



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January 2012

Newsletter of the Katy, TX, Chapter

Chapter Leaders
Newsletter Editor
Treasurer

Melinda and Glen Ginter
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Lisa Leanard

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The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families following the death of a child. Our mission is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

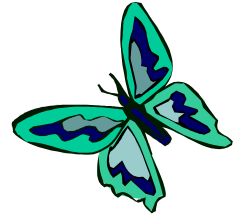
*** JANUARY MEETING ***

When: Tuesday, January 10, 2012

6:30 PM – Doors Open
7:00 PM—Meeting Begins

Where: Kingsland Baptist Church

20555 Kingsland Blvd,
Katy, TX 77450
John Burns Building, East side of church



Program: Finding Hope Through Grief Work

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

Our Children Remembered

Birthdays

| | | |
|--------------|----------|--|
| January 1988 | 24 Years | Tyler Herbst, son of Steve & Kathy Herbst |
| January 1989 | 23 Years | Jared Matthew Sanchez, son of Joseph & Melinda Sanchez |
| January 1965 | 47 Years | Ronald Howard McCall, son of Jeri Esmi |
| January 1990 | 22 Years | Justin Richard Clinton, son of Robin Clinton |
| January 1991 | 21 Years | Brittany LeeAnn Lewis, daughter of Lisa Atkinson |
| January 1980 | 32 Years | Anthony Joseph Leanard, son of Larry & Lisa Leanard |
| January 1987 | 25 Years | Garrett Davis Lawson, son of Beverly & Tom Lawson |
| January 1991 | 21 Years | Joseph Kyle Reph, son of Kristin Reph |

Anniversaries

| | | |
|--------------|---------|---|
| January 2011 | 1 Year | Janina Allison Taylor, daughter of Maria & Clarence Taylor |
| January 2010 | 2 Years | Nicolas Wade Dlouhy, son of Carol & Mike Dlouhy |
| January 2010 | 2 Years | Christopher Wayne Smith, son of Pamela Smith |
| January 2010 | 2 Years | Michael Steven Tout, son of Della & Harvey Brock |
| January 2010 | 2 Years | Luis E. Molina, son of Dahlia Salinas Molina |
| January 2008 | 4 Years | Shannon Faye Hooker, daughter of Janis Hooker |
| January 2007 | 5 Years | Sarah Eileen Magri, daughter of Neal & Virginia Magri |
| January 2009 | 3 Years | Dustin Christopher Kruase, son of Susan & Tony Krause |
| January 2008 | 4 Years | Emil Lamont "Rocky" Harris III, son of Monty Harris |
| January 2008 | 4 Years | Eric J. Chavarria, son of Eric & Julia Chavarria |
| January 2007 | 5 Years | Heather Ann Steffan, daughter of David & Kathy Steffan, twin sister of Kimarie Steffan |

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 share with us.



to



Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to all who attended our Candle Lighting in December.

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

Brenda Schmitt
Dr. & Mrs. William Hopper Jr.
Mark Johnson & Anna Apanel

In Loving Memory of:

John Robert Ginter
Christopher & Dawn Wilson
James M. Braun
Kelly Brianne Leasher
Jamie Lynn Leasher
Matthew Schmitt
Julie Ann Hopper
Teresa Alyss Johnson

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
SuicideRhonda (832) 282-7773
& Cathy (832)-746-1980



Katy TCF Volunteers

Welcome Cards to new members—Brenda Schmitt
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
Library— Jan Bigbee-Weesner
Web Site— Don Whitehill—VOLUNTEER NEEDED
Treasurer 2010—Lisa Leanard—lisaleanard@sbcglobal.net
Snacks—Barbara Braun—281 579-7258-jbraun1307@aol.com
Memorial Bench Maintenance—Delia Granado
Chapter Leaders—Melinda & Glen Ginter



We thank Beverly Bice, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, for the photo of the deer on page 1 of this month's newsletter. We thank Jody Griggs, Director of Finance at Memorial Drive United Methodist Church, for the beautiful butterfly pictures she sends to us. One of these pictures is on Page 2 of this month's newsletter.

Snacks

In December all members contributed a food dish for the Candle Lighting Ceremony. In January Barbara Braun will be bringing the snacks. If you would like to bring snacks in a special month, 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. We have seen a few returns of obvious email changes.

Add A Page To Our Chapter's Memory Book

We encourage each of our members to add a page to Chapter Memory Book....a page devote to your child. If you would like to include your child in this album, the page size is 8 1/2 x 11. If you need help designing a page or putting your thoughts into written form.



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 January meeting will be held on January 17, 2012. For more information contact Cathy Knapp at (713) 877-8626.

TCF National Office

P.O. Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522

www.compassionatefriends.org

email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Phone: 877-969-0010

Regional Coordinator

Annette Mennen Baldwin

Email: amennenbaldwin@hotmail.com
281-578-9118

A New Year of Hope

The New Year's Resolution has faded in popularity, but it once meant an opportunity for a "clean slate" where we each could redefine ourselves: throwing out the bad, bringing in the good. We would strive to learn more, do more, reach out, reach in, shed bad habits, add good habits. Many people still practice this.....witness the upswing in health club memberships after the holiday season. The new year is the blank slate: tabula rasa.



As bereaved parents, we know there is no "blank slate." We know, also, that we travel slowly, hesitantly and with much care on our grief journey. The new year presents an opportunity to continue our search for that most ethereal longing: the need for hope. Hope for bereaved parents can be something as simple as a "normal" day. Hope could be an afternoon filled with productivity, grace and gratitude. Hope might be a feeling of a fog lifting, a soft light shining. Hope is a positive emotion that can give parents a refreshed perspective, a sense of optimism for this day and the next.

Finding hope in the midst of grief, while difficult, is certainly not impossible. Most of us who have been without our children for a period of four years or more know that hope, eventually, will find us if we are in the right place. The grief work we do, the seminars we attend, the counselors we call upon, the Compassionate Friends meetings we attend, the books and other readings we select, the entertainment choices we make: all equal the intentional reframing of our lives to find hope after our child has died. Through these activities we shape the person we will become. We are different now, you and I. We have suffered the most traumatic loss a human being ever faces: the death of our precious children. We must acknowledge the differences in ourselves. We must shape our lives around those differences. We must share our lives with gentle people now....maybe for a year or two, maybe until death takes us, too. But at least for now, gentleness lessens the percussive assault on our psyche.

Grief work, though hard work, is something we must do. We must structure our lives, our thoughts and our dreams as we each move along this uncharted pathway that is now our lives. Yes, we ache for our children. But our subconscious mind eventually accepts that we will take our children into the future in our minds, our hearts and souls. We define our new reality loosely because it changes with each sunrise. Like the caterpillar who labors to develop its wings and become a butterfly, we are constantly laboring to accept our new reality and make changes in our perspective while simultaneously coping with the tremendous pain of unchangeable loss. As we engage and embrace this process of acceptance and change, and do the hard work of reaching out for help, refining our lifestyles, speaking clearly and honestly of our feelings and what we can and cannot tolerate at each stage in our grief, we begin to develop strength. Like the butterfly whose wings develop after much labor, our new reality gradually becomes more natural to us. And just as the butterfly's fragile wings gently lift it from flower to flower, the seed of hope blossoms and grows in our hearts.

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

Finding Hope Through Grief Work January's Discussion Topic

We have all experienced the shock of losing our precious children to death. The feelings are surreal; time passes as if in slow motion. Almost all of us have moved into the mourning process which is made so difficult because our shock is gone and the raw pain is so new, so overwhelming. Most of us have moved forward to grief.

Grief changes with each month and each year. We will discuss the various feelings and emotions that come from our grief and the fact that there is never really an end to this.....we simply modify ourselves and learn how to cope.

Parents whose child has recently died and those who are years into the grief journey will discuss the changes, the coping strategies and the many methods each of us has found to help us move into the light of hope. We encourage the very recently bereaved as well as long-term members to join us for the January meeting. Hope for the newly bereaved is often found in the words and perspective of those of who are many years into their own grief.

We hope each of you join us and contribute to this most important topic. We are unique in our grief journeys; each of us has much to share and give to other parents.....no matter where they might be in their grief.

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 second Tuesday of the 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.

Grief Share

Grief Share, a Bible based Christian program for the bereaved, is being offered at many locations in the Houston area in January. Grief Share includes a professional video presentation, group discussion and a workbook. Many of our members have attended Grief Share and report the experience as a positive one which enhanced their grief journey. Here are two churches in the Katy area which are offering Grief Share in January:

Kingsland Baptist Church, 20555 Kingsland Blvd., Katy, TX 77450, 281-492-0785, Thursdays, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm, (01/12/2012 – 04/12/2012)

St Peter's United Methodist, 20775 Kingsland Blvd., Katy, TX 77450, 281-492-8031, Thursdays, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm, (01/12/2012 – 04/12/2012).

Check the web for other locations:
www.griefshare.org

December & January Birthdays

If your child was born in December or January you are invited to bring a picture or memento of your child to our January meeting for our Birthday Table.



The Birthday Table allows us to share our child with the other members of our Compassionate Friends Chapter. We encourage you our members to participate in this important sharing.

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



A NEW YEAR

Memories of Nic

As we all begin this New Year, I would like to offer a glimmer of hope to those deep in the middle of their grief. There will be good days, and days not so good. Each day does get a little better, even if you don't feel it. Each day we get a little stronger, a little better able to cope with daily life. I remember how hard it was for me those first few months after my son, Christopher, died on July 24th, 2005. I look back and it is hard to believe I am still here and Chris has been gone for six years. It is certainly a paralyzing time for you when your child dies. I remember I just didn't care about anything. All the wind was gone out of my sails. Still to this day I am not as motivated as I was before Chris died.

Slowly, your life starts to get a little more manageable. With the help of friends, such as those you make at TCF, you learn you can smile again and have some semblance of normalcy again. I'm not saying this happens over night, as this can be quite a lengthy process. Some people work through their grief quicker than others, and some people can't work through it at all. There does not seem to be any rhyme or reason for this, but I do have a theory.

I have talked to quite a few people about how they cope with their loss. There seems to be one common thread, and that is having faith. I believe that to be true. If it were not for my faith I could not have gotten through the last six years of my life. I was at a place in my life just before my daughter Dawn died, on July 19th, 2008, that I was coping and even giving back to others through TCF. Then the unthinkable happens, and I lose another child. Once again you go through the motions for awhile and somehow you start to see the light at the end of the tunnel. There is hope again, only because the same people who helped you the first time are there again to pick you up.

This is what TCF is all about. Those of us who have some years behind us can offer hope to those that are new in their grief. My hope comes from God and from my faith. One of the ways I cope when I start to become sad is to pray. I ask God to take the pain away, and I realize my children are in good hands. Prayer works for me and for many other people I know.



My prayer for everyone who is grieving for a child is that you will feel God's love and ask him to help get you through it, one day at a time. This is how we exist after losing a child, just one day at a time. And soon all those days add up to a year, and then two. You think you couldn't make it a day, let alone a year. And here we all are, another year later. It is hard to believe you can get through a year, but if you break it down into smaller increments you see you can do it.

Happy New Year to you all and prayers to get through this year, one day at a time. There is hope and there is help. God bless you all.



*In Loving Memory of my Children,
Christopher Wilson 7-24-05
Dawn Wilson-Shafer 7-19-08
Robin Conner, TCF Katy, TX*

Another Year

Old year has gone away
With gift and candle-
Old year has gone away
With thought and song.

Old year has given light
And dark and season.
Old year has been too short
And been too long.

Old year has given joy
and disappointment
Old year has given grief
and strength to cope.
Old year was memory
and was forgetting

Another year is come:
give it your hope.



By Sascha Wagner, from "the Poems of Sascha Wagner"

Nicolas Wade Dlouhy came into this world on August 6th, 1986, and at the age of 23, on the morning of January 7th, 2010, passed unexpectedly in his sleep. Nothing has or will ever be the same since Nic went to Heaven that morning. Every night it was my routine to kiss Nic's forehead before I went to bed. If he or I were going to be away from each other for a few days, for example, if he was gone for 3 days I would kiss his forehead 3 times before he left to make sure he got his nightly kiss. The night of January 6th was no different, and I kissed my son on his forehead before I headed off to bed like any other night. The next day when the coroner was taking his body out of the house, the coroner gave us strict instructions saying that we could not touch him but could kiss him if we wanted to. When it came to my turn, I kissed Nic's forehead crying and through the tears I asked, how many kisses should I give him because I don't know when the next time I will see him again. So I just kept kissing and kissing Nic and said Lord let that be enough kisses until I see him again.

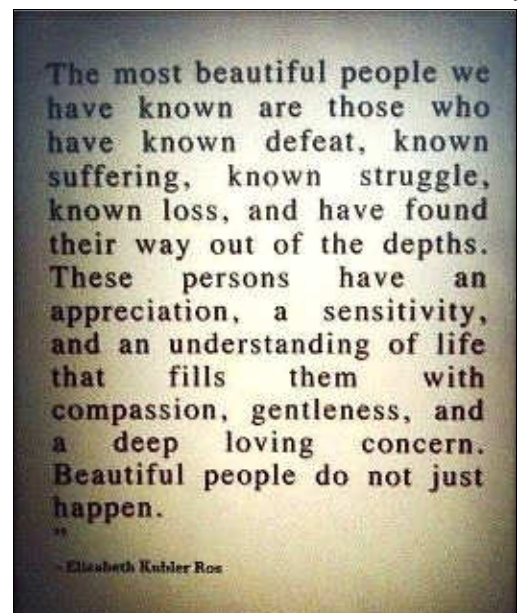


I wanted to share what is on Nic's headstone with you. It has the traditional information, name, DOB, etc. We took his hospital birth certificate and used his footprints and had them etched on it.

We have the footprints and this inscription on a heart on his headstone, that reads, "Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Others stay awhile, make footprints on our hearts and we are never, ever the same." Nic touched the hearts of so many people which was evident by over 600 people who attended his funeral. This month is the second anniversary of Nic being in Heaven, and we all miss him. Every thing in our lives has forever changed.

Nic, we all love and miss you and can't wait until we are reunited with you again in Heaven.

Love always,
Your parents,
Mike and Carol Dlouhy



December 11, 2011, marked the fifth Candle Lighting Ceremony that my husband and I have attended in memory of our beloved son, Robin Kumar Sen, who passed away from complications due to Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy in August, 2006. Robin had suffered from this debilitating disorder from birth but was not diagnosed until October 1989, eight years later and showed no signs of the disease until he was nine or ten years old. At first we had no concept of the pain and fear we would experience in the years to follow. Our initial reaction was a state of denial but a muscle biopsy confirmed the doctor's dire predictions.

I went to the public library and tried to read up everything I could about Duchenne MD. I had to know what monster I was confronting in order to help my child fight it with every last ounce of his strength and will power. Then I discovered a wonderful advocate for these unwitting victims of neuromuscular disease, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, working out of their headquarters in Tucson, Arizona. What they told me brought me and Robin a hope for the future. I also knew in the back of my mind, that we might eventually lose this battle but at the same time, bring the world at large closer to a cure for Duchenne and the forty other ailments under the umbrella of "Muscular Dystrophy."

From the very beginning, my husband, Salil, and I were aware that we were fighting against time to save our son's life. The disease is slow moving but varies from patient to patient. The tale-tale signs transform the bodies of sufferers gradually, so they exhibit lordosis which is a weakness in the spinal column which causes them to stick their stomachs forward to compensate for a loss of balance and then they slowly lose the side to side motion in their legs. Then they lose the front to back motion in the legs, and consequently begin to fall more than five or six times a day. This makes it necessary for them to go into wheelchairs by the time they are twelve or thirteen years old. Since this is a muscular disorder, the breakdown of the muscles in the body continue inexorably until nothing works anymore. This spreads to the limb girdles, down the arms to the hands and fingers too, making any motion impossible.



You must remember that the heart and lungs are operated by muscles too, so death comes eventually when the body closes up like the sides of a concertina.

Robin's death did not deteriorate to that state but was brought about by medical malpractice and absolute negligence on the part of Christus St. Catherine's Hospital in Katy, Texas. On July 4th, 2006, Robin was alive and well but he almost died on July 7th of that year. Robin had developed a deep abscess on his left buttock and we had taken him to his primary care physician, Dr. Rahim Haikal, at Kelsey Seybold Clinic on Kingsland Boulevard. We wanted Dr. Haikal to complete the removal of the abscess using local anesthesia at his premises but he recommended the state-of-the-art facilities at Christus instead. We took Robin to the emergency there and it was decided that they would administer 2 cc of Morphine to him and remove the abscess. The emergency room doctor had recommended 4cc but my husband had stipulated that that would be too high a dosage for Robin with his frail frame. Unfortunately the morphine bag still contained the lethal dosage of 4cc and was never changed due to the error of an emergency room nurse. Robin passed out during the administering of the Morphine and went into cardiac arrest. His lungs were perforated due to the resuscitation process and he died from acute sepsis thirty four days later on August 10th, 2006, at approximately eight o'clock in the morning. May God rest his soul.



The Compassionate Friends has been a God-send to us and been a true source of inspiration, comfort and new found joy. It is with great hope that we attend each Candle lighting in December to commemorate our beloved children and display the fact that we will never forget what Robin meant to us. We certainly mourn his death but celebrate the knowledge that he lived with courage and fortitude against all odds!

*In memory of my son, Robin Sen
Neela Sen, TCF, Katy, TX*

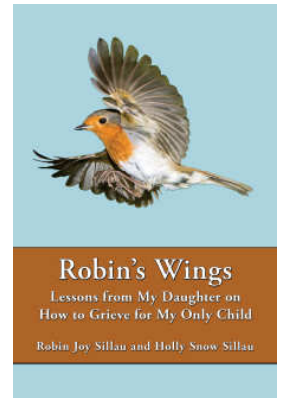
Books For Bereaved Parents



Robin's Wings: Lessons from My Daughter on How to Grieve for My Only Child

Robin Joy Sillau and Holly Snow Sillau

Holly and Robin, mother and daughter, share their heartfelt words with readers. You'll discover Robin's intuitive advice to her mom about how to handle the grief Holly is faced with upon the unexpected



death of her only child. Holly finds, in the writings Robin left behind, comfort, guidance, and soul-searching warmth, all of which are helpful navigational tools for learning to incorporate deep grief into her new existence. Bereaved parents, and anyone experiencing loss, will surely benefit from the expressive reflections of both of these courageous women.

You can find the book on amazon.com. On the book's amazon page, you can read several reviews, and you can also use the "look inside" feature provided by amazon to see a few pages from the book's interior. All proceeds from the sale of this inspiring book will go to the Robin Joy Sillau Memorial Research Fund for Connective Tissue Disease at New York City's Hospital for Special Surgery. This book is available at amazon.com.

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.



"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break."

~William Shakespeare~

Each Grief Journey Is Unique

I am visiting with a couple whose adult son had recently died. Mom is sobbing; dad is stoic. I look into dad's eyes and feel the pain that he endures. Yet he is strong.....strong for his wife, strong for his family. Strong because that's the way men are supposed to be. He comforts his wife; she collapses into a chair. He sits down in a chair next to her, patting her hand.

Mom talks about her child, about the death. She repeats her story many times. Dad looks at a booklet that I have given them. We talk about the many diverse paths they have taken throughout their lives and their marriage. They are different people with different interests. I mention that each parent grieves differently. This is a time to lean on each other but also to respect the other's choices on this terrifying grief journey. Each journey is unique.

We talk about their child. We talk about raising children. We talk about the unrealized dreams of their child. He asks about my husband. I tell him that my husband was driving the car when the accident occurred that took my son's life. I tell him that my husband's sanity was nearly lost after the accident and that he cried for a very long time.....he still cries sporadically and probably always will. But he is moving into hope, living his life, honoring my son's memory, loving unconditionally. He is rebuilding his life a day at a time. But first he had to take his grief journey, a journey that was different than mine. I go to monthly TCF meetings; he goes to two ceremonies each year. I participate actively; he doesn't. He doesn't talk to anyone but close friends and family about the accident and how much he misses Todd. I talk to many people. We're different, he and I. Though we share the same grief, the same horrendous pain, our perceptions are different.

Suddenly dad starts trembling. A soft cry which soon becomes a wail erupts from deep within his psyche. His surprised wife reaches over to comfort him. This is the first time he has cried since the funeral. He cries uncontrollably for a very long time. I tell him the tears are good, they are cathartic; tears help our souls to heal. I look into his eyes. They are red, but the pain does not dominate; I see a bit of hope in his eyes now. He won't come to the meetings, but his wife will, he tells me. There are no rules, I tell him. We make them up as we go along. He smiles.

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

At New Year's, Time

New Year, new year, what will you bring?
How many smiles to smile, how many songs to sing?

New year, new year, what will you give?
How many children will prosper and live?

New year, new year, come and be kind
Let us have hope again and peace of mind.

From "The Poems of Sascha Wagner" by Sascha Wagner



Walking the Lonesome Valley

One of my favorite gospel songs is "You've Got to Walk That Lonesome Valley" which is attributed to various composers in the early 20th Century. Many adaptations have been made to the words, yet all seem to fit.

This gospel song is particularly poignant for bereaved parents. We must take our grief journey alone. We must take our grief journey on our own terms and in our own way. I found myself humming and then singing this gospel song after my son died over nine years ago.

I was never really alone in this lonesome valley, however; many are taking this same walk, in their own ways and on their own terms. In TCF, we learn from other parents who walk the lonesome valley. We receive hope from those who take this journey with us. Some bereaved parents choose to return to the darkest places in the lonesome valley and help our newly bereaved parents as they define their own personal journey. Gradually, after thousands of steps, the bereaved parent comes to the place of resolution and emerges from the valley into the gauzy sunlight of hope and peace.

Reach out for assuring words and thoughts and ideas and hope. Take comfort in knowing that each of us is walking the lonesome valley.

You've got to walk that lonesome valley
You've got to walk it by your self
There's no one here can walk it for you
You've got to walk it by yourself

I must walk this lonesome valley,
I have to walk it by myself,
Oh, nobody else can walk it for me,
I have to walk it by myself.

I must go and stand my trial,
I have to stand it by myself,
O, nobody else can stand it for me,
I have to stand it by myself.

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

Grief to Greatness Website

Several of our members read this website daily. The message is transition to hope after the death of a loved one: <http://griegtogreatness.com/index.html>



The Burns Building, East Parking Lot

Finding Hope Through Grief Work

**Meeting:
January 10, 2012**

The Compassionate Friends
Katy Chapter
P.O. Box 45
Barker, TX 77413

