



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.
Fredericksburg Chapter, Fredericksburg, Virginia
Telephone Numbers: (540) 775-8430

Nonprofit Self-Help Organization for Families Who Have Experienced the Death
of a Child



APRIL 2008



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive. Parents who have experienced the death of their child at any age are welcome to attend our meetings. There are no dues. If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time, it is because someone told us our sharing might comfort you. We meet the **THIRD TUESDAY NIGHT** of each month at **7:30 PM**, at the Redeemer Lutheran Church, the fellowship hall of the church, 5120 Harrison Road, Fredericksburg, VA.

CHAPTER LEADER - Kathie Kelly

TREASURER - Clyde Richardson

OUTREACH COORDINATOR - Gloria Blake

SIBLING LEADER – Vickie Headley

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR - Odessa Cuffy

BUTTERFLY AMBASSADOR – Delores Martin-Lam

LIBRARIAN - Cathy Taylor

NEWSLETTER TEAM - Keith & Kathie Kelly

REGIONAL COORDINATORS – Chuck & Kathy Collins

4505 Rachael Manor Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22032; Phone: 703-425-9504
E-MAIL: ccollins21@cox.net

CHAPTER WEB PAGE- <http://www.geocities.com/tcffred/index.html>

CHAPTER E-MAIL - tcffred@yahoo.com

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook IL 60522-3696; Toll Free: 1-877-969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org
E-MAIL: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.
© Copyright 2008 All Rights Reserved

Chapter Leader's Corner

April showers bring May flowers, or so they say. When I think of showers I think of my son, Kevin, being with my family. Many of you may have heard "Holes in the floor of Heaven" sung by Steve Wariner, and the song talks about the rain pouring down and how this little boy's grandmother and this daughter's mother is watching and wishing they could be with them. When it rains, I think of that all the time. It seems to rain during special times and I feel that Kevin is watching and wishing he were with us. This is my way of keeping my son with me and makes me feel good, just like when we have those April showers, we know that the May flowers are not too far away. I hope you all have a wonderful holiday and remember, our children, grandchildren and siblings are with us always.

See you at the meeting.

Our meeting will be April 15, 2008 at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 5120 Harrison Road, Fredericksburg, VA in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 7:30 PM. I would like to thank Pastor Koehler for having us at his church.

If you would like to contribute something for the newsletter, deadline is April 20th for the May's newsletter. Thank you!

Well, I hope that you all have a wonderful month. If you are in need of anything, please call me at 540-775-8430, if there is no answer, please be sure to leave your name and number so I can get back to you or e-mail me at tcffred@yahoo.com.

*Your Compassionate Friend,
Kathie Kelly
Chapter Leader
Kevin Robert Kelly's Momma
7/19/94 - 5/10/98*



SILVER THREADS OF FRIENDSHIP

We speak a language of our own. We think of things that only bereaved parents think about. Let us write about them and be proud of them. Let us share with others our deepest feelings... It will help you; it may help others. The need is for bereaved parents to express themselves... To come out of hiding, to say the things they ought to say... So that others may learn about us... So that they may better help those bereaved parents who come after us.

By Margaret & Lindsay Harmer
Parents of Rhys Cameron Harmer, 8.6.62 - 28.10.73
Lifted from Words of Sorrow/Words of Love/ The Death of a Child Edited by Eva Lager

To My Dearest Family:

Some things I'd like to say, but first of all to let you know that I arrived okay. I'm writing this from Heaven where I dwell with God above where there's no more tears or sadness there's just eternal love. Please do not be unhappy just because I'm out of sight remember that I'm with you every morning, noon and night.

That day I had to leave you when my life on Earth was through. God picked me up and hugged me and He said I welcome you. It's good to have you back again you were missed while you were gone, as for your dearest family they'll be here later on. I need you here so badly as part of My big plan there's so much that we have to do to help our mortal man.

Then God gave me a list of things He wished for me to do and foremost on that list of mine is to watch and care for you. And I will be beside you every day and week and year and when you're sad I'm standing there to wipe away the tear. And when you lie in bed at night the days chores put to flight God and I are closest to you in the middle of the night.

When you think of my life on Earth and all those loving years because you're only human they are bound to bring you tears. But do not be afraid to cry it does relieve the pain remember there would be no flowers unless there was some rain.

I wish that I could tell you of all that God has planned but if I were to tell you, you wouldn't understand. But one thing is for certain though my life on Earth is over. I am closer to you now than I ever was before. And to my very many friends trust God knows what is best I'm still not far away from you I'm just beyond the crest.

There are rocky roads ahead of you and many hills to climb but together we can do it taking one day at a time. It was always my philosophy and I'd like it for you too that as you give unto the World so the World will give to you.

If you can help somebody who is in sorrow or in pain then you can say to God at night my day was not in vain. And now I am contented that my life it was worthwhile knowing as I passed along the way I made somebody smile. So if you meet somebody who is down and feeling low just lend a hand to pick him up as on your way you go.

When you are walking down the street and you've got me on your mind, I'm walking in your footsteps only half a step behind. And when you feel the gentle breeze or the wind upon your face, that's me giving you a great big hug or just a soft embrace.

And when it's time for you to go from that body to be free remember you're not going you are coming here to me. And I will always love you from that land way up above Will be in touch again soon.

P.S. God sends His Love

--Author Unknown

In loving memory of my son, Jonathan Lewis Blake
6/24/79 - 4/23/97

MRS. BUTTERWORTH

"Every supermarket decision has a family memory connected to it. You'd never expect a package of spaghetti or a can of creamed corn to leave you crying in the aisle at the store" Excerpt from Charlie Walton's book, "When There Are No Words.

Every parent who has lost a child knows these words to be true. Whether it is baby food or a toddler's newly discovered favorite food, junk food for teenagers or an adult child's old time favorite, the grocery store can be a rough trip. I lost my son, Stephen, when he was 18, so it was the junk food--potato chips, Funyums, French bread for pizzas, Ragu sauce, pepperoni, Cheetos, cheese bread, cereal of all kinds, Chex mix, and so on that haunted me and made me not want to grocery shop. But--it was the golden face of Mrs. Butterworth that brought me to my knees.

As I stared in horror at her face, I remembered sticky little handprints on the wall when the highchair had been just a little too close. I remember a chubby little toddler sitting next to me at the table, talking seriously, his green eyes wide, "I sink I saw her wink at me," he said of Mrs. Butterworth, sounding a little like Tweety Bird. "Really?" I asked. Mrs. Butterworth always winked on the commercial--she seemed so lifelike.

I took Mrs. Butterworth and made her walk toward his plate. She tripped when she was just the right distance from his plate and syrup spilled from her head right onto his pancakes. He looked at me and I saw it coming in his eyes--laughter. It seems to start deep within and rolls from their chest until they lose their breath. He cackled, he gasped, his body shook with laughter as Mrs. Butterworth regained her footing and said, :Oh, my--silly me!" He laughed even more.

Therefore, Mrs. Butterworth made a ritual of tripping and spilling syrup onto his pancakes. Sometimes she would let out a shriek as she fell; other times she would say in an embarrassed, dainty voice, something about how clumsy she was or how she had tripped over her apron. Whatever she did, he rolled.

When Stephen was 15, the two of us often shared a quick breakfast before rushing out the door. He usually ate pancakes that he cooked for himself and I joined him for a granola bar and a diet Coke. I was lost in thought one morning, a particularly stressful day ahead of me, when out of the corner of my eyes, I saw Mrs. Butterworth come walking toward me. She was helped by a hand as big as mine with slender fingers wrapped around her base.

"So-how have you been?" Mrs. Butterworth asked in a voice that tried to sound feminine but came out a little like a drag queen. She tripped suddenly and screamed in apparent horror, "Oh, crap!" she said as she stood back up. It may be the only time that Mrs. Butterworth has ever said "crap"--I'm not sure. I laughed until I was sick and left for work with a smile in my heart.

But now, I did not laugh or even smile when I saw her face. I cried. Other shoppers probably thought I was insane. I walked away. I couldn't look at her. Cheetos and Funyums and potato chips had already stabbed at me over on aisle four: Captain Crunch had almost tripped me; the Tombstone Pizzas had made me as cold as they were in the freezer just to look at them, but the little golden-faced lady broke my heart. For the next four years, I had a peculiar interest in shortening and oil--you see, they were across the aisle from Mrs. Butterworth and I had to keep my back to her. She was an old friend, but I couldn't face her. She was an intentional emotional grenade. It was a sad situation and such a shame for two who had been so close not to acknowledge each other's presence, but I just couldn't look at her.

I always knew she was there, kindly, smiling and understanding that I couldn't face her. But just last week, I felt the golden stare strongly on my back as I once again feigned interest in the Wesson and the Crisco. For the first time in four years, I dared turn and peek at her. She boasted of half the calories--so she too understood being mid-forties, huh?

I dared turn a little more to fully face the little lady who had meant so much to Stephen and me--the fully golden one with all the calories. The tears came, but a smile came with them. The memories that the golden face evoked were gently, worth remembering forever. Older grief is, indeed, kinder.



I put her in my shopping cart and took her home with me. She stands on one of the top shelves in my kitchen pantry, guarding my granola bars and my memories--handprints on a wall, a toddler's laughter, a teenager making his stressed mom laugh. And Stephen--you know, buddy, this morning when I grabbed a granola bar, I sink I saw her wink at me.

Marcia Carter, Waleska, GA, author of "Stephen's Moon"

CHAPTER INFORMATION PAGE

LOVE GIFTS

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Just as our chapter is run entirely by volunteers interested in furthering the work of TCF, your voluntary, tax-deductible donations make it possible for us to mail this monthly newsletter, contact newly bereaved parents, continue our participation in TCF/National, and meet other chapter expenses.

Often, as they find hope and healing within the group, parents make a contribution usually in memory of a child who has died, or maybe a gift of thanksgiving for their surviving children.

These contributions are our only source of funds. All proceeds given to the our chapter are used within the community for outreach and to provide a place for newly bereaved families to seek support.

Gifts are tax deductible. If you would like to make a donation, please send to The Compassionate Friends, The Fredericksburg Chapter, P.O. Box 172, King George, VA 22485. All gifts are welcome and truly appreciated. **THANK YOU!**

Mr. & Mrs. Hegna in loving memory of their son Jon Hegna

Thank you for your donations.

CHAPTER FUNDRAISER Walk to Remember Friends Asking Friends Program

You can become a unique part of TCF's Walk to Remember® when, in remembrance of a special child, you create an individual, team, or chapter group, support one of our already established teams, or make a general donation to the Walk to Remember. Your participation in this program will help raise funds for use in the support of thousands of bereaved families across the United States and its territories. All the tools you need to join in this special act of remembrance are right here!

First: Click on "Event Enrollment" on the left. Sign up as an individual participant or as a team captain (for families, chapters, or other groups). Or you can join an existing team.

Second: As an individual participant or team captain, you create a personalized web page with pictures and stories, and set a fundraising goal.

Third: Attain your fundraising goal by inviting friends and family to visit your web page and provide support.

Finally: *If you can attend and participate in the Walk to Remember being held in Nashville, Tennessee July 20, GREAT!* If you can't, celebrate the difference you are making in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people with your participation in the Walk to Remember through this special "Friends Asking Friends" program.

It's that simple.

Thank you to all our walkers, team members, team leaders, and TCF chapters accepting this opportunity through the Walk to Remember "Friends Asking Friends" program to make a difference in the lives of families that have experienced the death of a child. We cannot achieve our mission without your support! All teams raising funds through this program by July 10 will be represented by name on a banner to be carried during the Walk to Remember in Nashville July 20. Remember, "Together We Can Make a Difference!!"



TCF National Conference for 2008 in Nashville

Nashville City, known as Music City USA, home of country western music, will be the host city for the 31st national conference of The Compassionate Friends July 18-20, 2008.

The conference committee selected the theme *Volunteers for Healing—Friends for the Future*, a name that is very appropriate as TCF national conferences are always regarded as great healing experiences and a great place to find friends for life. The 2008 conference will have special guest speakers and entertainers, more than 100 workshops covering most aspects of grief following the death of a child, and many additional activities including the ninth annual two-mile Walk to Remember® at 8 a.m. Sunday July, 20. A pre-conference day for professionals and interested bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents will be Thursday, July 17.

Joe and Iris Lawley, founding parents of The Compassionate Friends, had planned to keynote at the conference, but for health reasons have been forced to cancel their plans to attend the conference on this, the 40th anniversary of the founding of the organization. All of us at TCF wish Joe and Iris a quick return to good health.

TCF is pleased to announce that among keynoters at the national conference will be Bruce Murakami, who will share the riveting story of how he has bonded and teamed up, in the name of safety and saving lives, with the drag racing teen who ended the lives of his wife and daughter. Bruce's incredible story has been featured on Oprah, NBC Dateline, The John Walsh Show, The Montel Williams Show, and has been made into a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie *Crossroads: A Story of Forgiveness*.

Stop back for news on additional keynote speakers.

To allow everyone to be a part of the 2008 conference committee experience, the conference committee plans to decorate the conference area with real 7" vinyl records that have pictures of our TCF children remembered in the center. The "sponsor a record" program is similar to programs available for previous conferences. For a nominal charge (to help defray the cost of the conference), pictures sent in of our TCF children will be placed on the records (which are pressed with real grooves, but will not have music) and will decorate the registration area, and reflection and hospitality rooms. To participate, download the Sponsor a Record order form and follow the easy instructions. Whether or not you are able to attend the conference, a child, sibling, grandchild, or loved one can still be remembered.

Those who attend the conference and have a record made will be able to carry them home. After the conference concludes, those unable to attend who would like their child's record can have it mailed to them.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Music City Hotel and a room rate of \$124 (plus tax) is now available for guests attending the conference. You can take advantage of this rate by calling 888-627-7060. Please mention that you are with The Compassionate Friends.

You may also register online at Room Registration

As always it is suggested that you register early to avoid disappointment. This rate will be available through June 20, 2008 (or until the room block has been filled). The beautiful Sheraton Music City Hotel, which recently completed a multi-million dollar renovation, is located at 777 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN. 37214. As always, we suggest you register early to avoid disappointment.

To Our First-Time Readers and New Members and To Our Long-time Members



If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time, it is because someone has told us that you might find it helpful or you asked us to send it to you. We cordially invite you to attend any of our meetings which are held on the third Tuesday of each month at Redeemer Lutheran Church, in the Basement, 5120 Harrison Road, Fredericksburg from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Nothing is required of you. There are no fees or dues. You need not speak a word. Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. If you have never come to a meeting, you are probably wondering what this group of people that you don't even know can do for you. It is here that comfort and support can be given by those that "have been there". We've all had chunks of our hearts torn out. Yet those holes get smaller with the loving touches, friendly smiles and kind reassuring words from each other.

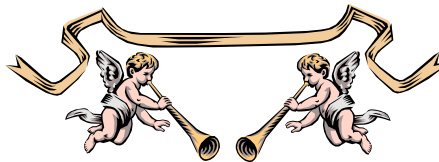
Try not judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. At your first meeting you were hoping that TCF could get you over your terrible pain and depression and loneliness and guilt and anger and all of the other faces of grief. You came expecting to go home, feeling "better, if not cured." Instead you met other parents who are still coping with forms of grief after months or even years. Perhaps you didn't notice there were some parents who were doing "OK." But the bottom line is you may go home from the first meeting feeling worse than when you came. Give it another try you will probably find, that each meeting uncovers a piece of the puzzle of life after the death of a child. It may take several meetings, but, hopefully, you will find the road to recovery like we did.

To Our Long-time Members

"TCF gives me a sense of purpose. A good enough reason for you to consider sticking around a while after you feel you have reached an acceptance or at least worked through your grief. Others need you. Pass the love on—adopt a bereaved parent!"

Fay Harden, TCF - Tuscaloosa, AL

CAN YOU HELP? Do you remember your first meeting of The Compassionate Friends, those first months of your grief journey? You desperately needed someone to talk to, someone who knew the pain of losing a child, someone to hug you, cry with you, listen to you. And there are newly bereaved parents who now need your help. Are you willing to be there for them? If two years or more have passed since the death of your child, and you feel that you are ready to give back some of the support that was shown to you, please consider a place of service in our chapter. There is a job for everyone. Don't wait call me at 540-775-8430. If you can't serve, please, at least, come to meetings to lend your support and understanding to our newly bereaved families. We have had so many new members join us the past few months. We need all the help we can get to help them. Thank you from all of our children.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.
© Copyright 2008 All Rights Reserved



SIBLING CORNER

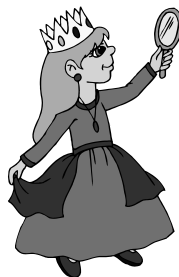
For all of children who have lost brothers and/or sisters



My Beautiful Brother Steve

You were my best friend, my other half.
Every night I dream of your beautiful smile and laugh.
My heart aches for you every day.
God, why did you have to take my brother away?
Even though we are physically apart,
your soul and spirit remain forever in my heart.
I know one day we will be together again.
And I will be heart broken and sad until then!

*Mary Elizabeth Herrick, Livonia, MI TCF. Chapter
in loving memory of her brother, Steven Michael.*



LITTLE PRINCESS

Once we had a little princess named Sophie I loved her and every night I said "Good night princess" and the worst thing happened May the 7th she died that day I was so sad that no one could come near me I cried it was that sad but Sophie you will never come out of my heart.

Robert Lester Smith (7), Brother of Sophie Brooke Lester-Smith, 14.7.89 – 7.5.93
(This was written as he wrote it with the spelling errors. Lovingly lifted from "Words Of Sorrow Words of Love The Death of a Child", edited by Eva Lager)

**TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2008 7:30-9:00 PM
AT REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN THE BASEMENT OF THE CHURCH
5120 HARRISON ROAD
FREDERICKSBURG, VA**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.

We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

Need to talk? Need a Friend?



TELEPHONE FRIENDS & REFERRALS: Do you need someone to talk to? Here is a list of Friends who can offer a listening ear. Please don't hesitate to call if you need someone to listen - - that is why we are here.

Gloria Blake (804) 633-9521
Dee Martin-Lam (540) 582-6921
David & Cathy Taylor (540) 582-2760
Kathie & Keith Kelly (540) 775-2015
Clyde & Cheryl Richardson (540) 659-6564
Odessa Cuffy (804) 633-6708
Wayne & Gloria Whitley (540) 371-9092
Millie Fleming (540) 373-5324
Greg & Cathleen Baker (540) 370-4838

Young Teen Accidental Death
Young Teen Accidental Death
Adult Accidental Death
Toddler/Sudden Death
Adult Sudden Death
Illness
Suicide
Adult Accidental Death
Unexpected/Expected Newborn Death

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, FREDERICKSBURG CHAPTER NEW SUBSCRIPTION – RENEWAL – CHANGE FORMS – DONATIONS

If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time...everyone within the Compassionate Friends Organization wants to say...We are sorry you have the need for this publication but we are glad you found us and we hope our newsletters will be helpful on your journey. Someone may have lovingly sent you the newsletter...and if so and you find it helpful, please complete the data sheet enclosed and return it so that we may add you to our newsletter database for future mailings. This is to insure that all the information we have is correct and complete. *This is for internal use only.*

Please print, filling in all applicable blanks/boxes:

Your Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Phone (including area code): _____ Email: _____

Do you prefer to receive the newsletter by (check one): Mail _____ Email _____

Child's Full Name: _____ Male: _____ Female _____

Child's Birth Date: _____ Child's Remembrance Date: _____

Cause of Child's Death (optional): _____

Child's relationship to you (e.g. son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild) _____

Names and ages of all surviving siblings living with you: _____

*How did you find out about The Compassionate Friends? Please circle one: Family, Friends, Hospital, Church, School, Funeral Homes, Internet, Newspaper, Employer (Human Resources) or Other

Note: **The information you have given above will be confidential (used for internal purpose only) unless you answer "yes" to one or more of the following questions:**

1. Do you want your child's name to appear in the newsletter's "***Our Children Loved and Remembered***" section of birth and remembrance dates? Yes _____ No _____
2. Do you want your phone number given to another member for one on one support, otherwise known as Telephone Friends? Yes _____ No _____
3. Do you wish to have your child's name included on the Wall of Memory on our TCF Fredericksburg Web Site? This is currently in the process of being put together Yes _____ No _____

Voluntary donations are TCF Fredericksburg Chapter's only source of income. The Compassionate Friends needs to be here for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

Yes, I want to help with TCF Outreach...a donation is enclosed in Memory of _____

I would like to apply my donation toward the following outreach:

Newsletter ____ (**recommended amount for paper newsletter is \$15.00 which would go towards postage, paper and copying**) ____ Library ____ General Expenses Birthday/Remembrance Date Cards

Newly Bereaved Packets ____ Annual Candlelight Remembrance Service ____

Make Checks Payable to: The Compassionate Friends **Please Return To:** The Compassionate Friends, Fredericksburg Chapter, P. O. Box 172, King George, VA 22485