



Jack Morgan 5/26

May-June 2022

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS-CHAPTER 2358

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*Facebook Page: Compassionate Friends of
Charlotte, NC*

MONTHLY MEETING

Meeting place: St. Matthew Catholic Church, 8015 Ballantyne Commons Parkway, Charlotte, NC - Room 234-235

Meeting Time: 3rd Tuesday of Each Month at 7:00 pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Covid numbers are declining, and mask mandates are being relaxed! We feel it is safe to return to “in person” meetings this month. We hope to see our chapter members at St. Matthew Catholic Church, 8015 Ballantyne Commons Parkway, Charlotte, NC - Room 234-235 on May 17, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Regional Coordinators for NC and SC: Donna & Ralph Goodrich

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NATIONAL OFFICE

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online private closed facebook pages:

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/>

TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!!

We congratulate you on having the courage to walk through our door for the first time. Please give our meetings at least 3 tries before deciding if they are right for you. We hope, with the resources available through TCF, you will find the right person or the right words to help you. You Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends.

TO OUR SEASONED MEMBERS:

We need your encouragement and support. TCF continues because of YOU. You give hope to the newly bereaved - hope that they too can eventually find joy in life again. Please attend when you feel you are able to reach out to another bereaved parent, grandparent or sibling.

Did you know that TCF Charlotte has its own Facebook page? Just search in facebook groups for - Compassionate Friends of Charlotte, NC

LIKE our Facebook page and please post any article, quote or personal musings that you feel may help another member. All information for meetings and special events will be listed on our facebook page.

PLEASE VISIT US ON OUR WEBPAGE!!

WWW.CHARLOTTETCF.ORG

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PART OF TCF CHARLOTTE STEERING COMMITTEE?

We need your help. Volunteering to be on our Steering Committee is a wonderful way to give back to the organization that helped you when you were starting your grief journey, and what better way to keep your child, grandchild or sibling's memory alive? Contact any of the leaders at our meetings if you would like more information. We need YOUR help to ensure our Chapter is as successful as possible in helping others. This is YOUR Chapter - help us make it a welcoming and caring place for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings to come to for help.

Our Chapter survives by donations only. There are costs associated with the Chapter, i.e., supplies, books, refreshments, food and supplies for our annual events, and our fee for our website. PLEASE help support our Chapter!!! Please consider donating to your Chapter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling on their special days or during the holidays. What better thing to do in their memory than to pay it forward for the help you have received from TCF.

You can also help your chapter by being a Steering Committee Member. Just contact one of our chapter leaders. We have lots of different areas that we need help in.

Please Mail All Donations to Our TCF Charlotte Treasurer at The
Following Address:
Carolyn Patton
5902 Rimerton Drive
Charlotte, NC 28226-8227

TO OUR MEMBERS

If there are any errors in dates or names in our listing of our children's, grandchildren's or sibling's, please let me know. We are trying to get our database as accurate as possible. Many of our loved ones names do not have a last name listed. In these cases, we assume it is the same as the parent, grandparent or sibling who is listed as a member in our database. If this is incorrect, please let me know. There are many names that do not have a birth date or a death date listed. We know this can be very difficult to list, especially in the early days of grief. If you feel like adding those dates, just email them to me at: fletcher1mom@gmail.com. We are only human so we do make mistakes, but I have tried to be as accurate as I possibly can. Thank you for understanding.

45TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

AUGUST 5 - AUGUST 7



TCF 45th National Conference
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022

Make your hotel reservations now.

We are very pleased to welcome back TCF's annual national conference, this year in person! This eagerly anticipated event for those bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings who attend seeking renewed hope, ways of coping with their grief, and friendships made

with those who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. With inspirational keynote speakers, numerous workshops including a wide variety of topics, and the always memorable candle lighting program on Saturday evening, culminating with the popular Walk to Remember on Sunday morning, and so much more, the TCF 45th National Conference is a much-needed gift that we give to ourselves!

This year's conference will be held at the Marriott Marquis Houston. Reservations can now be made [online](#) at TCF's dedicated reservation link. TCF's discounted room rate with Marriott is \$149 per night plus tax. Please note that each attendee will only be able to reserve two rooms. Since the conference begins early on Friday and pre-conference activities are offered on Thursday evening, attendees usually find it beneficial to arrive on Thursday. Those not able to make your reservations online, call the Marriott Reservation line at 877.688.4323. When calling be sure to mention *The Compassionate Friends National Conference* to receive your room rate.

Conference registration is now open for the Compassionate Friends 45th National Conference

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS - MAY

Kathryn Anderson 5/26
Robert Ankrah 5/30
G. Stone Barnett 5/18
Kevin Bell 5/16
Chip Day 5/31
Michael Gregory Finlay 5/2
Steve Hale 5/9
Michael Howard 5/15
David Paul Jackson 5/25
Jeremy Jenkins 5/8
Carl S. Olsen 5/6
Erica Lubeznik 5/4
Erin Kay Lynch 5/30
Timmy Manus 5/14
Amber Jackson 5/5
Richard McPeck 5/4
Erica Dawn Mesarus 5/15

Ayriel E. Moore 5/9
Michael Ragone 5/31
Joshua R. Holden 5/4
William Rebain 5/31
Brianna Rae 5/4
Allie Brown 5/17
Delbert Perry 5/11
Allen Doak 5/31
Jack Morgan 5/26

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR ANGEL DAYS -
MAY

Dylan Burke Hahn 5/3
Andrew Michael Chester 5/14
Drew Wright 5/29
Jessica Cudd 5/10
Ben Huff 5/7
Dennis Darrell 5/18
Jeffrey Michael Hunt 5/20
Daniel James 5/21
Ashton Sweet 5/31
Greg Kemp 5/?
Rickey Buchanan 5/18
William Buchanan 5/28
Sean Patrick Logan 5/26
Ben Longenecker 5/10
Michael Mahoney 5/3
Timmy Manus 5/13
Austin McRee 5/20
Jenna Ryan 5/8
Daniel Joseph Schrieber 5/18
Ryan Scott 5/1
Keaundra Sheats 5/2
Cory Smith 5/28
Baby O. Turner 5/8
Nicole C. Willis 5/3

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS -
JUNE

Felix Barraclough 6/6
Julian Alexander Barron 6/23
Jeremiah Bellard 6/23
Frankie Curra 6/13
Brian Yaniszweski 6/23
John Joseph Gabriel, Jr. 6/6
Christopher Diehl 6/21
Kevin Goodnight 6/26
Tarell Cooper 6/19
Kaleb Grant 6/28
Amanda Kendall Barbee 6/15
Brittney Lambert 6/22
Jeannie Liebertz 6/8
Jacki Grimstead 6/30
Scott Lee 6/9
Benjamin Elliot Owens 6/1
Kiara Pearse 6/12
Cherlyn Jane Crawford 6/7
Michael Rebain 6/22
Christopher Ross 6/25
Danny Gary Scott 6/17
Joseph Sharp 6/22
Martha Charlotte Von Dietman 6/5
Jason Lucas Armstrong 6/25
Jamall Miller 6/7

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR ANGEL DAYS -
JUNE

Gabriel Jordan 6/6
Julian Alexander Barron 6/23

Michelle H. Beebe 6/3
Christopher Brown 6/2
Lauren Campbell 6/21
Chip Day 6/14
Emily Lauren Upton 6/1
Christopher Flower 6/16
Stacey Glickman 6/15
Kaleb Grant 6/22
Caitlin Taylor Patton 6/22
Kristopher Hartung 6/15
David Paul Jackson 6/21
Jacquetta Johnson 6/10
Richard Maxwell 6/21
Adyson Faith Mendicino 6/24
Elizabeth Messer 6/24
Christina Michailidis 6/8
Eric Lemarier 6/27
Blake Carlton 6/16
Anthony John Pijerov 6/8
William Rebain 6/1
Michael Rebain 6/22
Heath Graves 6/5
Delbert Perry 6/27
Andrew John Wesley 6/2
Gabriel Jordon 6/6
Jimmy Zacharias 6/8
Amanda Jean Ziegler 6/25

May: The Unusually Difficult Month

For the bereaved parent, May is frequently the cruelest month. The month of May offers the rest of the world a promise of another carefree summer, swimming, family vacations, relaxation, reading, cook-outs and picnics, trips to the lake and so much that is inherent in our culture.

Yet May also brings memories of our children. The common denominator for mothers (and fathers) is Mother's Day. This tradition was wonderful when our children were alive; now

the direct mail and newspaper advertising, sentimental television spots, in-store promotions, cards and letters and the countdown to the day itself are very cruel reminders of our lost children. Who will remember us on Mother's Day?

This will be my fourth Mother's Day without my son. I miss him terribly all year long, but May and December are the worst months for me. First we have Mother's Day, then my son's birthday and throughout the month I am bombarded with invitations for high school and college graduations....each one reminding me of what once was. My son finishing grade school, high school, college, graduate school. Each was accompanied by a ceremony. All the ceremonies rush into my mind as I realize how much of myself is my memories and those memories are very entwined with my son's life. A big part of me died with him that night in December.

Three years ago I was overwhelmed, sobbing, still occasionally in deep shock. My mind was mush, my heart was crushed and I did not have the will to do much more than quietly weep. It was my first Mother's Day without my son, the first birthday that he wasn't here, the first Memorial Day Weekend without him. I was paralyzed. May would never be joyful for me again.

What to do....what to do. I ask myself this question each April as we begin the ramp up to the longest month. This year, I am counting out the last days of April and wondering how I will handle it. I am not worried about it; I am just wondering. I have gotten used to the transformation that has taken place in my mind, heart and soul. I experienced a slow spiritual awakening which accompanied a deep, deep sense of loss over which I have no control. I go with it.

There are questions that we must ask ourselves. The answers are unique to us. Collectively we know this is a month to dread; individually we have our own memories and our own methods of coping. Collectively we lean on each other for hope, comfort and support. Individually, we each walk our own road depending on how many circumstances of life are in our month of May: Mother's Day, Memorial Day, birthdays, death anniversaries, graduations, weddings, baptisms, first communions, confirmations, how we handled the beginning of summer, the end of the school year.....all of these events can bombard us in May.

The memories float into our minds like a mist that thickens into a heavy fog. We are enveloped in our fog of memories; the before death years come to us in a hodgepodge of the happiest times and clash with the reality of now. These are our memories, our children and ultimately our choices. And there seems to be little joy we can take from this month of memories.

Once again, we make the decision. If we are not ready to acknowledge Mother's Day, we shouldn't do it. If we are facing other days in May that will tear at our hearts, we must plan for it. Some of us prefer to be alone and isolated. Others of us prefer to be with friends or family. Some of us go to the cemetery, others go to the park. Some read, watch movies, sit on the deck or simply rest. Others take a weekend trip which puts them into a different state of reality.

There are as many choices as there are parents who have lost their children. Consider your options. Be honest with yourself. Don't be pushed into anything. Take control. We each move forward toward hope at a different rate and in a different way. This is not about meeting the expectations of others; this is a personal journey toward peace and hope. It is your journey.

I will always miss my son. I will always feel deep sorrow at his uncompleted life. But I know that he would want me to move forward, move back into the sunshine that is life on this earth. I'm working on it. Be patient with me. This is the most difficult road I have ever walked, but I am in motion, moving mostly forward and seeking something akin to peace, hope and tranquility. I will always be a work in progress.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

Mother's Day

Mother's Day.....a time set aside to honor each mother's role in her child's life.....is often dreaded by bereaved parents. This holiday, like Father's day, is dedicated strictly to us, as parents. Other holidays differ from this one. That difference, which once was so meaningful to us as parents, is now a poignant reminder of all that once was and will never be again.

Bereaved mothers often approach this holiday with much anxiety. Yet, the holiday itself is generally not as difficult as the ramp-up to it. There are television specials, movies, commercials, signs in stores and advertising everywhere we look.....all of which remind us that our children are no longer with us. This is a difficult time for many bereaved mothers-difficult but not insurmountable.

During the month before the second Mother's Day without my son, I realized that it was my perspective that was the problem. I understood that the world was going to continue to spin, the commercialism would build and the reminders would increase until the holiday arrived. I could either ignore the advertisements through my superb channel surfing skills or I could watch them and torture myself. Passing up print ads was simple....I scanned right past them in the newspaper, and I put the mailings in the trash without comment. Each time I actively said "no" to these reminders, I became a little stronger.

As the week before Mother's Day crawled to a close, I thought I had it aced. Then came Mother's Day. My husband gave me a card and a gift. That was it. The gift and card were both lovely and sweet. My husband cried. I cried. Then we settled down and read the Sunday paper. We had both agreed that we would stop protracting the self-torture and live in the moment. Since I was keeping Mother's Day in my heart, the celebrations and thoughts and sales projections of others mattered not. I keep Mother's Day as I choose.

Each of us must work at developing coping skills. Logic is the choice for some. Setting boundaries works for others. Some parents choose to go with their emotions. The decision to celebrate a holiday and the level of the celebration is a choice unique to each parent. We cannot allow others to set our agenda. Mother's Day is the singular holiday which serves to reinforce that I am forever Todd's mom. My child lived, loved and laughed with us, and this holiday brings deep, beautiful memories of that time. I choose to keep those sweet memories of my son in my heart. Making that decision was one more emotional choice in my grief work. Letting go of what was, living in the moment and cherishing my child forever.....all of these have helped me to find an ever brightening light of hope.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my Son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

Benchmarks

Good bye would be too difficult,
Although I know you are gone.
Instead, I keep you in my heart
And your memory lives on.

I have redefined my purpose, son,
Since you are no longer here.
With your death I faced a choice
To die, exist or to live free.

My life has changed forever, child,
I'm redefined each week,
You would call these "benchmarks"
Of goals set and then achieved.

And so I set my benchmarks,
Achieving many, reshaping some...
But everything is different now
Except your mother's love.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen

I Am Spring

I am the beginning.
I am budding promise.
I spill cleansing tears of life
from cloudy vessels
creating muddy puddles
where single cell creatures abide
and splashing children play.

I am new green growth.
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.
With compassion, we feather nests
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream

I whisper truth – life is change.

I am spring.
I bless long, dark wintry days.
I crown mankind's pain
with starry skies
in deepest night
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.

(written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox, author of 'Finding What You Didn't Lose' and 'Poetic Medicine'.)

Carol Clum

Spring Growth

Spring is officially here. The periods of rain and sun are greening things up and tiny crocuses, violets and daffodils are beginning to pop up in our gardens and yards. New life is abundant in spring and the beauty that accompanies this new life, feels renewing.

When someone is grieving they may not feel this sense of renewal. The pain is still there, not melted away with the last of winter's snow. Grief doesn't go away with the seasons but spring can be a reminder that no matter what we are dealing with in life, nature's changes continue, and that can offer hope.

Expectations are high in spring. Just as the gardener has to till the ground, fertilize and plant seeds to see new growth, those who grieve also have work to do to see growth. Reach out to others for support, be gentle and patient with yourself, go for walks and enjoy the affirmations of spring. Be open to letting some of the hope that spring has to offer into your heart.

Grief, like spring, has its own rhythm that is often unexpected. One day it may be warm, the next cold. It may rain one day, be sunny the next. In grief, one day we may be energetic, laughing and feeling some sense of normalcy and then the next burst into tears, feeling the deep loss and sadness of our loss. But what we do know is that spring will come and with it change. Grief doesn't just go away but it will change. Just like spring it takes time.

Janice Heil sums this up in her poem, [A Prayer for Spring](#), when she writes "Like Springtime, let me unfold and grow fresh and anew from this cocoon of grief that has been spun around me. Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and renewed life as my bones still creak from the winter of my grief. Life has dared to go on around me and, as I recover from the insult of life's continuance, I adjust my focus to include healing and growth as possibility in my future. Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief, but may I never forget it is the place where I grew my wings, becoming a new person because of my loss."

by: Christie Gillett, Grief Support Coordinator

Wings of Hope

Surviving Father's Day Grief: When sadness meets storytelling

HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS / HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS : LITSA WILLIAMS

1.4KSHARES

Father's Day has always felt a bit different to me than Mother's Day. Perhaps because of gender stereotypes or how the people at Hallmark decided to spin it. Somehow it seems mostly about tools and gadgets and dads getting permission to drink beer and watch sports without apology.

Comparing Mother's Day and Father's Day cards this year, I noticed how little emphasis there is on the uniqueness of fatherhood or the relationship between a father and child (a lot more good jokes though!). Father's Day is, at its core, unquestionably about love. It is just a bit more . . . hidden. You know, like when two brothers give each other that one-armed, pound on the back, hug. You know there is love hiding in there, it just isn't quite so obvious.

But layer grief on top of this and the contrast feels pronounced. Mother's Day, at least for me, has always created a gentle, emotional space where we acknowledge relationships and the feelings of gratitude that we don't always take the time to appreciate. When those relationships are lost, there is a space on Mother's Day, however painful, to acknowledge those feeling and that loss.

I can only speak for myself, but, for me, Father's Day has always felt a bit different. The day doesn't seem dedicated to the same level of emotion as Mother's Day, so it makes it a harder for me to know what to do with the emotions of the loss on the day. I wonder if others feel this. Be it fathers who have lost children, or children who lost fathers, if the day didn't carry the same emotional weight when a loved one was alive, does it make it harder to figure out what to do to acknowledge the day when they are gone?

I know I am not alone in the feeling that I don't have any particularly strong or important memories of Father's Day with my father – I have talked to others with similar feelings. I know there are many fathers who deeply appreciated Father's Day but might not have shown it or felt the weight of it in a significant way. But that doesn't make the loss any less. The day still represents a relationship, one that many of us, fathers and children, have lost. We are still faced with reminders. We may, in fact, be feeling an added layer of regret that we didn't do more or appreciate more those Fathers Days we had together.

Storytelling on Father's Day

So where does that leave us? What do we do? Well, I have posted about [sulking for Father's Day](#). We have posted on [supporting kids who can't remember their dads on Father's Day](#). We have posted deeply [moving words from one grieving father to another](#). But what we haven't talked about, despite it being something I make the conscious effort to do this time of year, is storytelling.

Without many specific Father's Day memories, what this day pushes me to remember and share are the little things about my dad, who he was, and what he did. It makes me want to share stories and anecdotes with the people who never met him. It prompts me to spend some time remembering the little memories that start to fade and to share them all over again. I know many of us do this often anyway, but it can be nice to have a reason. It can be nice to share with someone for the first time something about your child or about your father that you have never told them before.

I appreciate so much when people trust us enough to share their memories of loved ones. We know it isn't easy, so we never take for granted how nice it is to be let in on those memories. I shared this on Instagram just the other day, and I'll share it again here:

This is the window in our office, the one you often see in our photos from the inside. When we first came to see this space a year and a half ago we raved about how beautiful the window was and the light it let in. Once we got to talking with the landlord about what we do, he shared that he and his dad bought this amazing old building together nearly thirty years ago. He told us that the old window was falling apart was nearly irreparable. But rather than let it go, his father painstakingly took the whole window apart, saving and restoring the original wood and glass, committed to the integrity and history of the building. His dad died a number of years ago, but he explained that the window always makes him think of his dad. And now, even though I never once met the man who restored this window, I often think of him. I remember that story, with so much gratitude, when I look up at it on my way in, or when I appreciate its amazing light in our office. Especially around this time of year I sometimes find myself sad about all the people in my life who never got to know my dad, and who never will. In those moments I try to think of all the people who, though they never met him, get to know little bits of him through me – through little stories and anecdotes. All this to say, with Father's Day coming up, tell your stories. Share your memories. Love lives on in so many ways.

A post shared by Whatsyourgrief (@whatsyourgrief) on Jun 11, 2019 at 2:49p

A Letter from The Editor

Hello Friends,

Registration is now open for the Compassionate Friends 45th National Conference. I'll be very honest with you, I'm not relishing the idea of visiting Houston, Texas in August. It's HOT! I've been assured that the Marriot has air conditioning. So off to Texas I will go, to heal my heart and sooth my soul. If you have the opportunity to attend the conference, I encourage you to go. It is a worthwhile, comforting and emotional event. Members who have attended previous conferences had nothing but good things to say about the experience. I came home from the 2019 conference in Philadelphia feeling comforted, rejuvenated, informed and ready to take on my grief. If you're going, bring your bathing suit. They have a pool!

Love and Peace
Susan
Michael's mom

