW LIBRARY BOOK

Ka Thao has donated *Memories of a Teenage Angel* by Sandra K. Wilkerson to our library in memory of her son Christian. **Thanks Ka.**



Customized Compassionate Friends wristbands have the phrase "Forever in My Heart" framed by two butterflies. The wristbands are high quality long

lasting silicon and are swirled blue and white. These are available at the meetings. We ask for a minimum donation of \$2 each. Funds go toward the work of our chapter.

Welcome New Chapter

Please welcome a new TCF chapter to Texas. **TCF of Texas Hill Country**, in Kerrville has just received its charter and will soon be holding its first meeting. The chapter leader is Steve Karpuleon. He can be reached at (830) 792-3769 skarpuleon@windstream.net Meetings are the 4th Monday of each month 6:30 - 8:00 PM First United Methodist Church - 321 Thompson Drive in Kerrville.

Need additional support between meetings?

There are resources available through The Compassionate Friends national website at www.compassionatefriends.org. The weekly live call in radio show called "Healing the Grieving Heart" along has an online support community you may participate in.

Our own chapter has a phone friend list. For a list of members to contact, see our chapter's purple brochure.

WEBSITES

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is dedicated to advancing knowledge of suicide and the ability to prevent it. www.afsp.org

Alive Alone - designed to benefit bereaved parents whose only child or all children have died by providing a self-help network to promote communication and healing. www.alivealone.org

griefHaven - griefHaven provides loving support, hope, and hands-on tools for those who have lost a child, brother or sister, or grandchild, and also provides education to professionals and others seeking to help bereaved family members rebuild their lives. www.griefhaven.org

GriefNet offers e-mail support groups for the bereaved including parents, siblings, and grandparents. www.griefnet.org

KIDSAID is a safe place for kids to help each other deal with grief and loss. <http://kidsaid.com>

POMC Parents Of Murdered Children provides support and assistance to all survivors of homicide victims while working to create a world free of murder. www.pomc.com

MADD Mothers Against Drunk Drivers has a mission to stop drunk driving, support victims of violent crime, and prevent underage drinking. www.madd.org

MEETINGS

The Compassionate Friends of Southwest Dallas County meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the parlor of the First United Methodist Church in Duncanville. The church address is 403 S. Main St. The parlor is located behind the church at 206 W. Daniel St. **PLEASE NOTE THAT WE NO LONGER HAVE CHILD CARE AVAILABLE DURING MEETINGS.**

New TCF Video: After a Child Dies

The Compassionate Friends has unveiled a web version of a new video After a Child Dies. We believe After a Child Dies will offer insight and understanding and hope to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents, and to those who care about them. After a Child Dies is now available to view online at www.compassionatefriends.org **Our chapter also has a copy that may be checked out of our library.**

MEMORY BOARD AND BIRTHDAY TABLE

You are encouraged to use the memory board and birthday table. It is good way to remember and commemorate your loved one.

NEWSLETTER POLICY

Sponsoring a newsletter is a way to remember your child at any special time through the year. You may include a picture of your child (if emailed please use JPEG format) and a brief (100 words or less) comment about your child. *To guard against identity theft, please do not include full birth or death dates.* A donation of \$20.00 will help cover the cost of postage for the newsletter.

This is your newsletter. Please feel free to submit your own writings, book reviews, articles or poems you have found helpful. Be sure to include the author's name and source. Articles may have to be edited for space.

Please email to: tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net

Or mail to:

Bill Campbell

417 Cimarron Meadows Dr.

Waxahachie, TX. 75167

CHAPTER STEERING COMMITTEE

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Newsletter/Webmaster	Bill Campbell tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net
Members at Large	Marshall Moran, Vivian Adams,

AREA TCF CHAPTERS

CARROLLTON/FARMERS BRANCH www.orgsites.com/tx/tcf-cfb FT. WORTH www.geocities.com/tcfriendsfw
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NEWSLETTER
2009
AUGUST

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Southwest Dallas County Chapter
The Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 380011
Duncanville, Texas 75138



The Southwest Dallas County Chapter of The Compassionate Friends hopes that you have benefited from receiving this newsletter. Our purpose is to support and aid families in the positive resolution of their grief following the death of a child. If you no longer wish to continue receiving this newsletter please mail this page to the return address or email tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net so your name can be removed from our list.