



# 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

### MAY BIRTHDAYS

**LESLEY**  
*Daughter of Bill and Joan*

**REBECCA**  
*Daughter of Nancy*

**TARA**  
*Daughter of Tim and Holly*

**EDWARD**  
*Son of Edward and Pauletta*

**CHARLES**  
*Son of Charles and Robin*



### MAY ANNIVERSARIES

**CINDY**  
*Daughter of John and Susan*

**SCOTT**  
*Son of Sue*

**BRIAN**  
*Son of Jo Ann*

**SHAUNDA**  
*Daughter of James and Joyce*

**HOPE**  
*Daughter of Loretta*

**AARON**  
*Son of Sandra*

**ERIC**  
*Grandson of Carolyn*

## 2009 Butterfly Festival



The 2009 Butterfly Festival was held at the Dallas Zoo on May 2nd. This annual event and the Butterfly Garden near the Discovery House are sponsored by Khurram and Nikki Rehman in memory of their daughters Mina and Layla. Many, many thanks to the Rehmans for this generous and heartfelt gift to the community, their family and friends, and to our chapter of Compassionate Friends.

*Photos Joan Campbell*



### To Shaunda,

It's hard to believe it will be a year in May since you left us. This has been the most difficult year we have ever encountered. We thought the loss of our parents were difficult years, but there is no comparison to losing you, our only child. Over the year, there have been lots of tears, but we are comforted that you are always near. We love you and cherish every precious memory that we shared with you for 36 wonderful years.

Love You,  
James and Joyce Robinson  
(Shaunda's parents)



### Dear Edward,



We struggled with what to say and concluded that we can only speak from our hearts.

We thank God for choosing us to be your parents during your short (almost 22 years) stay on this side of heaven. When you left, a piece of our hearts was literally ripped away and gone with you. We will never be the same. We will not be whole again until we are with God and you on the other side. You were the greatest and most precious son. We learned so much from you. You taught us how to be better in each and every area of our walk here on earth: husband/wife, father/mother, grandparents, son/daughter, brother/sister and friend. We continue to learn more from you everyday as we reminisce on the time we shared with you.

Thank you so much for the lessons and thank you for being you.

Happy 24<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Boo

Oh how we long to see you and hold you. We love you and miss you dearly.

Love, bear hugs and raspberry kisses,  
Mom and Dad



### To Lesley,



Although the pain of losing you eases a bit as time goes on, the memory of you is as strong as ever. You could never be forgotten! It is incredible that this month would have been your 30th birthday. We try hard to focus on celebrating your **life** and the time we had together. You brought so much light and energy and joy into our lives! We all miss your smile and your contagious laugh!

We hope bringing awareness to others about your tragic death will keep others from having to experience the pain and suffering of losing a child. Even in death, you bring life to others!

We love and miss you so much!

Love always,  
Daddy, JoJo and Kaylee



*From your chapter leader...*

Once again spring is all around us. For so many of us, spring is filled with thoughts of work that must be done as we prepare for summer. The trees need trimming, flowers need planting, and yards need to be maintained. This time of year reminds me that although the winter storms have come and wreaked their havoc, the spring rains will shower us with a renewed sense of hope and uplift us for the coming months. Just as we had to endure the gloom of winter, springtime welcomes us with a new song as a sign of better things to come now that we have made it through the worst of storms. So as you set out to labor in your lawns and gardens, always remember, though we have had to endure our own winter storms, we can also expect that brighter tomorrow. Keep your friends and families close as you work together in finding ways to honor your sons and daughters. Like the gardens you tended, you will find personal growth in making a difference in the lives of others because it will truly bring meaning to your own. More storms will surely come, but know that after the storm passes, the sun always shines. And always remember, your friends here at TCF are here to help you weather the storms. We need not walk alone.

*Jerry Palady*

### **TCF SW Dallas County Chapter Gets Invited to Lancaster's Victims of Crime Awareness Fair**

On Saturday, May 2, the TCF Southwest Dallas County chapter was invited by the Lancaster Police Department's Crime Victim Assistance Division to host a table at the City of Lancaster's 1st Annual Victim Awareness Fair. In keeping with our goal to further promote community awareness of the TCF organization and our chapter, we accepted that invitation. This was a worthwhile event in that we were able to meet with over thirty other organizations from around the DFW area and let them know of our existence and purpose. These organizations ranged from area police departments to victim's assistance outreach organizations. Many individuals stopped by our table to introduce themselves and to get more familiar with our organization. Understandably, so many of these individuals were surprised to learn about the TCF and its function. As we explained, "This is not a club that any one of the members particularly want to belong, but it is important that we let the community at large know of our existence so we can help those bereaved parents and grandparents that need our support."

During this event, I was supported by Vivian Adams and Ross McBride who offered their time and talent to speak with interested visitors. Vivian and Ross did an outstanding job of talking with our visitors, explaining what we do, why we do it, and how we can help serve the community. Time and time again we heard different versions of the same story. That was, "When we have a family that has suffered the loss of a child, we don't always know how to help them or where to send them for help! Your organization will most certainly help so many." We were able to provide these individuals with needed information, handouts and contact numbers.

My special thanks to Vivian and Ross for their time and support at this event.

Jerry Palady

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#### STANDING

People say  
"Oh you are doing so well,  
you are so strong,  
you are an inspiration!"

We do not feel strong.  
We feel shaken to the core,  
Saddened beyond belief,  
Pain beyond comprehension,  
Forever changed.

What do they see that we can not see?

"That a horrible storm,  
unexpectedly ripped through  
our lives and we are  
still standing"

They are amazed  
We are paralyzed

Still Standing

*By: Julie Short  
In Loving Memory of Kyra  
TCF Southeastern Illinois Chapter*

For my Barbie on Mother's Day

## **Mother's Day For Bereaved Moms**

A day of joy and celebration  
for all mothers on this earth  
who love their children unconditionally  
from adoption or from birth

This love lasts a lifetime  
but if your child should die  
the day is marked with sadness  
stained with tears that you will cry

God bless you special mothers  
whose children have donned wings  
our thoughts are with you this bittersweet  
day and the melancholy that it brings

No matter how many years will pass  
your heart will hurt this day  
like a glowing ember flaring up  
the pain returns your way.

There is nothing that can be said  
nothing anyone can do  
no one can heal the pain  
so deep inside of you.

It is your pain  
the greatest burden a mother can bear  
imbedded within all the joys of  
Motherhood  
there will always be some despair.

Find solace the best you can  
in knowing a mother's love transcends  
all time and space  
and no matter where your child is  
they will feel your heart's embrace.

*Mitch Carmody*  
[www.heartlightstudios.net](http://www.heartlightstudios.net)  
[www.proactivegrieving.com](http://www.proactivegrieving.com)

"Grief knits two hearts in closer bonds than  
happiness ever can; and common sufferings  
are far stronger links than common joys"

-- Alphonse de Lamartine  
(1790-1869)

"Grief is a process, not a state"--  
Anne Grant (1755-1838)

## **Handling A Child's Grief** **By Virginia A. Simpson, Ph.D.**

Everyone experiences a sense of shock when death occurs, and this is especially true for children. They have no prior experience, and usually no information to help them comprehend what "dead forever" Means. All too often, parents wait until the child begins to "act out" his/her grief in disruptive ways before realizing that the child is hurting and needs help.

A child in emotional turmoil is frequently labeled a bad child, a disruptive child, a problem child, when what he/she is is a grieving child in pain. This pain needs to be addressed, or the "bad child" label will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Children express their grief differently depending on their age. An infant will be fussy and cry more than normal. A child age six or under will ask for details over and over, and may alternate between tears and going out to play as if nothing had happened. Children ages six to 12 have a more mature understanding of death, but may regress, and need a great deal of reassurance. A teenager has an adult understanding of death, but has fewer coping skills. The teenagers' responses are superimposed on the emotional rollercoaster of adolescence.

All grieving children and teens needs the following:

1. To understand that the person is dead. Young children are helped most when we tell them the truth in direct, concrete language.
2. To experience the pain and emotions associated with grief. This takes a lot of time because a child's grief will be reawakened with each new developmental stage.
3. Someone who will listen.
4. Your time.
5. Reassurance of being loved and cared about.
6. Encouragement to discuss his or her innermost fantasies, fears, thoughts, and feelings.
7. The truth. Never tell a child something he or she will later come to learn is not true. Trust your children enough to tell them the truth so that they will know they can trust you.

When children are not given the opportunity to grieve, they may learn to avoid love, to withdraw emotionally from others, and to build a life free of emotional turmoil so that they never experience great joy or great pain. All children who have lost a loved one can benefit from being part of a group that provides them with loving support and the safety to ask questions and find answers. Support groups meet regularly at The Mourning Star Center in Palm Desert. For more information about The Center's services, all of which are free, call (760) 836-0360.

©1998 Virginia A. Simpson, Ph.D., Founder, The Mourning Star Center, [www.drvirginiasimpson.com](http://www.drvirginiasimpson.com).

## Mothers' Day, "Before" and "After"

While sorting through boxes and bags, it is not unusual for me to find something unexpected. It happened just the other day. Shifting through a box, I came across a wrinkled, somewhat yellowed piece of lined school paper. I carefully unfolded it only to find a drawing of a stick-Mom and stick-daughter standing along side a mammoth daisy. The mom and little girl were holding hands with huge lop-sided grins on their faces. In her little girl just-learning-to-print handwriting were the words, "Happy Mother's Day, Mommy. I love you, Kristina."

Even six years later, little "gifts" such as these can bring fresh tears. It is times like these that I am glad that I was an incredible pack rat, especially when it came to saving things that my children have made. I can picture my then-blond, petite little Nina (her nickname), with the wispy hair, bent over the kitchen table, crayon in hand, creating that hand-made card filled with love. Memories of breakfasts in bed, only to return to the kitchen after finishing the "gourmet" meal served with tender care, to find it in such disarray that it took hours to clean up! Even through the tears, these are the sweetest memories.

As I type this, I look at another gift from a Mother's Day past; a little statue of a harried mom, surrounded by mop, broom and bucket, that says, "World's Greatest Mom", chosen for me at a neighborhood garage sale. I came across it accidentally shortly after Nina's death, unearthing it from its hiding place. I wondered to myself, why had I packed it away. Did Nina know that I did and did she think that, by doing so, I hadn't appreciated her gift? Did I ever thank her for it along with the other garage sale items that she proudly brought home to me, or did it show on my face that I really didn't need anymore "junk" around the house? Sometimes resurrecting these treasures can bring unpleasant feelings of guilt as we wonder if our children knew how much their little gestures of love meant to us. When our child dies, it becomes easy to second-guess ourselves, trapped in our fixations and exaggerations of the negative things that may have occurred during our child's life.

The first Mother's Days after Nina died was a grief-numbing blur, as it occurred only three days following her death. Unlike previous joyful dinners out with my four children pampering their mom, we spent the day making funeral arrangements and choosing a casket for one of them. In the early evening, I overheard it said to someone else, "Happy Mother's Day." I turned to my own mother and apologized for having forgotten.

I could not imagine ever celebrating another Mother's Day again. I am sure the dads have these same feelings on Father's Day. My heart goes out to them, because I think we forget that they, just like us, grieve and hurt, too.

For those mothers and fathers who have lost their only child, I have been saddened by stories told to me by them of attending church on Mother's Day Sunday and when the pastor asked the mothers in the church to please stand, they were undecided on whether they should stand or not. I hope that they will always remember, and the fathers as well, "Once a mother, always a mother; once a father, always a father." We are forever their parents.

If we are fortunate to have surviving children, they are often forgotten as well. In the early days, we become obsessed with the one who is missing. My own children showed quiet patience with this. I often wonder if they thought "What about us? We're still here!" Now with almost seven Mother's Days behind me, I try to accentuate what I do have. This does not happen overnight. I found that in celebrating my surviving children, I could still honor Nina's memory and find ways to include her as well. I have developed a ritual where I get up early on that morning and bring flowers out to the cemetery. I bring a flower and a note to some of the mothers that I know who have buried children there to tell them I am thinking of them and their child. There is something very healing when reaching out to others. I then sit by my daughter's grave-site on the spring-green grass listening to the sweet call of a robin. I bring her a flower and write in her journal telling her how thankful I am to be her mother, how much I love and miss her. That is our private time together; the rest of the day is spent honoring my other children.

Mother's Day and Father's Day are holidays especially created for us. Try to get through them the best that you can, in whatever way feels right for you. Truly, only you know what that is. Whether it is alone those first few years or with people that you love and who understand, do something that you find comforting. It is your day, for you were the giver of a precious life – you held a miracle in your arms. Even as powerfully destructive as death is, even that cannot take those memories away from you -- they are your child's gift to you.

With gentle thoughts and peace on your special day,

Cathy L. Sehuegger, TCF/St. Paul, MN

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 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. Nursery is provided. For information regarding the nursery contact Karen Sonnier at 972-298-6121.



### 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](http://www.tcfwalktoremember.org) and join the TCF SW Dallas Team. After you join you can create a personal page in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling.

You may also access the site through our website at [www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfswdallas](http://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](mailto:tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net)

### MEMORY BOARD AND BIRTHDAY TABLE

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

### 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. Those using Firefox browsers may be unable to view the video and should switch to a different browser. [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)



This year's national conference will be held in Portland Oregon August 7-9, 2009.

The ever-popular Darcie Sims, who uses her own unique brand of humor as a special type of grief therapy, has been announced as the final keynote speaker. Darcie is a bereaved parent, nationally certified grief management specialist, psycho-therapist, and a board certified hypnotherapist.

Candy Lightner, the dynamic founder of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) has also agreed to be a keynote speaker. Besides Candy Lightner, the conference will feature keynoters Reg and Maggie Green and Michele Longo Eder. Reg and Maggie are the parents of Nicholas Green, the seven-year-old American boy who was shot by highway bandits in Italy in 1994. Michele Longo Eder is author of *Salt in our Blood—The memoir of a Fisherman's Wife*. Michele, an accomplished lawyer, started journaling what daily life was like for her while her husband and sons were commercial fishing off the coasts of Oregon, Washington, and northern California.

For info go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### Need additional support between meetings?

There are resources available through The Compassionate Friends national website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). There is a weekly live call in radio show called "Healing the Grieving Heart" along with 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.

### 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.

## 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](mailto:tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net)

Or mail to:

Bill Campbell

417 Cimarron Meadows Dr.

Waxahachie, TX. 75167



### CHAPTER STEERING COMMITTEE

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<b>Community Outreach</b>	George Crews <a href="mailto:gmcrews@sbcglobal.net">gmcrews@sbcglobal.net</a>
<b>Newsletter/Webmaster</b>	Bill Campbell <a href="mailto:tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net">tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net</a>
<b>Members at Large</b>	Marshall Moran, Vivian Adams, Barbara Green

### AREA TCF CHAPTERS

<b>CARROLLTON/FARMERS BRANCH</b> <a href="http://www.orgsites.com/tx/tcf-cfb">www.orgsites.com/tx/tcf-cfb</a> <b>FT. WORTH</b> <a href="http://www.geocities.com/tcfriendsfw">www.geocities.com/tcfriendsfw</a>
<b>PLANO/COLLIN COUNTY</b> <a href="mailto:ewfarm@airmail.net">ewfarm@airmail.net</a> <b>ROYSE CITY</b> <a href="mailto:YvonneSebastian21@yahoo.com">YvonneSebastian21@yahoo.com</a>
<b>WYLIE</b> <a href="http://www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfwylie">www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfwylie</a> <b>GARLAND/MESQUITE</b> <a href="mailto:cnilesjones@hotmail.com">cnilesjones@hotmail.com</a>

NEWSLETTER  
2009  
MAY

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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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](mailto:tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net) so your name can be removed from our list.