

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Post Office Box 25573 Greenville, South Carolina 29616

(864) 288-9820 [www.tcfogreenvillesc.org](http://www.tcfogreenvillesc.org)



## **September 2008 Meeting**

*Always the second Thursday of the month*

### **Topic:**

Complicated Grief

### **Facilitated by:**

Norm and Alice Raiford

### **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!"

## **Empty Places**

I drove the old way yesterday.  
It'd been a while, you see.  
And there, without a warning,  
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday  
and sadness came on strong,  
taken back by so much feeling,  
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait  
to summon up the tears,  
to say remember yesterday,  
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played  
are places where I cry.  
These places hold the memories  
that will live as long as I.

*Genesse Gentry  
TCF, Marin Cnty CA*



Accept me as I am  
Grieving, pained  
Empty, lonely

Just love me  
And allow me to feel  
What I must feel.

One day I will begin to heal -  
I know not when.  
Don't be afraid of me -  
It is still me -

Struggling to find myself -  
outside of this pain.  
Please just be my friend.

*-Marilyn Henderson  
TCF/Pacific Northwest*

## **FEELINGS**

We feel sad for what we have lost.  
We feel happy, for what we have had.  
We feel poor, for the empty spaces.  
We feel rich, for we have each other.  
We will cry, for what we can't have.  
We will laugh, for our memories  
abound.  
We will hurt, for the love we can't give.  
We will rejoice, for the love we have  
received.  
We will be restless, for our lives are  
not whole.  
We will be peaceful, for we know it is  
not forever.

*Annette Hamilton,  
TCF Prince George, BC*

## **Message of Hope**

A whispered wish of remembrance  
Silent words of loss  
A song of good bye  
An unspoken prayer for lasting peace  
A message of hope  
Rejoice for the spirit that has passed.  
Release the sorrow and the sadness.  
Rebuild a life again.  
Emerging from your cocoon so gently  
placed  
Sensing the freedom in the waiting sky  
Wings open and quickly a flight  
A drift in the air dancing with the wind  
A glow in the sunlight.  
The message of hope  
Touching the spirit  
Teaching to begin anew  
Transforming the wish into hope  
on the radiant wing of a butterfly.

*By Kristi Dyer*



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

### Our Children Remembered:

They are loved, missed, and alive in our heart and our mind; never to be forgotten.

#### SEPTEMBER 2008

Kimberly Bennett  
Kelly Anne Bennett  
Chase Bowen  
Jeremy James Brooks  
Stephanie Corder  
Allan McGill Dobson  
Michael John Dorsey  
Jill Dunlap  
Christopher ("Chris") Ellison  
Robert Edward Ewing  
Timothy R. Gilbert  
EJ (Esteban Joseph) Gonzalez  
Holden Ender Gregory  
David Johnson  
Timothy ("Tim") Malone  
Olivia Skye Moser  
Kim Callahan-Patterson  
Amy Beth Pieszchala  
Kristen Denise Posey  
Josh Pritchett  
Matthew Robert Renner  
Jason P. Satterfield  
Molly Densmore Sheridan  
John Wesley Turner III  
Daniel Walker  
Jason Warlick  
Brett Warren  
Lynn Cobb Watson  
Joey Williamson

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:

Jeremy James Brooks by  
Ms. Martha Brooks

Christopher (Chris) Ellison by  
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Ellison

Jacob Alexander Nicholson by  
Ms. Dorothy C. Adkins

Matthew Robert Renner by Mr.  
and Mrs. Richard J. Renner



#### GRIEF SEMINAR SPONSORED BY THOMAS McAFEE FUNERAL HOME FEATURING DR. THERESE RANDO "Coping With the Loss of a Loved One"

The Compassionate Friends of Greenville, SC is one of the co-sponsors of this seminar. We encourage all our readers to attend this seminar. It will be a beneficial investment of your time. Date, time, and location are on the outside cover page of this newsletter with your address label on it. At the end of the seminar you will be able to (1) Differentiate between loss, secondary loss, grief, and mourning. (2) Appreciate the presence of trauma in most major losses. (3) Understand the difference in grief after anticipated deaths and those that are sudden and unexpected. (4) Identify at least ten courses of action that will help a mourner accommodate his/her loss healthily. (5) Describe what can and cannot be expected as a mourner goes on after the death of a loved one.

#### DIRECTIONS TO THE CAROLINA EXPO JAMES WOODSIDE CONFERENCE CENTER

I - 85 TO Exit 51 C (I -385 North)

I - 385 North to Exit 40B (291 South)

291 South to 3<sup>rd</sup> Stop Light (Tower Dr.)

Left at Tower Drive for about 0.1 mile)

Left onto Eisenhower Dr. for 0.1 mile James Woodside Conference Center is on your right.

TO DATE; ONLY 9 PEOPLE HAVE ENROLLED IN THE BI-LO BOOSTER CLUB. IN 2007, WE HAD 64 PEOPLE ENROLLED. PLEASE CONSIDER ENROLLING.

### 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 1<sup>st</sup> and closes on April 30<sup>th</sup>. 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](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)

Website:  
[www.compassionatefriends.com](http://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](http://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, as well as the chat room sections of the National web site.

[www.tcfogreenvillesc.org](http://www.tcfogreenvillesc.org) - Greenville, SC Chapter web site.

[www.SpiritLyric.com](http://www.SpiritLyric.com) - great grief website with several links to many grief resources including other grief web sites, books, music, etc.

[www.suicidreferencelibrary.com](http://www.suicidreferencelibrary.com) - contains very good grief information about suicide and general grief.

[www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org) - Alive Alone for bereaved parents whose only child or all children have died.

[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org) - information for bereaved families and newsletters.

[www.agast.org](http://www.agast.org) – Alliance of Grandparents A Support in Tragedy

[www.climb.org](http://www.climb.org) - Center for Loss in Multiple Birth

[www.teengrief@newhope-grief.org](mailto:www.teengrief@newhope-grief.org) - teenage grief web site

[www.misschildren.org](http://www.misschildren.org) – mothers in sympathy and support

[www.pomc.com](http://www.pomc.com) – a web site for parents of murdered children providing on-going emotional support and education, prevention advocacy, and awareness.



## 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 editors, Denise Gonzalez and Dick Renner at the following address:

The Compassionate Friends  
P.O. Box 25573  
Greenville, SC 29616



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Greenville, SC Chapter  
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Greenville, SC 29616

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We Need Not Walk Alone

SEPTEMBER 2008

**To those of you who are newly bereaved** and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly invite you to The Compassionate Friends. We are a self-help organization of parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the death of a loved one. We offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings, a lending library, and support materials.

Please do not be apprehensive about coming to a meeting. Every other person in the room has lost a child, grandchild or sibling. They come because they feel the need to be with someone else who understands. We know it takes courage to attend that first meeting, but those who do come find an atmosphere of understanding from others who have experienced the grief that you have now. Nothing is asked of you. There are no dues or fees and you do not have to speak. There is a special chemistry at meetings of The Compassionate Friends.

**Thomas McAfee Grief Seminar; Sept. 16, 2008 @ Carolina First Expo Center..... Free to the general public. Registration 5:45-6:45PM with Program from 6:45-9:00PM.** The speaker at this seminar is Dr. Therese Rando, a clinical psychologist and the Clinical Director of the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Loss. Dr. Rando is the author of several books on grief and is considered to be a National Media Resource Expert in dying, death, loss, and trauma.

The title of her seminar is ***"Coping With the Loss of a Loved One: How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies.*** Her seminar is designed to dispel many harmful but widespread myths about grieving and to provide practical information to enable bereaved persons to better understand and cope with loss of a significant other. There will be a discussion regarding appropriate expectations mourners can have for themselves, the different demands posed by different types of death, and constructive ways of dealing with bereavement distress.



## **Five things a Firefighter/Medic Wants you to Know** **by Aaron Espy, firefighter/paramedic**

Moms and Dads, can I talk to you for a minute? I was too busy during the emergency, and afterward- well, you both had more important matters to attend to. It doesn't matter whether you live in the Pacific Northwest or Florida, Maine or Kansas City. If your child was taken from you suddenly, there was probably someone like me in attendance who fights fire and delivers medical aid for a living. Chances are, they've struggled with the same feelings I struggle with. Here are five things I'd like to tell you. It's my hope that something I say will make your struggle through grief a little easier to manage.

### **#1 - Your Child Was Not" Just Another Patient"**

Perhaps you assume that because I've seen thousands of patients in my career, I wouldn't remember your son or daughter. Not true! Only the loss of a fellow firefighter affects us more profoundly than a child's death. When I lose a child in the line of duty, I don't leave the experience at the station. Your child's face comes home with me. I see him when I'm fishing, working in my garage, or just drifting off to sleep. I can still recall vividly the hour I spent with a little girl from a car accident almost fourteen years ago. She has a permanent place in my memory, just like your little one. (It's the inability to come to terms with these memories that drives many a firefighter from his or her career. Those of us who are old-timers in emergency medicine have learned to deal with the tragic cruelties of life we must face. Some exercise vigorously. Others, like me, write about our experiences. Sadly, there are some who are unable to cope with the pain and turn to drugs or alcohol.)

### **#2 - I Did More Than Provide Medical Care**

When I am fighting to save a child, I talk to them. It doesn't make any difference whether they're responding or not. I reassure and attempt to comfort them. If they're awake and very young, I give them a stuffed animal to hold. I do one other thing. I tell them that their mom and dad love them very much. I do this because several years ago, a mother told me "I would've given anything to tell my son I loved him just one last time." Since then, I try to tell every child that you, their parents, love them very much.

### **#3 - I Struggle With Feelings of Failure and Inadequacy**

When a firefighter/paramedic loses a child, he or she may struggle with personal feelings of failure. So often we repeatedly ask ourselves "what if" questions. "What if I'd been at a closer station? What if I'd arrived five minutes sooner? What if I'd tried another course of treatment?" It's these feelings of inadequacy that often keep a medic from approaching the parents of his patient. If a firefighter seems to be avoiding eye contact, he likely is not only struggling with his emotions, but possibly struggling with the feeling that he has failed. It's a common occurrence, despite the fact the medic may have performed flawlessly.

### **#4 - I Grieve With You**

Macho as we'd like to portray ourselves, we are by nature a group of men and women sincerely touched by the sorrow and suffering of others. That's one of the reasons we are drawn to the fire service in the first place. We have a deep, burning drive to make a difference, to alter tragedy in the making if we possibly can. Maybe it's because we feel we have an image to uphold. Whatever the reason, we firefighters tend to be good at holding our grief in check until we are alone. We present a tough-as-steel facade and inevitably do our crying in the station's hose tower or the compressor room where no one can hear us.

### **#5 - I'm Available to Answer Questions**

So often there are procedures or treatments you may not understand. They are almost always done for a very good reason, and with your child's best interest in mind. Almost without exception, the firefighters and medics who fought to save your child would be happy to answer any questions you may have. We also need to be informed when we unknowingly make comments that hurt or offend.

I won't make the mistake of telling you I know how you feel. I can try to imagine your pain, but I'm sure I could never know how it really feels unless I'd lost one of my children. I can tell you that I, and all my fellow fighters, do care. It is the chance that we will save the next victim of tragedy that keeps us doing what we're doing in the face of so much sorrow. We wish for you strength and peace on your journey.

*Aaron Espy is a Firefighter/Paramedic in semi-urban/rural Kitsap County, just west of Seattle, Washington. He has been a professional firefighter since 1980. He is a freelance writer; poet and has just launched a bimonthly column entitled "911-Fire and Rescue" for Kitsap County's primary newspaper.*

*If you would like to write Aaron, his e-mail address is QFQC13A@prodigy.com*

## HONORING AND REMEMBERING THE 911 FAMILIES

September 13, 2001

Horror, unthinkable, happened in the US on Tuesday. The exact numbers are unknown to us now, but thousands are dead.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with them," we read and hear from today's media. But you and I who have lost a loved child or children, know that it is more we feel today than thoughts and prayers. We are in shock like the rest of the nation, but we are also in pain for we know too well the horror mothers and fathers are now facing at the death of their children. These parents have entered what we live with each day, a life without our loved one.

Our "get on with your life" society isn't always kind to the grievers. Already it seems like there is the focus on showing the terrorists that we are not to be destroyed and that the American spirit cannot be crushed.

While this is a necessary action to project to the world, we know that what these new grievers need to have is support, empathy and the freedom to be devastated and immobilized. What better people than we, to offer them this support, tenderness and understanding.

I hope we can demonstrate to our broken country the loving arms and listening ears the newly bereaved of all ages need. Today the focus is on the tragedy as a nationwide event. But in time, the horror will diminish. However, the intense grief from the loss of thousands of loved ones will have only just begun.

For those of you who have had a loved one die due to any of Tuesday's events, my heart is heavy with sorrow. You have already suffered much.



Weep boldly. There is healing in tears.

*Alice J. Wisler*

*TCF Wake County Chapter Raleigh NC*

## SEPTEMBER 7, 2008 – GRANDPARENTS' DAY

### GRANDPARENTS' REMEMBRANCE

We are the grieving grandparents, the shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives. Our grief is two-fold and at times we feel powerless to help. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts. We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild, and we have lost a symbol of our immortality. As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them, and when they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together. We continue to be their guardians. We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We support the new ones, which symbolize the small steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.

*Susan Mackey  
TCF, Rutland VT*

### YES. GRANDPARENTS DO GRIEVE!

Thank God, someone stepped up and said, "Hey! This child was and is my grandchild! And I hurt too!" Not looking for sympathy, but wanting the world to know that yes, the mother and father are hurting from the loss of their little angels, but Granny and Grandpa loved these children with their hearts and souls.

Totally unconditionally! I read these letters that are sent to me, every day. My heart hurts for these parents for the loss of their children. But, please, let us not forget any of the grandparents whose loss is twofold. One for their child who is hurting so badly and for the loss of their grandchildren. I always thought my grandchildren would outlive me. At least that's the way it's supposed to be. It doesn't always work out that way. So yes, my heart also hurts for the grandparents too.

*Wanda Bryant  
TCF, Vidalia, GA*

