



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.

SOUTHWEST DALLAS COUNTY CHAPTER

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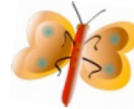
Volume 9

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Issue 9



Happy 8th Bithday my little boy
Christian. I love you and miss you.
Love, Mommy



Thanks to Ka Thao for sponsoring this newsletter

SAVE THE DATE



Preparations are beginning for this year's Worldwide Candle Lighting observance to be held December 11, 2011.

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.

OUR CHILDREN, SIBLINGS AND GRANDCHILDREN REMEMBERED



BIRTHDAYS

Brian Dwain Higgins son of Jo Ann
Aaron Michael Christian son of Mike&Kelly
grandson of Christi
Robert Daniel Langston son of Willie&Connie
Celeste June Blalock niece of Gloria
Abbie Danielle Adams granddaughter of Gary&Mary
Christian Cooksey son of Jesse&Ka
Marino Valdez son of Eusebio&Connie



ANNIVERSARIES

Roy Dyer son of George&Lillie
Kenneth John Bishop son of Sherri
Russell Burgan son of Jeff&Eva
Emma Marie Davidson daughter of Greg& Jennifer
granddaughter of Martha
Todd Arthur White son of Tom&Beverly
Timothy George Nance son of Marian
Reagan Kendall Suprun daughter of Christopher&Dianne



A Legend... A man had been wandering in the forest for many

days, and was nearing the end of his water and food supply. With each passing hour his sense of fear and despair was increasing. His body was weary with fatigue, yet he was unable to sleep. Slowly it became clear to him that he had been walking in circles and retracing his steps. He knew that his end was near. Suddenly, in the distance, he noticed the figure of a bedraggled fellow wanderer approaching him. His joy was boundless as he thought to himself, "At last, a way out of this dark and foreboding forest."

The man gathered all of his remaining strength and ran towards the stranger and exclaimed, "My brother, I can't begin to tell you how happy I am to see you. Which way leads out?" The stranger responded, "My dear friend, I am so sorry to disappoint you, but I too have been wandering in this forest for days on end. I can't save you - I too am looking for a way out. In a fit of despair the first wanderer shouted, "Then all is lost. It is over. There is no use in continuing," and fell to his knees in a fit of tears. The stranger responded in a deeply caring and comforting voice, "My friend, why are you giving up hope? Let us journey together. I will show you the paths I have taken that have led me nowhere, and you will show me the paths you have taken that have not brought you to your destination. Let us walk together and find a path home." -- Chassidic Tale



How Summer Was

It's been hot, really hot, in this inland valley where we live. It's in the 90's by mid-morning, 102 by noon, enveloping our little house in a blanket that doesn't lift much at night. It's made us all lazy, sweaty and cranky. We pick our activities carefully, doling out precious energy in smidgens.

I can almost hear the garden calling: "Water me, water me." It's too much effort to even think about facing the blaring heat, dragging out the hose to the far end of the property and dashing back in before I wilt. Once I'm out there, I can see that there's so much to do. The tomatoes are ripe and ready, the pepper plants are heavy, and the peaches are begging to be picked. They all produce more than we can either eat or give away, so I grudgingly face the additional heat producing duty of canning tomatoes and making jam. It seems unfair to have to do this during the hottest week of the year, but the garden won't wait.

I remember doing this when we lived at the beach when the children were very young. Our garden was smaller then, mostly tomatoes and an unruly berry patch, but it always gave us more than our small family could consume. So, I learned to "put things up." It's hard to explain the pleasure of opening a kitchen cupboard and seeing shelves of identical glass jars filled with things we had grown from seed. Because I was new at it, and because I was "putting things up" while also trying to care for and entertain a preschooler and an infant, the finished product was rarely perfect. The jam was usually yummy, and I'd often forget to peel the tomatoes. It didn't seem to matter much to Jennifer, who liked to line the jam jars on the window sill so she could see the sun shine through them. It bathed the kitchen in a warm rosy hue. "It looks like summer," she remarked. "It will remind us of how summer was."

It appears that in addition to making jam, we'd also made some memories.

I wish I'd worked harder at making memories with Tyler. There simply had not been time-only seven months to know everything about one another. When I look back, it sometimes seems that the only thing I taught him was

how it was to live in a house where a sleep deprived mother tried to cook, clean, chauffeur and coordinate the lives of a preschooler and a baby. Why hadn't I spent more time on the floor playing? Why hadn't we gone to Disneyland?

My heart reminds me of the things we did do: we went to the beach and watched seagulls play. We sang and danced to both Big Bird and The Beatles. We went for a walk every day. We spent time in our little garden in the late afternoon, and while he played on a quilt right next to me, I yanked weeds and tried to make things grow. Perhaps, somehow, I did tell him everything about me.

He died in May, before the boysenberries were ready to pick. When they ripened later that June, I didn't care. Jen picked a few for her cereal, but most fell to the ground and rotted. The vines, having done their job, shriveled up and went to work conserving their energy for next year's crop. The fence, once completely covered with lush green vinery and brilliant berries, was bare, dark & drab gray. Another reminder of what we had lost.

There were no jars of glistening preserves in the cupboard that year. There seemed little to help us remember happier times. Our garden lay barren in the fall. It was too hard to be there. It was Jennifer who, digging through the pantry, found it: the very last jar of the previous year's berry jam. It was November. She had it on her broccoli. We laughed. We cried.

I'm pulling out the canning equipment tonight because the garden won't wait. I've found the funny little spiral bound cookbook that taught me how to do this: Crescent Dragon wagon's Putting Up Stuff for the Cold Time. Its pages are tomato and berry-stained; I've used it for many harvest seasons. Still, I will follow its directions carefully. As if it were the first time, I'm so afraid of messing things up. In spite of my good intentions, I know that the peach jam will be runny. It always is. But we will enjoy it anyway, because it is sweet and good and because I worked hard at it and did the best I could.

And because it's like looking at memories. Its how summer was.

TCF Kansas City (MO-KAN) Region July-August 2002



The Compassionate Friends of Southwest Dallas County now has a Facebook Page. We invite you to join. You will need to log into Facebook to join the group. Our hope is that you will be able to connect to someone to help you in your grief journey. Remember "We Need Not Walk Alone".

THE UNANSWERABLE QUESTIONS OF A BEREAVED PARENT



It's a quiet Labor Day weekend, unlike when my children were small. Back then, the anticipation of the beginning of school was heavy in the air. My daughter Nina loved school, so I have fond memories of her excitement over who would be her teacher and who would be her classmates, and the two of us shopping for school clothes and supplies. She'd made multiple phone calls to friends trying to decide what to wear for the first day. The morning of was always hectic as four children vied for two showers and bathroom mirrors, to the shouts of, "Mom, do you know where I put my folders?!", "Where's my lunch money?", and, "Hurry up; I am going to miss the bus!" Pure craziness! I remember, after they had all gotten out the door, I'd breathe a huge sigh of relief. At last...peace again! Little did I know that there would come a time I would actually miss the hubbub of the first day of school and find how agonizingly quiet the house could be.

Not having someone to ready for school gives me more time than I'd like to muse over questions I've wondered about since my child died; things that if I live to be 100 years old, I will never understand. Perhaps you can relate to some of them as well. For instance, lately, there has been a lot of press and media coverage over the anniversary of the deaths of Elvis (thirty four years) and Princess Diana (14 years). Pictures of tearful fans making their pilgrimage to Graceland, along with pictures of Elvis and Princess Di plastered all over magazine covers, newspapers and television screens. Yes - Princess Di, Elvis, John Lennon, President Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and many other well-known people have died tragic deaths, but no more tragic than each of our children's deaths. After all, the majority of us never knew these icons except through their fame and/or music. Therefore, I am always amazed at the high tolerance level the world has for allowing the general public to grieve decades later for dead celebrities, but not for someone grieving the loss of their own flesh and blood.

For example, on the first anniversary of Nina's death, my oldest daughter's coworker said to her, "I bet you will be glad when tomorrow comes so you can get on with your life!" It was as if she would wake up the next morning after the year was up and miraculously everything would be okay again! If a bereaved parent wants to take a day off from work on the anniversary of their child's death (especially if it is after the first year or two) or decorate their grave site with balloons or burn a candle by their picture for the day, we are met with disapproving looks or, worse yet, "When are you going to get over it and get some closure?" The dreaded word: closure. Maybe someday it will be understood

that for those left behind, there is no such thing as closure. Those we loved who were so much a part of us in life, will forever remain so, even in death.

Something else I pondered comes up every now and then. We will hear someone say, as I did recently, "John Doe was driving in his car when another car cut him off, sent him careening into the ditch where he nearly missed crashing head-on into a telephone pole. He must have had his guardian angel looking after him. I guess it just wasn't his time yet." Why was it my daughter's "time"? And where was her guardian angel? I look around at all my Compassionate Friends who comprise the circle at our meetings and I wonder the same about their children, whether they were babies, toddlers, school-age children, teenagers and adults; and where were their guardian angels? If it was our child who died, it was never enough time, no matter what age. We were never supposed to outlive our children. I wish I had an answer, but I don't. It is another one of those questions I will never understand; at least not while I inhabit this planet.

Another quizzicality is the language of grief. It seems the majority of people have problems with saying that someone has "died." They will use such words as "passed away", "crossed over", and "expired", which as Joyce Andrews, member of TCF's board of directors, wrote of a friend who said, "My husband didn't expire; he died. Expired sounds like a subscription!" She also wrote about one of the worst I have heard. An ER doctor told a mother after her child died, "I'm sorry, but your child's condition is not compatible with life." And didn't you often wonder why there isn't a word in our language for those whose child has died? A spouse dies and they are a widow or widower, someone's parents die and they are orphans. Maybe it is just as I read in a poem written by a bereaved parent: there isn't a word that could ever come close to describing a "pain that cannot be believed."

Only someone who has experienced the death of someone they love would understand how vexing these questions are; another reason why I am eternally grateful for the parents of TCF. You have listened to the questions like those above and didn't turn away. You have cried a torrent of tears with me as I screamed out the unanswerable question of "Why?" You who have held my trembling hand, passed me the tissue box at our meetings, and warmed my heart with your unconditional friendship, and, last but not least, given me the best and biggest bear-hugs whenever I needed one.

Maybe in our lifetimes we will be allowed to grieve our loved ones for as long as we need, and words like "closure" and "expired" will no longer be part of the language of grief. And I trust someday there will be answers to our questions. But until then, I am so thankful for my ever-present Compassionate Friends!

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy Seehuetter
TCF/St. Paul, MN

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 30, 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

My Sibling

At night, as I sleep,
I wonder if my brother will wander
the streets of my dreams
In the morning when I rise

Sometimes all I can see is the rain.
It seems so lonely without him
There're days I feel pain
and some nights I lie awake in sorrow.
It's just not the same anymore
Without him it's hard to face tomorrow

My friendships aren't what they used to be
It's hard to explain,,, **Oh I know!!!**
it's because he's not standing next to me

As crazy as this may sound
At times, I try to talk to my sibling,
Hoping to see his face in a crowd
I'll be honest, I miss my loved one
The bond between a brother or sister
is as strong as they come

My heart goes out today,
To all of you who came
It's nothing, but respectful
for us to light a candle, in their name

I've learned a big lesson in my life,
It does hurt to grieve...
And, a blessing can come
Even in the misery of a tragedy...

The pain is written on our faces
From all the places memories were made
The valuable times we shared together
are now the reasons that we're afraid

Every year brings tear after tear,
our struggles grow, they know no limit
Grief doesn't show favoritism
the hurt is on the inside
it's never finished,
It won't one day feel better
it's not supposed to
you won't wake up changed forever
This is something you go through

Your loss has a name, so speak that name
Because what you find from here on out
will never be the same
as the body you had to bury and you're left
without

Your knees will be weak and your eyes will
flow
Your heart will ache as you speak that name
You'll see the face of the one you knew and
hope to know
You'll believe in faith,

So speak that name every day
for your peace remains in how you release the
pain

One day we will see our purpose
as we spread love through what hurts us
We see long faces leave us
and we depend on the one and only Jesus
To break free, what we can't seem to just let
be

Here let me speak that name: **Ryan Michael
Sheahy**
that's who matters to me...

— *Michael Joseph Sheahy*
December 4, 2005
Anne Arundel County Chapter/BPUSA
In Memory of his brother, Ryan Michael Sheahy
May 4, 1977 - March 16, 2001

UNEASY WORD

Hope is not an easy word for grievors
But we, more than most others,
Need to understand
What hope can mean for us.

Hope means finding the strength
To live with grief.
Hope means nurturing with grace
The joy of remembrance

Hope means embracing
With tenderness and pride
Our own life
And the gifts left to us
By those we have lost.

~ By Sascha Wagner

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**

CHAPTER STEERING COMMITTEE

Chapter Leader	Jerry Palady jpalady@palcoecs.com
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Treasurer	Marshall Moran
Librarian	Joyce Robinson
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Hospitality	Jessica Huckabe huckabe@sbcglobal.net
Newsletter/Webmaster	Bill Campbell tcfswdallas@sbcglobal.net
Member at Large	Vivian Adams vh1adams@yahoo.com

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

Or mail to:

Bill Campbell
417 Cimarron Meadows Dr.
Waxahachie, TX. 75167



AREA TCF CHAPTERS

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SEPTEMBER
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.