



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Fort Worth Chapter | Phone: (682) 201-0837 | tcffortworth@gmail.com

Chapter Website:

www.thecompassionatefriendsfw.com

Steering Committee

Chapter Leader

Donna Tusan

Hospitality

Christine Anderson
Jerry & Sharon Austry
Peter & Tessie Kau
David & Suzanne Wilkinson

Librarian

Marty Martin

Newsletter Editor

Lisa Jo Adkison

Secretary

Becky Long

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Welcome Bags

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Facebook: The Compassionate Friends/USA
In Spanish: Los Amigos Compasivos/USA
Twitter: Text follow TCFofUSA to 40404

Our New Members

We extend an understanding “Welcome”
to our new friends who attended the March meeting:

Al, for the loss of his daughter, Amy
David, for the loss of his son, Luke
Manny and Mariah,
for the loss of his son and her brother, Nolan

Our members are encouraged to meet the new
ones to TCF. There is healing for you and them in sharing!



What is a Steering Committee?

For our chapter it is a group of bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings who volunteer their time, talents and resources to help our chapter be successful in accomplishing our mission. Our chapter mission statement is stated on page six. The committee really is a group of people who care about others.

As stated on the National Website “Based upon professional studies of bereaved parents and over thirty years of experience, we find that chapters succeed when a combination of bereaved mothers, fathers, single parents, grandparents and adult siblings are encouraged to participate.” It really takes a good mix of us to have successful events and monthly meetings.

There are specific roles and duties as well as general Steering Committee members who serve as needed. Many of our members have served for many, many years and it is greatly appreciated. Without our volunteers we would not be here for you today.

You personally are invited to meet with our Chapter Steering Committee this Saturday at 10:00 am. Come and find a way you can help others. The meeting will be held April 7th in the home of Jerry and Sharon Austry in Fort Worth. You will not regret it!

Birthday Table

If your loved one's birthday is in April you are encouraged to bring a memento, photo, and/ or their favorite snack to this month's meeting. The Birthday Table will be available for you to share something about your loved one at the beginning of our meeting and allow others to celebrate your loved one's life with you and/or your family.

Need to Talk?

Listed below are parents, grandparents and siblings who have walked where you are today. If you are having a difficult day and just want to talk, please call. *It isn't necessary to call someone who has suffered a loss identical to yours.*

Addiction

David (214) 686-1901

Auto

Jeff & Marty (817) 475-9141

Drowning

Debi (817) 602-4018

Drowning/Young Child

Stacy (817) 656-7540 or
(817) 845-3433

Grandchild/Multiple Loss

Lydia (817) 829-3801

Homicide/Only Child

Steve (682) 583-0125
sjroberts1216@hotmail.com

Long Term Illness

Marty (817) 636-5645

Premature Infant(s)

Amy (817) 944-1710
amytori12@hotmail.com

Siblings

Jaye (817) 475-9363

Suicide/Only Child

Joy (817) 453-2227

Middle of the Night Calls

Liz (817) 726-3999

A Muscle Car and Memories

Over the years since my son Conrad died at age 21 I have done many things in his memory and to honor him. I wrote a poem that we used at his funeral and put on his grave marker. I have sent balloons in to the air and stood watching them disappear in the company of other bereaved parents. Candles have been lighted for him at the World-Wide Candle Lightings. I have signed his name on a banner carried during a remembrance walk.

There is a bear displayed in my house made from his well-worn western shirts. The bear sits atop of a large memory chest full of things too precious not to keep. When January comes around I bake a yellow cake with chocolate icing on what would have been his birthday. One year I ate the whole thing. Now I seek out friends and other bereaved parents to share it with.

Even though my heart sometimes skips a beat when his name comes up in conversation with family and friends I consider it an honor to Conrad and I am warmed to know he is not forgotten and that others still occasionally still occasionally mention his name and his stories. There are trips to the cemetery to put out flowers.

Recently I made the decision for another way to honor my son's memory. Conrad died in 1997 not too long after buying a 1969 Charger RT. While in college he had started some renovations on the car. It was his dream car and he willingly turned over his hard earned savings for it. When he brought it home and I looked at the prize he had bragged about over the phone I remarked: "Conrad, this is nothing but a old bucket of bolts." As he proudly gave me a ride he assured me that when it was done it would be something special.

After sitting in my garage for 15 years I decided that I should sell the car or fix it up in Conrad's memory. I cried as I made my decision. I cried at the title office when I put the car in my name. I cried on the phone with the classic car insurance people. I cried the day the car was hauled out of my garage and taken to the shop. Tears filled my eyes as I followed it down the highway and across town to its new temporary home.

I visit the car at the shop weekly at the request of the man doing the work. My early visits began and ended in tears. I have actually made some tearless trips to the shop. Some friends and family have often how the work is going. I enjoy talking about Conrad's car with them.

For too many years the Charger was hidden in the garage. The courage and determination to pull the car and the memories it represents into the sunshine has been a long time coming. I cry just thinking about this huge four wheeled memory of Conrad. When it is finished I want to take it to Oklahoma and travel the old Route 66. If you see a super cool white Charger with black rally stripe and a little gray-haired lady behind the wheel. be sure and wave because it is me driving, crying, honoring my son's dream and making memories - memories Conrad never got to make.

Pam Clapp
In Memory of Conrad
TCF of Fort Worth

Plan NOW to Participate OR Volunteer - Help Our Chapter!

Benefiting: Fort Worth Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, The WARM Place & The Firemen's 5K Scholarship Fund

WHEN: Saturday, May 26, 2018, 6:30 to 7:45 AM: Packet/Bib/Chip Pickup & Race Day Registration 8:00AM: 5K Race

WHERE: Arborlawn United Methodist Church, 5001 Briarhaven Rd., Fort Worth, Texas 76109 (where our chapter meetings are held.)

Your participation, volunteering, and support to this annual local, family event will financially assist our chapter to continue outreach to families who are in the process of their journey of healing. For more information email to info@firemens5k.com.

Check this special family friendly event out and share the info!

<http://www.firemens5k.com/>



Dates to Remember

April 7th - Steering Committee meeting at 10:00 am in the home of Sharon and Jerry Austray, 6716 Blue Meadow Dr., FW 76132

April 10th - Chapter Meeting 7pm: Information regarding National Conference 2018 and Video of National Conference speaker and bereaved sibling, Jennifer Perez.

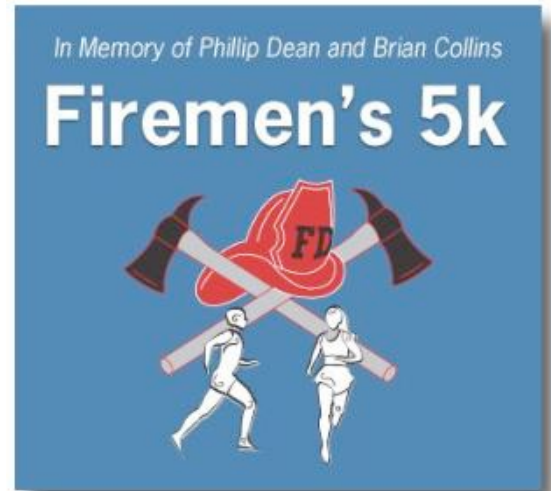
May 8th - Chapter Meeting 7pm: Butterfly Presentation by the Botanic Gardens.

May 26th - Firemen's 5K 2018 8:00 am

June 12th - Annual Butterfly Release and pot-luck meal (no birthday table)

July 10th - Chapter Meeting 7pm: Memorialize or create a legacy for your loved one.

July 27-29 - TCF National Conference - register now!



Just Ten Weeks

For just 10 weeks
I had you to myself.
And 10 weeks seems too short a time
For you to have changed me so profoundly.
In just 10 weeks I came to know you . . .
And to love you.
You came to trust me with your life.
Oh, what a life I had planned for you!
Just 10 weeks.
Then I lost you.
I lost a lifetime of hopes,
Plans, dreams, and aspirations.
A slice of my future simply vanished overnight.
Just 10 weeks.
It wasn't enough time to convince others how
Special and important you were.
How odd, a truly unique person has died recently
And no one is mourning the passing.
Just 10 weeks.
And no "normal" person would cry all night over
A tiny 10 week fetus, or get depressed and withdrawn
Day after endless day.
No one would, so why am I?
You were just 10 weeks, my little one.
But it seems you only needed 10 weeks
To make my life so much richer and give
Me a small glimpse of eternity.

Susan Erling
TCF St. Paul, MN

Because of You Kelsey

I truly understand the meaning of unconditional love. From the moment you entered this world, I felt a love I had never experienced with anyone else. I also felt a great responsibility, since you depended on me for taking care of and providing for you.

Unconditional love is defined as “caring about the happiness of another person without any thought for what we might get for ourselves.” I never expected anything more from you in return, other than maybe a hug or a “thank you daddy” when you were old enough to talk. I believe the intensity, depth, and duration of grief is directly related to the amount of love we have for the people who are no longer with us. That is why as long as I live, I will miss you. Because when you died, a piece of me died as well. But I believe that despite your physical absence, your spirit continues to live on in me.

I strive to continue to be a father you would be proud of. As I encouraged you to try to make a difference every day, so I try to do the same. Whether it's spending time with another bereaved parent, participating in grief organizations, donating blood, providing college scholarships, or some other activity which helps another person, I always have you in mind. You continue to encourage me in ways I can't even comprehend. But I know you are always with me.

And I will always love you...unconditionally.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. MT 5:4

So faith, hope, love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love. 1 COR 13:13

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these”. MT 19:14

Steve Roberts
In Memory of Kelsey
TCF of Fort Worth

*What do we live for
if not to make life
less difficult for each other?
~ George Eliot*

Love Gift

Our chapter recently received a love gift from
Kathy Newton in memory of her son

Justin Wood.

Donations are accepted at our monthly chapter meetings, received ONLINE through our local chapter website or received by mail to:

Steve Roberts,
P.O. Box 734, Euless, TX 76039

*If love could have saved you,
you would have lived forever. ~
author unknown*

The Color of My Grief

(this is a companion piece to The Color of My Joy)

I imagine various significant and emotional losses may be expressed as distinct colors on the color wheel with the death of a parent, grandparent, step-parent, friend, or child falling at different places. Today I decided the color of grief for the loss of a child is blue.

Anyone who has lost a child experiences blue - the constant yearning for things not to be what they now are. But how the loss occurs informs the shade of blue. A loss by miscarriage is not the same shade as a loss due to illness. A loss by suicide is not the same as the loss from an accident. And although we cannot distinguish the exact shade of blue other parents who have suffered loss are experiencing, we recognize it as blue, just like our own. We don't compare our blues, angling to see whose is darker or richer because we can only comprehend our own loss and its color. But we know the feeling of losing our most important gift, the piece of ourselves which was supposed to live beyond us, and we recognize that in others. In our loss, we all experience blue together.

Kimberly Starr
TCF Facebook Loss to Suicide Group
In Memory of my son Tom

FINDING SPRING AGAIN

It is the end of February, which means we are nearing the end of what has often been a brutal winter. While gazing at the mountains of snow piled high in my front yard and the foot-long icicles hanging from my roof, it is hard to imagine that spring will ever come. We have endured bitter cold winds that have chilled us to the bone and treacherous roads that we have cautiously traveled. The days have been long and dark and often free of sunlight. No matter how long you have been a native of the Upper Midwest, I know we all will be glad when it comes to an end.

However, as I described these thoughts about winter, I felt as if I was describing the days of my early grief. At that point, I did not believe that a day would ever come when I would thaw from the chill that had overtaken my body and mind. The bleakness of my existence during those early months after Nina died is almost frightening to remember; it is so difficult to even conceive of that much pain. I was anesthetized from some of its cruelty by the protective blanket of numbness that blessedly shielded me from the gale force of such overpowering sorrow. How could I ever feel spring in my heart again?

Spring had always been my favorite season. The air had a certain freshness to it that I would drink in. Simply put, it always made me feel happy and light of heart. Spring was our reward for surviving the freezing winter months that preceded it. It brought a smile to my face and a bounce to my step.

However, it was the spring of the year where my heart was irretrievably broken. It was during this exquisite season of warm, lilac-scented breezes and sun-kissed mornings where my sweet daughter Nina's life would end.

I wondered if my thoughts about spring would never be the same. Rather than anticipate with gladness the coming of spring, I dreaded it with the knowledge that it contained the anniversary of her death. The smell of the air and the look to the sky that I once found exhilarating now brought me back to my darkest day. I know that anyone, who has lost a loved one to death, no matter the season, understands.

Will spring come again to your life? In the almost six years since Nina died, has it come to mine? Looking back at my description of the winter of "my early grief", I know that I have come a long way from that time of desolation. I have found, especially after the first two years, that with each subsequent spring, I have rediscovered some of the pleasure I used to feel. I have learned that just because I have found things to feel joyful about again; it doesn't mean I am dishonoring my daughter's memory. I now take her along with me in my mind and my heart. I try to retrieve memories of the dandelion bouquets she so carefully gathered and presented to me, the rides to the park in the Radio Flyer, our talks while sunning on the deck, and, of course, shopping for spring clothes! Her favorite pastime! I will always feel tenseness, apprehension and sadness as May 11th draws near, but I no longer hold it against spring.

It is a slow, difficult journey, this grief pathway we travel. It is as treacherous as the roads we maneuvered following the winter storms, never knowing when we will hit an icy patch on the road and be thrown into a tailspin. Yet, we must travel it if we are to find any measure of peace and healing.

Please be patient with yourself as you are working hard to survive this winter in your heart. Trust that spring, though a much different one than the one we knew before our beloved child died, will come again.

With gentle thoughts,
Cathy L. Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN
In Memory of my daughter, Nina



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P.O. Box 734

Euless, TX 76039

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Chapter E-mail: tcffortworth@gmail.com

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The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

Fort Worth Chapter Meeting April 10th at 7:00

**We will view a video of
National Conference speaker
and bereaved sibling, Jennifer Perez.**

Volunteers bring our refreshments each month; Have you signed up yet? Please do not bring anything containing nuts. Paper goods and drinks are provided.

Meet friends in Room 271

ARBORLAWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
5001 Briarhaven Rd., Fort Worth

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

A Special Message

To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly welcome you to The Compassionate Friends. We are a self-help organization of parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the death of a loved one. We offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings, a lending library, support materials and loving telephone listeners. Please do not be afraid to come to a gathering. Every other person in the room has lost a child, grandchild or sibling. They come because they feel the need to be with someone else who understands. We know it takes courage to attend that first gathering, but those who do come find an atmosphere of understanding from others who have experienced the grief that you have now. Nothing is asked of you. There are no dues or fees and you do not have to speak. There is a special feeling at meetings of The Compassionate Friends.

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month.