



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

Bluegrass Chapter Newsletter

**"We need not walk alone."
www.tcfbluegrass.org**

P.O. Box 647, Nicholasville, Kentucky 40340

December 2010

Chapter Co-Leaders

Suzie McDonald
catholic20@windstream.net

Janie Fields
butterflymom@windstream.net

Treasurer
David Fields

Newsletter Editor
Lisa Fields

**Bluegrass Chapter
The Compassionate Friends
Regional Coordinator**
Dusty Rhodes
(502) 330-4769

Telephone Friends
Sometimes it helps to be able to talk to someone who understands. The following bereaved parents are willing to provide support and comfort.

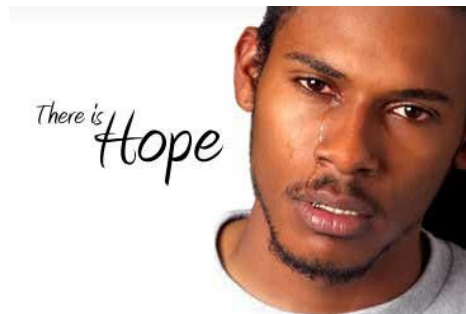
Jim Sims
(859) 858-8288
(859) 797-2168

Mary Camp
(859) 737-0180

Suzie McDonald
(859) 576-7680

Janie Fields
(859) 881-1991

The death of a child of any age, from any cause, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, a family needs emotional support for the long grief journey that lays ahead.



helping families toward the positive resolution of their grief following the death of a child.

Our Mission & Purpose is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age by any cause and to provide information to help others be supportive.

We welcome you with Compassion, Love and Hope

It is always difficult to say, "Welcome" to people coming to our meetings for the first time because we are so very sorry for the reason they came. For some, the first meeting or two can be rather overwhelming, especially if they are newly bereaved. We hope that anyone feeling that way will return to at least a couple more of our meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings, regardless of the age at which their child died or the length of time that has passed since that day.

New to Lexington Meeting:

Nancy Baker, mother of Joseph (Joey) Allen Kelley
Anna Weathers, mother of Victor Lamont Martin
Fern Dalton, mother of James Richard Dalton
Susan Thompson, mother of Benjamin Andrew Thompson



Since 1980, the Bluegrass Chapter of The Compassionate Friends has been actively



**The Compassionate Friends
National Office**
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522
(877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

Our Children
Forever Loved and Remembered

December Birth Dates

12/1 **Cody McClure Speer** Son of Lin and Mark Simmons
12/1 **William Fredrick White** Son of Fred and Rebecca White
12/2 **Michael "Mikie" Varnell Norton** Son of Mike & Vada Barnes, Varnell Norton
12/4 **Jennifer Lee Guenther** Daughter of Helen Burch
12/8 **Chad Hammons** Son of Dottie and Walter Hammons
12/5 **Shannon D. Robinson** Son of Dale and Teresa Robinson
12/7 **Evan Charles Thomas** Son of John and Keila Thomas
12/11 **Michael Rhodes Burton** Son of Harold and Pat Burton
12/13 **Zack Camp** Son of Mary Camp
12/19 **David Wayne Meade** Son of Sue & Fred Meade, Brother of Susan Bayes
12/21 **Christopher Andrew Keefe** Son of Michael & Anna Keefe
12/21 **David Alexander Keefe** Son of Michael & Anna Keefe
12/23 **Will Fister** Son of Gayle and J. W. Fister
12/24 **Hank Butler Scolf** Son of Michael and Doretta Scolf
12/27 **Frank Thomas Glowatz** Son of Frank and Dawn Glowatz
12/28 **Bessie Renee Root** Daughter of Patricia Root
12/30 **Noah Edward Kenawell** Son of Mike and Andrea Kenawell

December Remembrance Dates

12/1 **Debra Cay Stinson** Daughter of Bill and Letha Stinson
12/2 **Kevin Wayne Gardner** Son of Doug and Vicky Gardner
12/2 **John Martin Laswell** Son of Frances Shaver
12/6 **Jacob Daniel Akin** Son of Becky Akin
12/8 **Noah Edward Kenawell** Son of Mike and Andrea Kenawell
12/12 **Timothy Richard Woodworth** Son of Richard and Sharon Woodworth
12/12 **Robert "Rob" N. Lamb** Son of Carol Lamb
12/14 **Robert Allen "Robbie" Joseph II** Son of Mary Treadway
12/21 **Christopher Andrew Keefe** Son of Michael & Anna Keefe
12/21 **David Alexander Keefe** Son of Michael & Anna Keefe
12/23 **Keith Allen Gadbois** Son of George H. Gadbois
12/24 **Louis Tsey Gakpo** Son of Seth & Philomena Gakpo, Paul Gakpo
12/28 **Michael R. Lucas** Son of Anne & Ed Lucas
12/28 **Renee Peterson** Daughter of Roy and Juanita Peterson
12/29 **Julie Dawn Hall** Daughter of Sharon and Don Hall
12/29 **Tiffany Creech** Daughter of Jim and Karen Rice

Regretfully, a name was left off the November Remembrance Dates.

11/20 Ashley Riggs, Son of Sharon Bellows

A Letter to My Family and Friends

Thank you for not expecting too much from me this holiday season. It will be our first Christmas without our child and I have all I can do coping with the "spirit" of the holiday on the radio, TV, in the newspapers and stores. We do not feel joyous and trying to pretend this Christmas is going to be like the last will be impossible because we are missing one.

Please allow me to talk about my child if I feel the need. Don't be uncomfortable with my tears. My heart is breaking and the tears are a way of letting out my sadness.

I plan to do something special in memory of my child. Please recognize my need to do this in order to keep our memories alive. My fear is not that I'll forget, but that you will.

Please don't criticize me if I do something that you don't think is normal. I'm a different person now and it may take a long time before this different person reaches an acceptance of my child's death.

As I survive the stages of grief, I will need your patience and support, especially during these holiday times and the "special" days throughout the year.

Thank you for not expecting too much from me this holiday season.

Love,
A Bereaved Parent

[Source: From "A Letter to My Family and Friends" in M. Cleckley, E. Estes, and P. Norton (Eds.), *We Need Not Walk Alone: After the Death of a Child*, Second Edition, p. 180. Copyright (c) 1992 The Compassionate Friends.]

Waiting for Answers

Mary Clark, TCF-Sugar Land, SW Houston, TX

Years ago, I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul.

But when I walked out into the Spring air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max

forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory?

During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bad. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared were true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed.

My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of

his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise?

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF Chapter leader caught up with me.

"How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said. "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too."

Sometimes the best advice is none at all.

Join us as we remember our precious children

The Compassionate Friends

Candle Light Service

Sunday, December 12, 2010

6:00pm

South Elkhorn Christian Church

4343 Harrodsburg Road Lexington

For more information

tcfbluegrass.org

Suzie McDonald 859.576.7680 Janie Fields 859.881.1991

*Friends and family welcome * Childcare provided*

Light a candle for all the children that have died

... that their light may always shine.

Worldwide Candle Lighting December 12, 2010

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

Copying With Grief During The Holidays

Holidays are a difficult time for families after the death of a son or daughter, especially when the death has been within the last year. While other people and families are looking forward to the holidays with happy anticipation, those of us who know someone is missing look forward to the holidays with apprehension.

Following are some suggestions to help thru the holidays. I will not promise you no pain, but, perhaps, some of these thoughts will help you feel less alone and better able to face the day.

Cry

Give yourself permission to cry. Tears are nature's way of helping us heal.

Need

Let others know what you need. You don't have to do anything or go anywhere or be anything that forces you to pretend you are feeling better than you do.

Plan

Talk to your family and decide what you will do and what the day will look like. Will you have the usual dinner? Will you go out instead? Who will take care of what tasks? Most of all, remember the person who is gone. Light a special candle, plant a tree, share memories. Create your own special way to remember your son or daughter.

Nurture Yourself

Rest and eat balanced meals. Avoid sugar and alcohol because they tend to exacerbate emotions by throwing our body chemistry off balance. You may want to take a walk in nature, ride your bike, allow yourself extra time in bed, take a long and leisurely bath or shower, do whatever you find healing.

Be gentle to yourself and to your family. The holidays may be anticipated with dread, but if planned and time allowed for the grief and sharing of memories, you might find some of your tears turning into joy and laughter.

Melissa "Missy" Fields, the daughter of David and Janie Fields will be honored on the Donate Life Float in the Rose Parade in Pasadena, CA on New Year's Day. Missy's floragraph (picture) will be featured on the float. The parade can be seen on most local channels.

Love Gifts

In memory of Reith Allen Gadbois, by his father, George H. Gadbois, Jr.

To have your child included on "Our Children" webpage, please contact our webmaster Mary at thecamps@roadrunner.com.

Corrections to Birth Dates or Remembrances should be sent to Lisa at garandsmom@yahoo.com.

'100 Practical Ideas for Healing your Holiday Grief'

Dr. Alan Wolfelt

#1 Be Compassionate With Yourself

- Don't judge yourself or set your expectations too high.
- Be kind to yourself
- The journey through grief is a long and difficult one. It is also a journey for which there is no preparation
- Be compassionate with yourself as you encounter painful thoughts and feelings. Self compassion in grief is essential year-round, but especially during the emotionally-fraught holidays.
- Let your holiday grief be what it is. And let yourself – your new, grieving self – be who you are.

Give yourself a rest break today. Lay your body down for at least 20 minutes during the afternoon and relax your muscles. Sleep if sleep comes.

#18 Prepare to Answer the Tough Question.

- You may see many friends and family members over the holidays. Naturally, they will ask how you're doing. What will you say?
- "Oh, I'm doing OK" or "Not too bad" aren't really honest responses. You are probably not "fine," either.
- Be honest. Many of these people are looking for an opportunity to support you in your grief. If you are honest with them about your thoughts and feelings, they can express their caring and compassion.
- At times, sharing a detail of your recent experience is better than a general answer. Share something that happened today or something that's been on your mind this week.
- Sometimes people will be uncomfortable with your honesty, however. Our culture generally isn't very open about death and grief. When this happens, thank the person for asking and change the subject.

Think about and prepare an honest response to the "How are you?" question.

Coping with the Holidays

1. Be careful of "shoulds." It is better to do what is most helpful for you and your family. If a situation looks especially difficult over the holidays, don't get involved if possible.
2. Set limitations. Realize that it isn't going to be easy. Do the things that are very special and/or important to you. Do the best that you can.
3. Once you have made the decision on the role you and your family will play during the holidays, let relatives and friends know.
4. Emotionally, physically, and psychologically it is draining. You need every bit of strength. Try to get enough rest.
5. Donate a gift or money in your loved one's name.
6. Holidays often magnify feelings of loss of a loved one. It is important and natural to experience the sadness that comes. To block such feelings is unhealthy. Keep the positive memory of the loved one alive. Often after the first year the people in your life may expect you to be over it. We are never over it but the experience of many bereaved is that eventually they enjoy the holidays again. Hold on to **HOPE**.

Bah-Hum-Bug Christmas'

It's here again. I know when Halloween gets here another Bah-Hum-Bug Christmas without Jamie isn't far behind. This will be my fourth Christmas without Jamie. What will I try and do to get me through this year?

My sisters and I started a tradition when our father died in November of 1987. We started putting a Christmas tree every year at the cemetery. In 2007, I started putting up two; one for our dad and one for my son, Jamie. My sisters help with Dad's tree, but Jamie's brother Chase and I put up Jamie's. We do this during the Thanksgiving weekend and take it down on New Year's Day.

This is our gift to him. We decorate it just like the ones we had when he was here with us. Putting up a tree for Jamie is a way for Chase and I to cope with the holidays without my son and his brother. All

through the year, I am always on the look-out for new ornaments that can adorn his tree.

The first two years, it was decorated with big blue ribbons (the color of those magnificent eyes of his) and butterflies.

Last year it had a clown topper with polka dot ribbons, snowmen, motorcycles, skate boarders and of course, I had to find a couple of good looking females to add to the tree. We will use the clown topper this year as well, and next year we will do something new. But, if you knew Jamie, you would understand the clown. He was always clowning around and playing tricks on everyone he knew, and then some.

I find that one of the most amazing things that happens during this time is that family, friends and other bereaved parents will stop and visit with Jamie. They also put their own ornaments on the tree. I find it

very heart warming that he is remembered during this time of year. Also, that it may be somewhat comforting to other bereaved parents that visit as well. I look forward to seeing if I can find a new ornament on the tree when I go to Jamie's. Then I try to guess who has visited my loving, compassionate, free-spirited angel, Jamie. May he always be remembered and forever loved.

Try as you might, you can't escape the holiday season. I still approach the holidays with fear and trepidation, but I do hope Jamie's story may help other bereaved parents in some way to cope. Hopefully, they will come up with ways to honor the memory of their sons and daughters.

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas.

Suzie & Memories of Jamie

Meeting Information

Lexington

Third Monday of Every Month
6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.
Hospice of the Bluegrass
2321 Alexandria Drive
Lexington, Kentucky



Winchester

First Tuesday of Every Month
7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.
Hospice East
417 Shoppers Drive
Winchester, Kentucky

Meeting Format

Doors open one-half hour before meeting times to provide the opportunity to visit with old friends and acknowledge new ones. Please plan to arrive early so the meeting can begin on time.

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.

©2007 The Compassionate Friends

The TCF Sibling Credo

**We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.
 We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.
 Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.
 Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.
 At other times we need our families to be there.
 Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us,
 continuing to become the individuals we want to be.
 We cannot be our dead brother or sister;
 however, a special part of them lives on with us.
 When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.
 We are living a life very different from what we envisioned,
 and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.
 Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others
 the value of family and the precious gift of life.
 Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are,
 but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of
 The Compassionate Friends.**

“The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again.”

—Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends