

### Monthly Meeting

November 9, 2006

*Always the second Thursday of the month*

### Topic:

The topic for this month's meeting is  
"Handling the Holidays"

The holidays are coming! How on earth do you face holidays soon after your child has died? Yet, if you have other children, you feel obligated to make holidays special for them, to give them good memories to offset the unhappiness you're all experiencing.

These and other questions will be addressed by some of our veteran bereaved parents who have survived previous holidays. Please join us.

### Meeting Time & Location

7:30 P.M.

Pelham Rd. Baptist Church,  
Family Life Center  
1108 Pelham Rd., Greenville, SC

We acknowledge the following gifts with sincere gratitude and deep appreciation in Memory of:

- **Rachel Marie Schmidt**  
~by Hilan Pugliese, Aunt Lynel,  
Uncle Dave, Zana and Asher Katz

### My Best Suggestion

How I struggled that first Thanksgiving after Wade died to see how in the world I could possibly be thankful. The idea came to me to separate the two – what I could never be thankful for, from those things for which I was still thankful in spite of the tragedy that had come. I wrote my two lists on paper, and it helped!

Janet Reindle  
TCF – Houston, TX

## **Mark Your Calendars Dec. 14th**

Our December 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter Meeting will include a *Slide Show Presentation* honoring our children. We've had these in the past during different times of the year and it's always been a beautiful and moving experience for all who attend. If your child's picture has already been included in our presentation, there is no need to re-submit, however if you are new to Compassionate Friends and would like to have your child's picture included in the slide show, please submit them by e-mail to:

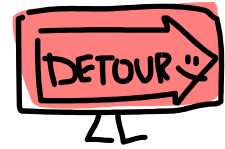
[Janisgow@msn.com](mailto:Janisgow@msn.com). Please put "TCF Pictures" in the subject line. You can also mail to: Janis Gow, 520 Dean Rd., Greer, SC 29651. All pictures must be received no later than **Nov 30<sup>th</sup>** in order to be included.



### Giving and Receiving

The secret of The Compassionate Friends' success is simple. There is no line between being a helper and being helped. In the early months of membership, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying, and letting the grief flow – and learning the ropes of being a bereaved parent. The next step is reaching out to other and helping them. It is not a big step, for listening to another person sort out his life helps us to sort out our lives too. But it is an important step, because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed. All the energy had been going inward. We felt so empty inside that we kept withdrawing into ourselves. But we turn around when we first listen to another, when we speak the words of comfort and hope, and share their pain instead of just feeling our pain. At that time, the real healing has started.

Dennis Klass – St. Louis, MO



### **Detour of the Month Thanksgiving**

Well, here it is – detour time again - just when you were about headed back to the main road after Halloween. Some out there think of the four months of October, November, December and January as the holiday season, but we know better, don't we? We know they're really the "Detour" season, and I don't have to tell you why, do I?

About this time last year I had a really good laugh when I received a letter from a member of the Atlanta Chapter where she told me, among other things, that she and her husband and their two young boys were heading for Florida over Thanksgiving. "We are not," she said "going to sit around a turkey and pretend to be thankful." Now, that's not observing that day in a traditional way. Do whatever it is that you need to do this year, if Thanksgiving is a problem. Explain to those who really care about you that this year will, by necessity, be different. Hope they will understand, but if they don't, let it be their problem, for your needs are paramount right now.

I'm happy to report that I look forward to our traditional day now. (Let me tell you, there was a time I didn't!) I hope you will soon reach that place, if you haven't already. I just want to assure you that nowhere is it carved in stone that you must sit around a turkey pretending.

Mary Cleckley  
TCF – Atlanta, GA

*The tears are fewer  
The sadness less often  
But the memories are strong*


G. Kuwalek ~ TCF, Livonia, MI

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**The November newsletter is lovingly dedicated to the memory of all our Children . . . gone too soon.**

**Our Children Remembered:**

Pamela Askew – 2/18/82 ~ 11/21/00  
Clayton Bagwell – 7/15/79 ~ 11/7/02  
Russell Baldwin – 11/27/79 ~ 7/9/05  
Deanna Boland – 11/12/63 ~ 7/15/90  
Eric Scott Gow – 4/6/71 ~ 11/4/91  
Bryan Gregory – 5/31/71 ~ 11/25/71  
Matt House – 7/20/74 ~ 11/6/92  
Robert J. Howell – 11/11/92 ~ 10/11/93  
John Johnson II – 11/30/61 ~ 11/12/89  
Brian King – 5/20/82 ~ 11/10/03  
Patrick Lay – 5/31/85 ~ 11/2/00  
Allison Leslie – 11/24/80 ~ 12/18/98  
Collin Lienau – 11/11/05 ~ 11/11/05  
Ben Morris – 8/18/76 ~ 11/18/95  
Josh Nichols – 11/15/78 ~ 5/3/01  
Jeremy Owens – 5/15/75 ~ 11/12/98  
Kristen Posey – 11/15/83 ~ 9/19/02  
Christopher Reeves – 8/18/82 ~ 11/8/02  
Terri Thomas – 10/22/79 ~ 11/22/04  
Amy Wilkinson – 12/3/67 ~ 11/5/2000

 Grieving is such a roller-coaster ride. One day we think the worst is over, that we're really beginning to pick up our lives again. The next day – or the next hour – it's as though it was all fresh, and we have made no progress at all.

We need to remember that recovery from grief is not a smooth uphill path. There will be many setbacks, many side paths onto which we are led, before we can continue our journey out of the valley of sadness.

Better not waste our energy castigating ourselves that we're not "doing better." We're doing as well as we can, and these "tempests" and setbacks are all part of the process. So let us expect them, accept them when they come, then take a deep breath and move on.

*Martha Whitmore Hickman  
Excerpted from Healing After Loss ©1994*



**Thankful vs. Thankless**

This is the time of year when many bereaved parents start saying out loud what newly bereaved parents have been thinking for weeks and weeks – "*I really am dreading the holidays.*" And why not? When your grief is so new, you haven't had the necessary time to accept life as it is for you now.

On the other hand, there are those of us who have had that necessary time and the proper support who are able to observe the holidays in a less painful way. We have kept some of the old traditions that warm our hearts and thrown out those that are either too painful or meaningless now. We have created a life that doesn't include someone who was a vital part of who and what we were. We're different now, doing different things because losing a child forces you into that position if you are to survive in an emotionally healthy way.

The words **thankful** and **thankless** follow one another in my dictionary; so close together in a book, yet so far apart in meaning. When you think about it,

the difference between the two words is *full* and *less*. Though those of us who have had more time do, like the more newly bereaved, have less in the way of family, our lives still do have a fullness because we have learned to be thankful and appreciate that which we have left in the way of people and memories – more so than we ever thought possible.

As you approach this Thanksgiving, if you haven't yet been able to make your adjustment, I hope you will feel what you must for now because whatever you are feeling is okay. It isn't until you have reached the place in your grief where the ability to make good choices returns to your life that you can make some important changes in how you approach the holidays. I hope the transition from *thankless* to *thankful* will be soon in coming for you, for that will mean some peace has returned to your life. Above all, I do wish you peace during this holiday season. I wish you more of the same in the New Year.

*By Mary Cleckley-Lawrenceville, GA*



Every month at our meeting, we provide a birthday table. In the month of your child's birthday, please bring pictures and small mementos of your child to place on the table. You may also bring a favorite cake, cookies, or other snacks, flowers or a candle for the table in memory of your child. We do this to celebrate our children's lives and to share their special day with others who understand.