



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



THIS MONTH: MAY 2016 ISSUE

This Month: Butterfly Release and Potluck Dinner

Newsletter Editor: Becky Long

THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME??

The good old summertime has arrived, the time when we usually plan vacations, family reunions, picnics, etc. There are many activities going on, such a ball-games, golf, swimming, though for some of us a float trip on a Ozark stream is more enticing. Vacation Bible Schools and ice cream socials are held at churches. We usually adopt a more casual life-style, cook outdoors, and free ourselves of rigid schedules. Whatever our interests may be, this is the time for family togetherness.

When our family is still intact it can be a wonderful time...if not, it can be a very painful time.

If this is the first summer following the death of your child, you may not have much inclination or energy for the usual activities, although many parents find that doing something physically demanding helps release the tension and anger associated with grief. Some have found a measure of healing and peace working in their yard or garden, or

planting a flower garden in memory of their child. Others may feel obligated to attend family activities, and then they find that it does help to get involved. If you don't feel able to get out and get involved in our usual activities, don't be concerned, just do what you feel like you can do now.



Most of us think going away on a vacation or short trip somewhere will help us get away from the painful reminders of our child's death, and though it may be less painful than it was at home, we soon learn that we take our memories and emotions with us wherever we go. However, a vacation can be an incentive for doing something relaxing and enjoyable though most of us feel guilty if we enjoy ourselves very soon after

our child has died.

When we made vacation plans for the summer following our son's death in February, I was a little apprehensive. We were going to visit our daughter, who had recently moved to Michigan, and invited our daughter-in-law (our son's widow) and her daughters, ages three and five, to accompany us on the vacation. From there, all our group traveled upstate to stay a few days at a lake resort. Our little granddaughters kept the trip upbeat and lively, and we were able to enjoy ourselves for

the first time that summer. It was helpful for all of us, even though there were several intense emotional moments.

Now we realize that everyone in our family was still grieving, each in their own way, and it would have been helpful to have allowed each one some private time to rest every day.

As newly bereaved parents, we are like pioneers, charting our way through an

(continued on page 3)

Steering Committee

CHAPTER LEADER

Jaye Sanford (817) 475-9363

Contact via Chapter Email
tcffortworth@gmail.com

Secretary

Becky Long

Treasurer

Steve Roberts (682) 583-0125

sroberts1216@hotmail.com

Hospitality

Annette Garcia-Gilmore

(817) 244-9102

Marty Akeman

(817) 636-5645

Christine Anderson

(817) 300-6196

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

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.

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

sjoberts1216@hotmail.com

Suicide (Only Child)

Joy (817) 453-2227

Siblings

Cheryl (817) 624-7043

lopezgregg@aol.com

Premature Infant(s)

Amy (817) 944-1710

amylori12@hotmail.com



**Middle of the
night calls**

Liz (817) 726-3999

THE AWAKENING

This morning, upon my husband's pillow,
A tear.

Last night I heard no weeping,

I felt no rhythmic shaking.

Yet, there it is –

Glistening, silent testimony to pain.

Quickly I reach to blot it,

As if one swift brush

Could set the world right again;

But something stays my hand –

Stops me to wonder,

“Am I the cause of weeping?”

In my life is much sorrow,

Dreadful longing and emptiness

That even my husband cannot fill.

Sorrow brings sleepless nights in fear

Of other phone calls and ambulances,

More longing and emptiness.

My husband shares this loss,

But men don't cry.

They nod gravely and tend to details,

Make arrangements and give support.

Yet, there it is upon his pillow –

A tear.

Have I given way to grief

And forgotten one who shares?

Have I made no room for his tears

In the flood of mine?

Am I the reason he weeps

Only in the silence of night?

I close my hand

To leave the tear drying there.

No more will I blot out his pain

To tend to mine,

For we must share

In order to live – together.

Marcia F. Alig
TCF, Mercer Area, NJ

FATHER'S DAY

Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong – must not cry.

But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving, and protecting has been able to stop our child's death. And, inside, we must ask ourselves about our failure, and we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father it is a poignant reminder of bitter sweetness; sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost, child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of inability to stop what happened.

Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurt and concerns. Often they are unable to do so, a remnant of childhood learnings about the strength and stoicism of “big boys.” A father may even be uncomfortable opening up to his wife, and the wife who pushes him to talk may be pushing too hard.

Father's Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, “I'm sorry we haven't talked. Let's do it now.” But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug, does something special, helps with the chores and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. It is some of these things that he has lost with the death of a child. And like Mother's Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to a Sunday in June. It can be any day and every day.

Fathers often show their hurt differently, often internally. But they do hurt.

Gerry Hunt
TCF, White River Junction, VT

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

(continued from page 1)

unknown area to our new destination. We've been told that it is peaceful there, but we can't feel that peace until we arrive. Those who have already made the trip report that life is different, yet good, in that new place. But we find that difficult to believe, because we are still traveling that long, rugged trail, and the end is not yet in sight. "Don't be afraid," we are told, "we made it, and you will make it too. Just take your time, and you will find your way." Those who have made the journey encourage us to believe that we'll make it through the wilderness of grief and find peace.

As one who has found peace at the end of the journey, I'm thankful to those who encouraged me during those dark days when I could not see the way. Their loving support, and my faith, gave me hope that life could be good and meaningful again, and now it truly is.

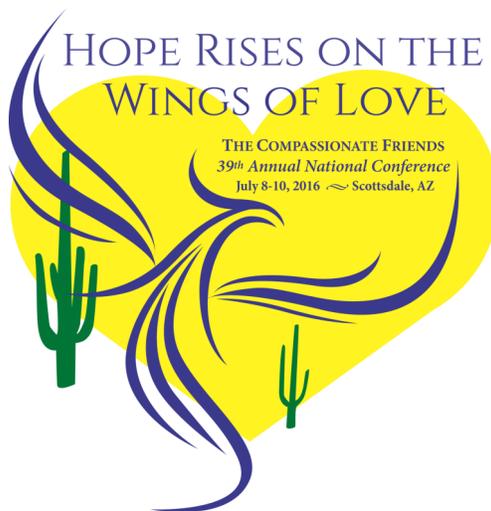
If you are still struggling along, unable to see a future without pain and confusion, please reach out to those of us who have been there. We are here to take your hand and help you find the way to healing. Be kind to yourself and others, and take time to relax and remember. Your child would want you to try to find some ways to enjoy life once again, without feeling guilty. This summer you may find the road to renewed hope and recovery.

By Lenora Sanders

Reprinted from Bereaved Parents USA

St. Louis Chapter Newsletter

Volume 24, Number 4, July – August 2003



A Feel for What to Expect

39th Annual

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

July 8-10, 2016 Scottsdale, AZ

Keynote Speakers

Alan Pedersen, *Opening Ceremony*

Nivia Vázquez, *Saturday Evening Dinner*

Steve Fugate, *Closing Ceremony*

Entertainment/Activities

Special Performance by Amy Sky, Olivia Newton-John and Beth Nielsen Chapman

Butterfly Wonderland Trip

Paint Night with Carrie Curran

Whispers and Dream Visits: Finding

Meaning and Hope in Synchronicity

with Mitch Carmody & Carla Blowey

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

“It is true that the grief journey is very lonely, but it is also true that it is up to you to decide just how lonely you will make it.”

Elizabeth Berrien



Due to the Butterfly release

June Birthdays

Will be celebrated at the July meeting

Visit our website for more Online Grief Resources



BUTTERFLY RELEASE AND POTLUCK DINNER

Our butterfly release is an acknowledgement of a life lived and the hopeful passing and celebration of a grander, most exquisite life to come. It is an expression by sight of what our soul feels, and the unutterable emotions we have riding on the beating wings of an equally speechless



butterfly. Please join us to observe their flight a be a part of a connection and special understanding of the event that has taken place.

Potluck dinner: Please bring a favorite dish and join us after for a dinner. It will be a time to get together, enjoy meeting new people, or seeing old friends again. This is the first of two family events we promote during the year—**adults and children are welcome.**



**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



June 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

Butterfly Release and Potluck Dinner

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.**