

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter of the Katy, TX, Chapter

September 2011

Chapter Leaders
Newsletter Editor
Treasurer

Melinda and Glen Ginter
Annette Mennen Baldwin
Lisa Leanard

(281) 492-1262
(281) 578-9118

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.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

When: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 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: Choices-Making the choice to be bitter or better

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.

Our Children Remembered

Birthdays

September 1989	22 Years	Walter William (Billy) Krause, son of Tom & Judith Krause
September 1981	30 Years	Eric Scott Krause, son of Tom & Judith Krause
September 1995	16 Years	Austin Joseph Becer, son of Joe & Cindy Becer
September 1975	36 Years	Brian Wood, son of Michael & Jo Wood
September 1986	25 Years	Monica Anne Frederick, daughter of Dorothy Frederick
September 1989	22 Years	Joshua Rodolfo Lozano, son of Gina & Juan Duran
September 1978	33 Years	Troy David Murphy, son of Kimarie Linehan
September 1984	27 Years	Jennifer Ann Roberts, daughter of Joe & Linda Roberts
September 1980	29 Years	Mauriceio "Bobby" Jose Rodriguez, son of Ana Rodriguez
September 1991	20 Years	Myron "Spencer" Kinley, son of Karl & Melinda Kinley
September 1989	22 Years	Roxanne Rene Rangel, daughter of Georgina Rangel
September 1967	44 Years	Laura Eliska Swails, daughter of Markey Swails
September 1980	31 Years	Kelly Brianne Leasher, daughter of Joyce & Brian Dakin
September 1978	33 Years	Andrew Ryan Houghton, son of George & Cindy Houghton
September 1975	36 Years	Sonya Ann Cunningham, daughter of Jean McKinney

Anniversaries

September 2010	1 Year	Sean Wyatt Sanders, son of Kathi Sanders
September 2001	10 Years	Rein Gregory Henderson, son of Kim & Rick Bozeman
September 2004	7 Years	Gregory Jackson, son of Doug & Christine Jackson
September 2010	1 Year	Joe Michael Cabellero, son of Rosie & Eddie Cabellero, brother of Johanna Cabellero
September 2004	7 Years	Jennifer Ann Roberts, daughter of Joe & Linda Roberts
September 2007	4 Years	Jakob Heath, son of Dawn Lovell
September 2006	5 Years	Nicholas Christopher Sayles, son of Scott & Vickie Sayles
September 2003	8 Years	Mark Corder Whitehill, son of Don & Terry Whitehill
September 2006	5 Years	Sean Patrick McElroy, son of Pat & Jan McElroy
September 2006	5 Years	Gregg Lanier Holland, son of Carolyn Montgomery
September 2010	1 Year	Christopher Charles Dunlap, son of Cindy & Lloyd Dunlap

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 August:

Maria Taylor whose daughter, Janina Allison Taylor, died in January 2011

Jan Halfin whose son, Larry Gene Young, II, died in May 2011

Kenrdick & Shanania Leggins whose son Kayden Addison Leggins, died in June 2011

Dahlia Salinas-Molina whose son, Luis E. Molina, died in January 2010

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.

In Memory of our Beloved Children

Memorials given by:

Glen and Melinda Ginter
Robin Conner
Barbara Braun
Robin Larsen Conner
Sam & Patsy Cruse
Diane Ellis
Don & Terry Whitehill

In Loving Memory of:

John Robert Ginter
Christopher & Dawn Wilson
James M. Braun
Christopher Frederick Wilson
Jeffrey Matthew Cruse
Amy Lynn Ellis Oliver
Laura & Bert Swails

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) 858-1906
*Death of Teenage Child.....*Joyce Dakin (281) 858-4551
*Death from long term illness.....*Karen (281) 398-0472
*Support for Fathers.....*Albert (832) 563-4739
Special Needs Child..... Volunteer needed
*Suicide*Rhonda (832) 282-7773
& Cathy (281) 855-2228



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
Library—Jan Bigbee-Weesner
Welcome Package—Neela Sen
Web Site—Don Whitehill—VOLUNTEER NEEDED
Treasurer—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

August snacks were brought by Stephanie Cartwright, Cindy Dunlap and Jeri Esmi. September snacks will be brought by Debbie Heck, Patti Small and Sherry Key. If you would like to bring snacks to a meeting, contact Barbara Braun at JBraun1307@aol.com or call her at (281) 579-7258.



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



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 September meeting will be held Tuesday, September 20, 2011. The topic will be "Ask It Basket."



For more information contact Cathy Knapp, Chapter Leader, at (713) 877-8626 or check out their website at <http://www.orgsites.com/tx/tcfhoustoninnerloop/>

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

amennenbaldwin@hotmail.com



Bitter or Better? Topic of September Meeting

The general theme of our September meeting is whether or not we are finding success at releasing our negative emotions and replacing them with neutral or positive emotions. This is a complicated process and many parents have real difficulty in letting go of feelings such as anger, guilt, self-loathing, blame, self-recrimination and much more.

The groups will discuss this topic and some timely materials will be presented for you along with book recommendations and group experiences with this necessary component of our grief work.

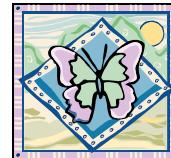
We hope you are able to join us for our September e3, 2011 meeting.



If September is your child's birthday month, please bring a framed picture of your child for our Birthday Table in September..

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.



Picture Buttons

Picture buttons are free to our members. These are buttons that are made with various pictures of our children on them. If you would like a picture button, e-mail the picture you would like on the button to Annette Baldwin. If you have a digital output or an original photo that you want used, bring this to a meeting. Annette will scan photographs and create a digital print out. Digital (paper-not photographic paper) print outs are used on the buttons. We encourage our members to have at least one picture button of their children. There is no charge for this.



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.



The beautiful butterfly pictures for this newsletter were photographed and provided by Jody Griggs,. Jody is a nature photographer by choice, and a director of finance by trade. She works at Memorial Drive United Methodist Church. We thank Jody for these special pictures seen on Page 1 and Page 2 of this newsletter. The generosity of gentle people like Jody touches our hearts.

For the Newly Bereaved.....and the Rest of Us

Don't... ..

Don't tell me that you understand,
Don't tell me that you know...
Don't tell me that I will surely survive,
How I will surely grow....

Don't tell me this is just a test,
That I am truly blessed.
That I was chosen for the task,
Apart from all the rest...

Don't come at me with answers,
That can only come from me....
Don't tell me how my grief will pass,
That I will soon be free...

Don't stand in pious judgment,
Of the bonds that I must untie...
Don't tell me how to suffer,
And don't tell me how to cry....

My life is filled with selfishness
My pain is all I see....
But I need you, I need your love,
Unconditionally....

Accept me in my ups and down
I need someone to share...
Just hold my hand and let me cry,
And say, "My friend, I care....."



Joanetta Hendel

This poem was posted by TCF on their Facebook page in August, 2011

Grief Share Programs Offered in Katy and Throughout the U.S.

Grief Share is a Christian based program offered by many denominations throughout the country. In the Houston area we have many churches participate in Grief Share. It is a structured, 13-week group program which features biblical teaching on grief and recovery.

The next session of Grief Share at Grace Fellowship United Methodist church offers GriefShare starting on Wednesday, September 14. Contact Debbie Barrett, 281 646 1903, ext. 177 for information. Kingsland Baptist, where our group meetings, will offer GriefShare on Thursdays. Call the church or check on line for the start

Many churches in Houston and Katy offer the program. Check the national website for a complete listing of churches: www.griefshare.org, select "find a group" and enter your zip code. All are welcome to attend.

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



Celebrating A Life

August 10, 2011, was the fifth anniversary of Robin's departure from this worldly plane and marked our sojourn from Chennai to Delhi. We had enjoyed three brief but happy days spent with Subir, Champa, Dipp and Sunny. Prior to that, we had nine hectic days in Chandernagore when we attended the wedding of Soumita and Abhijit. We embarked from Houston on July 27, 2011, via Emirates Airlines and arrived around eight in the morning in Kolkatta. After clearing Customs and Immigration, we took a taxi from Dum Dum Airport directly to Rabindra Bhavan in Chandernagore where Sujit had arranged for us to stay while we were there. The next day, we went to Kolkatta with Sunit in order to buy a necklace and earrings for the bride. We also purchased a set of bracelets for a friend and myself. It turned out to be far more expensive and time-consuming than we had anticipated. Since we also bought three saris, three kurthies and one panjabi – it turned out to be an altogether money-spending venture! The plan had been to visit the home of Neela's youngest and surviving Aunt before returning to Rabindra Bhavan that evening but there was not sufficient time to do so. The next three or four days were taken up by the preparations for the wedding, the ceremony at the bride's place and then at the groom's home. Before we knew it, the time came for our flight to Chennai and it was time to leave.

Delhi, the capital of India, was a welcome surprise for us and particularly the airport! Frankly speaking, Indira Gandhi International Airport can rival any airport in the world as far as cleanliness, service, appearance and anything else you might want it to possess. India has progressed well in the last three years from the time we visited in 2008. However, we were tired and in a hurry to reach our hotel in the Saket area of Delhi. Once we were inside the Hilton, it was hard to believe that we were outside the United States of America! It was truly a relief to be able to enjoy a hot shower, our own personal towel, shampoo, lotion and all the comforts of a well-stocked hotel after almost two weeks of living out of suitcases. The following morning, we had a bountiful breakfast of eggs done to our preference, toast, juice and our habitual cup of tea. Then it was time for our trip to Agra and we set out with our driver, Prem, to make our pilgrimage to the Taj Mahal. We were very fortunate that our driver spoke excellent English and was amusing too. We whiled away the ride with conversation regarding various things but eventually we spoke about Robin and what he meant to us.

Prem informed us that we would be making a stop for a bathroom break and also to do any shopping that we might want to do. When we stopped at "Midway", we found the bathrooms to be tolerably clean and then were overwhelmed with the myriad of collectibles available in the gift store. As soon as the salesman laid eyes on us and noticed my penchant for the various elephants (wooden, camelbone, marble, hand-carved or ivory), he gave us a veritable tour of all the merchandize they had to offer. After almost an hour of searching and some haggling, we walked out with two Taj Mahal plates for display, a medium-sized hand carved wooden elephant two tee-shirts depicting the Taj and several dollars poorer than when we had left Delhi. However, we both agreed that Robin would have appreciated our purchases very much. We had no idea at that time how much we would end up spending in Agra later on the following day, after our visit to the Taj Mahal!

We very soon recommenced our sojourn to Agra and our conversations with the fascinating Prem, our driver. He was totally engrossed by our tragic story about the demise of our beloved son, Robin, and consoled us by saying that we were indeed blessed to have such fond memories of our lost child. He also added that we would be visiting a shrine to Mumtaz-i-Mahal in the Taj Mahal, that Emperor Shah Jahan built in the memory of his second and favorite wife, who died bearing their fourteenth child. He said that we would be fascinated and charmed by this particular wonder of the world. We have to admit that it was definitely worth the trip, despite the intense heat and humidity. We were fortunate to find a professional photographer to take pictures for us and put it in an album at the end of the day!

All in all, this was an unforgettable trip, yet we were very relieved to get back to the United States! You never appreciate any place until you leave for a brief respite and then return to discover how much you miss those everyday things that make your home unique. Yes, we may grumble about the ways things are in America but we have to admit that we would not choose to live any where else in the whole world. It is hard to believe that we were gone for nineteen days and had to contend with brutal heat similar to the drought conditions experienced here in Houston. On this fifth anniversary of Robin's death, we perhaps escaped some of the drama and regret we might have experienced if we had been in Katy, but we did indeed celebrate his life in a style our son would have approved of in no uncertain fashion!

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



Our Birthday Table

Our birthday table is set up for you to bring in your child's picture or a memento of your child's life. The birthday table is set up 10 months out of the year. In June and December we do not have a birthday table; members bring their birthday pictures the following month.

If your child was born in September, please bring a framed picture, a collage, or a memento of your child's life and put it on our birthday table. Following the opening of our meeting, we provide the time for you to introduce your child to us.

As bereaved parents, we want to know you through your child. In sharing your child, you give a gift to each of us who walks this journey with you.

Thank you for sharing your child with us.

Resources Available to Our Members

Resources of all types are available to our members. We include these in the monthly newsletter and strongly recommend that, in addition to Compassionate Friends, newly bereaved parents avail themselves of one or more of the many retreats, programs, etc., that are available in the Houston area.



Subscribe to TCF Magazine

We Need Not Walk Alone, the Magazine of The Compassionate Friends is published quarterly for bereaved parents and professional grief counselors. This is a beautiful publication which has a full color picture of a different butterfly on the cover each quarter. The writings and information in the magazine are tailored specifically for bereaved parents and siblings. The cost is \$20 per year. To subscribe, write or fax our national TCF office:

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

P.O. Box 3696

Oak Brook IL 60522-3696

Phone: (630) 990-0010

Fax: (630) 990-0246

H.A.N.D. for Neo Natal Loss

H.A.N.D. is a greater Houston area based pregnancy and infant loss support group for parents whose babies have died any time from conception through late infancy.

The mission is to help parents cope with the feelings of grief and isolation that accompany the loss of a baby.

The goal of this site is to share H.A.N.D.'s mission to support grieving parents in the greater Houston area. We welcome any and all comments regarding neonatal death and this web site. If you have neonatal death questions regarding grief, information to share, a link to add or a problem with this web site, please contact us. We welcome all comments that will help us to have a more effective web site.

H.A.N.D.
P.O. Box 19823
Houston, TX 77224-9823
832-752-1919
info@hand.net



One Moment in Time

As bereaved parents, we have a line of demarcation in our lives. This line is like no other. Other people define their lives by that one big career step, move or degree. But in other people's lives, things are different. We are not like other people.

We experienced a clearly defined moment in time when everything changed. The tectonic plates of our lives shifted at one moment on one date of one year. Nothing will ever be the same. We definitively mark the time before and after our child died. Life was different before our child died. It was easy; it was filled with promises of tomorrow, accomplishments, setbacks, goals set and achieved and happiness that abounds in the natural order of life. But our basic assumptions were shattered and our world turned inside out at that one moment in time when our child died.



Can we ever feel as optimistic about life as we did before that moment in time? Will we ever again believe that one day we will feel balanced, optimistic and serene?

We certainly can, and most parents certainly do. As you read the articles in this month's newsletter about the journey through grief, consider the gentle optimism that presents itself in these parents' words. Each of these parents have walked this lonely road. Each has come through the darkest, rockiest valley into a gauzy sort of light which gradually crystallized into a true sunshine as time moved forward. How did they do it?

Insight is offered in these parents' stories. We must do our grief work, face our demons and stand them down. We must talk with others, set limits on what we will tolerate, and hold our line. We must seek counseling, attend seminars, attend TCF meetings or other offerings that give us the support of parents who have lost a child or help us in acquiring skills to cope with our pain and loss.

We must take grief breaks in the beginning and for the first year or two. We must take care of ourselves physically, mentally and emotionally.

But most of all we must keep our child with us as we complete our life's journey. How we choose to complete our journey is unique. The common denominator that all of us share is the need to find a precious flicker of hope which we can nurture and coax to a radiant glow. We all find it in different ways and at different times on our grief journey. But, rest assured, we all find it. I call it "my little light."

One day you will feel the burden lifting. You will laugh about things your child said or did. That moment will gently envelop you. There is hope. Let your little light flicker and then glow.

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

You Need Not Walk Alone

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.

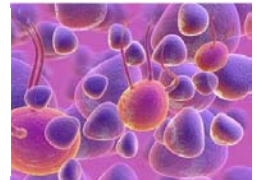
To My Brother, My Friend...

You can't choose your family,
so I guess I was just lucky
to have a brother like you.
We fussed and we teased,
we had fights and we had fun,
and always in my heart I knew
that I would do anything for you.
You can never know
how proud I am to tell the world,
"That's my brother,"
but I'm even prouder to say,
"That's my friend."

*Johanna Cabellero
In memory of my brother,
Joe Michael Cabellero
TCF, Katy, TX*

Special Stress Reduction Presentation for October Meet

The October meeting of TCF Katy will include a special speaker from Hermann Hospital on stress reduction. Reducing excessive stress and its harmful effects will be discussed in detail.



The stress reaction: fight or flight is an ever-present in humans. When we lose a child to death, the impact of this can be exponential compared with that which we have experienced in the past. It is imperative that each of us develop an understanding of the mechanisms behind it so that we can begin to deal its damages and consequences.

We are privileged to have Shirley Chambers speaking to our group in October. Her presentation will be engaging and instructive as it will deal, not necessarily with eliminating stress from our lives, but instead with access to our own relaxation response and management of daily stress.

We encourage all of our members, to attend the October meeting in order to lower the impact that our extra stress has on us in our daily lives.

"The Compassionate Friends has adopted the butterfly as one of its symbols - a sign of hope to us that our children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom - a comforting thought to many."



*The Compassionate Friends -
National Office*

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>

Autumn Memories

My son and I always enjoyed the autumn season. Yes, when we lived in the cold zone, we knew that winter's winds and snows were on the way. But, yet, we took time to enjoy the beautiful array of colors that nature gave us as a final salute to the growing season.

Todd and I raked leaves in the autumn. I had purchased a home in a town on the Mississippi River bluffs; the home had been built in the 1860s and I am sure some of the trees were well over 50 years old. The leaves would fall and we would rake. We made a game of it. Sometimes his best friend, Allen, would come over and help. The boys would jump into the piles and laugh with delight. We'd create a big pile and rake it to the concrete so that it could be burned. I can still see Todd laughing and dancing around that fire. His pure childhood joy was contagious.

Todd and I loved to look at the changing leaves along the bluffs of the river. We would drive on weekends and find the best view. Then we'd park and marvel at nature's wonder. The big bluffs, the turning leaves, the eagles soaring above us. Ducks flying south....even the occasional group of geese overhead...honking, honking as they journeyed to a warmer climate. .

The light is different in the autumn...it's diffused somehow. It's different than the light in any other season. Autumn sun was our favorite light. It seemed less harsh, more forgiving, gentler in a strange sort of way. That was another time and another place.

Now in the autumn I remember all the special times I shared with my child. Looking at leaves, collecting leaves, raking leaves.....we did this together, just the two of us. "Mom, when are we going to go look at leaves?" Todd would ask. That was my cue to load up some soft drinks and sandwiches and head out on the first sunny Saturday. We'd repeat this ritual until the leaves had all fallen and it was time to rake.



When we moved to the Houston area, Todd was 12, and we talked about the seasons. He told me about his great memories of leaves and drives and time together. He said he would miss autumn with me. That made me feel good. These were memories that we shared, of a time when it was just Todd and me for those special moments. Looking back, I am so glad that I spent the time to make memories. I thought I was making memories for my child, but in fact, I was making memories for us both. And now those memories are my memories.....good memories.....memories that I will cherish always.

Here it is autumn again. Soon Todd will be gone five years. The memories are flooding back: the first day of each school each year, the changes as he grew to become a man. High school, college, graduate school....all began in the autumn. Autumn marks the beginning of many good memories for me. I listen as the school bus stops in front of our house to pick up today's children. Once in a while I go to the door and watch them load up, chatting with each other as they take their seats. I think of my 12 year old son, getting on that bus in front of our home for the first time: the first day of school in Houston. And for a moment, just a fleeting moment, I think I can see him sitting at a window seat, waving at me. Waving goodbye.

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

Our Condolences to A Katy Chapter Member

Bert Swails, husband of Markey Swails and father of Laura Swails, died on August 9, 2011, at Hermann Hospital in Katy, TX.



Bert had been in declining health for a number of years, requiring the devoted attention of Markey for much of that time.

Bert and Markey joined our Katy Compassionate Friends chapter following the death of their daughter, Laura in March of 2005.

Markey has been an active member of our chapter and serves on our steering committee.

We offer our sincere condolences to Markey and her family.

Until We Meet Again

Author unknown

Each morning when we awake
We know that you are gone.
And no one knows the heartache
As we try to carry on.
Our hearts still ache with sadness
And many tears still flow.
What it meant to lose you,
No one will ever know.
Our thoughts are always with you,
Your place no one can fill.
In life we loved you dearly,
In death we love you still.
There will always be a heartache,
And often a silent tear,
But always a precious memory
Of the days when you were here.
If tears could make a staircase,
And heartaches make a lane,
We'd walk the path to heaven
And bring you home again.
We hold you close within our hearts,
And there you will remain,
To walk with us throughout our lives
Until we meet again.
Our family chain is broken now,
And nothing will be the same,
But as God calls us one by one,
The chain will link again

*Joanna Cabellero
As read at Joe Michael's Funeral
In September, 2010
In memory of my brother,
Joe Michael Cabellero*



**Meeting Begins at 7:00 p.m.
Doors Open at 6:30 p.m.**

September 13, 2011

Return Service Requested

Katy, TX 77450

565 S. Mason Road PMB 152

Houston West Chapter

The Compassionate Friends®

