



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

SOUTHWEST DALLAS COUNTY CHAPTER

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.

Jerry Palady, Chapter Leader

214-478-5942

jpalady@palcoecs.com

www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfswdallas

National Office

P.O. Box 3696 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

Toll Free Telephone 877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

Bill and Joan Campbell

North Texas Regional Coordinators

972-935-0673

jojocamp@sbcglobal.net

Volume 9

NOVEMBER 2011

Issue 11



Remembering your 50th birthday and missing you so very much. We think about you every day and look forward to the time when we will be together again.

"I thank my God every time I remember you."

Phil 1:3

*Love to you,
Mom and Dad*



Brian,

It's been 4 years since you left us. We don't know how we have survived these last 4 years. We try to hard to smile in this new life of ours but some days the heartbreak is too much. We still want you here. Brian, always know that we love you.

*We miss you so much.
Mom & Dad*



Many thanks to Marvin and Juanita Mott and Neil and Joy Brenckman for sponsoring this newsletter in memory of their children Reneé and Brian

OUR CHILDREN, SIBLINGS AND GRANDCHILDREN REMEMBERED



BIRTHDAYS

Brandon Alexander Palady son of Jerry and Linda
Brian Edward Brenckman son of Neil and Joy
Roderick Lipscomb son of Thelma
Melody Ann Pasley daughter of Wayne and Kathy
Rhonda Reneé Mott daughter of Marvin and Juanita
George W. Payne III son of Vimbai



ANNIVERSARIES

Galen Sean Rhoden son of Donna
Edward Jay Groenleer son of Edward and Charisse
brother of Cynthia
John Wysocki son of Vera
Eric Hargrave son of Patsy
George W. Payne III son of Vimbai
Justice Lee Womack son of Vicki



SAVE THE DATE



This year's Worldwide Candle Lighting will be held on **Sunday, December 11, 2011**. If you have ideas for the program, please submit them to Jerry Palady at: 214-478-5942 or email: jpalady@palcoecs.com.

The Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. Candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time in every time zone around the globe, creating a virtual wave of light, commemorating and honoring the memory of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

This evening of remembrance is a beautiful, uplifting time together as we share the lives, love and laughter of our beautiful children, grandchildren and siblings. We will be gathering at 6:45p.m. in Aldersgate Fellowship Hall of First United Methodist Church. The program will include special music, readings, a slide show, and time for reflection. Light refreshments will be served following the program. To include a loved one's photo in the slide show, please contact Bill at: tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net before Nov. 15. **Even if you have participated in the past**, we need to hear from you **each** year to verify that you still want to participate. (This helps us be sure everyone who wants to participate is included, and that we don't accidentally leave someone out!) Check the list in this newsletter to confirm that we have your name and photo.

PLEASE CHECK : So far I have received permission to use the following in the slide presentation for the Candle Lighting. If you do not see your child, grandchild or sibling's name and want to have them included please let me know by email or telephone.

tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net

972-935-0673

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. KYLE CREWS | 14. BILL LAMBERT |
| 2. GARY BROWDER | 15. DAYMEN GRABER |
| 3. LESLEY CAMPBELL | 16. ERIC HARGRAVE |
| 4. MARKCUS HALL | 17. RENEE MOTT |
| 5. BRIAN HIGGINS | 18. BROOKE CAMBRON |
| 6. TODD WHITE | 19. TIFFANY COX |
| 7. BECKY JOHNSTONE | 20. CHRISTOPHER WALTON |
| 8. MICHAEL MORAN | 21. KENZIE MOORE IV |
| 9. BRANDON PALADY | 22. COLLIN BORDERS |
| 10. SEAN McBRIDE | 23. MARK BARBARA |
| 11. JOHN WY SOCKI | 24. SHILOH ADAMS |
| 12. EDWARD JONES, III | 25. TARA PATTERSON |
| 13. SHAUNDA JOHNSON | 26. RODERICK LIPSCOMB |

Once Again The Time Of Celebrations Is Upon Us.

Ghosts, goblins, and a wicked witch or two express our farewell to October and prepare us for the turkey, family reunions, and pumpkin pie that mark Thanksgiving. Then comes the most cherished holiday - Christmas, followed by New Years Day.

For many parents these occasions are almost unbearably difficult because our memories give us glimpses of excited costumed children voicing a timid "trick or treat" at neighbors' and chuckle at recalling best clothing smeared the color of cranberry. But, perhaps most of all, we live again the search for that favorite toy or book, or the vibrancy of a child's eyes, drinking in the Christmas tree.

It is wonderful to remember, but in the first years at least, the pain overshadows most of the happiness we have in recall. But even for those along in years and growth from the time of bereavement, there is a longing that is forever barren, a hope that cannot be realized. The pain may be less wrenching, less totally consuming, but it is always there.

There are ways to help yourself if you wish, but it is very hard at first. You can curse the darkness, holding the pain close to you to protect what little seems to remain of you, and we who are also bereaved will understand, for we have gone that lonely road as well. Plan to give yourself lots of latitude and learn to tolerate your own behavior. If you spend all one, or two of these days in tears, depression or yearning, it simply means that you are not yet ready to face the task that holidays have become. Perhaps in the future you will.

When I think of my son Olin or the children we have all lost, I think of light and dreams, joy and laughter. There is no beautiful present, well-intentioned relative, holiday memory or activity that can compensate for the life, the light or the splendid future forever lost to eternity. Yet, as I grow older in my grief, I also remember that my child's light and dreams gave birth to my own joy and laughter. These were gifts he gave me every holiday together with a limitless love that edifies all time and space, even death itself.

So I have promised him a laugh back this Christmas, at least, and other holidays if I can. It's not a gift to put in a box or stocking and the packaging will still be the same old me. But he'll have my gift this year - a smile, a laugh, some joy from me. As I write this it seems very strange, for that invisible to all but me, nestled in splendor beneath our tree.

By Don Hacket, TCF Hingham, MA,

Deceased Daughter's Recovered Letter is Invaluable to Mom

By Kimberly Wencil

It was August 30, 2006, and there it was. The article on fatal off-campus house fires was on the front page of that day's edition of USA TODAY. I had been so pleased to receive a call, some three weeks earlier, from a reporter working on the story. They had done extensive research on all the fatal off-campus house fires across the US since 2000, and the article would run just in time for college students who were moving into off-campus housing for the upcoming school year.

It was everyone's hope that this article would keep other college kids from making the mistakes of, not only my daughter Liz, but of the 61 other college kids who had lost their lives due to fire in their off-campus homes. Prevention was key and I was glad to play a small part in doing whatever I could to keep other families from experiencing the devastating loss of a vibrant young adult.

When I found out the article was going to print, I excitedly emailed all of my friends and family to tell them about it and that Liz's picture would be included.

I stopped at the store on my way to work that morning and bought three copies of the paper. I was so excited! I couldn't wait to get to my desk so I could read that article. But, once I did, it made me so sad. The senselessness of Liz's death hit me again in such a powerful way, and it felt like September 20, 2003, all over again. I guess I should have expected that kind of reaction, but it had taken me by surprise and I was having a very difficult time dealing with all of the raw, painful emotion that once again bubbled up and grabbed me.

I was also very mad at myself. How naïve could you be, I thought to myself? How could you possibly think that this article would make you happy?

Suddenly, I wished it had never been published and I threw the papers on the back credenza of my office and tried hard to put it out of my mind. But I couldn't, because all day long I had a steady stream of co-workers stopping at my desk to see the article, and it was all I could do to keep my composure.

I was having a sad day. I hadn't had one of "those" days for quite some time and I just figured I was due. I'll get through it, I told myself, because tomorrow will always be better. It was something I had dealt with before in the three years since her passing, and it always worked. You had to feel the pain before it would leave I had learned.

I focused on my job and tried hard to put the article out of my mind. I work with International customers at my company. Because of the time difference, email is the accepted means of communication. I had taken this position just three weeks after Liz's death and it had been the perfect job for me. The stress level was low; I could come in, answer the emails I received, and go home. I thanked God often for giving me such a wonderful job at just the right time.

I continued to work through my emails. Suddenly a familiar email address popped up. It was Liz's high school French teacher. Jan had been Liz's favorite teacher, and we had kept in touch after her death. I had shared my news about the USA TODAY article with her, and I assumed that was what her email to me was about.

Much to my surprise, it wasn't about the article at all. Kim, she said, you will just treasure this. I was in my classroom yesterday, cleaning out my files, getting ready for a new school year. A lone file folder fell on the floor. I reached down and picked it up and on the outside I read "Liz Wencil Essay." I opened it up and discovered an assignment I had given out over four years ago.

The assignment was to write a letter to one of your parents, in French, telling them what they represent in your life. Kim, this is a letter Liz wrote to you!

Now, I don't speak French, so Jan translated it for me. That letter was a mother's dream. In it Liz told me how much she loved and missed me in so many different ways. And, amazingly, even though the letter was written when Liz was in high school, it made complete sense for life after September 20, 2003.

Here is the English translation of the letter:

Assignment: Write a letter to your Mother or Father telling them what they represent in your life.

Dear Mom,

I know that you love me. You show me each day that it is true. Don't think you are a bad mother. It isn't true! When I look at you I realize how much I am loved.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

When you are feeling bad, don't forget — I truly love you. I would like to be a better daughter. We argue sometimes and that makes me sad. I feel bad and unhappy if you cry.

I remember when I was little and you would hug me and say, "I love you so much, Lizzie, sit here with me for just a little while. Those times were so special for me and you made me so happy. I felt like nothing could ever hurt me. I use to wish those moments would never end. To be cuddled up next to you like that today would be like a dream come true.

Mom, I feel sad when you feel sad. And, when you are happy, I am happy! You are my mother and I would never choose anyone else. Without you, I would never be who I am.

I love you with all my heart.

Kisses,

Liz

Suddenly what had been a very difficult day became a completely amazing day, and I was once again emailing all of my friends and family to share this wonderful letter with them.

Jan brought the folder and the letter to my house that night. As she put it in my hands, she said to me, "You have got to know this was no accident." I said, "Oh Jan, believe me I do know that." She went on to tell me that she remembered telling Liz what a beautiful letter it was, and she had encouraged her to share it with me. She even remembered what Liz's comment had been, "I will when the time is right."

Receiving that letter was no coincidence. I believe with all my heart that my daughter is still with me and she knew I was having a difficult day. She reached out to let me know just how much she loves and misses me, just as I love and miss her.

That letter is now framed, with the French version on one side, a picture of Liz in the middle, and the English translation on the other, and it hangs in our living room. It is a constant reminder of the power of our love. That letter is visual proof for me that Liz reached out and touched me on a day when I needed it most.

Now, I am sure, I will have more sad days in the years to come. But when I do, all I have to do is read her letter and I will once again feel the strong bond that we will always share. It is a bond that can never be broken, not even by death.

Just as God's love for his children never changes, the love that my daughter and I share never changes. It will live for all eternity.

From OpentoHope.com used with permission of author, Kim Wenc



...in the autumn

Some people love to see the changes
In the colors of the leaves,
When the sky is clear
And dark blue, as the sea.

They love to smell the oak leaves burning
But it is then my heart is yearning
To be with ones I know
I cannot see.

There's something in the autumn
That makes my heart so heavy,
I miss them all but know they're
where they should all be.

If I can make it through the
winter, and see the spring unfold
before me, then I'll know once
more they're there....and wait for me.

When the morning sun comes
later, and the afternoons die early,
And my spirits drop like leaves
around my feet.

I'm so aware that I am mortal
And I can almost see the portal
That I will pass through and be
Evermore complete.

by Jim O'Neil, TCF Montgomery, AL

LIFTS TO THE HEART, PREPARING FOR THANKSGIVING

Elaine Stillwell, Rockville Centre, NY,

Many of us who are grieving feel that Thanksgiving is a useless and painful holiday because we do not feel very thankful with our terribly hurting hearts. Maybe we could prepare our hearts for Thanksgiving by peeking into them to find at least one and maybe even more blessings that we could count at this special time of the year.

After I lost my two oldest children, 19 year old Peggy and 21 year old Denis, in the same car accident, I learned that the tiniest thing that could ease my heart's burden was indeed a blessing! Discovering these "lifts to the heart" may help you prepare your heart for Thanksgiving. Sometimes amid all the pain, we forget what we could be grateful for. Take an "inventory" of your heart. Perhaps you could be thankful for:

THE STRENGTH TO GET UP EACH DAY--even if it is not fun. Grieving takes 10 times the energy to get through a day. Exhaustion can be one of the hardest parts of grieving.

THE LOVE OF ONE SPECIAL PERSON--whether it be spouse, child or friend, giving us encouragement and support. I call my husband "my blotter" because he picks up all my tears and says, "it's okay."

SOMEONE NEEDING OUR LOVE--a person giving us reason to live, to nurture, to plan for, to hug.

A SPECIAL HOBBY OR INTEREST--an activity that consumes our time and keeps our mind busy. It could be reading "grief" books to survive, writing our thoughts in a journal, making crafts, playing the piano, listening to music, planting a garden, walking along the beach.

A JOB--that keeps our attention and makes hours, days, weeks, and months pass by quickly.

PICTURES--that make special moments treasures and keep our happy memories very much alive.

THE YEARS--we had with our loved one.

SOMEONE REACHING OUT TO US--in a special way. It could be a new friend, a fellow employee, a support group.

MUSIC OR POETRY--that soothes our soul.

A PET--that makes us laugh, listens to our troubles and never tells anybody, who allows us to cry and needs us. I could never "repay" my 15 year old Labrador retriever for his untiring devotion!

CLERGY AND DOCTORS--who try to help heal us.

A LINKING OBJECT--something that belonged to our loved one and brings joy to our hearts, such as a ring, bracelet, watch, jacket, book, golf clubs, garden.

FAVORITE RECIPES--of our loved one that bring smiles to our faces. It's French Toast for my Denis and Angel Food Cake for my Peggy!

THOUGHTFUL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS--who have tried to understand our needs and not frustrate us with a "time and schedule."

TRADITIONS OR RITUALS--that bring a moment's peace to our hearts. Going to the beach, watching a football game, lighting a candle, hanging a Christmas stocking, coloring Easter eggs, or attending church services—whatever touches your heart.

NATURE--a pretty flower, a sunset, a gorgeous mountain or ocean view- to stir the love of beauty in our hearts.

CARDS--with just the right message-to let us know someone cares about us or remembers our loved one in a special way.

THE PHONE--to heal us when we're feeling low and need to talk to someone else.

BOOKS--to bring a soothing message to our weary hearts and to give us a "thought" to carry us for the moment.

PRAYER--to our loved one or to our God or both to send us strength to keep us going through the "Valley of the Shadow." Talking to our loved one helps our hearts. Including them in our plans makes them a part of the occasion. I always put Peggy and Denis "in charge" of the weather for our special events like weddings and parties. They do such a good job that friends ask for their help too. In addition to the weather, Peggy and Denis are great at finding parking places.

TIME--that gives back to us what we lose, through wisdom and memories.

May your Thanksgiving be filled with reasons to be thankful! Having loved and having been loved is perhaps the most wonderful reason of all.

from www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving

W.T. Purkiser

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you recently signed up to provide refreshments at future meetings, please contact Jessica Huckabe huckabe@sbcglobal.net so she can confirm the schedule.

Thanks to Jessica for providing the wonderful refreshments at the October meeting.

If you have checked out resources from the library and are finished using them, please return them so others may benefit.



Please make plans to attend the meeting this month. Last month we listened to music that helps us remember our loved one or brings comfort in dealing with their loss. This month we will be sharing a poem or short reading that we find healing or uplifting.



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 when 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

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."

CHAPTER STEERING COMMITTEE

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Chapter Leader | Jerry Palady jpaldy@palcoecs.com |
| Facilitator | John Takacs johntakacs@tx.rr.com |
| Treasurer | Marshall Moran |
| Librarian | Joyce Robinson |
| Community Outreach | George Crews gmcrews@sbcglobal.net |
| Hospitality | Jessica Huckabe huckabe@sbcglobal.net |
| Newsletter/Webmaster | Bill Campbell tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net |
| Member at Large | Vivian Adams vh1adams@yahoo.com |

AREA TCF CHAPTERS

FT. WORTH
www.geocities.com/tcfriendsfw

PLANO/COLLIN COUNTY
ewfarm@airmail.net

WYLIE
www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfwylie

GARLAND/MESQUITE
cnilesjones@hotmail.com

TCF OF KAUFMAN COUNTY
David_Stine@sbcglobal.net

TCF OF JOHNSON COUNTY
lisaadkison@yahoo.com



NOVEMBER
2011
NEWSLETTER

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.