



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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.

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Volume 9

JUNE 2011

Issue 6



It's Been Four Years, Sean, and.....

It's been four years, Sean, and we still miss you more and more each day. The bad days are filled with other parents telling us about their children graduating from college. Or, communicating the excitement of their child's marriage or a new grandchild. We don't and won't have that in our lives. Just a deafening silence; an absence of potential memories. But, at the same time, we still laugh at the beautiful memories your mom and I share of you growing up. We frequently laugh at the comic strip, Zits, featuring a teenager, Jeremy, and his typical antics. It's so much like the day-to-day antics with you as you were growing up and we just laugh and cry at the same time.

And what an honor your friend, Scott Martin, bestowed on you. He and his wife had a boy last August, almost on your birthday, and named him Sean Michael Martin. We were blown away and cried and cried. Scott appreciates the influence you had on his life and his marriage and, as a tribute of their love for you, they honored your name so it will live on forever.

You touched our lives. There will never be any doubt of that. And, you touched so many other lives in a kind and generous way. That will be missed.

We love you, Sean.

Your Mom and Dad
Tracy & Ross McBride

This newsletter is sponsored by Ross and Tracy McBride



The TCF Southwest Dallas banner will once again be carried in the Walk To Remember at the 2011 National Conference in Minneapolis. If you have not previously signed a message to your child, grandchild or sibling, it will be available at the June 21st meeting.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Walk to Remember
Minneapolis, Minnesota
July 17, 2011



A Sibling's Point of View

by Lauren Dado

Remembering Those Who Have Gone Before Us

Three years ago, my six-year old brother, Luijoe, died while my family and I were on a vacation at a beach resort in Cebu. He drowned at the kiddie pool and not a single person noticed that he was in danger until it was already too late. I can still remember the events of that fateful day. There was a cool breeze that blew as the lifeguard tried to resuscitate my brother by the poolside. Then my dad came running from the beach and started screaming. When the lifeguard couldn't revive him, Luijoe was driven to the hospital in an ambulance. And although the doctors did everything they could to save him, my little brother was pronounced dead one hour later.

Having experienced what it is like to grieve for someone, I can say with conviction that Anton Chekhov's portrayal of a father's anguish for his dead son in the short story *Grief* was accurate. Everyone has their own way of dealing with grief. I chose to deal with my sadness through writing down what I felt in my journal. I suppose I could have talked to my friends about it, but I knew in my heart that they could not comprehend the magnitude of my sorrow and guilt unless they themselves have experienced death, which they haven't.

Though the image of a man telling a little horse about the death of his son might look a

little ridiculous, we must keep in mind that Iona's way of dealing with his grief was by talking about it. No one was kind enough to spare a few minutes and listen to his story, which left him with no choice but to converse with his horse. It sounds a little pathetic but when you come to think of it, talking to a horse or inanimate object about something as difficult as grief is a lot similar to writing it down. A piece of paper will never know what it is like to lose a brother, but it heard every single word I wanted to say and did not look bored or interrupt my narrative with comments. During my bereavement, one thing that exasperated me was when people would tell me things like, 'At least your brother is an angel in heaven now.' Though I know they meant well by these attempts to comfort me, I did not want to picture Luijoe hovering in and out of the clouds with a pair of wings and a halo. I wanted him to be alive, to be as annoying as little brothers are; anywhere but inside a wooden casket buried six feet under a fine carpet of Bermuda grass.

Grief is a never-ending process. The beautiful thing about grieving is that even though you will never get over the death of your loved one, you will learn to move on and live without that person. Death like any great wound leaves a scar that will heal with time. But the mark will always remain, and so will the memories of your loved one.

When I See You Again

When I see you again
Will you still have that face
That beautiful smile
Will you still move with Grace
When I see you again
Will you still have those eyes
Bright piercing glances
With sarcastic little sighs
When I see you again
Will you still have that laugh
The one that makes me smile
Guess I'll wait awhile
When I see you again
Will you light up a room
The way you've always done
You're such a lovely one
When I see you again
Will I hold you to my heart
You've been there all these
years
That end will never start
When I see you again
Will you know how you were
loved
Will you know all the truth
Of lives gone by
Will you share your love with me
And look into my eyes
When I see you again
My soul will sing with joy
My heart bleed tears of
happiness
And I will hold you my Dear Boy

Written for David Thomas Calvert

By; Thomas Patrick Calvert

I love you David

used with permission

Music is the art which is most high
to tears and memory.

~Oscar Wilde

A Symbol of Hope

"A butterfly lights beside us like a sunbeam.

And for a brief moment its glory and beauty belong to our world.

But then it flies on again, and though we wish it could have stayed, we feel so lucky to have seen it...."



BIRTHDAYS

Matthew Wayne Blake son of Rick & Deannie
Christopher Michael Adams son of Leah
Joel Jackson son of Jo Ann
Eric McGraw grandson of Carolyn
Gary Glen Browder son of Barbara

ANNIVERSARIES

Mina Rehman daughter of Khurram & Nikki
Layla Rehman daughter of Khurram & Nikki
Sean Michael McBride son of Ross & Tracy
Ishmael Thompson son of Pam
Billy Dyer son of Lillie stepson of George
Braelyn Sanai Brown daughter of Shenard & Tajuanekja
Jamie White son of Kelly stepson of Jim
David Valdez son of Margaret
Celeste June Blalock niece of Gloria

Men Do Cry

I heard quite often "men don't cry"
Though no one ever told me why
So when I fell and skinned a knee
No one came to comfort me.
And when some bully boy at school
Would pull a prank so mean or cruel
I'd quickly learn to turn and quip
"It doesn't hurt" and bite my lip.
So as I grew to reasoned years
I learned to stifle any tears.
Though "Be a big boy" it began
Quite soon I learned to "Be a man."
And I could play that stoic role
While storm and tempest wracked my soul.
No pain nor setback could there be
Could wrest one single tear from me.

Then one long night I stood nearby
And helplessly watched my son die
And quickly found to my surprise
That all that tearless talk was lies.
And still I cry and have no shame
I cannot play that "big boy" game.
And openly without remorse
I let my sorrow take its course.
So those of you who can't abide
A man you've seen who's often cried
Reach out to him with all your heart
As one whose life's been torn apart.
For men do cry when they can see
Their loss of immortality.
And tears will come in endless streams
When mindless fate destroys their dreams.

Ken Falk TCF, NW Connecticut Chapter

Father's Day - A Grandfather's View

By Bill "Pa Paw" Fausett
Bereaved Grandfather, BP/USA Arkansas

Now well into my fifty's and knowing Father's Day is approaching once again, I find myself recalling my very first. It was a beautiful Sunday morning, June 16, 1969, when I became a father for the first time. A Father's Day I will never forget. Already prepared with the traditional cigars, I had to be a turkey strutting his stuff. Many of the Father's Day after that were spent away from home working and never stopping to think just how special this day really is.

After my retirement a few years back, I became a grandfather, and my whole life changed. I never dreamed I would be changing diapers, giving bottles in the middle of the floor, playing dolls, or outside watching bugs, birds, butterflies, bees, squirrels, rabbits, and loving every minute of it, with the most beautiful granddaughter anyone has ever seen (my opinion of course). That was a special year for me. I found myself asking the wife, "did our kids do that?" many times, and she telling me "yes", but you were working or just didn't notice. My granddaughter taught me more about beauty of life and how much I had missed, in the short time she was here, than I could have ever imagined. We lost her at 13 months, 2 days and 22 hours due to a very rare genetic disorder and again my life changed.

This Father's Day will be spent with my family and a new grandson, now 2 1/2 years old, and a great little guy. I see much of the same inquisitive nature in him. Making sure each visit he has a good time. I think I do it out of obligation, and not with the joy that I once had, but when you see that smile on his face you know you made his day a little better, and that makes it all worthwhile.

Memories are a part of our past, and some become a part of our heart.

At the end of Father's Day, when everyone has gone to bed, I will sit at my desk, drink one more cup of coffee, say a prayer, and once again, tell my granddaughter just how much I love and miss her, and somehow know she knows, and in my mind will hear her say.

"Pa Paw I love you too." Take time to smell the roses.

*Bill "Pa Paw" Fausett
In Memory Of
Jessica Lynn Webb
Forever In Our Hearts*

from *A JOURNEY TOGETHER*, www.bereavedparentsusa.org.

TCF National Conference "Star of Hope" Now Available Online



This year a unique remembrance item is being offered, the Star of Hope. With the national conference this year in Minneapolis, MN, the conference logo, reflecting the theme "Shining Stars, Guiding Hope" is a depiction of one of Minnesota's "10,000 lakes" outlined by a serenely beautiful north woods scene. A flock of butterflies seems to vanish into the horizon where they meld into glistening stars shining in the heavens. We look at our children as shining stars who remain for us beacons of light and hope in the darkness.

A rectangular version of the logo is the basis for the Star of Hope and includes silhouetted pine trees, gleaming stars, and a single butterfly where the child's picture will be inserted with his or her name. That logo insert with picture will be artistically framed by a 4"x6" silver, vertical wire star-frame ornament with an attached ribbon for hanging. All Star of Hope mementos ordered will be displayed at the national conference in a special area for everyone present to view!

The Star of Hope can be ordered online on TCF's national website. The minimum donation for each picture submitted remains \$10 again this year.

If you cannot attend the conference and would like the Star of Hope sent to you, then an additional \$5 donation is requested to cover postage and handling. For more details, please go to TCF's national website at www.compassionatefriends.org and go to "TCF 2011 National Conference - Minneapolis" in the dropdown under "News & Events."

THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH

A Father's Story

How do we fathers deal with the death of a child? We've been good fathers, doing our best to provide for our families both materially and spiritually. We have taken our responsibilities as family men very seriously. Heck, we haven't even cheated on our income taxes! Why do we have to suffer? Why were we given this burden? What wrong have we committed to deserve this pain? And most important, how can we find the strength to endure?

Hundreds of doubts assailed me as I struggled to adjust to the reality of my situation and to make some sense of Blake's death. It was difficult for me to accept in a world governed by a loving and all powerful Creator, innocent people suffer and die. Therefore, I decided I must have been guilty of some transgression. Worst of all, I could not imagine ever feeling happy again. I didn't think I would ever enjoy my life. I missed my son terribly, and I was consumed with worry about my wife and surviving children. That question of "Why?" continued to plague me. I guess I was asking for knowledge and insight which no mortal can have. It was like a midnight search in the dark room for a black cat that wasn't there.

We do not know the reason, but we live in a world in which innocent people suffer. We need not add guilt to the pain we experience. Grief is a natural and important part of the healing process after the loss of a child. Guilt is not. The kind of despair that often accompanies guilt must be dealt with and overcome.

When we lose faith in the possibility of ever regaining happiness, we don't allow ourselves to believe that we can hope again. In truth, believing that we will get better is healing. We must reach down inside ourselves and find something to push us to a hopeful direction. The first step is to make a choice to believe we can overcome our suffering. Despite the fact that we have no guarantees for the future, we have to accept hope. The alternative is to allow ourselves to be convinced that we will never be healed. How can we progress from there? Hope can return if we allow it to. Doubt and despair will impede the process. Only when we allow ourselves to take the leap of faith and believe in the chance for our renewed happiness can we begin to enjoy life once more.

So how do we begin our healing? Well, like it or not, the only way out is through. How do you get started? Start where you are. Start with your grief, your despair, your guilt. Start with your confusion and questions. Start with the fact that you ARE. Try to find some sense of gratitude about your own life. Don't try to figure out why . . . you never will.

This Father's Day, try to trust in the goodness of life and to want that goodness again. Dedicate your talents and abilities to healing yourself and those around you. You'll know you're getting better when you can spend Father's Day celebrating the joy of your child's life, rather than the pain of his death.

~Jeff Dyson TCF/Beaumont, TX



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

facebook

Grief work is a difficult, necessary part of life after a child has died. Member Rebecca Hensler tells us that at her support group meeting, "we were asked to write a letter TO our grief. The members suggested I share with others what I have written."

Dear Grief,

I guess we are stuck together, you and I. You are my most constant connection to my son. Without you, it is hard to see him. His memory brings you; you bring his memory. In my mind's eye, you and he walk hand in hand.

Some people would say it is time to let you go. But I would rather live with you, and with my memories, than live without both.

In a way, I am grateful to you, Grief. But my son should be holding my hand, not yours.

Rebecca

from the TCF Facebook page



34th National Conference

TCF Conference: Find Friendship, Understanding, and Hope.

Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN
• Join us July 15 - 17, 2011 •

Speakers Announced for National Conference!

David Morrell is a bereaved parent and grandparent, author of the poignant *Fireflies*, but perhaps best known for creating *Rambo* (adapted to the big screen with Sylvester Stallone). David's 15-year-old son Matthew died from bone cancer in 1987, a loss that, according to his bio, "haunts not only Morrell's life but his work, as in his memoir about Matthew, *Fireflies*, and his novel *Desperate Measures* whose main character lost a son." Ironically and sadly, David's granddaughter Natalie recently died from the same rare bone cancer that took his son. David's award winning writing career includes more than 30 books with more than 18 million copies of his books printed. David will be the Saturday evening banquet speaker.

Carol Kearns, author of *Sugar Cookies* and *a Nightmare* became a psychologist at the urging of the renowned Elisabeth Kubler-Ross after the death of her 7-year-old daughter who was swept out to sea by a rogue wave. She has appeared as an expert on numerous television shows to discuss the psychological impact of such headline crimes as the Polly Klass murder, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the Columbine school shooting. Carol will be the Friday afternoon banquet speaker.

Mary Rondeau Westra, recently published her memoir *After the Murder of My Son*, created following the senseless and brutally violent death of her son Peter in 2001. She has written numerous short stories and articles for grief publications and presented at the Art of Recovery Workshop sponsored by the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Office of Justice Programs. Mary will be the Sunday closing ceremony speaker.

Mitch Carmody, author of *Letters to My Son*, is a bereaved parent, losing his son Kelly to a cancerous brain tumor and is a twice bereaved sibling, with the loss of his older brother from degenerative cerebral palsy and his twin sister in an automobile accident that also claimed her two young boys. He is the popular workshop presenter of "Whispers of Love, Signs from Our Children." Mitch also performs interpretive sign language, is a staff writer for *Living With Loss* magazine, an accomplished artist and creator of the innovative 20 Faces of Grief and the S.T.A.I.R.S. model of grief staging. Mitch will be the Opening Ceremony speaker.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Walk to Remember

Minneapolis, Minnesota
July 17, 2011



Join TCF Members As We Walk to Remember Our Children

Whether or not you can participate in TCF's Walk to Remember® July 17th in Minneapolis, Minnesota, you have the opportunity to create a website in memory of a special child and help The Compassionate Friends to raise crucial funds to help bereaved families across the United States.

You can do this by joining hundreds of others in TCF's popular Walk to Remember Friends Asking Friends® fundraiser.

The Southwest Dallas County Chapter Team is up and ready for your donations. Just go to www.walktoremember.org and join our team it only takes a little time. You can also make your own page in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling.

Click on "Event Enrollment" on the left. Click on "Join A Team". Then scroll down to **TCF Southwest Dallas**. Fill out the information and you will be able to make a donation and create your page.

Attain your fundraising goal by inviting friends, family, and business acquaintances to visit your memorial web page and provide support (they can come to your website and donate using a secure server; you can also receive checks, enter them on your website as pledged, forward the checks to the National Office—noting the Team or Individual name—and we'll mark the check on your website as received).

Thank you to all our "virtual" walkers, team members, team leaders, and TCF chapters accepting this opportunity through the Walk to Remember "Friends Asking Friends" program to make a difference in the lives of families that have experienced the death of a child. We cannot achieve our mission without your support! Remember, "Together We Can Make a Difference!!"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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. Child care is available.

Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to those who attended their first TCF meeting 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 third Tuesday of the month). The meeting is open to everyone and free of charge. You are free to talk, cry or to sit in silence; we respect the individuality of mourning. Comments shared in the meetings remain confidential. 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 print and mail this newsletter and meet other expenses involved in reaching out to other grieving families (100% of funds are used for this outreach). Donations, along with the name of the person being honored, may be sent to:

TCF Southwest Dallas
P.O. Box 380011
Duncanville Texas 75138

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. Please make all submissions by the 20th of the month prior to which you wish them to appear.

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:
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NEWSLETTER
2011
JUNE

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Southwest Dallas County Chapter
The Compassionate Friends
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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.