



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Fort Worth Chapter #1354 | Phone: (682) 201-0837 | email: tccffortworth@gmail.com

Chapter Website:
www.thecompassionatefriendsfw.com

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chapter Co-Leaders

Charles & Genie Dean

Hospitality / Meeting Setup

René Willars
 Chloe Willars
 Donna Tusan
 Janet DuPertuis

Librarian

Sharon Austray

Secretary

Becky Long

Newsletter / Website

Chloe Willars
 René Willars

Treasurer

Charles Dean

Welcome Bags

Janet DuPertuis

Welcome Table

Jerry & Sharon Austray
 Donna Tusan

Additional Members

Charles & Genie Dean
 Lydia Moore
 Steve Roberts

Regional Coordinator

Bill Campbell
 (972-935-0673)
jojebill@sbcglobal.net

TCF National Office:

The Compassionate Friends
 48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
 Wixom, MI 48393
 Call toll free: (877) 969-0010
 9 AM-5 PM, CST, Monday-Friday.
 Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
 Website: www.compassionatefriends.org
 Facebook: The Compassionate Friends/USA
 In Spanish: Los Amigos Compasivos/USA
 Twitter: Text follow TCFofUSA to 40404

Our regular chapter meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm at Arborlawn United Methodist Church, Room 271

*Please note that the doors of the church are now automatically locked. When attending a meeting you must go in at the main entrance by the office prior to 7pm.

*****New Member Recruitment*****

We'd like to give a huge thanks to David and Suzie Wilkinson involvement as Chapter Leaders of The Compassionate Friends, Fort Worth Chapter for the last 2 years. The steering committee has ushered in so many successful initiatives under their leadership, and we are excited to find the next group of members who can continue bringing good ideas to the group!

The Chapter Leadership role opens up March 1, 2024. We also have many more opportunities for involvement on the steering committee. If you have an interest to become involved and be a part of the steering committee, please reach out to a board member for more information. We welcome your interest and your participation!

A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO NEW MEMBERS

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.

Monthly Program:

Refreshments are provided each month by volunteers. Please sign up to bring snacks to share. We also ask that no one bring any snacks containing nuts.

Paper goods and drinks are provided

Join friends at the
Arborlawn United Methodist Church
Room 271
5001 Briarhaven Road
Fort Worth, TX 76109

Celebrate life



THE BIRTHDAY TABLE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT OUR MEETING THIS MONTH.

IF YOUR LOVED ONE'S BIRTHDAY IS IN THE MONTH,
YOUR WELCOME TO BRING A MEMENTO IN HONOR OF
YOUR LOVED ONE'S BIRTHDAY.
AND REFRESHMENTS TO SHARE!

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 12, 2024

Chapter Meeting at 7:00pm

April 9, 2024

Chapter Meeting at 7:00pm

May 14, 2024

Chapter Meeting at 7:00pm

June 11, 2024

Chapter Meeting and Annual Butterfly
Release at 6:30pm

July 9, 2024

Chapter Meeting at 7:00pm

July 12-14, 2024

47th TCF National Conference
New Orleans



TALK TO A TF FRIEND

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

Grandchild/Multiple Loss

Lydia 817-829-3801

Drowning

Debi 817-602-4018

Long Term Illness

Marty 817-726-7218

Homicide/Loss of all Children

Donna 817-690-8741
drjtusan@gmail.com

Homicide/Loss of Only Child

Steve 682-583-0125
sjr1216osu@gmail.com

Siblings

Suzie 214-686-1907

Spanish Speaking (Español)

David 214-686-1901

LOVE GIFTS

A Love Gift is a donation made in honor of a child, grandchild or sibling who has died or as a memorial to a relative or friend. Donations are tax deductible and are a means to allow us to reach out to other bereaved families through books and programs, and to help us hold monthly meetings and events. If you would like, you can specify that your love gift be used for specific use, e.g., continuing education, workshops, memorial event, or books for our lending library.



You can donate through the TCF Fort Worth Website at: <https://www.thecompassionatefriendsfw.com> or you can bring a check to a monthly meeting or event made out to [The Compassionate Friends Fort Worth](#).

Recent Love Gifts In Memory of:

Sydni Pena
Chase & Graham Davidson
Kelsey Marie Roberts
Mark Stanley Austry
Devon Becker
Michael Wilkinson and Michelle Baker
Phillip Wayne Dean



P.O. Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

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.



Registration Open for TCF's 47th National Conference in New Orleans

We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 47th Annual National Conference in New Orleans! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief, all while making friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

Special Opening Discount Until March 20th



Grief and sorrow are our companions after the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild. There is no place within where we can hide from, ignore, or push our deep pain. We may try to shove down our grief or decide we won't give it space, but it usually waits until an opening is cleared. Among the many struggles we experience after a profound loss, a challenging one is finding a balance between grieving and continuing to take part in life.

Grief is not a choice but an experience that needs to be addressed, expressed, supported, and validated. Grief is felt physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We may seek distractions or ways to avoid the pain when coping with the intensity that grief brings. Yet, when we ignore, push down, or try to numb our grief, it can become internalized. Grief internalized is carried in our bodies and manifests as depression, anxiety, addiction, physical illness, and mental strain.

Choosing to lean into our grief, instead of away from it, can be painful. When we move toward it and allow ourselves to experience it more fully, we discover ways to better manage our sorrow, express our pain, and be validated by others experiencing similar situations. Our struggle with grief is one of the ways we learn to carry our pain and find our footing again after a great loss.

Similarly, leaning into life and living is also a choice. Accepting invitations from family and friends when we want to stay in our shell or seeking to mend a broken relationship are choices. Being kind to others and being kind to ourselves are choices. Eating a healthy diet and moving our bodies to the extent we are able, are choices as well. Just as leaning into our grief helps us learn how to carry our pain, leaning into life allows the possibility of meaning, purpose, and renewal.

Grief will be with us and will take up a lot of space that isn't apparent to others from the outside. Finding a balance between leaning into our grief while continuing to engage with life and living is important to our health and well-being. This may feel very difficult, but doing so offers the possibility of having more meaning, peace, enjoyment, love, and hope over time through our struggle with this challenge. Sometimes grief will lead and leaning into life follows. At other times, leaning into living leads, and grief accompanies alongside. There is no right or wrong way to balance this, but we can find a place of stronger foundation and greater contentment through our struggle with both.



SHARI O'LOUGHLIN
CEO, TCF



SPRING CLEANING

Posted on February 20th, 2024

We used to live in a townhouse, one of those inventions designed to minimize housekeeping chores, mortgage payments and a tendency to accumulate more things than one needs to cross the Sahara in summer. We moved there because I liked the idea of no yard work, and we would be unburdened by conversations of “It’s-Saturday-so-mow-the-lawn.” I hate housework (it hates me too!), and we wanted a less complex life.

Smaller places do have a certain appeal...especially during the “It’s Spring and that means let’s-get-organized-around-here-and-throw-out-all-YOUR-stuff” mood that tends to permeate the months of March and April.

When you only have one closet, cleaning it takes a minimum of time. Opening the door starts the process, and if you are clever, you will stand with an open trash bag as you pry open the door. Always do this at 2:00 a.m. when the other nearby occupants in your townhome are asleep, or during those few quiet moments of solitude you get after announcing that Dairy Queen is having a twenty-minute-only-special, and you have (thoughtfully) placed the keys in the car.

Designed by some psychologist in an effort to help patients rid their psyches of old memories, useless information and general “clutter,” spring cleaning has become an American phrase most often associated with grief. It is a painful process, this sifting and sorting of all the things that tell us (and the rest of the world) who we are or were.

There are as many ways to spring clean as there are homes and hearts and minds and spirits that need “adjusting” (a real psychological term thrown in just to remind you that I am a professional too!)

How many times have you been told “It’s time to move on,” or, “It’s time to get back to normal,” or, “You mean you haven’t gotten rid of that yet?” (That can refer to a multitude of things such as his favorite pipe, her bathrobe that the dog attacked during one his “spells,” or an odd assortment of baseball cards, used gum wrappers and dirty socks that were secreted under the bed, left behind for you to find and cry over.

How come everybody else knows when it is time for me to spring clean! How come everybody else knows when it is time for me to open that closet and sort through all those memories, trying to decide which ones to keep and which ones to pass on to the Salvation Army? How come everybody else knows when it is time for me to get back to living?

I am spring cleaning. I am sifting through the “stuff” that made up my loved one’s life and I am learning to let go of a few things...slowly.

When we moved to a townhouse, we thought life wouldn't be so complicated. I wouldn't have to go out into the yard and remember how wonderful it was to enjoy the first spring flowers...with him. I don't want to cut the grass, because we loved playing in it, tickling our bare toes and laughing our way through spring into summer. We moved to a townhouse so we couldn't keep everything forever. It doesn't stay around anyway, so why have storage space? Why have cupboards that no longer need to hold cereal that turns the milk blue, or closets that no longer need to hold baseball shoes, bats and crumpled homework pages? Why have room for memories?

WHY? Because, I can't live without them! Spring is a time for spring cleaning, for sifting and sorting and re-reading and remembering. Spring is a time for things to go and things to stay. We just have to decide which ones do what. Spring is a time for renewal, when the earth begins to defrost after a harsh and bitter winter. It doesn't matter when your loved one died ; it does matter when you begin to let spring back into your life. It does matter when you open that closet and let the memories come out, along with the hurts and the hopes that you buried one day not so very long ago.

You never know what you are going to find when you start spring cleaning. You might discover treasures you had long forgotten, or the tax papers you needed, or the Easter egg no one found last year. You might find a few bits of joy lurking under the bed (we found dust bunnies). What fun to remember how that stuff got there or who might have been hiding under the bed when you were looking for volunteers for trash patrol!

Spring cleaning is a tradition that follows the footprints across your freshly waxed floor. I wish there were still footprints to clean up, but since there aren't, I'll just have to spend a few extra moments with this box of treasures I found. No time like the present to inspect the "stuff" in search of few "bits of joy."

When we lived in a townhouse, we thought that maybe, in a few years, we could stretch out into something a bit larger (and have a maid, too!). Maybe we would just start a little patch of grass out front, plant a seed or two in a clay pot on the patio, and live with what we have. Eventually, my house got larger, and my heart has grown, too!



DARCIE SIMS

Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS was a bereaved parent, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and a licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist. She was an author of many books on grief and bereavement including *Why Are the Casseroles Always Tuna?*, *Footsteps Through the Valley* and *If I Could Just See Hope*. She was an internationally recognized and popular speaker having keynoted at numerous bereavement conferences nationally and around the world. She served on The Compassionate Friends (TCF) national board of directors and the Association of Death Education and Counseling. Darcie received the TCF Professional Award in 1999. She was president and co-founder of Grief, Inc. and Director of American Grief Academy. She also was Director of Training and Certification for Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). Sadly, Darcie died suddenly and unexpectedly in February of 2014.

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us.

Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.

We are young, and we are old.

Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together.

We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends.

SIBLINGS WALKING TOGETHER (FORMERLY THE SIBLING CREDO)

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.

Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.

Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.

At other times we need our families to be there.

Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be.

We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.

We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.

Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life.

Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

