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Bluegrass Chapter

The Compassionate Friends

Regional Coordinator

Suzie McDonald

(859) 576-7680

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

859-858-8228

859-797-2168

Mary Camp

859-737-0180

Suzie McDonald

859-576-7680

Janie Fields

859-881-1991



“Welcome to The Compassionate Friends. We are so sorry for the reason you’re here, but so glad you found us.”

Those are the words I heard when I walked in the door at my first meeting, just a month after my daughter died. That is still the thought that plays in my head when I come to a meeting or read the newsletter. I will forever hate the circumstances that made me a member of this club. And I am profoundly grateful that I found others to share this journey with me.

Please remember that you are not alone and that there is not a single, “right” way to grieve. For many of us, the Holidays bring additional reminders of our loss and our sense of loneliness. For the “non-grieving world”, people take for granted that holidays are filled with joy, happiness, and peace on earth. That may not be true for us. Take care of yourself and give yourself permission to do what is right for you. There is no single answer. Some of us take bittersweet pleasure in our old traditions, while others create new traditions by traveling or eating out. Some of us try to ignore the holidays as much as possible and no longer “celebrate”.

We will make it through another season by remembering our children, our grandchildren, and our siblings, and by supporting each other. We are the Compassionate Friends.

Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

November Birthdates

11/1 **Daryl Clinton Barnes** Son of Vada and Mike Barnes
11/1 **Kimberly Ann Holder** Daughter of David and Sondra Holder
11/2 **Ash Coffey** Son of Stacy Coffey
11/3 **Taiann Nicole** Daughter of Sue Wilson
11/4 **Brian Staats** Son of Juanita Staats
11/8 **Ralph Winton Wesley** Son of Gen Wesley
11/8 **Randy Blake Johnson** Son of Randy and Doris Johnson
11/11 **Patrick McDonnell** Son of Bob and Ann McDonnell
11/13 **Joseph Carl Richardson** Son of Jim and Jean Richardson
11/13 **Dillon Cree Davis Walker** son of Peggy Murphy
11/20 **Ruth Ann Proutey** Daughter of George and Sarah Hudgins
11/22 **Isaiah Thomas Stewart** Son of Connie Stewart
11/23 **Debra Cay Stinson** Daughter of Bill and Letha Stinson
11/23 **Amanda Williams** Daughter of Donna Riley
11/24 **John Thomas Parks** Son of Rosemary Parks
11/24 **Marcie Reynold Thomason** Daughter of Barbara and Bill Thomason
11/27 **Bobby Lee Grimm** Son of Brenda and Peter Grimm

Holidays can be especially difficult after losing a child. Here are some suggestions from other bereaved people which may be helpful:

* First of all, recognize the fact that as a grieving person you have definite limitations and are unable to function as you normally would. It's important that you re-evaluate priorities and decide which activities you really feel up to participating in.

* Keep things as simple as possible!

Ask yourself:

* Just what can I handle comfortably?

* Is this activity something I really enjoy doing? Do other family members find this activity needful?

* Have I considered or involved my spouse's/children's wishes in my plans?

* Am I being realistic? Limit activities to the ones which are the most meaningful and enjoyable for your family.

* Can this job be done by someone else or can someone help me do it?



Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

November Remembrance Dates

- 11/1 **Brian Alan Frith** Son of Larry & Rowena Frith
- 11/2 **Jason Randall Johnson** Son of Sundae and Brad Park
- 11/2 **Christy Weldon** Daughter of Connie Weldon
- 11/2 **Zane Gregory Brown** Son of Gale and Joe Brown
- 11/8 **Colleen Christine Owen** Daughter of Diane and Andrew Owen
- 11/12 **Becky Fister** Daughter of David and Meriam Fister
- 11/12 **Lonnie Gene Centers** Son of Oneida Centers
- 11/14 **Sherilyn Annette Adams** Granddaughter of Ann Milton Adams
- 11/16 **Jonathan Walker Mayberry** Son of Jonathan & Stephanie Mayberry
- 11/19 **Jennifer Lee Guenther** Daughter of Helen Burch
- 11/20 **Ashley Riggs**, Son of Sharon Bellows
- 11/21 **Paul Travis Hickey** Son of Al and Sandy Hickey
- 11/21 **Allyson Mailfald** Daughter of Bill and Carole Mailfald
- 11/21 **Joseph William Minor** Son of Pat and Joseph S. Minor
- 11/28 **Taylor Joseph Gallant** Son of Beth Taylor Gallant

Meeting Information:

<p>Lexington</p>	<p>Winchester</p>
<p>First Tuesday of Every Month</p>	<p>Third Tuesday of Every Month</p>
<p>6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.</p>	<p>7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.</p>
<p>Hospice of the Bluegrass</p>	<p>Hospice East</p>
<p>2321 Alexandria Drive</p>	<p>417 Shoppers Drive</p>
<p>Lexington, Kentucky</p>	<p>Winchester, Kentucky</p>

* You may find making changes makes things less painful, like eating dinner at a different time or location, opening gifts at a different time, letting others do the activities you normally have done but feel unequal to this year, or maybe even going away for the holidays.

* Plan to be with understanding relatives or friends if at all possible.

* Realize you will have to educate others as to your need for hearing your child's name mentioned. They think they are doing you a favor avoiding it.

* Doing something for others may bring special comfort. Choosing a name from underprivileged people and providing a gift to make their holiday special, giving a donation in memory of your Loved One, or adopting a needy family for the holidays may be very healing for you.

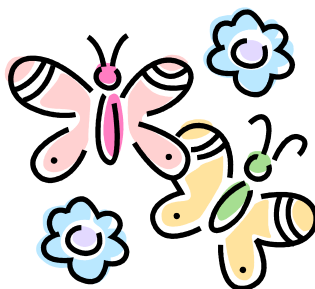
Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

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

REMAINING CHILDREN

Children view celebration of special days as evidence that their happiness is still important to their parents, that they are loved, and with hope that their family stability will return. Birthdays and holidays are significant occasions for children which bring heightened expectations that their family will demonstrate their love for them. Grieving children need to know they are valued and special. Many feel they are not as valued as the one who died since their sibling's absence has caused the parents so much sadness and pain. Because grief can cause parents to be emotionally out of focus towards remaining children, sometimes the only feeling conveyed is pain, so the remaining child(ren) may feel abandoned or rejected. Be sure to spend time with them assuring them through words and actions of your love. Rather than buy extravagant gifts for children, give them extra time and attention as nothing purchased can replace the loss in their lives. You might want to create a special card for your living child, listing why they are so special and reassuring them of your love, maybe include some special reminiscing. Explain that your grief doesn't lessen your love for them. For your family's sake take care of yourself: eat properly, exercise, nurture your marriage and work through your grief.



Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

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, Brother of 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
12/30 **Joshua Allen Childers** son of Joe and Amy Childers

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.



I light a candle for you my dear child keeping you near.

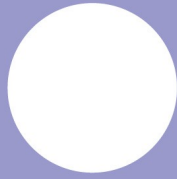
I light a candle for you my dear child to share your love.

I light a candle for you my dear child to ease the pain.

I light a candle for you my dear child keeping you near.

~Janie Fields

Know that there is hope. Know that many, many bereaved parents who have been in the same painful place that you are now have found life meaningful again. Know that you will too.



The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all
children who have died

Worldwide Candle Lighting®

*... that their light
may always shine.*

**Sunday, December 14, 2014
7 PM Around the Globe**



Please join us this year for our Candle Lighting Event. It will be Sunday, December 14, 2014 at South Elkhorn Christian Church, 4343 Harrodsburg Road , Lexington, Kentucky. We will meet at 6:30 pm; candles will be lit at 7:00 pm.

Here is a picture of our candles from previous years. It is non-denominational and very moving. Family is invited and encouraged. This is our children's remembrance day. Please bring a photo of your child to share on our remembrance table. Punch and light refreshments will also be served. If you wish, please bring a dessert or snack to share (perhaps, your child's favorite...).



“I had a conversation today with someone about Adam’s death, what life was like at that moment and how it’s been since that horrific day. The best analogy I could think of was this: in one phone call, in one second of one ordinary day, life as I knew it changed forever. It was as if all the electricity in the world went out at once and I was left standing there...all alone...scared & lost...in total darkness. I had to walk through days, weeks, even months in a total black out – not knowing where I was or which direction I was going. I couldn’t see my hand in front of my face, but I could hear familiar voices and I knew I wasn’t alone, but I could not reach out & touch the people who were standing directly in front of me. Slowly over time, a dim light started to shine and I could finally see silhouettes staring back at me. The familiar faces of my family and friends who loved me and stood there in the darkness patiently waiting for me. In time, I could actually start to see their faces and eventually I was able to reach out take their hands. It’s such an exhausting struggle to learn how to balance living & grieving. You have to dig deep and find an inner strength that you never knew existed. You have to find the joy and beauty in life again, once you have been broken down to your soul. It was a tough battle, but it was definitely worth the fight. If you hold on through the darkness, the light will shine again. As hard as it was to say good-bye to my child and to live this life so many will never be able to comprehend, I wouldn't trade a single day of being Adam's Mom. I could have missed the pain - but I'd had to miss the dance...So many people take life for granted...it’s a gift and so are the people God gave you to love. Love them!”

Quoted with permission from Martie Brinck DAndrea – bereaved mom of Adam

*The only people who think there’s a time limit for grief,
have never lost a piece of their heart.*

Take all the time you need.

The Bereaved Holiday Bill of Rights

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO FEEL WHATEVER YOU ARE FEELING. YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE TO MAKE OTHERS COMFORTABLE OR HAPPY.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO FEEL GOOD, TO LAUGH AND HAVE FUN. FEELING GOOD AND LAUGHING RELAX YOUR BODY AND ALLOWS YOU TO REGAIN SOME STRENGTH FOR A FEW MOMENTS DURING YOUR GRIEF. YOU ARE NO WAY BEING DISRESPECTFUL TO THE MEMORY OF YOUR CHILD.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO CRY WHEN THE PAIN BECOMES TOO MUCH. CRYING HELPS YOU.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO TAKE A REST FROM THE STRESS OF GRIEF. TAKE A WALK, LISTEN TO SOOTHING MUSIC, GET A MASSAGE.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO HAVE YOUR CHILD REMEMBERED IN A WAY THAT IS MEANINGFUL TO YOU THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO CHANGE YOUR HOLIDAY TRADITIONS IF DESIRED. TRADITIONS ARE SUPPOSED TO BRING COMFORT NOT DISTRESS.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION CHANGE YOUR MIND OVER AND OVER DURING ANY GET TOGETHER, EVENT OR PARTY. YOU MAY NOT KNOW IF YOU CAN OR CANNOT HANDLE UNTIL YOU ARE FACED WITH IT.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION NOT TO SHARE YOUR FEELINGS IF SOMEONE ASK. "I AM FINE" IS OKAY TO SAY.

REMEMBER FRIENDS ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN "B" IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND A FUNCTION OF SOME SORT, HOLIDAY OR NOT!

MAKE SURE YOU DRIVE OR HAVE SOMEONE THAT WILL TAKE YOU HOME THE MOMENT YOU ARE READY TO LEAVE.

Our Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children 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 and creeds. 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 we feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength; some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt, or in deep depression; 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 our children.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together as we reach out to each other in love and 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

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 one 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 © 1992 The Compassionate Friends.



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Eight Holiday Gifts to Give Bereaved Families After the Death of a Child

When a child has died, the normally festive holiday season can be one of great sadness and pain for the family that finds itself with an empty chair at the dinner table. Friends and family so often ask us what they can do to help those mourning the death of a child at the holidays, says Patricia Loder, a bereaved parent herself, and Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends, the nation's largest self-help bereavement organization. There are many gifts that cost very little for friends and family to give, but can be very helpful to the bereaved at this time of the year.

- The Gift of Remembrance -- When you send a card or talk with the family, remember the child by name. While you might think this would bring pain to the family, there is more pain when it appears the child has been forgotten.
- The Gift of Understanding -- Realize things will be different this holiday season than before the child died. Tasks which were routinely completed in the past may now go undone.
- The Gift of Self -- Help the bereaved with some of those routine things that need to be done such as shopping and preparing meals. Bring some holiday goodies.
- The Gift of a Memorial Donation -- Make a donation in remembrance of the child to a favorite charity that the family may find important in their lives.
- The Gift of Hope -- Make them aware of a local self-help bereavement organization whether it be The Compassionate Friends or another group where the members have gone through a similar loss and are ready to help families that are grieving.
- The Gift of Kindness -- If there are children in the household, offer to take them shopping for whatever holiday presents they may wish to purchase. The hustle and bustle of the stores with holiday music blaring can be overwhelming to bereaved parents.
- The Gift of Time -- Offer to drive the family to a remembrance service, whether it be through a Compassionate Friends chapter, another bereavement group, hospital, funeral home, or church. Your presence will show that you truly care.
- The Gift of Love -- Let them know that, even though the family feels very alone, there are others who care deeply about them and will truly be there to provide support along the way.

