

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter of the Katy, TX, Chapter

Chapter Leaders
 Newsletter Editor
 Treasurer

Melinda and Glen Ginter
 Annette Mennen Baldwin
 Lisa Leanard

(281) 492-1262
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When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

*** AUGUST MEETING ***

When: Tuesday, August 14, 2012

Where: Kingsland Baptist Church

6:30 PM – Doors Open
 7:00 PM—Meeting Begins
 20555 Kingsland Blvd,
 Katy, TX 77450
 John Burns Building, East side of church



Program: Establishing Rituals

Directions:

From East of Fry Road (coming from Houston): Go west on I-10 to Fry Road. Turn left (south) on Fry Road. Turn right (west) on Kingsland Blvd and travel 0.5 miles to Kingsland Baptist Church.

From West of Mason Road (coming from San Antonio): Go east on I-10 to Westgreen Blvd. Turn right (south) on Westgreen Blvd and travel 0.6 miles to Kingsland Blvd. Turn left (east) on Kingsland Blvd and travel 0.5 miles to Kingsland Baptist Church.

(Across from Nottingham Country Elementary School)

Our Children Remembered

Birthdays

August 1982	30 Years	Patrick Ross Davidson, Jr., son of Leslie Barry Davidson
August 1982	30 Years	Ian Geoffrey Woodham, son of Geoffrey & Pam Woodham
August 1984	28 Years	Dustin Christopher Krause, son of Susan & Tony Krause
August 1986	26 Years	Nicolas Wade Dlouhy, son of Carol & Mike Dlouhy
August 1984	28 Years	Luis E. Molina, son of Dahlia Salinas-Molina
August 1985	27 Years	Matthew Moore, son of Susan Archer
August 1995	17 Years	Angelica Rae "Angel" Cartwright, daughter of Stephanie & Michael Cartwright
August 2011	1 Year	Eaden Kleighan Jackson, son of Khaya & Eric Jackson
August 1993	19 Years	Jakob Heath, son of Dawn Lovell
August 2006	6 Years	Harley Johannes Hammack son of Rebekah Hammack, grandson of Susan Hammack
August 1974	38 Years	Brett Austin, son of Janis Austin
August 1987	25 Years	Hannah Henson, daughter of Karen Henson
August 1974	38 Years	John Robert Ginter, son of Glen & Melinda Ginter

Anniversaries

August 2009	3 Years	Wesley Wayne Bode, son of Joyce Bode
August 2004	8 Years	Andrew Ryan Houghton, son of George & Cindy Houghton
August 2011	1 Year	Eaden Kleighan Jackson, son of Khaya & Eric Jackson
August 1993	19 Years	Stormy Sean Beck, son of Howard & Linda Beck
August 2006	6 Years	Robin Kumar Sen, son of Neela and Salil Sen
August 2009	3 Years	Stephen Paul Rider, son of Sharon & Don Sackreiter
August 2005	7 Years	Brett Austin, son of Janis Austin
August 2006	6 Years	Carlos Enrique Villarreal, son of Linda Hilliard
August 1997	15 Years	Elizabeth Anne Chamberlain, daughter of David & Colleen Chamberlain
August 2004	8 Years	Stephanie Anne Favorite, daughter of Malena & Ray Lopez
August 2010	2 Years	Mario (Mijo) Escareno, Jr., son of Viola & Mario Escareno

During your child's birth month, you are invited to bring a special photograph or keepsake of your loved one to share with the group. If you are unable to attend the meeting during your loved one's birth month, please feel free to choose another month to share with us.





Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to all who attended their first meeting in July:

Carole Etzel whose daughter, Michelle Rene Redinbo died in February 2012

Tracy McCarty whose daughter, Brandi Leigh Rushing died in May 2012

Carolyn Porter whose son, Bryan Andrew Lewis died in June 2011

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.

~TCF Credo

In Memory of our Beloved Children

Memorials Given by:

Glen and Melinda Ginter
Robin Conner
Barbara Braun
Joyce Dakin

Susan Archer
Markey Swails
Colleen & David Chamberlain

In Loving Memory of:

John Robert Ginter
Christopher & Dawn Wilson
James M. Braun
Kelly Brianne Leasher
Jamie Lynn Leasher
Matthew Moore
Laura Eliska Swails
Elizabeth Anne Chamberlain

Thank you for your donation to The Compassionate Friends, Katy, TX Chapter

Our chapter is operated entirely by volunteers dedicated to furthering the work of TCF. Your voluntary, tax deductible donations honor your loved one in a meaningful way by enabling us to print and mail this Newsletter and meet other expenses involved in reaching out to other grieving families. Donations along with the name of the person being honored may be sent to:

Lisa Leanard
13814 Wheatbridge Drive
Houston, TX 77041

Loving Listeners.....Phone-A-Friend

TCF Katy has established a phone-a-friend list for parents who want to talk with someone who shares a similar loss. If you would like to volunteer to be a phone-a-friend, please contact Annette Baldwin.

*Loss of an Adult Child.....*Annette (281) 578-9118

*Only Child.....*Annette (281) 578-9118

Murdered Child..... Robin (281) 851-5425

*Death of Teenage Child.....*Joyce Dakin (281) 858-4551

*Death from long term illness.....*Karen (281) 398-0472

*Support for Fathers.....*Albert (832) 885-4741

Special Needs Child..... Volunteer needed

*Suicide*Rhonda (832) 282-7773

Cathy (832)-746-1980



Katy TCF Volunteers

Welcome Cards to new members—Joyce Dakin
Cards for remembrances—Robin Larsen
Newsletter—Annette Mennen Baldwin amennenbaldwin@hotmail.com
E-mail to group—Annette Mennen Baldwin—tcfkaty.messages@gmail.com
Publicity & E-Mail correspondence—Annette Mennen Baldwin
Picture Buttons—Annette Baldwin
Contacting Newly Bereaved Parents—Joyce Dakin
Holiday & Craft Projects—Joyce Bode
Library—Jan Bigbee-Weesner
Web Site—Don Whitehill—**VOLUNTEER NEEDED IMMEDIATELY**
Treasurer 2012—Lisa Leanard—lisaleanard@sbcglobal.net
Snacks—Barbara Braun—281 579-7258-jbraun1307@aol.com
Memorial Bench Maintenance—Delia Granado
Chapter Leaders—Melinda & Glen Ginter



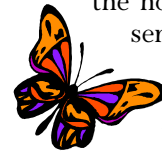
Snacks

Our snacks in July were brought by Robin Conner, Neela Sen and Barbara Braun. If you would like to bring snacks for one of our meetings, contact Barbara Braun @ jbraun1307@aol.com



Join Our Chapter E-Mail List

Join our chapter e-mail list to receive timely notices, writings, articles, special information and more. During the holiday season, we try to send special thoughts and articles to our group several times per week.



To join, send an email to tcfkaty.messages@gmail.com. If you are already on this email list, you need not send your email unless it has changed.

Inner Loop Chapter Meeting

The Inner Loop TCF Chapter holds meetings the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at The Meeks House, 4990 Caroline, Houston, TX. Doors open at 6:30 pm. The August meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 21, 2012. Topic: "When Do You Know That You Need Counseling/Therapy After A Loss?" Guest Facilitator is Marjorie A. Kosoy, Ed. D., Psychologist, Co-Founder of the Red Bird Center (a center for bereavement and loss counseling) For more information contact Cathy Knapp at (713) 877-8626.

National TCF Contact Information

TCF National Office
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522



Toll Free: (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.

Establishing Rituals: August Meeting Informational Segment

Our August meeting will offer a brief program on rituals. Most of us are familiar with rituals due to past or current religious activities. Rituals associated specifically with our children are directed at honoring our children and retaining an expanded closeness with them and the memory of their lives.



The Compassionate Friends holds an annual Candle Lighting Ceremony on the second Sunday of December throughout the world. The Katy Chapter of Compassionate Friends offers a balloon release with messages to our children attached. Other chapters release butterflies or doves. These rituals are a coming together of those who have lost their children in a peaceful, modestly structured ceremony which gives peace and provides a sense of closeness to our children.

Private rituals are much different. Some parents consider writing in their journals to be a ritual. Other parents light a candle on birthdays and anniversaries and bring their family and friends together to remember and honor their child. Some rituals are designed for family participation. Many parents report that they continue to honor their child privately through various rituals as well. Still other parents fund scholarships, build playgrounds, establish trusts, donate money or volunteer their time, all of which are forms of the ritual to honor, remember and memorialize our children.

While rituals may seem odd to others, these acts are now a focus of our love for our child and an effort to retain our child in our daily lives. We hope you are able to join us and possibly share with the group a ritual or two that you or you and family have selected to honor your child.

Sometimes

Sometimes in the middle of the night as I read, wash dishes, fold clothes, or sit quietly and pontificate about this or that, I hear your voice. The sound is so clear. "Mom," you say.

Sometimes I answer back in an automatic response. I wait for a brief moment and then your voice is gone. I am startled and I freeze in place, not moving, not breathing, not blinking, just listening.

Sometimes I think I see you in a store or on the street, walking that unique walk that was yours alone. I look twice and realize it is not you. But it was a brief moment of joy to see that special walk.

Sometimes I think I have lost my mind. But most of the time I am thankful for these little reminders. Perhaps it is my mind giving me a sense of you. Perhaps the keeping of you in my heart brings this peace to me.

Sometimes when I come home from work, I find something on the counter that wasn't there that morning. A sock, a small socket wrench, a matchbox car. I ask my husband if he came home during the day. He didn't, of course. I wonder about these things, but then I also get comfort from them.



Sometimes I wish I could talk to you just one more time. I would simply listen to your voice, your excitement, your disappointment, your happiness, your enthusiasm, your concern....whatever you might be feeling. That would be enough. I don't need great revelations, just a conversation, just your voice.

Sometimes I could just scream at the inequity of your death. You, my only child, the one who gave purpose and meaning to my life, are gone forever from this plane. But then, I get a grip on my sanity and stop thinking negatively.

Sometimes I meet a newly bereaved mother and I see myself. I know her heart, I understand her torment, and I feel the pain that has wrapped her in its horrible, crushing grip. I listen to this mother whose world has been gnarled into a grotesque shell of life, and I ask about her child.

Sometimes I accept my reality, sometimes I don't. But I always keep you in my heart, taking you into the future as far as I, myself, will go. And that has to be enough. I cannot change the past. I can only live today and plan for tomorrow.

Sometimes, though, I am glad that my mind allows me these little forays into a parallel reality. These give me peace. In this world, peace is as ethereal as a fine mist near a waterfall.

Sometimes, reality is just too harsh.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX*

Birthday Table

If your child's birthday is in August, please bring a picture or memento to our August meeting to share with the group. In May



and December we ask that you bring your child's picture for the birthday table in the month following the actual event. We hold our balloon release in May and our Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony in December.

Special Small Group Meetings For Parents Whose Child Was Lost to Suicide

The Katy Chapter of TCF has a unique program for parents whose children died from suicide. All parents attend the opening of our meeting each month and then adjourn to their own private meeting for the remainder of the meeting. Death from suicide usually requires additional and unique group dynamics.



This program is offered only to parents who have lost children to suicide.

Articles & Poems For Our Newsletter

If you would like to submit a poem, a writing or a brief article (no more than 800-825 words) about your child or your grief journey for publication in our Katy Compassionate Friends newsletter, e-mail your work to Annette Mennen Baldwin at amenmenbaldwin@hotmail.com. We encourage our members to share with us.

Webmaster Needed ASAP

Our chapter is in need of a volunteer to update our website. If you know someone who is reliable and willing to do this, let us know!

National TCF Contact Information

TCF National Office
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522

Toll Free: (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

Printed in Loving
Memory Of
Todd M. Mennen
1967-2002



TOUGH TIMES

Looking back on this past month I wonder how I ever got through the many tough challenges I had to face. May and July are the worst months of the year for me as far as birthdays and anniversaries are concerned. I believe July really is the toughest month for me to get through. Dawn's birthday is the 10th, her anniversary is the 19th, and then Chris' anniversary is the 24th. Besides those days, I have also been struggling with just the simple task of walking. I am really not sure how much God expects one person to handle. I think He knows when enough is enough. Today is the 24th, the last real hurdle I had to get through this month, I hope.

I have spent a great deal of time crying this month. I think about how much I miss Dawn and Chris and then it goes downhill from there. We have all been there and will continue to be there, whatever time of year our tough times happen to be. It always starts out the same, the depression, the tears, the second guessing yourself as a parent, just knowing you could have been better. All the anxiety that leads up to that particular day, and then the day is here and it is not so bad after all. Our feelings tend to be very predictable and happen in the same pattern. So why all the anxiety when it always ends the same? That is the million dollar question. The answer is quite simple, we are all humans, with some very unique distinctions, and yet we are all alike and kind of follow the same pattern when we grieve. Yes, we all do grieve in a different way and some can get through some very tough circumstances, but it really is comforting to know we are alike in so many ways as well.

We are alike because we have all lost a child, and sometimes more than one. The positive is that we have each other to share stories and the different ways we cope with our loss or losses. There is a certain familiarity with being part of this group. We meet and discuss how we cope and share our own unique stories.



I have a few stories I would like to share. My sister in NY sent me the cutest card to raise my spirits when Dawn's anniversary came this month. She told me she found something in her driveway the day she mailed the card, which was Dawn's 4th anniversary. I got the card several days later and inside it was a child's white, plastic ring with a gold angel on the top. She told me she asked everyone in her house if it belonged to them and they all answered "no". I guess that was Dawn's way of letting us know she is okay and still watching over us. On that same day I changed purses and I opened the new one to transfer my junk and at the bottom of the purse was a shiny new dime. That was Chris' way of telling me he was okay and was looking over me. He does that quite often, just when I am down in the dumps I find a dime from him and it makes me smile. So close, yet so far away. I think it is so important to share these stories with each other to give us hope. We all need hope to get us through those tough times.

*Written In Loving Memory of My Children,
Christopher Wilson and Dawn Shafer-Wilson
Robin Conner, TCF, Katy, TX*

Another Summer

Leaving another summer behind
Adding one more bouquet
To your stones of remembrance,
Holding new images
Summerwarm to your mind.

Leaving another summer behind,
With old, familiar mementos
Of long-ago times in the sun.
And did you discover once more
How grief changes memories
To anniversaries?



Sascha Wanger
From *The Poems of Sascha Wagner*

Compassionate Friends Webinars



As bereaved parents, we know that there are times when there are no words to describe the depths of our pain and devastation.

Check the Compassionate Friends website at www.compassionatefriends.org, click on news and events, then search for Webinars. Upcoming webinar events will be listed; some dates will be listed. When you see a webinar you in which you would like to actively participate, just click and register.

To view the archives of webinars presented by The Compassionate Friends, go to http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx

TCF E-Newsletter

An E-Newsletter is available through the National TCF Organization. To subscribe, go to TCF's National Web site home page (www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on "Register for E-Newsletter" link.

Grief Share

Grief Share, a 13 week program featuring biblical teaching on grief and recovery will be held at the Grace Fellowship United Methodist Church with the first class beginning on Wednesday, September 12, 2012. Classes begin at 6:30 and end at 8:30 pm. For information on this resource, contact Lee Boyes at 281 646 1903, extension 134.

Grief Share starts at Kingsland Baptist Church on Thursday, September 6, 2012, from 6:30—8:30 pm. Call Pat Bramlett at 281 492 0785 for more information or to register.

Grief Share is offered throughout the country at many churches and through many denominations. To find another church which is closer to you or meets on another evening, here is the link: <http://www.griefshare.org/findagroup>.

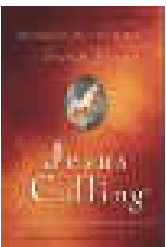
~~~~~  
"Every widow wakes one morning, perhaps after years of pure and unwavering grieving, to realize she slept a good night's sleep, and will be able to eat breakfast, and doesn't hear her husband's ghost all the time, but only some of the time. Her grief is replaced with a useful sadness. Every parent who loses a child finds a way to laugh again. The timbre begins to fade. The edge dulls. The hurt lessens. Every love is carved from loss. Mine was. Yours is. Your great-great-grandchildren's will be. But we learn to live in that love."

~Jonathan Safran Foer,  
*Everything is Illuminated*

## Different Ways to Cope

All of us cope and grieve in different ways. Some have a very good support system at home, at church, or at TCF. For me, after my son Chris was killed the only support I had for awhile was at church. That was minimal as I was not quite so involved as I am today. My family is all in the northeast and being here in Texas was not easy for me. I did have Dawn, and we did try to comfort each other, but she was in her own little world then. She wasn't coping and was staying medicated as to not have to face those awful feelings. My husband was not much help, he couldn't "fix" me, so our marriage really suffered. I didn't find TCF until almost 6 months after Chris died. I was such a mess when I first started to go to the monthly meetings. So many of us just cry and cry, and just don't come back. I am glad I was pushed a little to try and go every month.

This group has made a tremendous difference in my grief process and healing. When Dawn died, it was almost 3 years to the day after Chris died. It was different though, I was very much involved in my church and with TCF. My husband was different; he was really hit hard by the loss of Dawn. I felt like he was at least present with me and cared. Several months later he was gone, diagnosed with lung cancer and 3 weeks later he died. Looking back it all seems so surreal, losing Steve so soon after Dawn died. I had so much support then, and I will be eternally grateful for all those people who stood by me during those months.



There is another way that helps me to cope with my losses and to work through this journey that is called "life". My faith has helped me so much that I just do not know where I would be if not for that faith. I have been reading a daily devotional book called Jesus Calling, written by Sarah Young. There is something to read each day and then she quotes bible verses to read that goes along with her writing for the day. She writes as if it is actually Jesus speaking. I really enjoy her book because it feels as if Jesus really is talking to you and there is always something I can take away from that days reading, and reading the scriptures that she includes. I would like to share a short one from July 19th, which was Dawn's 4th anniversary in Heaven.

"Bring Me all your feelings, even the ones you wish you didn't have. Fear and anxiety still plague you. Feelings, per se are not sinful, but they can be temptations for sin. Blazing missiles of fear fly at you day and night: these attacks from the evil one come at you relentlessly. Use your shield of faith to extinguish those flaming arrows. Affirm your trust in Me, regardless of how you feel. If you persist, your feelings will eventually fall in line with your faith. Do not hide from your fear or pretend it isn't there. Anxiety that you hide in the recesses of your heart will give birth to fear of fear: a monstrous stepchild. Bring your anxieties out into the Light of My Presence, where we can deal with them together. Concentrate on trusting Me, and fearfulness will gradually lose its foothold within you."

To read this on Dawn's 4th anniversary really helped me to keep it together. Reading these daily devotions has changed my outlook and brings a different perspective to my day. I hope it will work for you as well.

*Written in Loving Memory of My Children,  
Dawn Shafer-Wilson and Christopher Wilson  
Robin Conner, TCF, Katy, TX*

## Make Plans Now To Attend Alan Pedersen Concert

Alan Pedersen has accepted an invitation from the Katy Chapter of The Compassionate Friends to perform a concert on January 8, 2013, at the Kingsland Baptist Church. Alan recently provided music at the TCF International Conference in California. He travels the country, visiting chapters in each area, and provides free concerts of music that he has written about the grief journey after the death of his daughter.



We urge you to mark your calendars for this special event. We have reserved the large auditorium room at the Kingsland Baptist Church in order to accommodate parents, friends and extended family.

## Mutual Support for Bereaved Parents

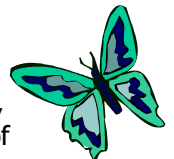
The death of your child is probably the most traumatic, life-changing event that you will ever experience. The Compassionate Friends is an organization of parents who have also lost a child to death. Each of us has experienced the deep, searing pain that you are feeling now. Each of us has turned to other parents who were farther into their grief journey for guidance, support and understanding.

This is done through our monthly meetings, our newsletter, our website, our phone-a-friend program, our library, our e-mail program and our referral program. Each month parents find our meeting to be a safe place where they can talk about their pain and problems with others who are uniquely qualified to understand; bereaved parents offer gentle suggestions or often simply listen. We invite you to bring a friend to your first few meetings until you feel a level of comfort with the group.

Do not be surprised if we talk about the happy times with our children, the wonderful memories and the various methods we have created to keep our children close to us. It is here that many bereaved parents find hope as those who are more seasoned in their grief shine the light of experience to help illuminate each grief path. We have no dues. We are self-sustaining through donations and the generosity of so many in our community. You Need Not Walk Alone.

## A Note to Our New Members

Attending your first Compassionate Friends meeting can be a frightening experience. Bereaved parents are vulnerable, lost, heartbroken and fearful of the unknown. Please remember, each of us was in this same place not so long ago. Bring a friend or your spouse for support to your first few meetings. Someone from our group will talk with you and sit with you as well. We are here for you.....the newly bereaved parent. We suggest that you attend at least three meetings before deciding whether or not TCF will help you on your grief journey. You need not walk alone.



## August

The summer runs to harvest-  
Do you ask:  
How can a harvest be without my child?

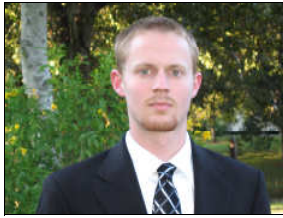
Friend, some day soon  
the harvest in your life  
will bring you hope and wealth  
from love remembered



Sascha Wagner,  
From *The Poems of Sascha Wagner*

## Memories and Reminiscing of Matthew

Matthew Lyle Moore  
1985 - 2011



When my son Matthew was born, I found my purpose in life: to raise him to be a happy, faithful, honest person. He was a beautiful always-smiling boy. He grew up to be talented in music, art, sports and interested in WW II history. He had a CDL and loved driving big trucks. The real Matt was kind, loving, gentle, considerate and intelligent. He never said a harsh word to me his whole life. Matthew knew without a doubt that I loved him unconditionally and would stand by his side through all adversity.

I fought for his life for many years against the addiction that finally took his life. He fought so hard to beat the demon heroin that had invaded his mind and body. But the demon never took his heart. Matthew was an innocent and always had the most sweet and gentle disposition. I believe this is why he didn't have the strength to conquer the demon that possessed him.

Matt and I talked often of the fact that he walked through life with a Guardian Angel on his shoulder who protected him and looked after his every move. On Saturday, December 17, 2011, his Guardian Angel let God take him home because his Angel knew Matthew could never find peace from his torment on this earth and so God took him to save him from some even worse future evil.

In 2005, Matt first found his roots with our family in Finland. They joyfully welcomed him as a natural cousin into the family. These visits I remember as the happiest of times. Matt loved his family and knew he was loved.

He would be 27 years old on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The pain of love and loss is so great at times I don't think I can survive it. It's hard to believe he's really gone. He will always be my loving son and I will always be his proud mother.

Happy Birthday Matthew - you live forever in my heart and soul. I carry your heart with me in my heart. I look forward to the day I will see you again, my beautiful boy.

Love, Mom

*Susan Archer  
In Memory of her son, Matthew Moore  
TCF, Katy, TX*

"There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning." - Thornton Wilder

Matthew,

Your birthday will just not seem right without you with us in person. Of course that same feeling that something's missing surfaces whenever I walk past the fences you and I replaced, the gateway we built, the range we practiced on, or pull up the pictures of the two Finland trips that I seem to be able to look at all day. Precious memories. You, of course, know that you are in our hearts and minds always and forever.

I am comforted by the vision I was able to share with you of the beautiful clearing changing before us and your words so clear-- "Because that's what it is," and "Because that's what it's supposed to be."

Thank you,  
Bill

*Bill Archer, TCF Katy  
In memory of his son, Matthew Moore*

## Transition in Grief

It is good to speak of our children, to recall the wonderful memories of their lives. It is good to honor our children with ritual, ceremony, prayer and thanksgiving for the gift that will always be our child. It is good to celebrate the life of our child, to cherish our time with them.

It is also wise to acknowledge that by honoring our child in these ways, we are doing our grief work. This work also involves pushing, pulling and dragging ourselves through the purgatorial fog that transcends our every thought after our child dies. The grief is overwhelming; the process of grief work is demanding, punishing and often harsh.

Either we stay in one place, "stuck" in our grief, or we reach out and help ourselves. There are no other choices.

The loss of our child to death is the most traumatic event of our adult lives. We have lost the future, and we have lost an immense piece of ourselves when our child died. We must work to rebuild ourselves. Rebuild ourselves for a new life: a life without our child sharing this physical plane with us.

But as we share our child with others, speak of the life that no longer is, celebrate that life in ritual, ceremony and memories shared, we are doing our grief work. At first it is difficult. The throat swells, the breathing is shallow, and the words are so difficult to find. But we pursue, for we do not want the memory of our child to be erased.

We carry our child forward into the future; we see the world for two now. We cherish this new journey that we take for our child and ourselves. This effort is our child's legacy. Our child will live as long as we live....through our words, actions, thoughts, memories, and memorial efforts.

And as we do these things that are good, we find the burden lifts ever so slightly. Days, weeks, months, and then years pass. At some point we realize that we, too, have transitioned. Our subconscious mind has accepted the worst that life can give, and we have emerged as different people cherishing the goodness that is always our precious child.



*Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen  
TCF, Katy, TX*

*Meeting: August 14, 2012*

**August 2012**