



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Fort Worth Chapter | Phone: (682) 201-0837 | [tcffortworth@gmail.com](mailto:tcffortworth@gmail.com)

### CHAPTER WEBSITE:

[www.thecompassionatefriendsfw.com](http://www.thecompassionatefriendsfw.com)

### STEERING COMMITTEE

Charles & Genie Dean

Jeff & Marty Martin

Lydia Moore

Jaye Sanford

#### Hospitality

Christine Anderson

Jerry & Sharon Austray

David & Suzanne Wilkinson

#### Librarian

Donna Tusan

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Facebook: The Compassionate Friends/USA

In Spanish: Los Amigos Compasivos/USA

Twitter: Text follow TCFofUSA to 40404



## What is so 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.

Dory Rooker  
TCF Upper Valley, VT



*I am here. Let's heal together. ~ a friend*

## As the Holiday Season Ends

*Well has it been said that there is no grief  
like the grief which does not speak.  
~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

### 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. *It isn't necessary to call someone who has suffered a loss identical to yours.*

#### **Addiction**

David (214) 686-1901

#### **Auto**

Jeff & Marty (817) 475-9141

#### **Drowning**

Debi (817) 602-4018

#### **Drowning/Young Child**

Stacy (817) 656-7540 or  
(817) 845-3433

#### **Grandchild/Multiple Loss**

Lydia (817) 829-3801

#### **Homicide/Only Child**

Steve (682) 583-0125  
sjroberts1216@hotmail.com

#### **Long Term Illness**

Marty (817) 636-5645

#### **Premature Infant(s)**

Amy (817) 944-1710  
amylori12@hotmail.com

#### **Siblings**

Jaye (817) 475-9363

#### **Suicide/Only Child**

Joy (817) 453-2227

#### **Middle of the Night Calls**

Liz (817) 726-3999

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 your 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 meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

The newsletter is another way you can become involved in your chapter. Let us know contributing poems or stories. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs. Have a Happier New Year!

Pat Akery  
TCF Medford, OR

### To Start a New Year

If I can concentrate on the  
moral and spiritual side of  
the holidays  
I can make it through.

If I can absorb the love and  
warmth that was the  
beginning  
I can give love back.

If I can share the grief and  
love that is in me  
through these holidays  
I can start a new year.

Tom Spray  
TCF Ventura, CA

## LOVE GIFTS

We appreciate the recent Love Gift received from

*Christine Anderson in memory of her daughter Tamara.*

Love Gifts are accepted at our monthly chapter meetings, received ONLINE through our local chapter website or received by mail to:

Steve Roberts,  
P.O. Box 734, Euless, TX 76039.



## REMEMBER THESE DATES

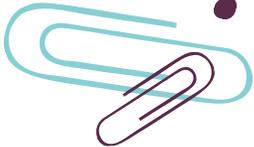
**January 9, 2018** - Chapter Meeting with a Guest Speaker, Dr. Patrick O'Malley, author of "Getting Grief Right"

**January 13, 2018** - Steering Committee Meeting 10:00 am

**February 13th** - Chapter Meeting 7pm

**March 13th** - Chapter Meeting 7pm

**July 27-29, 2018** - 41st TCF National Conference, "Gateway to Hope and Healing" in St. Louis, Missouri.



## BIRTHDAY TABLE

If your loved one's birthday is in January we encourage you to celebrate their life at this month's chapter meeting. Bring a photograph, snack, and/or memorabilia to share with your local Compassionate Friends.

## THE PROCESS

Recently we faced the second anniversary of my son's death. Quietly, at home, no friends, no phone calls, no plans, just personal thoughts and reflections. That is how we chose to honor Todd Mennen on this saddest of days.

My husband said he woke up during the night; he had been dreaming about the accident and Todd's death. I slept throughout the night, but when I awoke in the morning I was still in that place between awake and asleep; I was "in a dream". Todd and I were having a conversation; it felt nice. I didn't feel the usual jolt of reality when I awoke—the jolt each of us feels when we awaken to remember our child is gone. The conversation was comforting.

We miss him so much. His laugh, his sincere, sparkling eyes will never grace us again. His deep concern about others, his love of life, his gifts of analyzing, listening, gently suggesting....those have gone with him. In their place is a deep void.

The process of grieving is a strange one. Each day is different. Throughout each day my child is in my mind....in the forefront or in the background...but in my mind. I shed tears unexpectedly, my voice breaks when I remember truly special events in Todd's life. Sometimes I get angry over little things. Sometimes I don't react to anything. Sometimes I seem normal to everyone, but it doesn't matter.

Normal, of course, is what others want to see in me. What is normal for a mother whose only child is dead? Who has that answer? Everyone has an opinion, but in truth, there is no normal, there is no answer.

And so, as we continue to travel this highway of life, our grief is in us and around us.

Sometimes our grief is all we have. Still we travel this empty road.

We understand. We're all different, yet, we are all the same. Our child is dead. We are Compassionate Friends.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen  
TCF, Katy, TX



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*The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.*

## **Fort Worth Chapter Meeting January 9th at 7:00**

*Guest Speaker - Dr. Patrick O'Malley*

Bereaved father, psychotherapist and author, along with Tim Madigan, of  
"Getting Grief Right"

Volunteers bring refreshments to share;  
please nothing with nuts.  
Paper goods and drinks are provided.

### **Meet friends in Room 271**

ARBORLAWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
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.

*We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month.*