



# The Compassionate Friends

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies



**This Month:** Craft—*Making Collages*

### YOU ARE NOT ALONE

When your child has died, you can feel so alone; so singled out and overwhelmed by a dreadful fate in a world of happy and intact families that the sorrow you bear and the happiness of the world around you can be like a drop of water dripped in oil that cannot mix together, and ever so slowly sinks isolated deeper and deeper into a darker and darker place where there is no light—where hope is diminished.

The reality is that your world has permanently changed; and this change can begin to close in and trap your mind in thoughts that desperately search everywhere inside your being looking for answers, some kind of relief and somehow to understand the confusion of how your life can possibly survive the change.

The important thing to know is that you're not alone. There are many other people like you. The death of a child does not only come to a select few, in certain times in history, or just in certain parts of the world – it comes to us all and the pain to follow has mercy for none; not even the Kennedys, the Rocke-



*John Adams*  
2nd President of the United States

fellers, or the Bushes have been exempted. They too have experienced the heart-break of the death of a child and their stations in life offered no relief.

The death of a child is a great leveler of social and economic status and there is a common thread among all where consolation in this time of distress or sadness is found. It is found with others who have experience the same kind of loss. Here are the kindred spirits.

The reality is that grief can be diminished by sharing it with others who truly understand. It helps to hear from other parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters who have been where you're at and are further along in their journey and have survived the death to see the day they could love and laugh and enjoy the sunshine again.

John Adams, second president of the United States, upon the death of his daughter, Abigail "Nabby" Adams, reached out to Thomas Jefferson, who suffered the loss of five children before his own death. It was him alone who understood Adams pain and offered these

words of understanding: "I know the depth of the affliction it has caused, and can sympathize with it the more sensibly, inasmuch as there is no degree of affliction produced by the loss of those dear to us, while experience has not taught me to estimate...time and silence are the only medicine, and these but assuage, they never can suppress, the deep drawn sigh which recollection forever brings up, until recollection and life are extinguished together."

What can be felt in Thomas Jefferson's words is the true understanding of the pain from the death of a child and what John Adams could know is that from such a deep place, his friend had emerged to survive it.

What you can learn from those who have made the journey before you is that there does come a time when light does reappear, when the darkest hours begin to pass and the light of our children becomes a little brighter lighting up the quiet places inside of us where they live, exposing our fondest memories held safe in our minds and in our hearts... and remembering them begins to not be so overwhelming.

**THIS MONTH:**  
**DECEMBER 2014 ISSUE**  
Newsletter Editor: Crys Kelly

### Steering Committee

#### CHAPTER LEADERS

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#### Librarian

Liz Hutchison 817-726-3999

#### Welcome Bags

Janet DuPertuis

#### Committee Members

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

*"Some people come into your life as a blessing.*

*Others come into your life as a lesson."*

Mother Teresa

### Monthly Newsletter

Newsletters are emailed to those on our recipient list and available online the 1st of every month on our website. Hard copies are made available at each monthly meetings.

## 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

## DECEMBER MEETING



Come join us to create a 12" X 12" collage of your loved one at the December meeting. It is time now for you to start collecting photos and other materials like fabric, stamps, magazine cut-outs and such to include in your personal creation. This is sure to be a special time of fellowship and reflection.

## 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 10th 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.

## WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

The *Compassionate Friends* Worldwide Candle Lighting, which unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon, is scheduled to be held on Sunday, December 14th, 2014, at 7:00 p.m.



As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon. Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 18th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, the event has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

*Starting in New Zealand*, candles are lit at 7:00 PM local time. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lit in the next, creating a virtual 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world. TCF's website will host extended chat room hours and a message board for families to post tributes. Last year there were over 4,000 posted messages from all corners of the world.

*This year* our candle lighting service will be in the beautiful **Independence Chapel** in *Greenwood Memorial Park at 3100 White Settlement Rd, Fort Worth, TX 7617*

## 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 [jojobill@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jojobill@sbcglobal.net)

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

## WHAT IS NEW ABOUT THE NEW YEAR?

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hurrahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try.

But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

### EMPTY PLACES

I drove the old way yesterday.  
It'd been a while, you see.  
And there, without a warning,  
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday  
and sadness came on strong,  
taken back by so much feeling,  
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait  
to summon up the tears,  
to say remember yesterday,  
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played  
are places where I cry.  
These places hold the memories  
that will live as long as I.

Genesse Gentry  
TCF Marin County, CA



Dory Rooker  
TCF Upper Valley, VT  
Bettye and Sam Rosenberg  
TCF Louisville, KY

### BIRTHDAY TABLE

December birthdays will be celebrated at this month's meeting. If your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthday is in November or December, 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

Chase Davidson  
and  
Graham Davidson

By Michael Davidson

*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

### WEBINARS

The Compassionate Friends provides its webinars free of charge as a service to the bereaved. If you have questions about the webinars please email national at:

**Mailbox:** nationaloffice  
@compassionatefriends.org



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



**December 2014**

**Non-Profit Organization**

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## **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: Making a Collage.*

### **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.**