



**Chapter Co-Leaders:**

Jim Sims & Stephanie M.

**Treasurer & Newsletter Mailings:**

David & Janie Fields

**Newsletter Editor:**

Rebecca Woloch

**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

Suzie McDonald: (859) 576-7680

Monique Podgorski: (859) 381-8256

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[compassionatefriends.org](http://compassionatefriends.org)

The Bluegrass Chapter publishes all newsletters online:

[www.tcfbluegrass.org](http://www.tcfbluegrass.org)

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national, non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and support to bereaved parents and their families. Our primary purpose is to assist in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of a child and to support grieving family members in their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

Additionally, we provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings to help others in our community to be supportive. If you are a bereaved parent, grandparent or adult sibling, we extend our hands in friendship and our hearts in understanding and invite you to join us at an upcoming monthly meeting.

**Meeting Information**

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

Winchester: First Tuesday of Every Month—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Hospice East ▪ 407 Shoppers Drive ▪ Winchester, KY

**Meeting Format**

Doors Open one half hour before meeting times to provide the opportunity to visit with old friends and acknowledge new ones. Be sure to check out the library. Please plan to arrive early so the meeting can begin on time.

**Steering Committee** — meets on the first Monday of each month at 6:30pm at Hospice in Lexington. All are welcome to attend and participate.

**We welcome you with compassion, love and hope**

It is always difficult to say "welcome" to those 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 for the 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 our Winchester meeting:*

Tim and Melissa Hatchett, parents of **McKenna Brooke** 9/2/08

Maureen Brantigan, mother of **Denise Brantigan Engdahl** 5/29/99

Gale Brown, mother of **Zane Gregory** 11/2/07

*Returning to our Lexington meeting:*

Kathy and Dan Turner, parents of **Spencer David** 6/2/96



## Bluegrass Chapter News

**Worldwide Candle Lighting**—As part of the National event, please join TCF Bluegrass on Sunday, December 14th as we honor and remember our children, that their light may always shine. This event will be held at South Elkhorn Christian Church located at 4343 Harrodsburg Road in Lexington. Directions are available by visiting the Elkhorn Christian Church website:

[www.southelkhorncc.org/mappage.html](http://www.southelkhorncc.org/mappage.html)

A pot-luck supper will begin at 5:30 pm, please bring a dish to share (perhaps your child's favorite). The Candle Lighting will commence at 7:00 pm with guest speaker Juanita Peterson. We invite all family members and friends to come together in memory of those who are no longer with us in love, fellowship and remembrance.

### From our Chapter Leader

*Jim Sims*

The holiday season is here as we are reminded daily by music in the stores, mailboxes filled with ads and a steady stream of TV commercials. It's not the most favorite time of the year for most bereaved parents and families, most especially to those facing it for the first time or those that have had bad experiences in years past. So what can you do when your feelings and emotions threaten to overwhelm you? First and foremost, remember that the

dread and anticipation is often worse than the reality. Recall the things you've heard and read about making a plan that you think is best even if it doesn't include others expectations. You can follow traditions only if they feel ok to you. You can remind yourself that it will be over at the end of the month. You can think about the countless others who have faced this same situation and found a way to handle it.

*You can and you will do the same.*

You can lean on your compassionate friends that are ready and willing to listen or talk to you. *Give one of us a call.* You can reach out to help another parent that is dealing with the same problem as you. Helping someone else will give you a good feeling that you won't want or need to ignore.

I'll be thinking of all of you.  
Jim

**Additional resources for coping with the holidays are available at [www.tcfbluegrass.org/holidays.html](http://www.tcfbluegrass.org/holidays.html)**

**Love Gifts**—There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Some parents remember a birthday or anniversary date of their child, or a holiday with a love gift. The "Love Gifts" help with the mailing of the newsletter, maintaining and updating our library and meeting costs. Please send love gifts to David Fields, P.O. Box 647, Nicholasville, KY 40340. Please remember, if given in memory of your child, to include his/her full name. A **very** special **Thank You** to those who contribute love gifts to the basket during monthly meetings. We greatly appreciate your support!

A love gift was received in honor of **Zack Camp's** 19th birthday from his mom and brother Jessie.

A love gift was received in memory of **Jeremy Hicks** by his parents Joe & Sheila Hicks.





## Our children— forever loved and remembered

### December Birthdates

12/1/91	<b>Cody McClure Speer</b>	4/2/05	Son of Lin and Mark Simmons
12/1/71	<b>William Fredrick White</b>	8/5/00	Son of Fred and Rebecca White
12/2/70	<b>Michael "Mikie" Varnell Norton</b>	9/25/97	Son of Mike & Vada Barnes, Varnell Norton
12/4/64	<b>Jennifer Lee Guenther</b>	11/19/04	Daughter of Helen Burch
12/5/78	<b>Shannon D. Robinson</b>	1/28/95	Son of Dale and Teresa Robinson
12/7/85	<b>Evan Charles Thomas</b>	7/15/02	Son of John and Keila Thomas
12/11/64	<b>Michael Rhodes Burton</b>	7/20/89	Son of Harold and Pat Burton
12/13/89	<b>Zack Camp</b>	3/7/04	Son of Mary Camp
12/21/86	<b>Christopher Andrew Keefe</b>	12/21/86	Son of Michael & Anna Keefe
12/21/86	<b>David Alexander Keefe</b>	12/21/86	Son of Michael & Anna Keefe
12/23/68	<b>Will Fister</b>	2/18/90	Son of Gayle and J. W. Fister
12/24/69	<b>Hank Butler Scolf</b>	9/27/86)	Son of Michael and Doretta Scolf
12/27/01	<b>Frank Thomas Glowatz</b>	12/27/01	Son of Frank and Dawn Glowatz
12/28/79	<b>Bessie Renee Root</b>	10/29/94	Daughter of Patricia Root
12/30/04	<b>Noah Edward Kenawell</b>	12/8/05	Son of Mike and Andrea Kenawell

### December Remembrances

12/1/03	<b>Debra Cay Stinson</b>	(Born) 11/23/54	Daughter of Bill and Letha Stinson
12/2/97	<b>Kevin Wayne Gardner</b>	(Born) 4/30/77	Son of Doug and Vicky Gardner
12/2/04	<b>John Martin Laswell</b>	(Born) 6/20/68	Son of Frances Shaver
12/6/94	<b>Jacob Daniel Akin</b>	(Born) 6/25/89	Son of Becky Akin
12/8/05	<b>Noah Edward Kenawell</b>	(Born) 12/30/04	Son of Mike and Andrea Kenawell
12/12/04	<b>Timothy Richard Woodworth</b>	(Born) 7/8/68	Son of Richard and Sharon Woodworth
12/14/05	<b>Robert Allen "Robbie" Joseph II</b>	(Born) 8/19/71	Son of Mary Treadway
12/21/86	<b>Christopher Andrew Keefe</b>	(Born) 12/21/86	Son of Michael & Anna Keefe
12/21/86	<b>David Alexander Keefe</b>	(Born) 12/21/86	Son of Michael & Anna Keefe
12/23/83	<b>Keith Allen Gadbois</b>	(Born) 2/8/60	Son of George H. Gadbois
12/24/04	<b>Louis Tsey Gakpo</b>	(Born) 8/11/84	Son of Seth & Philomena Gakpo, Paul Gakpo
12/28/77	<b>Renee Peterson</b>	(Born) 10/7/70	Daughter of Roy and Juanita Peterson
12/29/97	<b>Julie Dawn Hall</b>	(Born) 6/26/68	Daughter of Sharon and Don Hall
12/29/79	<b>Tiffany Creech</b>	(Born) 10/12/79	Daughter of Jim and Karen Rice



### The Plight of the "Recovered"

by Vicky Pruitt, TCF Bluegrass

Don't forget us –

Our smiles are back  
 Our tears are spent -  
 But that doesn't mean we don't hurt.  
 Her clothes are packed,  
 Her toys retired –  
 But that doesn't mean we've forgotten.  
 We have a new baby,  
 He's a joy, and a pleasure-  
 But that doesn't mean she's replaced.  
 Our hearts are not empty,  
 Our arms are filled,  
 But that doesn't mean they don't ache for her.  
 Our house rings with laughter,  
 Our hearts full of joy –  
 But that doesn't mean we don't grieve for her.  
 We celebrate holidays,  
 Weddings, and christenings,  
 But that doesn't mean her absence isn't felt.  
 Our lives are quite normal,  
 We're carrying on –  
 But that doesn't mean we've recovered

Please, Please, don't forget us.

*In memory of Leslie Anne Pruitt 8/14/78—9/14/79 (after heart surgery at 13 months of age) Originally published in TCF Bluegrass Newsletter, September 1981*

### Untitled

by Jack Bahm, TCF Lexington

I never knew how empty  
 Empty really was:  
 And never knew that lonely  
 Means all that it does  
 How could I know that aching  
 Was as powerful as death?  
 But now these things are known to me  
 And known with every breath

*In memory of J.C. Baum II 3/16/70—2/18/88  
 Originally published in TCF Bluegrass Newsletter, January 1990*

### I Remember Keich

by Sarah E. Newby, TCF Bluegrass

I remember your smile and your laughter. I remember your wit and charm. I remember you calling "Grandmother, can I come up there?" Keich already knew my answer.  
 I remember something coming to my house called an autopsy report. The report said that Keich's young body was strong and healthy, but then went on to say something about a bullet from a "38" entering his back—that youthful back that I remember so straight and proud—a bullet that tore through every vital organ in his precious body.  
 They said he was handing or showing you that gun, but how could that be? You had your back toward him as you bent over the fountain and got your last taste of water.  
 They then carried you to Woodford Memorial Hospital, where we agonized as your life and spirit slipped away. They said that they did what they could, but it is hard for your family to believe that you—always so active, giving and alive—would surrender this world. I hope I didn't do anything wrong by mentioning that hospital, for since October 17, 1986 until now it's name has never been in print.  
 My family was taught to believe that laws were made to protect the innocent and to punish the guilty. None of us want revenge, but we did want and expected justice.  
 I know you wouldn't want us to go one crying, but honestly Keich, we are really trying. We will keep praying and trusting that one day justice will be done.  
 You remember how we would always get together at my house. We still do, but somehow it's not the same. Like all of us, your two brothers (first cousins really) are having trouble dealing with your departing. Greg Jr. (Chief) doesn't talk about it much when he comes down here. He goes into your room alone and just sits.

You remember how much fun the three of you would have in there? Little Cedric has nightmares and refuses to go to sleep in his room. He cries if Chief goes to sleep before he does. When his Mom asks why he is crying, he says he is afraid someone will shoot him. He also wants to know what a 12 year old kid is doing with a gun.

I worry so much about your mother, my daughter. She keeps all this bottled up. When she does talk about it she asks questions that none of us can answer.

I could go on talking about Keich forever, but no way could we, his family and friends, convey to you the hurt, the lonely emptiness we feel that doesn't diminish with time. You see there is so much around to remind us of him. He loved us first of all, and he loved the sunshine, the wind, and the rain. He loved life.

We will go on remembering him, loving him, and missing him.

*In memory of Keich Newby 5/27/74—10/18/86 (from gunshot wound)  
 Originally published in TCF Bluegrass Newsletter, August 1987*





## What Jesse Taught Me: TY

By Rebecca Woloch

Jesse spoke young, with his fathers' direct, intelligent words and his mothers' perpetual ramble. When he turned one I took a part time job and he had a babysitter for several months before he entered daycare. For Christmas she gave him a talking "Big Bird" that was almost as big as he was.

We pulled the string: "Hi, I'm Big Bird. Would you like some bird seed?" and Jesse would respond "No sank you, Big Bird."

Jesse remained a very polite young man.

When I emailed him the confirmation for the laptop he was getting for Christmas 2006, his response was: ty ty ty.

Thank you.

It's hard, very hard to find reason to say thank you anymore, I am not as polite as Jesse.

I've been trying to find the right word to describe the thankless thanks that I have for my fellow sad moms and dads but the words just don't work. I am not thankful for being here as we would all prefer we'd never had the occasion to meet. But I appreciate the shared tears, thoughts and meaning behind what they have said and done and given. I have decided there is no word for this - there is no applicable term.

To honor them, and us, I chose to give them voice in this issue. To repeat stories perhaps forgotten and others we are thanklessly too familiar with. I have grieved while I read about children I didn't know - I have cried while I read the writing of others I did.

"No sank you, Big Bird."

I listen and sometimes what I hear is so wrenching. Sometimes what I hear turns inside out and back into what I know all too well.

I am thankless in this season of "peace and love and joy" and then angry as I reflect on things I have heard, tales of the hurt others have dispelled without thanks to those who are surely the most thankless.

About her son's room, a friend said "Well you should turn it into a Yoga Room." Never mind that no one in the family ever practiced yoga or that she could even fathom her dead sons' room as anything other than what it is.

Or my sad sister who stood quietly while a coworker ranted and raved about her new grandchild then turned to her and said "I just don't know what I would do if anything ever happened to my son."

Or the other who said "Really, you should try to stop playing the victim"

Or the other whose sister was out partying the night of her son's funeral because her best girl friend was going through a divorce and needed a fun time.

Or the family members who neither acknowledged nor considered a birthday or the dreaded anniversary day or even thought to call or drop a note. And then figured it was okay to just go ahead and forget their dad's birthday too.

Or my son's best friend whose mother asked "did you know this girl who was just killed in the accident?" and when he said "Yes, she was friends with me and Jesse" her response was "Oh well, it happens"

Or the chain letter email sent on mothers' day - all about mom's who sit up at night and tend young ones without considering that this mother will never again hear the words "happy mothers day." So the sad mom wrote "I know you didn't mean to hurt me but that did" and received no response, no apology. Nothing but silence. It was sent because it made the sender feel better. Too bad our skin is not thicker.

Or the woman in Kmart whose daughter-in-law Jesse's dad taught who said "oh and how are you doing with that thing you know that THING you are having to go through?"

There are so many, so very many reasons to not give thanks. I don't want to hear again "have a blessed season" or a "happy holiday" and it's really not too much to ask but it seems in order to get that we have to bury ourselves until this season is finished. Thankfully, it will be gone soon.

I will light a candle for my son - and all of our children and I will keep it burning through these days of so-called peace and joy. I will be thankful when they are done but I will be more thankful if someone reads these pages and then realizes that what they might say should be something else. That they realize even though we have suffered the greatest pain, the only pain, we are still capable of hurting more.

And that they will remember, remember and in place of added sorrow offer us love and compassion instead.

Then I can type like Jesse: ty, ty, ty.  
<3

*Zach Landers - after submitting a poem he wrote for his cousin Hannah - helped inspire the theme of this month's newsletter.*



## The Belt

by Katherine Shaw

I watched him stand at my kitchen counter  
holding an old white terry cloth  
and tenderly wiping down your belt,  
washing ground dirt and sand  
from black leather and chrome studs.  
He twisted the towel under the stream of water  
from our sink  
and stroked your belt clean.  
Our ceremonial bathing,  
we faltered toward goodbye  
as strangers washed your body  
five miles north  
and I stood helpless  
bathing the kitchen with my tears,  
crying out your name  
but your ears were packed  
with bloodied cotton.

*In memory of Tevis Caleb Shaw  
4/8/86—8/21/06 (from a fall at Red River Gorge)*

## In the time of Remembrance

By Beth Fritz, TCF Bluegrass

In the time of Remembrance  
(Silent night, Silent night)  
In the long lonely hours  
(Silent night, Silent night)  
When the only rustling bedclothes  
Are mine as I toss and turn  
(Silent night, Silent night)

The sayings of the Season  
Remind me of the reason  
That I feel lost inside  
Because I know the family  
Meant to be  
Has been shattered so cruelly  
And the sound of silver bells  
Is hollow in my ears

Christmas is for the living

*In memory of Matthew Robert Fritz born and died 10/10/82  
Originally published in TCF Bluegrass Newsletter, December 1985*

## We Remember Annemarie

Our precious only daughter, our youngest child, our loving sister, Annemarie Timm, was taken from us, suddenly and tragically on October 28, 1990. At the tender age of 16 she was already a beautiful girl and a wonderful person. She is an irreplaceable loss to us and to the entire universe. Annemarie, we miss you and love you. You shall live on in our hearts forever.

- Dad, Mom, Chuck and Joey

## To Annemarie With Love

We miss your gentle beauty and your smiling face  
Without you there's an emptiness which nothing can replace  
We wait to hear your giggle and your singing in the hall  
Or your screaming at a spider which you hated most of all

We try to help each other with the heartache and the pain  
As we think about you every day and mention your sweet name  
We pray that you are happy in God's heaven up above  
If only we had one more chance to tell you of our love

We hope some day to be with you and until then we will never forget  
'Cause Annemarie, we aren't finished being your big brothers yet

- Always in our hearts, Chuck and Joey (our loving sister Annemarie Timm, died October 28, 1990 at age 16).

*In memory of Annemarie Timm 4/8/74—10/28/90 (from an auto accident) Originally published in TCF Bluegrass Newsletter, September/October 1991*





### Enclosed: Tikles 'n Strawberries

By Suzanne Woloch

Yellow hoodies and black tee shirts  
And hair of varying lengths—

Yours was first light fuzz  
Then straight soft bangs the color of the sun,  
A yellow-capped son,  
Sunlight encasing the dazzling rays of your mind.

Your words were bigger than you,  
Bigger than your 100-pound name  
On your 40-pound frame  
When your hair grew short like a little man's hair.

So your limbs grew longer,  
Your fingers even more slender.  
Magic sunrays were synapses from the sunlight of your brain  
To your fingertips to the keys,

To the hardwired lines and the wireless signals  
That turned metal boxes into life that did magical tricks  
And your hair grew longer  
Because the sunlight needed to get out all the time.

You wore black tee shirts  
With messages not always understood,  
But the dark absorbed the brilliant light  
To protect us from blindness and sunburn  
And from the light that would reveal us all  
To be lesser than the sun, the son.

In the morning, the sun rises,  
And the son also rises,  
And we believe this will happen forever.  
And we will love you forever.

*In memory of Jesse C. Higginbotham 3/10/90—4/19/07  
(from an auto accident)*

In an effort to continue the work Jesse was so passionate about his family and friends established **The Jesse Higginbotham Technology Trust, Inc.** a 501 (c) (3) non-profit. The "Mindtriggerz Project" is one of several the Trust has undertaken. Used donated computers are repaired and given a "second life" and are then placed in the homes of children in Lexington who could not otherwise afford them. Information is available on this and other endeavors of the Trust at [www.jessehigginbotham.com/mindtriggerz.html](http://www.jessehigginbotham.com/mindtriggerz.html). Donations are tax-deductible and help us continue in a manner in keeping with Jesse's altruistic nature.

### A Tribute to Life

By Cindy Snapp

(Life; "vibrant, full of energy, sparkle,  
resilience, spirit)

To most of us his life seemed too short. He was a son, a brother, a nephew, a cousin, an uncle and most of all a friend. We knew him as the kid on crutches who struggled for years with rheumatoid arthritis and a lover of music never leaving the house without a CD in his hand. He was the defender of the defenseless; a Good Samaritan changing flat tires for stranded strangers and offered rides to those in need. To some, he was the quick oil and lube guy at Valvoline, the voice in the dairy case at Kroger, and a delivery man for Cables. To others, he was the redneck on a 4-wheeler, a jet ski, behind the wheel of a pickup truck or the mickey d's mustang, with ripped jeans and untied boots, popping wheelies in Terry's parking lot and cruising The City or The Rocks. He was the survivor of a .44, installed heating and cooling sys-

tems, an electrician's helper, a painter, manhandling a fork-lift at Quebecor, a confidant, a comedian, worked with Parks Landscaping and had a soft heart for a pretty girl. An avid swimmer, boater, took his Marlboro's and Bud "Light". He liked his steak rare, drank milk by the gallon, was a fan of Homer Simpson and swam against the tide of tradition. Always found the good in people choosing not to sit in judgment of others and persuaded many to show mercy and offer second and third chances to those who had wronged them. He completed eighth grade in twelve weeks and never missed a session of summer school while in high school. He was voted having the "worst case of senioritis" graduating with his Class of 2002. To most, he was the one full of life and light, heading to the Clay City drag strip with friends instead of cleaning his room, a work of art in a ballerina costume or wearing a local beauty queen's crown, and he was a father's best friend. You wouldn't find him without a cell phone, he told his momma everything (just AF-

TER the fact), and he always remembered to say thank you. This and more would be *life* as normal – full of adventure, excitement, laughter, challenge, disappointment, surprise, hope, family, friends and he was convinced one day he would find the Garden of Eden. Today, he would challenge us to experience what life has to offer as he truly loved life. He was a living example that friends and family are life's treasures. There is a poem that says when we die it is not what we take with us but what we leave behind that is important; but I have witnessed that you do take something with you when you die; you take the hearts of those you touched while you were alive. So it is that we remember him, our friend this March 31<sup>st</sup> on what would have been his 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. We know heaven has not been the same since he arrived and one day we will all be united; just believe. FLY ON!

*In memory of Richard Allen "Dicky" Snapp 3/31/84—6/11/06 (from a motorcycle accident)*



## Jottings from Jo

By Jo Hepburn

Christmas is a time of joy and peace. That might seem strange to some of us. Joy? Peace? Ever again?

I can only say a probable yes to all three. It hurts as I try to plan as many of the family rituals as I can handle. But we carry on. We will have a tree decorated with the treasures collected as the children grew. I get a smaller one now that I live alone and I cry some as I decorate it, but it is a necessary part of our celebration. And I enjoy doing the shopping, and helping others do theirs. The gifts are fun. I feel Jonathan was such a special gift for fifteen years. The gifts he gave us are the things we miss most. He gave us fun and laughter (Joy, Peace).

I will again take a small tree to the cemetery decorated with a few of my reminders of things Jon loved and popcorn for the birds and chipmunks. I will cry some and I will smile because it was his love for birds and chipmunks that makes me do it. We will have a family dinner and I will miss him and know others of the family miss him too even if they do not say so.

The candles are the most special. He loved candles, fire-place fires, campfires, sunrise and sunset. I will keep a candle lit for him. I do so much anyway, but during the holi-

days I keep one lit in his window, day and night. I think he likes that, for Christmas is a time of light.

The music hurts too. How many of us sang carols as we rocked babies; how many times we watched cherub choirs sing with our own cherubs in little robes looking like angels.

God help us.

That's a prayer.

I cannot hang stockings. Cannot hang his yet, and cannot hang the others without his. I do hang a tiny one for the grandchild.

I hope my thoughts do not depress you, just help you to understand yours. I smile, I laugh, I cope better with each occasion. I miss him, but it is precious pain, for I miss him because I had him and he was very precious. His love for us hovers about us always and we talk about him and how dear he was. And he knows.

May God bless each of you and help you to find some bit of strength and hope and: Yes, Joy and Peace! Keep mindful that you have some compassionate friends. And love.

*In memory of Jonathan Hepburn 7/31/63—6/9/78 (from hit and run driver)*

*Originally published in TCF Bluegrass Newsletter, December 1981*

## A Birthday Gift

by Joe Elswick

Today was my birthday, one of the hardest days yet  
I asked for one silly gift since you couldn't be here  
For a storm and rain that would make you smile

All day I waited through the heat and sunshine  
And I feared that maybe you had forgotten me  
While you're swinging up there in your trees

It was a long, busy day in which I found nothing  
Including a lack of appetite and birthday wishes  
Because I didn't want to miss you as I do now

Evening came and I had given up hope on my dream  
Of the rain coming down so no one could see my tears  
My family came with your dad but none of it mattered

We ordered dinner and I didn't finish my meal  
Which is a first in all ways possible for me  
Waitresses sang that lousy song and I sat there

Dinner was long and I thought only of you completely  
But as they brought me that free desert, I tried again  
Blowing out a single candle in hope of rain showers

Finally we got up to go and my sister saw it first  
Sure enough, we stepped out and there was rain  
Your beautiful rain and the cracking thunder

I was so utterly shocked the tears ran freely  
I am grateful to know wishes still come true  
And even gone, you gave me the greatest gift of all.

10:19 pm 6/26/06

*In memory of Andrew Ryan "Annie" Graham 3/29/89—  
5/21/06 (hit by a car while crossing the street)*





## Josh

by Elizabeth Hicks

I remember walking into the funeral home for his visitation: it was uncomfortably cool, and music that was popular four years ago played softly in the background in an appreciated, but unsuccessful, attempt to lighten the mood. I consciously kept my eyes from resting on anyone or anything in front of me; I hardly remember what the funeral home looked like. I hated the feeling of being there, but I continued to follow the long line of people to his casket. Once I reached it, I was shocked to see that it was open. I only saw his face for a second before tears obstructed my vision completely. Through heaving sobs, I screamed at nobody in particular that his hair had been dyed black instead of pink and that they didn't do his make-up correctly and that this was not the beautiful boy I remembered and that this strange-looking mannequin was not *my* friend. After a couple of minutes, I walked away from... it. It felt like my body had just been hit with the weight of one thousand tons, the weight of one realization: Josh was really gone.

Josh Shipman was impossible to ignore. He had bright pink hair, flawless make-up, polished nails, and his signature feather earring. He often wore his favorite heeled boots with black clothing that hugged his skinny frame. His bold outward appearance complemented his bubbly personality. He would

hug and kiss everyone in his path and would make anyone his friend.

As happy as Josh always seemed, he had many emotional problems. Being openly gay and Wiccan, he dealt with the intolerance of numerous students at Dunbar—it was appalling how many of his classmates would outright taunt him—but he seemed to let their hate roll off his slender back. Privately, he suffered from depression, and sometimes self-mutilated. All of Josh's friends saw what he was dealing with on a regular basis, but he always managed to disguise his pain with a beautiful smile that no one could see through.

On October 6, 2006, the principal interrupted first block over the P.A. system.

"Students, I have some disturbing news."

That caught my attention.

"One of our students, Josh Shipman, was found dead in his room this morning. I don't know many details, but let's please have a moment of silence for him."

Nothing he had just said registered with me. Everyone was silent, tears formed in their eyes, they hugged each other, my friend Brittany walked out of the room, and I could not understand why. When Brittany came back in class, her face was red and swollen from crying. I stared at her, dumbfounded. She was crying because Josh was gone. What was wrong? Josh was

dead.

What's going on? I don't even remember what I did or said the rest of class.

I spent the time in between that day and Josh's visitation in denial. His death was the hardest thing in the world for me to wrap my mind around. I could not make myself believe that he was gone for good. Every time I had to tell someone he died, it made it that much harder because it made it real. Going to the visitation, and seeing him in the casket, is what pulled me out of my denial. Josh Shipman was dead. He couldn't continue under the weight of his own reality; his fragile frame couldn't take it. But without him, how was I supposed to handle mine?

Josh was buried later that week, on what would have been his sixteenth birthday. He was such a beautiful person. He always looked so happy, so full of life. But because of the pain he felt every single day, he had a funeral for his sweet sixteen. It's terrible to know that he is gone forever, but hopefully he will serve as a reminder to those who treated him and others with disrespect. Maybe now their hatred will become love and acceptance. Josh's life impacted many, but his untimely death impacted even more.

*In memory of Joshua Lee Shipman  
10/12/90-10/5/06 (by suicide)*



### Remember Them As We Grow Old

by Mary Treadway, TCF Bluegrass  
written in December 2007

When I hear sirens, see blue lights from law enforcement vehicles flashing, hear the helicopter flying out or hear on the news "highway shut down for hours due to car crash." We remember them.

I pray please God let them all be okay.

There is shock, numbness it eventually changes daily to only visit us at those moments when you hear a special song, anniversaries, birthdays, past conversations. We remember them. We meet new people we become part of a club the membership is costly the price is the loss of your loved one. You may get in your car to

go grocery shopping but in my case drive thirty miles to the cemetery to remember them. Old friends are afraid to mention their name. You search for ways to make others remember them. When and if you have the strength you may find a cause, something to help others so that they do not become a member in this terrible club known as grief. It has been two years, and about 29 hours for me since I became a member. My son Robbie was the impaired driver killed in a single car crash. I never question God he gives me strength when I think that I cannot go on. I thank The detective from the Alcohol Beverage Control for his professionalism, patience and compassion in Robbie's case and pray for his safety. Susan Crouch with Mothers Against Drunk Driving has been a rock for me. Mothers Against

Drunk Driving provided literature to me about alcohol, sudden death and answered many questions. Thank you Lisa Brock. In Mt. Sterling the city council took on my cause to have an ordinance to have mandatory training for servers and those who sell alcohol. It took all of my strength at times and I am sure Mayor Williamson's patience as well but he was most gracious. Winston Churchill wrote:  
Remember them  
They shall grow not old  
As we that are left grow old  
Age shall not wear them  
Nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun  
And in the morning  
We will remember them

*In memory of Robert Allen "Robbie" Joseph 8/19/71—12/14/05 (single vehicle auto accident)*

### Under Great Blue Skies

by Zachary Landers

Under great blue skies  
I think of us when we were side by side  
How these six months have flown by

You were the last I thought would die  
And now you're up there high  
With the great spirit in the sky

I've been left here to cry  
And these days are just passin' by  
On that May day I prayed for one more goodbye

Now you're up there high in the sky  
And we're still watching you shine  
Though we've been left here to cry

But you have inspired I  
With that great spirit in the sky

*In memory of Hannah Meagan Landers  
9/28/90 - 5/6/08 (auto accident)*

### To Jimmy (James E. Hall)

by Ann Hall Drury, TCF Bluegrass

Jimmy,

When I get to missing you so badly that I think I can't go on another day, I just close my eyes and think of you and if I wish and think hard enough, then suddenly you're here. I hear your laugh, I see your smile, that great big old grin that only you can grin, those beautiful big blue eyes and oh what a head of hair. Baby, you'll always be with me, I'll never let you go because we have a special bond, a special love that only a mother and her child can know.

I'll always love you honey,  
you'll always be my little skinny,  
six-foot baby. Seventeen forever.

Love you forever,  
Mama

*In memory of James E. "Jimmy" Hall 8/14/68—4/2/86  
Originally published in TCF Bluegrass Newsletter, February 1989*





## National News

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting, held annually the second Sunday in December, this year December 14, unites family and friends around the globe as they light 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 memories 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 from TCF to the bereavement community, 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.

The Worldwide Candle Lighting started in the United States in 1997 as a small Internet observance but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. The 2007 Worldwide Candle

Lighting saw information on services received from 24 countries outside the United States. Joining TCF last year were chapters of several bereavement organizations including MISS, Twinless Twins, MADD, Parents of Murdered Children, and BPUSA and services were held in all 50 states plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico.

The Bluegrass Chapter invites you to attend the Candle Lighting to be held at South Elkhorn Christian Church in Lexington. Details on the event are located on Page 2 of this newsletter.

**Winchester Meetings**—In our continuing efforts to reach out to others in the Bluegrass community, our local chapter is hosting additional monthly meetings in Winchester. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 4th from 7pm to 9 pm at Hospice East located at 407 Shoppers Drive, Winchester, Kentucky. Meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month in this same location. Decembers' meeting topic will be "Coping with Holidays." Special thanks to Mary Camp who has been instrumental in the addition of the Winchester meetings.

**Library Books** —Please remember to return all borrowed books. Many books were donated in memory of a child. If you can't come to the meetings to return the books, please call or email Jim or Mary at (859) 858-8288, (859) 797-2168, or [TheCamps@adelphia.net](mailto:TheCamps@adelphia.net). Put **Library Books** in the subject line, and include the book name and author, your name and phone number. Our Library is a great resource for our members, friends and families. Be sure to come to our monthly meetings early enough to browse our selection and borrow a book. Please keep our library in mind and contact Mary with your donations.

**To Our Long-time Members:** We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting new parents arrive with a fresh hurt and frightened eyes. I remember how we felt at our first meeting. Think back... what would it have been like for you if there had not been any "oldies" to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, "your pain will not always be this bad: it really does get softer". They were the ones who wanted to really listen when you talked about your child. Can you be an "oldie" for someone else? By helping someone else, you help yourself and share your child with someone who never got to know them. Come out and share with newly bereaved parents to help them help each other. Our own healing happens when we are reaching out to others.

**A Change to the TCF Bluegrass Newsletter**—Our monthly newsletter is sent to members and friends via email and posted online at our website at [www.tcfbluegrass.org](http://www.tcfbluegrass.org). A quarterly newsletter containing excerpts from the monthly editions is mailed to any member who would like to receive it. We strongly encourage those with internet access to unsubscribe from the mailed edition saving resources and funds as well as being ecologically minded. To unsubscribe from the print edition, please send an email to Janie at [Butterflymom@alltel.net](mailto:Butterflymom@alltel.net). To sign up for the email edition, drop a note to Jim at [KyWildcat1@alltel.net](mailto:KyWildcat1@alltel.net). Additionally, if you know of someone who would appreciate receiving our online newsletter, please let Jim know. Corrections, additions and submissions to the TCF Bluegrass newsletter should be sent to Rebecca Woloch, [rwoloch@insightbb.com](mailto:rwoloch@insightbb.com)