

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Post Office Box 25573 Greenville, South Carolina 29616

(864) 288-9820 www.tcofgreenvillesc.org



July, 2008 Meeting

Always the second Thursday of the month

Topic:

Investing in Other People's Lives as a Way of Healing

Facilitated by:

Teresa Cothran

Meeting Time & Location

7:30 P.M.

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

Compassionate Friends A Safe Place to Talk

There is a need to talk, without trying to give reasons. No reason is going to be acceptable when you hurt so much. A hug, the touch of a hand, expressions of concern, a willing listener was and still is the things that helped the most. The people who were the greatest help were not judgmental. It's most helpful when people understand that what is needed is to talk about it and that this is part of the grief process.

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not The Compassionate Friends will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

TO OUR MEMBERS WHO ARE FURTHER DOWN THE "GRIEF ROAD"

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. **THINK BACK** – what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"



Fourth of July

Each Year on the 4th of July we celebrate the birth of a great nation - a nation of people "united" in a dream. It was through hope, determination and a bonded strength that the people of America strived to achieve their dream of freedom to be a free nation. Nothing, however, is achieved without a strong will. We, too, as bereaved parents are fighting a battle to be free - free of the pain that has become a part of our waking days. We want to be happy. We want to be able to enjoy life again. You are one of those proud Americans. Refuse to give up. Fight for your dream. There is peace to be found in freedom!

*~written by a member of TCF,
Homdel, NJ*



Stolen Moments

I got to see my belly getting larger.
I got to see my babies on a screen.
I got to feel them moving inside me.
I got to experience the feeling of them kicking.
While that is amazing,
What I lost is even greater.
I had the honor of giving birth,
But not the privilege of bringing them home.
I will never get to hold them alive.
I will never hear their first words,
See their first steps, Or watch them grow.
I will never get to hug them,
Comfort them and protect them.
I will never get to hear them
Tell Mommy and Daddy how much they love them.
I will never get to experience the adventure
Of being a mother of twins.
In my heart, I'm a mother
But In reality I m not.
I will never know how they would have looked and been like.
But I did get to learn sacrifice,

And I will always be able to love them.

Emily

From C.L.I.M.B. (Center For Loss In Multiple Birth) www.climb.org

What I Wanted

I wanted to hold your sticky little hand
as we walk through the park
to hear you squeal
as I push you high on the swing
and to hear you say
"One more time Grammy"
as I caught you at the bottom of the slide
I wanted to watch you splash
in the wading pool in my back yard
and to lay on our backs in the cool
summer grass
and talk about the shapes that clouds
make
I wanted to lift you from the tub
and wrap you in a towel
holding you close as I pat you dry
and hear you beg for one more bedtime
story
before I turn off the light
I wanted to sing to you
songs of joy in the morning
action songs during the day
soft lullabies full of love as darkness
falls
and of course Alice's Restaurant at
Thanksgiving
I wanted to watch you grow
from baby to little girl to young lady
to see you dressed up for your first
prom
to comfort you after your first heartbreak
to cry with joy on your wedding day
I wanted you so much

*-Nina Bennett - Grandmother
7 June 2005 From A.G.A.S.T. (Alliance of
Grandparents A Support in Tragedy)
online newsletter. www.agast.org*

Sometimes our hearts
Borrow from our yesterdays,
And with each remembrance
We meet again with those we love.

Flavia

The July, 2008 Newsletter is lovingly dedicated to the memory of all our Children . . . gone too soon.

Our Children Remembered:

Clayton Bagwell
Jamie Bagwell
Russell Lee Baldwin
Deanna Kaye Boland
Bryan Lee Denny
Quinn Hall
Justin Hix
Matt House
Deborah Anne Jolley
Jeremy Knoke
Victor Lawson
Damon Asa Leonard
Jeremy McIntyre
Tim McKelder
Krystal Milwood
Josh Prichett
Melissa Lyday Rowland
Donny Wilkinson
Amanda Camille Williams

A recent memo from our National Headquarters has urged the local TCF Chapters **NOT** to publish the birthdates of our children. This is because birthdates are often used to commit identity theft. TCF Greenville will comply with this recommendation as identity theft would lead to further grief for our bereaved families. We hope that all will understand this concern.

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

Hannah Marie Linder by Mr. and Mrs. M.E. Linder

Amanda Camille Williams by Ms. Julia Muirhead

Rememberance

In the light of day
I awake with thoughts of you
In the dark of night
I sleep with thoughts of you
Is it grief or disbelief?

Evan Filmore, Huntington, UT

We Wear the Mask

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,--
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.
Why should the world be overwise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.
We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise
We wear the mask!
by Paul Laurence Dunbar



The Mask

I have a face I put in place;
It's what I wear when folks are there.

For those only who want to see
the way they think I ought to be.

I live in times that have no light,
just cloudy darkness, endless night.

I no longer see the sun,
I laugh but never feel the fun.

When I arise to start a day,
I stumble as I make my way.

I don't know who's really me,
I'm not the one I used to be.

I have no heart to fill with joy,
I lost it when I lost my boy.

The future is so bleak to me,
I choose to not let others see.

So when people stop to ask,
I hide behind my smiling mask.

by Dianna J. Brendle



TCF NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

If you are a Bi-Lo shopper with a **BONUS CARD**; you can support TCF by enrolling in the Bi-Lo Booster Club. Greenville TCF qualifies as a non-profit organization for this program, and can earn up to \$3,000 per year.

Why is my support needed? With your donations through the Bi-Lo Booster Club we are able to reach out to bereaved parents, grandparents, step-parents, and siblings with this newsletter, our chapter library, and grief pamphlets. The donations also help to defray our postage costs and other expenditures necessary to keep our chapter in operation.

What is my cost to support TCF? Your **only** cost is the time and effort to have your TCF Bar Code scanned once every school year.

How do I enroll? Simply take your enrollment card (the bar code included in this newsletter) to a Bi-Lo & have it scanned with your BONUSCARD. **You must enroll each school year** by scanning the bar code enrollment card.

When are the enrollment periods? Enrollment opens on July 1st and closes on April 30th. Therefore, May & June are the only months you can NOT enroll in the program. TCF does not earn any money **until you enroll**, so the earlier you enroll, the more money we receive.

Do I have to use the enrollment card bar code each time I shop? No, you only need to use it once every school year.

Do I have to shop at the Bi-lo where I enrolled as a member for my purchases to count for TCF? No. Every Bi-Lo store is a member.

Do you have to be a member of TCF to participate in this program? No. You can give friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc. an enrollment card & TCF will still receive the benefits.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



TCF National Office

The Compassionate Friends

P.O. Box 3696

Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696

Toll Free: 877-969-0010

Fax: 630-990-0246

E-mail:

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Website: www.compassionatefriends.com

TCF National Memory Book

If you would like to have your child's name put in the TCF National Memory Book, please send the following information concerning your child to our National Office. ***Child's Full Name, Date of Birth, Date of Death, Relationship to child, Your Name, Address, and Zip Code. Also include Your Phone Number and E-mail Address.***

Love Gifts – A Way to Remember

There are no dues to belong to Compassionate Friends, because we have already paid the ultimate price; the loss of our loved one(s). *A Love Gift is a gift of money given in honor Of a child who has died from their family members or as a memorial from friends. Your gifts are tax deductible and are used to reach out to other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Your gifts support this newsletter, our TCF Library, and other Chapter expenses.*

Birthday Table

Every month at our Chapter 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 snack in memory of your child. We do this to celebrate and honor our children and to share their special day with others who understand.

Useful Web Sites

www.compassionatefriends.org - TCF National web site. Be sure to visit the ***Other Grief Resources*** section and the ***Sibling Resources***, and the ***Community Online Support*** Section of the National web site.

www.tcfogreenvillesc.org - Greenville, SC Chapter web site.

www.SpiritLyric.com - great grief website with several links to many grief resources including other grief web sites, books, music, etc.

www.suicidereferencelibrary.com - contains very good grief information about suicide and general grief.

www.alivealone.org - Alive Alone for bereaved parents whose only child or all children have died.

www.bereavedparentsusa.org - information for bereaved families and newsletters.

TCF National Convention

Check www.compassionatefriends.com for recent updates. You can register online for the conference as well as signing up for a vinyl record with your child's photo on it as a remembrance of your child. You do **NOT** have to attend the conference to obtain a vinyl record.

TCF Library

We invite you to check out books from our library. We are pleased that you might find a book that may help you or your family. If you have any books you would like to donate to our library that will be great. On the inside front cover of the book please put "Donated in Memory of (Your Child's Name)", and your child's birth and death dates. Also include your name and the date donated.

Newsletter Submissions

If you would like to submit an original poem or a poem of special meaning for you; you can send it to our co-editors Denise Gonzalez and Dick Renner at the following address:

The Compassionate Friends

P.O. Box 25573

Greenville, SC 29616

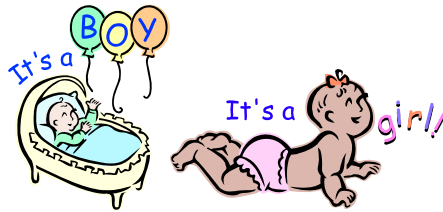


A Grandparent's Point of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives—family, friends, and even strangers. I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the special love we have for our grandchildren and the loss we feel when the child dies. For grandparents, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day. The smile that was always on my daughter's face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep and there are so many questions. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss the hurt away as you did when they were a child. You have no answers for their questions, for you can barely understand your own feelings.

Each day I hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on my daughter's face. I search for a little something to say or do that will comfort her. It seems that there is no end to the suffering. As time has slowly gone by, I have seen the healing process begin. In time a ray of hope will shine on my daughter's face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to me for what little comfort I can give her. There will always be a part of me that is gone, but in time I will learn to live with the part that is still there.

*--Ruth Eaton
TCF- Savannah, GA*



Just an Infant

We had a fine discussion, you and I, talking about those who don't understand our loss and how we feel; peers in grief. And then you asked my son's age at death, and I could see your change of attitude as I replied "three months," our talk was over. Having lost an older child you decided that what we both felt couldn't be the same, for your child was with you longer; and my child was just an infant. But our loss and our pain are not that different, for through the death of our child, we have lost the same thing; dreams of the future. Yes, you have more memories than I, but we have both lost the tomorrows of our children, and that pain knows no minimum age. God, it hurts. All of the things we've wished for our child, with no regard to age, now will not come to pass; that future is gone. Yes, my son was an infant, but that does not lessen the love that I have, as the age of your child does not affect your love; love is an ageless emotion. And when my young son died, he carried away in his little hands as many dreams, hopes, and love as your child did when he left; I miss you Alex.

*Doug Hughes TCR Cincinnati, OH
It's so hard to watch your child grow up in your mind!*



Questions Without Answers

At different times in our grieving process we may find ourselves looking for answers, wondering if we are losing our minds, wondering if others have struggled with similar concerns and questions. We do not offer any answers. Although you may find it helpful to discover how group members have chosen to deal with certain issues relevant to you.

We offer these questions in support of your own unique expression of grief. We, too, have been and continue to be seeking answers to questions that may not have answers:

"Why can't I cry?"

"Why can't I stop crying?"

"What if I hadn't listened to the doctor and trusted myself more?"

"Why would God take such a beautiful, loving child?"

"How do I answer when asked 'how many children do you have?'"

"How do I reconcile my religious and/or spiritual beliefs with the death of my child?"

"I know my husband loved our son as much as me; why isn't he showing it?"

"I'm so angry – at everybody and everything. How long will this last? Is it normal?"

"These things are not supposed to happen to good, faithful people. How can this be true?"

"Why didn't I see this coming?"

"How could I have missed my daughter's symptoms?"

"Why didn't I push harder; I knew this could happen?"

Baltimore, MD TCF Website

Toeholds

If you are out there and haven't been able to attend a meeting - or even if you have, but still find yourself "yo-yoing," you have to know that this is the way the road to recovery is. Would that it were a road that angled straight up, but it isn't. The road is full of hills and valleys and you are first up and then down, thinking for a day or two that you have this thing under control only to find yourself down in the valley again the next day. What you can't see when you are in the middle of all this is that each time you slip back, you don't slip all the way back to the bottom of the hole. Each time you climb out, you make yourself some toeholds that enable you to give yourself a boost. You eventually learn that there are some things you can do to help yourself. These toeholds help you to inch your way to the top again. Also, they stop your slide so that you don't have to go to the bottom of that hole each time.

We make progress in such small amounts that it is difficult sometimes for us to realize that we are progressing. Try not to judge your progress from day to day, week to week or even month to month. I find that it is better for me to judge my progress from year to year. That way I can better remember how I was at handling a particular event last year as compared to how I handled that event this year. I can see my progress, and I am again encouraged to know that I am moving ahead. I'm thankful for my toeholds.

*Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA*