



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



THIS MONTH: FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE

This Month: BOOK REVIEW—“After the Death of a Child” by Ann K. Finkbeiner

18TH ANNUAL —FIREMEN’S 5K

The 18th annual Firemen’s 5K and One Mile Fun Run will be held at 8 A.M. on Saturday, May 28th at Arborlawn United Methodist Church, 5001 Briarhaven, Fort Worth.

All proceeds benefit the Fort Worth Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, The WARM Place, and The Firemen’s 5K Scholarship Fund.

This is a major source of funds for our chapter.

If you or your company would like to sponsor the race, please see the form attached to this newsletter.

Sponsor donations are needed by April 1st.

Volunteers are also needed

to pass out packets, point out the route or distribute water to the runners. If you can commit to a Thursday evening meeting and the Saturday morning of Memorial Day weekend, please call Lori Carver at 817-819-5530 or e-mail info@firemens5k.com.

We invite you to join us and walk or run in memory of your loved one. Online registration is now available at www.athlete360.com.

Registration fees are \$20, before May 1st, \$25 on or after May 1st, and \$30 on race day.



MY PERENNIAL LOVE

Every summer my son gives me flowers. He planted them 17 years ago ... the summer before he died. I remember the day he planted them. Not the exact date, but standing there talking to him as he poked holes in the ground and carefully placed each one. I remember thanking him and thinking how very sweet of him to do that for me.

Terry died the following February. After months of crying and grieving, summer came and with it his flowers bloomed! Of course it made me miss him even

more, but how I loved seeing them and knowing that he had put them there the year before. I know nothing about flowers so I was astounded when my mother told me that what he had planted was an annual and not a perennial and that they should not have come back.

A few weeks ago, our neighbor who moved in last summer, commented on my impatiens. She said she was surprised to see them come back from last year. I told her that they have been coming back every year

now for 16 years. Just saying it aloud made me realize how extraordinary that really is!

There is something else I have come to realize. My love for my son did not end when he died. My love for him is indefinite; it is enduring. It is perennial.

Maureen Harman
TCF Tidewater Chapter, VA

Steering Committee

CHAPTER LEADER

Jaye Sanford (817) 475-9363
Contact via Chapter Email
tcffortworth@gmail.com

Treasurer

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

Hospitality

Annette Garcia-Gilmore
(817) 244-9102

Newsletter

Jaye Sanford (817) 475-9363
tcffortworth@gmail.com

Librarian

Liz Hutchison (817) 726-3999

Welcome Bags

Janet DuPertuis

Committee Members

Jeff Abodeely
Jeff & Marty Martin
Jerry & Sharon Austry
Charles & Genie Dean

Chapter Volunteer Opportunities

You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late . . . the love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say to him, 'What are you going through?'

Ralph Waldo Emerson

One of the best ways to work through grief is to keep busy -- to get involved with life again especially by volunteering your time to help others. Contact Jaye for more information.

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

THE CRACKS IN YOUR HEART

Recently I heard a quote from someone, I know not who, that struck a responsive chord in me; "The cracks in your heart are where the light shines through." I immediately knew whoever said it was someone who had experienced a great loss or many great losses; someone who suffered

great loss and survived. Surely, in the beginning, when you learn of the death of

someone dear to you, there is no crack in your heart, just solid pain that fills every corner. It is like a boulder has come crashing through what was your almost perfect world and left it in shambles. There is definitely no light. There is no great interest in searching for a light with all the pain that is involved.



Why do you suppose that some of those who have lost children are able eventually to find something that enables them to go on and have productive lives? I think they survive better because they find something worthwhile to give meaning to their lives. Strange, isn't it, those same people don't "get over it." Though they've

been able to find peace, they still remember vividly what they've been through. When you come to the place in your grief where you're weary of

the hurting, you might consider using the cracks left in your heart to let the light shine through to the many areas that are still open to you. It can give meaning and purpose to your life, and in the process, your choice may help others who also suffered the loss of a child.



Mary Cleckler

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Yesterday

You were here and I took it for granted that you would always be here. Telling you I loved you and was proud of you seemed unimportant. There would be time for that when we were older – when we fought less and talked more.

Today

I know that time will never come, and I will never have the chance to say things face-to-face. So I write them and think

them and hope you know I mean them now and have always felt them.

Tomorrow

Each day the pain and regrets of things left unsaid get easier to deal with. I have begun to realize that you knew how I felt because you felt the same way. And as more tomorrows turn into yesterdays, I will find peace in that knowledge. Someday, somewhere, we will meet again and I will have my chance then.

Shannon Odessa Stiener
TCF, Lowell, IN

TCF National Office — *The Compassionate Friends* . P. O. Box 3696 . Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

Fax: (630) 990-0246 Call toll-free: (877) 969-0010 9 A.M. - 5 P.M., CST, Monday-Friday.

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

ROSEBUSH FULL OF BLOOMS

On a rosebush full of blooms, there is occasionally one rose more fragile than the rest. Nobody knows why. The rose receives the



same amounts of rain and sun as its neighboring blooms: it receives the same amounts of food and water from the earth, of clipping and tending and gentle encouragement from the gardener. Its time on earth is neither more nor less significant than that of the other blooms alongside it. It has all the necessary components to become what it is intended to be: a beautiful flower, fully open, spreading its petals and fragrance and color for the world to see.

But for some reason, once in a while, a single rose doesn't reach maturity. It's not the gar-

deners fault, nor the fault of the rose. So it is that sometimes, despite the best growing conditions, the best efforts of the gardener, the best possibilities for a glorious blooming season, a particularly fragile rose will share its growth for a while, then fade and die. And the gardener and the rosebush and the earth and all around grieve.

We are never ready for a loss, not for the loss of a promising rosebud, whose life appears ready to unfold with brilliant color and fulfillment, in the midst of our grieving, we can remember the glimpses of color and fragrance and growth that was shared. We can love the fragile rose and the fragile soul for the valiant battles won and the blooming that was done. And as our own petals unfold, we can remember the softness and beauty of those who touched us along the way.

Ernestine Clark
TCF, Oklahoma City, OK

TO MY MISCARRIED BABY

Out of our love you came,
Planned, wanted, welcomed.
Your announcement created excitement, joy.

Friends and family inquired,
Do you want a girl or boy?
Will you take Lamaze?
What colors for the nursery?
Then suddenly you're gone — and silence.
No one talks about a baby that won't be.

Were you real or a dream?
I feel alone and empty.
Where can I put my love that was for you?
Now what does it mean?

Betty Ruder
TCF North Shore Chapter,
IL



WANT A BUTTON?



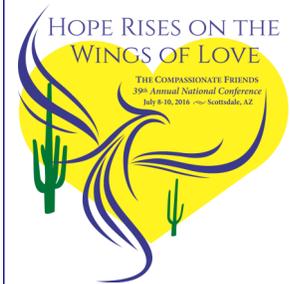
Photo buttons are a perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with others at monthly meetings. If you would like to have one, simply bring a photo to any of our monthly chapter meetings and we can make one for you. *There is no cost.* Keep in mind that the button is about 2 1/4 inches in diameter, so the picture needs to fit inside that area and the actual photo is used, so make sure it's one we can cut into a small circle.

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
Eules, TX 76039



COMING SOON

39th Annual
**NATIONAL
CONFERENCE**
July 8-10, 2016
Scottsdale, AZ

"Sometimes the best thing that you can do is not think, not wonder, not imagine, not obsess. Just breathe and have faith that everything will work out for the best."

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



February 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

Book Review—"After the Death of a Child"
by Ann K. Finkbeiner

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.**