



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## TOPEKA CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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*Published Bimonthly by The Topeka TCF Chapter*

NEWSLETTER - Issue #3  
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.  
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Toll Free 877-969-0010; Fax (630) 990-0246

National TCF Website:  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

NEW Topeka TCF Chapter Website:  
[www.tcftopeka.org](http://www.tcftopeka.org)

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

### MAY MEETING

Monday, May 25, 2015  
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church  
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

**Signs, Symbols & Dreams** - At this month's meeting we will have the chance to talk about unusual happenings we may have experienced since the death of our child, grandchild or sibling. Bereaved people often talk about something that has happened to them that made them feel as though they were somehow contacted or felt more connected to their deceased loved one. Sometimes dreams about our child can be comforting, sometimes unsettling. This meeting will offer us the opportunity to share any such events that have happened to us in an open and non-judgemental setting.

### JUNE MEETING

Monday, June 22, 2015  
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church  
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

**Men to the Right, Women to the Left** - It has long been known that men and women are just "wired" differently and therefore the grief response and journey can be very different for mothers and fathers. This sometimes makes it difficult for couples to relate easily to each other following the death of their child. After our group opening together, we will divide into two groups by gender that will have the opportunity to talk, share and discuss the grief process and journey with others who may truly understand what they are experiencing. The different grieving styles of men and women may also impact your relationship with other family members as well. We especially encourage all fathers to plan to attend.

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:***

Dennis & Ann Hermreck in loving memory of their son Mitchell "Gus" Hermreck who died on May 12<sup>th</sup>

Mary J. Lindeen in loving memory of her grandson Drew Lindeen who was born on May 8<sup>th</sup>

Jim & Linda Meyer in loving memory of their son Clay Meyer who died on June 27<sup>th</sup>



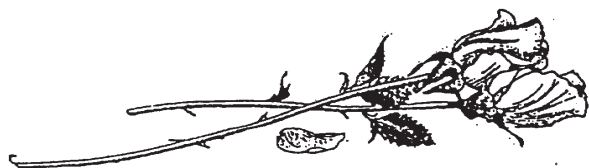
Lori Neddermeyer in loving memory of her daughter Madison "Maddie" Naill born on June 17<sup>th</sup>

Warren & Beth Watson in loving memory of their son Michael Scott Watson who was born on June 4<sup>th</sup>

Daniel & JoAnn Wempe in loving memory of their son Christopher Lee Wempe who died on May 12<sup>th</sup>

*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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## We Need Not Walk Alone

### **HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT OUR LIBRARY?**

We have lots of wonderful books covering the many and varied aspects of grief, loss and mourning in our Topeka TCF Chapter Library. We have books on various kinds of loss, cause of death, sibling issues, grandparent grief, as well as an assortment of books for children who are dealing with the loss of a sibling. Many of the books have been donated by Chapter members in memory of their child, grandchild or sibling. A great resource for everyone!

# From the Chapter Coordinator

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

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

We are on the cusp of summer now. The days are longer with Daylight Saving Time sunlight. It's that time of year again when proms happen, when graduation announcements and wedding invitations make their way into your mailbox. We celebrate both Mother's Day and Father's Day with a sense of bittersweetness. Memorial Day brings us yet another opportunity to honor the memory of our beloved child, grandchild or sibling. With school out and summer upon us, this may be the first time you have ever gone on a vacation without your loved one. There seem to be lots of "triggers" this time of year that tend to constantly remind us of what we have lost. And we need to mourn that which has been lost. But we also need to take this time to reflect on the joy and delight those "who left too soon" imparted to our lives in ways large and small. We need to cherish and remember the joy, however brief, that their existence brought to our lives. We cannot bring them back, but we can be grateful for the lessons both their lives and their deaths brought into our lives. So close your eyes and remember that special smile---it may bring tears to your eyes but hopefully also warmth to your heart.

As I write this it is only about 11 weeks until the 2015 National TCF Conference in Dallas, TX I hope many of you are planning to attend. There are currently over 100 workshops planned on all aspects of grief as well as several special events, wonderful keynote speakers and the national Walk to Remember. Reservations for the hotel is now open through the national TCF website [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) (look under News and Events/National Conferences). Rooms at the main conference hotel will fill up quickly, so I would encourage you to make your reservation NOW; you can always cancel it if you find you cannot attend. Conference registration is also now available online at the TCF national website. You have until June 5<sup>th</sup> to order your Shining Star Photo Memento featuring your loved one's picture. An order form appeared in the March/April issue of this newsletter and is also available online on the national website. If you would like your child's name carried in the Walk to Remember, you can submit it either online or by calling the national TCF Office at toll-free (877) 969-0010.



Hope to See You in Dallas!  
Check out the TCF website  
for further information.  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

In Love They Are Remembered. In Memory They Live.

Until next time, be patient and let the healing happen

~Susan Chan, Coordinator

October 2-4, 2015 ~ Rochester, MN

"Hope and Healing for Our Broken Hearts"  
Kahler Grand Hotel, Rochester, MN

Speakers: Mitch Carmody, speaker, author and bereaved dad and sibling; Executive Director of TCF and bereaved dad, Alan Pedersen; Dr. Heidi Horsley, TCF National Board Member and Executive Director of "Open to Hope" and bereaved sibling; and Glen Lord; vice president of the TCF Board of Directors and The Grief Toolbox, and bereaved dad. Special Friday Night program with Carla Blowey of "Dreaming Kevin" and Mitch Carmody of "Letters to My Son" on signs from our children and dream work.

If you would like to further information, please call Cathy at 651-459-9341 or email at [peachy3536@comcast.net](mailto:peachy3536@comcast.net) or Mary and Darwyn at 651-923-4922 Tri at [dntri@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:dntri@sleepyeyetel.net)

## Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

**July 10-12, 2015** - 38<sup>th</sup> National Compassionate Friends Conference in Dallas, TX. See more information at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**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.

**October 2-4, 2015** - TCF Regional Conference, Rochester, MN. The theme of this conference is "Hope and Healing for Our Broken Hearts"

# 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:

♥ Gary E. Rice in loving memory of his daughter Sarah N. Rice who was born on July 19<sup>th</sup> and died on October 6<sup>th</sup> ♥

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](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)

**Compassionate Friends web address:**  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**Topeka TCF Chapter NEW web address:**  
[www.tcftopeka.org](http://www.tcftopeka.org)

**Kansas Regional Coordinator:**  
Marty & Renda Weaver - (785) 823-7191

***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.*

Daniel Gerado Anguiano, son of Luis and Candace Anguiano, died on June 7<sup>th</sup>

Matt Arnold, son of Don and Susan Arnold, born on July 28<sup>th</sup>

Brandon Asuncion, son of Lori Bailey; brother of Justin and Tarren Asuncion, who died on June 28<sup>th</sup>

Tim Baker, son of Charles D. and Mille Baker, died on July 1<sup>st</sup>

Kathy Bahr, daughter of LeRoy and Bebe Bahr, died on July 29<sup>th</sup>

Diane Joy Bandstra, daughter of Bert and Elaine Bandstra, died on July 28<sup>th</sup>

Jordan Robert Barranco, son of Juan and Elizabeth Barranco, who died on June 6<sup>th</sup>

Logan Monroe Baublitz, son of Sandra Baublitz, who died on June 19<sup>th</sup>

Jennifer Beck, daughter of Darlene Lemkemann, was born on June 26<sup>th</sup> and died on June 10<sup>th</sup>



Samantha Jo Bishop, daughter of Denise Bishop, born on June 15<sup>th</sup>

Maximus Blindt, son of Heather Blindt; brother of Brad and Natalie; who was born on July 25<sup>th</sup>

Kelly Bogner, daughter of Carole Bogner, died on July 22<sup>nd</sup>

Christina Rae Brennan, daughter of James (deceased) and Christina L. Brennan, died on June 6<sup>th</sup>

Victoria (Tori) Brennan-Williams, daughter of Patricia Saracyewski, died on June 22<sup>nd</sup>

Charles Bruschi, son of Pauline Bruschi, died on June 2<sup>nd</sup>

Teresa Jenkins Carson, daughter of Phillip and Louise Jenkins, died on June 17<sup>th</sup>

James Dean Cavin, son of Robert and Roberta Cavin, died on July 8<sup>th</sup>

Blake Jagger Chamley, son of Denise Bishop, born and died on June 27<sup>th</sup>

Kenneth Dean Chapman, son of Richard Chapman and Mildred (Chapman) Toburen, born on July 4<sup>th</sup>

Willy Cheung, foreign exchange student and "son" of Mike and Karen Esslinger while he lived in the U.S., born on June 19<sup>th</sup>

Brianne Clark, daughter of Leanna Clark, born on July 20<sup>th</sup>

Misty Dawn Cloud, daughter of Robin Proudfoot, died on July 5<sup>th</sup>

Tavion Cooper, son of Lisa Cooper, died on July 7<sup>th</sup>



Justin Corbet, son of Ken and Bev Corbet, died on July 28<sup>th</sup>

Patrick Cummings, son of Carol Cummings, died on June 27<sup>th</sup>

Jeffrey Darrell Darting, son of Gerry and Judy Darting and brother of Sarah Escobar and Jenny Darting, born on June 26<sup>th</sup>

Donald Glen Davis, son of Rebecca S. Davis, born on June 8<sup>th</sup>; died on June 7<sup>th</sup>

Eli Zachary Devlin, son of Sherry Devlin, who died on June 5<sup>th</sup>

Anthony Diemer, son of John and Wendy Diemer, born on June 9<sup>th</sup>; died on June 6<sup>th</sup>



Lt. David K. Dillon [Douglas County Sheriff's Dept.], son of John and Joyce Dillon, died on June 28<sup>th</sup>

Michael Donoho, son of Dennis and Tammy Donoho Collins and stepson to Ed Collins and Debbie Donoho, born on June 24<sup>th</sup>

Macy Vail Donnell, daughter of Crysti and Rob Sheldon, born on June 25<sup>th</sup>

Michael Bert Doud, son of Mary A. Doud, born on July 23<sup>rd</sup>

Trudy Elizabeth Douglas, daughter of Carole Rost, and stepdaughter of Tom Rost, born on July 24<sup>th</sup>

Timothy Lynn Drayer, son of Donald W. Drayer (deceased) and Vada V. Drayer, born on July 9<sup>th</sup>



Deano A. Duncan, son of Pete and Colleen Duncan, died on June 19<sup>th</sup>

Randy Flanagan, son of Dennis Flanagan, who died on June 10<sup>th</sup>

Amber Fleer, daughter of Darla Hughes and Terry Fleer, who died on July 7<sup>th</sup>

Theodore W. Fuller, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Fuller, born on July 13<sup>th</sup>

Carol Cortner Gaul, daughter of John and Norma Cortner, died on June 25<sup>th</sup>

Carol Jane Gibbs, daughter of Stanley E. Gibbs (deceased) and Dorothy A. Gibbs, born on July 29<sup>th</sup>

Ryan Mathew Hair, son of Janis (Hair) Humbert, born on July 18<sup>th</sup>

Trever Antwan Harness, son of Tonie R. Harness and John K. Perkins, died on July 14<sup>th</sup>

Randy Harris, son of George and Polly Harris, born on June 1<sup>st</sup>

Brad Harwell, son of James and Mary Harwell, born on July 4<sup>th</sup>

Spencer Mark Hastings, son of Steve and Sue Hastings, born on July 12<sup>th</sup>

Brenda D. Helner, daughter of Loma Gregg, born on July 15<sup>th</sup>

Robert R. Herrick, Jr., son of Phyllis Ashcraft, born on July 28<sup>th</sup>

Stephen (Steve) Richard Hill, son of James G. and Bridgie R. Hill, born on June 4<sup>th</sup>

Kevin Hirschberg, son of Dale and Dorothy Hirschberg, died on June 24<sup>th</sup>

Shawndy Hogue, sister of Kaylee Hogue, died on July 5<sup>th</sup>

Charles William Hugo, son of Cornelius and Corina Hugo, born on June 13<sup>th</sup>

Dana Hudson, daughter of Bruce and Terri Clark-Hudson, died on July 29<sup>th</sup>



Gabriel Christopher Hudson, grandson of Bruce and Terri Clark-Hudson, born on June 16<sup>th</sup>; died on July 29<sup>th</sup>

Barbara A. Huninghake, daughter of Raymond (deceased) and Rosann R. Huninghake, died on July 14<sup>th</sup>



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

Ethan Jackson, son of Amy Jackson, born on June 27<sup>th</sup>

Ashten Jackson, daughter of Amy Jackson, born on July 4<sup>th</sup>

Jackson Jackson, son of Amy Jackson, born on July 29<sup>th</sup>

Jayamalrah Jackson, son of Ternanglia Jackson, born on July 20<sup>th</sup>

Brittani Jeanneret, daughter of Ron and Lisa Jeanneret, born on July 6<sup>th</sup>

Kelly Dale Jennings, son of Rosemary Jennings, born on July 7<sup>th</sup>

Kody Kavtz, son of Connie Kavtz and brother of Heather Wood, died on June 28<sup>th</sup>

Jonathan Kaspar, son of Jeffrey and Susan Kaspar, sister of Jen Kaspar who died on June 4<sup>th</sup>

Reilly Opal Kircher, daughter of Sandy and Robert Kircher, stillborn on July 31<sup>st</sup>

Tyler Austin Kirk, son of Kim L. Kirk, born on June 7<sup>th</sup>

Joel Andrew Knight, son of Jim and Gloria Knight, born on June 24<sup>th</sup>

Jessica Joane Koelzer, daughter of Dennis and Deborah Koelzer, born on June 16<sup>th</sup>

Andrew Kohake, son of Joe and Denise Kohake, died on June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Terry W. Lambert, son of Elmer and Marcial Lambert, born on July 21<sup>st</sup>

Charles Duane "Chuck" Lawson, son of Charles and Patsy Lawson, died on June 23<sup>rd</sup>

Lisa Jane Lewis, daughter of Robert and Jane Lewis, born on July 7<sup>th</sup>

Andrew Garrett Lindeen, grandson of Mary J. Lindeen, died on July 29<sup>th</sup>

Richard L. "Rick" Linder, Jr., son of Richard and Pat Linder, born on June 26<sup>th</sup>

Colgin Tanner Lohman, son of Chad and Christine Lohman, born on June 19<sup>th</sup>

Gylmn Guerry Lough, son of Billy D. and Inez G. Lough, born on June 15<sup>th</sup>

Billy Lucas, son of Bernie and Jeanette Bialek, born on June 20<sup>th</sup>

Amy Lundin, daughter of Ralph and Judy Lundin, died on July 28<sup>th</sup>

Pelepesite Mariner, daughter of Ieu and Winnie Mariner, who died on June 29<sup>th</sup>

Marlin Dean McCall, Jr., son of Marlin McCall, Sr. and Darlene McCall, born on July 3<sup>rd</sup>; died on July 17<sup>th</sup>

Stuart McKinnon, son of Sandra McKinnon, died on June 26<sup>th</sup>

Michelle Renee McNeive, daughter of Michael and Barbara McNeive, born on July 15<sup>th</sup>; died on July 24<sup>th</sup>

Clay Meyer, son of Jim and Linda Meyer, born on July 26<sup>th</sup>; died on June 27<sup>th</sup>

Gregory Dean Michael, son of Lawrence J. Michael and Marianne Michael Carlson, died on July 31<sup>st</sup>



Tracy Kevin Michael, son of Lawrence J. Michael and Marianne Michael Carlson, born on July 17<sup>th</sup>

Gregory Dean Michael, son of Lawrence J. Michael. and Marianne Michael Carlson, died on July 31<sup>st</sup>

Katie Mika, daughter of Robert and Rita Mika, born on July 9<sup>th</sup>

Troy Sinclair Miller, son of Del and Jan Miller, died on June 23<sup>rd</sup>

Kristin Dee Morford, daughter of Bill and Nancy Morford, died on July 4<sup>th</sup>

Debra Dee Morris, daughter of Estell Danner, born on June 23<sup>rd</sup>; died on July 9<sup>th</sup>

Nathan W. Muggy, son of Bill and Dorothy Muggy, born on July 6<sup>th</sup>

Madison "Maddie" Rae Naill, daughter of Lori Neddermeyer and Eric Naill; step-daughter of Mark Neddermeyer; sister of Jesse and Allie Naill; step-sister of Cale and Braden Neddermeyer; and granddaughter of Bruce and Ginny Miller and Allan and Marge Neddermeyer, born on June 17<sup>th</sup>

Philip Harold Newell, son of Fred and Mary Newell, died on June 27<sup>th</sup>



Chad O'Leary, son of Patricia Shomaker, born on July 29<sup>th</sup>

Jerry James Oldham, son of James and Claudette Oldham, died on July 30<sup>th</sup>

Janet Pace, daughter of Barbara Hale, sister of Carla Gilbert and Sara Wallo, and mother of Shauna Andersen died on June 10<sup>th</sup>

James A. Padilla, son of the late Miguel C. Padilla and Rose Padilla, born June 27<sup>th</sup>; died on June 19<sup>th</sup>

Jeremy Pechanec, son of Tobias and Pamela Pechanec, was born on June 13<sup>th</sup>

Eric Edwin Pfeffer, son of Rick and Sharla Pfeffer, born on July 3<sup>rd</sup>; died on July 29<sup>th</sup>

Aurora Mae Philippi, daughter of Chris and Triste Philippi, born and died June 17<sup>th</sup>

Kasey Pike, grandson of Grace Reichle, who was born on July 3<sup>rd</sup>

Erik Dean Pilcher, son of Mitchell Dean Pilcher and grandson of Marilyn J. Pilcher, died on June 30<sup>th</sup>

Amy Pomeroy, daughter of Dave Pomeroy and Cheryl Weber, born on June 17<sup>th</sup>

Brian Powell, son of Glenn and Jody McGhee, who died on July 24<sup>th</sup>

Sara J. Pusker, daughter of Susan Pusker, died on July 8<sup>th</sup>

Bryan Ralston, son of Winona Ralston, died on June 27<sup>th</sup>

Timothy Ramsey, son of Dorothy Ramsey, brother of Tom Ramsey, died on July 5<sup>th</sup>



Misty Redd, daughter of Larry and Nancy Redd, born on June 11<sup>th</sup>

Casey Wm. Reed, son of Bill Reed and Ila Baker, died on June 13<sup>th</sup>

David Wayne Reese, son of Tom and Bonnie Reese, died on July 2<sup>nd</sup>

Sharon Lorraine Rhodes, daughter of Paul and Shirley Hensley, died on June 18<sup>th</sup>

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

Nancy Reives, sister of Carol Daughenbaugh, died on July 4<sup>th</sup>

Sarah N. Rice, daughter of Gary and Peggy Rice, born on July 19<sup>th</sup>

Jaron Robbs, son of Jesse and Debbie Robbs, born on July 7<sup>th</sup>

Kerrie Lynn Roberts, daughter of Ferne Lutz, born on June 7<sup>th</sup>

Chuck Rosenbaum, son of Charlotte Rosenbaum, born on July 14<sup>th</sup>

Kathryn (Katie) Rush, daughter of Thomas and Barbara Rush  
born on July 6<sup>th</sup>

Daniel Rusher, son of Joe and Helen Rusher, died on June 22<sup>nd</sup>

Adam Sands, son of Steve and Claudette Sands, born on June 6<sup>th</sup>

Alexis "Lexie" Diane Salmon, granddaughter of Candy Morgan and  
Robin Heuer, who was born on July 11<sup>th</sup> and died on June 5<sup>th</sup>

Lillie Ann Marie Seibel, granddaughter of Becky Eck, born on July 1<sup>st</sup>

Trisha Dawn Shay, daughter of Mark A. Shay and Carol S. Lang,  
died on July 19<sup>th</sup>

Ryan Wayne Simecka, son of Mark and Tonya Simecka, born on July 26<sup>th</sup>

Michael Joseph Skaggs, son of Willie and Megan Skaggs,  
born July 25<sup>th</sup>

Diedra Smith, daughter of Gene and Marcia Smith,  
born on June 2<sup>nd</sup>; died on July 18<sup>th</sup>



Jade Smith, daughter of Carrie Abram, born on June 4<sup>th</sup>

Rachel Diana Sowers, daughter of Bill and Diana Sowers,  
born on July 30<sup>th</sup>

Amy Spencer, daughter of Loren and Beth Mitchell, born on June 11<sup>th</sup>

Dylan Spencer, son-in-law of Loren and Beth Mitchell,  
who was born on July 17<sup>th</sup>

Sara Nicole Stack, granddaughter of Donald and Evelyn Monroe,  
born on June 21<sup>st</sup>

Brady Stauffer, son of Curt and Cheryl Satuffer, died on July 15<sup>th</sup>

Ava Steinlage, daughter of Shana Steinlage, born on June 28<sup>th</sup>

Jpurden William Stodola, son of John Stodola and Shannon Yocum-  
Stodola, born and died on July 30<sup>th</sup>

Natalie Nicole Stucky, daughter of Morris and Diana Stucky,  
born on July 31<sup>st</sup>

Rachel Swanson, daughter of Del and Kim White, died on June 17<sup>th</sup>

Jason Swim, son of Jocelyne Bruschi, died on June 14<sup>th</sup>

Christine René Thuro, daughter of Dwight  
and Nancy Thuro, died on June 16<sup>th</sup>



Gregory D. Talley, son of Garland and Carol Talley, died on June 10<sup>th</sup>

Michelle Traxler, daughter of John and Dianne Traxler, born on July 25<sup>th</sup>

Zachary Typer, son of Mike & Jennifer Typer; brother of Gillian,  
died on July 2<sup>nd</sup>

Marc Darrel VanVleck, son of Frank and Susan Van Vleck,  
died on July 18<sup>th</sup>

Richard U. Vines, son of Richard and Joyce Vines, born on June 21<sup>st</sup>

Chad Nicholas Ward, son of Charles R. Hill and Shondi L. Ward,  
born on July 28<sup>th</sup>

(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 June  
and July).

.....  
**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**

## ENERGY DRAIN

It is surprising to me that much bereavement literature omits mention of the huge energy drain which comes with grief. If you are newly bereaved and have yet to realize that nearly all of your energy is required just to deal with these many emotions you are confronting, then let me assure you that this is the case. Don't expect yourself to complete projects within the same time frame as you were once able to, not expect yourself to be able to dazzle customers or clients with pizzazz or gusto.

It simply takes too much energy just to dress in the morning, to make the simple decision to eat, to stifle tears in public, to keep your anger from inappropriately erupting. There is very little energy for anything else. Everything will take longer than you think, including grief recovery. You will, however, gradually rediscover yourself and build a new life. Your life will be a rich and full one where memories of your child will no longer produce pain. In fact, those memories will enrich your life. And that's the truth!

Meanwhile, conserve your energy when and where you can, and allow yourself time to grieve. Those people who deny their grief simply delay the process. The quicker way to recovery is straight through the grief, not around it.

~ Shirley Ottmen, TCF Denton, TX

I'm beginning to know your children  
From the things I've heard you tell,  
From the pictures that you've brought here  
I think I know them well  
Our hurt and sorrow are immense  
I'm not sure where to start.  
Compassion after all is  
Your pain in my heart.  
My thanks to you for listening  
To words wrung from my soul.  
We are The Compassionate Friends  
That's all I need to know.

~ Jack Brown, TCF, Louisville, KY

## MISSING GRADUATE



Parent's happy faces all around me,  
With a glow from within.  
Pomp and Circumstance is playing,  
Now the program will begin.  
The graduates are lined up,  
They are coming down the aisle,  
Some have serious faces, yet  
Some have a little smile.  
I look down the aisle,  
Hoping for your face to come into sight.  
This is your class,  
It was to be your graduation night.  
All the graduates pass by,  
But none of them are you.  
A tug of my heart tells me,  
You are not here your death is true.  
God called you home...  
I wanted you here in such a bad way.  
Looking into your classmates' faces,  
Do they recall you, missing this day?  
Memories, sweet memories,  
Now fill my mind and heart.  
There will be no golden tassel,  
This day for my Sweetheart.  
The class is oh, so happy,  
This isn't the time to be blue.  
Now I must go shake a hand,  
And get a hug or two.

~ Emma Valenteen, TCF, Valley Forge, PA

Each new life,  
*no matter how brief,*  
forever changes the world.

- author unknown



# What I Wish More People Understood About Losing A Child

By Paula Stephens, March 23, 2015

Four and half years after the death of my oldest son, I finally went to a grief support group for parents who have lost children. I went to support a friend who recently lost her son. I'm not sure I would've gone except that when I was in her shoes, four years ago, I wish I would've had a friend to go with me. Losing a child is the loneliest, most desolate journey a person can take and the only people who can come close to appreciating it are those who share the experience.

The meeting was a local chapter of The Compassionate Friends, an organization solely dedicated to providing support for those who have lost children, grandchildren or siblings. The facilitator was a tall gentleman who had lost his 17-year-old son eight years ago. He opened the meeting by saying that dues to belong to the club are more than anyone would ever want to pay. Well, he couldn't be more correct: no one wants to belong to this group.

The group of incredible survivors included parents whose children had been killed by drunk drivers, murdered, accidental overdose, alcoholism, suicide and freak accidents. The children's ages ranged from 6-38 years old. When hearing the stories, I had a visceral reaction to being part of this "club," but was also humbled by the greatness of these mothers and fathers.

Most of what I share in this article came from this meeting, but also from my own experience of having lost a child and being four years into that lifelong journey of healing from deep grief. The following five tips can be your compass to help you navigate how to give support to grieving parents on a sacred journey they never wanted to take.

**1. Remember our children.** The loss of children is a pain all bereaved parents share, and it is a degree of suffering that is impossible to grasp without experiencing it first hand. Often, when we know someone else is experiencing grief, our discomfort keeps us from approaching it head on. But we want the world to remember our child or children, no matter how young or old our child was.

If you see something that reminds you of my child, tell me. If you are reminded at the holidays or on his birthday that I am missing my son, please tell me you remember him. And when I speak his name or relive memories relive them with me, don't shrink away. If you never met my son, don't be afraid to ask about him. One of my greatest joys is talking about Brandon.

**2. Accept that you can't "fix" us.** An out-of-order death such as child loss breaks a person (especially a parent) in a way that is not fixable or solvable — ever! We will learn to pick up the pieces and move forward, but our lives will never be the same.

Every grieving parent must find a way to continue to live with loss, and it's a solitary journey. We appreciate your support and hope you can be patient with us as we find our way. Please: don't tell us it's time to get back to life, that's it's been long enough, or that time heals all wounds. We welcome your support and love, and we know sometimes it hard to watch, but our sense of brokenness isn't going to go away. It is something to observe, recognize, accept.

**3. Know that there are at least two days a year we need a time out.** We still count birthdays and fantasize what our child

would be like if he/she were still living. Birthdays are especially hard for us. Our hearts ache to celebrate our child's arrival into this world, but we are left becoming intensely aware of the hole in our hearts instead. Some parents create rituals or have parties while others prefer solitude. Either way, we are likely going to need time to process the marking of another year without our child.

Then there's the anniversary of the date our child became an angel. This is a remarkable process similar to a parent of a newborn, first counting the days, then months then the one year anniversary, marking the time on the other side of that crevasse in our lives.

No matter how many years go by, the anniversary date of when our child died brings back deeply emotional memories and painful feelings (particularly if there is trauma associated with the child's death). The days leading up to that day can feel like impending doom or like it's hard to breathe. We may or may not share with you what's happening.

This is where the process of remembrance will help. If you have heard me speak of my child or supported me in remembering him/her, you will be able to put the pieces together and know when these tough days are approaching.

**4. Realize that we struggle every day with happiness.** It's an ongoing battle to balance the pain and guilt of outliving your child with the desire to live in a way that honors them and their time on this earth.

I remember going on a family cruise eighteen months after Brandon died. On the first day, I stood at the back of the ship and bawled that I wasn't sharing this experience with him. Then I had to steady myself, and recognize that I was also creating memories with my surviving sons, and enjoying the time with them in the present moment.

As bereaved parents, we are constantly balancing holding grief in one hand and a happy life after loss in the other. You might observe this when you are with us at a wedding, graduation or other milestone celebration. Don't walk away — witness it with us and be part of our process.

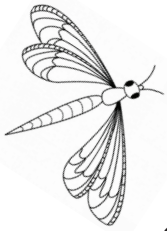
**5. Accept the fact that our loss might make you uncomfortable.** Our loss is unnatural, out-of-order; it challenges your sense of safety. You may not know what to say or do, and you're afraid you might make us lose it. We've learned all of this as part of what we're learning about grief.

We will never forget our child. And in fact, our loss is always right under the surface of other emotions, even happiness. We would rather lose it because you spoke his/her name and remembered our child, than try and shield ourselves from the pain and live in denial.

Grief is the pendulum swing of love. The stronger and deeper the love the more grief will be created on the other side. Consider it a sacred opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with someone who has endured one of life's most frightening events. Rise up with us.

Source: [www.mindbodygreen.com](http://www.mindbodygreen.com)





## The Dragonfly

### *(Is Your Child Like The Dragonfly?)*

Once, in a little pond, in the muddy water under the lily pads, there lived a little water beetle in a community of water beetles. They lived a simple and comfortable life in the pond with few disturbances and interruptions.

Once in a while, sadness would come to the community when one of their fellow beetles would climb the stem of a lily pad and would never be seen again. They knew when this happened, their friend was dead, gone forever.

Then, one day, one little water beetle felt an irresistible urge to climb up that stem. However, he was determined that he would not leave forever. He would come back and tell his friends what he had found at the top.

When he reached the top and climbed out of the water onto the surface of the lily pad, he was so tired, and the sun felt so warm, that he decided he must take a nap. As he slept, his body changed and when he woke up, he had turned into a beautiful blue-tailed dragonfly with broad wings and a slender body designed for flying. So, fly he did! And, as he soared he saw the beauty of a whole new world and a far superior way of life to what he had never known existed.

Then he remembered his beetle friends, and how they were thinking by now he was dead. He wanted to go back to tell them, and explain to them that he was, now more alive than he had ever been before. His life had been fulfilled rather than ended.

But, his new body would not go down into the water. He could not get back to tell his friends the good news. Then he understood that their time would come, when they too would know what he now knew. So, he raised his wings and flew off into his joyous new life!

~ Author unknown

## ADJUSTED

"It's been several years since your son died,"  
They say, "Surely, you must have adjusted by now."

Yes, I am adjusted  
Adjusted to feeling pain  
And sadness and grief  
And guilt and loss.  
Adjusted to hurting and unexpected tears.  
Adjusted to seeing people made uncomfortable  
upon hearing me say "My son died."  
Adjusted to losing my best friend because I'm not  
always "up."  
Adjusted to people acting as if grief is contagious  
And TCF meetings are "morbid."  
Adjusted? Oh, yes, to many things.  
Knowing I won't hear his voice, but listening  
for it still.  
Knowing I won't see him drive his Toronado,  
But staring at every one I see.  
Adjusted to feeling empty on his birthday  
And wishing for just one more time with him.  
Adjusted: As life goes on -  
To realizing I cannot expect everyone I meet  
To wear a bandage - just because I am still bleeding ...

~ Shirley Blakely Curle, TCF Central AR

## Valley of the Butterflies

There is a green sun-drenched valley  
Light with the scent of clover and lilacs  
Where the butterflies dance.  
Leaping and swooping, they reflect colors  
Of every hue and dimension.  
There are monarch and skippers,  
Swallowtails and delicate spring azures.  
Each dances its unique pattern  
Of flits, circles and dives.  
Stretching its fragile wings toward the clouds  
Or brushing its feet on the succulent grass.



There are no roads, paths, or gates  
To broach the valley's entrance;  
Yet it is visited often in thoughts and dreams.  
Every parent who has sent forth a child  
and vainly waited for its return  
Comes seeking in the valley of the butterflies  
And there finds a beautiful spirit,  
Stretching its wings to the clouds  
and brushing its feet on the grass,  
Dancing in swoops, flits and dives,  
Drying its dewy wings in the warm sunshine of  
forever.

~ Marcia Alig, TCF, Princeton Jct., NJ

# That First Summer Vacation

*Summer time is quickly drawing near and with it you may be planning a vacation. If you have recently suffered the death of your child..... that first vacation can be very difficult.*

I would like to share with you our experience the first time we took a vacation after our son, Paul, died. I have included some suggestions to help you through your first vacation and to help you plan around your grief.

Our son, Paul, died in November 1979 from leukemia. He had been ill for eight years. The last couple of years were very hard for us and we were not able to go on any vacations because of his illness.

In August of 1980 we decided to go on a big trip to Hawaii like we had always wanted to do. We made our plans and we felt at the time that our grief was far enough along that we could enjoy ourselves. It was a very difficult vacation for our whole family. Each of us seemed unable to have a good time. We talked a lot about Paul. He was everywhere, in our thoughts and minds. We all knew how much he would have loved the beauty of Hawaii, the ocean with all its beautiful

waves just right for surfing, and all of the sea life we saw when we went diving. It was very hard to have a good time and I soon realized we were all having problems with Paul's absence.

As I look back and remember our vacation some six years later, I know that even though we did not have a great time, our vacation did serve a purpose in our grief.

We found we were together as a family in strange surroundings and we were grieving. We started working hard on our grief during that vacation, and I know now it was a GOOD vacation.

If you are planning a vacation, here are some suggestions that may help:

Be gentle to yourself. Don't expect too much on your first vacation. Remember as bereaved parents the first time we do anything without our kids is tough, whether it be going to the movies, shopping, or on a vacation.

Plan to do some grief work because you will, planned or not. Give yourself time enough on the trip if you have a bad day you can just do what you feel like doing.

Know that your child will be on your mind day and night just as he or she is at home. Our grief goes with us.

Plan a vacation that is restful. You need all the rest you can get at this time.

Plan to do something your child would have loved to do, but did not get a chance to do. Do this in his or her memory.

If you plan to visit relatives for the first time since your child's death, remember they mean well even if they seem insensitive with their remarks. They have not lost a child and can't see through your eyes.

If you have other children, remember them. They are also having a hard time coping on this vacation. Plan some activities that will be especially for them.

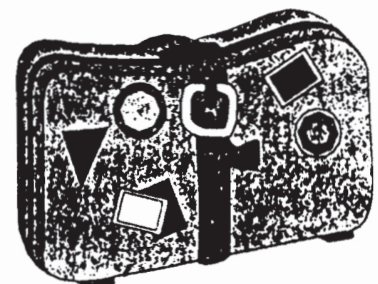
Be especially careful to communicate with your spouse. Plan a vacation that is suitable for both of your needs. Remember you are both grieving for the same child, but we all grieve differently and in our own way.

If you have been maintaining your child's grave site and feel guilty leaving it unattended, let a family member or friend see to it while you are away. You need not feel guilty and it could fill a need for one of your family members or friends, allowing them to help.

You will have a memorable vacation even though it will be difficult. You will look back on it as I have done and see it as another growing experience as you find your way through the grief work of a bereaved family.

I hope all of your vacations are nice this summer. Enjoy them for our kids.

--Diana Hammock, TCF, Central Coast, CA





## FATHER'S DAY

Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong -- must not cry. But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving, and protecting has been able to stop our child's death. And, inside, we must ask ourselves about our failure, and we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father it is a poignant reminder of bitter sweetness: sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost, child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of inability to stop what happened.



Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Often times they are unable to do so, a remnant of childhood learnings about the strength and stoicism of "big boys." A father may even be

uncomfortable opening up to his wife, and the wife who pushes him to talk may be pushing too hard.

Father's Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, "I'm sorry we haven't talked, Let's do it now." But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug, does something special, helps with the chores, and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. It is some of these things that he has lost with the death of a child. And, like Mother's Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to a Sunday in June, It can be any day and every day.

Fathers often show their hurts differently, often internally, BUT THEY DO HURT.

~ Gerry Hunt, TCF, White River Junction, VT

## MOTHER'S DAY

Another Mother's Day!  
But a different one this year.  
For you see, I am a mother,  
But my child isn't here.



I am a mother who is hurting  
For this child who was so dear,  
As I face this & other occasions,  
Each and every year.

I am a mother who feels an emptiness  
Over and over again,  
Because I miss THIS child,  
And all that could have been.

I am a mother who cared,  
As I watched my child grow,  
And truly loved her more  
Than anyone will ever know.

I am a mother who has memories  
And many tears to cry,  
Over regrets I'll have to live with  
Until the day I die.

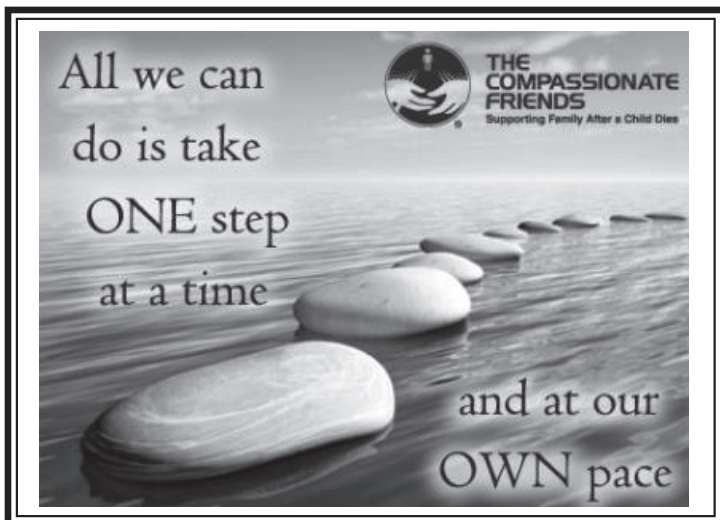
I am a mother who is thankful  
For the miracle of birth,  
And all my child has taught me  
About life & my own self-worth.

I just can't stop being a mother,  
Just because my child isn't here.  
Because the love we had for each other  
Will continue for years & years.

And so ...

On this special "Mother's Day",  
I will feel within my heart  
All the pride, love and joy,  
that are the parts  
that make me who I am,  
And what I'll always be,  
A Mother  
Just remember that - please!

~ Judy A. Sittner, TCF, Murfreesboro, TN



## 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto: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/>

*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/>



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MADDIE RAE NAILL



June 2003, Age 7



June 17, 2011, Age 15

June 2009, Age 13

June 2000, Age 4



Maddie, we all miss your beautiful smile. Not a day goes by where we don't wish we would be celebrating every day with you. Special days, such as your birthday are especially difficult.

Love, Mom & Mark, Dad, Allie, Jesse, Cale, Braden,  
Grams and Gramps, Lisa, Lexi and all of your friends

# **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.**

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **TCF 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.