



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

www.thecompassionatefriendsfw.com

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

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chapter Leader

Becky Long

Secretary

Becky Long

Treasurer

Steve Roberts

Welcome / Hospitality Coordinator

Janet DuPertuis

Welcome / Hospitality Committee

Sharon Austray

Virginia Solis

Elsie Sosa

Juan Sosa

Librarian

Elsie Sosa

Chapter Phone

Sharon Austray

Newsletter

René Willars

Additional Members

Jerry Austray

Charles & Genie Dean

Mark Deegear

Tony Pena

Chloe Willars

Regional Coordinator

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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

Regular chapter meetings **2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm**

Arlington Heights Methodist Church
4200 Camp Bowie Blvd
Fort Worth, TX 76107
(Enter through west side of building)

All meetings/events held at Arlington Heights Methodist Church

UPCOMING EVENTS

Chapter Meetings

Tuesday, September 8

Topic: Journaling

Tuesday, October 13

Topic: Handling the Holidays

How to Plant a Monarch Butterfly Waystation

Tuesday, November 10

Topic: Memorial

Tuesday, December 8

Topic: Book Review: It's OK Your not OK

Other Meetings/Events

Sunday, December 13

Worldwide Candle Lighting Event

Time: 7:00pm local time

Saturday, January 16, 2027

Steering Committee

Time: 10AM

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 provided.

Celebrate Life



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

New Member Recruitment

We are always looking for volunteers to help with meetings and events.

If you're interested in joining the Steering Committee, contact your Chapter Leader or any Steering Committee member.

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

René 817-504-8976
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 memory of a loved one. Your gift helps support books and programs, and ability to hold monthly meetings and special events for bereaved families. You may designate your Love Gift for a specific purpose, such as continuing education, workshops, memorial event, or books for our lending library.



Donations can be made on the TCF Fort Worth website at:

<https://thecompassionatefriendsfw.com/>
or bring a check to any monthly meeting.
(please make checks payable to
The Compassionate Friends Fort Worth)

Recent Love Gifts

Summer Hamilton in memory of Brandon Hamilton



THE BONDS OF SHARED GRIEF

Posted on October 9th, 2025

Divisiveness and intolerance for others' views seem prevalent all around us today. We see it in our political beliefs, social justice concerns, and health environment. It is apparent within families, workplaces, and organizations. When we are grieving the painful death of a child, grandchild, or sibling, this divisiveness creates walls that can make our sorrow even deeper. It's difficult enough when we're grieving to feel connected to the people around us, and these dividing walls can further isolate us.

The Compassionate Friends credo begins with these words:

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.

Uniting people who share this deep grief was the premise that started The Compassionate Friends. The death of our brother, sister, child, or grandchild permeates all aspects of our being. It's something that can't easily be explained to those who have not experienced it, while those who have, possess a deep and compassionate understanding that requires little explanation. The bonds within our TCF community can bridge these chasms we see around us. Rather than being further isolated in our grief, we can feel surrounded by understanding, community, and shared hope that can be lifesaving during this time.

While none of us would choose to be a part of this community given the reason that brought us, we are connected at a deeply meaningful level. It's hard to see someone across the table with a similar loss and stay in a place of intolerance and anger. When we remember what binds us as a group and honor our shared losses, we focus on supportive and comforting connectedness. When we reach for the love in our hearts that's bolstered by our shared sorrow, we can model a greater energy that's needed in our world. Our child, grandchild, or sibling who died and brought us to TCF is honored each time we choose this path of connection through our differences rather than more division because of them.

Article by Shari O'Loughlin, member of TCF



Autumn's Caress

the calm brush of a breeze
with the scent of home fires burning.
inviting, the spell of leaves falling
in a swirl, they touch your face
and provoke a smile.

the gentle caress of autumn
steals the sultry heat of summer
precludes the melancholy of winter;
a careful lover, he whispers in your ear
promises of evenings spent
enthralled within his arms
as he teases you with nature's kisses.

within the change of seasons
comes the promise of his visit
and within his embrace, the promise
your heart will be kept warm
and your soul lulled into rest
before the chill of winter steals
his caress away from you.





The Holidays

How Do We Manage to Get Through Them Without Our Children?

Holidays with our children were some of the greatest times of our lives.

So much of our energy, time, and creativity was spent on planning and orchestrating experiences that were fun, memorable and perfect for our family. Even when they didn't turn out exactly as we had planned, they were wonderful, because we enjoyed the moments together.

Once our children die, we just can't even imagine facing holidays, and our traditions, without them here with us. Whether it's decorating the tree, baking the cookies, or wrapping gifts, we soon realize how empty our own holiday season seems, compared to the times we shared with our children.

And it's not just the "big holidays," like Christmas or Hanukkah, Thanksgiving, New Year's Eve, Halloween, or Easter...but also the days that don't get the same attention, yet, as a family, we may have had special traditions attached...fireworks on the Fourth of July, a camping trip over Labor Day weekend, a long weekend at the shore for Columbus Day, etc.

All of a sudden, the special seasons that we looked forward to are now something we might face with dread. Nothing can ever match the joy of all we shared with our children. All of us probably spend much time, especially in the beginning of our grief journey, wondering how on earth we will ever make it through those special days.

How can we face the holidays now that our children are missing?

How can we survive the feelings of emptiness and dread, as the world around us doesn't seem to miss a beat with shopping, decorating, playing music, and sending out happy holiday greetings to all?

While we grieve.

While we miss our children in new ways when we reflect on our past holidays.

While our world will never again be the same as it once was...and neither are we.

Just as unique as our own grief journeys, our approach to the holidays has to be something fitting for us. For Dave and myself, we have discovered that our best way to survive the holidays, and any day, is with our children, not without them.

This statement may confuse others around us at first.

And this “new way” of including our children in our holidays, or any day, will never match when they were physically here with us...the time that Dave and I consider the happiest days of our lives.

Although it will never be the same, we choose to include our boys in our approach to every holiday and event. We mention their names, we create new traditions that keep their memories present, and decide which old traditions to keep...and which ones to abandon, or alter.

When it comes to Christmas, we no longer decorate our house as we used to, because our boys were a big part of decorating every room, as well as the outdoors.

We still spend the day after Thanksgiving going to the tree farm to find “the perfect tree.” However, we no longer bring it into our home as we once did, but we take it to the cemetery and place it at our sons’ gravesites. We decorate with sparkly garland, solar lights, and some special ornaments, and we invite friends and families to stop by the tree throughout the season and write a message on an ornament and add it to the tree (we keep a container with ornaments and markers under their bench.)

In our home, we get out their Christmas stockings and hang them up. It surely grabs at our hearts when we remember the special trinkets that we would get to fill them up for our boys to discover on Christmas morning...but now, I set aside time each year to write them each a Christmas letter, fold it up and add it to their stockings.

We have some special books that, as a family, we enjoyed reading together each Christmas. Now, we set them out, hoping that if others see them, they may pick them up and appreciate knowing a little piece of our old holiday traditions, as they rustle through the pages.

We are intentional about keeping our boys names, and memories, a part of our daily conversations. For the winter months, we take strings of blue and white lights and wrap them around the two trees that we’ve planted in our front yard in memory of the boys, and shine them nightly, not only through the holiday season, but throughout the dark winter months. Those who know us, know that it’s one more of our ways of keeping our sons represented, and remembered.

Whether we are welcoming people into our own home, or possibly attending an event at the home of other family members, we have incorporated a tradition of taking a bud vase with two red roses, to place on the table, or a location that seems fitting, that others have begun to realize represent our Dylan and Gavin. At the end of the day, Dave and I will go through the cemetery and put the roses at the boys’ graves. It’s just a part of what has become “our new traditions.”

When we first started these “new traditions,” and even now, it hasn’t (isn’t) easy to openly share with all of our family and friends. Some will always feel uncomfortable whenever we mention Dylan and/or Gavin, but we’ve learned to not stop what is right for us. We begin to realize that, although we’ll always wish that we would never have to “settle for the substitutes” of the wonderful traditions we used to share, it’s the best way for us to keep them present...and a way to help to educate those around us the ways that help us “normalize” the grief that we continue to carry through each holiday...and each ordinary day.

May you all find ways to get through your holiday seasons (and every day) by exploring how you can include your dear children in remembrance and love. As time rolls along, you may realize that even your new traditions must change...and that’s okay.

May you know that, whatever you choose to do, or not do, is what is “right” for you.

Lora Krum member of TCF