



The Compassionate Friends



El Paso Chapter



September



October



November



WELCOME TO OUR FALL MEETINGS

Picnic: October 5, 5:00 PM
Madeline Park

Meetings: Wednesdays
September 24, 2008
October 29, 2008
November 26, 2008

Program:
To be Announced

Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

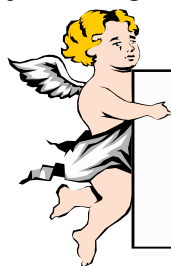
Place:
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
1000 Montana Avenue
El Paso, Texas

Board Of Directors:
Chairman: Susan Crews
542-0908
Sec/Treasurer: Lou Cain
Newsletter, Copies & Mailing:
The Winkelmans

Mark Your Calendar For Future Meetings

Dec 14 Around the Globe
Candlelight Ceremony
Jan 28 Monthly Meeting
Feb 25 Monthly Meeting

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is a self help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purpose of TCF is to aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of their child and to foster the physical and emotional health of bereaved parents and surviving children. The El Paso chapter meets in donated church facilities, but no religious creed or affiliation is involved. There are no dues and no one is required to talk at any meeting. Listening is okay! Please join us, together we can make it.



Editor's Notes



In October, we will be having our annual balloon picnic at Madeline Park. Everyone is invited, parents, children and other family members. We all **bring our favorite dish**, eat, socialize, then send off a balloon with a special message to our child(ren). Each person is asked to **bring one or more helium balloons** to send off to their child. We also suggest you **bring lawn chairs** to sit on. The picnic will be held at **Madeline Park on Sunday, October 5, at 5:00 PM, located off of Cincinnati Avenue, in Kern Place**. See you there.

Mail all Entries to: Eric Winkelman
5337 Hunters Glenn
El Paso, TX 79932
ejwink@sbcbglobal.net

National Office: TCF National Office
PO Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
(630) 990-0010 or (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

If you would like to receive this monthly newsletter, please e-mail ejwink@sbcbglobal.net or www.elpasotcf.org

Attitude Adjustment

Again and again, in many different situations and under various circumstances, I've had to adjust my attitude. Whether it's been a holiday, or a regular day, or a special event like a wedding, shower, or birthday celebration, my attitude decides how that day will turn out. At first I was continually sad and despondent and therefore, all the world around me felt sorrowful and dark. Of course, this is the way it should be – dealing & coping with the death of a child is the absolute worst tragedy and what other attitude could anyone have for the longest time but to be grief-stricken with sadness? But we know we can't live like that for the rest of our lives and neither would our child want us to be forever engulfed in sorrow. As we emerge out of the darkness and live in the light of our child's memories, we always remember the lessons our child's life and death taught us. No longer do the material things have the same value and importance "before our child died", a broken car or appliance is no longer earth shattering, getting the laundry done on time is not a big deal, neither is a clean house or cooking a meal every night. Our friends complain and gripe about the weather, or a broken fingernail, or the terrible traffic, getting stuck in a long line at the grocery store or any other such minor inconvenience. We, the bereaved, fluff it off; that's nothing compared with losing a child. I just don't get upset anymore when the checkbook doesn't balance (there's always hope next month) or when a glass breaks, or if I forgot to turn on the dishwasher or if the laundry stacks up. My attitude has adjusted in many situations, not just work or holidays or special events; attitude adjustment is something that goes on daily, but James' life and death taught me if I can just shrug it off, try to smile, make a few jokes, be positive and humorous to others, it somehow rubs off on me too. Bereaved parents have no choice but to adjust their attitudes and if somehow it can be for the better, that's another healing milestone. We will always and forever miss our child & be sad they can't experience every day, holidays and celebrations with us but our child would want to see us have a healthy mix of enjoying life as much as possible mixed in with the times we are sad and ache to see them again.

Rosh Hashana

Counting years
Counting tears,
Counting the children
Who are gone from this earth.
Counting the memories
Of time past and done.
Blessing the children
Alive on this day.

By Sascha Wagner, from "Wintersun"

Bent Not Broken

For the longest time we are totally broken; we are completely heartbroken and physically we feel broken into pieces as the pain of grief is a real stab to our insides and we wonder how can we ever learn to cope with so much pain? For the longest time I cried every day and it amazed me that one person could have so many tears. I felt broken as a person, broken and a failure as a mom, and broken as a wife. There was no way I felt I could put any of these pieces back together again and be a fairly together, functional, competent, and content person, in my roles as a wife, daughter, friend, employee and any kind of member of society. Walking into a store and trying to buy items needed was a huge chore. Gone was any sense of organization and focus at work and home. I knew I couldn't survive like this for the rest of my life; but feeling broken apart was just how it was for many months. Somehow, although I really didn't care much about myself, I decided to start caring about others and doing for others and hoped that it would help myself also. Now I can realize that bereaved parents are broken but the pieces gently and gradually blend back together in new ways that allow us to bend, allow us to be better, and not bitter, and our life, although it will never be the same, can somehow be molded so that we can heal and be flexible as we struggle and manage our life as parents, relatives, spouses, friends and members of society. Yes, in many ways I still feel emotionally broken, but through the past 11 years I've been bending, trying to be flexible, trying to be patient & understanding because what and whom I've got left in this life is to be treasured. James taught me to bend, because to continue to be rigid with grief, to allow minor inconveniences destroy my contentedness, will only continue allowing the pieces to be shattered and broken. A life worth living, and yes, we have to learn that our lives are worth living even without our child, is a life that we deserve to have and we need to bend toward the path of forgiveness and fulfillment and not be forever broken in pieces.



The ABC's of Grief

As we grieve, and grow and time marches on, we learn so much that we wish we hadn't had to learn. We've received an education that was so very unwelcome, very unwanted, but we were thrust into this school of grief and have learnt so many lessons. These are the ABC's of grief that I've learned and this September marks the 11th year since James left us.

Fall Angel Dates

If your child's name has been left out of this section, or their is missing/incorrect information, please mail or e-mail me immediately so I can update our data base.



LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN

HERE AND THEN GONE

BUT ALWAYS REMEMBERED

DEATH DATES:	AGE:	CHILD:	PARENT(S):
9/2/1983	3	Jonathon	Son of Mrs. Susan Crews
9/4/1998	12	Adam	Son of Beverly Hurley
9/5/1997	41	Harlow III	Son of Mr. & Mrs. Harlow Paul
9/5/2006	8	Samual	Son of Gordon Mahon
9/18/1993	29	Steven	Son of Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Waite
10/6/2005	47	Fred	Son of Fran Zimet
10/7/2007	2	Ethan	Son of Gloria Ortiz
10/16/2001	26 Days	Elsie	Ann Sigholz
10/19/1991	8	Jeremy	Alvin and Carmen Dobard
10/22/1979		Eric Lazono	Son of Rosa and Oscar Miranda
10/30/2003	10	Ruben	Son of Cindy and Mark Flack
11/28/2003	19 Days	Gabrielle	Daughter of Edna and Andrew Sierra
11/30/1991	21	Mark Anthony	Son of Maria Molina

September and a New School Year

To most people means:

The kids out from under foot, buying a new lunch box, new clothes, and the usual school supplies; fixing breakfast and trying to get it eaten, and getting to the school bus on time. What does school mean to a mother who has lost a child? Watching other children filled with excitement; a little boy who should be in kindergarten, a brother who must go off to school by himself; a teacher who must reach out to a class, when her little one won't be in school this year. A mother sending two children off when there should be three. Many tears, behind smiling faces.

By Patsy Hedges
TCF Fredrick County, Maryland

Yes, Grandparents Do Grieve

Thank God, someone stepped up and said, "Hey! This child was and is my grandchild! And I hurt too!" Not looking for sympathy, but wanting the world to know that yes, the mother and father are hurting from the loss of their little angels, but Granny and Grandpa loved these children with their hearts and souls. Totally unconditionally! I read these letters that are sent to me, every day. My heart hurts for these parents for the loss of their children. But, please, let us not forget any of the grandparents whose loss is two-fold. One for their child who is hurting so badly and for the loss of their grandchildren. I always thought my grandchildren would outlive me. At least that's the way it's supposed to be. It doesn't always work out that way. So yes, my heart also hurts for the grandparents too.

By Wanda Bryant, TCF, Vidalia, GA

Why We Walk “Out of the Darkness”

A Survivor’s Story by Karen DeLany

In 2001, I walked 60 miles in three days to raise money and awareness of breast cancer. Funny thing is, I did it for fun. I did it to challenge myself. I felt great doing “something” for a great cause. I didn’t even really know anyone who had died from breast cancer.

The fun of doing something for a great cause must have been preparing me for the journey I would be taking now. I walk the Out of the Darkness Community Walk and the Overnight Walk because I have to help find a way to end the pain of being a survivor of suicide. I will walk until I can’t walk anymore. I’ll crawl to the end of the world to help fund the research that will save other families from the pain that I live every day since I lost my 16-year-old son, Kyle, on September 4, 2006 to suicide.

Kyle was a good-looking, fun-loving and popular kid. He loved baseball, cars and his family and friends. All Kyle had to do was walk into a room and your attention automatically went to him. His laughter will always be ingrained in my memory. His smile, his warmth and his being will always be in my heart. But his illness will forever haunt me. I will never understand why we didn’t see the illness that killed Kyle.

But now, I will continue walking to educate other families about depression and other mental illnesses that take the lives of our children and our parents, and our co-workers. I will walk to eliminate the need for awareness programs and for the day that there are no more stigmas associated with suicide and so others do not have to take the walk I’m taking now.

In Loving Memory of Kyle Walter Copija

12/20/89 - 09/06/06

Compensate and Compromise

I live a life without my son. As with all bereaved parents, a huge part of our life is forever gone. Although James is with me spiritually and I carry his memories and love with me every day, he is not with me physically and most certainly, this is not the way it should be. Over the years I’ve learned to compensate and compromise for whom and what I don’t have in my life. I’ll never watch James graduate from high school or college, I’ll never share in his successes & accomplishments with college and/or a career, I’ll never dance at his wedding, I’ll never have a daughter-in-law to pass family traditions on to, I’ll never hold James’ child, and my grandchild, in my arms. Many friends and family members do not understand that my grief is not simply for the loss of James; it is for the loss of all that he is not experiencing, it is for the loss that I’ll never be a grandmother and a mother-in-law. It is for the loss that my husband doesn’t have his son to go fishing with and continue in Scouts with, and carry on the family name. That loss does not end in the first year or the next year; it carries over to different levels & degrees depending on the situation or circumstances. I ache for myself and for my husband and for all the “future” we should have had for and with James. In my own way, I’ve learned to compensate and compromise to get some enjoyments out of life. I know that total joy, or total happiness, will simply never be a part of my life. I can find a level of peace, and moments of contentment and I am so blessed when I do have these and I have found ways to reinvest my life, both for myself and for others in memory of James, and with my husband. We won’t experience high school with James; but we’ve been host parents for exchange students and we’ve been fortunate to share their high school experiences with them and our lives are enriched with our international teenagers - even though I’ve had to compensate and be an “active mom” by borrowing someone else’s child. What a life changing experience it’s been for us and our girls; they have become family to us. My husband loves Scouting and although James is no longer a participant, he didn’t quit Scouting; he continues on to help other teens and they are benefiting from the compassion and patience my husband has developed. Some people envy me because I travel frequently. I find it difficult to spend too much time at home. I know that I need to be out doors, to travel and discover the beauty and serenity of nature and our beautiful environment. I am extremely blessed to have a group of wonderful friends that plan travel adventures and we all have such good times and create terrific memories. My husband and I enjoy camping and that’s another way to spend time outdoors. Quite honestly, I feel closer to James when I’m hiking a mountain trail, hiking to see and photograph waterfalls, walking on the beach (especially at sunset), standing out on the deck of a cruise ship relaxing and basking in the views, and these are my therapy. If only I could be spending my time traveling to visit James at college, or taking him on vacations, going on vacations with my grandchildren, but that will never happen. Yes, during the past 11 years I’ve learned to compensate and compromise and if others think I’m so lucky to travel, to be able to pick up at a moment’s notice and do whatever and whenever, let them try walking in my shoes for a week. The emotional sacrifices and the physical loss I have in my life leave me with no choice but to compensate and compromise and while doing so, find pockets of peace and moments of contentment.

Life is meant to be enjoyed to some degree, to whatever degree we can possibly reach. I know James, and I know our children, would want us to enjoy our lives whenever and however possible. So as we go through our ABC’s, and as we learn the lessons our child taught us, as we are educated along our grief journey, I hope we all take it one day at a time and always realize, although we have to adjust our attitudes, become bent not broken and better not bitter, as we compensate and compromise in our own individual ways, we also need to remember, we need not walk alone.

By Meg Avery

Written August 2008, In Memory of my son James Avery, 7/15/83 – 9/22/97



Love Gifts

A LOVE GIFT is a gift of money or service to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died but it can also be a gift to help in the work of the El Paso Chapter of TCF. Your gifts are tax deductible and are our Chapter's only monetary support. Your donation will help us pay for postage and labels for sending our newsletter each month.

LOVE GIFT

Name of Person to be Remembered _____

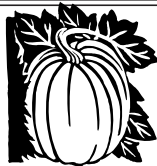
Special Occasion of Person _____

Given By _____

Send To: Mary Lou Cain
5664 Beth View
El Paso, TX 79932

Love Gifts

Terri & Joe Harlow in Loving Memory Harlow L. Paul III, Born in Everlasting Life August 7, 1993
Harlow and Ruth Paul in Loving Memory of Their Son Harlow L. Paul III, Death Day September 5, 1997



Holidaze

I was getting ready to go to the store to purchase candy for the “great pumpkin day” which brought my attention to the holidays of preceding years: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah and New Years – those days that threaten us so much.

This is the fifth holiday season since my son Douglas’s death, yet I still have a fleeting desire to run and hide. Although last season was not as terrible as the one before, I know this year there will be tears shed and some lonely times. Such times are very private moments of grief for me now.

If you are bereaved, I hope that you will take some time for yourself during the holidays. Take the time to cry and take time to be alone. Try not to take on assignments from other family members who cannot know the exhaustion you experience. Ask for the things you think you need. Others cannot read your mind, yet it is so difficult to tell someone that you are hurting and need something from him or her. There is no requirement to pretend you are okay when, in fact, you are not.

Healing is a slow process requiring a lot of work. I always know when others have never experienced a great loss, for they will say time will heal all wounds. What they do not know and cannot know is that healing a great grief requires hard work which time only permits.

Time itself cannot heal anything. It is not the passage of time in itself, but the pain and suffering endured and the struggle to reclaim one’s life which through time earns a new life. Others see only the end result without realizing the work that went into the healing; therefore, others can only allude to superficial and trite remarks.

Take the time you need to complete your work, to heal your spirit, your mind, and your body and your will to live again. Be good to yourself. Remember that healing is possible through your own effort and determination, and not simply by the passage of time.

By Shirley Corrigan, Bereaved Parents USA of Northern Texas, from “Where Are All the Butterflies”
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

If You'll Be My Friend

~By Theresa Heitz, Sept. 2004

If you'll be my friend, there's something you must know.
I'm not the friend I used to be, I wish it were not so.
I may look like your old friend, but I am definitely someone new.

I used to remember your birthday, now I can barely
remember what day it is.
I used to bake you bread, now I anxiously wander through
the grocery store.
I used to answer the telephone, now I'm not up for talking.
I gaze at each sunset while thinking about Heaven.
I used to worry about everyday hassles,
Now, I long for moments filled with peace.

If you'll be my friend, please know I'm forever changed.
Since that day in September, the day I buried my son, all events
are measured in comparison to the tragedy we suffered.

I often wonder "who would want to be my friend?"
My burden is heavy, my pain too much for many to see.
I just have to let you know, my friend, I've changed.

I have read that "friends become strangers and strangers
become friends".
I know you'll be my friend the minute that we meet.
You know my thoughts and fears. You understand my ups and downs.
I ask nothing of you, you ask nothing of me.
While sharing the most unfathomable pain, we became friends.
You are another bereaved mom.

You may have known me "before", or you may have met me "after" . . .
To you, my friend, one thing I ask,
Please allow me to grieve.

If you'll be my friend . . .

Tuesday's child

Again a new school year is upon us, with it, it
brings on a new feeling of our loss.

Even though Steven was long out of school, it
still brings on the memories. So if you are
dreading the sight of the yellow buses, know I
am thinking of you.

I'm Never Prepared

~Theresa Heitz Sept. 2008

It happened again.
I'm never prepared.
Should I be?
Five years have passed.
I park the car.
I take in my bags.
The dog is waiting.
We go for our walk.
We head back home.
We make our way to the mailbox.
Right there, on top, it caught my eye.
Another piece of mail addressed to our
son.
I stop, I stare, my thoughts go blank.
He doesn't live here anymore.
Don't they know?
He died five years ago.
I'm never prepared.
How could I be?

Hey Mom and Dad

Don't forget I love you.

I know that today finds you crying
sighing with a broken heart.
I know that today will find you
trying to find comfort from the start.
I know today will be sad for you....
going through what you've gone through.
And, I wish you could hear....
Bo Layton whisper in your ear....
Hey Mom and Dad, don't forget
I LOVE YOU!!!!!!

Joyce Layton

*Human pain works its way out of our consciousness over time.
There is a season of sadness, a season of anger, a season of
tranquility, a season of hope. But seasons do not follow one
another in lockstep manner. At least not for those in crisis. One
day we feel as though the dark clouds have lifted, the next day
they return. One moment we can smile a few hours, later the
tears emerge. But people do survive their heartbreaks. We don't
recover all at once. In fact we recover slowly. Gradually.
Sometimes in almost undetectable ways. But if we are patient we
begin to see the signs of healing. And the prospect of a new life
starts to unfold.*



Thanksgiving at Our House

Of all the holidays, Thanksgiving seemed to mean the most to our Daughter Natalie. When she was small she would get up with me early Thanksgiving morning and she would help me make the fixings for the stuffing. I would toast the bread and she would tear it up into small pieces. After all the ingredients were added and the turkey finally went into the oven we would push the cranberry "log" out of the can and cut it into slices. It would soon be time for the Macy's parade and we would all sit around the television wondering when we would see Snoopy or Hello Kitty.

My job caused us to move far away from where all our family lived. Sometimes we would have friends or family from out of town but many times we did not. It didn't seem to make any difference because we had each other and the thoughts of the Thanksgiving Dinner.

When Natalie went off to college I would look forward to the Thanksgiving break like I was a kid counting the days until Christmas. It was a six hour drive to pick her up from school and all the while I thought about how she would describe what the Thanksgiving dinner would be like. She always would make a list to make sure we didn't forget anything. After Thanksgiving Dinner we had a few movies we always watched. Our favorite was "Christmas Story". We all knew the story by heart, but we laughed just the same.

In October 1997 we took her to the hospital in a place far from home. She was doing well enough that she could come back to our apartment for the Thanksgiving Holiday. I had decided that no matter what it took, I was going to cook Thanksgiving dinner just like every year. As always, Natalie made the list and I made the dinner. She couldn't help me with the stuffing because she had to go back to the hospital for a couple of hours. But when she returned we had our dinner and her Mama and I were pleased that she ate so much of everything. The next morning we heard her in the kitchen searching for the leftover stuffing.

That was the last Thanksgiving we had together before Natalie left us. As it was last year, there is no one to pick up at school, no one to make the list or help with the stuffing bread. But Natalie's Mama and I intend to make the big Thanksgiving dinner according to our Daughter's specifications like we always have. We know that somewhere, Natalie will be sharing the Holiday with us and is thinking about the leftovers she will enjoy the day after.

I am thankful that these memories of Natalie are more wonderful each time they come into my mind.

In Memory of our Daughter Natalie 5/11/75 – 1/22/98 Terry and Evelyn Sparks, Lawrenceville, GA

Thanks Given

Many years after her birth
Having taken for granted her wonderful worth,
We feel it necessary to share a time
That our memories of her come to mind.
Everyone was excited about the day
That each would give thanks in their own way.

That year our daughter's birthday was celebrated
With turkey and mashed potatoes, all were elated.
She was given head-of-the-line honors, not too bad,
And the smile on her face told of the thrill she had.
We sang Happy Birthday Pride then gave thanks
For one of the best moments ever, is where it ranks.

She thanked us for presents and for the fun.
We thanked her for being our special one.
Thanks seemed to be fine later that night,
Yet, not enough was said to make it feel right.

Were we able to re-live that day long ago,
We would have said thanks for the love she showed.
Thanks for the compassion she gave to others.
Thanks for putting up with me and her mother.

We would thank her for laughing at silly cartoons
And at us when we acted like buffoons.
We would thank her for challenging our minds
And thank her for loving people of all kinds.

She would be proud of us for what we do now,
Helping others to work through grief somehow.
She would tell us that the thanks,
For doing our parts,
is given freely from the love for her in our hearts.

Thank you for being our daughter.

By Dan Gardner
TCF, Nashville, TN

A Letter to My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer. How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near? Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always. Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness. I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

By Robin Holemon
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

Mark Your Calendar



The Annual El Paso TCF Picnic will be on Sunday, **October 5, 2008** from **5:00 – 7:00** at Madeline Park in Kern Place. The main dish will be provided by El Paso TCF. We would like for you to bring a favorite salad, side dish, appetizer, snacks (chips, pretzels, etc.), sodas and water, or dessert. We will have our **Memorial Balloon Release** between **6:00 and 6:30**. Please bring your own balloons, lawn chairs or a blanket to spread out. As always, you are welcome to bring friends and/or family members. **Check our local website: www.elpasotcf.org for pictures of previous year's picnics.**



National Children's Memorial Day

The senate has, for many years, at the request of The Compassionate Friends, proclaimed the second Sunday in December as National Children's Memorial Day to coincide with The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting. Members of all TCF chapters join tens of thousands of families worldwide in lighting candles at 7 PM as an act of symbolic remembrance. This is an annual event where persons around the globe, united in the loss of a child, light candles for one hour the second Sunday in December. Candles are first lit at 7 PM local time just west of the International Date Line. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are then lit in the next, creating a virtual 24 hour wave of light as observances continues in countries around the world. **El Paso TCF Chapter will sponsor a Candle Lighting Ceremony** as part of The Compassionate Friends worldwide candle lighting remembrance services on **Sunday, December 14, 2008, National Children's Memorial Day, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. We will begin lighting our candles promptly at 7:00 PM. Please plan shortly prior to 7:00 PM.** Please bring a candle to light, a memorabilia picture of your child, and a favorite **Holiday Dish or dessert** for gathering to follow the ceremony. This is a very poignant ceremony to remember our child, sibling, grandchild during the busy holiday season. Many of us have discarded old traditions, kept some traditions and found new rituals to connect us with our children. This may be one of your new traditions, a memory to cherish. Please join us on December 14th

Self Help Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parent

Address Correction Requested



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
1000 MONTANA
EL PASO, TX 79902