



March- April 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 March 15, 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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<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/>

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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.

We would like to thank the following members for their generous donations to support our chapter:

Marie and David Roberts in memory of Jason

Carol Patton in memory of David and Billy

Scott Higgins and Lois Clark in memory of Chris

The Jackson Family in memory of Matthew

Connie Toby in memory of Zachary

Donna and Ralph in memory of Garth and Lauren

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.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

For 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.

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS - MARCH

Cory Abernathy 3/24
Zachary Anderson 3/5
Jack Hicks 3/26
Mary-Mattison Burnett 3/1
Vincent Chandler Edmund 3/19
Michael Crites 3/31
Alexander M. Williams 3/12
Jennifer Eanes 3/18
Lauren Ehele 3/8
Cliff Golla 3/21
Lauren Marshall 3/22
Homer Denver Graham III 3/25
Donald McDermott 3/17
Missy Minor 3/8
Jason Lubeznik 3/14

Anthony McLain 3/29
Samantha Mertz 3/15
Aiden Miller 3/24
Isaac Rowell 3/21
Christina Rupp 3/19
Keaundra Sheats 3/8
Danielle Jean Callahan 3/29
Robert Hunter Moyer 3/4
Jimmy Zacharias 3/31

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR ANGEL DAYS -
MARCH

Brandon Baldwin 3/26
Phillip Jason Bell 3/13
Kevin Bell 3/1
Dan Biffi 3/11
Nick Brendle 3/23
Andrea Skillman 3/25
Eric Carlson 3/9
Alexander M. Williams 3/12
Nathan Eply 3/1
Michael Gregory Finlay 3/15
Steve Hale 3/18
Chase Austin McCowie 3/23
Scott Aaron Katowitz 3/13
Joshua Brian Bronson 3/15
Joey McKee 3/3
Lance Ferguson 3/2
Chaylan Tucker 3/27
Veronica Nicholson 3/4
Jaqueline Nicholson 3/4
Cherilyn Jane Crawford 3/24
Hannah Quinton 3/26
Jason Kendall Ray 3/26

Jason Christopher Roberts 3/5
Christopher Eastman Tilsch 3/21
Allen Doak 3/9
Cory Vincent 3/3
Robert Hunter Moyer 3/4
Jonathan Holt Whitlow 3/31
Javon Brown 3/23
Derik Brown 3/23
Nicholas Cherry 3/26
Christopher Diehl 3/8

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS -
APRIL

Brad Aylward 4/6
Nick Brendle 4/25
Christian Buell 4/12
Lauren Campbell 4/27
Kevin Carosa 4/1
Fausto DE Los Santoa 4/2
Garth Marshall 4/23
Ryan Jamal Hayes 4/1
Jaxson Hill 4/26
Luke Hoover 4/20
Brady Hopkins 4/27
Jordan Horeth 4/4
Sean McCormick 4/8
Michael Kern 4/30
Russell Kershaw 4/30
Joshua Brian Bronson 4/10
Gevaughnti Lawson 4/25
Jeremy Lewis 4/26
William Buchanan 4/19
Brien Smart 4/15
Jason Smart 4/24
Andrew John Wesley 4/12
Laura Whittaker 4/21
Joey McKee 4/7

Gina Rosette Samuels 4/20
Michael Schexnayder 4/22
Cory Vincent 4/17

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR ANGEL DAYS -
APRIL

Kyle Bennett Allen 4/18
Peter Fowler 4/5
Will Blottman 4/26
Tarell Cooper 4/6
Nicholas Daniel 4/24
Fausto De Los Santoa 4/12
Creed Campbell 4/15
Garth Marshall 4/23
Donald McDermott 4/25
Jordan Horeth 4/7
Jordi Bone 4/26
Sergio Huerta Jr. 4/25
Carl S. Olsen 4/24
Michael Kern 4/13
Brian Michael Kirchner 4/29
Bradley Lovell 4/6
Andy Yeager 4/20
Brittany Williams 4/14
Jamie McKinley 4/9
Jonah L. Gray 4/21
Kyle Bodord 4/23
Adam Powalski 4/12
Gina Rosetta Samuels 4/29
Loren Silva 4/12
Darron Stitt 4/1

The Bumpy Road

The other day I sat alone and realized my heart was not as heavy. Oh, there are still times when I miss my child desperately, but I seem to rebound sooner now. Then the phone rang—another mother called to lean on me. She must have known that I was ready. I listened, she shared and oh how I felt for her. When we said good-bye, I sat again but not as alone this time. New strength and pride came in knowing I had lent a helping hand. My child's death has taught me so much new, a lot I wished I had never known. But since I do now know what others face, perhaps the bumpy road I've traveled can be made smoother for another.

A Bereaved Mother

The Grief of a Parent Who Has Lost an Infant

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should the child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for parents. No parent ever expects to outlive the child; the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to the parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant. 1. Shame and Guilt - Especially if the infant was stillborn or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman. "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die

months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault. 2. No Memories - Parents may only have "souvenirs of the occasion" (birth certificate, I.D. bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older, they may have pictures and a few belongings, but they still feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child. 3. Loneliness in Grief - It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is newborn, they may give the impression you are grieving unnecessarily, they hope you can "forget this baby" and "have another one." 4. Neglected Fathers - Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby, too. 5. Mothers vs. Fathers - Since the mother has bonded with her child during the pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father's, who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

Claire McGaughey and Sue Shelley TCF St. Louis, MO
(Lovingly borrowed from the TCF Wilmington newsletter)

Honoring Unhappiness

I have re-read the book *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl more times than I can count. In it, Frankl quotes from a paper written by Edith Weisskopf-Joelson, who had been a professor at the University of Georgia. She wrote, "Our current mental-hygiene philosophy stresses the idea that people ought to be happy, that *unhappiness* is a symptom of maladjustment....in the present day culture of the United States, the incurable sufferer is given very little opportunity to be proud of his suffering and to consider it ennobling rather than degrading...so that he is not only unhappy, but also ashamed of being unhappy."

It is my hope that all bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings will have the chance to feel that our unhappiness is honored and respected by others suffering similarly. I

hope we will find validation, whether from the embrace of others at chapter meetings, from words read in a newsletter, or from conversations with other bereaved parents and siblings. I hope we will not be ashamed of being unhappy. And when our time is right, I hope we may find some moments of joy and peace even as we keep our grief for our lost children and siblings.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

HEART CONNECTIONS – THE BONDS OF SHARED GRIEF

By Shari O’Loughlin

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

The Compassionate Friends credo begins with these words:

*We need not walk alone.
We are The Compassionate Friends
We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.
The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes,
but our love for them unites us.*

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

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

THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile,
That first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us of ways to deal.

It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.

Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs.
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.

NANCY MYERHOLTZ

TCF Waterville/Toledo, OH

For You, Michael Gabriel

From Mom

Dandelion fluffs float on wind gusts,
Like parachutes, delicate memories,
Tucked away since childhood, fall.

Moments dance before me,
Awakening images locked deep in the past -
Proud baby steps circling the carpet, your first steps.
Bedtime stories read with love;

Snuggle deep, my son, under cozy covers.

“Read, Mommy, read,” he’d plead,
New letters, new words, drawings and imaginings,
Of fantastical places, magical things.
Of course, I would read,

Till eyelids grew heavy and he’d fall sleep . . .
“. . . I pray the Lord my soul to keep.”
Sleep till tomorrow, and tomorrow again,
Life never hinted this would all end.
No little angel knocked at my door,
To warn me someday this would all be no more.

His world of Legos, bikes and stuff,
Transformers, Dungeons and Dragons,
Were never enough;
Skateboards and snowboards and sports through the ages.
Then off to the world as life turned its pages.

I never thought it would unravel so fast . . .
That tomorrows would crash,
That his life would not last.

God chose to take him before he took me.
No, that’s not the way, the way it should be.

A mother's not supposed to outlive her child,
Stand at his coffin, still be alive,
She should not be the one who says goodbye.

But death passed me by and took him instead,
In the flash of a moment, my son was dead.
Memories we made, my life and his,
Naïve, I believed he had decades to live.

No, he had no more days, not one more tomorrow -
Memories, like puffs of dandelions, are now filled with sorrow.
They knock at my door and dance through my mind,
As he sleeps through eternity . . . I follow behind.

Miss you forever, Son, till I die.

Loretta Krause

TCF Charlotte, NC

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello Friends,

Shortly after my son Michael passed away, a dear friend gave me the book, Healing After Loss- Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief by Martha Whitman Hickman. It's a thoughtful book that provides comfort and hope. I would like to share with you, her entry for February 28th.

“It comes to us a revelation at first-an astonishment-almost an occasion of guilt. We can be happy!

Maybe we thought it would not happen, that our life would forever be colored with pain, that no moment would be free of it.

There is a way in which we are right: no moment is ever free of the life history that has preceded it. And we don't want that. One of the things we sometimes fear-needlessly-is that, having lost a loved one, we will lose the memory of the loved one as well. That will not happen.

But we will lose, or be released from, the overwhelming cloud of gloom which for a while may seem our daily portion. Part of that is up to us. We can decide not to be happy again. It may take a lot of work-never to be happy again-but we can do it if we want to.

How much better-and how much more a tribute to the one we have lost-to walk out from under our cloud, so that when we come upon a butterfly in the winter woods, we will be able to see it.”

It took me a few years to walk out from under my cloud. It didn't happen all at once either. Little by little I would find myself singing along with the tune on the radio or being intrigued by the rainbow appearing in the sprinkler mist. I know my child would not want me to exist in a state of “unhappy”. Michael would want me to see the butterfly!

Love and Peace

Susan
Michael's mom