



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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

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

### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

#### **Chapter Co-Leaders**

Becky Long  
 Chloe Willars

#### **Hospitality / Meeting Setup**

René 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**

Gene Caligari  
 (480-703-2963)  
[gcaligari7@gmail.com](mailto:gcaligari7@gmail.com)

#### **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](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)  
 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

Our regular chapter meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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

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*We have many 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!*

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## A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO NEW MEMBERS

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*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

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### Celebrate Life

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**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

#### Tuesday, September 10

Chapter Meeting at 7:00pm

Topic: Approaching Angelversary or other difficult days

#### Tuesday, October 8

Chapter Meeting at 7:00pm

Topic: Sharing memento's

**\*Bring your favorite memento's of your loved ones.**

#### Tuesday, November 12

Annual Remembrance Memorial at 7:00pm

Dining area (enter through back/west entrance)

**\*Family members welcomed. Potluck event.**

**All attending, please bring side dish or dessert. Meat and drinks provided by Steering Committee.**

#### Sunday, December 8

Worldwide Candle Lighting Memorial Service at 7:00pm local time

Candles provided / Hosted by Steve Roberts (Meet at back/west side of entrance)

#### Tuesday, December 10

Chapter Meeting at 7:00pm

Topic: Ways to help in your grief in working through the upcoming Holidays

#### January 2025- Date TBD

Steering Committee Meeting

Details TBD

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## TALK TO A TF FRIEND

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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

René 817-504-896  
jrbc@att.net

### 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:

Beth Alden Dupertuis

Sydni Pena

Chase & Graham Davidson

Kelsey Marie Roberts

Mark Stanley Austray

Devon Becker

Michael Wilkinson and Michelle Baker

Phillip Wayne Dean



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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.*



DECEMBER 8, 2024

## WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December 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. As candles are lit on December 8th, 2024 at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the annual Worldwide Candle Lighting (WCL), 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. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance and 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 and will never be forgotten.



## **Lessons on Living with Grief**

*Posted in TCF website on August 27th, 2024*

Here's the thing about grief. You can't really know it completely until you experience it firsthand. It's like visiting the Grand Canyon for the first time. Before I ever visited it I imagined what it would be like from pictures I'd seen and what I'd been told. Ultimately, when I got to the rim of the canyon that first time and began hiking down one of its trails, it was nothing like what I had imagined. Grief is like that, too.

My husband and I lost our 28-year old son Andrew in 2018 to a rare and aggressive kind of cancer. While I have lost aging parents, the kind of grief experienced after losing our son took me to an entirely different place altogether. I've found that even though it's only been three years since our son died, time has helped soften the edges of my sorrow and allowed me to look back at some of the preconceived ideas I had about losing a child and about grief in general.

I know a number of parents who have lost children. Before Andrew died, I had always thought of these parents as being forever sad and unable to enjoy life ever again. I couldn't imagine how they could get up in the morning and complete their day, being so injured by the loss of their child—how could they possibly go on? Through no choice of my own, I've learned how they go on. Like the Grand Canyon, I've gone to a place that I could never know without visiting it firsthand. And in going there, deep into a canyon of sorrow, I've learned not only what it's like to lose someone who is so dear to me, but I've discovered so much more.

Having traveled to the depths of mourning has given me a different understanding of life. I'm able to connect with others who have experienced this kind of grief. We recognize each other, speak the same language and exist in a vaguely different reality. Having faced a place of profound sadness has enabled me to experience life more fully. It's like when you travel deep enough into the canyon, you find the river. The Dalai Lama says that without experiencing great grief, you can't know great happiness, and I've found that to be true. While I will always grieve the loss of my son, I can also find incredible happiness when I hear the peepers first thing in the spring, when I visit a beautiful garden or when I hear from a close friend from far away.

In the past I have tiptoed around parents who have lost a child. I was afraid that I'd say the wrong thing. Or worse, I'd remind them of their loss and ruin their day. As if! Trust me when I say that there's nothing you can say that will remind me that Andrew is no longer alive—that knowledge is always there. Even when it's not at the front of my mind, the loss of my son isn't something I will ever forget. I've also hesitated to talk to other people about their loss because I've assumed that they just don't want to discuss it. However, most of the time it helps me to share memories of my son, and I've discovered that other parents welcome talking about their lost love one, too.

## **Lessons on Living with Grief (continued)**

The Grand Canyon, like grief, is made up of many different pathways. Some trails stay close to the rim and others crisscross deep into the inner gorge. Each visitor to this place has a different experience, which is also true of grief. There is no right or wrong way to process a devastating loss. After Andrew passed, my husband buried himself in his work while I wanted to go deep and rehash everything that happened. Both ways of coping got us through.

The Canyon is also made up of many geological layers, from the white Kaibab Limestone at the rim to the deep purple Vishnu Schist deep in the inner gorge. These varied layers are thick in some places, thin in others and non-existent in many stretches. In a perfect world, these bands of rock would stack up evenly, one on top of the other, but they don't. When it comes to the phases of processing, grief is like that too. Researchers have identified stages, such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, that grieving people experience. However, one stage may last a long time, another briefly, and others may not happen at all. These stages may also come and go out of order, can repeat and are often nuanced. Again, every person grieves differently.

I was surprised to find that grief does some really weird stuff to your body and your brain. I know that because in the months after we lost Andrew I had tons of migraines, smell hallucinations and disabling vertigo. I was so achy that I thought I had developed fibromyalgia—until I came across a grief website that told me flat out that it was grief, not fibro. And my brain! In the first few weeks after Andrew died, I was numb. It was amazing that I could function as well as I did at the time, but was later told by a grief counselor that your brain only gives you as much shock as you can handle. As the weeks went on, more grief got though, and I couldn't think straight. There were moments driving when I had absolutely no clue where I was. I was forgetful and couldn't concentrate. The counselor said, "Be careful out there, this is your brain on grief." And so it was.

In experiencing Andrew's passing I learned that grief is universal, and the death of my son doesn't diminish anyone else's loss. More than a couple of times I've had interactions with people who hesitated to talk about losing a parent or a beloved pet fearing that their loss might sound insignificant compared to the passing of my child. Grief isn't a contest. Just because my loss was devastating, it doesn't make your bereavement any less painful, and I'm capable of acknowledging your grief. In fact, I'm more capable now than I ever was.

We're all meant to visit the deep canyon that is grief. Loss is a part of life, and we're meant to experience loss in order to learn and grow. But it's painful. Traveling deep into that canyon can feel endless and scary, but just when you feel like you can't go any deeper, you come across a tiny creek of clear water passing through a grove of willows.

### Lynn Jaffee

*Lynn Jaffee is a freelance writer and retired acupuncturist. She and her husband lost their 28-year old son, Andrew, in 2018 to a rare form of cancer. Lynn is working on a collection of stories about caregiving her adult son, grief, and surviving loss. "Lessons on Living with Grief" is an excerpt from that collection. Lynn and her husband live in Minneapolis.*

## 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.

