

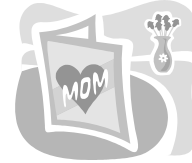


**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.**  
**Fredericksburg Chapter, Fredericksburg, Virginia**  
Telephone Numbers: (540) 775-8430

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



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

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

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## Chapter Leader's Corner

May is here again. May for me is a hard time you have Mother's Day and Memorial Day. Mother's Day is particularly hard on me as it was 10 years ago on Mother's Day in 1998 that Kevin became an angel. It is hard to believe that my Kevin has been gone that long I guess that is why it hit me so hard this year. I am going to try to remember the good times and wonderful memories we have with Kevin. I hope that you all will be able to do the same. This month's meeting the topic is "Our Children Remembered". Please be sure to bring something of your child/children to share with the group. If there is an issue that you would like to discuss, please let me know.

Our meeting will be May 20, 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 May 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



my son & Mickey Mouse

### KEVIN

If you walk by their house you may see her staring out the window at the yard he once ran and played in, and even though you can not clearly see her face, you know that she is crying. Never will you hear a sound so sad as her weeping.

She is his mommy

If you see him carrying his baby girl in his arm, you will notice how his other arm hangs limp at his side. Strong hand holding a tiny hand that is no longer there. He will surely walk that way for the rest of his life... remembering how his little fingers felt wrapped in his.

He is his daddy

If these two people had known on the day Kevin was born that they would hold him for only three years, would they have given up the time they had together? Never. Will they think about him? Touch his toys and clothes and wish they could have him back? Always.

His handprint will remain forever upon their lives.

by Shawn Henley written for Keith, Kathie and Katie Kelly in loving memory of Kevin Robert Kelly who died on Mother's Day , May 10, 1998



### MEMORIAL DAY

For each grave where a soldier lies at his rest  
For each prayer that is said today out of love  
For each sign of remembering someone who died  
Let us also give thoughts to the mothers and fathers, the brothers and sisters, the friends and lovers whom death left behind.

By Sasha

# Happy Mothers Day

## A MOTHER'S MUSINGS

There are no ordinary days for us. Each day brings with it something that triggers memories of our children. I've found myself in tears at the site of a TV commercial, or when I see a toy that my child loved, or a song that he sang. I've felt my heart skip a beat at the site of a blonde, curly haired little boy, or a young woman the same age my daughter would be now, or whenever I see a young man in a wheelchair. I've 'seen' Danny in the t-shirt someone was wearing, in the way someone's hair curled up at the nape of their necks and in every disabled child. Our memories are etched deeply in our hearts but can rise to the surface at the slightest hint of something that once was associated with our children.

I've found myself driving down the road with tears streaming down my face because the Beatles song, "Michelle" came on the radio. I've been in the middle of cleaning house when my mind turns to memories of my children and then the world becomes a blur of tears. I've cleaned out a drawer or closet and sat looking at an object, caressing it, cherishing it because it has some connection with one of my children. The holidays are the worst. Everything reminds me of the fact that all of my children are not here. Hanging the stockings and knowing that there are three other stockings now packed away forever. So many memories tugging at my heart at every turn...it's almost too much to bear.

For me, September is a difficult time. Not that there are any significant holidays but the one that is in September, Labor Day, holds some very painful memories. My sweet Jerry died on Labor Day and although Labor Day isn't always on September 6, for me it will always be the day that Jerry died.

For someone to say that they know how we feel because their child has gone off to college, is typical of the remarks that we have all heard over the years. There is "it was God's will", "it was for the best", "at least they aren't in pain anymore", "there in a better place" and my all time favorite, Well, now you have two angels in heaven"! I don't want ANY angels in heaven...I want them HERE with me. To these people I say, "Thank God you are not in my shoes because if you were, you would not survive...not if you think what you are going through is even close to the pain I've felt"!

For most parents, September comes and school begins, then follows Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the beginning of a new year. For us, each month brings up old memories and new pain. We mark time by, "before he/she died" or "after he/she died." We remember their birthdays with tears and flowers, instead of gifts. But then we have one more date to mark...one we wish we had never lived to see...the anniversary of our child's death. All of those parents who are watching memories being made as their children grow up, date, graduate, and marry; have no idea of what it means to have that opportunity cut short. They assumed that when their child was born that they would experience all of these things. We have learned to NEVER assume. We know that nothing is certain, life is tenuous and fragile and can be snuffed out in an instant. For us, no month, no week, no day is ordinary. They are all reminders of what might have been.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

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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!**

Mr. & Mrs. Knight in loving memory of their son Tucker Austin Knight

Mr. & Mrs. Godfrey in loving memory of their son Craig Reynolds Godfrey

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!!"

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..



## 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.

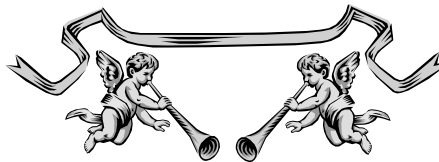
Try not judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. At your first meeting you were hoping that TCF could get you over your terrible pain and depression and loneliness and guilt and anger and all of the other faces of grief. You came expecting to go home, feeling "better, if not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



### My Brother

As we grow up some things can change,  
but my love for you will always remain.  
In my heart you'll stay my whole life  
through.  
My love for my brother still remains true.  
My brother, a Father, a son, a friend.  
I'll think of you brother,  
Till our path's meet again.  
So go with God, He'll take care of you,  
and always remember, my brother....  
I LOVE YOU!!

~written by Chris Steele, Marietta, Ga  
In Memory of his brother, Steven Steele  
March 31, 1972 - November 5, 1999



### To My Sister

You touched us all  
You loved us all  
Forever giving  
Forever caring  
Forever forgiving  
Never wanting in return  
Blessed are those who shared your  
life  
Rich are those who carry your  
memories  
Please rest now  
Your chores we will finish.  
'Til we meet again...

**TUESDAY, MAY 20, 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