



The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2017

Chapter Leader: Denise St. Pierre 504-265-0581 Email address: tcfnola@gmail.com www.tcfneworleans.com

Strange Words Welcome New Members

I am always amazed at the instant empathy we each feel as new members come to their first meeting. We have the strangest welcome for these parents: "We are so sorry you have to be here."

In other organizations the questions are probing: where did you go to school, where do you work, where do you live? All designed to "size up" the newcomer, put him or her in the proper perspective of a neatly ordered world. For us, this information is meaningless. We know the world isn't neat and orderly; we discovered that when we lost our children. We care about you, the newly bereaved parent, whose life was tossed into a cosmic blender when your child died. We care because we are you. We have been here a while, in this purgatory of pain. We have learned to live our lives in a different way, to place value on understanding and hope, the intangibles of the purest meanings of life. We have learned to value each other, to reach out and talk, to wait patiently during the silences needed to form thoughts. We listen intently as you quietly say your child's name, tell your child's story, speak of your heartbreak.

Yes, this is a different kind of welcome. But it is the most deeply sincere welcome we will ever receive. We are kindred souls, you and I. Each of us lives in the "after death" world of losing our child. Each of us has learned gradually that the hope we have attained has made life better, lessened the pain, moderated the isolation, tears, emotional devastation and pure mayhem that once overtook us.

Each of us has learned this slowly, in our own time and in our own way. Each month new parents who have suffered the most horrific loss that a human can endure are welcomed into our group. We reach out, we listen with our hearts and we remember.

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

BIRTHDAY TABLE: We remembered birthdays in **JULY** for: **Joseph "Joey" Burke; Jacob Buuck; Thomas Cornman; Gavin Gholston; Amanda Lambert; Brian Leonard; Jason Lynn; Desha Ricks; Kendall Sprinman.** We do encourage both you and 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 **Jason Lynn.**

MONTHLY MEETINGS

August 14, 2017

2nd Monday of every month

East Jefferson Hospital
4200 Houma Blvd.
Metairie, LA 70006

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

On the 1st floor, adjacent to the
Hudson St. Garage, Esplanade III
room

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

July 10	October 9
August 14	November 13
September 11	December 11

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Denise St. Pierre
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NATIONAL OFFICE

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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., 1st 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:

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Newsletter Editor.....Denise St. Pierre
Treasurer.....Debi Giordano
Facilitator.....Debi Giordano
Webmaster.....William Hunton

Steering Committee:

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

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

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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.

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 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.

William Hunton is now our Chapter's webmaster. He would like to add some updated pictures to our website. If you have any pictures of our events that you would like added to the website please send to

whunton@cox.net

Thank you for your continued support of our chapter. And a big thank you to **William** for being our webmaster in memory of his daughter **Chelsea Hunton**.



LOVE GIFT DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Beau Charles Tedesco

May 21, 1971 ~ August 28, 2003



You are missed every single day!

**I don't know why.
 I'll never know why.
 I don't have to know why.
 I don't like it.
 I don't have to like it.
 What I do have to do is make a
 choice about my living.
 What I do want to do is accept it
 and go on living.
 The choice is mine.
 I can go on living, valuing every
 moment in a way I never did before.
 Or I can be destroyed by it and,
 in turn, destroy others.
 I thought I was immortal.
 That my family and my children
 were also.
 That tragedy happened only to others.
 But I know now that life is tenuous
 and valuable.
 So I am choosing to go on living,
 making the most of the time I have,
 valuing my family and friends
 in a way never possible before.**

Iris Bolton

Strength and Courage

**It takes strength to be firm
 It takes courage to be gentle
 It takes strength to stand guard
 It takes courage to let down your guard
 It takes strength to conquer
 It takes courage to surrender
 It takes strength to be certain
 It takes courage to have doubt
 It takes strength to feel a friend's pain
 It takes courage to feel your own pain
 It takes strength to hide feelings
 It takes courage to show them
 It takes strength to endure abuse
 It takes courage to stop it
 It takes strength to stand alone
 It takes courage to lean on another
 It takes strength to love
 It takes courage to be loved
 It takes strength to survive
 It takes courage to live.**

John G. Young, Mississaiya, Ont. Canada

...Grief has no rules, no timeline, and no expiration date... Death is something no one wants to acknowledge or talk about. Even the most well-meaning friends and family experience an increasing sense of impotence as time passes and our grief remains.

For months after Hannah's death, despite the intensity of my pain, I resisted the idea of going to a Compassionate Friends meeting. The thought of sitting in a room full of other bereaved parents overwhelmed me. I was certain that it would leave me feeling more hopeless and depressed than I was already feeling. Eventually, though, my sense of isolation and my need to talk to other people about Hannah forced me to reconsider. I will forever be grateful that I did.

...The Compassionate Friends became, for me, a lifeline, a place to go whenever I needed to share and remember Hannah in the company of others who were not afraid of my tears, who did not need me to feel better, who understood that years pass but the loss remains. It was a place where bereaved parents shared a sense of hope and possibility with each other and laughed

about things no one else dared to. It made a difference in my life, not because it told me what to do or how to feel, but because it encouraged me to be exactly where I was. It gave me permission that I couldn't give myself, to remember, to cry, to be silent, to feel.

The Compassionate Friends is different things to different people, but for me, it's ultimately about kindness, a willingness to simply show up for each other, in the midst of whatever is happening. We show up because of what we know and what we are still struggling to know. We show up to feel less alone or because someone else, who is hurting more than we are, needs us to be there... I look forward to being in a room with so many other parents who know something I am both sad and blessed to know; to feel the sense of comfort that is possible only when bereaved parents stand silently together, in their singular and shared suffering. Because in that place there is no need for words, there is only kindness.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO

We do encourage families to come to the meeting when it is your child's birthday month, to share your child with all of us. We thank **Nalani Lynn**, mom to **Jason Lynn**, for making these phone calls for us. We enjoy hearing these wonderful stories and seeing their pictures! Thank you to all who participate!

A Big Thank You to: Patti Goens, aunt to **Dennis Wedge**, **Tina Rome**, mom to **David Rome**, and **Jerrie Vicari**, mom to **Zane**, for sending the birthday and anniversary poems to our members. Sometimes our families do not acknowledge those special dates. We in TCF know how important those dates are to us no matter how long our child has been gone from our sight. Thanks to **Patti, Tina** and **Jerrie** for remembering our children.

Thank you to: Michael, dad to **Jacob**, and **Charlene Hoffmeister**, mom to **Tynia**, for toting the picture boards of our children to the meetings every month. These picture boards let us see all our children who are dearly loved and missed.

Thanks to: Melva Duhon, mom to **Dennis**, and **Janice Flock**, mom to **Kevin**, for bringing our library books to our meetings. These grief books have helped many on this grief journey.

A Huge Thank You to: Debi Giordano, mom to **Nicholas**, for facilitating our meetings every month. She brings much comfort to our members and gives "hope" that we will survive the death of our children. She has shared her "wisdom" and how she has incorporated her grief into her life so that we can develop our own coping skills and find a way to go on living without our child. She does this in memory of her son **Nicholas** and I thank her.

To Our Old Members: We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. Think back—what would it have been like for you if there had not been any "oldies" to welcome you, share your grief and encourage you? It was from them you heard, "Your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer." Thank you to all "old" members who continue to support our chapter.

BRICKS: The next time to order bricks will be for the **December Worldwide Candle Lighting on December 10, 2017**. Please send in your brick order form no later than **October 15, 2017**.

"SOMETIMES OUR LIGHT GOES OUT BUT IS BLOWN INTO A FLAME BY ANOTHER HUMAN BEING. EACH OF US OWES DEEPEST THANKS TO THOSE WHO REKINDLE THIS LIGHT." —ALBERT SCHWEITZER



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

Keilon J. Barnes, Sr.	August 7	Brenda D. Barnes
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 Matrangala	August 14	Son of Jodi Caronna; Brother of Jaclyn and Joseph
Angel B. Williams	August 15	Daughter of Linda J. Williams
Jeffrey Hergert	August 17	Son of Donald & Roxanne Hergert
Joshua LeJeune	August 17	Son of Naomie Swanson
April Blossum Duran	August 19	Daughter of Mark & Martha Duran; Sister of Autumn Moore; Mother of Gina Wills
Artemis June Westcott-Hite	August 20	Daughter of Kelsey and Cher Westcott-Hite; Sister of Freyja and Cedar
Bryan Anthony Eiserloh	August 20	Son of June DeJong
Debra Barker Hamburger	August 24	Daughter of Antoinette and Edward Barker
Kade Michael Davis	August 27	Son of Andrew Davis
Elizabeth Mary Forrest	August 28	Daughter of Steven & Nicole Forrest; Sister of Madison and Logan; 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
Mathieu James Jenkins	August 29	Son of Cory Peter Jenkins
David Andre Folks	August 29	Son of Vickie Tullier; Brother of Jared; Grandson of Ellwyn and Joseph Abadie, Jr.; Nephew of Janel & Peter Quitzau
Paris Callais Sullivan	August 30	Daughter of Gwen and Randy Sullivan
Gerry Ray Marcoux, Jr.	August 31	Son of Gerry Marcoux

August Anniversaries

Kade Michael Davis	August 1	Son of Andrew Davis
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
Frankie Matto III	August 9	Son of Beth O'Neal and Frank Matto, Jr.
Duane Ransome	August 15	Son of Elaine Ransome
Thomas "Tommy"	August 18	Son of Steven Cornman and Felicia Cornman
Artemis June Westcott-Hite	August 20	Daughter of Kelsey and Cher Westcott-Hite; Sister of Freyja and Cedar
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
Mathieu James Jenkins	August 29	Son of Cory Peter Jenkins
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 21st!



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
504-875-8836 – Sonya Mazzella, daughter, 4, drowned
985-665-6250 – Duffy St. Pierre, 2 sons, 22 and 25



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4541 Loveland St.
Metairie, LA 70006

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August



"Why me? 'is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the 'Why me?' will answer itself." —Polly Moore