



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



THIS MONTH: AUGUST 2016 ISSUE

This Month: *Sharing Ideas About Our Grief Journey*

Newsletter Editor: Becky Long

HOW I SPENT (SOME OF) SUMMER 2016

Back in grade school many more years ago than I care to admit, one of the first assignments I had in English class at the beginning of the school year was to prepare an essay about what I did during the summer break. I'm certain I wrote about



trips to the neighborhood swimming pool, seeing a blockbuster movie or two, competing in a youth bowling league, playing baseball, and the summer's highlight of having gone on a family vacation trip. Maybe it was a trip to the nearest big city to visit the zoo, an amusement park, and a museum. Or maybe my parents decided to load up the Vista Cruiser (yes, with wood paneling and a vinyl roof!) to spend a few days at a state park where my sisters and I could swim, fish, roller skate, and see what trouble we could get ourselves

into. Of all the family vacations we took, however, the most memorable for me was a week's vacation to visit the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Driving through the desert in western New Mexico and crossing into Arizona seemed to me very

barren and lifeless, until we approached The Painted Desert with a crayon box of colors on display, the mesas, and the endless miles of horizon in all directions. When we eventually arrived at the Grand Canyon, I was speechless. I was really seeing for my own eyes what I could only imagine from having viewed documentaries on television and reading articles in National Geographic. It really was grand, and far exceeded my expectations. The vastness of the canyon which stretched for miles, as well as the tranquility of being

far away from the sounds of a big city, created a feeling of peace and awe at this amazing site. I remember not wanting to leave. I wished I could have hiked or ridden a horse to the bottom of the canyon, or taken a white water raft trip on the Colorado River. The Grand Canyon was so unlike any other place I had ever visited before. My family may have spent only a few hours out of the entire vacation trip at one small area of the Grand Canyon, but that memory has stayed with me to this day.

I recently returned from a four-day conference held by The Compassionate Friends in Scottsdale, Arizona. Although I was unable to make a return visit to the Grand Canyon, I couldn't help but reminisce about that family vacation trip while I was at the conference. And I also began to draw comparisons between the conference and the Canyon. After we have lost a child, some of us tend to feel that we have fallen into a canyon, wondering how we got there, if someone will find and rescue us, and what we need to do to survive. Being in a canyon can be a very dark and scary

(continued on page 3)

Steering Committee

CHAPTER LEADER

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Contact via Chapter Email

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Secretary

Becky Long

Treasurer

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sjroberts1216@hotmail.com

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(817) 636-5645

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Newsletter

Position Open

Librarian

Position Open

Welcome Bags

Janet DuPertuis

Committee Members

Jeff & Marty Martin

Jerry & Sharon Austray

Charles & Genie Dean

Lydia Moore

Mark Deegear

Grief to me is

a strange

thing. Off-

hand, it might

sound like it's

about weeping by a tombstone and

laying some flowers. But, as a

wise man once said, "Grief is love

you cannot get rid of."



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.

Addiction

Helen (817) 431-6964

Auto

Jeff & Marty
(817) 475-9141

Grandchild/

Multiple Loss

Lydia (817) 829-3801

Drowning

Debi (817) 270-3275

Drowning (Young Child)

Stacy (817) 656-7540

or (817) 845-3433

Long Term Illness

Marty (817) 636-5645

Homicide (Only Child)

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

Suicide (Only Child)

Joy (817) 453-2227

Siblings

Cheryl (817) 624-7043
lopezgregg@aol.com

Premature Infant(s)

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



**Middle of the
night calls**

Liz (817) 726-3999

TO OUR LONG-TIME MEMBERS—HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are so sad when we have to welcome new members at our monthly meetings. Knowing there are parents, grandparents and siblings hurting as much as we did when we first started coming to TCF, reminds us of the deep loss we felt as we entered our first TCF meeting.

We need the help and support of our long-time members to listen and talk with newly bereaved family members.

Do you remember your first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and those first months of your grief journey? You desperately needed to talk to someone who knew the pain of losing a child, someone to hug you, cry with you, and listen to you. There are newly bereaved families who



now need your help. Are you willing to be there for them?

If you feel that you are ready to give back some of the support that was shown to you, please consider a place of service in our chapter. There is a job for everyone. Don't wait. See the position openings on the Steering Committee and call our chapter leader Jaye to find out the details. If you can't serve, please come to the meetings to lend your support and understanding to our newly bereaved families. We have had so many new members join us in the past few months. We need as many long-term members as possible to help our newly bereaved.

Thank you from all of our children.

SPIRIT CHILD

To my child who came into the world sleeping, ~ To my child whose little parts never fully grew, ~ To my child that I never felt move in my womb, ~ To my child that the world never knew ~ YOUR HEART WILL ALWAYS BEAT THROUGH ME. ~ I will think of you – ponder possibilities – miss creating memories, ~ BUT YOUR HEART WILL ALWAYS BEAT THROUGH ME. ~ To my child that I nourished, ~ To my child that fueled excitement, stretched my body, expanded my love space, made me glow, ~ To the child family would never know. ~ I WILL CHERISH YOUR CONCEPTION. ~ To the child I never heard cry, and so often wonder why, ~ To the child that never opened their eyes to see the world into which they arrived – I may of-

ten question why. ~ To the child so light in weight – whose dreams never took shape – YOUR HEART BEATS THROUGH ME, CHERISHED YOU WILL ALWAYS BE. ~ To the child planted in my womb, ~ To the child that did not have time to bloom ~ YOU ARE THE FLOWER IN MY HEART GARDEN, YOUR SEED WILL ALWAYS & FOREVER BE. ~ My arms held you for a moment, for some moments never came, ~ BUT YOU ARE CRADDLED IN THE HEART – Remembered Always, Missed Often, LOVED FOREVER. YOUR SPIRIT LIVES!

To the miss-carried, stillborn, conceived in love, seed of my womb, ~ MY SPIRIT CHILD.

Pamela Hagens
TCF Nashville Chapter, TN

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Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org **Website:** www.compassionatefriends.org The website contains links to TCF's national and regional conferences, brochures, e-newsletter, online support community, *We Need Not Walk Alone* magazine, "Healing the Grieving Heart" and "The Open to Hope Show" radio program archives, webinars, chapter websites, and other resources. **Regional Coordinator:** Bill Campbell 972-935-0673 jobill@sbcglobal.net

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

SUMMER 2016 (CONTINUED)

place, especially if we have never been there before. We can cry out for help, but most of the time all we hear are the echoes of our own voices. Fortunately, when we are among others at a Compassionate Friends conference or chapter meeting, our voices are heard. I am almost eleven years bereaved. My daughter and only child Kelsey was killed in 2005. I remember feeling alone at my first TCF conference in 2006 and uncertain about how to climb out of the canyon. I reluctantly attended a couple of workshops and listened to the presenters tell their stories. I also attended sharing sessions. I soon realized I was with many others who could help me navigate my way through and out of the canyon. By the end of each TCF conference, just like visiting the Grand Canyon, I don't want to leave.

During the past ten years, I have attended TCF conferences all over the country. As I have continued on my grief journey, and I no longer feel stuck in a canyon wondering if there was a way out, I have tried to reach out and guide others. Each year's TCF conference has a unique theme. The theme of the 2016 TCF conference, "Hope Rises on the Wings of Love", resonated with me. I now strive to provide hope to others who are struggling with their grief. I served as a panelist in three workshops (stigmatized loss, homicide, and seasoned grievers). I told my story and experiences to many other bereaved parents and adult siblings. I also held a sharing session for survivors of homicide to allow the attendees to talk about their loved ones and ask questions.

Even though I am now in the category of "seasoned griever", this doesn't mean I no longer struggle with my grief. I found myself crying when Alan Pedersen sang "I Remember You" during the opening ceremony. If you have never heard this or any of Alan's many other songs, he has a way of touching your heart through music unlike any other bereaved parent I know. The candle lighting session on Saturday night is always an emotional event. Walking down the hallways and seeing the pictures of our children on the memory boards sometimes brings a tear to my eye. Thank goodness this year's conference includ-

ed a Hug Station! I hope this becomes a fixture at future conferences!

I attended workshops for grieving men and how to write and publish a book, as well as sharing sessions for singles and for no surviving children. Each of the workshops and sharing sessions provided attendees the opportunity to speak and ask questions, which really helps the newly bereaved to validate feelings and emotions they may believe are abnormal. And since I was one of six early risers for a 3 ½ mile jog Saturday morning, that afternoon's chair massage really hit the spot.

As I look in my rear view mirror, I see how far I have come during my almost eleven years as a bereaved parent. The Compassionate Friends has acted as a trail guide to help me navigate my way out of my grief "canyon" so I can see the vast horizon, colors, and beauty of a life ahead of me.

Steve Roberts
Ft. Worth, Texas Chapter

*I'm not crazy.
My reality is
just different
than yours.*

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Our meeting this month is about sharing ideas for what has helped us on our grief journey, and creating a legacy for our loved ones. Everyone is encouraged to bring something with them that has helped in their journey, be it a song, poem, article, memento, book, activity or to share the ways they have created a legacy for their loved one.

LOVE GIFTS



Love Gifts are a thoughtful way to remember our precious children and can be made **ONLINE** on our website or by sending your donation to:

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



*"When I get to
Heaven, the first
thing I am going to
do is FIND YOU.
The second things I
will do is NEVER
let you go again."*

Healing Hugs

THERE ISN'T A
DAY THAT GOES
BY WHERE I
DON'T, AT SOME
POINT, THINK
OF YOU.

Visit our website for
more Online Grief
Resources





**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Fort Worth Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

2301 N. Sylvania Ave.

Fort Worth, TX 76111

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

WWW.THECOMPASSIONATEFRIENDSFW.COM



August 2016

Fort Worth Chapter Meeting

**We meet the 2nd Tuesday
of every month.**

Meeting Time: 7 P.M.—9 P.M.

This Month's Program

Sharing Ideas About Our Grief Journey

Refreshments

Please feel free to bring refreshments to share.

~ Paper Goods and Drinks are provided ~

ARBORLAWN UNITED METHODIST

CHURCH - ROOM 271

5001 Briarhaven Rd., Fort Worth

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.**