



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
FREDERICKSBURG CHAPTER
P.O. BOX 172
KING GEORGE, VA 22485
540-775-2015**

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

JUNE 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

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

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www.compassionatefriends.org

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CHAPTER LEADER'S CORNER

June, summer vacations, Father's Day, Graduations, that is what comes to mind when I think of June. For our family June has changed a bit, Father's Day will forever be different without our son, Kevin being a part of it. I know that for my husband this is a hard time of year as he remembers the times we had with Kevin. My husband never had a Father's Day with both of his children as Kevin died on Mother's Day and Katie was only 5 months old. He makes the best of it with Katie and I making it nice for him. I know a lot of our Dads and Grandpas out there are feeling some of the same emotions, remember to hold on to the memories, I know this is one way our family gets through these special days.

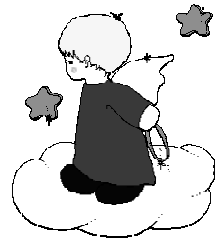
This month we also celebrate graduations. I can only imagine how difficult it is to have a missing graduate. We all have so many dreams for our children and now they are gone, but their spirit lines on. Know that they have touched someone, somewhere and have made a difference. So, Congratulations to our Angel Graduates, thank you for being a part of our lives if only for a while.

Our meeting will be June 17, 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 June 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.

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



Our Newsletter is going green! With ever-rising costs for supplies and mailing, the TCF Fredericksburg Newsletter is moving towards a more environmentally friendly and cost effective delivery. Each month we post our newsletter online at www.geocities.com/tcfred/. If you have internet access PLEASE unsubscribe from the printed edition of our newsletter by emailing a note to Kathie at kellykathie@hotmail.com she will add you to the email notification list. The newsletter is posted on our website each month. If you do not have internet access, we will continue to mail you a paper copy. Thank you for your help.

A Love Song

The mention of my child's name
May bring tears to my eyes,
But it never fails to bring
Music to my ears.
If you really are my friend,
Please don't keep me
From hearing the beautiful music.
It soothes my broken heart
And fills my should with Love.

**Nancy Williams
TCF - Central NJ**



Memories

There is a place
That we call Memory -
A province by itself -
Which, though unseen,
Is home and haven
To the Heart.
And there,
In peace and beauty,
Waiting are those with whom
We shared our yesterdays.

**Nancy Cassell
TCF - Holmdel, NJ**



WHEN FATHERS WEEP AT GRAVES



I see them weep
the fathers at the stones
taking off the brave armor
forced to wear in the work place
clearing away the debris
with gentle fingers
inhaling the sorrow
diminished by anguish
their hearts desiring
what they cannot have--
to walk hand in hand
with children no longer held--
to all the fathers who leave a part
of their hearts at the stones
may breezes underneath trees of time
ease their pain
as they receive healing tears
...the gift the children give.

---Alice J. Wisler

For David, in memory of our son Daniel (August 25, 1992--February 2, 1997)



Whatever graduation ceremony you are apprehensive about, remember... your child has been promoted into the greatest class and has received the most honorable degree attainable.

Carol Hershey, TCF Livonia, MI



FATHER'S DAY

One of the many mixed feelings a father will have on Father's Day will be one of failure--failures as a protector of his child who has died. The roles of protector and father are synonymous. The father's duty is both to love and protect that child from harm. A man may intellectually know he did his best; but the child, his charge, is still painfully absent on this Father's Day.

Dick Moen, TCF, Indianapolis, IN

A SPECIAL THOUGHT FOR MY SON

Jonathan Blake on his birthday

Born June 24, 1979

Left us April 23, 1997

My Mom is a Survivor

My Mom is a survivor, or so I've heard it said. But I hear her crying at night when all others are in bed. I watch her lay awake at night and go to hold her hand. She doesn't know I'm with her to help her understand. But like the sands on the beach that never wash away... I watch over my surviving mom, who thinks of me each day. She wears a smile for others...a smile of disguise. But through Heaven's door I see tears flowing from her eyes. My mom tries to cope with death to keep my memory alive. But anyone who knows her knows it is her way to survive. As I watch over my surviving mom...through Heaven's open door. I try to tell her that angels protect me forever more. But I know that doesn't help her or ease the burden she bears. So if you get a chance, go visit her...And show her that you care. For no matter what she says...no matter what she feels. My surviving mom has a broken heart that time won't ever heal!



--Unknown Author--

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 fami-

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. Richardson in loving memory of their son
Bryan Richardson

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!!"**

Please support our Chapter. If you do not like donating online, please mail us a donation at TCF, P. O. Box 172, King George, VA 22485. This is in loving memory of all our children who are gone too soon.

SOME HELPFUL WEBSITES

www.thecompassionatefriends.org
www.griefnet.org
www.goodgriefresources.com
www.thebereavementjourney.com
www.nationalshareoffice.com
www.survivorsof suicide.com

www.griefwatch.com
www.journeyof hearts.org
www.lexinfertility.com
www.bereavedparentsusa.org
www.healingheart.net
www.missfoundation.org

www.growthhouse.org
www.childrenofdome.com
www.spacebetweenbreaths.com

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



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 con-

ference, 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.





SIBLING CORNER

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



I Wish

I wish I could watch you work on cars,
preparing for a race and being with our friends.

I wish I could hear Mom attempt to
wake you up, pounding on the floor,
hoping you're downstairs.

I wish you would ask to borrow money
(and never plan to pay it back) or con
me out of my car for the night.

I wish you could go up north with Dad
or be with us on family vacations.

I wish you'd be there when I come
home on weekends, or come and visit
me when I'm at school.

I wish I could hear your dry sense of
humor or see the look when you're
trying to hold back a laugh.

I wish you were here to keep the
stories going, so I wouldn't need to
keep memories alive.

I wish I could set a place for you for
Thanksgiving dinner or draw your
name for Christmas.

I wish you could hold your sister's new
baby or be the best man at your
brother's wedding.

I wish I could see your hopes and
dreams come true, and we could be
there when we need each other.

I wish I could hear you say, "I love you"
just one more time.



Why?

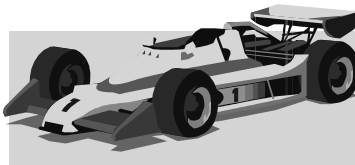
When my sister died, I asked what
every surviving sibling most likely asks
himself: Why? For quite a while this question
gave me something to strive for, a purpose to
fight for. But what I soon realized was that there
was no use in asking. That question is irrelevant;
the point is moot. It no longer matters why she
died. The fact remains that she died, and there
is nothing I can do to change that, including find-
ing the answer to why. There is no such answer.

If perchance God would speak to me, would that
change anything? If he would say, "Trey, I took
your sister because I want her up here in
Heaven," what would that mean to me? I still lost
her. I would still question God's decision.

What it comes down to, however, and although it
is hard, we who have lost a sibling must accept
the fact that they are now gone. Put aside the
fact of why or how they died, and remember that
they once lived and will always be alive in your
memory and heart. Bypass the question of why
they died, and instead concentrate on how we
should now live. Remember, they would have
wanted it that way.

Lisa DuBois
TCF-Grand Rapids, MI

Trey
TCF-Harding County, OH



**TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 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:

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