



# The Compassionate Friends

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies



THIS MONTH: SEPTEMBER 2016 ISSUE

This Month: *The 20 Faces of Grief*—Marty Martin

Newsletter Editor: Becky Long

### A PERSONAL VIEW OF AN IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY

I've done just about every job in TCF, from chapter founder and co-leader to regional coordinator and, most recently, a director on the national board. Nothing, however, has given me more satisfaction than my job as editor of the Sugar Land – SW Houston Chapter newsletter.

I was still newly bereaved when I took on the job; Rhonda, our only daughter, had died only 16 months before and I was actively seeking solace wherever I could find it. I learned very quickly that my greatest comfort came through the written word, so I read voraciously. But comprehension and retention don't come easily to a grief-ridden mind, and repetition was essential for me. When a poem or article, or even a meaningful passage or phrase gave me a fresh insight, I read it over and over again and often wrote it out so it might sink in. Those passages lifted me and gave me hope, so I made sure they were there when I needed them. I carried a few short ones in my pocket and billfold. Other bereaved parents have told me they did this, too. A note on

the back of a business card became a tangible bit of hope that could sustain me through an unwelcome encounter or sudden grief attack.

Who would have guessed that searching for newslet-



ter material could have been such a tremendous help in processing my own grief? I scoured other chapter newsletters and read grief books with new eyes, searching for words that would comfort and guide my fellow chapter members; and I never failed to come upon something that was especially meaningful to me. I checked carefully on copyright and intellectual ownership laws to be sure I was in compliance. Inspiration was everywhere, once I began seeking it not only for myself, but for my fellow grievers. It was exciting, it

was stimulating. I was experiencing these emotions once more, after thinking I never would feel them again.

Other editors were generous with their articles and words of encouragement.

Like me, they were learning that "Helping is healing." This is one of the axioms on which TCF is founded. Chapter members inspired me, too. I often searched for articles with a particular member in mind, hoping to find something that might strike a chord with him or her. I found myself listening in the sharing circle with new ears, and when I heard a particular need or frustration, I searched for a piece or a poem that addressed it. I remember answering the phone late one Tuesday morning and hearing a chap-

*(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

sjroberts1216@hotmail.com

#### Hospitality

Annette Garcia-Gilmore

(817) 244-9102

Christine Anderson

(817) 300-6196

#### Newsletter

Position Open

#### Librarian

Position Open

#### Welcome Bags

Janet DuPertuis

#### Committee Members

Jeff & Marty Martin

Jerry & Sharon Austry

Charles & Genie Dean

Lydia Moore

Mark Deegear

# Hope

Sometimes that's all you have when you have nothing else. If you have it, you have everything.

## 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

## HOLIDAY MEMORIAL

The Fort Worth Chapter Memorial will be a time to take a break from the world and

come together as kindred spirits during the Holiday season and remember that our children, our grandchildren, our brothers and our sisters are no longer physically here on earth, but they are ALL still with us in spirit and always will be. We remind ourselves that we are richer because they LIVED and there is a vast measure of love, of tenderness, of fulfillment and a sense of purpose that we could not have enjoyed had it not been for them. They opened a new dimension of love to us. How grateful we are for that gift!

The memorial will begin promptly at 6:30pm at Arborlawn United Methodist Church, 5001 Briarhaven Rd., Fort Worth. Dinner will be served immediately following the memorial event and this memorial is for the entire family of all ages, so feel free to bring guests to share this evening with.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE

### Bring One Picture to Display:

Please bring an 8 x 10 or smaller picture of your loved one to place a candle in front of at least 20 minutes prior to the event. Each family will receive a copy of the program with each loved one's picture, as well as a rose and ornament.

### Send One Picture to be in the Program:

Please notify Mike Bills by **October 15<sup>th</sup>** if you want your loved one's picture to be

included in the program, even if you just want to use the same picture as last year. E-mail a picture to [mbills@locallyowned.org](mailto:mbills@locallyowned.org).



Please list the "NOVEMBER MEMORIAL" in the subject line of your e-mail. Mike will reply to all e-mails that he receives, so if you do not receive a return e-mail from him within 24 hours, please e-mail the picture again or call or text Mike at (817) 371-5120. If you do not have e-mail, you may also mail a picture to Mike at 2301 N. Sylvania Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76111. Mailed pictures will be returned.

Please bring a favorite dessert to share.



## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

If you are interested in helping with the planning or other behind the scenes work that is required to keep our chapter functioning, please make plans to attend the next steering committee meeting:

Saturday, September 17th, at 10 AM, at Mount Olivet Chapel, 2301 N. Sylvania Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76111. If you

are unable to attend the meeting, you may send your suggestions, comments, and concerns to Jaye Sanford at [tcffortworth@gmail.com](mailto:tcffortworth@gmail.com).



**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](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org) **Website:** [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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](mailto:jobill@sbcglobal.net)

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

## RESPONSIBILITY (CONTINUED)

ter member's voice as she said with great relief, "I needed this newsletter so much — it just came, and on page six is an article that was written just for me. Thank you!"

I had thought of her as I typed that piece, and now we celebrated together as some of her pain was lifted by the words of a fellow griever known to us only as the author of an article in an August newsletter.

Editing a chapter newsletter is a wonderful opportunity to grow, to heal, and to give back. I gave up the chapter leader's job after two and a half years, but I kept my job as newsletter editor for five. In the end, I realized that it was work that should be shared and that it was selfish of me to hold on to it. This is a job that could have many titles, Comforter, Healer, and Minister among them. It's the job that made me see beyond myself — and in doing that, made me take a giant step in my own grief journey.

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The Compassionate Friends

## IF THEY ONLY KNEW

If only they knew that when I speak of him, I am not being morbid. I am not denying his death. I am proclaiming his life. I am learning to live with his absence. For twenty-six years he was a part of my life, born, nurtured, molded and loved — this cannot be put aside to please those who are uncomfortable with my grief.

If only they knew that when I sit quietly, apparently content with my own company, I am not self indulgently unhappy, dwelling on things which cannot be changed; I am with him. I am seeing his face, hearing his voice, remembering his laughter, recalling his excitement and joy in life. Please allow me this time with him, as I do not begrudge you your time with your children.

If only they knew that when I sometimes weep quietly, I do not cry in self pity for what I have lost. I weep for what he has lost, for the

life he loved, for the music which filled his very being, and for all he still longed to hear, for the poetry which moved him to tears, for the beauty about him that daily fed his soul, for the exhilaration and excitement of flying the skies, of searching for his God in the vast space of the universe. For all that he loved and lost, I cry.

If only they knew the feeling of deep grief, the emptiness, the dull pain, the endlessness of death. If only they understood the insanity of the platitudes so freely spoken — that "time heals," that "you'll get over it," that "it was for the best," that "God takes only the best," — and realize that these are more an insult than a comfort, that the warm and compassionate touch of another means so much more.

If only they knew that we will not find true peace and tranquility until we are prepared to try to stand in the shoes of others. We will not be understood until we learn to understand compassionately and we will not be heard until we learn to listen with hearts we well as minds.

Jan McNess  
TCF Victoria, Australia

## VOLUNTEER FOR THE CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Our chapter is in need of someone to help with the newsletter - all that is required of you is to find three articles or poems a month from the National TCF database or other grief materials which allow reprinting. If you have read a book that helped you in your grief journey and you would like to review it for the newsletter, that would also be helpful. Even better would be something you have written yourself that you would like to share. If you would be interested in helping with the newsletter, please contact Becky Long through the chapter email address [tcffortworth@gmail.com](mailto:tcffortworth@gmail.com).



## LOVE GIFTS



In Memory of

**Steven Zahir**

By Bijan and Sandra Zahir

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

## October Meeting Handling the Holidays

*Grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling is a deep and difficult challenge at any time. But the holiday season can magnify your sense of loss and mourning. Family gatherings and seasonal events can be painful reminders of the absence of a loved one. At the same time, they can also be comforting rituals where you spend time with family and friends, focusing on good memories and trying to recapture your sense of joy. Please join us to share our experiences of mourning the loss a loved one during the holiday season and to discuss things that have been helpful to get through this difficult time of the year.*

Visit our website for more Online Grief Resources





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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



**September 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**

*The 20 Faces of Grief—Marty Martin*

### **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.**