



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
FREDERICKSBURG CHAPTER  
P.O. BOX 172  
KING GEORGE, VA 22485  
540-775-8430**

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

**DECEMBER  
2008**

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**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**

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

**CHAPTER E-MAIL -** [tcfred@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfred@yahoo.com)

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook IL 60522-3696; Toll Free: 1-877-969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
E-MAIL: [nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)

## CHAPTER LEADER'S CORNER

Happy Holidays, yes it is that time of year once again. I, probably like you have a hard time with the holidays. I am missing my son and remembering the last Christmas we spent together as a family. Kevin was 3 years old and Katie was only 3 weeks old. They both went to see Santa together, Kevin was the proud "big" brother. Now that Kevin is not here physically, we remember him during this special time of year. One thing my family does to remember Kevin is get an angel ornament and place it on the Christmas Tree together. I know that this will not bring our children back, but it is a way to help heal and cope with the pain of missing our children. My wish for you is that you remember your special angel and the good times you had together, no matter how long or short it was. Keep their memory alive.

Our chapter Worldwide Candle Lighting Memorial Service will be Sunday, December 14 at 4 PM. The service will be at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 5120 Harrison Road, Fredericksburg. In the Fellowship Hall. There will be refreshments following the service. Remember to bring a picture of your children. This will be in place of our monthly meeting.

Our next meeting will be January 20, 2009 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 and his congregation for having us at their church.

If you would like to contribute something for the newsletter, deadline is December 20th for the 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 [tcfred@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfred@yahoo.com).

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



## First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas  
without her being here.  
Yet the world is singing round me,  
joyful tidings and good cheer.  
Though I try to put on armor  
and brave the sights and sounds,  
a few moments worth of shopping,  
and the tears are spilling down.  
I pray for strength to do it,  
find a path through holidays,  
look for shortcuts, good ideas,  
some directions through the maze.  
Then I find at last the answer:  
I'll include her symbolically.  
And the giving becomes perfect;  
her love's flowing down, through me.

Genesee Bourdeau Gentry  
*From Stars in the Deepest Night –  
After the Death of a Child*



## FREDERICKSBURG CHAPTER WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING MEMORIAL SERVICE

### 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.

Manda & Jason Colburn in loving memory of Aleah Marie Colburn.

Delores Martin-Lam in loving memory of Jeffrey Martin

Gloria Blake in loving memory of Jonathan Blake.

Our chapter Worldwide Candle Lighting Memorial Service will be Sunday, December 14 at 4 PM. The service will be at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 5120 Harrison Road, Fredericksburg. In the Fellowship Hall. There will be refreshments following the service. If you are interested in helping with refreshments, please contact Kathie Kelly at 540-775-2015 or email me at [tcffred@yahoo.com](mailto:tcffred@yahoo.com). The cut off will be November 15th.

Please mark your calendars and remember to bring picture of your child to share.

**iGive.com**

**Shop through iGive.com to support  
The Fredericksburg Chapter.**

**All you have to do is go to <http://www.igive.com/welcome/warmwelcome.cfm?c=48639&m=0> and sign up.**

**By purchasing through iGive.com after joining our chapter site will help our chapter earn money with each purchase you make.**



### SOME HELPFUL WEBSITES

[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)  
[www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)  
[www.goodgriefresources.com](http://www.goodgriefresources.com)  
[www.thebereavementjourney.com](http://www.thebereavementjourney.com)  
[www.nationalshareoffice.com](http://www.nationalshareoffice.com)  
[www.survivorsof suicide.com](http://www.survivorsof suicide.com)

[www.griefwatch.com](http://www.griefwatch.com)  
[www.journeyof hearts.org](http://www.journeyof hearts.org)  
[www.lexinfertility.com](http://www.lexinfertility.com)  
[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)  
[www.healingheart.net](http://www.healingheart.net)  
[www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org)

[www.growthhouse.org](http://www.growthhouse.org)  
[www.childrenofdome.com](http://www.childrenofdome.com)  
[www.spacebetweenbreaths.com](http://www.spacebetweenbreaths.com)

*Please let us know if you've found a helpful website you'd like to share.*



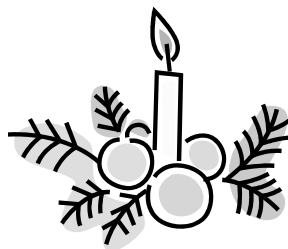
## NEWS FROM NATIONAL



## Centering Corporation

**Grief Materials**--Looking for a particular grief book? Look no further than Centering Corporation, the official recommended grief resource center of The Compassionate Friends. With the largest selection of grief related resources in the United States, Centering Corporation will probably have just about anything you're looking for-or they'll be able to tell you where to find it.

Call Centering Corporation for a catalog at 402-553-1200 or visit their Web site at [www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org). When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.



## 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.





## SIBLING CORNER

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



### *Helping Your Grieving Adolescent*

Parenting teenagers...it's a tough job under the best of circumstances. But when a teenager is grieving as well, four dynamics place additional stress on the situation.

First, grieving families often feel a need to pull together for support. Since adolescence is increasingly a time of breaking away and relying on peer support, these conflicting needs can place parents and teens at odds with one another.

Second, adolescents are keenly aware of parental reactions and, when parents are grieving, often try to protect them from further pain. Most commonly, this takes the form of not talking about it.

Third, simply because they've experienced the death of a loved one, grieving teens tend to feel different from their peers. In an attempt to fit in, they may try to ignore their own grief reactions. Nevertheless, their normal grief reactions seethe beneath the surface, waiting for expression—healthy or unhealthy, at appropriate or inappropriate times.

Fourth, the stress of bereavement adds to the physical and emotional swings already common in adolescence. So what's a caring parent or caregiver to do? Here are four strategies for helping your adolescent through bereavement.

1. Provide an environment the adolescent perceives as safe. Like adults, if they don't feel safe, young people can't do the necessary grief work. They need to know that they can trust themselves as having grief reactions that are normal, their peers and adults to be supportive, and parents to be a dependable safety net.

You can help through structure, discipline, and education. Structure and maintaining routines provide adolescents with a subtle, daily sense of continuity and permanence at a time when everything else seems up for grabs.

Discipline—reasonable and caring, but consistent and firm—reassures adolescents that someone is in control and will save him or her from serious harm.

Education can transform a neutral environment into a healing one for your teen. Make sure the adults in his or her world (school personnel, coaches, bosses, clergy, etc.) know that a death has occurred. Share with them printed materials about normal grief responses and what grieving people need. Use health classes and all-school assemblies to educate peer groups about bereavement.

And educate your child about normal reactions to grief so that he knows he is not going crazy and can trust the way his body, mind and emotions are responding. If he pulls back from discussion, provide books or movies that illustrate normal grieving.

2. Encourage your teen to express what the grief experience is like for him or her. Recognize and affirm that her experience is likely to be different from everyone else's in the family. Provide "emotional coaching" for your child by modeling appropriate emotional responses to loss. If your teenager is a quiet or private person, encourage other methods of expression. Helpful ways of expressing emotion include playing music or musical instruments, writing (songs, poetry, diaries, letters to the person who died), sports (including martial arts and punching bags), art, and photography.

3. Facilitate an ongoing connection with the person who died. Tell stories about the person. Give your adolescent a photo or him or her with the person. Support him in visiting the gravesite if that is meaningful to him. Make sure he has a memento of the person who died—a favorite tool or sports or hobby item, a piece of jewelry, a book, a sweater or robe—by which to stay connected. And make sure you remember (in discussion, in prayer, by way of a small gift) to include the memory of the person who died in your celebration of important events in your child's life, such as graduations, getting a driver's license, participating in his or her first school play or first varsity sporting event.

4. Encourage your teenager to participate in normal adolescent life as she feels able. Grieving takes enormous energy, so your child may need to slow down a bit while she works on her grief. However, it's important for her to know that you don't expect her to take on an adult role now that someone important has died. Let her know you love and accept and support her—just as she is now, with all the normal living and loving and learning she has yet to do.

*Lovingly lifted from the TCF newsletter, Delaware County, DE*

## Christmas Without My Child

Last night we held our Compassionate Friends chapter meeting for November: the topic was Holidays and Grief. We met in small groups to discuss how we are going to get through this most difficult of times. While we found no single answer, we did make some discoveries about ourselves. We also found some basic ways to take control of our lives.

In our group of eleven were several newly bereaved parents. Deep sorrow and anxiety were apparent in each face as we opened the dialogue –a discussion of the holiday season without their children. This anxiety and deep sorrow immediately became mine; I am that parent, I am still on the first leg of what may be a long journey without my child. Their tears were mine as we talked.

As the discussion progressed, I could see a bit of each parent's tension slowly release. I felt as if I could read their minds: give me some answers, tell me I will survive this, tell me how you did it. The answers were all different; the reassurances of parents who had lost their child and survived that first heartbreaking holiday were there. Some of the answers came from the newly bereaved as they explored their inner feelings.

We found consensus on one important factor: we must give ourselves permission to do what makes us most comfortable. We are not the caretakers to the world right now; we must take care of ourselves. If established traditions bother us, then we must turn to something else. What is the point of pouring salt into this open wound? Perhaps next year or the year after, when the wound is not so fresh, we will want to return to former traditions. Perhaps not.

Through tears and some light laughter, we realized that we are not invincible. We are not responsible for the happiness of friends and extended family. We do not have to meet the expectations of others. We must accept our emotional limitations and the psychological and physical toll that grief takes on us. We must slow down and change our perspective. We must do what is right for us, especially during the holidays.

Most of those who had been through at least one holiday season without their child felt that making changes for the first year or two was a positive step forward. We found that talking honestly with our family about our feelings might make them feel temporarily uncomfortable but it did clear the air about expectations. We agreed that limiting our casual social relationships negated the need to make explanations regarding our lack of interest in holiday celebrations.

By "dropping out" we also eliminated obligations in many areas. This gives us the freedom to choose simplicity over stress, essentials over hassles and flexibility over anxiety. This gives us the opportunity to live in the moment, go where our emotions take us and listen to our hearts.

While we all agreed that the holidays are overwhelming for parents whose children have died, we also agreed that we are each individuals and we each perceive the world differently. Some of us want and need the old traditions during the holiday season. Some of us need to be with people who are not part of our grieving process. Others among us felt that solitude and simplicity were the answer.

The answer to the question of how we get through the holidays is found within each one of us. We each have our own truth. The challenge, we decided, is to honor that truth and hold the line against external pressures. A few of our newly bereaved parents could barely choke out a word or two. Others were more vocal. While grief consumes some of us for many, many years, others appear to "go with the flow" of life very early in their grief. What feels right for one of us may be abhorrent to someone else.

One universal truth did emerge from our conversations: we miss our beautiful children and love them as deeply as when they walked beside us. We live in this purgatory each day of the year, but during the holidays it seems most oppressive. Our children have been torn from our lives forever. Daily life and special traditions will always reflect the deep void that has become our reality.

We need our Compassionate Friends at the holiday season. We need to know that others have walked this road, have lived this nightmare and have managed to survive. We each continue to rediscover hope through our Compassionate Friends. And in finding that hope we have given and received the purest gift of the season: the possibility of peace.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen  
TCF, Katy, TX

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2009 7:30-9:00 PM  
AT REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH  
IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL 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:

Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

\*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