



The Compassionate Friends
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JOHNSON COUNTY WEBSITE
www.tcfkc.org

The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

Autumn

Autumn touches memories that traumatize me. Never in any nightmare did I dream of this path my life has taken. Death changes all things: friends, family, perspective, relationships, job, and self worth. Uncertainty creeps into these areas. As if I were carving a pumpkin and my knife slips, cuts appear, fingers bleed, blood gushes. This hints at the sensations I feel in autumn as I approach the anniversary. I cannot will the knife backwards and undo the carving, cut, destruction. I look at my family and friends and while some have lost a sibling, none have lost a child. This just doesn't happen, but it did-so unbelievable.

Rebecca Pinker, Jana's Mom

Falling Forward

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

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

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

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

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

We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief,

but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

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

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

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share,

just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

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

We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace,

share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

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

TCF, Inc. 2007

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The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Wyandotte & Johnson County

Aug., Sept., Oct.- 2016 Volume 4 Issue 4

Communicating with My Child

Eighteen months ago, I dedicated a bench to Philip. It's in a space Philip would like, out in the natural world, with abundant wildlife and wonderful views across hills and sea.

I go there often to spend time alone with my beloved son. I sit on the bench, look at the vistas, and remember our family as it used to be. I talk to Philip. I make him promises; I ask for his guidance. I muse on what his life would be like now. I tell him how deeply I love him, how missing him gets harder with each passing year. I tell him about his brothers, about his sister-in-law and his little nephew, both of whom he never met. I tell him how important he is to us. I tell him that we will never forget him, that though our lives are five years past his death, we still think of him all the time and want him with us. I tell him that I am having a terribly hard time accepting that he has died, and that I am doing the best I can.

I have no idea if I am communicating with a Philip who has survived death or with myself, who hopes he has. Sometimes I think I feel an impatient nudge, a sort of, "Get on with it, Mom, it's not what you think" message. Sometimes I feel his arms around me in compassionate understanding. Sometimes I don't feel any response at all.

I am grateful for these private times with my child. Whether he lives on in some other sphere—and how I hope he does!—or whether he resides only in our deepest hearts, there is an honoring of him in these conversations, a recognition of his existence and its importance, that matters very much to me.

I believe that we all need to find our individual ways of keeping the channels to our children open. My conversations with Philip may seem odd to some people, but they are right for me. I encourage you to honor your own private ways of communicating with your beautiful child, whatever they are. If you are searching for the channel that will work for you, consider what some other bereaved parents have found helpful: poetry, painting, journal writing, hiking in the natural world, daydreaming, music, meditation, lighting candles, wearing a deceased child's clothing, sitting in his/her room, playing a sport she/he loved, among many, many others. May the time spent in private dialogue with your child bring you peace-filled moments, a renewed sense of connection, and strength to continue the difficult journey we are all on.

Kitty Reeve

TCF Marin County and San Francisco Chapters, CA

WYANDOTTE COUNTY

Eisenhower Community Center

2901 North 72nd St., KCKS

Richard Moore 913-238-1890

Marlene Moore 913-238-5348

1st Tuesday @ 7PM

JOHNSON COUNTY

Advent Lutheran Church

11800 W. 151st St.

Olathe, Ks

Gay Kahler & Brian Janes

913-764-2669

WWW.JOCOTCF.ORG

2nd Monday @7PM

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept 6th, Balloon Launch
WYCO Chapter
- Oct. 6-8th, Allie's Sale,
Valley View UMC, OPKS
www.teamlitttleowl.org for
more information

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

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Gifts of Grief

The 39th National Conference of TCF is now in the history books. It was held in Scottsdale, Arizona this year. There were 118 workshops offered for parents, grandparents and siblings. We listened to wonderful speakers throughout the conference, and then lots of sharing sessions at the end of the day to just talk with other likewise grievers. The conferences also gives you a chance to get to know the core leaders who are responsible for running this incredible organization. This was my 6th conference and it has been nine years since my son, Keith died, so I put myself into the category of a “seasoned griever”. There was one workshop I attended this year called “The Gifts of Grief” put on by Donna Goodrich. After holding several positions in different chapters, she is now the regional coordinator for the state of North Carolina. The title of this workshop intrigued me but at the same time my blood pressure jumped a bit. Already planning in my head ways to dispute this thought, I went to the workshop.

In the description of this workshop and before she even began, she made it clear that every one of us would give up all we had achieved after the loss of our child to have our children back. But knowing this was impossible, she wanted to focus on what was possible. I would not recommend this topic for newly bereaved parents as this idea is totally incomprehensible for many, many years. The workshop was well done and I walked away with a list of 22 gifts we might have received since the death of our child. As I read through the list I did a mental yes, yes, not yet, maybe, yes and so forth. It was definitely a positive take away from this workshop. Here are a few of the gifts mentioned.

Courage—when we walked into our first TCF meeting

Hope—from the “seasoned grievers” that life can get better

Better sense of what matters most in our lives now

Live in the moment—we don’t save things or wait until later to do things

Our lives have better focus and greater meaning as we honor our children

Better appreciation of life

Acute awareness of suffering and heightened sense of empathy

Our ability to step forward and help other newly bereaved parents

I have since wondered how many charitable organizations would have been started had someone not lost and then grieved deeply for a loved one.

Next years conference is July 28-30, 2017 at the Hilton Bonnet Creek Resort, Orlando Florida

Debbie McFadden, Keith’s Mom

To Our New Compassionate Friends

If you are newly bereaved and have recently attended your first meeting, you may have left the meeting feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heave 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.

Sibling Grief

COURAGE

My brother died three years ago when he was seventeen years old. It was an accident when he fell while hiking in the mountains. I was fifteen and my brother was my hero. I would do anything to make him proud. When I lost him, I could have just given up. I have the courage to love people even though I know that I could lose them. I had many opportunities to just forget everyone else and lose myself. My brother was my best friend and when he died I could have too.

I decided that he would not have wanted me to throw my life away. I try my hardest to work hard in school and live up to what his expectations would have been. I am not living just for him. I am living for myself. A lot of people like to escape their problems by drinking or doing drugs. Alcohol and drugs only make problems worse because escaping a problem is not solving the problem. Self-respect means knowing who you are and treating yourself with dignity. I want people to look at me and to respect me. Staying in school and working to my potential is essential for respect. People cannot respect those who do not respect themselves. As Shakespeare said, "This above all else, to thine own self be true."

I do not make choices based on what the popular decision is. I base my thoughts and ideas on what I believe is right and important. I know that my brother would have been proud of me, because I made it through the most difficult time in my life, without him. I kept living when I lost the most important person in the world to me.

Courage is to keep fighting even though it looks like you are going to lose. When he died, I felt the world crash down on me. Everything I ever hoped for just seemed empty. Even now sometimes it will just hit me that my brother is gone. I have to keep on living and facing the world because that is what life is all about. Sometimes things happen that seem impossible to face. If I do not face my problems, who will?

Life is not supposed to be easy but it is not devastating either. There are so many wonderful things that happen and I have to have the courage to realize it. Life is not just a long line of problems. It is also a long line of answers. I need courage and self-respect to find these answers. I have to trust myself and my future that everything will work out. It always does. The answers to life's problems can only be found through hard work and belief in yourself. My belief in myself comes from a big brother who always had faith in me.

Patricia Kelley
TCF Richmond, VA
In Memory of my brother, Sean 8/24/76 - 8/28/93

What Candice Would Say

I’m sorry big sister, I can’t play with you.
I’m sorry grandpa, I can’t go to the zoo.
I’m sorry daddy, you can’t kiss me goodnight.
I’m sorry mommy, you can’t hold me tight.
No one knows why, no one can guess.
But I can’t play right now,
I’ve gone to rest.

Mary Lingle
TCF Tyler, TX
In Memory of Candice

Grief and the Single Parent

The death of a child is an unanticipated, shocking, devastating event in any family. In the single parent home, the death of a child or children can be more difficult than in the two-parent home. Families have a difficult enough time coping with this life passage without the added burden of making arrangements and paying expenses.

When adults have gone through a life crisis like divorce, the stress of dealing with the necessary arrangements presents another barrier on the long road of restructuring the single's life. We may be on speaking terms with the ex-spouse and that is helpful to a point. Those who are not on speaking terms are faced with even greater stress.

The emotional ties that at one time connected us to this lost child are no longer present, yet to many it points to the hurt of the past. Survivors search for something or someone to blame. Widows or widowers are confronted with compounded grief. Unfortunately, most of us do not get through life with only one crisis. Dealing with the past rekindles the hurts of the past.

As parents, we would be well advised by the legal system and counselors to make an effort to be amicable and/or courteous to the ex-spouse; papers must be signed.

Grandparents, siblings, relatives and friends are also in grief. We must deal with them all. Who can our remaining children turn to if not us for guidance through these crises?

If you have a companion who has suffered this loss, be patient. If you are the parent who has lost a child, ask your companion to be patient with you. The grief process is longer than we knew it would be. To the non-bereaved parent, the grief process is longer than you can know.

This life passage is not something we want for any of you. The death of a marriage is not comparable to the death of a child. Often the widow or widower or the divorced person may remarry. The loss of a child is not a void which can be filled. There are entirely different emotions to be dealt with. Many of us survive but will forever have emotional scars. Stand by us and we will be forever grateful.

Jacque Stockhausen
TCF St. Louis, MO

Meditation on Anger

How come I feel my face flush when you urge me to hurry? I can hardly put one foot in front of the other.

Why did my temper flare when the clerk moved me to another counter? I don't want to make more change, not even a little one.

Why am I irritated at the party clatter? It seems inane and unimportant.

How can I forgive myself for snapping at my co-worker? My concentration is nil.

Where did this "me" come from? Irritable. Angry. Upset.. Impatient.

When I was a child, I needed my mother at times like this. NOW I NEED MY CHILD.

Author Unknown

But You're Absolutely Normal!

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it shows up in many ways you might not expect. If you've...

- been angry with doctors or nurses for not doing enough
- been sleeping too much or not enough
- noticed a change in appetite
- felt no one understands what you're going through
- felt friends should call more or call less or leave you alone or invite you along more often
- bought things you didn't need
- considered selling everything and moving
- had headaches, upset stomachs, weakness, lethargy, more aches and pains
- been unbearable, lonely, and depressed
- been crabby
- cried for no apparent reason
- found yourself obsessed with thoughts of the deceased
- been forgetful, confused, uncharacteristically absentminded
- panicked over little things
- felt guilty about things you have or haven't done
- gone to the store every day
- forgotten why you went somewhere
- called friends and talked for a long time
- called friends and wanted to hang up after only a brief conversation
- not wanted to attend social functions you usually enjoyed
- found yourself unable to concentrate on written material
- been unable to remember what you just read

...you're normal. These are all common reactions to grief. They take up to two years (or more) to pass completely, but they will pass. You'll never forget the person who has died, but your life will again become normal, even if it is never exactly the same. Take care of yourself. You will heal in time.

Joanne Bonelli
TCF, Greater Boise Area, ID

A PhD in Pain

I didn't take an entrance examination. I didn't apply for admission. I didn't register for classes. I never completed any assignments. I didn't write or defend a dissertation.

I didn't wear a cap, gown, or hood at graduation. I didn't walk to "Pomp & Circumstance."

I don't have this diploma framed on my wall. I don't have letters I use after my name.

But my son died five years ago.

So, I have a PhD in Pain.

I never wanted one.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us everyday.
Unseen, Unheard, but always near, so loved, so missed, so very dear.

JOHNSON COUNTY
OUR CHILDREN & SIBLINGS REMEMBERED

Births

August

- 2nd Hope Jeanne Ray, daughter of Greg & Amy Ray
- 4th Brandon Warren, son of Debby Atkinson
- 8th Helena Grace Melo, daughter of Pam and Rudy Melo
- 11th Thomas McCord, son of Therese McCord
- 13th Dalton Hawkins, son of Shawn & Rhonda Hawkins
- 23rd Sam Delay, son of Kathy Coggins
- 25th Dayton Porter, son of Kami Porter
- 26th Kathleen Kafka, daughter of Kathy Kafka
- 29th Andy Shields, son of Linda Schoonover

September

- 6th Nathen Krasnopoler, son of Michael Krasnopoler & Susan Cohen
- 7th Kyle Bunselmeyer, son of Suzette Bunselmeyer
- 11th Grace Maryalyce Deck, daughter of Shawne & Joseph Deck
- 13th Matthew Vance Stasevich, son of Vance & Cindy Stasevich
- 17th Ashton Brunmeier, son of Todd & Julie Brunmeier
- 20th Keith McFadden, son of Buddy & Debbie McFadden
- 21st Jack Polson, son of Doug and Pam Polson
- 22nd Bryan Bandera, son of Janet Bravo, brother to Alexa

October

- 2nd Houston St. John, son of David & Theresa St. John
- 3rd Sarah Batson, daughter of Barbara & Don Batson
- 4th Laine Goff, child of Becky Thurlow
- 6th Annie Reed, daughter of Ginger Sparks
- 6th Leo Sorrentino, son of Glovana Dubinski
- 7th Curtis M.G. Gilmore, son of Anita Gordon-Gilmore
- 7th Angela Schofield, daughter of Joe & Julie James
- 15th Robert Damian Barrett, son of Mary Barrett
- 15th Bryan Owens, son of Kay & Dean Owens
- 16th Allison Michelle Fisher, daughter of Kelly & Kyle Fisher
- 18th Tom Nesbihal, son of Jane Zaccardi
- 18th Alan Maxville, son of Marty & Beth Maxville

Deaths

August

- 3rd Tom Nesbihal, son of Jane Zaccardi
- 9TH Paul David Walter, son of Betty Walter
- 10th Nathan Krasnopoler, son of Mitchell Krasnopoler & Susan Cohen
- 16th Alan Maxville, son of Marty & Beth Maxville
- 23rd Jack Polson, son of Doug & Pam Polson

September

- 2nd Jimmy Gorman, son of Kathy Gorman
- 7th Bryan Owens, son of Kay & Dean Owens
- 8th Hope Jeanne Ray, daughter of Gret & Amy Ray
- 13th Michael Paul Early, son of Suzy Early
- 18th Mario Wards, son of Leah Wards
- 24TH Matthew Vance Stasevich, son of Vince & Cindy Stasevich
- 27th Matthew Stipancich, son of Angie Pahal
- 30th Alex (Allie) Lahr, daughter of Amy & Rob Lahr

October

- 6th Misty Warren, Daughter of Jamie Good and Nikki Krueger
- 6th Israel Adams, son of Dan & Leanne Adams
- 23rd Jeffrey Neil Crump, son of Paul & Ann Crump
- 28th Thomas McCord, son of Therese McCord

TCF Meetings

August 8th -- What got you
through the last
day...week...month?

September 12th—Balloon
Launch (weather permitting)

October 10th—I'm strug-
gling with...I'm grateful
for...

Events for our Children
Wyandotte & Johnson County

Please let me know if you would like your event added to this listing.

The Jana E. Pinker Memorial Foundation - Daughter of Rebecca and Bob Pinker

Jana died at age 19 from liver cancer. Every year there is a 5k Run/Walk on the 1st Saturday in March called the Truffle Shuffle. It is held at Johnson County Community College. Please go to www.janaepinker.org to see all the organizations that benefit from this foundation.

Faith's Pennies From Heaven - Granddaughter of Nela Bruner

Faith died from cancer at 4 years old. Money is raised year round with different events such as, donation jars at local businesses, cold water challenges, car washes, and t-shirts. Nela is ready and willing to try new things to benefit The Dream Factory and to keep her granddaughters memory alive. You can contact Nela at bruners05@aol.com.

Thor Rodenbaugh Memorial Golf Tournament - Son of Chris and Ron Rodenbaugh

Thor died at age 37 during a surgical procedure. He left a wife and 3 daughters, though he was never able to meet his 3rd daughter. Every year a golf tournament is put on to raise money for his daughter's college fund. The event is usually held in early summer at Dub's Dread Golf Club, KCKS. . For more information please contact Chris at 816-679-8678. www.ask4thor.com. This year the tournament was June 18th, 2016

Keith McFadden Memorial Golf Tournament - Son of Debbie & Buddy McFadden

Keith died at age 28 from a brain tumor. Every year we do a golf tournament to raise money for brain cancer research. All proceeds go to Head for the Cure Foundation which partners with MD Anderson in Houston, Tx. The tournament is held in June every year at Painted Hills Golf Course, KCKS. For more information you can go to www.kmangolf.com. This year the tournament was June 11th, 2016

Allie's Sale – Daughter of Kelly & Kyle Fisher

Allison Michelle Fisher died at the age of 3 from a brain tumor. Every year in October there is a garage sale to raise money for Children's Brain Tumor Project (CBTP). For more information, or if you have items to donate please contact Team Little Owl at hoot@teamlittleowl.org. Follow on Facebook at [Facebook.com/TeamLittleOwl](https://www.facebook.com/TeamLittleOwl). This year the sale is at Valley View United Methodist Church, 95th & Antioch, October 6-8th, 2016