



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TOPEKA CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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NEWSLETTER - Issue #4
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National TCF Website:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter Website:
www.tcftopeka.org

July ~ August 2015
Editor: Susan Chan
3448 S.W. Mission Ave.
Topeka, KS 66614-3629
(785) 272-4895

JULY MEETING

Monday, July 27, 2015
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

I Wonder? I've Always Wanted to Ask That - As we travel along on our grief journey, we often wonder about the various feelings and/or experiences we are having. Do other people experience these same things? Why do I find some days so much harder than others? Are there strategies I can use to make my journey go more smoothly? This meeting offers us the opportunity to ask those questions that may have been on our minds and get input from others in the group. **Because the Parish Center will be closed for maintenance, we will be meeting in the MPH Office Bldg., south of the Parish Center. Follow the signs to the entrance on the north side of that building.**

AUGUST MEETING

Monday, August 24, 2015
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

"Confessions of a Grief Bully" - We are very pleased to have with us for this meeting Dennis Apple from Kansas City. Dennis is a minister, author and bereaved father. He will be talking about how some people around us may actually be trying to "bully" us out of our grief. Why would someone do this? What can we do to counteract this negative influence in our grief journey? This should prove to be a very interesting topic and one which some of us may have had to deal with following the deaths of our child, grandchild or sibling.

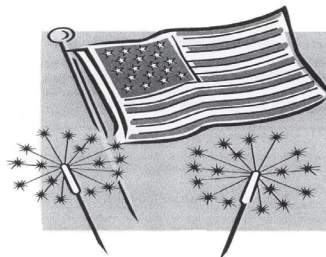
Meetings are always held on the fourth Monday of each month unless otherwise noted. Listen to radio & TV for cancellations due to severe weather conditions.

This newsletter is sponsored by:

Don and Susan Arnold in loving memory of their son Matthew W. "Matt" Arnold, who died on July 28th

James and Gloria Knight in loving memory of their son Joel Andrew Knight who died August 23rd

Ralph and Judy Lundin in loving memory of their daughter Amy Lundin who died July 28th



Mark and Linda Marling in loving memory of their granddaughter Morgan Marie Pollak who was born on August 14th and died on August 27th

Gary E. Rice in loving memory of his daughter Sarah N. Rice who was born on July 19th

Tom and Barbara Rush in loving memory of their daughter Kathryn "Katie" Rush who was born on July 6th

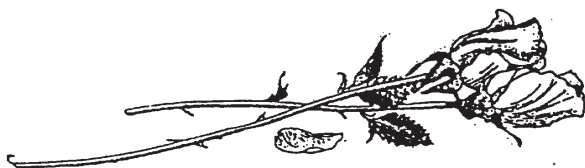
The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purposes are to promote and aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experience following the death of a child of any age, from any cause; and to foster the physical and emotional health of all bereaved parents, grandparents and surviving siblings.

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Mark Your Calendars!

22nd Annual Memorial Picnic & Dove Release
Saturday, September 26, 2015
Shelter House #6
Lake Shawnee, Topeka, KS

RSVP/Dove Sponsorship Form
is in this issue of the newsletter.



We Need Not Walk Alone

From the Chapter Coordinator

Local Topeka TCF Chapter contact info:
Phone - 785-272-4895; Email - chanx2@cox.net

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

Summer has definitely arrived in Kansas with temperatures hovering in the 90's. Thanks to the generous rains of spring and early summer, our landscapes are still green and trees and flowers revel in the warmth of long summer days. Our Topeka Compassionate Friends Chapter turned 36 years old in July and over its existence has provided hope, friendship and support to hundreds of bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Our TCF Chapter is managed entirely by volunteers who, like you, are bereaved themselves. It takes a great deal of effort to keep the Chapter functioning and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have volunteered their time, talent and treasure to make sure the Chapter will always be there for those who will need it in the years to come. I would especially like to thank Judy Darting who is stepping down after close to 20 years serving as the Topeka Chapter's Treasurer. Judy made sure our bills were paid, maintained our checking account, wrote countless thank you notes to donors, and worked with me, as Chapter Leader, to complete and file all the necessary financial forms with National TCF in Chicago. Judy was not only an excellent treasurer, but a good friend and great supporter of the work of TCF in memory of her son Jeff. Taking Judy's place as Treasurer is Jessica's Mom, Jennifer Meyer.

As most of you are aware, TCF charges no dues or fees to participate in our support group meetings or in our Memorial Events. All of the Chapter's expenses, such as the printing and mailing of this newsletter (about \$580 per issue), are paid for with donations made by bereaved parents, grandparents or siblings in memory of their loved one. Because we were unable to hold our Walk to Remember this year - which is our major fundraiser - our funds are tight and we may have to cut down on the size of this newsletter to ensure its continued production in the future. We certainly wish to also continue sending out First Contact Packets to all newly bereaved families in our area, but this activity also cuts into our available financial resources. For those who are able, we would certainly welcome additional donations to help support the work of the Topeka TCF Chapter in northeast Kansas. All donations to the Chapter are fully tax-deductible and don't forget the opportunity to double your donation if your employer has a Matching Funds program. Thank you in advance for your continuing support of the Topeka Chapter.

I hope many of you are planning to join us for our **22nd Annual Memorial Picnic and Dove Release** that will be held on Saturday, September 26th at Shelter House #6 at Lake Shawnee. **Please note** that we are in a different location than in previous years--we were not able to get a reservation for Shelter House #3 on Memory Pointe, so will hold our event in Shelter House #6. Please look for the Yellow RSVP form included with this newsletter, fill it out and return it to the address given by September 20th. The

form also gives you the opportunity to sponsor a dove(s) in loving memory of your child, grandchild or sibling who "left too soon". These sponsorships help us to defray costs associated with the event. **This event takes the place of our regular September support group meeting.** This memorial event has become a cherished part of our Topeka Chapter tradition and we encourage you to attend as we remember and honor the lives of all our loved ones.

In Love They Are Remembered. In Memory They Live.

Until next time, be patient and let the healing happen

~Susan Chan, Coordinator

When someone ask me what The Compassionate Friends is, I tell them it is a club that nobody wants to be a part of. It's a club you don't know exist until you suddenly find yourself a member. It is a club where background, age, religion, skin color, geographic location makes no difference. There is a common denominator among all, a grieving and broken heart. We don't know each other but we do. We are thankful for this organization and the hundreds of thousands that have been helped. We share our children, our stories, our tears and our memories to help make the way a little softer for ourselves and others.

Karen Cantrell, Frankfort, TCF

Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

August 24, 2015 - The Topeka Chapter will be having guest speaker Dennis Apple, author of "Life After the Death of My Son - What I'm Learning" as our guest speaker. His topic will be "Confessions of a Grief Bully". 7:00p.m. in Formation Room at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church.

September 26, 2015 - Memorial Picnic and Dove Release 11:30am - 3:00pm at Shelterhouse #6 at Lake Shawnee, Topeka, KS. See Yellow Form in this newsletter for details and RSVP.

October 2-4, 2015 - TCF Regional Conference, Rochester, MN. The theme of this conference is "Hope and Healing for Our Broken Hearts". If you would like to further information, please call Cathy at 651-459-9341 or email at peachy3536@comcast.net or Mary and Darwyn at 651-923-4922 or email dntri@sleepyeyetel.net Or check out http://www.tcfst.org/regional_conference.aspx

Love Gifts

**Your Love Gifts Help Spread
the Message of Hope & Healing ~ Won't You Help Today?**

What is a Love Gift? A Love Gift is a gift of money (or books, etc.) to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child, grandchild or sibling who has died, but it may be from individuals who wish to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanks that their children are alive, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help. The Compassionate Friends charges *no individual dues* or fees and depends on such Love Gifts to meet the Chapter's expenses, including the printing and mailing of this newsletter. **When you make a donation, make sure to check to see if your employer may have a "matching gifts" program** as this could double the amount of your donation. If you are not sure whether your company has such a program, check with your Personnel Department. This month we thank:

♥ *Tami Connor in loving memory of her daughter Ashley who was born on August 21st and died on August 27th* ♥

♥ *Jim & Linda Meyer in loving memory of their son Clay Meyer who was born on July 26th* ♥

Thank you for your gifts which enable us to print this newsletter and reach out to newly bereaved families. Donations are our only source of income and are **tax deductible**. If you would like to sponsor a newsletter, the cost is \$30.00. If we have more than one sponsor, we recognize all of them. If you wish to send a Love Gift, any amount is appreciated. It is whatever you feel you can give. Donations of books that you have found helpful to the Topeka Chapter Library are also greatly appreciated, and it is a nice way to remember your child or other loved one. If you would like to send a Love Gift or a Newsletter Sponsorship, you may do so by sending it to: The Compassionate Friends, c/o Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. For Newsletter Sponsorships, please indicate which issue you wish to sponsor (Jan/Feb, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, or November/December). Makes checks payable to "TCF".

DO YOU NEED TO TALK? LOVING LISTENERS AVAILABLE

Yvonne Albright - Sudden Infant Death
Leader, Infant Loss Group (785) 246-3298

Carol Cummings - Heart Surgery
Former Coordinator (785) 272-2155

Donna Martin - Accident
Former Coordinator (785) 286-0538

Tom and Carolyn Voth - Cancer
Former Coordinator (785) 235-5406

Susan Chan - Motorcycle Accident
Current Coordinator (785) 272-4895

Leslie Johnson-Wingert - auto accident
and SIDS (785) 840-0512

Debi Harvey - Drug Overdose
(785) 806-2836



Submit a Memory Page

Remember your child, grandchild or sibling in a special way by submitting a Memory Page to be published in the Topeka Chapter Newsletter. You may include a photo, drawing, a poem, letter to your child, etc - just about anything you would like to put on it in memory of your child. You do not have to put the page together - I can help you with this from the materials you select to use. Memory Page submissions should be sent to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. Photos will be returned, but **DO NOT** send a photo of which you only have one copy. No charge for page.

TCF National Office email:
nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Compassionate Friends web address:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter NEW web address:
www.tcftopeka.org

Kansas Regional Coordinator:
Marty & Renda Weaver - (785) 823-7191
mweaver@cox.net

TCF Mission Statement: 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.

Our Thanks to:

Midland Care Connection for giving us a mailbox and Most Pure Heart of Mary Church for allowing us to meet at their facility.

And We Remember....

Because of the potential for the hurtful crime of identity theft, TCF Chapter Newsletters will now only publish the date of a child's birth or death without listing the year of each event. This is a directive from the National TCF Office to protect all TCF members.

Isaiah Absher, son of Vince and Amy Bahm, born on September 12th and died on August 29th

Noah Matthew Aker, son of Joe and Vicky Aker, born September 28th

James Warren Arnold, son of Anne Roberts, born on September 24th

Byron Ashworth, son of Dean and Sylvia Weichold, died on August 11th

Leah Danielle Austin, daughter of Chad and Dani Austin, born on August 26th; died on September 8th

Sherri Axline, daughter of Roy and Donna Axline, born on September 2nd



Buddy Benedict, son of Dicky Benedict and Janice Burks, died on September 5th

Dinah L. (Bollinger) Bergstrom, daughter of Randal and Linda Bollinger, born on September 14th; died on August 9th

Shawn L. Bergstron, son-in-law of Randal and Linda Bollinger, died on August 8th

Zackary Jon Hugh "Zacky" Berkey, son of Jonathan and Kristi and brother of Kaiman Berkey, grandson of Mary Fischer, born on August 17th died on August 7th

Jacob "Jake" Binfield, son of Jenny Binfield, brother of Sarah, who was born on August 6th

Maximus Blindt, son of Heather Blindt; brother of Brad and Natalie; who was born on September 15th

Joshua James Bogdan, son of Joseph F. Bogdan and Angelika Bergman, born on September 13th

Lucas William Brady, son of Sandra Brady, born on September 14th

Douglas G. Brees, son of Donald and Joye Brees, born on September 22nd; died on September 27th



Christina Rae Brennan, daughter of James (deceased) and Christina L. Brennan, born on September 8th

Victoria (Tori) Brennan-Williams, daughter of Patricia Saracyewski, born on August 16th

Ronald Scott Bullock, son of Jack (deceased) and Monica M. Bullock, born on August 4th

Terry Edward Burns, son of Kenneth and Eleanor Burns, and brother of Kathy Kaesewurm, born on September 17th

Conrad Grant Carlson, son of Robert and Julie Carlson, born on September 12th; died on August 1st

Kevin Wayne Carlson, son of Ken W. Carlson and Carolyn N. Wilson, died on August 15th

Brianna Michelle Clark, daughter of Ryan and Kimberly Clark, died on September 19th

Andy Conger, son of Leon E. and Suzanne Conger, died on August 15th

Stephanie Nicole Corbett, granddaughter of Emery and Judy Corbett, died on September 28th

Timothy Brogan Crawford, son of Lori Eigenman, born on September 20th

Amanda Kay Cunningham, daughter of Stacey McCain; sister of Josh and Adam, died on August 6th



Wendi Sue Cushing, daughter of Scott and Denise Cushing; sister of Deana and Dylan Cushing, died on August 9th

Jeffrey Darrell Darting, son of Gerry and Judy Darting and brother of Sarah Escobar and Jenny Darting, died on August 29th

Corey Allen Davis, son of Tammy L. Davis, born on September 8th

Kirk Merill Davidson, son of Dave and Gerry Davidson, born on September 9th; and died on August 13th; and their son, Mark Patrick, born on September 25th

Cheryl J. Delozier, daughter of Donald and Mary Rickel, born on August 13th

Kimberly Melissa Dickinson, daughter of Curtis and Debbi Dickinson, stillborn on August 25th

Ashley Brooke Dickinson, daughter of Curtis and Debbi Dickinson, stillborn on September 3rd

Steven Louis Douglas, son of Norton E. and Barbara L. Douglas, born on September 3rd

Rick Douglas, son of Morris and Neva Douglas, died on September 23rd



Deano A. Duncan, son of Pete and Colleen Duncan, born on September 14th

Gerald (Jerry) Eberhardt, son of Duane and Mary Eberhardt, born September 1st

Gregory Ralph Eilert, son of Marge Eilert, died on August 28th

Michael Ent, son of Cheryl Ent, died on August 7th

Barry Eaton Epoch, son of Nancy S. Epoch, born on August 2nd

Edward Rudd Fenton III, son of Edward R. Fenton, Jr. and Sharon K. Fenton, born on August 25th

Brian Lee Fieldler, son of Bernard and Marge Fieldler, who died on September 18th

Azure Ann Fisher, daughter of Shelly Ross, died on September 12th

Amber Fleer, daughter of Darla Hughes and Terry Fleer, who was born on September 21st

Lindsey Shea Garner, daughter of Mel and Cheryl Garner, born on August 24th

John Garvey, son of Horace and Donna Garvey, died on September 19th

Ashley Connor, daughter of Tami Connor; sister of Sara, Kyle and Abby, born on August 21st; died on August 29th

Carol Cortner Gaul, daughter of John and Norma Cortner, born on August 25th

Kelli Rae Grauer, daughter of Harold and Marilyn Grauer, died on September 2nd

Cambyrnn Christine Greenfield, daughter of Kevin and Amy Greenfield, died on September 1st



John Michael Grimes, son of Angela Smith, born and died on August 4th

And We Remember..... (Cont'd)

Brittney Marie Hajny, daughter of Andrea McCalla, who died on August 14th

Grayson C. Harder, son of Will and Cassie Harder and grandson of Bill Harder, born on September 20th

Juliet Faith Harrington, daughter of Mary Harrington, born on September 2nd, died on August 25th

George Harrington, son of Frances Mitchell, died on August 16th

Spencer Mark Hastings, son of Steve and Sue Hastings, died on September 28th

Colbie Heitmann, son of Del and Kim White, stillborn on September 27th

Jennifer Hicks, daughter of Calvin and Linda Hicks, born on September 20th

Donnie L. Higbee, son of Susan Vega, who died on September 24th

Davante Armon Hinkle, son of Shawnette Bronson, born on August 12th and died on September 5th

Timothy Hopkins, son of Dorothy C. Hopkins and brother of Michelle Eakes, died on August 1st

Shawndy Hogue, sister of Kaylee Hogue, born on September 19th

Dana Hudson, daughter of Bruce and Teri Clark-Hudson, born on August 19th

Charles William Hugo, son of Cornelius and Corina Hugo, died on August 13th



Vernon A. Jamison, Sr., son of Eugene A. and Mayverdis Jamison born on August 30th

William James Jarvis, son of Chris Jarvis and Jenny McCormick, born and died on September 10th

Cameron James Johnson, son of Mark and Jody Johnson, who died on September 29th

Clara Harrington Jones, daughter of Mary Harrington and John Jones, born and died on August 26th

Brent C. Jordan, son of Kenneth and Donita Hordan, born on September 12th; died on August 26th

Dustin Wade Kasson, son of Stephen and JoEllen Kasson, born on August 8th

Kody Kavtz, son of Connie Kavtz and brother of Heather Wood, born on September 8th

Jonathan Kaspar, son of Jeffrey and Susan Kaspar; sister of Jennifer Kaspar, who was born on September 17th

Michael "Mike" Dean Kidney, son of Forrest and Susan Kidney, born on September 14th

Joel Andrew Knight, son of Jim and Gloria Knight, died on August 23rd

Jessica Joane Koelzer, daughter of Dennis and Deborah Koelzer, died on September 10th

Sherry Lynn Kraus, daughter of Shirley Kraus, who died on August 18th

Cara Elizabeth Kroll, daughter of Joseph Kroll, step-daughter of Brenda Kroll, sister of Christopher Kroll, who died on August 8th

Terry Lambert, son of Elmer and Marcial Lambert, died on September 17th

Austin Isreal Lewis, son of Amy Marker and grandson of Mr. & Mrs. Larry Smallwood, died on September 16th



Lisa Jane Lewis, daughter of Robert and Jane Lewis, died on September 28th

Colgin Tanner Lohman, son of Chad and Christine Lohman, died on August 3rd

Gregory Scott Longbine, son of Jeff Longbine and Gwen Yarnell-Longbine, died on August 10th

Paula Ann Dreiling Lucas, daughter of Daniel and Betty Dreiling, died on August 3rd

William Henry "Hank" Lumpkin, son of Joe and Penny Lumpkin, died on August 19th

Tara Lee Stilson Lyman, daughter of Terry and Connie Stilson, born on September 5th

Elizabeth (Lizz) McKenna, daughter of Yvonne H. Smith, born on September 28th

Pierce Carter McNabb, son of Karen Murray, died on September 26th

Jason McNaughton, son of Patty Wiltz, died on September 21st

Belinda Meier, daughter of Maggie Walshire, born on September 14th

Sharis Thompson Meyer, daughter of Gary and Margaret Thompson, born on September 15th; died on August 25th

Terry Lee Michael, son of Lawrence E. Michael and Marianne Michael Carlson, born on September 24th

Kathleen R. Armstrong Millard, daughter of Ken and Barb Armstrong, born on August 30th

Troy Sinclair Miller, son of Del and Jan Miller, born on September 17th

Rodney Kurk Milstead, son of Camille and Jerry Garrett, born on September 27th



David D. Morris, son of Merwin (Bud) and Velma C. Morris, who died on August 24th

Morgan Myers, daughter of Alta Myers, who was born on August 20th

Ethan Neu, son of Billy Neu, born on September 7th

Andrew Newcomer, son of Steve Newcomer and Janet Cummings, born on September 23rd; died on September 22nd

Robin Lynn Paulson, daughter of Frank and Brenda Bissey and sister of Brad Bissey, and Greg Lee Paulson, son-in-law of Frank and Brenda Bissey and brother-in-law of Brad Bissey, both died on August 27th

Kasey Pike, grandson of Grace Reichle, who died on August 7th

Morgan Marie Pollak, daughter of David and Shelley Pollak; granddaughter of Mark and Linda Marling, born on August 14th and died on August 27th

Brian Powell, son of Glenn and Jody McGhee, who was born on August 16th

Timothy Ramsey, son of Dorothy Ramsey, brother of Tom Ramsey, born on September 5th

And We Remember..... (Cont'd)

Cristi Colleen Reece, daughter of Terry C. Allen and Barbara J. Reece Allen; and daughter of Marilyn Reece, born on September 19th; died on December 19th

Owen Allen Renbarger, son of Brian and Bethany Renbarger, born on August 30th; died on September 22nd



Dennis James Reser, son of Robert Neil and Janet Louise Reser, who was born on August 12th

Sharon Lorraine Rhodes, daughter of Paul and Shirley Rhodes, born on August 21st

Kerrie Lynn Roberts, daughter of Ferne Lutz, died on August 16th

Kristin Saragusa, daughter and step-daughter of Jim and Suzi Saragusa, born on September 2nd

Gregg W. Scott, son of Garry and Jo Scott, born on September 11th

Kathy Lynn Schmelzle, daughter of Pat and Patty Schmelzle, born on September 15th

Brent Allen Schneider, son of Vicki Jackson, died on August 7th

Otto G. Schnellbacher, son of Mary Therese Sanders, who was born on September 28th

Scott Allan Seidel, son of Stan and Pat Seidel, born on August 8th

Ryan Wayne Simecka, son of Mark and Tonya Simecka, died on September 24th

Michael Joseph Skaggs, son of Willie and Megan Skaggs, who died on August 29th

Scott Edward Sobba, son of Harold and Linda Sobba, died on September 9th

Nicholas Regis Stallbaumer, son of Terry and Norma Stallbaumer, died on August 12th



Keith Strathman, son of Don and Julie Strathman, brother of Becky Strathman, born on September 10th

Michelle Studebaker, daughter of Kathy Studebaker; sister of Jeff Studebaker and Julie Hafenstine, who died on September 21st

Lindsay Marie Taylor, niece of Gregg and Theresa Watkins, born on September 17th

Brandon Toler, son of Marty Tyson, who was born on August 18th

Bryan M. Turner, son of Woody Turner, died on September 15th

Tom Uhl, son of Dwight and Doris Uhl, born on September 14th

Roy Vega, son of Carol Rush, died on August 25th

Mariana Villegas-Singleton, daughter of Seth and Amy Meyer, born on August 23rd

Matthew James Vogel, son of Jim and Carol Vogel, born on September 20th; died on August 12th

Greer Elizabeth Volkmer, daughter of James and Raina Volkmer, died on September 11th

Kerensa Kaye Ward, daughter of James F. Sosebee and Carol Sue Ward, died on August 11th



Robbie Weakland, son of Bob and Lori Weakland, died on August 19th

Richard W. Wilson, son of Katherine S. Whittington, born on September 1st

Dawn Lee Wilson, daughter of Don J. and Dixie Lee Wilson, born on September 19th

Chris and Cindy Wright's son, Jonathan Gates, born on August 27th

JoAnn Wulfschlaeger son, Heath White, died on August 23rd

Robb Zeller, son of Robert and Sherry Zeller, born on September 14th

David and Beverly Zirkle's daughter, Susan J. Goodlove, born on September 30th

(Use the form below to submit your listing if you have not already done so. Once you have submitted your listing you **do not** have to do so every year. Your child's name and dates will remain on the We Remember database unless you request their removal. This month's listing includes birth and death anniversary dates for August and September).

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And We Remember - If you wish your child, grandchild or sibling included in the We Remember section of this newsletter, please fill out the form below and return to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may also email the information to chanx2@cox.net< We do not automatically list your information just because you are receiving this newsletter. We only list information for those parents requesting it. If you have previously submitted your child's information and it has appeared in the newsletter during the past year, you **do not** need to resubmit it. If you have just begun receiving this newsletter, or have never submitted this information, you will need to do so in order for it to be included. **Please type or print clearly.**

Child's Name _____ Son__ Daughter__ Grandchild__ Brother__ Sister__

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Father _____ Mother _____

Note: Please list your address and phone number. You will only be contacted if there is a question about your listing.

Is this a change of address for you? (please circle) YES NO

July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month
And she chose this month to die.
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was she
Having been, and left her mark.
A glorious incandescent life,
A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.
The July birth, the July death of
my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
With love that never dies.

~ Sally Migliaccio, TCF Babylon,
Long Island, NY



Inner Tempest Stilled

Sometimes I sense a little flutter.
Like a shadow swiftly slipping by.
Or I hear a silent, gentle murmur,
Like a soft whisper from the sky.
Sometimes, I hear you call my name,
or clearly see your face before me.
And I feel that you are with me still.

Then peacefully ... I come to know
As I am thinking happy thoughts of you,
You, my son, are thinking of me too.

Loving memories fill my aching heart.
As dreaming dreams of what could be ...
Or might have been, if you were here.
Until the piercing pain of losing you comes
tumbling down on trembling fear.

And clearly once again I hear you say,
"But Mom ...
What if I had never been? You could not then, in Love,
remember me."

~ By Beenie Legato Clendive, Montana

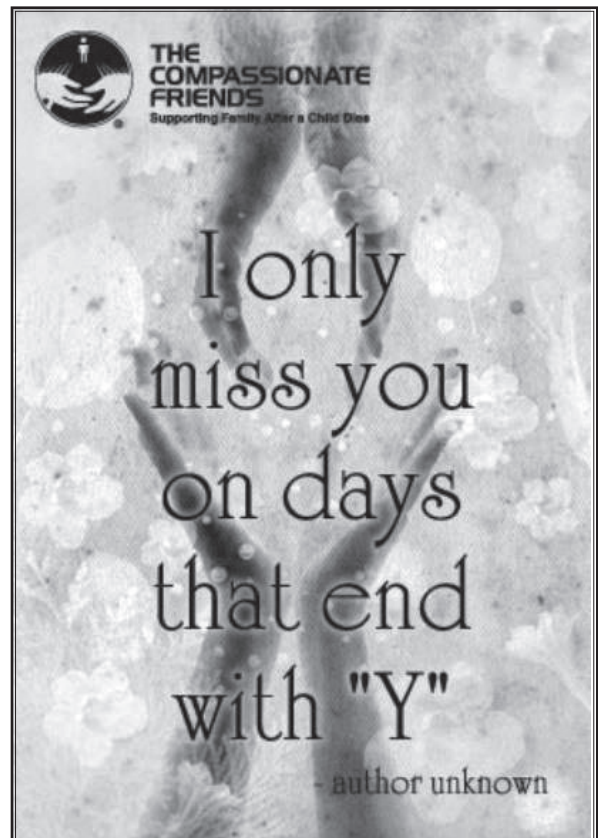
NO VACATION



There is no vacation
from your absence.
Every morning I awake
I am a bereaved parent.
Every noon I feel the
hole in my heart
Every evening my arms
feel empty.

My life is busy now, but not quite full.
My heart is mended, but not quite healed.
For the rest of my life every moment
will be lived without you.
There is no vacation from your absence.

Kathy Boyette, TCF
Mississippi Gulf Coast Chapter



Letting Go of Illusions

By Mitch Carmody, South Hastings, MN

Recently, I have heard a lot of discussions on the use of the terms closure, letting go, moving on, getting on with your life, and acceptance. So many people who are in the process of bereavement find the glib use of these terms offensive, repugnant and say that it minimizes their intense journey of pain. When taken off guard, the grieving person is hurt by the insensitivity of the remark and often even angered by it; especially if uttered by the inexperienced or the ignorant. We don't ever want them to be experienced, but if they are ignorant, then we must enlighten them. So many times, we are angered and say nothing; we swallow our hurt and put it deep inside on a back burner to slowly burn us up. It is okay to be angry because it is a part of grief, but it also needs to be released and not be allowed to fester. Most of the time when someone makes a remark we do not like or utters an inane platitude, know that their hearts are in the right spot; they just truly do not understand. We must appreciate their compassion and realize that our perception is jaded by deep personal grief and its umbrage of pain and bitterness.

We tell our friends and educate them so that they will become informed and so we don't harbor resentment. We see past their ignorance, accept whatever words of compassion they give to us and recognize that this is the reason so many of them say nothing. Often times it is not what is said, but how it is said that threatens our well-being. Positive accolades are never taken well, especially in early grief when they seem to be used the most. People who have never lost a child just don't know what it is like. Accept their compassion in whatever way they give it. If you must, put a finger to the lips of the fumbling but caring human beings, and simply tell them, "Please don't try and fix it – I don't want to fix it just yet – just hold me like you mean it."

There is one key word in the above-mentioned platitudes that you will notice is one of Kuebler-Ross' stages of grief: acceptance. This is the stage of grief that rules all the others and is the key to understanding the use of its sister terms: moving on, letting go, and finding closure. First of all, I think we all have learned to understand that the five stages of grief: shock, denial, anger, bargaining and acceptance are non-linear and sometimes happen all together, separately, and in all combinations for many years. But they do and will happen. Each stage serves as a unique purpose for our survival, and that is what these stages are: survival tools.

Shock gets us through the impossible task of burying a child. Denial keeps back reality so we can ease somewhat back into society. Like a non-ending bad dream, we continue to live on without our child, but never give up the elusive thought that we will wake up to find that is really was just a bad dream. The first year anniversary usually knocks out denial, and shock briefly steps back in. Anger jumps in and out at its leisure and usually catches us off guard, especially when we are going in and out of depression. Bargaining is total mind games where we play with our thoughts to rationalize our current state of misery and try to justify it: "I deserve to not get out of bed... If I go to church more often, I will feel better... If I get drunk enough, I can cry and/or sleep... If I pray enough, I will wake up from this nightmare... If I end my own life, I can join him... If I am good enough, maybe he will come to me in my dreams." A seemingly never-ending dialogue takes place that yields no answers, but gets us through another day.

Now back to acceptance, the "over soul" of the stages of grief, the one that encompasses all of the others and gives credibility to the aphorism: letting go, moving on, getting on with your life and

finding closure. We own these words – they are our grief – we paid a heavy price for them and we shall use them as they were meant to be. In the eventual healing from child loss we find closure from the other stages of grief, but **not closure from our child**. We usually first find closure from shock. As a temporary survival tool, shock finds closure on its own when we are no longer numb and when we start to truly feel the pain. When we find closure from denial, we know that our child is dead, that this is not a dream, that he is not coming back, and that we will have to begin to live the pain. We eventually find closure from bargaining, because it is a mind game and simply doesn't work. That leaves us with acceptance. We accept the pain, we accept our "new normal", and we accept the new relationship we have with our dead child. We also accept that "dead" does not mean "gone", we accept that we are letting go of many things and people in our "new normal" but not our child. The world must accept our "new normal" and accept that we never "get over our loss." We will just learn to live with it, just like we learn to live with arthritis.

We "get on with our life" with our child, we "let go" of illusions of what could have been, we "find closure" in what we cannot change, and we "move on" with our new future as best we can. We are now our child's legacy; we substantiate their life by the way we live ours – so let's make them proud of us. We do not put their names and memories away, leave them unspoken and hidden like some shameful secret, but shout them loudly to the heavens and to all that can hear: "I love my child and I still feel him near." It's in the letting go that we are free to hold on.

The Wounded Heart

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, nor will we be the last, to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now..... right now, it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS are in need of mending.

Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger; and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life.

A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his/her heart has healed.



The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

~ Nancy Green, TCF, Livonia, MI

ALPHABET GRIEF

Allow, and express your feelings

Be patient with yourself and others

Cry without shame---tears are healing

Don't compare the depth of your feelings with other mourning styles---don't waste energy trying to measure someone else's pain

Energy might be low or absent

Fight to survive---one day, hour or minute at a time

Give forgiveness a chance--forgive yourself, your child, the circumstances, your God

Hope hides but will emerge just when you need it

Ignore the dumb and inappropriate comments of others---they don't mean to hurt you

Join a support group - Compassionate Friends understand

Keeep searching for your sense of humor--once found, laughter will help you cope

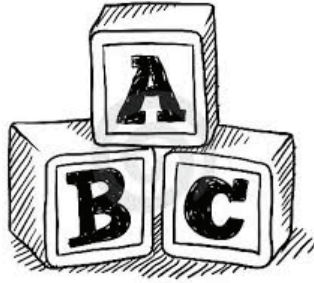
Live each day as best you can---take time to take care of yourself

Make only small goals -- baby steps are OK

Note that you are still standing

Overcome your expectations of yourself and others

Pray, if it is part of your belief system, otherwise meditate or spend some time in solitude



Quiet silence and calm

Realize your love for who you lost, and theirs for you, did not die with them

Sleep as much as you can at night, napping in the day is fine also

Take time to grieve and mourn. Don't dive into extreme business or make hasty decisions

Use a compassionate friend, family member, counselor or God to vent and express how you feel

Veer away from expecting others to grieve the same way you do

Write about how you feel and how much you miss your child

Xout feelings of guilt, know you did the best you could as a parent

You are not alone -- remember and take comfort in that

Zoo: Yes, it feels like you're in a zoo. The world keeps moving despite your loss. Be gentle with yourself and don't get stuck and caged in your grief.

~Author Unknown

*I dropped a tear in the ocean.
When they find it;
that's when I'll stop
remembering you.*



A Special and Important Message to Our New Compassionate Friends

If you are newly bereaved and have recently attended your first Compassionate Friends meeting, you may have left the meeting feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heavy load of grief you are carrying, you cannot bear to hear about all the pain shared at meetings. Consequently, you may have decided not to return. We would like to let you know that these feelings are common to all our members, many of whom resolved not to expose themselves to such anguish again, but were drawn back by the knowledge that they were among those who "know how you feel".

Please give us at least **three** tries before you decide whether or not the meetings are for you. You will find a network of caring and support which will help you as you travel your grief journey, and most assuredly, you will find hope along the way. We truly care about you and want to make certain that no bereaved parent ever needs to walk this path alone.

---Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee

Additional Support Group Resources

HEALs - Healing after loss of suicide offers support to all survivors affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide. Meetings are at 7 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. Pozez Center (north side of Stormont Vail). Contact Information: Sandy Reams 785-249-3792 or email sreams67@gmail.com

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Group - Meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 6-8 p.m. at the Pozez Education Center. The group, which has regular meetings to share information and experiences, also has a blog for members that offers communication, resources and support. If you are interested in learning more about the blog, please email lrosen@stormontvail.org. For information call (785) 354-5225.

From Victims to Survivors - Support group for families who have had a loved one murdered. The group meets the fourth or last Wednesday of each month at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4775 S.W. 21st. For more information, call Bill Lucero at 232-5958 or see <http://fromvictimstosurvivors.com>.

Are You Moving?

If you move, please let us know your new address so you can continue to receive this newsletter. It costs the Chapter 65 cents every time a newsletter is returned by the Post Office with an outdated address. Please send address changes to: Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may email address changes to chanx2@cox.net. We appreciate your cooperation as this will save the Chapter money which can be better spent on bereavement outreach. If, for any reason, you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list, please drop me a note or email and I will take your name off the list.

TCF Facebook Resources

The following are closed and moderated Facebook groups for various kinds of loss. You can connect with any of these groups through the listed links and by requesting to join the group.

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes

Moderators: Barbara Allen and Mary Lemley

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1515193738693712/>

TCF - Loss to Suicide

Moderators: Cathy Seehuetter and Donna Adams <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1550029471893532/>

www.facebook.com/groups/1550029471893532/

TCF - Loss to Homicide

Moderators: Debbie Floyd and Kathleen Willough-

by <https://www.facebook.com/groups/924779440868148/>

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss

Moderators: Susan Peavler and Tiffany Barraso

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1511758585777339/>

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

Moderators: Andrea Keller and Barbara Allen

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1516508415263760/>

The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings) Moderators: Tracy Milne and Keith Singer <https://www.facebook.com/groups/21358475781/>

The Compassionate Friends Chapter Leadership (for anyone currently serving on a Chapter Steering Committee) Moderator: Debbie Rambis

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1422251371371148/>

New Facebook Group - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver

TCF has started another new TCF Facebook group. TCF – Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver. This is a closed group - open to bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings to share their experiences and heartache, the added difficulties related to losing a child, grandchild, or sibling to a drunk/ impaired driver, things that may have been helpful on their journey, and anything else that they have felt since their child, grandchild, or sibling died and want to share, get feedback on, or just because they need to give words to what is in their heart and mind. The co-moderators of the group, Robin Landry and Rebecca Perkins, welcome you to the group. Go to the following link to join.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/858226880883307/>

Capacity to Love - Part 1

By Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Director
Center for Loss and Life Transition, Ft. Collins, CO

“Every time we make the decision to love someone, we open ourselves to great suffering, because those we most love cause us not only great joy but also great pain. The greatest pain comes from leaving, and the pain of the leaving can tear us apart. Still, if we want to avoid the suffering of leaving, we will never experience the joy of loving. And love is stronger than fear, life stronger than death, hope stronger than despair. We have to trust that the risk of loving is always worth taking.” — Henri Nouwen

“All you need is love,” famously sang the Beatles. I couldn’t agree more. We come into the world yearning to give and receive love. Authentic love is God’s greatest gift to us as human beings. Love is the one human experience that invites us to feel beautifully connected and forces us to acknowledge that meaning and purpose are anchored not in isolation and aloneness, but in union and togetherness.

What higher purpose is there in life but to give and receive love? Love is the essence of a life of abundance and joy. No matter what life brings our way, love is our highest goal, our most passionate quest. Yes, we have a tremendous need for love—love that captures our hearts and nourishes our spirits. In fact, our capacity to give and receive love is what ultimately defines us. Nothing we have “accomplished” in our lifetimes matters as much as the way we have loved one another.

Yet love inevitably leads to grief. You see, love and grief are two sides of the same precious coin. One does not—and cannot—exist without the other. They are the yin and yang of our lives. People sometimes say that grief is the price we pay for the joy of having loved. This also means, of course, that grief is not a universal experience. While I wish it were, sadly it is not. Grief is predicated on our capacity to give and receive love. Some people choose not to love and so never grieve. If we allow ourselves the grace that comes with love, however, we must allow ourselves the grace that is required to mourn.

The experience of grief is only felt when someone of great value, purpose and meaning has been a part of your life. To mourn your loss is required if you are to befriend the love you have been granted. To honor your grief is not self-destructive or harmful, it is life-

giving and life-sustaining, and it ultimately leads you back to love again. In this way, love is both the cause and the antidote.

Yes, it is a given that there is no love without loss. Likewise, there is no integration of loss without the experience of mourning. To deny the significance of mourning would be to believe that there is something wrong about loving. Just as our greatest gift from God is our capacity to give and receive love, it is a great gift that we can openly mourn our life losses.

It is important, however, that you understand that grief and mourning are not the same thing. Grief is the constellation of thoughts and feelings we have when someone we love dies. We can think of it as the container. It holds our thoughts, feelings and images of our experience when someone we love dies. In other words, grief is the internal meaning given to the experience of loss. Mourning is when we take the grief we have on the inside and express it outside of ourselves.

Making the choice to not just grieve but authentically mourn, provides us the courage to live through the pain of loss and be transformed by it. How ironic that to ultimately go on to live well and love well we must allow ourselves to mourn well. Somewhere is the collision between the heart (which searches for permanency and connection) and the brain (which acknowledges separation and loss) there is a need for all of us to authentically mourn. You have loved from the outside in, and now you must learn to mourn from the inside out.

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About Dr. Alan Wolfelt

Author, educator, and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. His compassionate messages about healing in grief—based on his own personal losses as well as his experience supporting children, teens, adults, and families over the last three decades—speak not only to the intellect but to the hearts of all who hear him. Perhaps best known for his model of “companionship” versus “treating” mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well. Learn more at www.centerforloss.com

*“It is so much darker when a light goes out
than it would have been
if it had never shown.”*

~ John Steinbeck

The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter, c/o Midland Hospice Care., Inc.
200 S.W. Frazier Circle, Topeka, KS 66606-2800

**A self-help organization offering friendship and
understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.**

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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.