



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Bluegrass Chapter Newsletter

"We need not walk alone."

www.tcfbluegrass.org

P.O. Box 647, Nicholasville, Kentucky 40340

March/April 2012

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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

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*The Compassionate Friends
National Office*

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Oak Brook, IL 60522

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www.compassionatefriends.org

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.

Newcomers Welcome

We know it's hard to take that first step to attend your first meeting. Bringing someone along can help you take that first step. There are misconceptions about what our meetings are like. Are we sitting around having a pity party? NO! We learn healthy ways to deal with our grief. Does crying mean we are out of control? No! It means we hurt. Do others understand why we continue way past the time they think we shouldn't need it anymore? Some of us have stayed so others will have a place to come to heal. Aren't we glad others don't understand!

Love Gifts:

**In memory of Jamie Flynt
By his mother, Suzie McDonald**

"Wilderness of Grief, Is There Hope"

Frankfort, KY Regional Conference

March 23 & 24, 2012

[Click here for more information](#)

[Registration Form](#)

Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

March Birthdates

- 3/1 **John Martin Fay** Son of Mary Ann Fay
 3/1 **Ryan Jason Ross** Son of Mitzi and Rick Holbrook
 3/4 **Barclay (Bart) Knafl** Son of Karen and John Knafl
 3/7 **Kiah Nicole Milson** Daughter of Lisa Scott
 3/8 **Robby Meeks** Son of Cindy and Rusty Meeks
 3/10 **Andy Jones** Son of Jean and Cal Jones
 3/10 **Victor Paul Basil** Son of Lorena Basil
 3/10 **Jesse Caldwell Higginbotham** Son of Rebecca Woloch and Jerome Higginbotham
 3/11 **Mark A. Romond** Son of Ed and Jan Romond
 3/12 **Laura Ann Lemieux** Daughter of Vincent and Jackie Lemieux
 3/14 **Eric Ritchey** Son of Lynn and Harley Ritchey
 3/15 **James "Jamie" Earl Flynt** Son of Suzie McDonald
 3/16 **Matthew Charles Estes** Son of Barry and Cheri Catron
 3/16 **Edward Charles Campherl** Son of Martha E. Stone
 3/16 **Jack Charles Bahm II** Son of Jack Bahm
 3/17 **Jayne Lynn Wawrzyniak** Daughter of Loretta Wawrzyniak
 3/19 **Doug Steinkuhl** Son of Gary and Barb Steinkuhl
 3/20 **Matthew Patterson** Son of John and Ann Patterson
 3/20 **Katherine "Kate" Tudor** Daughter of Suzanne Tudor & Lewis Perry
 3/21 **Jackie Peel** Son of Carl and Pansy Peel
 3/28 **David Ryan Goldey** Son of George and Julia Goldey
 3/28 **Chip Cheek** Son of Betty Milton and Ercel Cheek
 3/29 **Andy McLaughlin** Son of Iris McLaughlin
 3/30 **Joshua Montgomery** Son of Jo Barnes and Eddie Montgomery
 3/31 **Michael Wallace** Son of Jack and Carolyn Wallace
 3/31 **Davey Allison Dunavant** Son of Anita and J. C. Harris
 3/31 **Brandon Lee Lorance** Son of Callie Lorance
 3/31 **Cynthia Duncan** Daughter of Davena Ridenhour Hagen

Meeting Information

Lexington

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



Meeting Format

Winchester

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

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.

Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

March Remembrance Dates

- 3/1 **Addison Elise "Addie" Koch** Daughter of Charles and Katie Koch
 3/1 **Donald Ray Bingham, Jr.** Son of Barbara Bingham
 3/2 **Patrick McDonnell** Son of Anne and Bob McDonnell
 3/2 **Jonathan Derek Perdue** Son of Donna and Chris Perdue
 3/6 **Grant Casey Blethen** Son of Casey Grant Blethen
 3/6 **Rachel Elaine Sutherland** Daughter of Elly and Alan Sutherland
 3/7 **Stephen Booher** Son of Mary McCormick
 3/7 **Zack Camp** Son of Mary Camp
 3/7 **Brenna Jiwon Kihlman** Daughter of Dale and Shan Kihlman
 3/8 **Shadanay Everett** Daughter of Tawana Everett
 3/9 **Robin Lemaster Ratliff** Daughter of Jesse and Betty Lemaster
 3/10 **Jeffrey Scott Wallace** Son of Lynn Wallace
 3/11 **Randy Blake Johnson** Son of Randy and Doris Johnson
 3/12 **Mitchell Allen Jaquish** Son of Ellie and Thomas Jaquish
 3/12 **John Thomas Reynolds** Son of Joan & Richard Reynolds
 3/12 **Christian "Chris" Ford Cash** Son of David Cash
 3/13 **Glenn Cope** Son of Sheila Cope
 3/13 **Charles Hayden "Chip" Lampe** Son of Betsy Lampe
 3/13 **Benton (Ben) Warner Blanton, III** Son of B. W. Blanton, Jr.
 3/13 **Brian Philpot** Son of Mitch and Dee Philpot
 3/13 **Cole Brian Gilliam** Son of Joan B. Gilliam
 3/15 **Amy Jeanine Click** Daughter of Kathy and Steven Click
 3/17 **Darius Xavier Jerome Young** Son of Deborah Young
 3/20 **Lauren Elizabeth Stokley** Daughter of Jackie Webb
 3/20 **Robert (Robbie) Lewis Byrd II** Son of Beverly and Bobby Byrd
 3/21 **Amanda Williams** Daughter of Donna Riley
 3/21 **Bobby Sherman Parsons** Son of Anna McKinney
 3/23 **Scott Carter Jeffers** Son of Susan Jeffers
 3/24 **Joshua Montgomery** Son of Jo Barnes and Eddie Montgomery
 3/25 **David Wayne Meade** Son of Sue & Fred Meade, Brother of Susan Bayes
 3/29 **Matthew Patterson** Son of John and Ann Patterson
 3/30 **Victor M. Martina** Son of Don and Judy Martina
 3/30 **Erica "Shi" Richie** Daughter of Carol Scott
 3/30 **Kimberly Varney** Daughter of Judy and Lewis Varney
 3/31 **Mark Anthony Bishop** Son of Marlene and Mark Bishop

If we have omitted your child, misspelled your child's name, or listed incorrect dates, please accept our apologies and call Janie Fields at (859) 881-1991 to correct the information. Call any of our telephone friends if you are having a hard time on these days. We truly understand your pain; for we, too, remember our own children.

April Birthdates

- 4/2 **John Thomas Reynolds** Son of Joan & Richard Reynolds
 4/5 **Kelly Renee Powell** Daughter of Cecil and Barbara Powell
 4/5 **Michael R. Lucas** Son of Anne and Ed Lucas
 4/8 **Annemarie Timm** Daughter of Helen and Charles Timm
 4/9 **Anthony Eugene Gay** Son of Larry and Gayle Gay
 4/11 **Sean Robert Wright** Son of Sherry Conway & Mark Wright
 4/13 **Tony R. Applegate** Son of Dolly Wallace Bellemy
 4/13 **Jason Davis** Son of Curt Davis
 4/15 **Colin Spencer** Son of Stephanie Spencer
 4/15 **Jeonna McDaniel** Daughter of Jennifer Sebastian
 4/20 **Ivy Britton Freeman** Daughter of Kevin and Cindy Freeman
 4/22 **Brenna Jiwon Kihlman** Daughter of Dale and Shan Kihlman
 4/24 **James Edward Auberry** Son of James Auberry
 4/24 **Glenn Ray Carter** Son of Angela Carter
 4/28 **Katie Lynn Brandenburg** Daughter of Michael & Gennie Brandenburg
 4/28 **Jeremy Daegan Hicks** Son of Joe and Sheila Hicks
 4/29 **Bridget Elizabeth Kolles** Daughter of Greg & Mary Ellen Kolles
 4/29 **Christina Leigh Kolles** Daughter of Greg & Mary Ellen Kolles
 4/30 **Kevin Wayne Gardner** Son of Doug and Vicky Gardner

March Wind

Perhaps our grief is like the March wind. When the wind blows, we have two choices: we can either stand tall and face the wind, or we can allow it to blow us over. Stand tall against the wind, and imagine it is your child giving you the strength to endure. When you feel that gentle breeze or the wind upon your face, that's your child giving you a great big hug or just a soft embrace. May the winds of March dry your tears and help you feel the presence of your child.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY JAMIE. In my heart, you will be 40. You will always be here with me. I am so thankful for all the love and memories you gave to me and the wonderful gift of your birth. I will always remember this day and always.

LOVE YOU BUNCHES!

Mom

April Remembrance Dates

- 4/1 **Ash Valic Coffey** Son of Stacy M. Coffey
- 4/2 **Cody McClure Speer** Son of Lin and Mark Simmons
- 4/10 **Andy Jones** Son of Jean and Cal Jones
- 4/15 **Jennifer Podgorski** Daughter of Monique Podgorski
- 4/15 **Bill Varney** Son of Judy Varney
- 4/16 **Daryl Clinton Barnes** Son of Vada and Mike Barnes
- 4/16 **Deana Mari Sea** Daughter of Darrell and Jean Sea
- 4/16 **Brian Jason Hardin** Son of Richard and Sue Hardin
- 4/17 **William Henry "Bill" Sanders** Son of Barbara Sanders
- 4/19 **Jesse Caldwell Higginbotham** Son of Jerome Higginbotham & Rebecca Woloch
- 4/19 **Kara Elizabeth Horton** Daughter of Carole Mull
- 4/19 **A. Daniel Morris** Son of James and Marie Morris
- 4/18 **James Michael Farris** Son of Hulda Farris
- 4/19 **John Andy Girdler** Son of Ella Girdler
- 4/20 **Madeline Violet Benton** Daughter of Amy & Tony Benton
- 4/21 **Shari Eldot** Daughter of Roz Eldot
- 4/22 **Ron Jones** Son of Mel and Jeanette Jones
- 4/23 **Weston "Ashe" Marlowe** Son of Brandi & Wesley Marlowe
- 4/24 **Trista Erin Lane Hail** Daughter of Bill and Debbie Lane
- 4/25 **Robin Ricci Kuniff** Daughter of Norma Forston
- 4/26 **John Thomas Parks** Son of Rosemary Parks
- 4/27 **Joshua Scott Barker** Son of Deborah Barker
- 4/27 **Lisa Jean Johnson** Daughter of Sam and Doris Strader
- 4/28 **Mark Robert Bartella** Son of John and Brenda Peterson

Grief Nights

By Doug Parrish, In loving memory of my son SCOTT DOUGLAS PARRISH

Four o'clock in the morning "AGAIN" and this disease called Grief has awakened me once more. You never know when it's going to turn on – that movie picture show in your mind. There are a lot of symptoms of grief including depression, despair, confusion, anger and loneliness. Then there's the why's. Why me? Why did this happen? Why did GOD let this happen? Why now? And, of course, Why my child?

Grief has no known cure; only God and time will make it easier to live with. For me, I think any loss of a loved one is devastating, but the loss of a child takes so much more out of you. The years, hours or moments you had to nurture that child are lost in an instant. Your dreams and aspirations for your child gone in a moment of time. It is so senseless for a young life to be taken from you before what we as parents would say "before their time."

Now all that's left are the loving memories, the pitter-patter of little feet running around the house carefree and so enjoyable. Graduation Day and the pride billowing up inside you like a cloud in the sky. Memories of hugs and kisses and "I love you, Mom and Dad!" And, of course, "We love you too!" So, I say to all bereaved persons, hold on to those precious memories and keep them in your heart. Talk about the good ones and the love shared between you and your child. Take time to live, thank God and pray for each other. It's not easy but we will survive.

In the Springtime of Your Grief

By Judi Fischer, Cleveland, Ohio

Spring has fragile beginnings; a tiny shoot of green that emerges from the cold earth, a hint of pastel against the brownish grass, a bud that awakens with the morning sun. Sometimes spring comes so quietly we almost miss it, but once it begins, it is impossible to ignore the daily growth and change. The morning sun brings sounds that were not there before. The breeze carries warmth that invites us to venture outside of ourselves.

A promise is released with the budding and blossoming surrounding us. Hope emerges for the beginning of a new season; change is in the air. What we experience in the springtime of the year is what we can experience in the springtime of our grief. There begins to be a growing radiance. The radiance is not just around us; it is within us.

A gradual warming of the heart silences the chill of intense pain. The natural unfolding of the grief process moves gently to remind us that we will survive. Life is changing and growth emerges through the changes. The song of our hearts that seemed off key begins to experience a harmonious blend of the past and the present. The songs of the birds invite us to join them in a celebration of new life. In the springtime of our grief, there can be a new song for us to sing. It will be a song we composed through the heartache of loss. Optimism for a better day may awaken us one morning.

Hearing laughter and discovering it is coming from within ourselves gives us promise for today. Dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow shine brightly with the morning sun. Surviving the winter of our grief with the openness to embrace change is a decision to embrace loss and integrate its impact into the fabric of our lives. It can be a willingness to explore new possibilities that create a different landscape to behold. We can make a decision that we will begin to appreciate what we still have, not just focus on what is missing. We will know when we have made that decision. **S o m e t h i n g** buds; something opens. The harshness of winter is softened with new life and new growth. It is not something we can force; it is something that unfolds when the time is right. The springtime of grief arrives with no dramatic entrance, no flashing lights. The stillness of the beauty unfolds and captures our attention. It is happening around us, but it is also happening in us.

If spring has already crossed the path of your personal journey of grief, rejoice! But, if the chill of winter remains in your heart, be encouraged; around spring is on its way. Look for it, expect it and it will be yours to experience around you and in you.

Why Butterflies?

Since the early centuries, the butterfly has symbolized renewed life. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and freer existence. Frequently, the butterfly is seen with the word "Nika," which means victory. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of the children's dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since Elisabeth believes in the innate intuitiveness of children, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us a message. Many members of The Compassionate Friends embrace the butterfly a symbol--a sign of hope to them that their children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom-- a comforting thought to many.

What Does Time Have to do with Grief?

Everything! Just consider how, in "normal life," our lives are run by the clock and the calendar. Some of us have a clock in every room so we can keep close track of the time. Few of us have the courage to live without wearing a watch because we're afraid we might be late for something. Time is precious to us. We live in a society that reminds us that every moment counts, and some of us are masters at cramming as much activity as possible into every moment. And when we are grieving our experience still has much to do about time.

Time stands still.

When we are grieving we may feel like the rest of the world is going on as usual while our life has stopped. Just last week, after my friend died, I passed a neighbor watering his lawn. He seemed totally unaffected by, and most likely unaware of Sarah's death. How could that be? He only lives a block away. Didn't he feel the same shift in the universe that I felt when she died? Doesn't he realize someone really special is missing?

Time's up.

Most people will allow us about a one month grace period where we are permitted to talk about our loss and even to cry openly. During this time our friends will probably seem to be attentive to our needs. But when the month is up they may be thinking, if not actually telling us, that it's time to move on, and that we need to get over "it". They want us to get back to normal. We may be surprised how many of our friends (and relatives too) will become uncomfortable with our need to dwell on our sorrow. They may not appreciate that it takes time to readjust our life to the loss. Maybe what they are really saying is, "Time's up for me to be able to be present to you in your grieving time." Because of this we may need to redefine what is normal for us, and choosing some new best friends—friends who are willing and able to walk along side us on our personal journey of grief, and who will allow us to determine when our "time's up".

Doing Time.

Grief may make us feel imprisoned in our own version of hell. We won't like who we are. We won't like it that our loved one has gone. We won't like it that our friends can't make us feel better. We just want out of here, and we're not sure we want to do the work that grief requires in order to be set free from this bondage. Some of us will remain in this uncomfortable place for a short time while others of us may feel like we have been given a longer sentence.

Wasting time.

Though in real life I pride myself in being a master at multitasking, in the land of grief I'm much less sure of myself. I find it hard to make decisions because, in my new situation, I don't trust myself to make the right choice. I want someone else to be responsible if something goes wrong. Sometimes my wasting time is about not having the energy to get started. I am physically exhausted and my body refuses to make an effort to reclaim my former self. And I admit, quite frankly, that I'm not sure I even care enough about anything to make the effort. What's the use, since it seems like everything I love sooner or later gets taken away from me.

Looking back in time.

When we grieve we spend most of our time, at least at first, looking back. It seems safer that way. That's where our missing loved ones are. If we were to look forward, that would mean we would have to imagine our lives without those we have lost. And that's what we aren't ready to accept--not yet. So we spend a lot of time thinking how we should have been able to prevent their dying, or wondering if we used our time with them well, as we remember the good times, bad times, silly and sad times. We think we have to keep those memories in front of us, or surely we will forget those whom we have lost.

Continued on Page 8...

...Continued from Page 7

First times.

It is natural for us to gauge our life after a loss as we anticipate and then go through the first times -- first day, the first week, the first month, the first time we venture out in public, the first time we went back to school, or church, or work, the first summer, the first Christmas, the first vacation, the first time we laughed. These first times are like benchmarks, notches in our belt that prove we are surviving when you weren't sure we wanted to, or didn't know we could.

Dinnertime.

There's an empty chair at the table. There's the conversation that seems to be just noise, having little to do with the absent one about whom we are all thinking but not daring to speak. We still prepare more food than we now need because we haven't yet figured out how to cook for one less person. Sometimes the food seems to have no taste, and is not able to do what we want it to do--to fill that huge hole within us.

Time out.

Sometimes what we need to do is to take a time out from our regular activities to reflect on what has happened to our personal world, as we knew it before our great loss. To do so is not to run away from life but simply to realize that to act as if nothing has happened doesn't work. This loss is too big to allow us to pretend that it hasn't had a big impact on us. It's in the quiet time, when we shut off our thinking, and empty out the chatter in our head that the healing begins. Others will have to be okay with our need to bow out for a while. Remember that during grief our job is to take care of ourselves, not to take care of our friends. When it's time to re-enter a normal routine, it's our choice what we will reinstate and what we decide to lay aside. Loss tends to redefine our priorities. What used to be important may not be as important now. And that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Time heals what reason cannot.

In the end, time will change things. The intensity we experience when grief is new, where we can see nothing but our loss, and where every moment is filled with thoughts of the one who died will gradually diminish and become softer. Time forces the big picture of life back into our vision whether we like it or not. This happens in our lives all the time. Remember how when we first fell in love with someone, we were totally preoccupied with only that other person, until gradually a more balanced existence was restored. Or when we did (what we thought was) some terrible thing and we were sure everybody would never let us forget it, we came to find out a few months down the road that most people had forgotten the incident.

In the months (maybe years) following a loss, life will eventually start to re-emerge, and life on this planet will once again seem possible. This will not happen because we come to understand the death more clearly but because, with the passage of time, the unanswered questions will become easier to live with.

Time will not remove grief entirely. The scars of our grief will remain and we may find ourselves ambushed by a fresh wave of grief at any time. But needing to know the answers to the "why" questions won't seem quite so important as it once was.

Time is a gift that we have taken for granted. We've been given our lives one moment at a time.

This is good.

Peace to you.

How Do We Celebrate Our Children's Birthdays?

By: Suzie McDonald

In thinking about my son Jamie's birthday which is on March 15th, I begin to wonder exactly how I will "celebrate" – if that is the word. I will need a plan for how I will spend that day without crying or staying in bed all day. "A very merry un-birthday to me." Is this how we feel about our child's birthday now? It really isn't an un-birthday, but would it be easier for me to celebrate an un-birthday? I will try and stay as busy as possible on Jamie's birthday. Somehow keeping busy during the day seems to be a good thing to do. We used to have birthday parties, dinners, cakes with candles. Now instead of those happy times, we have the pain of grief. We try to find a way to handle the loss of our child. On the day our child was born, we embraced him with hope, love, joy, without much thought for the future. We shared that wonderful gift of life with each one. Now that life is over, we relive every moment. For some of us there were years, for some others, months, days or even less. It isn't the length of the life that is important now. It is the fact that we had life with us at all. When we look at the calendar, as one more year has passed, the birth date is approaching. Our child isn't getting older; he or she has just been gone longer. For that, we now remember the date of his or her death. So, what are we supposed to do on that day our child was born? As Jamie's birthday approaches, I find myself at great loss. Instead of celebrating his birthday, I am learning how to cope with a day that is filled with loss and grief. So, here I am asking that question again. How do we "celebrate" the birthday of our child? I'm sure each of us has tried different ways. There is no one best way. Each of us has to find what gives us comfort and honors our child's memory. I choose to remember the day that Jamie was born by recalling his birth, his first few days, weeks, months, and years. I look at his baby pictures again. I look at pictures of him as an adolescent and then as a young man. I try to fill my mind with comforting thoughts of the loving words we said to each other over the span of his short life of 34 years. I try to remember his face and I will call his cell phone all day to hear his voice. The past five years since he left have been extremely difficult. But out of the sadness, I have found some joy. Without Jamie, at first I had no idea what to do with myself. But somehow, since he has been gone, I have been able to find other activities to fill some of the emptiness. A few months after losing Jamie, I became involved with TCF and giving back to other bereaved parents on this long, and lonely journey helps me to survive without my Jamie and continues to keep his spirit alive. I have found that gives me the opportunity to touch other families' lives as I touched Jamie's. Even though I have a husband and a surviving son (Chase), both of whom I love, the pain of missing Jamie, was just so overwhelming that I needed more and TCF has given me the opportunity to be with other bereaved parents and I thank them for this. As difficult as it is for each of us to live without our child, we find we must accept that this is the way it is. But we have a choice to make. We cannot change what was. We can only change the now. We can embrace life in any number of fulfilling ways, or we can try and hide from it. The choice is ours to make. I choose to live in the spirit of Jamie, reaching out to the bereaved parents with love and kindness, just as I did with Jamie.

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.