



# 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.*

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Volume 9

**OCTOBER 2011**

Issue 10



*Bill, my dear Son,  
You have been gone for 2 years now, and I still miss you every day. Mostly, I try to remember your loving and sweet disposition and actions.  
The new baby we now have in our family, whose name is Anderson, is so sweet. You always enjoyed the young ones so much. I know you would have loved to be around him.  
I know you are enjoying being in Heaven with your Dad and Grandmother, as well as, all of your friends that went before you and those that have come afterwards. You can now tell them all that you wanted to tell them while you were still here with us.  
God calls us home when he is ready for us... See you soon.*

*Love,  
Moma*



*My Dearest Melody,  
I can't believe it will be 7 years this month since you left us. It still seems impossible that you are really gone. Sometimes I believe that you are sitting right next to me. I miss hearing you laugh, but I know that someday I will hear you laugh again. You would be so proud of your children. I talk to Colton about you a lot. He looks so much like you and has your talent for drawing. Dalton has your sweet spirit. Tara has your beauty and so many of your ways. Chelsey misses you very much. Someday we will all be together again and this grief will all be forgotten. We love you!*

*Love,  
Mama, Wayne, Chelsey, Dalton, Tara, and Colton*



Thanks to Hazel Lambert and Wayne and Kathy Monk for sponsoring this newsletter in memory of their children.

## OUR CHILDREN, SIBLINGS AND GRANDCHILDREN REMEMBERED



### BIRTHDAYS

Layla Rehman daughter of Khurram&Nikki  
Jamie White son of Jim&Kelly  
Amanda Walker granddaughter of Marian  
William Lynn Lambert son of Hazel  
Tiffany Cox daughter of Jennifer  
Leah Michelle Edwards Hall daughter of Mattie  
sister of Sherri  
Dana Lynne Moore daughter of Kaye  
David Valadez son Of Margaret  
Andrew James Bolton son of Ben&Dawn



### ANNIVERSARIES

Melody Ann Pasley daughter of Wayne&Kathy  
Brian Edward Brenckman son of Neil&Joy  
Michael Eugene Moran son of Marshall&Gladys  
Tara Louise Patterson daughter of Tim&Holly  
Leah Michelle Edwards Hall daughter of Mattie  
sister of Sherri



### SAVE THE DATE



**Preparations are beginning** for this year's Worldwide Candle Lighting observance to be held December 11, 2011. If you have ideas for the program feel free to submit them.

The Compassionate Friends 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. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

## For Many Bereaved Families, 'Visits' From Late Loved Ones Provide Solace

By Jeffery Zaslow

In 1999, Glen Lord's 4-year-old son died from complications of a tonsillectomy. Not long after that, Mr. Lord began having dreams in which Noah, his son, had grown into a healthy young man.

Mr. Lord felt comforted by these "visits." But in 2002, he had a dream in which Noah introduced him to two boys. "He explained that he had to go, but these boys would be staying with me," recalls Mr. Lord. "When I woke up, I told my wife that I knew I'd never dream about him again. And I haven't."

Mr. Lord, who runs a manufacturing firm in Nashua, N.H., believes that final dream was a reassurance from Noah that he was OK, and that there were other children who needed to be loved. In late 2002, Mr. Lord and his wife adopted two brothers through a Russian adoption program.

Every night, millions of people are visited by deceased loved ones. In dreams, the living and the dead embrace, converse and reach understandings. What are we to make of these encounters? Are they merely emotional responses to dreamers' grief? Or, as research suggests, are there patterns to these dreams that could explain the inexplicable?

I met Mr. Lord last month in Dearborn, Mich., at the annual conference of the Compassionate Friends, a support group for parents whose children have died. About 1,100 parents attended, and the sessions on dreams and "after-death communication," or ADC, were standing room only.

Attendees learned that basic "grief dreams" tend to be fragmented and filled with symbolism. There are often common themes, such as travel: Dreamers get off an airplane or train, and their late loved ones travel on without them.

"Visitation dreams," on the other hand, are usually more vivid, with less need for interpretation. In these dreams, those who died of serious illnesses are often healthy; if they were in a wheelchair, they can walk. These dreams can feel "sacred" to those who've had them, says Bill Guggenheim, a co-founder of the ADC Project, an independent research group.

Women are more open to potential messages in dreams, while men may underreport dream experiences, researchers say. Mr. Guggenheim theorizes that men fear being perceived as weird or too grief-stricken. "They wonder what friends and bosses will think of them," he says.

In U.S. surveys, about 60% of women and 40% of men say they've dreamed about late loved ones, says Kelly Bulkeley, former president of the International Association for the Study of Dreams, and a visiting scholar at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif.

Humans have been chronicling visitation dreams since the days of prehistoric cave paintings, and many cultures today embrace the concept. Americans, however, are more inhibited, researchers say. Our lifestyles -- shortened sleep patterns, late-night TV viewing, alarm clocks -- limit opportunities for the deep-sleep dreaming that leads to dream recall. And a lot of us

discount anything that can't be proven by science. "The scientific skeptical tradition in the U.S. says that dreams are random nonsense," says Dr. Bulkeley.

This is a "tragedy," because people who have these dreams feel belittled, says Jeffrey Long, an oncologist who founded the After Death Communication Research Foundation. He has collected testimonies from more than 1,000 people. His Web site, [adcrf.org](http://adcrf.org), allows the bereaved to share dream experiences.

Brain-imaging research suggests that the prefrontal cortex -- the part of the brain engaged in rational thinking -- basically goes offline when we sleep. The parts of the brain that then become active are more engaged in imagination and emotions, which could explain visitation dreams.

Many people were grateful to discuss their dreams at the Compassionate Friends conference. I sat in the audience, surrounded by parents who lost children. I had put my cellphone on vibrate, and two of my kids kept calling. (Nothing important, it turned out.) Normally, I'd be annoyed; the kids knew I was working. But on that day, I felt blessed. All around me, people spoke of how they yearned to go to bed at night, in the hope they'd be contacted by their kids again.

The session was led by Carla Blowey of Montrose, Colo. In 1991, her 5-year-old son, Kevin, was hit by a truck while riding his bike. He died in Ms. Blowey's arms.

Since then, she has kept a dream journal, and she finds the process healing. Dreams of Kevin have been a respite from the grief of her waking hours, and even painful dreams have brought clarity. Once she dreamed of entering a house and seeing Kevin on the stairs, crying because he'd been left alone. She sat on the stairs and comforted him.

She asked the attendees for words conjured up by the dream. They called out: "guilt," "love," "helpless." She told them her interpretation: This was the house of death, and she should have died first, so Kevin wouldn't be alone there. The dream allowed her to recognize how heavily this weighed on her.

Some at the session said they were unable to dream about loved ones. Sarah Brummel, a 26-year-old attendee from Santa Cruz, Calif., offered advice. Since her brother, Gregory, died in his sleep in 2003, she has been dreaming about him easily. Her mother, however, longed to dream about Gregory but couldn't. Ms. Brummel encouraged her mom to stop watching TV before bed and instead spend a few moments in quiet reflection. "After that, dreams started coming," Ms. Brummel said.

Researchers can't say whether such dreams are visitations or merely "expressions of our deepest wishes," says Dr. Bulkeley. "It's an unanswerable debate."

But as Ms. Blowey told that crowded room of grieving parents, a dream about a late loved one is often a gift. "Don't overanalyze it. Accept it with gratitude."

*Used with permission from the author Printed in The Wall Street Journal, 8/3/06 page D1 [jeffrey.zaslow@wsj.com](mailto:jeffrey.zaslow@wsj.com)*

## **But Love... Love is Immortal**

As bereaved parents it can be happy for us or not, depending upon our own state of mind and our particular juncture on the road of healing.

Many of us will resent the lengthening of time between our child's life and our own present. Others may welcome the increasing distance in the hope that time itself will be a balm to pain.

Yet all of us perceive, beyond all the hype and expectations, that new years and seasons are merely calendar events. Whatever problems we have had in the past will follow us into the present. There is no inner demarcation with hurting behind and joy ahead.

Each of us has the same opportunities now as we had before. We can permit time to simply pass, or we can work to mold its passage into constructive growth.

In the death of our children, we have discovered with certainty that we lack the means to control the most cherished elements of our lives. But we also know that within each of us is the potential to rise above the debilitating anguish we have experienced.

Time continues to move forward and most of us have been too damaged to even play the games of ... resolutions or dance the rites of spring. We are beyond the futility of such exercises. But let us each confront this moment and time with an inward commitment to recovery, to living the hours, which comprise our existence with all the fullness and love of which we are capable.

Hurting will ultimately lessen. Pain will slowly become more bearable. Fears and guilt will gradually pass away. But love, that inner dance of the heart which leaps to our child's name or the memory of an especially close experience that bears not only the mantle of endless joy, will not pass away. All else, fame and fortune, distress and dismay, wealth and power, even ourselves, will at the last be done.

But love ... love is immortal.

... may the immortality of love grow secure and healthy again within each of us.

*Don Hackett  
TCF, Tauton MA*

## **Ask Dr. Paulson—October 2011**

**As the autumn season approaches, I cringe. I used to love autumn before my brother died. It was my favorite season. Now, I'm afraid it will haunt me forever. Every time I think about it, I wish it would just pass me by. Is there anything I can do?**

You are not alone. For everyone who has lost a loved one, there are things that trigger painful memories. The good news is that as time wears on the pain subsides, and the painful memories surrounding your loss begin to be outnumbered by the happy memories of the love and laughter you shared. These are things that will help in the long run, but in the short run you may have to try to do some very specific things to help ease the pain. In your situation it is an entire season that triggers the painful memories and feelings. It might be helpful if you plan something to look forward to during the fall season, especially if it could be something that would help you remember your brother. This could be a way of keeping him a part of your life in a special way, with a specific time set aside each year. It would be especially important that you focus on ways of celebrating your brother and the life he lived.

*Reprinted with permission from **We Need Not Walk Alone**, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.*

Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine of the holidays and other major events of my life. *We Need Not Walk Alone*. Copyright 1998-2011.

# Beatitudes For Survivors After Suicide

## By LaRita Archibald

BLESSED are they that recognize suicide grief is compounded; that we grieve the death of a beloved person, but first and foremost, we grieve the cause of the death.

BLESSED are they that give us permission to mourn the loss of one dearly loved, free of judgment, censure, and shame.

BLESSED are spiritual guides who relieve our concerns for the repose of our loved one's soul with the truth that God is All-Knowing, All-Loving, and All-Forgiving.

BLESSED are they that don't offer the meaningless cliché, "Time Heals," because, for a long while, the passing of time holds no meaning or value for us.

BLESSED are they that don't say, "I know just how you feel" but instead say, "I am here for you. I will not tire of your tears or your words of sorrow and regret."

BLESSED are they that have the patience and love to listen to our repetitive obsession with WHY? without offering useless answers or explanations.

BLESSED are they that affirm the worth of our deceased beloved by sharing memories of his/her goodness and times of fun, laughter, and happiness.

BLESSED are the mental health care providers who explain to us that, very probably, our loved one died of a terminal illness called depression.

BLESSED are they that challenge our sense of omnipotence with the reminder that no one has enough power or control over another to cause them to end their life.

BLESSED are the first responders to our loved one's suicide who try to relieve our sense of guilt and responsibility by assuring us, "This death is not your fault."

BLESSED are they that lend acceptance to the value of the relationship we shared with the one who died by allowing us to speak of them and "what might have been."

BLESSED are they that allow and encourage us to use our loved one's death in a manner that gives our loss and grief meaning and purpose.

BLESSED are they that do not expect us to find "closure," "grief resolution," "recovery," or to "be healed," understanding that these terms define "grief work in progress" that will take the rest of our life.

BLESSED are community caregivers who direct us to suicide bereavement support groups where our anguish is understood, our loss validated, and where we are encouraged by the example of others who have traveled this road before us.

BLESSED are 'seasoned' suicide survivors who role model that not only can we survive, but, in time, we can thrive we can regain peace of mind, restored confidence, renewed productivity, and a revived zest for living.

BLESSED are all who honor our loved ones by remembering how they lived rather than how they died.

*In 1980, two years after the suicide of her 24 years old son, LaRita Archibald founded HEARTBEAT, support groups for the suicide bereaved. A member of the American Association of Suicidology since 1979, she was among the founders of the Survivor Division and co-chaired the Division 1993-1994, chaired the first national survivor conference in 1989, served on the AAS school education committee, served on the Surviving Suicide newsletter editorial staff, and is certified as an AAS Crisis Worker. LaRita was among concerned Coloradoans forming the first state suicide prevention organization and, in 1993, LaRita co-founded the Suicide Prevention Partnership/Pikes Peak Region. Upon request of the Schriever AFB commander, LaRita co-authored a Crisis Support Team program and traveled to USAFE three consecutive years to train teams. LaRita has three sons, nine grandchildren, one great-grandson, and lives in Colorado Springs with her husband, Arch.  
[www.heartbeatsurvivorsaftersuicide.com](http://www.heartbeatsurvivorsaftersuicide.com).*

*~reprinted from TCF/Kamloops Autumn 2011 Newsletter*

Please read and return **no later than October 31, 2011.**

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

We are happy to send our newsletter to you. We hope that it is helpful to you to be kept informed of chapter resources and activities and that you still wish to receive our newsletters that contain excellent material relating to grief issues. To keep our mailing list current, we do ask to hear from you each year making sure that our information is correct and that you still wish to receive our mailings. If we did not hear from you in the last year please indicate any appropriate choices below and return the form to the address at the bottom of this page.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check any of following that apply.**

- Please continue sending the newsletter.
- No thank you, I'd prefer to stop receiving the newsletter.
- Please include my child's name and picture in the slide presentation at the Candle Lighting Ceremony.
- Please change my delivery preference to email at the above address.
- I am enclosing a memorial to support The Compassionate Friends in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please make check payable to TCF Southwest Dallas County*

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

*The continuation of this chapter's work depends on donations. If you have not taken the opportunity to give a donation in memory of your child please consider taking this time to give a gift that will help reach out to other newly bereaved parents. **We must have your written permission on file to use your child's name and/or picture in the newsletter, website, Candle Lighting Ceremony or any other TCF event.** Permission may be withdrawn at any time by written request. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only used for Chapter activities such as the newsletter.*

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 31, 2011**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed form to:

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

You may copy, paste and fill out in your word program.

Email to: [tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net)

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Thanks to Jesse and Ka for providing the wonderful refreshments at the September meeting.

If you have not done so, please fill out and return the newsletter update page. This helps us get the newsletter to you and also gives us permission to use your child's picture in the Candle Lighting slideshow, if that is your desire.

**Please make plans** to attend the meeting this month. The program will be about music that makes you remember your loved one or brings you comfort in dealing with their loss. Please bring one song for us to hear. We will have a CD player available. Alternatively, if you have a poem or reading that you find healing, please bring 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. 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](mailto: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

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