



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



THIS MONTH: JULY 2016 ISSUE

This Month: National Conference Discussion

Newsletter Editor: Becky Long

AFTER ONE YEAR—WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, HOW DO I GO ON FROM HERE?

Many heads always nod in agreement when the question is asked at a Compassionate Friends meeting. Is that your question, too? It has been over a year since your child has died. In your own way you have met and survived those special days, holidays, his or her birthday and all the events you had anticipated sharing with your child, at least once. Now what? Where do you go from here? Life is going on around you, yet your own life may seem at a standstill. It has had a drastic and traumatic change. A tug-o-war wages within your mind and body. Part of you wants to hang on tight to the life you knew when your family was whole. But after a year of grieving and crying for your child you realize that life as you knew it is no more. The separation death has brought is daily becoming more real.

If you are at this point in your grief, you know how it is. We are weary and tired

from the constant effort and energy it takes to keep moving ahead each day. Possibly we find ourselves putting up a false front and saying “okay,” “fine,” when people ask how we are doing, because we think they feel that’s how we should be by now. We remember a year ago, when we looked



ahead to this time thinking we would be back to normal, our grief somehow healed and resolved. Now we often seem to be two different people. A person living with the burden of the loss of our child and the emotions, depth of sorrow and pain which only another bereaved parent can understand; and at the same time a person going through the motions of living in the normal world of everyday work, activities, friends and

problems, which we often are tempted to let go on without us. A feeling of panic isn’t uncommon, yet you must have developed some survivor skills if you have come this far.

How do we get out of there and go on without leaving the life of our child behind?

Some helpful words might be slowly, carefully, patiently, and prayerfully, accepting ourselves as we are, and truthfully facing our feelings. Our own son was killed 18 months ago by a hit and run driver. If you were to peel back my outer shell right now and expose my thoughts, you would see that loving, exciting seventeen year old we shared so many good times with and my wish to have him here on his 19th birthday this month. You would see my desire to know more about heaven and God’s plan for eternal life, a deep loneliness, fatigue and many unanswered questions. It’s strange. I have apprehen-

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Position Open

Welcome Bags

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Jeff & Marty Martin

Jerry & Sharon Austray

Charles & Genie Dean

Lydia Moore

Mark Deegear

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. If you are interested, please contact Jaye for more information.

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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

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.



MY ANGEL

Deep in the woods a meadow lies
this is the place where sorrow hides

In this clearing there is a pool
filled with tears I've cried for you
And from this pool springs forth a stream
that leads me to the land of dreams

This is the place I long to be
The place where you can be with me
Thou I know this cannot be

I also know you'll wait for me
And one day when my time has come
I'll find you smiling in the sun
And together joyfully we'll run
through meadows made of memories,
of love, of hope, and happy things

Until then I shall carry on
With you as my angel to lean upon.

By Tracy Smith

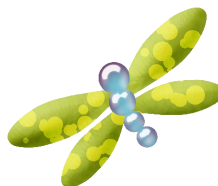
DO IT YOUR WAY

I think it's only fair to tell you – There is no *Bereaved Parent of the Month* award, nor an award for the one with the stiffest upper lip! In fact, what you will find if you try to be most stoic, brave and strong, the one doing too well, is instead of a reward, you suffer the consequences.

It is not possible to lose someone as vital as one's child and not have the paid of deep grief. You will find a great many non-bereaved people who will encourage you to play the old game of, "If you'll pretend you're okay and it's not really so bad, we'll let you come play with us. But if you're going to cry and talk about your dead child, then you can't play."

This is one time in your life you don't have to meet anybody else's standards. There is nothing more unique about you than the way you express your grief – and you have that right however it is manifested. A great deal of how you go about it is determined by how you have handled previous losses.

So if someone tries to influence you to play the old game by rewarding you with attention because "you're doing so well," tell them you're not doing well. Tell them your child has died and you're hurting. Let them know it doesn't help you for them to pretend everything is okay. Do whatever it is you need to do to survive this trauma and don't worry about whether it pleases or displeases other people...



DO IT YOUR WAY!!



By Mary Cleckly
TCF, Atlanta, GA

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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

AFTER ONE YEAR (CONTINUED)

sion as I move back into life, yet a real fear of staying emotionally where I am.

Yes, it is hard to go on because no one can do it for us. The great effort it takes to get out of bed on time in the morning, to plan ahead for dinner and to make the best of each new day must come from within each of us. Now is a good time to take inventory of our resources. Do you have your health, home, husband, other children, other family members, friends, a job, faith in God? Do you have talents which you have neglected or something you always wanted to do which could be developed? Making an appointment for health or dental check-up, deciding to lose those pounds you gained through frustrated eating; planning some special times with your family, initiating contact with old friends and rebuilding relationships, releasing new energy into your job, taking time to seriously study your faith, enrolling in a class to learn something new may be the boost you need. Do you have strengths of understanding love, caring, listening? No doubt you have already reached out to help someone else in their need or grief because you know how that kind of love has helped you.

THE COLOR OF MY GRIEF

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

Last summer, a "Things to do" list evolved out of my own frustration of not being able to budge or take even one step forward. Each day I tried to accomplish at least one small task from this list. As I saw little bits of progress, my attitude and depressions began to lift. I kept my list very simple, thinking of those things which would encourage me to succeed in areas I was weak, such as house work, planning meals and meeting the needs of my family; yet allowing me time for a quiet half hour by myself, going out to dinner with my husband, taking a walk, a bike ride or playing the piano and being available to do for others in a helpful way, especially other bereaved families. Of course some days are still hard, but over the months my ability to move ahead has gradually increased. If you are stuck in one spot and the obstacles ahead seem too big, I encourage you to make a list of your own to fit your own lifestyle, talents and strength. Our life is still worthwhile even as we continue to work through our grief.

By Phyllis Sewell



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
Companion article to *The Color of My Joy*

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

Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear the hardship of today.



June & July Birthdays

Will be celebrated at the July meeting

Visit our website for more Online Grief Resources





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

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Fort Worth, TX 76111

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

WWW.THECOMPASSIONATEFRIENDSFW.COM



July 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

National Conference Discussion

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.**