



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



THIS MONTH: JANUARY 2015 ISSUE

This Month: *Debriefing the Holidays*

Newsletter Editor: Crys Kelly

THE NEW YEAR—A TIME OF HOPE

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be.

For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories....sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX



Steering Committee

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Librarian

Liz Hutchison (817) 726-3999

Welcome Bags

Janet DuPertuis

Committee Members

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

"Talking with others who have experienced similar loss and are at varying stages can act as a bridge between the past and the future."

Gandhi

Monthly Newsletter

Newsletters are emailed to those on our recipient list and available online the 1st of every month on our website.



choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

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 (817) 914-8689
sjroberts1216@hotmail.com

Suicide (Only Child)

Joy (817) 453-2227

Suicide

Glinda (817) 485-3772

Siblings

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

Middle of the night calls

Liz (817) 726-3999

TCF NATIONAL MAGAZINE WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE AVAILABLE FREE ONLINE

The Compassionate Friends national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*®, is available for free online. The magazine remains available in print free with any patron donation or when ordered by paid subscription through TCF's online store. www.thecompassionatefriends.org

STEERING COMMITTEE

If you are interested in helping to guide our chapter, you are welcome to join us for our steering committee meetings. The next Steering Committee meeting will be:

January 24th at 10am

In the Breyley Room

Greenwood • Mount Olivet Chapel

2301 N. Sylvania Ave.

~ Refreshments will be provided ~



If you are unable to attend the meeting, you may send your suggestions, comments and concerns to Crys Kelly.

RESOLUTIONS



Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this new year shouldn't be better.

Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what our meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you can become more involved in our chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs.

Have a happier New Year!



Pat Akery
TCF, Medford, OR

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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

THE SCREAM

The Smile you see in not all of me,
For I'm not what I seem.
I laugh and smile but all the while,
My smile holds in a scream.

For when I see a little girl,
So innocent and free,
I think about my little girl,
Who died at seventeen.

And then the scream comes welling up,
From in my soul so black,
And so my smile must block it in,
And laughter hold it back.

I saw her born and watched her grow,
From child to blooming lass,
But through the years I couldn't know,
I'd have to see her pass.

The suffering within my heart,
I hide from all the work.
I do my job, I play the part,
And miss my little girl.

A song about a father's love,
So sweet with tenderness,
Awakes in me the horror of,
My loss and loneliness.

GOD HATH NOT PROMISED

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

God hath not promised we shall not know
Toil and temptation, trouble and woe;
He hath not told us we shall not bear
Many a burden, many a care.

God hath not promised smooth roads and wide,
Swift, easy travel, needing no guide;
Never a mountain, rocky and steep,
Never a river, turbid and deep.

But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

Annie Johnson Flint

So, if they say "He takes it well,
He'll be OK we all can tell.
How well his life continues on,
It's almost if she wasn't gone."

Remember that I'm not so sane,
Playacting, keeping up the game,
My nightmare life trapped in a dream,
You see, my smile holds in a scream.

Steve Tull
TCF Tyler, Texas

TCF NATIONAL OFFICE SEEKS YOUR STORIES AND ARTICLES

For many years, The Compassionate Friends National Office has provided on its Leadership site stories and poems by TCF members that can be published in Chapter newsletters around the country.

Currently, the Newsletter Editor Database has over 500 stories and 200 poems. The National Office would like to include your personal grief related stories and poems. Please submit your articles and poems to sara@compassionatefriends.org. Please include your name and chapter affiliation.

BIRTHDAY TABLE

January birthdays will be celebrated at this month's meeting. If your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthday is in January, please feel free to bring a photo or memento of them for the birthday table. It is also a great time to bring their favorite food or snack to share with the group on the refreshment table.



WANT TO SHARE ?

If you have read an article, poem, book, or other material that has helped you along your grief journey, please share it with our newsletter editor. We also encourage you to submit your own works of poetry or prose for our newsletter to the editor.



LOVE GIFTS



In Memory of

Devon Becker

By Linda Becker

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 202654
Arlington, 76006

WHAT I NEED

A lot of time!

A little space.

A kind of quiet

Resting place

Are what I need

At times like these.

A special spot;

Where I can grieve.

Beth Pinion
TCF Andalusia, AL

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



January 2015

Fort Worth Chapter Meeting

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

Meeting Time: 7 P.M.—9 P.M.

This Month's Program

Craft: Debriefing the Holidays

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**.