



# 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

#### Chapter Leader

Donna Tusan

#### Hospitality

Christine Anderson  
Jerry & Sharon Austry  
Peter & Tessie Kau  
David & Suzanne Wilkinson

#### Librarian

Marty Martin

#### Newsletter Editor

Lisa Jo Adkison

#### Secretary

Becky Long

#### Treasurer

Steve Roberts

#### Welcome Bags

Janet DuPertuis

#### Additional Members

Charles & Genie Dean  
Jeff & Marty Martin  
Lydia Moore  
Jaye Sanford

#### Regional Coordinator

Bill Campbell  
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[jojobill@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jojobill@sbcglobal.net)

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CST, Monday-Friday. Email:  
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Website: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
Facebook: The Compassionate Friends/USA  
In Spanish: Los Amigos Compasivos/USA  
Twitter: Text follow TCFofUSA to 40404

### Promises of Rainbows

I promise not to offer  
Rainbows after storms  
Or silver linings beyond the clouds,  
But if you have tears of sorrow,  
I will share them.

If you have words of anger,  
I will hear them.  
If you have moments of confusion,  
I will help you through them.

Perhaps  
Your tears of sorrow today  
Will water the seeds  
Of tomorrow's garden  
Of spiritual growth, of worthy priorities,  
Of loving relationships and genuine  
Understanding and compassion.

My sad friend, your weeping is not fruitless.

Nancy Williams  
TCF Marlbor, NJ

*Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where  
any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.*

*~from A Grief Observed by C. S. Lewis*

### Our New Members

We extend a very warm and understanding "Welcome"  
to our new friends who attended the February meeting:

Alex & Logann, and Laci, for the loss of their  
daughter & niece, Daisy  
Kathryn, for the loss of her brother, Scott  
Laura, for the loss of her daughter, Amy  
Melissa, for the loss of her brother, Nolan

We encourage all members to reach out and meet our new  
members. There is healing for you and them in sharing!

## Lending Library Books

Please return any borrowed books as soon as you are finished with them. If you have kept one for a while you may call our chapter phone number (682) 201-0837 and arrange to have the book(s) mailed back so others may benefit from it as well. Thank you for your cooperation!

Image courtesy of Paul at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

## 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

## The Anticipation Of Spring

Spring is a time for growth and renewal. As a child, teen, and then an adult, I always looked forward to spring with anticipation. The thoughts of green grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers of all varieties and colors were a welcome change from the long cold, dreary Michigan winter.

It was a magical time of year. When I was a child, each member of my family watched anxiously to lay claim to being the first to spot the familiar hop-hop of the returning robin, the first sign that spring was actually here. We could finally take off the gloves, shed our heavy winter coats and boots, and roll down the windows on the car to hear the laughter of children playing outside and smell the fresh mown grass as we'd drive down the road.

That's the way it was for me on the first day of spring 12 years ago. I remarked how beautiful the tulips looked as they danced in the wind. The trees were budding, and there was magic in the air. My kids and I shed our heavy winter coats, flinging them in the backseat, rolled down the windows of the car, and started singing in celebration of the beautiful day we were experiencing.

And then . . . **IT** happened.

Suddenly, undeniably, horrifically—my world, my spring, my life changed.

My 5-year-old son, Stephen, died that first spring day. His 8-year-old sister, Stephanie, my firstborn, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on the death certificate. Gone was the laughter, the magic, the beauty of my world.

The springs that followed were no longer filled with anticipation or magic. They were dark and ugly and filled with memories too painful to talk about. I wanted nothing to do with "spring." If H.G. Well's time machine had existed, I would have entered it at the end of winter and fast-forwarded through spring.

As time marched on and one spring followed another, I learned an important lesson in my journey through grief: As much as I wanted to, I couldn't fast-forward through the hard spots. I couldn't go around them. I had to go through them slowly, like a dog paddling through water, so I could get to the other side. Somehow doing this taught me to cope, to endure, to face tomorrow and all the first days of spring that followed. It's much like the transformation that takes place when a butterfly emerges from a dark, cold, seemingly lifeless chrysalis.

A few years ago, as winter was drawing to a close and the first day of spring was quickly approaching, I looked out the kitchen window toward the budding pear tree in the backyard and discovered it was full of chirping robins. I smiled and knew that spring somehow wasn't going to be so bad. It was once again time to enjoy the smells of the season, the beauty of the budding trees, and the magic that the season had to offer. And I knew Stef and Steve would have wanted that for me.

Pat Loder

TCF Lakes Area Chapter, MI  
In Memory of Stephanie and Stephen Loder

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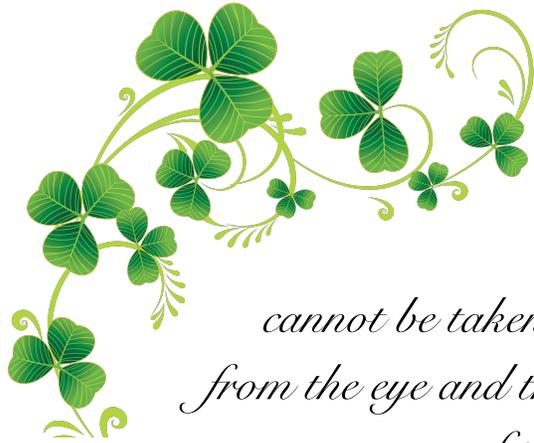
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## Latest Issue of We Need Not Walk Alone

The Autumn/Winter 2017 issue of We Need Not Walk Alone is now available for free on [TCF's website](#). Thank you so much for your continued support of We Need Not Walk Alone.



*For  
what  
is once  
given  
cannot be taken, except  
from the eye and the touch  
of the hand.  
~ Polly Toland*

### Mark these Dates

**March 13th** - Chapter Meeting 7pm: Panel presentation regarding how men and women grieve differently; followed by gender-related group discussion.

**April 7th** - Steering Committee meeting at 10:00 am in the home of Sharon and Jerry Austry, 6716 Blue Meadow Dr., FW 76132

**April 10th** - Chapter Meeting 7pm: Video of National Conference speaker and bereaved sibling, Jennifer Perez.

**May 8th** - Chapter Meeting 7pm: Butterfly Presentation by the Botanic Gardens.

**May 26th** - Firemen's 5K 2018 8:00 am

**June 12th** - Annual Butterfly Release and pot-luck meal

**July 10th** - Chapter Meeting 7pm: Memorialize or create a legacy for your loved one.

**July 27-29** - TCF National Conference - register now

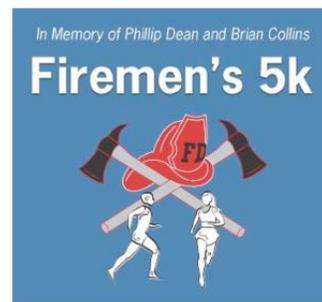
### Another Online Resource

The Compassionate Friends offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions.

Chat rooms are open to bereaved parents, grandparents and adult siblings. If you are looking for more information regarding The Compassionate Friends, please contact the National Office at 877.969.0010.

Please Note: Times posted on the schedule are based upon Eastern Time. Select "enter room" under the [chat room](#) you would like to participate in and you will be prompted to register. Once registered you will be able to log-in with your username and password that you have set up.

### You Can Help Our Chapter!



**Benefiting:** Fort Worth Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, The WARM Place & The Firemen's 5K Scholarship Fund

**WHEN:** Saturday, May 26, 2018, 6:30 to 7:45 AM: Packet/Bib/Chip Pickup & Race Day Registration 8:00AM: 5K Race

**WHERE:** Arborlawn United Methodist Church, 5001 Briarhaven Rd., Fort Worth, Texas 76109 (where our chapter meetings are held.)

Your participation, volunteering, and support to this annual local, family event will financially assist our chapter to continue outreach to families who are in the process of their journey of healing. For more information email to [info@firemens5k.com](mailto:info@firemens5k.com).

Please check this special family friendly event out at <http://www.firemens5k.com/>

## Birthday Table

If March is your child's birthday month, we invite you to come to our monthly meeting and share their story! Birthdays hold treasured memories and are especially difficult for surviving siblings, grandparents, and parents; TCF is where we can honor and celebrate the precious life-story of our loved one. Taking a few minutes at the beginning to share a photo/memento is a gentle reminder to all that love continues.

Our Birthday Table is available to display your pictures and special keepsakes. You can also bring your child's favorite snack or even a birthday cake to share!



## Gateway to Hope and Healing

Register NOW for the 41st TCF National Conference to be held July 27-29, 2018 in St. Louis, Missouri. "Gateway to Hope and Healing" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of a great National Conference experience. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. You can get updates on the national website as well as on [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#). Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.



Adult Registration: \$115  
 Child Registration (9-17) \$55  
 Full-time College Student  
 Registration \$55  
 Active Military Registration \$55

The Conference schedule and list of workshops are also available on the [national website](#).

If you are thinking about going but just not sure several of our Steering Committee members have attended in the past and would be willing to share their thoughts and experience regarding the National Conference.

## Last Month's Meeting

We appreciate Sharon Austry for leading last month's meeting. She shared with our group the article by Angela Miller: *7 Things I've Learned Since the Loss of My Child*. Afterwards we had discussion groups. The article may be found in the [e-newsletter](#) from the National Office. Thank you to all who attended and participated in the group discussion.

*"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal; Love leaves a memory no one can steal."  
 -found on an Irish headstone*

## This Is Your Chapter

We encourage each member to consider how you will participate in our chapter this year. It takes all of us to make our support group effective.

If you are new, we hope you will muster up the courage to reach out and get to know some of your fellow members, hear their stories and gain hope, wisdom and friendship for your journey from theirs.

If you have been around for a while, are you considering taking a more active role yet? There is so much which goes into a successful chapter, and you are truly needed. Volunteers for our chapter's Steering Committee are always welcome! You will not only be helping others in the chapter, you will find even more healing for yourself, which is the secret of TCF's success! You are personally invited to meet with the Steering Committee April 7 at 10 AM in the home of Sharon and Jerry Austry, 6716 Blue Meadow Dr., FW 76132.



## Ten Healing Rights for Grieving Children

**Author's note: This "bill of rights" for grieving children is intended to empower them to help themselves heal – and to help direct the adults in their lives to be supportive as well.**

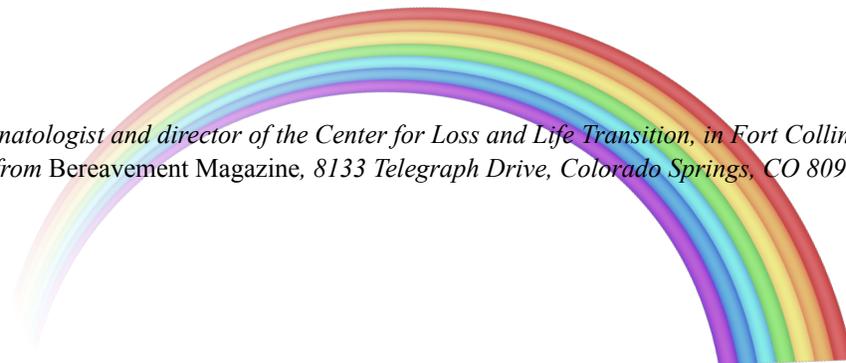
Someone you love has died. You are probably having many hurtful and scary thoughts and feelings right now. Together those thoughts and feelings are called grief, which is a normal (though really difficult) thing everyone goes through after someone they love has died.

The following ten rights will help you understand your grief and eventually feel better about life again. Use the ideas that make sense to you. Post this list on your refrigerator or on your bedroom door or wall. Re-reading it often will help you stay on track as you move toward healing from your loss. You might also ask the grown-ups in your life to read this list so they will remember to help you in the best way they can.

1. **I have the right to have my own unique feelings about the death.** I may feel mad, sad, or lonely. I may feel scared or relieved. I may feel numb or sometimes not anything at all. No One will feel exactly like I do.
2. **I have the right to talk about my grief whenever I feel like talking.** When I need to talk, I will find someone who will listen to me and love me. When I don't want to talk about it, that's okay, too.
3. **I have the right to show my feelings of grief in my own way.** When they are hurting, some kids like to play so they'll feel better for awhile. I can play or laugh, too. I might also get mad and scream. This does not mean I am bad, it just means I have scary feelings that I need help with.
4. **I have the right to need other people to help me with my grief, especially grown-ups who care about me.** Mostly I need them to pay attention to what I am feeling and saying and to love me no matter what.
5. **I have the right to get upset about normal, everyday problems.** I might feel grumpy and have trouble getting along with others sometimes.
6. **I have the right to have "griefbursts."** Griefbursts are sudden, unexpected feelings of sadness that just hit me sometimes – even long after the death. These feelings can be very strong and even scary. When this happens, I might feel afraid to be alone.
7. **I have the right to use my beliefs about my God to help me deal with my feelings of grief.** Praying might make me feel better and somehow closer to the person who died.
8. **I have the right to try to figure out why the person I loved died.** But it's okay if I don't find an answer. "Why" questions about life and death are the hardest questions in the world.
9. **I have the right to think and talk about my memories of the person who died.** Sometimes those memories will be happy, and sometimes they might be sad. Either way, these memories help me keep alive my love for the person who died.
10. **I have the right to move toward and feel my grief and, over time, to heal.** I'll go on to live a happy life, but the life and death of the person who died will always be a part of me. I'll always miss this special person.

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

*Dr. Wolfelt is a clinical thanatologist and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, in Fort Collins, Colorado. This article is reprinted with permission from Bereavement Magazine, 8133 Telegraph Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920-7169, [719] 282-1850.*





# *The Compassionate Friends*

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

*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 March 13th at 7:00**

**Panel Presentation:**  
**How Men & Women Grieve Differently**  
followed by gender-related groups  
for discussion.

Volunteers bring our refreshments each month;  
Have you signed up yet? Please do not bring anything  
containing nuts. Paper goods and drinks are provided.

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

ARBORLAWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
5001 Briarhaven Rd., Fort Worth

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## **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.*