



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



MARCH 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

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

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Chapter Leader's Corner

Spring is almost here. When I think of Spring I think of renewal, like a butterfly coming out of its cocoon. The days are beginning to get longer and hopefully it will begin to get warmer, let us focus on the bright new days ahead, the butterflies flying around and remember our children fluttering around us happy and carefree. Our children have died, but they are not gone from any of us. They will always be fluttering around.

This month's meeting the theme is "Remembering". Please bring pictures and mementos of your children and share them with the group. I am sure we all have something that we remember about our children like the first time they said "mama or dada" or their first day in school. I know there are some of us who weren't fortunate enough to have those memories due to losing your child as a baby or before they were born, share the memories you had when you first found out you were having a baby, what plans did you have for your new child? For those of you who lost your children as babies, remember the firsts or just how cute and cuddly they were. We look forward to hearing about everyone's memories of their children so come and remember and share. See you at the meeting.

Our meeting will be March 18, 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 March 20th for the April'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



In March

*The year moves on.
Between the weeks and days
are spaces filled
with more than only time:
those minutes, moments,
when your life stands still
and aches in memory...
And part of you
needs to endure the dark,
because it means
to have that love again.
And part of you
prays for forgetfulness,
because your mind
may break, remembering.
Between the weeks and days
are spaces filled
with more than only time...*

Sascha *The Sorrow and The Light*, 1992



Excuse me, BUT, losing a child is NOT like:

When you child was in the military and stationed out of the country one year at Christmas.

When your pet died.

When your favorite sibling died.

When your spouse died.

When your parents died.

When your child in college couldn't make it home for Thanksgiving one year.

When you were in the hospital during any holiday.

When one of your neighbors or someone at work lost a child.

When your last child (or any child of yours) moved out of your home and into one of their own.

IF you are NOT a bereaved parent it is NOT like anything you have ever experienced and you are very, very lucky. Please don't

Compare it to anything in your life. Just drop to your knees and be grateful.

Nina Harrison, TCF Sioux Falls, SD (Jaryn's Mom),
October 22, 2002

**In loving memory of
my baby girl
Megan Marie Blazek
on her 1st Angel Anniversary Date
3~13~08.**

How do you love a person
Who never got to be?
Or try to envision a face
The you never got to see?
How do you mourn the death of one
Who never got to live.
Where there is nothing to feel good
about
And nothing to forgive?
I love you my little baby,
My companion of the night.
Wandering through my lonely hours,
Beautiful and bright.
What does it mean to die before
You were ever born,
To live the lonely night of life,
And never see the dawn?
Ah! my little baby,
You lived like anyone!
Life's a burst of joy and pain.
And then like yours its done.
I love you, my little baby,
Just as if you lived for years.
No more, no less, I think of you,
The angel of my tears.

Author Unknown

I loved you all your life and I hope to
see you in my dreams!

Love always your Mommy



THINKING OF YOU WITH LOVE

We thought of you with love today,
But that is nothing new.
We thought of you yesterday,
And all the days before that too.
We think of you in silence,
We often speak your name.
All we have are memories,
And your picture in a frame.
Your memory is our keepsake,
With which we will never part.
God has you in His keeping,
We have you in our hearts.
A million times we wanted you,
A millions times we cried.
If love could only have saved you,
You never would have died.
It broke our hearts to lose you,
But you didn't go alone,
For a part of us went with you...
The day God called you home.

Unknown Author

With a lot of hugs and kisses to our little
angel, Megan Marie Blazek on her one
year anniversary of becoming an angel.

With love today and always,
Mommy, Daddy, Austin and the rest of
your family



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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!**

Michelle, David & Austin Blazek in loving memory of their daughter Megan Marie Blazek.

Erika & Jeff Wolff in loving memory of their son Charles Wolff.

Marilyn & George Graves in loving memory of their nephew Jonathan Blake.

Chuck & Kathy Collins in loving memory of their daughter Tiffanie Amber Collins.

Thank you for your donations.

FREDERICKSBURG ATTRACTIONS COUPON BOOK

Our chapter is doing a fundraiser selling the Fredericksburg Attractions Coupon Book. The book serves Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Stafford, King George, Caroline Counties, Bowling Green, King George, Dahlgren, Ladysmith, Thornburg, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Woodbridge, Dumfries, Hardwood, Ferry Farm, Chancellor, Brokenburg, Quantico, Triangle and Woodford. This coupon book has a lot of great coupons as listed below:

- Section 1: Ristorante Renato; Riverboat on The Potomac; Colonial Tavern Home to the Irish Brigade; La Rosetta
Ristorante Italiano; High Tides On The Potomac
- Section 2: Buffalo Wild Wings; T.G.I. Friday's; Foster's Grille; IHOP; Happy Endings
- Section 3: McDonald's; Burger King; Chick-Fil-A; Hardee's; Sonic Drive In;
- Section 4: Dick's Sporting Goods; Gander Mountain; The Sports Authority; New York & Co; Circuit City

The cost of the book is \$25. The money made from this fundraiser will go towards our mailings, annual memorial candle lighting program, 24 telephone line and general operating of our chapter. If you are interested in purchasing a book to help support our chapter, please send a check to The Compassionate Friends, Fredericksburg Chapter, P. O. Box 172, King George, VA 22485. Please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends, Fredericksburg Chapter.

Thank you in advance for your support.



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.

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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.

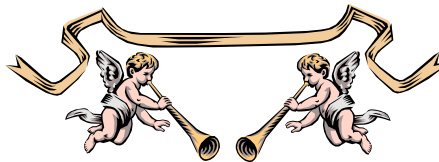
Try not judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. At your first meeting you were hoping that TCF could get you over your terrible pain and depression and loneliness and guilt and anger and all of the other faces of grief. You came expecting to go home, feeling "better, if not 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.



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SIBLING CORNER

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



Grief's Array of Emotions

by Carrie Kears

I think the most frustrating thing about grief is that it is more than just sadness or the persistent feeling of emptiness I feel. Grief spans a wide array of feelings and emotions including, but not limited to sorrow, anger, jealousy, and helplessness. Lately, I have been struggling with coming to grips with my life as it continues along a path I would never have imagined. If Carl were still alive, I imagine he would be married and I would be an aunt to his children. He would have been there for my wedding and would be anxiously awaiting, along with my parents, the arrival of his future nieces and nephews. He would have been a great uncle. He was always great with kids and reveled in the part of himself which never grew up; the same trait which inexplicably drew kids to him.

Losing a brother is not just losing a companion, a best friend, a confidant, someone to pave the way for a little sister as she follows eagerly behind. When Carl died I not only lost those things, but I lost the future we would have had. I wish I would have had a chance to see how great he would have been with the children I hope to someday have. I wish I would have had the chance to see his sparkle, his amazing smile passed on to his children. But my reality is that these things will never come to pass. As each year turns into the next I struggle to reconcile the life I had imagined with the life I live today. It's hard to keep moving forward when I no longer have a big brother to do things first so I know, more or less, what to expect.

Maybe dealing with Carl's death and the loss of the future I had imagined would be easier if grief were merely a matter of dealing with the ensuing sadness. However, as my life continues to move forward I come across new struggles. I find myself getting jealous of my husband of three months, relationship with his brother and angry at him for having one when mine is gone. Is it rational? No, but grief isn't always rational. I can't fault him for having a close relationship with his brother, nor can I fault him for Carl's death. I have no real reason to be angry with him when he is on the phone with his brother. I can't be angry with him because it's not me. No matter how much I wish, it will never be me again. I have no real reason to be jealous of his niece and nephew and the relationship he has with them. It is not his fault that I will never hold my brother's children.

It isn't fair for me to take my anger out on him or brood silently while he continues to nurture relationships with his family. I know, too well, the importance of family. One of the things I love most about him is that he is very close to his family and places great importance on maintaining strong familial ties. But, my grief inevitably creeps in and weaves its way through our relationship. Not only do I have to deal with my grief, but I have to be careful in how I channel it, if I want to have a successful marriage. Yet, even as I try to channel my grief, more anger creeps in because I have to concentrate harder on my actions because I am grieving my brother's death...and that doesn't feel very fair either.

I try to tell my husband and try to help him understand when I am feeling angry or jealous because he has something I long to have, but I am afraid. I fear that there will come a day when I tell him the reason I am acting irrationally is because I am struggling with my grief and he sees my explanation merely as an excuse or something I should learn to control. I fear he will tire of being patient with me, or expect that one day I won't cry "over nothing" or that one day I won't feel sad on the Fourth of July because it was one of Carl's favorite holidays.

Is my fear irrational, or am I assuming he will react to me the way others in the past have reacted? I guess I am bound to find out sooner or later. Just as I learn to live with my grief I will have to learn how to manage my grief while maintaining a marriage. I sure wish grief was just about feeling sad. No, I really wish I didn't have to deal with it all.

Carrie's brother, Carl Pueschel, died January 19, 1996

**TUESDAY, MARCH 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