



# The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2016

Chapter Leader: Denise St. Pierre 504-265-0581 Email address: [tcfnola@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnola@gmail.com) www.tcfneworleans.com

## **SAVE THE DATE: Saturday November 5, 2016**

### **Walk and Auction**

**Our only fundraiser—we need your support to help us make this a success!!**

**See flyer for details.**

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#### **Vacations**

Vacation time can be painful for bereaved parents. Caught up with normal demands of making a living or keeping a household going, we have less time to think than we do on vacations, especially the "take it easy" kind-at a hideaway, tucked away somewhere.

In the summers following Tricia's death, I found vacations could bring a special kind of pain. We avoided going to places where we had vacationed with her. At one time, I thought Williamsburg might be off my list forever since we had a very happy time together there. I tried it one summer three years later and found that she walked the cobbled streets with me. Now that nine years have passed and the pain has eased, maybe the happy memories we shared in Williamsburg can heighten the pleasure of another visit there.

For the first few years after Tricia's death, we found fast-paced vacations at places we had never been before, to be the best. The stimulation of new experiences in new places with new people refreshed us and sent us home more ready to pick up our grief work. That is not to say when we did something or saw something that Tricia would have enjoyed, we didn't mention her. We did, but it seemed less painful than at home. One caution: Do allow enough time for sleep; otherwise, an exhausted body can depress you.

We've said it many times: **YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR OWN WAY, YOUR OWN PEACE.** Let vacation time be another try at that; but do give yourself a break in choosing the time and locale where that can best be accomplished. Don't be afraid of change-it can help with your re-evaluation of life.

Elizabeth Estes ~ TCF, Augusta, GA

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**“I have learned to give into them and let the tears fall. I can live with these storms and accept them as part of my life because my child lived and I loved him with all my heart. I cannot change the fact that my child has died and I will not change my love.” —Barb Seth**

**BIRTHDAY TABLE:** We remembered birthdays in JULY for: **Jennifer “GG” Arnold; Jacob Buuck; Chris Carmello; Gavin Gholston; Brian Leonard; Jason Lynn; Haylee Danyelle Mazzella; Desha Ricks; Kendall Springman; Jorion White.** We do encourage both you & your family to come when it is your child’s birthday month, to share your child with all of us. You will receive a special birthday gift in memory of your child. Bring that treasured picture of your child that always makes you smile so we may smile with you.

The cake for July birthday is in memory of **Chris Carmello and Jason Lynn**

#### **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

**August 8, 2016**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month**

East Jefferson Hospital  
4200 Houma Blvd.  
Metairie, LA 70006

Time: **7:00 PM – 9:00 PM**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, adjacent to the Hudson St. Garage, Esplanade II room

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

September 12      November 14  
October 10        December 12

#### **REGIONAL COORDINATOR**

Denise St. Pierre  
504-454-5078  
[denisestp12@gmail.com](mailto:denisestp12@gmail.com)

#### **NATIONAL OFFICE**

The Compassionate Friends  
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[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

877-969-0010

To all those newly bereaved, who are receiving this newsletter for the first time and to all our Compassionate Friends, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you and your family have many friends. We, who received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow, now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. **You are not alone in your grief.**

**Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at East Jefferson Hospital, 4200 Houma Blvd., 1<sup>st</sup> floor adjacent to the Hudson St. garage at 7:00 P.M.** We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join with us at a meeting.

#### **Grief support after the death of a child**

The Compassionate Friends is a national non-profit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

#### **Contact:**

**Phone: (504) 265-0581**  
**Email: [tcfnola@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnola@gmail.com)**  
**[www.tcfneworleans.com](http://www.tcfneworleans.com)**  
**4541 Loveland St.**  
**Metairie, LA 70006**

Chapter Leader.....Denise St. Pierre  
Newsletter Editor.....Denise St. Pierre  
Treasurer.....Debi Giordano  
Facilitator.....Debi Giordano

#### **Steering Committee:**

**Patsy Ashton, Alice Buuck, Jan & Ted Dutilh,  
Debi Giordano, Denise & Duffy St. Pierre**

Denise St. Pierre, Regional Coordinator  
(504) 265-0581

TCF National (877) 969-0010

**[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)**

#### **The Meeting Agenda**

**7:00 p.m.** - The meeting will begin with a short introduction followed by lighting of candle and then reading of the Credo. Remembering our children's birthdays of the month. Then followed by smaller groups of sharing.

**9:00 p.m.** - Meeting will close by recognizing our children's names. Feel free to visit with each other and check out a book from our library.

**ATTENTION:** **Duffy St. Pierre** is the contact person for bereaved fathers who may feel the need to speak with another dad. Men grieve differently than women and it may be very helpful for fathers to speak to another father about their grief. Dads, feel free to contact **Duffy** at **985-665-6250** or you can email him at [captstpierre@gmail.com](mailto:captstpierre@gmail.com) He will be glad to speak with you.

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:** **TCF Greater New Orleans** welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to: TCF GNO, 4541 Loveland St., Metairie, LA 70006. Or e-mail text and photos to: [tcfnola@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnola@gmail.com) As our chapter is only funded by your donations, we ask for a donation of **\$15** or more for a dedication for our newsletter. This is tax-deductible. We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content. Deadline for submissions is on the Child Remembered page of the newsletter each month. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source. Errors and Omissions: Please notify me if any of your information is incorrect. Thank you!



**BIRTHDAY CAKE:** Our child's birthday is still such an important day to us bereaved parents. In TCF this is where we can celebrate our child's birthday and remember the love we still have for them no matter how long it has been since they died. Our chapter is now offering you the chance to sponsor the birthday cake for the month of your child's birthday. You may do so by calling **Denise St. Pierre (504) 265-0581** to order the cake through East Jefferson Hospital. The cost for the cake is **\$40**. This way we can all celebrate your child's birthday.

## "NEW" NEWS

The Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony is Sunday, December 11, 2016.

We have been discussing the idea of making a slideshow of our children's pictures to be viewed during/after the ceremony. We would like to get some feedback if members would be willing to submit their child's picture for this slideshow. We can add your child's name to their picture.

In order for this to happen, it will take some expense for the projector and a lot of work. We welcome any help with this but most importantly want to know if this is something you would like. Please drop me an email, a note in the mail, or a phone call to let me know if you are interested in submitting your child's picture. [tcfnola@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnola@gmail.com) Denise St. Pierre, 4541 Loveland St., Metairie, LA 70006 or call (504)265-0581. Please let us know as soon as you can. Thank you!

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**BRICKS:** The next time to order bricks will be for the **December Worldwide Candle Lighting on December 11, 2016. Please send in your brick order form no later than October 15, 2016.**

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### TCF National Office Seeks Your Stories and Articles

For many years, The Compassionate Friends National Office has provided on its Leadership site stories and poems by TCF members that can be published in Chapter newsletters around the country.

Currently, the Newsletter Editor Database has over 500 stories and 200 poems. The National Office would like to include your personal grief related stories and poems. Please submit your articles and poems to [sara@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:sara@compassionatefriends.org). Please include your name and chapter affiliation.

**TCF ANGELS:** *Loving angels are everywhere – In the smiles that you give; In the words that you say; In gentle hearts of those who care.* We need "special angels" who care and can help with the work of our chapter. In helping others – you are healed. Become a "volunteer."

VOLUNTEER LIST

TCF NEEDS YOU!!

Call Denise St. Pierre 504-265-0581 to help!

**Birthday Table** – THANK YOU to **Nalani Lynn** for calling our members each month for the birthday table.

**Greeter** – THANK YOU to **Nalani Lynn** for greeting our new members as they walk through those doors for the 1<sup>st</sup> time.

**Kleenex/Picture Boards** – THANK YOU to **Charlene** and **Michael Hoffmeister**.

**Outreach** – THANK YOU to **Tiffany Bordelon** for giving our Chapter Brochures to funeral homes etc to let the community know we are here.

**Remembrance Poems** – THANK YOU to **Patti Goens**, **Tina Rome** and **Jerrie Vacari** for remembering our child's Birthday and Anniversary dates.

Thank you to all who help our chapter in memory of their child. Our chapter could not continue without our volunteers.

## Better Than We've Ever Been

*"There's been a lot of things said about me, since that awful day. I'm not the person that I used to be, and that I will never be the same. That's true—no doubt; But I know more what life is about..."*

The above is the first verse from a song called Better Than I've Ever Been by Cindy Bullens from her CD, Somewhere Between Heaven and Earth. I had the great pleasure of meeting Cindy at the TCF National Conference in Arlington, VA. in July. She sang at the Friday evening banquet and held a fantastic workshop on music in grief, which I attended. Her daughter Jessie died on March 23, 1996, shortly after her 11th birthday. Cindy is a singer/songwriter and, outside of her family, music had been her life. When Jessie died of Hodgkin's only months after her diagnosis, Cindy swore that she would never write another song. But approximately four months after Jessie's death, she picked up her guitar and began "aimlessly strumming cords just to hear the comforting sound of the instrument." Somehow without any thought on her part, a song emerged which became the title of her CD. She said that she was "at once horrified and energized"; on the one hand, she was energized by the making of music, which was so much a part of her, but horrified at the same time that she had just written a song about her child's death. She soon realized that her only inspiration would be her "absolute love for Jessie and the absolute agony of life without her."

I think we can relate to that in different ways. In the early days, months and even years of our grief, we can't begin to imagine that we could ever do anything meaningful again. We had lost our greatest gift. We had invested so much love in this person to whom we gave life and who, for some incomprehensible reason, is now gone. Life, for us, had lost its purpose; what was the point? As Cindy sings in the song, "I've Got to Believe in Something" — "Everything I planned didn't work out like I thought it would." So many hopes and plans for the future, our dreams for our children shattered. We visualized a world for them with the thought that someday we would see and be part of the milestones of their lives; watch them go off to school and maybe college, fall in love, perhaps marry and have children, our grandchildren. We never envisioned a world that did not include these things.

How do we reinvest our lives, rethink a future very different from the one we had hoped? This is not something that happens quickly. It is a long journey with many peaks and valleys—that roller coaster ride of emotions that we so often talk about. Sometimes we wonder if we are making any progress at all. Others may see it, but we feel we are only moving forward at a snail's pace, if at all. My friends helped by accentuating the positive steps that I had made, ones that I could not recognize. As the saying goes, we can't see the forest from the trees; in our case, because we are so consumed by our own sadness it is hard not to be blinded by it. They pointed out how I was making progress by getting through an entire day without crying; when my first thought in the morning was not that Nina was dead; when I could go down the macaroni and cheese aisle at the grocery store without having to flee, and many more. All may seem insignificant to those who have not "been there", but to us who have, are very significant indeed. Every one step forward, two steps back, we are still gaining, even if just a little.

After the reality hits that we cannot control what happened, we can then decide what we are going to do with this new life we have been handed. We aren't the people that we used to be, nor will we ever be the same. We are changed in ways we would have never imagined. We have learned where our priorities should be. We sweat the small stuff less, put less importance on materialistic things, and value each other's uniqueness. We prize our family and close friends. We are more compassionate and less impatient. We know how precious and, too often, how fleeting life is. As one of the members of our group said, "I had to decide whether I was going to be bitter or better, and I chose better." What better way to honor our children than to be a better friend, a better family member, a better citizen; to reach out our hand or give a shoulder to cry on to a newly bereaved parent, in a way that only we as bereaved parents can do. I truly believe that these things make our children very proud of us.

The last verse says: "There's a curious feeling rising up from the dark, some kind of strength I've never had. But I'd trade it in a second to have you back, I've got to make some good out of the bad." Yes, we'd trade it in a second to have them back...doesn't that just say it all?

*"I laugh louder, cry harder, take less time to make up my mind, and I love deeper, go slower, I know what I want and what I don't. Maybe I'll be better than I've ever been...better than I've ever been." (refrain from "Better Than I've Ever Been")*

Though not the life we had hoped, wished and dreamed of, at some point each of us will know that with the help of other Compassionate Friends, the love of family and our children, (and lots of patience with ourselves) perhaps we too will choose to be better than we've ever been.

With gentle thoughts, Cathy Seehuetter, TCF St. Paul, MN



# Our Children Remembered



“So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are a part of us as we remember them” ~ Gates of Prayer

## August Birthdays

|                         |           |   |
|-------------------------|-----------|---|
| Ron Guillory            | August 9  | Son of Jane Guillory  |
| Kim Mark Kimble         | August 10 | Son of Nancy Kimble; Brother of Baron   |
| Cherie Lampert          | August 11 | Daughter of Shirley and Martin Watsky   |
| Mrs. Kerry A. Degeyter  | August 12 | Daughter of Dee Arnold  |
| Joshua Louis Matranga   | August 14 | Son of Jodi Caronna; Brother of Jaclyn and Joseph   |
| Jeffrey Hergert         | August 17 | Son of Donald & Roxanne Hergert   |
| Joshua LeJeune          | August 17 | Son of Naomie Swanson   |
| Reginald E. Taylor, Jr. | August 18 | Son of Elvira Washington  |
| April Blossum Duran     | August 19 | Daughter of Mark & Martha Duran; Sister of Autumn Moore; Mother of Gina Wills   |
| Bryan Anthony Eiserloh  | August 20 | Son of June DeJong  |
| Sean Fox                | August 21 | Grandson of Patricia and Cary Becker  |
| Debra Barker Hamburger  | August 24 | Daughter of Antoinette and Edward Barker  |
| Elizabeth Mary Forrest  | August 28 | Daughter of Steven & Nicole Forrest; Sister of Madison and Logan;<br>Granddaughter of Elmer and Dianne Darwin   |
| Beverly Ann Alexander   | August 28 | Daughter of Beverly and Melvin Siemssen   |
| Eric Lanus              | August 28 | Son of Linda Lanus  |
| David Andre Folks       | August 29 | Son of Vickie Tullier; Brother of Jared; Grandson of Ellwyn and<br>Joseph Abadie, Jr.; Nephew of Cindy & Duane Abadie; Lynne & Ronnie<br>Ebersole; Julie & Jerry Puyau; Janel & Peter Quitzau |
| Gerry Ray Marcoux, Jr.  | August 31 | Son of Gerry Marcoux  |

## August Anniversaries

|                           |           |  |
|---------------------------|-----------|--|
| Duane DeMatteo            | August 7  | Son of Brenda P. DeMatteo  |
| Joshua William McNulty    | August 9  | Son of Pam McNulty   |
| Eileen LaPorte Mustacchia | August 9  | Daughter of Catherine O. LaPorte   |
| Blake James Carver        | August 11 | Son of Cathy Vega; Brother of Brett; Father of Aleah; Grandson of Marie Vega |
| Duane Ransome             | August 15 | Son of Elaine Ransome  |
| Kayleish Billings         | August 15 | Daughter of Stacy Toal   |
| Thomas “Tommy”            | August 18 | Son of Steven Cornman and Felicia Cornman                                    |
| Kaitlyn Denese Pitfield   | August 21 | Daughter of Mike and Cheryl Pitfield   |
| Kim Mark Kimble           | August 27 | Son of Nancy Kimble; Brother of Baron  |
| Beau Charles Tedesco MD   | August 28 | Son of Madelyn and Ted Tedesco   |
| Gerry Ray Marcoux, Jr.    | August 31 | Son of Gerry Marcoux   |

A **Newsletter Dedication** is a special page dedicated in memory of your child with any favorite poem or writing you submit.

A **Love Gift** is a short one or two sentence message in your child’s memory. You may use the form below for love gifts.

**Make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends. Mail to: Denise St. Pierre, 4541 Loveland St., Metairie, LA 70006 (265-0581)**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Child \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
 Message \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Love Gifts/Dedications to be put in the September newsletter are due August 23rd!**

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## **LOVE GIFT DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**Beau Charles Tedesco, M.D.  
May 21, 1971 ~ August 28, 2003**



Loving and kind in all his ways,  
 Upright and just to the end of his days;  
 Sincere and true in his heart and mind,  
 A beautiful memory he left behind.  
 He had a nature you could not help loving,  
 A heart that was purer than gold;  
 And to those who knew him and loved him,  
 His memory will never grow old.  
 Love, Mom and Dad





**Our listeners are willing to listen, understand and share.**  
504-454-3293 – Melva Duhon, son, 41, suicide  
504-456-8248 – Patsy Ashton, son, 24, drug overdose  
504-606-3275 – Janell Sisolak, son, 25, murdered  
504-957-7419 – Lisa Ridge, son, 29, suicide  
504-875-8836 – Sonya Mazzella, daughter, 4, drowned  
985-665-6250 – Duffy St. Pierre, 2 sons, 22 and 25



## ***The Compassionate Friends***

***Greater New Orleans Chapter***  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

4541 Loveland St.  
Metairie, LA 70006

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# **August**



“Although our greatest wish can’t come true, there are many things that we can do to honor our children’s lives. We can still hold them close to our hearts. As the keepers of their memory, we can guarantee that, by sharing their lives with others, our children will never be forgotten.”